

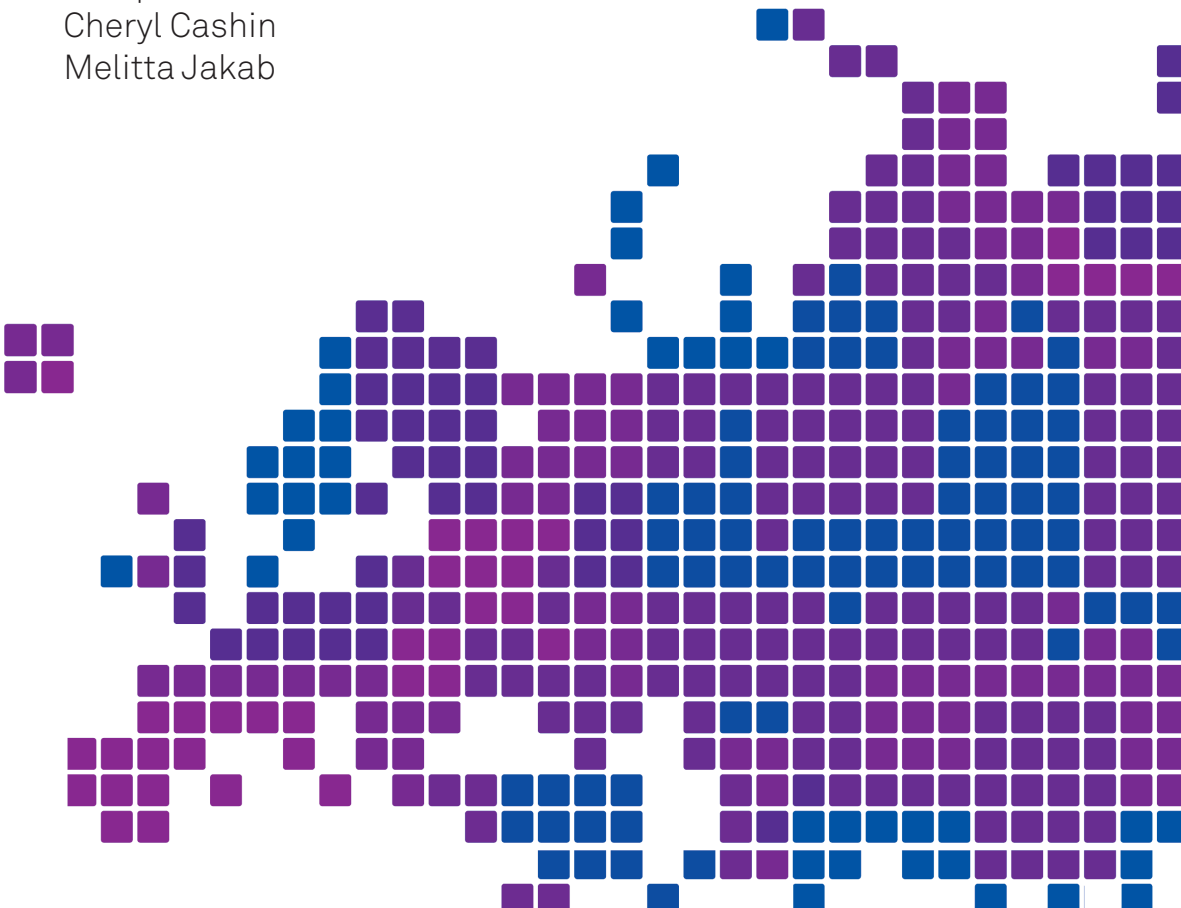
Implementing Health Financing Reform

21

Observatory
Studies Series

Lessons from countries
in transition

Edited by
Joseph Kutzin
Cheryl Cashin
Melitta Jakab



EUROPE

European
Observatory
on Health Systems and Policies



Implementing Health Financing Reform



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Foreword

The collapse of the Berlin Wall brought with it massive economic, social and political changes for the countries that emerged from the Communist era. Health and health systems were greatly affected by these, and while the countries seemingly came from a similar starting point, differences became apparent in country contexts, policy responses and outcomes. Because changes in the economic context of most countries came very quickly and often brought severe consequences, reforms in health system financing were particularly high on the policy agenda.

The nature of the health financing reforms implemented in the so-called *transitional* countries were closely linked to the underlying changes occurring in these societies. In many cases, this gave a strong ideological flavour to the reform process, as it was viewed as part of a wider shift towards a more liberal economic environment. Frequently, however, many aspects of the pre-transition system remained highly resistant to change, and the specific mix of reform instruments and key contextual factors varied substantially across countries. By the late 1990s, most countries were not satisfied with the progress made on either the implementation or the effects of their reforms, despite the limited

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