

Concept note

For the first meeting of the EPF working group on access to healthcare

1. Why a thematic working group on access?

The thematic working group on access is one of two pilot working groups that aim to adopt a thematic approach to key policy areas. The goals of this approach are to strengthen the synergies between policy and programme work, increase the effectiveness of EPF's policy work, and put in place a working structure that can best deliver on the new Strategic Plan 2014-2020.

The new approach will ensure members are involved from the outset in EPF policy-formulation and activities. It will also help to ensure that the EPF Board and Secretariat focus EPF's work on areas that are considered as priority themes by our membership.

The thematic area of access to healthcare was chosen as a priority through a survey with our membership conducted in 2012, consultations with the [EPF Policy Advisory Group](#), and in accordance with the goals and core values of our [Strategic Plan 2014-2020](#), particularly:

Goal 2: Healthcare Access and Quality

To contribute to improvements in health systems that enable equitable access to sustainable and high-quality healthcare designed and delivered to meet patients' and informal carers' needs at all levels of care, embracing innovation in all its forms.

2. Who can participate?

All EPF member organisations with an interest and/or expertise on access to healthcare and health inequalities are welcome to participate. Members of the working group should be nominated by their organisations.

Please note that to ensure diversity of views, the same person cannot participate in both EPF thematic working groups (access and empowerment).

Following the first meeting, the detailed membership criteria will be agreed, including a time limit on participation and turnover of members. A draft Terms of Reference document will be circulated before the meeting. Following discussions at the first meeting, detailed membership criteria will be agreed for both working groups.

Representatives at the EPF Annual General Meeting 2014 are welcome to participate in the first meeting before deciding whether or not to commit to be a member of the working group in the longer term.

3. What are the objectives of the first meeting?

The main aims of the first meeting are to agree the Terms of Reference; elect one Chair among the members (the other co-chair will be nominated from the Secretariat); and to agree on the objectives of the working group. Objectives should be agreed for the short, medium and long term, including concrete outputs and outcomes. An evaluation approach should be agreed on.

While the working group will collectively define its objectives during the first meeting, the following are suggested as important areas of work based on our Strategic Plan and previous work in this area:

- Arriving at a *common definition of “access”* specifically from a patient perspective, which EPF can use in its policy work and disseminate to external stakeholders.
- Building the *patients’ evidence-base* on health inequalities for EPF policy work; collecting evidence on the direct experiences of patients with chronic and/or long-term conditions across EU member states.

4. What will be expected from members of the working group?

The working language of the group will be English. Members will need to be able to read and comment on documents in English.

In 2014 the group will meet twice. The second meeting will take place in October (date to be confirmed). After that the group will meet face-to-face once per year in Brussels. The costs of attending the meeting will be covered by EPF.

In addition members will be expected to attend regular teleconferences.

Members should commit themselves to giving active input into the development of draft positions, background papers and other work undertaken by the group.