Urban Development & HIA

1. How has Geneva institutionalised HIA and why?
2. How has HIA been used in Geneva?
3. What are the future prospects of HIA in Geneva and in Switzerland?

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1. How has Geneva institutionalised HIA and why?

Why…

- 2003: very tensed budgetary context → incentive to look for new efficient means to promote health

- One of the 4 core themes of Phase IV (2003-2008) of WHO European Network of Healthy Cities → integrate health impact assessment as a systematic framework in cities

- Interest of other Swiss partners to introduce HIA (cantons of Jura and Ticino, NGO equiterre, Health Promotion Switzerland)

- Opportunity to take with the Health Law project; inspired by the Quebec 2002 Health Act (art. 54)
1. How has Geneva institutionalised HIA and why? (2)

How...

➔ In summer 2004 the Geneva government adopted a project including the introduction of HIA and submitted it to the local Parliament

• Article 4 (“Commitments of Geneva State and Municipalities”) (§ 2) *When a legislative project can have effects on health, then Geneva government join an assessment of its potential impact on health*

• No changes through the work of Parliament’s Health Commission

• During the final Commission’s vote ➔ members express fears that this clause will be an obstacle for economic activity, “e.g. construction industry”
1. How has Geneva institutionalised HIA and why? (3)

• Vote on the suppression of this clause \( \rightarrow \) 8 against 6

• Warning of the minority (“this is an important clause \( \rightarrow \) risk of referendum”) and insistence of the Health Minister, which propose a compromise amendment

• Compromise amendment accepted almost unanimously

• “*If a legislative project is likely to cause negative consequences to health, then Geneva government can decide to join to it an assessment of its potential impact on health*”

• During the final discussion and vote in Parliament’s plenary session \( \rightarrow \) new amendment to come back to the original more restrictive version \( \rightarrow \) rejected

• Health Act come into force on September 1st, 2006
2. How has HIA been used in Geneva?

- Using both qualitative and quantitative approaches
- Comprehensive HIA’s (*several months or a year*)
  - Tobacco free public places
  - Geneva metropolitan cross-border area’s Master Plan (GMCAM)
  - Other urban planning HIA’s (MICA, Bernex-Est)
- Rapid HIA’s (*several weeks or months*)
  - Electric assist bicycle promotion
  - Ban on sale of alcohol to young persons under 18
  - Solid waste collection and management in a Burkina Faso’s neighbourhood
  - Use of VOC in paints & varnishes
  - Etc.
2. How has HIA been used in Geneva? (2)

- HIA Sub-Network of the European Healthy Cities Network
  - Exchange data & know-how (e.g. with Brighton & Hove HC about HIA on tobacco free public places)
  - Training courses at several levels (with Erica Ison)
  - Strengthen common methodological basis ("")

- HIA Swiss Platform
  - Further development and refinement of the concept
  - Build up, share and spread (e.g. by training) a common know-how
  - Advocate about HIA at different levels and introduce it in the political agenda of public communities
  - Nexus with other decision making aid tools
3. What are the future prospects of HIA in Geneva and in Switzerland?

In Geneva…

1. Consolidation of the local institutionalisation
   - Precise rules within administration to enforce art.4 Health Act
   - Distribution of roles and competences field between administration and University

2. Go further the methodology with
   - Implementation of a MCDA tool during the screening stage
   - Implementation of HIA in other urban issues (e.g. energy, social economy, migrant populations, food supply, etc.)
   - Integration of HIA with other impact tools (e.g. sustainable development evaluation tools)
3. What are the future prospects of HIA in Geneva and in Switzerland? (2)

In Switzerland…

1. HIA Swiss Platform 2009-2011
   - Information on HIA to the other cantons
   - Implementation by pilot study-cases
   - Communication: website, newsletters, Guide
   - Training courses (e.g. Summer School)
   - Advocacy for administrative and political decision makers ("argumentaire", fact sheets)

2. Project of federal law on health promotion & prevention
   - Article 9: similar to art.4 of Geneva’s Health Act
   - End March 2010: start of the work at the Social & Health Affairs Commission of the federal Parliament
   - Objections of Economiesuisse
Instead of conclusion … question for the discussion

• The existence or not of a legal basis for HIA seems to play a crucial role

→ “Extra legislationem nulla salus” ???

• Indeed, essential in Geneva’s case
• …but not in Ticino’s or Jura’s case
• …and clause exists in Fribourg’s case, without HIA implementation

• What about Lithuania’s case?

• EIA → example… or counter-example?

• Personal conclusion: “necessary AND sufficient condition” = legal basis + political will