

Arnaudova A, editor. 10 health questions about the new EU neighbours. Copenhagen: World Health Organizations, Regional Office for Europe; 2006. 248 pages; ISBN 92-890-1381-8; price: free hardcopies and download as PDF file at: <http://www.euro.who.int/Document/E88202.pdf>

Field: Public health

Format: Paperback

Audience: Public health professionals, policy-makers, professionals, and general audience interested in health and health care in the EU-neighboring countries.

Purpose: To present general information about health and health care in 12 countries that became new EU neighbors after May 2004.

Content: The book consists of 12 chapters, each presenting one of the new EU-neighboring countries: Albania, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia and Montenegro, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, and Ukraine. Each chapter is divided into two sections: a section containing general data about the country and

a section with 10 health questions about the new EU neighbors, with related comparisons. General data section provides basic information on each country: area, population, people, languages, form of government, religions, gross domestic product *per capita*, regions, currency, human development index, unemployment rate, and memberships. The ten questions on each country are the following: What are the demographic essentials?; What do the citizens suffer from?; Where does the risk lie?; Who is who in the public health sector?; How are services provided?; What resources are available?; Who pays for what?; How was health care system reformed?; What is one of the things that they have learned by doing changes in health care?; What has the Regional Office

been doing in the country? End-notes about specific issues relevant for the country, provided for some chapters, allow easier understanding of the given information.

The data used in the book are for the year 2001-2003 and originate from the "European Health for All" database by the WHO Regional office. Besides this, various other data sources were used, like national data for mortality. All sources are listed in technical notes. At the beginning of the book, there is a list of acronyms and references and Glossary at the end. All these sections are easy to understand and are great basis for further studies.

Highlights: The book can be used as a quick and easy guide to the essential information on health and health systems in 12

EU neighboring countries. What is particularly useful are briefly presented key health indicators and comparisons between each country and 3 EU average values: for its 25 current members, 15 members before May 2004, and 10 new members. Results of more than a decade of health system reforms are also presented, which is especially interesting and challenging for policy-makers.

Special attention has been paid to graphical and technical de-

tails. Colored bookmarks and accompanying graphics make the book easy and pleasant to use.

Limitations: As is stressed in the book, it is not an in-depth study of health and health care, but an “easy guide” and “entry point” to the new EU’s neighbors. Therefore, this book cannot be used as a professional source for in-depth analysis or comparisons, but as a rather easily accessible orientation.

Related reading: At the end of each chapter, a list of other sources about the presented country is added. Also, further investigation could be undertaken through the WHO “Health for All” database (<http://www.euro.who.int/hfadb>), HiT country profiles (<http://www.euro.who.int/observatory/Hits/Top-Page>), scientific sources, and database for some specific issues.

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