

# 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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Research Group on Environment & Health

# 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 → 8 against 6
- Warning of the minority (“this is an important clause → 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 → new amendment to come back to the original more restrictive version → rejected
- Health Act come into force on September 1st, 2006



## 2. How has HIA been used in Geneva?

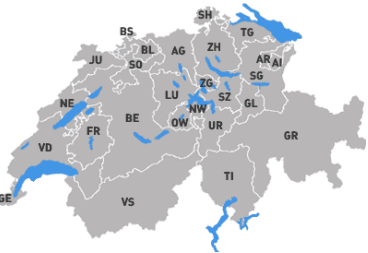
- Using both qualitative and quantitative approaches
- Comprehensive HIA's (*several months or a year*)
  - Tobacco free public places
  - Geneva metropolitan cross-border area's Master Plan (GMCAM)
  - Other urban planning HIA's (MICA, Bernex-Est)
- Rapid HIA's (*several weeks or months*)
  - Electric 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*



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## 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

