

EPHA Contribution to the Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) Handbook for Trade Agreements

EPHA has recently contributed to the Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) handbook for trade agreements. This guides organisations through the process of assessments necessary for their final reports. EPHA feels that the qualitative and quantitative analysis set out in this guide should have a specific chapter on public health, in line with the requirements of EU law (Health should be included into all EU policies (TFEU article 168)).

The European Commission has decided to update its Handbook on Sustainability Impact Assessments (SIA) from 2006, it has been in the process of public consultation since the 30th of April and which will be running until the 14th of August. A revised edition is expected to be published later this year.

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What is the SIA?

SIAs are a tool developed to support trade negotiations by providing evidence on topics that need to be negotiated, and how these negotiations should be conducted.

Independent consultants are called to tender, although only a select number of organisations can answer this call, and they run the analysis alongside the negotiation process to provide constant input into the system.

The SIA provides the Commission with a detailed analysis of the potential economic, social, human rights, and environmental consequences of ongoing trade negotiations and provide an opportunity for stakeholders in the EU and partner countries to give an input into the agreement.

SIAs have been carried out on all major bi-lateral or multi-lateral trade negotiations since the 1999 WTO Doha negotiations. Many of the original principles of the handbook are still relevant, but as time has passed many lessons have been learned about how to carry out more effective and efficient assessments. The new edition aims to set out the main characteristics, objectives and principles of the new generation of SIAs. It will be a reference point for consultants, civil society stakeholders.

- [Questions - Public consultation on the Handbook for Sustainability Impact Assessment of EU trade negotiations](#) (pdf)
- [DRAFT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION - Handbook for Trade Sustainability Impact Assessment 2nd Edition](#) (pdf)



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EPHA feels that the qualitative and quantitative analysis set out in this guide should have a specific chapter on public health. The areas currently included are economic, social, human rights and environmental impacts.

Including health is a binding requirement of EU law: the aim of the EU as set out in Article 3 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples. The goals of the EU's Trade Policy - respecting EU's fundamental values and aims - is creating growth and jobs in Europe, promoting development around the world, and strengthening ties with important trading partners. Fully in line with EU law, specific emphasis should be given to health in the EU Trade policy given the fact that Article 168 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) requires, in a legally binding manner, that health should be included in all EU policies.

EPHA also feels that the SIA handbook should give special attention to non-communicable diseases (NCDs), analysing both the health impact and economic cost, which is estimated to be \$47 Trillion over the period from 2011 to 2030.¹

Trade negotiations are taking place in the context of a high and growing burden of NCDs, such as cardiovascular disease (CVD), diabetes, certain cancers, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), as well as obesity. CVDs cause [50% of all deaths](#) in Europe at an estimated cost to the EU economy of [€196 billion/year](#).^{2 3 4} [The societal costs of alcohol use in Europe are in excess of €155 billion per year across the EU. Alcohol-related diseases across Europe claim 120,000 lives every year](#).⁵ These are in large part preventable conditions, leading to premature deaths.

¹ World Economic Forum and Harvard School of Public Health

² Nichols M, Townsend, N, Scarborough P, Luengo-Fernandez R, Real J, Gray A, Rayner M (2012) ; European Cardiovascular Disease Statistics 2012. European Heart Network, Brussels, European Society of Cardiology, Sophia Antipolis - <http://www.ehnheart.org/cvd-statistics.html>

³ Alcohol-abuse is the leading risk factor for ill-health and premature death for the working age population (25-59 years) in Europe [[Scientific Opinion of the Science Group of the European Alcohol and Health Forum (2011) Alcohol, Work and Productivity

⁴ Rehm, J. et al (2012) Interventions for alcohol dependence in Europe: A missed opportunity to improve public health

⁵ <http://www.euro.who.int/en/publications/abstracts/status-report-on-alcohol-and-health-in-35-european-countries-2013>