



European Economic
and Social Committee

Considering health as a complex system

Pierre BAUBY, President, "Reconstruire l'action publique" ("Rebuilding public action")

Considering health as a complex system

- * Health is “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, [which] does not consist merely of the absence of disease or infirmity” WHO 1946.
- * Health cannot be approached only as a “state of health” of a population, or as a “public health policy”, or as a “care system”, but health should **take into account the multiple tensions, interactions and contradictions** of these aspects.
- * Health should be understood as a Service of general interest (SGI), complex multi-dimensional, multi-actor, multi-territorial system.

Services of general interest: the common EU vision

Implementation of particular norms and rules to :

- * Guarantee the **right** of access for each inhabitant
- * Ensure economic, social and territorial **cohesion**, develop solidarities
- * Taking into account the **long term**, the sustainable development

⇒ **Common values within the European Union**

1. Essential role and wide discretion of national, regional and local authorities to meet user needs
2. Diversity and disparities in terms of needs, user preferences, different geographical, social or cultural situations
3. High level of quality, safety and affordability, equal treatment, promotion of universal access and user rights

Multidimensional

Right to health \Leftrightarrow public health duty cf. vaccination

Individual needs \Leftrightarrow general interest

Technical \Leftrightarrow social – societal

Economic \Leftrightarrow human needs

Demand \Leftrightarrow Supply

“Health is priceless” \Leftrightarrow but it has a cost

Cost(s) \Leftrightarrow Benefit(s)

Disciplinary specializations \Leftrightarrow decompartmentalisation – holistic

Technical \Leftrightarrow human - psychological aspects

Care \Leftrightarrow individualistic withdrawals

Solidarity – micro - charity \Leftrightarrow social protection system

Preventive throughout life \Leftrightarrow curative

Public health policy \Leftrightarrow fight against pathologies

Hygienism - epidemiologism \Leftrightarrow laissez-faire

Multi-actors

Each person \Leftrightarrow medical, para-medical and medical-social professionals

Technologies \Leftrightarrow bio-medical industries

Long-term research \Leftrightarrow immediate answers

Fragmented - compartmentalized \Leftrightarrow democratic participation of all actors

Multi-territorial

Proximity \Leftrightarrow territorialisations

Accessibility \Leftrightarrow universality

Concentrations \Leftrightarrow medical deserts

Local – national \Leftrightarrow European – worldwide policies (Covid)

Connect, combine, decompartmentalize, articulate, experiment, in dynamics of active and cooperative subsidiarities (institutional, territorial, cognitive, between actors, etc.)

=> Need to Co-construct