The ERA-ENVHEALTH network, created as a continuation of the project funded by the EC FP7, is proceeding, focusing on information exchange and circulation of proposals for joint activities.

After the association of two members on January 2014, the Public Health Agency of Sweden and the Public Health Service of the Walloon region, we received other requests and we established an exchange of information with the MED HISS Project.

After the first ERA-ENVHEALTH network meeting in Rome, in December 2013, the second took place in Stockholm in June 2014, together with the ACCEPTED project meeting. The proposal for the present year is to match again with the final meeting of ACCEPTED, foreseen in October 2015 in Brussels.

In this newsflash we present an update of the ISEE position around the role of environment and health in EU research program Horizon 2020. Manolis Kogevinas was one of the speakers during the Rome ERA-ENVHEALTH network Conference in 2013, and he is now President-Elect of the International Society of Environmental Epidemiology (ISEE). The community of environmental epidemiologists is part of the scientific community that is committed to operate in a complex field like environment and health, which needs a dedicated attention.

In Europe, the debate on HIA inclusion in legislation has gradually developed along two lines: the HIA as a stand-alone tool, the HIA within environmental impact assessment, EIA, and strategic environmental assessment, SEA, and more recently as part of integrated pollution prevention and control, IPPC process. Although HIA has broad similarities with EIA, and the SEA, it requires several operational adjustments to overcome barriers and stereotypes.

In the last decade, the EU policies have been subjected to HIA, and there is a large body of methodologies available and many experts involved in the field. HIA is an ad-hoc procedure, which can be applied having an advanced information system, to measure environmental and health phenomena on an adequate scale.
CRUCIAL ISSUES IN HORIZON 2020: THE ISEE POSITION

Manolis Kogevas, President International Society of environmental Epidemiology (ISEE)

Horizon 2020 is described by the European Union as the financial instrument implementing the Innovation Union, an initiative aimed at securing Europe's global competitiveness. Horizon 2020 should tackle societal challenges and the European Commission puts very high in the agenda bridging the gap between research and the market. This approach defines many directions given to the Horizon2020 program, and for example is translated in the health area to an obstinate focus on personalized medicine, development of new technologies and promotion of private enterprises.

This is a simplistic and obsolete view on how to promote research, innovation and competitiveness in Europe and, more importantly, marginalizes research in key areas.

Environmental and Health in H2020

Environmental health research was in the two previous framework programs a well defined priority within the “Environment” part of these programs. The issue identified by ISEE concerning H2020 is that environment and health was moved to “Health”. This is not necessarily negative. The problem however is that environmental health is not any more identified as a distinct area for funding and there are no built links between the “Health” and “Environment” programs either. ISEE’s concern was that the momentum and vitality of the European-wide collaboration in environmental health, that started in FPS and that has led to important advances in environmental health research, needs to be preserved. If sufficient funding is not available in the future and if sufficient priority is not given to this area, successful European-wide research will not remain competitive internationally. This issue is not only a matter of funds but also a matter of knowhow within the Commission. There are few officers that know public health and even fewer who know environmental health. This is a serious problem since there is no in house knowledge to judge the importance of specific priorities within environmental health.

How should scientific societies act concerning research policy in Europe

We (researchers) are key stakeholders concerning the definition of research policy in Europe but we seem to have little influence in defining this policy. This is due, in part, to the distance between organs and persons taking these decisions from the research community but is also due to the lack of involvement from us in expressing efficiently our views. Public health and our societies have been traditionally inactive concerning decision making in Brussels and have relatively weak societies and with little funds. The European section of ISEE has developed an active plan of contacts within the society and with several stakeholders in the European Commission and in national states to promote our views on the need to develop research on environment and health and has acquire knowledge on mechanisms of decision making in Brussels. ISEE has also promoted a connection with other public health associations in Europe. These type of actions need continuity and also central funding that is currently not available. However it is important to keep and expand our involvement. European research in public health and environmental health is crucial for addressing the health of the population. So we have to keep our action going!

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL EPIDEMIOLOGY

Twenty-Seventh Conference of the International Society for Environmental Epidemiology

Sao Paulo, Brazil - August 30-September 3, 2015

Theme: Addressing Environmental Health Inequities

Organizing Committee Chair Nelson Gouveia, School of Medicine, University of Sao Paulo, Brazil

Check the conference website for details www.isee2015.org
FORESIGHTED REASONING ON ENVIRONMENTAL STRESSORS AND HEALTH

FRESH PROJECTS

Environment and health in transition
A good quality of the environment is essential for human health and quality of life, as has been shown during the last centuries. Today, environmental factors continue to affect our lives, but the scope of environmental health challenges (and opportunities) is shifting. In the past, environmental health (EH) problems have often been successfully addressed by removing or controlling a single source of pollutants or by controlling sources affecting individual environmental compartments. However, today’s environmental health problems are often more complex and the traditional, predominantly hazard-focused and compartmentalised approach to environment and health is simply insufficient to fully address today’s complex interconnected and interdependent issues. Recognising these challenges, the European Environment Agency (EEA) expressed the desire to enhance the environmental health and well-being (EHWB) component in its integrated assessments and reports. Three sequential projects entitled “Foresighted Reasoning on Environmental Stressors and Health” (FRESH) were launched in 2012, 2013 and 2014 to inform how this might be achieved (Depending on the 2012, 2013 and 2014 contracts, the members of the FRESH-consortium were: RIVM-Netherlands (project-coordinator), UBA-Germany, NIEH-Hungary, ANSES-France, Natural England-United Kingdom, NIPH-Croatia, NIIPH-Macedonia, NIIPH-Poland, NIIPH-Slovenia, EA-Slovenia and ULB-Belgium, and Professor George Morris (UK)).

The aims of the FRESH projects were to:
- further explore aspects of environment, health and well-being issues;
- provide building blocks to support the development of an integrated narrative;
- underpin the EEA’s support for policy analysis and development in EHWB;
- share country experiences and case studies in assessing and reporting environmental health issues.

The FRESH approach
In FRESH 1 emphasis was placed on exploring the power and potential of a narrative approach, whilst FRESH 2 and 3 explored how the EEA might embed its activities and products (e.g. around indicators of environmental quality, resources and policies) in a wider social, cultural and ecological context. Working methods included surveys to collect information on data-availability, bio-monitoring studies and case-studies from environment and health networks (European Environment Information and Observation Network (EIONET) and ERA-ENVHEALTH), organisation of knowledge gathering workshops and analysis of the literature and international databases. Key outputs of FRESH included:
- a proposal for an overarching conceptual approach for framing environment, health and well-being issues and developing integrated assessments;
- a narrative on societal transitions and EHWB in an urban environment;
- a proposal for a suite of EHWB indicators in a wider context;
- an overview of policy evaluations and case studies in the field of EHWB;
- an assessment of the value of human bio-monitoring data.

The FRESH approach was not built around issue-specific challenges. Rather, in exploring the power and potential of a narrative approach in EHWB, FRESH chose to focus on the interplay of three key contemporary transitions impacting at societal/global level – an urban transition, a demographic transition and, perhaps most concerning of all, an ecological transition. The FRESH project also sought to reflect a modern inclusive definition of health, as a resource for life which embraces positive notions of well-being. Through this, it was hoped that a much richer contemporary understanding of the interconnectedness of human health and environmental quality might be made explicit.

Framing the issue
FRESH highlighted that the current complex and interlinked environmental challenges require a more systemic and integrated approach. The introduction of well-being as an important target alongside health demands a comprehensive rethink of how the relationship between human beings and their environment is framed and which policies are required. EHWB depends on the interconnections between important societal, economic and demographic transitions. Effective governance in the domain of EHWB reaches across many policy domains and must be grounded in an improved understanding of the complex system interactions, feedback loops and trade-offs involved. This has profound implications for approaches to environmental monitoring and EHWB indicators.

The concept of risk governance has raised the awareness of the need to integrate knowledge from different disciplines and involve stakeholders in all phases of assessment. Conceptual frameworks are an important tool in this respect, as they can provide “tools to think with”, to communicate, to bridge gaps between scientific, professional and policy constituencies, to assemble a diverse array of evidence relevant to any issue and as a framework to configure EHWB indicators. The conceptual models adopted in FRESH permit the broader framing of environmental health and well-being. Accordingly, they integrate a) human social complexity, b) ecological complexity in the relationship between environment and well-being and c) the positive concept of well-being. But if they are to be applied effectively then the current gaps in understanding need to be addressed.
specific issue by looking into the policies, indicators and cases studies relating to resource use categories, in particular energy, food, water, and materials (housing).

**Conclusion**

In essence, the challenge posed by the EEA is how to effectively communicate the state of human health and well-being as determined by the environment. It is recognised that this is a challenging ambition given the complexity of the systems involved in addition to the number of different policy domains. Environmental health and well-being (EHWB) depends on the interconnections between important societal, economic and demographic transitions. Effective governance in such a multi-policy domain as of EHWB relies on the awareness of these complex interactions and the trade-offs involved. This can be achieved by introducing more stakeholder involvement, informing cross-cutting analysis and synthesis, and reflecting on implications. In translating evidence into policy information and action, different approaches could be integrated, such as the use of conceptual frameworks as a communication and issue-framing tool, indicators and case studies to describe EHWB from different perspectives.

**Tools for communication including indicators and narratives**

Complex multifaceted challenges with complex interacting causes require a range of indicators, which raises awareness of the interactions and health impacts of policies and actions, as well as unintended side-effects. The FRESH-project proposes a set of indicators which allows better understanding of the association of human health, well-being and the environment and their use can allow clearer communication and identification of trends or comparison of countries or regions.

The use of a narrative dialogue format helps in describing possible emergent trends and complex issues. Storytelling is considered a fascinating approach to communicate and enhance the understanding of complex issues and to introduce formal reports, where underpinning data can be further developed. Thus, narratives are an additional tool to reach out to experts and policy-makers, and enable interactions and measures that impact our environment to be examined in a more descriptive way. FRESH developed a narrative on the interplay of three key contemporary transitions impacting at societal/global level – an urban transition, a demographic transition and, perhaps most important of all, an ecological transition.

The FRESH project implemented this approach on a
European guidelines on waste

Currently, waste production and waste disposal are under a national, European and global spotlight, since they directly relate to the behavior adopted by society. Current patterns of consumption and production are not sustainable. The main reasons for this are a lack of adequate waste management strategies, as well as a lack of awareness in the population. In response to the first reason, the European Commission published the "Roadmap on the Review of Waste Policy and Legislation" on March 26, 2013, which reviews the current regulatory framework in Europe. The review also states that there is a need to update the guidelines and the economical instruments that incentivize re-using production chains.

The aim is thus to align the overall management to the indications given by the European Agency for the Environment in the report "Towards a Green Economy in Europe ", issued in July 2013. In response to the lack of awareness in the population, the DG Environment European Commission included stakeholders and the community in the decision-making process, in the “Arrangement of a Waste Management Plan” report, 2012. The European Directive Framework on Waste 2008/98 / EC, already stated that “a consultation should be included in each stage of the planning process, in order to allow public authorities to make informed decisions”.

The HIA21 approach and aims

The adoption of a participatory and transparent approach in the Life+ Project “HIA21” : Participative assessment of the health, environmental and socio-economic impacts resulting from urban waste treatment - constitutes the methodological framework for assessing the impacts of two different management options, and for setting up a network of contacts in the area.

The HIA21 project is aimed at increasing knowledge, through monitoring and researching, and at implementing it in the decision-making process, in order to create a more informed political activity. The transfer of knowledge and the possibility of receiving recommendations from the HIA require a network of collaborations to develop a basis of trust between the parties involved, which is not easily achieved.

The HIA21 project contributes to the prevention of medium and long-term effects on health and environment by promoting guidelines for the use of a model of stakeholders’ participation in impact assessment in order to facilitate well-informed decisions on local policies concerning waste management:

- in the long term, the expected overall outcome is to raise society’s level of knowledge and understanding of the effects produced by the policies undertaken. In this sense, it should facilitate the achievement of targets set for 2020.

The HIA21 project aims to apply Health Impact Assessment (HIA) procedures integrated in the Local Agenda 21 practices, in order to provide a tool for the impact assessment of the waste cycle management, which is innovative and integrates the democratic participation of the communities in the local strategic planning. The population residing near an incinerating plant and a landfill site, in two different Italian regions, has been characterized for the health status, the environmental exposure and the socio-economic condition.

The key objectives of the project are:
- Applying an HIA procedure combined with LA21 methods.
- Involving locals in a process to establish guidelines for urban waste management in the area, experimenting methods of participation which include forum communication meetings and the active work of focus groups.
- Evaluating the health, environmental and socio-economic impact of the incinerator and landfill, through means approved by the scientific community.
- Deepening awareness of local communities concerning their role in land-management policies
- Developing guidelines to support local planning policies.
- Developing an international network between public bodies and research institutions.

The model of participation within the HIA case studies

When defining the community’s participatory model in the HIA21 project, an adaptation of the Local Ag21 process to the project constraints and goals was required. A model composed by three main subjects with different roles was agreed on. Besides the project research group a Forum and a Focus group were created.

The roles of each subject were defined as below described. The HIA21 leading group of researchers and HIA21 project local partners, provides the evidence on impacts and the terms of reference of the process. The forum, constituted by individuals from the community, aims at the surveillance of final recommendations. The focus groups of local experts work on targeted themes. They integrate the content of the work done by the forum and the HIA21 leading group, evaluating processes and results. The overall goal of the participative process is to integrate the local knowledge within the impact assessment of the current local waste cycle management.
The Arezzo case study demonstrated that the HIA21 participative model was effective in supporting the decision about the new interprovincial waste plan. The HIA21 project increased interest in waste issues in the general population. It has also generated collective expectations concerning the decisions of the new waste management plan, and the identification of optimal management alternatives. Some public events focusing on the issues of waste cycle were developed in collaboration with the Municipality. Local government and policy makers became key players in the achievement of project objectives. The assessment of the environmental, health and socio-economic impacts was conducted through a process of involvement of local stakeholders up to the drafting of recommendations and monitoring indicators. The contribution of citizens and stakeholders during the project shifted the decision of local administrators of doubling the incinerator’s capacity in favor of differentiated waste collection, which passed from the target 65% to 70%.

Conclusion

A network of collaborations, involving the community and the municipality administrators, was locally built to collect new data and share the project results. Findings of the health and socioeconomic studies supported the selection of sustainable waste cycle management in Arezzo and also pushed the plant owner to provide deeper analysis of impacts from different waste management scenarios. The HIA21 approach facilitated the building of trust among relevant parties – citizens, administrators, owners, local actors concerned- and the conduction of the assessment of impacts. Also, it increased the sensibility and awareness within the community. The setting up of a systematic channel to communicate and inform citizens hopefully would improve the awareness of the local decision makers and the interventions targeted at the areas with environmental pressures would promote social equity.

Transferring knowledge to decisions: the condition of success

The Lanciano case study suffered from a political background and an administrative component with a low awareness about the potential to promote local health and environmental quality by a sustainable waste management system. This was an obstacle to collect and provide the best available information to the impact assessment and monitoring phase. However the project emphasized the role of local policies and actors in the reduction of waste production and the improvement of recycling. Moreover, the large consultation of the communities by questionnaire provided a picture on the socio-economic status and their feeling about the current waste policy. The perception of health status and waste management service supply proved to be strongly influenced by age, level of education and income. An Agenda 21 forum on the specific issue of waste was established.

Moreover, the participated monitoring on the adoption of the final recommendations is carried out. Two waste treatment plants in Italy were selected for case studies development: the municipal solid waste landfill located in Lanciano (CH) and the municipal solid waste incinerator in Arezzo.

An HIA was applied retrospectively to both plants, with the support of Agenda21L participatory processes, above described. The five stages of HIA were applied during the project: Screening and Scoping of impacts (phases 1 and 2), which were analysed with local stakeholders. Impact assessment (Assessment - Phase 3) was presented to decision-makers and citizens. Recommendations and Reports (Reporting - Phase 4) were then developed during meetings with stakeholders. Monitoring (Monitoring - Phase 5) activities were designed during 4 focus group sessions with the stakeholders to assess the trend of selected indicators and evaluate whether recommendations will be implemented over time.

www.era-envhealth.eu
The theme of environmental justice in urban areas - understood as the prevention and reduction of socio-spatially concentrated, health-relevant environmental burdens, as well as a socially just access to environmental resources - is increasingly gaining attention in Germany. However, strategies and measures for implementing environmental justice in municipalities (and municipal planning) are still widely lacking.

The research project “Environmental justice in urban areas”, undertaken by the German Institute of Urban Affairs and funded by the Federal Environment Agency, provides foundations for establishing the topic of environmental justice in municipal practice. It seeks answers to the following practical/application-oriented research questions:

* How can integrated consideration of environment, health, social issues and urban development be established as a foundation for planning and decision-making in municipal practice? How can integrated consideration be standardised and stabilised (monitoring procedures – environmental/socio-spatial urban audit system)?

* Which formal and informal instruments, especially related to planning and environmental law, and financial instruments can be used to relieve heavily burdened areas, and how can the emergence of such areas be avoided? Where is it necessary to broaden the range of instruments?

* What approaches, strategies and measures for relieving heavily burdened areas, or avoiding the emergence of such areas, can already be found on the municipal level?

* What are the targeted results when testing and validating instruments, procedures and measures to create more environmental justice in selected municipalities?

* Which recommended actions can be derived from already existing municipal approaches and applied in individual cities for preventing and reducing the spatial concentration of health-relevant environmental burdens, as well as ensuring socio-spatially just access to environmental resources in other cities and urban areas?

Work is being done on various project components that are interlinked in terms of content. Together, they guarantee a coherent research design:

* Expertise “Small-scale monitoring approach ‘Environmental Justice in Urban Areas’”: The central basis for preventing and reducing the socio-spatial concentration of health relevant environmental burdens is, first of all, an appraisal of the situation in cities. This calls for monitoring that illustrates the relevant characteristics of the social structure, environmental quality and health conditions on a small scale with the help of valid indicators. It must put municipalities in a position to observe socio-spatial inequalities and identify areas that are faced with multiple burdens. Against this background, the goal of the expertise was to offer a manageable and conclusive set of indicators for this type of monitoring to municipalities.

* Expertise “Instruments for maintaining and creating environmental justice”: The objective of this area of expertise was to examine what formal/informal planning and regulatory instruments, as well as organisational, cooperative, informative, participatory and financial instruments are suitable for combating the unequal socio-spatial distribution of health-relevant environmental burdens, risks and environmental resources. The instruments were assessed on the basis of their relevance for the improvement of health relevant environmental conditions, as well as in enabling socio-spatial differentiation.

* Municipal case studies: Even though the topic of environmental justice is, as yet, hardly established in municipal practices, a number of municipalities are (at least selectively) involved in activities that, while not carried out under the label “environmental justice”, are still aimed at the prevention and reduction of spatially concentrated, health-relevant environmental burdens, as well as at ensuring socio-spatially just access to environmental resources in urban areas. Against this background, the case studies aimed to investigate municipal environmental justice practices in five selected cities (the district of Tempelhof-Schöneberg in Berlin, Bottrop, Bremerhaven, Leipzig and Mannheim).

* Symposium “Potentials for more environmental justice in urban areas”: The objective of the symposium, held on 19 and 20 November 2012 in Berlin, was to discuss how to improve the environmental and living conditions of residents in urban districts characterised by health-
relevant environmental problems as well as social disadvantages, and how environmental, health and social interests can be integrated more strongly. Preliminary results of the research project were also introduced and discussed.

Simulation game: The objective of the simulation game carried out in conjunction with Berlin’s Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg district and the cities of Bottrop, Düsseldorf, Mülheim and Nuremberg was to test and validate administrative, organisational and legal instruments used to create a higher degree of environmental justice in municipal administrations, as well as to identify and work on approaches that are transferrable and practically applicable.

Summary of results and conclusions as well as recommended activities for the federal government and states, and in particular for municipalities.

The full report, published in January 2015, is available in German at:
http://www.umweltbundesamt.de/publikationen/umweltgerechtigkeit-im-staedtischen-raum

MEDITERRANEAN HEALTH INTERVIEW SURVEYS STUDIES: LONG TERM EXPOSURE TO AIR POLLUTION AND HEALTH SURVEILLANCE
WWW.MEDHISS.EU

Air pollution is the number one environmental factor contributing to premature mortality and it importantly affects quality of life, given its contribution to the onset and worsening of cardiovascular and respiratory diseases.

A better knowledge of the long-term health effects of air pollutants is mandatory in order to guide the European policy dealing with environment and health (Environment and Health Action Plan).

The problems targeted by the MED HISS project are to estimate long-term health effects of air pollution in four Mediterranean countries (France, Italy, Slovenia and Spain), providing new evidence to support EU legislation and implementing an epidemiological cheaper surveillance system to monitor these effects over time. The project started on first of July 2013 in order to give the first results before the end of the project (June 2016).

The proposed low-cost approach, suitable for surveillance, is based on linking resources like air pollution prediction models, mortality and hospital admissions registries and National Health Interview Surveys, already available and mandatory in all European countries.

In particular, the surveys contain representative samples of the general population, covering both urban and rural areas. Each individual is linkable to mortality and hospital admissions information.

A measure of exposure is assigned through the national deterministic dispersion models (in France-CHIMERE, in Italy-MINNI, in Slovenia-ARSO and in Spain-CALIOPE) integrated with monitoring stations information.

MED HISS wants to settle an inexpensive way to monitor health effects of air pollution over time, covering the whole national territories and all European population. These analyses are possible thanks to a partnership which includes well-experienced epidemiological institutions together with experts in the field of environmental epidemiology and air quality monitoring and modeling.

Arpa Piemonte (Italy) is the coordinator of the project (epidemiologia@arpa.piemonte.it).

The aim of MED HISS is to demonstrate the feasibility of this kind of approach in France, Italy, Slovenia and Spain, in order to make it available in all European countries.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

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<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>28 February 2015</td>
<td>Rare Disease Day</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The main objective of Rare Disease Day is to raise awareness amongst the general public and decision-makers about rare diseases and their impact on patients' lives. <a href="http://www.eurordis.org/">www.eurordis.org/</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>29 April 2015</td>
<td>INAD 2015 International Noise Awareness Day</td>
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<td><a href="https://www.euracoustics.org/">https://www.euracoustics.org/</a></td>
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<td>from 12 to 16 July 2015, Florence, Italy</td>
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<td>International Institute of Acoustics and Vibration (IIAV) and the Acoustical Society of Italy (AIA) 22nd International Congress on Sound and Vibration (ICSV22)</td>
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THE ERA-ENVHEALTH NETWORK

COLLABORATION IN RESEARCH TO HELP TACKLE THE CHALLENGES IN E&H AND THEIR POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The European Environment and Health Action Plan for 2004-10 pointed to a need to strengthen networks between researchers, policy-makers and stakeholders. The FP7 ERA-ENVHEALTH project was set up to bring together European organisations planning research in the Environment and Health (E&H) arena with the objective of providing policy support. ERA-ENVHEALTH’s task was to mobilise scientific research in support of European and national policies on E&H issues.

Goals and activities

ERA-ENVHEALTH facilitates better communication and deeper understanding of the drivers and priorities in E&H for both scientists and policy-makers. ERA-ENVHEALTH is a unique active transnational network in the E&H field. ERA-ENVHEALTH has shown that transnational collaboration in E&H fills an important niche and the network is an innovative forum to discuss challenges, visions and emerging issues. In this respect

- access to, sharing and communicating information is a crucial success factor, and
- joint activities are essential to promote exchange and collaboration and foster new ideas to enhance the uptake of environment and health issues and co-benefits in different sectors and provide valuable support in tackling the future challenges for better health and well-being.

Join us!

- Become a member: signature of the MoU, contribution on a voluntary basis
- Register for the ERA-ENVHEALTH newsflash: with regular up-to-date information on E&H activities
- Participate in its annual conferences and help build up this innovative discussion forum

The structure of the network is based on “contributing and sharing” and involves no centralised budget; each organisation participates on a voluntary basis.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>ADEME</td>
<td>French Environment and Energy Management Agency</td>
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<td>ANSES</td>
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<td>BeSPO</td>
<td>Belgium federal Science Policy Office</td>
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<td>Public health authority</td>
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CONTACTS

www.era-envhealth.eu

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