



ACTION PLAN FOR PUBLIC HEALTH IN THE 21ST CENTURY

REPORT SUMMARY

This Plan is addressed primarily to the Prime Minister and to the Minister of Health, the political parties and the Local Government. At the same time, the Plan can also be used by organisations and scientific societies active in the field of Public Health.

The Plan presents the building blocks for a modern Public Health System, together with the prerequisites for their implementation. The proposals have been prioritised and could serve to establish a strategic roadmap for 2030. This venture does not concern the system for the provision of healthcare services; instead, it concerns the cross-sectoral policies, services and activities related to preventing diseases and promoting health, protecting and monitoring the health of the population, and managing health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Plan is the result of close cooperation with the academic and professional communities, as well as of extensive consultations with scientific, political and social stakeholders.

The Plan's modules were formulated based on the World Health Organisation's framework of essential Public Health functions and on the most modern concepts of interventions and governance for health and wellness.

The Plan attaches great emphasis to the right to health, equality and sustainability, and proposes four key lines of approach and action for a systematic effort to upgrading Public Health: *political*, *scientific*, *strategic* and *operational*. The Plan highlights and emphasises the importance of putting health at the heart of all policies, as well as the key role of first and second-tier Local Government in the provision of public health services on a population and community basis.

The effort to upgrade Public Health in the country hinges on extensive dialogue, broad consensus and engagement of stakeholders from the very start of the whole process and, above all, strong political will.



For the effort to upgrade the Public Health System to be viable and effective, this should be formulated as a National Cross-sectoral Programme under the Prime Minister's direct authority, with medium and long-term goals.

The likelihood of success of a serious effort to modernise the Public Health System will be maximised if **multipartisan and interdisciplinary consensus** is reached on the goals, principles and key directions of the task to be undertaken. To this end, the organisation of a “Consensus Conference on Public Health” is proposed.

Moreover, a prerequisite for the implementation of such a Plan is the **general awareness**, by all parties involved, of the content and approaches of modern, scientifically informed Public Health.

The Plan's key proposals are the following:

1. **Integration of the population's health and wellness at the heart of social and economic development policies and strategies** ('health in all policies').
2. Harmonisation of Public Health strategies with the **implementation of the thematic objectives of the United Nation's Agenda 2030**.
3. Creation of a **Supreme Interministerial Council for Health and Wellness**.
4. **Increase of public health spending** (preventive care) and review of the way in which the available resources are allocated, incorporating strategic focus and sustainable actions.
5. Establishment of **cross-sectoral and cross-disciplinary health governance structures and mechanisms** at national, regional and local level (laterally and vertically) with emphasis on cooperation, coordination and accountability.
6. Re-establishment of the **National Council for Public Health**, as an Independent Authority or autonomous body.
7. **Reorganization of the National Public Health Organisation (EODY)** with staff specialties covering the entire range of health sciences, and its transformation into a modern Public Health Institute.
8. Creation of a **body of Public Health Officers**.
9. Establishment of an **Annual Report on the Health of the General Population**, submitted to the Parliament.
10. **Strengthening the role of the elected Regional and Municipal Authorities** in Public Health, with distinct and complementary roles.
11. **Functional interconnection of Public Health with primary health care**.
12. Creation and operation of the **Single Online Health Data System**.
13. In terms of **scientific and operational framework**, the Public Health system should be able to operate effectively in the following six areas: social, economic and environmental health determinants, health behaviours, addressing inequalities and the needs of vulnerable populations, population-level interventions, health literacy, and empowerment and engagement of the Civil Society.
14. Establishment of a **single strategic reference framework** with which all existing and new national thematic plans should be aligned, and **establishment national targets** for health, wellness and equality.
15. Investing in the **continuing training / education and skills development of all Public Health Officers** regarding modern practices, in Greece's cities, regions and local communities.
16. **Creation of platforms for dialogue and cooperation** between social, scientific, political and professional groups on health, wellness and sustainability.
17. Special attention should be paid to the needs of population groups living in **remote areas**, such as outlying islands and mountainous settlements.

In its individual sections, the Plan identifies **strategic priorities in the following key Public Health areas**: assessment of the population's health needs, equality and vulnerability, health promotion, mental health, prevention and protection, crisis management and civil society.

