

# EU Health Highlights

News about health in the EU from EuroHealthNet Brussels Office

Issue # 10, July 2005

## 1. Main Stories

- **UK Presidency health priorities**

The UK Presidency has announced two health policy priorities: health inequalities and patient safety.

During the Summit on Health Inequalities on 17-18 October, the profile of social causes will be raised and the attention will be focused on the behavioural causes of health inequalities: drugs, alcohol, diet and nutrition, tobacco consumption as well as cancer and binge drinking. EuroHealthNet members and staff are actively involved in advising or planning for this event.

The Health Council during the UK Presidency will hold a public debate on nutrition and physical activity in December and take forward legislation on:

- improving the safety of medicines for children;
- nutrition and health claims made on foods;
- food supplements (vitamins and minerals);
- health and consumer protection programme

In the next six months, the Health Council is expected to work on the following policies:

- a green paper on mental health,
- a communication on emergency preparedness and pandemics,
- a communication on HIV/AIDS and problems on EU borders,
- a green paper on nutrition, diet and physical activity,
- discussion on a framework convention for tobacco control
- a debate on international health regulations
- patient mobility

The Council is also expected to take a closer look at the services directive and working time directive and on patient mobility.

Events organised under the UK Presidency are included in the calendar at the end of this newsletter

<http://www.eu2005.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1115139187056>

- **UK Presidency social priorities**

The UK Presidency will focus on putting in place initiatives to achieve the goals of the Lisbon agenda and has stressed that it believes it will only be possible to invest in social policy by maximizing economic growth.

The UK Presidency will put forward proposals regarding supplementary pensions as well as initiatives to make legislation concerning health and safety at work clearer and simpler.

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The Commission is also expected to issue its final Communication on Corporate Social Responsibility (CRS) in the summer of 2005, and take forward work on the establishment of a European Institute for Gender Equality.

<http://www.eu2005.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1115139187056>

- **Influenza pandemic gets increasing importance on EU agenda**

The influenza preparedness is getting higher on the EU agenda in the light of the current avian flu situation in Asia and growing concerns that a mutant virus could lead to a worldwide pandemic amongst humans. The Commission gathered Influenza experts from the 25 Member States and other European countries in Luxembourg on 28 June to discuss the threats of avian and human influenza and possible responses to a pandemic.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health\\_consumer/dyna/consumervoice/create\\_cv.cfm?cv\\_id=107](http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health_consumer/dyna/consumervoice/create_cv.cfm?cv_id=107)

## **2. News from the European Commission**

- **New EU health data published**

The first set of EU-wide health data from the European Community Health Indicators (ECHI) project has been published on the Commission's Public Health website. The aim of ECHI is to produce better and more comparable data that will enable policy makers to track developments in the health status of EU populations. The ECHI indicators aim to cover the 25 Member States, the EU Candidate Countries (Romania, Bulgaria, Turkey), the West Balkan Countries, the USA, Canada and Japan. The data they contain is available in English, French, German and Spanish.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_information/dissemination/echi/echi\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_information/dissemination/echi/echi_en.htm)

- **Preparing Romania for the European Social Inclusion Strategy**

Vladimír Špidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, and the Romanian Minister for Labour, Social Solidarity and the Family, Mr Gheorghe Barbu, signed the Joint Memorandum on Social Inclusion, the objective of which is to prepare Romania for participation in the European Social Inclusion Strategy. The Memorandum analyses the key political challenges in the social field and makes recommendations for the next steps in the struggle against poverty and social exclusion.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/news/2005/jun/memorandum\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2005/jun/memorandum_en.html)

- **Commission softens criteria for state aid to public services**

The European Commission has issued new measures to regulate state aids to providers of public services, such as transport, education, health and social housing.

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Under the new system, Member states will be able to aid services of general interest up to a ceiling of 30 million euro per year for beneficiaries with an annual turnover of less than 100 million euro. Above that level, Member States will have to notify their subsidies to the European Commission.

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/937&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

- **DG Sanco: project outcomes**

-Project: "*Workplace Health Promotion, national health policies and strategies in an enlarging Europe*", funded project 2004, description of the project.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_projects/2004/action3/action3\\_2004\\_10\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_projects/2004/action3/action3_2004_10_en.htm)

-Project: "*Baltic health train - Baltic sea public health training network*", funded project 2004, description of the project.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_projects/2004/action3/action3\\_2004\\_02\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_projects/2004/action3/action3_2004_02_en.htm)

-Project: Euro support V - Improving the sexual and reproductive health of persons living with HIV in Europe, funded project 2004, description of the project.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_projects/2004/action3/action3\\_2004\\_13\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_projects/2004/action3/action3_2004_13_en.htm)

### **3. News from the European Parliament**

- **Parliament calls for investment in pediatric medicines**

A draft regulation proposed by the European Commission aims to encourage pharmaceutical industry to invest in pediatric medicine by extending the life of patents or supplementary protection certificates by six months (under the current legislation the patent is valid for 15 years) thus enabling the industry to increase its profit to fund more research.

The draft regulation also proposes that the exclusive commercial rights of "orphan drugs", intended to treat rare illnesses, will be increased from 10 to 12 years if they are invented specifically for children. The Committee of Environment and Public Health wants to find other ways to boost research and calls -among others- for a special EU programme for research into medicines for children, to be called MICE (Medicines Investigation for the Children of Europe). MEPS also called for the set up of a network of researchers and research centres to avoid duplication of research and or tests on children.

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+NR-20050713-1+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=S#SECTION4>

- **Parliament backs moves to simplify export of generic drugs to developing countries**

A decision of the WTO General Council of 30 August 2003 lays down the conditions under which countries without manufacturing capabilities can import generic medicine that are still patent-protected. It also allows manufacturing countries to export drugs under a compulsory licence even where these drugs are patent-protected on their territory.

The European Commission's draft regulation is intended to transpose the decision of 30 August 2003 into Community law. It lays down conditions for the granting of compulsory licences for the manufacture in Europe of generic drugs intended for export to developing countries.

The European Parliament Trade Committee made a few amendments to simplify the legislation and broaden its scope in order to enable more developing countries to benefit from the generic drug export scheme.

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+NR-20050713-1+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=S#SECTION5>

- **Report on Gender discrimination and the health system**

The Women's Rights Committee of the European Parliament adopted a report acknowledging the impact of gender on health, and the need for a better recognition of the issue. The report calls for research into different areas relating to gender and health and the use of gender-disaggregated statistics and data in all health and medical services. It also stresses the importance of developing the gender perspective in health strategies on national and European level.

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+NR-20050714-1+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=S#SECTION5>

- **MEPs react to sugar reform**

The European Commission has put forward a proposal to reform the sugar sector in Europe by cutting subsidies by 39 %. The current system leads to overproduction of sugar in Europe (and over-consumption) and dumping of European sugar on the world market, which has been criticized by the WTO and others.

Both sugar producers and some MEPs have denounced the reform as too radical but some health campaigners have welcomed the reduction in subsidies.

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+NR-20050714-1+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=S#SECTION1>

#### **4. Events and Publications**

- **European Health Policy Forum's recommendations**

The European Health Policy Forum released recommendations on health services and the Internal Market.

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The EHPF recommendations are (among others):

1. Ensuring that the specificity of health services is adequately reflected in any EU initiative
2. Ensuring that sustainability and long-term objectives of health services are reflected in EU initiatives with an impact on health
3. Ensuring that a proper health impact assessment including health system impact assessment is performed prior to any legislative initiative
4. Coordination between Commission services to ensure consistency of initiatives

The EHPF recommendations can be downloaded from our Website under the [news section](#).

• **13<sup>th</sup> European Social Services Conference**

The 13<sup>th</sup> European Social Services Conference, entitled '*Putting People First: Partnership and Performance in Social Care and Health in a Changing Europe*' took place on 4-6 July in Edinburgh. This UK Council Presidency event was organised by the European Social Network.

During the Conference presentations, it was noted that the central question facing social and health care providers today is how to deliver quality in a world that is very different (e.g. characterized by demographic and technological change as well as changing expectations with respect to service provision.)

One of the main themes of the Conference was, in this context, the issue of user involvement, and ensuring that services are demand rather than supply driven. This, it was argued, can be achieved by enabling people to purchase services directly, which empowers service recipients and ensures that the services received are relevant to their needs. People's willingness and their ability to be involved and engaged and to exercise their choice must however be taken into consideration. Most important is to ensure that services are available on a non-discriminatory basis, and that their quality is guaranteed.

EuroHealthNet organised a workshop at the Conference, entitled '*Where does health service provision end and social service provision begin?*' which incorporated the outcomes of the Health and Social Inclusion project. While there is general consensus that health and social care should work together, this is easier in theory than in practice.

The workshop presentations, as well as all other presentations are available on: [http://www.socialeurope.com/english/e\\_about.htm](http://www.socialeurope.com/english/e_about.htm)

• **Court of Justice ruling on food supplements**

The European directive on food supplements adopted in June 2002, concerning food supplements marketed as foodstuffs and presented as such, establishes a 'positive list' of vitamins and minerals approved for use in food supplements and rules on labelling to better inform consumers.

A group of consumers, manufacturers, distributors and retailer associations in the UK challenged the validity of the transposition of the directive into the law of England and Wales.

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The European Court of Justice ruled, on 12 July 2005, and rejected the claim. However the 'positive list system' will be accompanied by a procedure allowing new substances to be added to it, once they have been approved by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The manufacturers will thus need to submit all natural remedies, vitamin supplements and mineral plant extracts for approval and inclusion on a list of recognised food supplements, before a product containing these ingredients can be put on the market.

<http://curia.eu.int/en/actu/communiqués/cp05/aff/cp050066en.pdf>

- **Publication on Health and Economic Growth**

A new publication book explores the explicit mechanisms by which a population's individual and collective health status affects a nation's economic development and performance.

<http://mitpress.mit.edu/catalog/item/default.asp?type=2&tid=10711>

- **Publication on race-based health disparities**

The Applied Research Centre in California published a report that identifies best practices to reduce race-based health disparities around the United States, from both inside and outside of the health care system.

Full report available at <http://www.arc.org/downloads/closingthegap.pdf> (downloading takes a while)

- **European Campaign on smoking and blindness**

The [AMD Alliance International](#) and [RNIB](#) (Royal National Institute of the Blind) are running a joint campaign establishing the link between smoking and blindness. A position paper is available calling for more awareness at European Level.

Contact: Barbara McLaughlan at [bmclaughlan@btinternet.com](mailto:bmclaughlan@btinternet.com)

- **US bill inspired by the EU legislation REACH on chemicals**

A draft legislation aiming at better protecting children, mothers and workers against potentially hazardous chemicals in the US is largely inspired by the EU REACH proposal (registration and authorisation of chemicals).

<http://www.euractiv.com/Article?tcaturi=tcm:29-142660-16&type=News>

- **European Agency for Safety and Health at Work recruits director**

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/news/2005/jul/bilbao\\_vacancy\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2005/jul/bilbao_vacancy_en.html)

- **Making lobbying at EU level more transparent**

Transparency of lobbyists is getting higher on the agenda. Transparency coalitions argue that lobbyists – especially private interest lobbyists- looking to influence the EU decision-making process should be registered on an online database, and recordings of their meetings with decision-makers should be made public. On the other hand, Sim Kallass, European Commissioner for administration and the fight against fraud has launched the European Transparency initiative to tackle the problem of intensive lobbying of the EU Institutions.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/commission\\_barroso/kallas/transparency\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/commission_barroso/kallas/transparency_en.htm)

## 5. News from Member States / Organisations

- **England: publication on the cost effectiveness of public health interventions**

Professor Mike Kelly from NICE has published a report analysing the cost-effectiveness of public health interventions in a publication entitled: '*Economic appraisal of public health interventions*'.

<http://www.publichealth.nice.org.uk/page.aspx?0=513209>

- **England: UK Chief Medical Officer annual report on the state of public health**

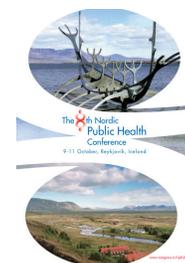
UK Chief Medical Officer Liam Donaldson's annual report looks at tobacco smuggling, and highlights the progress made in tackling second-hand smoke and obesity. The report proposes to limit smokers buying cigarettes abroad.

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/Home/fs/en>

- **Iceland: 8th Nordic Public Health Conference**

The Public Health Institute of Iceland is organising the 8<sup>th</sup> Nordic Public Health Conference that will take place on 9-11 October in Reykjavik.

Programme and posters can be downloaded from the [Iceland page of our website](#).



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**7. Calendar of international events**

<b>1-5.08.2005</b>	The EuroHealthNet office is closed
<b>7-11.08.2005</b>	<b>Bangkok</b> , 6 <sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Health Promotion – WHO <a href="http://www.who.int/noncommunicable_diseases/6gchp/en/">http://www.who.int/noncommunicable_diseases/6gchp/en/</a>
<b>16-17.08.2005</b>	<b>Kuala Lumpur</b> , International Conference on Health Communication Contact: <a href="mailto:aidcom@streamyx.com">aidcom@streamyx.com</a>
<b>21-23.08.2005</b>	<b>Galway</b> , 1 <sup>st</sup> conference on health and biodiversity <a href="http://www.cohab2005.com/">http://www.cohab2005.com/</a>
<b>4-8.09.2005</b>	<b>Cairo</b> , 28 <sup>th</sup> Congress of the World Federation for Mental Health <a href="http://www.wfmh2005.com/">http://www.wfmh2005.com/</a>
<b>12-13.09.2005</b>	<b>Coventry</b> , Health Protection Agency Annual Conference 2005, UK Presidency Event <a href="http://www.eu2005.gov.uk">http://www.eu2005.gov.uk</a>
<b>12-14.09.2005</b>	<b>Warwick</b> , Health Protection Agency, annual conference 2005 <a href="http://www.hpaconference.org.uk/">http://www.hpaconference.org.uk/</a>
<b>14.09.2005</b>	<b>London</b> , Conference on Malnutrition in an Ageing Population Contact: <a href="mailto:info@european-nutrition.org">info@european-nutrition.org</a>
<b>17-20.09.2005</b>	<b>Yerevan</b> , 'Educating the Public Health Workforce, Development Perspectives for the European and Mediterranean regions' <a href="http://www.auachsr.com/aspher/">http://www.auachsr.com/aspher/</a>
<b>18-20.09.2005</b>	<b>Montreal</b> , Improving Health by Advancing Health Care <a href="http://www.icsbhs.org/index_eng.html">http://www.icsbhs.org/index_eng.html</a>
<b>18-23.09.2005</b>	<b>Orlando</b> , XVIIth World Congress on Safety and Health at Work <a href="http://www.appcluster05.com/App/homepage.cfm?moduleid=16&amp;appname=343">http://www.appcluster05.com/App/homepage.cfm?moduleid=16&amp;appname=343</a>
<b>22-23.09.2005</b>	<b>Paris</b> , 1st European Conference on Child and Adolescent Mental Health in Educational Settings <a href="http://www.tavi-port.org/departments/d_conferences/conferences/Conferences_ParisConf.htm">http://www.tavi-port.org/departments/d_conferences/conferences/Conferences_ParisConf.htm</a>
<b>23-25.09.2005</b>	<b>Athens</b> , 'From parents to children, the impact of parental mental illness on children' <a href="http://www.parentsonchildren.gr/">http://www.parentsonchildren.gr/</a>

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<b>29.09-1.10.2005</b>	<b>Eretria</b> , First European Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion 'Towards a Safer Europe, time for action' Contact <a href="mailto:preevent@med.uoa.gr">preevent@med.uoa.gr</a>
<b>3.10.2005</b>	<b>World Habitat Day</b> <a href="http://www.unhabitat.org/whd/2005/">http://www.unhabitat.org/whd/2005/</a>
<b>5-8.10.2005</b>	<b>Gastein, European Health Forum 2005</b> <a href="http://www.ehfg.org/website05/">http://www.ehfg.org/website05/</a>
<b>6-8.10.2005</b>	<b>Berlin</b> , Seminar 'Dignity and Health' of Disadvantaged and Excluded People <a href="http://www.smes-europa.org/UK_Invitation_9sem_Berlin.htm">http://www.smes-europa.org/UK_Invitation_9sem_Berlin.htm</a>
<b>9-11.10.2005</b>	<b>Reykjavik</b> , 8 <sup>th</sup> North Public Health Conference <a href="http://www.congress.is/NPH2005/">http://www.congress.is/NPH2005/</a>
<b>10.10.2005</b>	<b>Brussels</b> , Conference 'Ageing, health Status and Determinants of Health Expenditure' Contact: <a href="mailto:svetla.tsolova@ceps.be">svetla.tsolova@ceps.be</a>
<b>10-14.10.2005</b>	<b>Brussels</b> , European Social Housing Week <a href="http://www.cecodhas.org/rightclick.cfm?ID=40">http://www.cecodhas.org/rightclick.cfm?ID=40</a>
<b>11-12.10.2005</b>	<b>Brussels</b> , Social Platform conference on 'Building Social Policy on Fundamental Rights' <a href="http://www.socialplatform.org/code/EN/abou.asp?Page=692">http://www.socialplatform.org/code/EN/abou.asp?Page=692</a>
<b>13-14.10.2005</b>	<b>Edinburgh</b> , Protecting Patients: healthcare professionals Crossing borders, UK Presidency Event <a href="http://www.eu2005.gov.uk">http://www.eu2005.gov.uk</a>
<b>14-15.10.2005</b>	<b>Warsaw</b> , 1 <sup>st</sup> Polish National Conference on Mental Health Promotion <a href="http://www.ipin.edu.pl">http://www.ipin.edu.pl</a>
<b>17-18.10.2005</b>	<b>London</b> , Empowering People: Tackling Health Inequalities – UK Presidency event <a href="http://www.eu2005.gov.uk">http://www.eu2005.gov.uk</a>
<b>17-18.10.2005</b>	<b>Glasgow</b> , Social Inclusion Round Table UK presidency event <a href="http://www.eu2005.gov.uk">http://www.eu2005.gov.uk</a>
<b>19.10.2005</b>	<b>San Francisco</b> , Second Milestones of a Global Campaign for Violence Prevention <a href="http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/en/">http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global_campaign/en/</a>
<b>20-21.10.2005</b>	<b>Hertfordshire</b> , Health Ministerial Conference UK Presidency event
<b>27-28.10.2005</b>	<b>London</b> , Meeting of EU Chief Medical Officers, UK Presidency Event

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	<a href="http://www.eu2005.gov.uk">http://www.eu2005.gov.uk</a>
<b>7-8.11.2005</b>	<b>Brussels</b> , EU Open Forum
<b>10-12.11.2005</b>	<b>Graz</b> , 13 <sup>th</sup> European Conference on Public Health - EUPHA <a href="http://www.eupha.org/html/documents/2005_graz/eupha_graz_2005_first_announcement.pdf">http://www.eupha.org/html/documents/2005_graz/eupha_graz_2005_first_announcement.pdf</a>
<b>14-15.11.2005</b>	<b>Brussels</b> , Communicating European Research <a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/conferences/2005/cer2005/index_en.html">http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/conferences/2005/cer2005/index_en.html</a>
<b>17-18.11.2005</b>	<b>Strasbourg</b> , Forum organised by the OECD on ' Reconciling Labour Flexibility and Social Cohesion' <a href="http://www.coe.int/T/E/social_cohesion/social_policies/04.Activities/4.Annual_Forums/2005/">http://www.coe.int/T/E/social_cohesion/social_policies/04.Activities/4.Annual_Forums/2005/</a>
<b>28-30.11.2005</b>	<b>London</b> , Patient Safety Summit, UK presidency event <a href="http://www.eu2005.gov.uk">http://www.eu2005.gov.uk</a>
<b>1.12.2005</b>	<b>London</b> , World Health Day
<b>9.12.2005</b>	<b>Brussels</b> , Health Council

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**Would you like to inform other members about new publications or events in your organisation or country? Please send contributions to [l.coulet@eurohealthnet.org](mailto:l.coulet@eurohealthnet.org)**

**Please see Events Calendar on [www.eurohealthnet.org](http://www.eurohealthnet.org) (under main menu item 'News') for upcoming events**

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