

EU Health Highlights

News about health in the EU from EuroHealthNet Brussels Office

Issue # 4, March 2006

1. Main Stories

- **7 April, World Health Day – Working together for health**



The theme of the 2006 World Health Day is '*Working together for health*'. The focus is put on the health workforce. The WHO alerts countries about a chronic global shortage of health workers, as a result of what it regards as decades of underinvestment in their education, training, salaries, working environment and management.

In that context, EU Development and Foreign Affairs Ministers are to commit themselves to stop the trend of recruitment of locally needed medical staff from African and other countries into EU hospitals, when they meet on 10-11 April 2006.

http://www.who.int/world-health-day/2006/tm_speech/en/index.html

- **EuroHealthNet's response to the Commission Green Paper on Promoting Healthy Diets and Physical Activity**

EuroHealthNet has submitted its response to the Commission Green Paper on 'Promoting healthy diets and physical activity: a European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases'.

EuroHealthNet welcomes the systematic appraisal of the situation concerning diet, nutrition and physical activity in the EU and highlights the following points:

1. The EU added value lies less in its supporting role in health and education but more in its social, economic and political levers of power in its given competences. EuroHealthNet highlights the crucial importance for the EC to develop integrated policy approaches, for example on agricultural subsidies.
2. EuroHealthNet would be cautious with the approach of 'providing information' and 'choice', and prefers the term 'empowerment' as an effective concept in health promotion, which encourages citizens to sustain healthy behaviours and action at all levels.
3. The EC should communicate better the results, evidence, outcomes and innovations of its programmes and co-funded projects as it is often difficult for national agencies to gather widely dispersed information.
4. Consumer information should be led by public health rather than commercial values. If market self-regulation is to prevail, it should be monitored closely and regulation used where necessary.
5. EuroHealthNet encourages member states and the EC to make structural programme and other funds available to develop healthier environments, including physical activities structures, and support community initiatives in that field.

EuroHealthNet's response is available on www.eurohealthnet.org, policy section, and national members have also submitted responses separately.

- **European Council focuses on jobs, energy and social cohesion**

EU Health Highlights
News about health in the EU from EuroHealthNet Brussels Office
Issue # 4, March 2006

Heads of States and Governments of the 25 Member States met on 23-24 March in Brussels for the 'Spring Council'. The meeting focused on three main points: jobs and growth, energy and social cohesion.

Within the job and growth priority area, the Council highlighted specific areas of priority action:

1-Investment in education and training:

Within the specific areas for priority action to be implemented by the end of 2007 in the context of the renewed partnership for growth and employment, the European Council stressed the need to invest in education and training as critical tools to maintain social cohesion and asked the Member States to set up strategies for life-long learning.

2-Increase employment opportunities for priority categories: the young, women, older workers, persons with disabilities and legal migrants and minorities.

In that perspective, the Council called for

- measures to reduce early school leaving to 10% and to offer a job/professional activity opportunity to a young person who has left school within 4 month by 2010.
- measures to make working more attractive to older workers to stay employed for longer.
- Measure to ensure a better work-life balance and better child-care structures to involve women with children in the labour market. In that perspective the Council has approved a European Pact for Gender Equality
- The creation of a European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to support redundant workers with training and job search efforts.

As part of the discussion on energy, the Council highlighted three main objectives: Increasing security of supply, ensuring the competitiveness of the European economies and promoting environmental sustainability by

1. Developing renewable energies
2. Combating climate change (EU Emission trading scheme)
3. Saving on energy with a view of a saving of 20% by 2020.

Finally the Council discussed how to enhance social cohesion by stressing the following points:

- that policies for social inclusion and social protection should be closely coordinated with the 'partnership for jobs and growth' and should be regarded as productive factors.
- social inclusion policies should focus on child poverty with a view to reduce child poverty.
- the European Social Fund should support policies promoting the solidarity between generations, promote health, improve affordable health care, life long learning and increased employment rate of young people.

http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/

2. News from the European Commission

- **European Commission on the Board of the Global Fund**

The European Commission will increase its role and visibility in the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria by assuming the Vice Chairmanship of the Board. Dr. Lieve Fransen, Head of the Human and Social Development Unit in DG Development, has been elected to this post. The European Commission is one of the main donors of the Fund contributing overall € 522 Million over the period 2002-2006.

http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/388&format=HTML&age_d=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

- **DG Sanco : projects – project outcomes**

-Project: '*EURO HIV - HIV / AIDS Surveillance in Europe*' funded project 2004, description of the project.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_projects/2004/action2/action2_2004_13_en.htm

3. News from the European Parliament

- **European Parliament report on social protection and inclusion**

The European Parliament has adopted by a large majority a report on social protection and social inclusion. Currently, one out of six Europeans live in poverty. In fighting poverty, the Parliament has identified two priorities: child poverty and youth unemployment. The European Parliament (EP) urged the Commission to put forward a Green Paper on child poverty.

The EP regard developing female activity as one of the keys to combating poverty and ask Member States to facilitate access to childcare systems and eliminate gender inequalities on the labour market regarding both access to jobs and wages.

They also call on the European Council to adopt "*an integrated framework on social protection and social inclusion*" as well as a single list of common objectives on social integration, pensioners, healthcare and long-term care, with a view to systematically applying and simplifying the open method of coordination" at its spring 2006 session.

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/default.htm?language=EN>

4. Events and Publications

- **Implementation of Mental Health Policies Conference, Budapest**

The conference on Mental Health Policies Implementation in the member states was a culminating event of the EMIP project. Clive Needle and Kasia Jurczak, who represented EuroHealthNet on the project consortium, attended the event organised by the project lead - German Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (FIOSH). The existence of targeted national strategies was presented as a key factor for promotion of positive mental health and prevention of mental disorder.

For more information about the project and the final event, please consult the project website <http://www.emip.org/>.

- **Health Inequalities 'Closing the Gap' project meeting, Brussels**

European Partners for Equity in Health met for the third time at a meeting in Brussels on 29th and 30th of March. The meeting was devoted to exchange of experience and good practice between the project partners. Four workshops related to health inequalities were held, namely "Awareness Raising and work with media", "Evidence and Evaluation", "Working across policy sectors health impact assessment", "Support for Regions". The workshops were led by the project partners themselves and the material discussed will be summarised in a toolkit to be available in June 2006.

Background documents of the meeting (agenda, presentations, list of participants...) will be available shortly on the EuroHealthNet website, [project section](#).

- **Conference on EC Action programme to combat Social Exclusion**

DG Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities organised a conference on 29-30 March 2006 in Brussels entitled '*Learning together: lessons drawn from the Community Action Programme to Combat Social Exclusion*'. The conference gathered EC officials, local authorities/politicians, social and community workers and civil society organisations from the social field.

The conference focused mainly on exchanging on the various methodologies and existing processes currently used to address social exclusion at European, national and local level. The outcomes of the conference will be fed into the new proposed programme PROGRESS.

- The Open Method of Coordination was seen as a good EU added value, but participants called for more visibility of the process, and more particularly more visibility and communication on the 'NAPs' (national action plans for social protection and social inclusion) which were nicknamed '*the best kept secret of Europe*'
- Awareness raising and enhancing the democratic legitimacy of the fight against social exclusion. Conference participants agreed that the vulnerable groups should be more consulted and more involved in

the actions and policies addressing social exclusion. Also many participants called for major communications at all levels to raise awareness on the issue of social exclusion to gather a democratic support.

- The role of local and community level in the fight against social exclusion was stressed as crucial, as local authorities are the closest to the citizens. It was also stressed that local level not only implements measures but also takes part in the decision making.
- Conference participants recognised that social exclusion is a multi-dimension phenomenon and therefore needs a multi-dimension approach. Conference participants called for more mainstreaming of social inclusion in other policy areas at national and EU level.
- Finally all participants recognised the added value of exchange of experience and good practices across Europe.

A full report of the conference will soon be available on the EurohealthNet website, member section.

- **Health Inequalities: a challenge of Europe – second edition**



The report entitled '*Health Inequalities: a challenge for Europe*' co-written by Caroline Costongs, Kasia Jurczak, Ken Judge and Stephen Platt at the occasion of the UK Summit on Health Inequalities in October 2005 was updated and re-edited. This report was produced as a part of the project entitled "Tackling Health Inequalities: Governing for Health" which was funded by the European Commission.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/socio_economics/documents/ev_060302_rd05_en.pdf

- **The Rolling Stones as a Model of Ageing?**

The Rolling Stones were mentioned at several occasions at an Austrian Presidency conference on Healthy Ageing taking place in Vienna early this year. Reference to the world-famous rockers was not a joke but rather an invitation to change attitudes and approaches towards the concept of healthy ageing.

More information can be found on the website of the project Healthy Ageing:
<http://www.healthyageing.nu/templates/page.aspx?id=1155>

- **EU Court rules on Swedish alcohol law**

The European Court of Justice ruled on a case involving the Swedish state monopoly for alcohol and more precisely the ban of private import of alcohol. The Court ruled that the state monopoly practice might in some cases break the EU trade rules by limiting the origin and diversity of alcoholic products imported to Sweden but did not state that the system itself was illegal.

<http://euobserver.com/9/21274#>

- **Lifting the smokescreen: 10 reasons for a smoke free Europe**



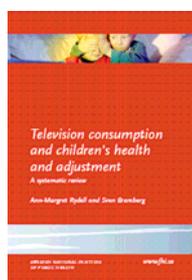
A report on the impact of passive smoking on health was launched at the European Parliament. The report was published by The Smoke-free Partnership (European Respiratory Society, Institute National du Cancer and Cancer Research UK) and the European Heart Network. According to the report 79 000 people die each year in Europe as a result of passive smoking.

'Lifting the smokescreen: 10 reasons for a smoke-free Europe' aims to assist European and other national politicians and policy makers to promote and implement comprehensive smoke-free legislation.

http://www.ersnet.org/ers/default.aspx?id_fiche=232472&id_langue=3&id_dossier=56222

5. News from Member States / Organisations

- **Sweden: Systematic review of television consumption and children's health and adjustment**



The Swedish National Institute of Public Health has published a report on the effect of television consumption on children's health and behaviour. The report indicates associations between high television consumption and aggression in children and the incidence of externalised behaviour problems and an association between high television consumption and overweight among children.

The report explains that setting up guidelines commonly agreed by parents and children on what programmes the children should watch and how much time per day they should spend in front of television has shown to be successful.

http://www.fhi.se/templates/Page_8071.aspx

- **France: manual on quality criteria for tools to be used for health education interventions**

INPES - the French National Institute for Prevention and Health Education has published a manual listing 31 essential quality criteria to define 'good tools' for health education interventions. This manual in French is aimed at health promotion professionals, policy makers and practitioners.

<http://www.inpes.sante.fr/>

EU Health Highlights
News about health in the EU from EuroHealthNet Brussels Office
 Issue # 4, March 2006

6. Calendar of international events

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 5.04.2006 | Brussels , European Health Policy Forum http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_overview/health_forum/health_forum_en.htm |
| 5-6.04.2006 <i>New!</i> | Cardiff , 7 th International Health Impact Assessment Conference : making the difference http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/home.cfm?OrgID=522 |
| 7.04.2006 | World Health Day , 'Working together for Health' http://www.who.int/world-health-day/2006/en/index.html |
| 20.04.2006 <i>New!</i> | Vienna , Social Services Conference – EU presidency event http://www.eu2006.bmsg.gv.at/cms/eu2006EN/liste.html?channel=CH0608 |
| 23-25.04.2006 | Manchester , North West Health Conference Contact: c.white@nwhbo.org |
| 25-27.04.2006 | Brussels , EuroHealthNet General Assembly |
| 25-27.04.2006 | Vienna , Informal meeting of Health Ministers Austrian presidency event |
| 30.04.2006 <i>New!</i> | Brussels – European Parliament Open day http://www.europarl.eu.int/ |
| 3-5.05.2006 | Stockholm , European conference on urban governance and partnership http://www.urbanfutures.se |
| 8.05.2006 <i>New!</i> | Brussels , 'Meeting Europe's Obesity Challenge' http://www.friendsofeurope.org/index.asp?http://www.friendsofeurope.org/conf_ataglance.asp?ConfId=420&frame=yes~bas |
| 10-12.05.2006 | Malaga , e-health 2006 High level conference, 'e-health in the Europe of the regions: networks for health' http://www.ehealthconference2006.org/ |
| 17.05.2006 <i>New!</i> | Brussels , Seminar on the Right to live in the Community - European Coalition for Community Living http://www.community-living.info/ |
| 19.05.2006 | Deadline: Public Health Programme Call for Proposals http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_programme/howtoapply/all_for_propal_en.htm |
| 22-27.05.2006 | Geneva , WHO General Assembly http://www.who.int/en/ |
| 31.05.2006 | Deadline: EU Mental Health Green paper Consultation |

EU Health Highlights
News about health in the EU from EuroHealthNet Brussels Office
 Issue # 4, March 2006

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| | http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/green_paper/consultation_en.htm |
| 2.06.2006 | Luxembourg , Health Council |
| 7-9.06.2206 | Athens , 'Social Inclusion in Europe: perspectives and developments in social psychiatry, care for the mentally handicapped and the elderly' Contact: maria@invgolf.com |
| 15-17.06.2005 | Ejsberg , 5 th Nordic Health Promotion Research Conference http://www.5nhprc.sdu.dk/ |
| 19-21.06.2006 | Vienna , 14 th European Social Services Conference http://www.socialeurope.com/pdfs/Vienna/en_possible_workshop_themes.doc |
| 19-21.06.2006 | Vienna , Delivering social and health care in an ageing Europe: the challenges of demographic trend |
| 26-28.06.2006 | Vienna , European Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/environment/IPP/documents/ev_20060625_en.pdf |
| 28-30.06.2006 | Budapest , European Health Management Association annual conference http://www.ehma.org |
| 4-8.10.2006 | Gastein , European Health Forum http://www.ehfg.org |
| 10.10.2006 | World Mental Health Day ' Building Awareness – reducing Risk: Mental Illness and Suicide' http://www.wfmh.org/wmhd/abou.html |
| 17-18.10.2006 | ' Equity and Action '. Event organized by the Institute of Public Health in Ireland http://www.publichealth.ie/ |
| 18-21.10.2006 | Budapest , 7 th IUHPE conference 'Globalisation and Equity, Inequalities in Health' http://www.Equityinhealth2006.hu |
| 25-28.10.2006 New ! | Amsterdam , 5 th International Conference on Urban Health http://www.icuh2006.com/ |
| 15-17.11.2006 | Istanbul , WHO Ministerial conference on counteracting obesity http://www.euro.who.int/nutrition/Obesity/20051123_1 |

EU Health Highlights
News about health in the EU from EuroHealthNet Brussels Office
Issue # 4, March 2006

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

*EU Health Highlights is produced for the internal use of organisations, institutions, authorities and departments interested in health promotion, disease prevention and public health in the EU. It is funded only by fees paid to us. If any reader knows of people or bodies who might find it useful to receive *Health Highlights*, please do not copy it without our authorisation, but do send details to us at: l.coulet@eurohealthnet.org. We will be pleased to make contact and offer our services, including a trial period. Your comments and suggestions will also be welcome. *Thank you for your help.**