

2. PLENARY SESSIONS

Plenary 1 - Sharing our common wealth: efficiency and equity trade-offs in welfare policies

Thursday 2 November 11:00–12:00

Moderator: Caroline Costongs, EuroHealthNet

Keynote speaker: Karl Falkenberg, Senior Adviser to the European Political Strategy Centre (EPSC), European Commission

Organiser: EuroHealthNet

Panellists:

- Gaetan Lafortune, Senior Economist at the Health Division, OECD
- Clare Bamba, Professor of Public Health at the Institute of Health & Society, Newcastle University, United Kingdom
- Taru Koivisto, Director of the Department for Promotion of Welfare and Health, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland

Growing levels of health inequalities reflect that our market economies are not delivering well-being in a fair and effective manner and that this must be improved. Socio-economic inequalities are increasing in Europe, which generates feelings of injustice and fuels social and political instability. The labour market is changing due to technology, digitization and the

increase in temporary jobs, leading to new risks in terms of social rights, working conditions, gender inequalities and access to welfare. Young people in particular will be affected and the proportions of young people not in education, employment or training has been identified as a major public health concern. In addition, poor health is often both a consequence and causal factor for unemployment or poverty. It is time to modernize our welfare systems, policies and practices, including health and social services, in order to reflect our changing societies and make them more resilient and healthy. How can we ensure adequate and appropriate social investments? How can we guarantee equity and effectiveness in service delivery and address those growing health inequalities? How can we measure the progress we make towards sustainable societies and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals that Europe signed up to?

The need to strengthen the social dimension of the EU, to avoid widening socio-economic and related health inequalities within and between Member States and to share our common wealth, is clearer today than ever before.