



“EUROPE FOR PATIENTS” - FRENCH EU PRESIDENCY CONFERENCE

On 13th and 14th October the EU French Presidency held a conference on "European Health at the Service of Patients". The objective of the conference was to present and discuss the added value of EU action on health and health service issues and to compare the progress achieved in meeting patients' expectations and future challenges. The meeting was attended by some 400 representatives from the EU Institutions, health sector NGOs and Member State representatives.

Report (available soon)

http://www.eu2008.fr/PFUE/lang/en/accueil/PFUE-10_2008/PFUE_13.10.2008/conference_1_europe_de_la_sante_au_service_des_patients

Agenda:

http://www.eu2008.fr/webdav/site/PFUE/shared/import/1013_europe_sante_patients/Programme_EN.pdf

IT BARRIERS TO HEALTHCARE

A new study for the European Commission has concluded that current standards of information technology in the health sector are leading to interoperability problems between health information systems, resulting in unnecessary financial costs and barriers to users such as general practitioners and hospitals. The report "ICT Standards in the health sector: current situation and prospects" was finalised in June for the European Commission's Directorate-General for Enterprise and is now available online:

http://www.ebusiness-watch.org/studies/special_topics/2007/documents/Special-study_01-2008 ICT_health_standards.pdf

COMMISSION COMMUNICATION ON TELEMEDICINE

On November 4th the European Commission's Directorate General for Information Society published a Communication on telemedicine following an extensive consultation during 2007 and 2008, which involved Member States, health professionals, patients associations and industry representatives.

The Communication proposes a series of actions: To increase confidence and acceptance of telemedicine services among users, in particular, by encouraging provision and dissemination of scientific evidence of its effectiveness and cost-effectiveness; to bring legal clarity on existing EU legislation regarding telemedicine services and encourage Member States to improve provision of telemedicine services; to solve technical problems such as the lack of adequate community-wide broadband infrastructure and interoperability of telemedicine devices.

http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemlongdetail.cfm?item_id=4465

EU-WIDE WORKPLACE SMOKING BAN?

Vladimir Špidla, the European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, is to begin "first-stage consultations" within the Commission on a ban on smoking in the workplace. However, it is likely that any legal proposal will have to wait until the next Commission take office. EU legislation is considered necessary, as national smoking bans are not consistent across the European Union, with some only limited

to bars and clubs for example. 11 EU Member States have introduced smoking bans since Ireland took the lead in 2004.

<http://euobserver.com/851/27002>

EU HEALTH GRANTS AWARDED

The European Commission has awarded grants for the 2008 call for proposals under the new EU Health Programme. 42 projects and 11 conferences will receive EU co-funding, and 8 projects were put on a reserve list. In addition, 10 organisations will receive grants to cover some of their operating costs, and two joint actions with public institutions of the Member States will receive financial support. EHMA's proposal on "Promoting Health through Excellence in Health Management" was among the projects selected.

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_programme/howtoapply/call_for_propal_en.htm

LAUNCH OF "EUROPE FOR PATIENTS" CAMPAIGN

The EU Commissioner for Health, Ms Androulla Vassiliou, launched the 'Europe for Patients' campaign in Brussels in October. The campaign highlights the different health policy initiatives the Commission intends to adopt in the coming months. The initiatives and actions address patient safety, rare diseases, organ donation and transplantation, cancer screening, health workforce, flu and childhood vaccination and antibiotic use. The first initiative under the campaign - the proposed Directive on cross border health care - was adopted by the Commission on 2 July 2008.

http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/europe_for_patients/index_en.htm

EUROPEAN WORKING TIME DIRECTIVE

On October 20th the European Parliament's Employment and Social Affairs Committee met for a first discussion of its report by Alejandro Cercas MEP as part of the second reading of the Council of Ministers position on the directive to amend Directive 2003/88/EC on working time. Importantly, The MEPs rejected an earlier compromise with Member States on the definition of working and on-call time and the opt-out clause. The whole Parliament will now vote in plenary on 2 December 2008. The Cercas report can be located in the following list of official documents:

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/organes/empl/empl_20081020_2100.htm

FINAL MEETING OF EU PHARMACEUTICAL FORUM

On 2nd October the concluding meeting was held of the EU Pharmaceutical Forum, which was set up in 2005 to "find solutions to public health considerations regarding pharmaceuticals, while ensuring the competitiveness of the industry and the sustainability of the national health-care systems".

The final report focuses on three key challenges: how to improve information on diseases and treatments; how to compare and identify the best medicines; and how to balance access and reward for innovation within limited healthcare budgets. The meeting was attended by Health Ministers of Member States, MEPs and senior representatives from the Forum's ten stakeholder organisations including the European Patients' Forum.

http://ec.europa.eu/pharmaforum/docs/final_conclusions_en.pdf

NEW REPORT CALLS FOR ACTION ON EU CANCER CARE INEQUALITIES

Unequal access to cancer care and national differences in the training that cancer experts receive is harming thousands of Europeans every year, according to a new study. The report on the status of medical oncology in Europe, by the European society for medical oncologists highlights a range of inequalities in

cancer care and treatment across the EU. One of the key issues affecting the provision of specialised care for patients is formal EU recognition of oncology as a medical speciality.

<http://www.theparliament.com/latestnews/news-article/newsarticle/new-report-calls-for-action-on-eu-wide-cancer-care-inequalities>

CONFERENCE: HEALTH SYSTEMS & THE ROLE OF EU LAW & POLICY

This is the title of a conference taking place in Brussels on 11 December 2008, co-organized by the Belgian Ministry of Health, the Belgian Health Insurance Institute and the 'Observatoire Social Européen' and supported by the French EU Presidency. It will look at the potential effects of the application of EU legislation on national health systems. The main findings of the forthcoming book on this theme will be presented and discussed with health sector policy-makers and managers.

<http://www.ose.be/hconference2008/>

LAUNCH CONFERENCE FOR EU GREEN PAPER ON HEALTH WORKFORCE

DG Health and Consumers of the European Commission is organising a conference on 10th December to launch formally the publication of the Green Paper on the EU Workforce for Health and to promote the consultation exercise that will follow.

Marianne Olsson, a member of EHMA's board, will be on the panel at the launch event.

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/workforce/index_en.htm

PUBLICATION: EU LAW AND HEALTH POLICY IN EUROPE

The latest issue of "Euro Observer" (European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies) looks at the scope and impact of EU regulation on national health care systems; case studies focus on competition law, public procurement and state aids, cross-border health care services, national private health insurance markets, and regulation of the European pharmaceutical market.

http://www.euro.who.int/Document/OBS/EuroObserver_Autumn2008.pdf

MEP's RESPOND TO EU STRATEGIC HEALTH APPROACH 2008-2013

In response to the 2007 White Paper by the European Commission "Together for Health: a strategic approach for the EU 2008-2013" MEPs adopted a report on 9th October by Alojz Peterle MEP which lends support to the Commission's proposals. MEPs say that disease prevention efforts and vaccination campaigns should be stepped up significantly. Parliament therefore urges the Commission to draw up an ambitious plan for preventive actions for the entire five-year period. Parliament also states that a "European Health Index" is required to identify inequalities between Member States.

http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/expert/infopress_page/066-39073-282-10-41-911-20081009IPR39072-08-10-2008-2008-false/default_en.htm



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