



## **2009 EUROPEAN COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME**

On 5<sup>th</sup> November the European Commission published its annual work programme for 2009. It contains four overarching priorities: Climate change and a Sustainable Europe; a Europe Close to Citizens; Europe as a World Partner; and Growth and Jobs. Health-related priorities include actions on cancer, child health, dementia, health inequalities and a Communication on social protection in health and reform of the financing of health systems in developing countries.

[http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/atwork/programmes/index_en.htm)

## **EU GREEN PAPER AND CONFERENCE ON HEALTH WORKFORCE**

Although adoption has been delayed of the European Commission's Green Paper on Health Workforce, the planned launch conference on this topic will go ahead on December 10<sup>th</sup>. Information available at: [http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph\\_overview/workforce/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/workforce/index_en.htm)

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development has also published a new report on "The looming crisis of the health workforce: How can OECD countries respond?" It documents the challenges in responding to the growing demand for doctors and nurses over the next 20 years in a world which is characterised by significant international migration of health workers. The report considers the combination of human-resource management policies and migration policies adopted by OECD countries, how migration and other health workforce policies interact with each other and how destination countries can build a sustainable health workforce

[www.oecd.org/health/workforce](http://www.oecd.org/health/workforce)

## **FURTHER SETBACK FOR MEDICINES INFORMATION TO PATIENTS**

The European Commission has again postponed adoption of the "pharmaceutical package" which had been rescheduled for 26<sup>th</sup> November. This follows pressure from a coalition of European patient, consumer and health professional organisations and opposition by the Commissioners for Health and Communications. The joint letter sent to the President of the European Commission is available below:

<http://docshare.beuc.org/docs/1/MNPDNIMBAGHABKMHNNAELFECPCDBW9DBGG69DW3571KM/BEUC/docs/DLS/2008-00943-01-E.pdf>

## **DELAY TO EU PATIENT SAFETY INITIATIVES**

On 28 November 2008 the European Commission did not release its Communication on Patient Safety and Council Recommendation on healthcare acquired infections as widely anticipated. This is now expected sometime in December. Shortcuts will keep readers updated.

## **EU ACTION ON RARE DISEASES**

On November 11<sup>th</sup> the European Commission adopted a Communication and a proposal for an EU Recommendation on rare diseases which sets out an overall European strategy to support Member States in diagnosing, treating and caring for the 36 million EU citizens with rare diseases.

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health\\_consumer/dyna/consumervoice/create\\_cv.cfm?cv\\_id=486](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/dyna/consumervoice/create_cv.cfm?cv_id=486)

## **EUROPEAN SURVEY ON HEALTH, AGEING AND RETIRMENT**

November 28<sup>th</sup> saw the launch of the most recent findings of the European Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE). It notes that Northern Europeans are healthier and wealthier but the people in the South live longer. There is a clear North–South gradient in health and income: Older persons in the North are better off financially and are in better health, but this does not translate into corresponding mortality differences.

<http://www.share-project.org/>

## **EUROPE URGED TO PROMOTE GENERIC DRUGS**

A new study submitted to the European Commission highlights that the failure to promote more cost effective and widespread prescription of generic medicines is costing EU taxpayers billions of Euros a year, according to research by the London School of Economics. It is estimated that health insurers could have saved in excess of \$3bn in 2004 through greater use of generic drugs.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d9fbde6e->

[bbf6-11dd-80e9-0000779fd18c,dwp\\_uuid=70662e7c-3027-11da-ba9f-00000e2511c8.html](http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/d9fbde6e-bbf6-11dd-80e9-0000779fd18c,dwp_uuid=70662e7c-3027-11da-ba9f-00000e2511c8.html)

## **NEW PUBLICATION: HEALTH TECHNOLOGY ASSESSMENT IN EUROPE**

“Health Technology Assessment and Health Policy-Making in Europe - Current status, challenges and potential” is the title of a new publication from the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. It is available online at:

<http://www.euro.who.int/Document/E91922.pdf>

Questions? Contact [jeni.bremner@ehma.org](mailto:jeni.bremner@ehma.org)