

EU Health Highlights

News about health in the EU from EuroHealthNet Brussels Office

November 2005, Issue # 15

1. Main Stories

- **EU Open Health Forum, 7-8 November**

The EU Directorate for Health & Consumer Protection (*DG SANCO*) organised the second Open Health Forum in Brussels on 7-8 November. This is an annual event that aims to provide a platform for networking and exchange of ideas and views of different stakeholders from the European health community.

In a Plenary session DG Sanco reaffirmed its strategic plans, while other speakers focused on determinants and health economics. The plenary was followed by three sessions on the development of the EU health strategy, health products and health services. EuroHealthNet was part of the steering group in the first session, in which EuroHealthNet President Bosse Pettersson spoke and Director Clive Needle was chair.

The health strategy session featured a series of short observations to spark debate, followed by ad hoc votes on key issues. The main points raised concerned complementary and alternative therapies, EC governance and powers, patient rights and various specific priorities.

The session on health services focused in particular on:

- Ensuring the principle of equity in access to health care
- The need to take into consideration the concerns of patients and health professionals.
- The need to build safeguards at EU level to protect national health systems from the EU integration mechanisms (namely the mechanisms of the Internal market and the controversial service directive), and the need for the Commission to explore the potential of an EU legislation to deliver equal and quality health care within the common market.

- **4th Round Table on Social Inclusion, Glasgow**

The Fourth Round Table on Social Exclusion took place on 17-18 October in Glasgow, Scotland. The aim of the Round Table was to assess the progress that has been made to date on the EU's Open Method of Social Inclusion and the National Action Plans (*NAPs*).

Jerome Vignon, Head of the European Commission's Social Inclusion Unit, stressed that the Commission is committed to Social Cohesion as a key priority in the EU.

The underlying sentiment at the Round Table was that the OMC for Social Inclusion has achieved progress and that it must, above all, be allowed to maintain its momentum. A great deal, however, remains to be done to strengthen the process, which continues to suffer from a lack of visibility. Amongst the key challenges are to involve more people at local level as well as different policy sectors, which entails greater partnership working. It is, in this respect, important to address the implementation gap to ensure that the good intentions are reinforced by real actions.

Amongst some of the points made was the need to reduce the negative media stereotypes often associated with people facing poverty, and the need to link the Social Inclusion Strategy with the structural funds.

A fuller report will be available soon on the EuroHealthNet website.

- **Rights of disabled passengers**

The October Council of transport ministers reached unanimous agreement on a proposed legislation to guarantee the rights of persons with reduced mobility in air transport. The proposal forbids airlines and tour operators from declining reservations or boarding to persons with reduced mobility on the basis of their disability and obliges them to provide any assistance free of charge.

<http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/lvb/l24132.htm>

2. News from the European Commission

- **European Commission adopts its 2006 work programme**

"*Unlocking Europe's full potential*" is the title of the work programme 2006 presented by the Commission. The programme has five objectives: prosperity, solidarity, security, Europe's role in the World and better regulation.

Some measures announced in the Communication are related to health:

- Communication on tackling alcohol related harm
- Communication on 'Growth, prosperity and solidarity in an equal and democratic society: a roadmap for equality between women and men'
- Communication for a new Community Strategy on health and safety at work 2007-2012.
- Communication on the demographic future of Europe
- Green paper on drugs and civil society in the EU
- Proposal for a Council Decision on Strategic Community Guidelines on Cohesion

The plan is subject to European Parliament approval and will be reviewed by June 2006.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/atwork/programmes/index_en.htm

- **Reshuffle of top management jobs at the Commission**

The Commission announced the nomination of 17 Directors-General in a general reshuffle. Catherine Day has been given the top position as the new Secretary General of the Commission. Odile Quintin at DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities changes position with Klaus van der Pas from DG Education and Culture. José Manuel Sioiva Rodriguez is replacing Achilleas Mitsos at DG Research.

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/05/1399&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

- **Communication on “Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe”**

The European Commission Communication aims to define the role of education in achieving the Lisbon agenda. The Communication warns that Member States must accelerate the pace of reform in their education and training systems and promote lifelong learning, or else large proportions of the next generation will face social exclusion.

Despite the efforts made by all Member States, there is too little progress against the European “benchmarks” fixed for improving young people’s qualifications and competences. According to the communication this has serious consequences for all citizens, especially for disadvantaged groups, and the 80 million or so low-skilled workers across Europe, and for the wider economy as a whole in terms of competitiveness and job creation.

The Commission also proposed to the Council and European Parliament a scheme to establish a European Framework for Key Competences – a practical reference tool to support Member States’ efforts.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/et_2010_en.html

- **DG SANCO leads on policy impact assessments**

DG SANCO Director General Robert Madelin led a conference in Brussels (attended by EuroHealthNet) to explore how the Commission applies impact assessments to its policy development process. This is part of the Better Regulation Initiative aimed at streamlining and improving EC processes and helps to make policy decisions more transparent.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm

4. Events and Publications

- **Conference 'Future Europeans' - The right start in life for children and young people in Europe**

This conference, organised by the [European Public Health Alliance](#) and regional authorities as an associated event of the UK Presidency, took place in Brussels on 9-10 November. The Conference explored whether children and young people are adequately supported and protected within the EU framework and shared examples of good practice in working with and empowering young people. Patrick Trousson from DG Justice discussed the upcoming Communication on the Rights of the Child, which will, for the first time, assess the impact of the European Union’s policies on children’s rights.

Children face the highest risk of poverty of any population group in Europe. EuroHealthNet in this context, coordinated a workshop on ‘*Overcoming disadvantage: tackling health inequalities and social exclusion amongst young*

people', which assessed the situation of poverty and social exclusion amongst children in the EU. Maria-Anne Paraskevas from DG EMPL spoke on 'Preventing and reducing child poverty in the European Union', while EuroHealthNet members from the Netherlands, Ireland, Malta, Hungary and Denmark also contributed.

A full report will be sent to EuroHealthNet members and be made available on the EuroHealthNet website.

- **WHO European health report 2005**

The WHO report displays a widening East-West gap in children's health and identifies poverty and socioeconomic inequality as the greatest threats to children's health in Europe.

Poverty is stated as the greatest threat to children's health, regardless of a country's level of development. Social inequalities are said to have increased in all European countries, in particular in the East, and the inequalities in children's health are "unacceptably large", states the report.

<http://www.euro.who.int/ehr2005>

- **Report: Homeless and Health in Amsterdam**

A report by the Municipal Health Service of Amsterdam (GGD), on the link between homelessness and health, and outreach activities over the years 1997-2004 in the specific setting of Amsterdam, has been recently released in the Netherlands. The report highlights that behind the seemingly social problem of eviction, as a major source of homelessness, medical problems are hiding, and social medical problems have to be addressed accordingly.

<http://www.ggd.amsterdam.nl/>

- **5th Nordic Health Promotion Research Conference**

The organizers of the 5th Nordic Health Promotion Research Conference in Esbjerg offer a reduced rate for participants from the Central and Eastern European countries to attend the Conference in June 2006.

The conference organizers can offer a conference fee of 750 Kr/person under the following conditions: if groups of more than 4 persons from these countries register together and at least one abstract per group is submitted.

To apply send an Email with names, Email addresses and affiliation to the conference office 5NHPRC@health.sdu.dk.

- **OECD report 'Health at a Glance, OECD health indicators 2005**

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development released a report that shows that, on average, only 3% of total health expenditure in OECD countries goes toward population-wide prevention and public health programs, while most of the spending is focused on "sick care." According to the OECD, most countries have developed national strategies for public health improvement that include immunization programs, disease screening and other steps to reduce the population's risk of developing communicable and non-communicable diseases.



However, only a small proportion of health spending goes toward these types of initiatives. The publication presents comparative data on four key dimensions: health status, health care resources and how they are used, vaccination coverage and a breakdown of health expenditure.

http://www.oecd.org/document/11/0,2340,en_2649_33929_16502667_1_1_1_1,00.html

- **Paper on the role of radio broadcasting in health promotion to poor communities**

A paper from the UK Department for International Development ([DFID](#)) provides an overview of the role radio broadcasting can play in promoting better health for disadvantaged people. It advocates a people-centred and rights-based approach to health communications.

<http://www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/icdradioshealthbrochure.pdf>

- **Euro barometer survey on citizens, science and technology**

The Magazine on European Research, *RTD Info*, has released the result of a survey on citizens' perception of science and technology. The issue comprises interesting particular surveys on whether citizens believe that science and technology will improve the quality of life of future generations, or on the scepticism related to science and technology.

TRD info, Magazine on European research, [Special Eurobarometer issue – November 2005](#)

5. News from Member States / Organisations

- **Switzerland: model to classify health promotion projects outcomes**

The Swiss "model for results classification in health promotion and prevention activities" is now available also in English. The model facilitates the planning and systematic recording of project outcomes in health promotion and can be used also

in situation analyses. A guide for HP professionals on how to use the tool complements it. The experiences with its use so far are very positive.

<http://www.gesundheitsfoerderung.ch/en/knowhow/tools/model.asp>

- **Malta: article on healthy employees**

Marianne Massa, from the department of Health of Malta (a EuroHealthNet member agency) has written an article on '*Healthy employees in healthy organisations*' in 'The Malta Independent Online'.

http://www.enwhp.org/news/_uploadinthenews/1814_Malta_Independent.pdf

- **Italy: national conference on health promotion**

Next year the Italian national conference on health promotion will be held in Cagliari on 16 - 18 March 2006- organized by the Italian Confederation of Health Promotion under the presidency of Professor Lamberto Briziarelli. The main theme of the conference is *Health Promotion and Health Education between globalisation and individualism: participation, integration and intersectoriality*.

Participants are health professionals active in different health promotion and health education field. They will find in the conference many opportunities to discuss health promotion planning at regional and local level, post graduate and vocational training of professionals, strategies of increasing participation and addressing inequalities in health.

Contact: conferenza.cipes.06@tiscali.it

- **Lithuania: Conference assessing the implementation of the Lithuanian health programme since 1998**

The Conference entitled "*Transitional Assessment of the Implementation of the Lithuanian Health Programme*" was held in Vilnius on 4th of November. This politically significant event aimed at the assessing the practical implementation of the Lithuanian Health Programme for the period 1998-2005.

The results presented showed some positive and very significant changes in health indicators of the Lithuanian population: the average life expectancy started to increase; an essential breakthrough was reached after 17 years of declining birth rate; infant mortality is decreasing considerably, the decrease in perinatal and neonatal mortality as well as in the number of premature babies; high risk and undesirable pregnancies was constant.

Almost full children vaccination coverage has been reached according the main positions of the mandatory children vaccination calendar; the number of new patients with mental disorders and patients with alcohol psychosis was diminishing. The data in the available information resources showed that adult cigarette smoking decreased.

However the conference mentioned areas of concern such as students and especially girls smoking, increasing rates of mortality due to malignant tumours,

EU Health Highlights
News about health in the EU from EuroHealthNet Brussels Office
November 2005, Issue # 15

breast, cervix and lung cancer, the increasing number of suicides and mental disorders, problems connected to the spread of HIV/Aids and drug addiction.

For more information, contact zenonas.javtokas@vvspt.lt

- **Czech Republic: the National Institute of Public Health celebrates its 80th Anniversary**

The NIPH in Prague was founded in 1925 as a top establishment for public health. Health education, policy, research and a manufacturing of sera and vaccines were the main responsibilities. Although political circumstances resulted in various organisational and conceptual changes, the Institute has recently regained its original aim and position as a modern governmental organisation in the field of the public health.

The celebrations on 3-4 November included seminars of the Centres, the International conference "European Public Health Strategy in 21th Century" and an "Open Door Day".

More info about the NIPH www.szu.cz

- **Estonia: competition of health promotion projects**

The Development Centre of National Institute for Health Development launched a competition of health promoting projects ideas "TEIP" last year. The Competition was arranged for school children and young people all over Estonia to give them an opportunity to promote health in their own community. Children were very eager to submit ideas of projects promoting a healthy status throughout life for persons in the same age category.

Last year the TEIP competition gathered up to 86 projects. This year NIHD received up to 55 project ideas; the 6 best will be rewarded with a valuable prize and these projects will be put into practice next year.

For more information contact <http://www.tai.ee/>

- **France: week for the employment of disabled persons**

The national week for Employment of Disabled Persons runs through 14-20 November. This initiative aims to make employers familiar with the measures of a pending regulation called 'handicap' that should enter into force on 1 January 2006 to address companies including less than 6% of disabled employees.

<http://www.lemonde.fr/web/article/0,1-0@2-3224,36-709799@51-696019,0.html>

EU Health Highlights
News about health in the EU from EuroHealthNet Brussels Office
 November 2005, Issue # 15

6. Calendar of international events

20-22.11.2005	Amsterdam , 3 rd International Congress, the failing heart under stress. http://www.failingheart.com
23.11.2005	Brussels , Round table on Mental health 'Towards an EU mental health strategy: health stakeholder perspectives' Contact: info@mhe-sme.org
23-25.11.2005	Brussels , Child Health and the Environment: results from the EU Framework 5 Pinche, Children Genonetwork & Plutocracy Projects Contact: M.Saunders@bristol.ac.uk
28.11.2005	Dublin , Strengthening the policy voices and practices of people in Poverty Contact: havingyoursay@cpa.ie
28-30.11.2005	London , Patient Safety Summit, UK presidency event http://www.eu2005.gov.uk
1.12.2005	World Aids day - Stop Aids, Keep the promise http://www.unaids.org/en/default.asp
1-2.12.2005	Brussels , The European Day of Disabled People Conference 'Living Together in a common society' http://www.edf-feph.org/en/events/day.htm
3.12.2005	European Day of Disabled People
7-8.12.2005	Birmingham , NICE 2005: Health and Clinical Excellence http://www.nice2005.co.uk
7-8.12.2005	Amsterdam , Proving the business benefit of Employees health strategy www.eng-nl.com
8-9.12.2005	Edinburgh , 'IN Good HEALTH' conference organised by EuroHealthNet and NHS Health Scotland http://www.eurohealthnet.org/EuroHealthNet/Site/EuroHealthNet/Conference/First_Announcement.html
9.12.2005	Brussels , Health Council
12.12.2005	Bilbao , Closing event of the European week for safety and health at work http://www.ew2005.osha.eu.int
12-13.12.2005	Brussels , European Commission conference on 'Social sciences and humanities in Europe: New challenges, new

EU Health Highlights
News about health in the EU from EuroHealthNet Brussels Office
November 2005, Issue # 15

	opportunities' http://www.cordis.lu/citizens/conf_20051212.htm
23.01.2005	Brussels, 2nd European Voice conference on healthcare in Europe. http://www.europeanvoice.com/ev/info.asp?id=1280

Please note that EuroHealthNet is not responsible for the content of sites or publications mentioned in this publication.

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

Please see Events Calendar on www.eurohealthnet.org (under main menu item 'News') for upcoming events

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