

Are decision-makers ready for participation?

Session EHFG 2024: Recording available!

The new [World Health Assembly resolution](#) highlighted that social participation is not only an expression of good governance but also a cornerstone for achieving universal health coverage, health, and well-being. Against this background, the Austrian National public Health Institute (GÖG) hosted an interactive fishbowl discussion on social participation at this year's European Health Forum Gastein, in which the readiness of policymakers for leveraging participation in the health sector has been in the spotlight. After a warm welcome and some introductory notes from **Herwig Ostermann, Dheepa Rajan** from the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies continued the session by giving an overview on social participation and the structures and resources that are needed for meaningful participation with real impact on policy and practice. After this brief introduction, **Michaela Moser** gave a keynote, in which she presented the main findings of the feasibility study for increased citizen and patient participation in the Austrian health system. The key message of the keynote: "**participation starts with a C**". The **C** stands for **Conviction, Commitment, Change, Curiosity** and **Courage** as central components for making participatory processes successful and meaningful for citizens and patients as well as other stakeholder groups such as public administrations and governmental bodies. The keynote presentation was followed by concrete examples of on-going participatory initiatives in different countries and on various levels in view of better understanding what it takes to make participation truly inclusive and avoid mock participation. The speakers also openly discussed questions on equity and consultation and addressed common oversights and pitfalls in public involvement and engagement processes. High-level international experts shared their experiences with participatory approaches from different perspectives – as public administrators wishing to understand people's views on health policies (**Giovanna Marsico**, Director of the Centre for Palliative and End-of-Life Care, France; **Goncalo Figueiredo Augusto**, Expert, National Health Council secretariat, Portugal) but also as patient advocates trying to have more patient voice included in health system operations (**Amanda Bok**, The Synergist) and researchers (**Michaela Moser**, University of Applied Sciences, St. Pölten) calling for more public and patient involvement in health systems to improve the quality of and access to health services. **Silvia Ganzerla**, a participant in the Session and policy manager at EuroHealthNet, highlighted that there needs to be a shift in public administration and in how we actively reach out to different communities and especially also to vulnerable groups. Experts and public administration need to become more responsive and to better understand the needs and "languages" of different communities and capacities for translation and brokerage are central to this endeavour. Another participant stressed in similar ways that good and constant communication (as well as science communication) on eye-level with citizens is crucial. Also, once decisions have been co-created with citizens and patients, the impact and change due to their engagement must be communicated well. This of course requires a series of measures and a commitment to mutual understanding and learning.

The Session was moderated by Dheepa Rajan (European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies).

The following panellists were participating as speakers in the Session: Giovanna Marsico, Goncalo Figueiredo Augusto, Amanda Bok, Michaela Moser.

The following GÖG Team organized the Session: Gerlinde Rohrauer-Näf, Daniela Rojatz, Laura Soyer.

You can catch up the recorded discussion in this video here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3F1DBCxD6JM>

After this Session, participants had the opportunity for exchange during the Networking Break Social participation and policy uptake. Showcasing the Roadmap "Future Health Promotion" organized by the Competence Centre for Future Health Promotion and interact directly with Gerlinde Rohrauer-Näf (Head of Competence Centre Future and Judith della Grazie (Ministry of Health Austria)

More information about the strategy process and its policy uptake:

https://agenda-gesundheitsfoerderung.at/sites/agenda-gesundheitsfoerderung.at/files/inline-files/agendagf_roadmap_V3_EN_bfrei_0.pdf

Posters by Gerlinde Rohrauer-Näf, Irina Vana, Lisa Schlee, Laura Soyer, Nadine Zillmann

- **Poster Gesundheitsförderungsstrategie**
- **Poster Roadmap "Zukunft Gesundheitsförderung"**