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New 'Sport and Health' Collaboration between World Heart Federation and European Healthy Stadia Network

A new collaboration between the World Heart Federation and the European Healthy Stadia Network is set to increase the number of sports stadia involved in promoting healthy lifestyles and by doing so, help reduce incidence of heart disease and stroke amongst fans, stadia staff and local communities. During World Heart Day this year (26th September 2010) we will be working together to raise awareness of cardiovascular disease (CVD), and address health challenges through workplace wellness initiatives.

Sports stadia offer an excellent setting to support the delivery of public health interventions, in particular those relating to cardiovascular disease. Such interventions are of benefit to our wider communities, whilst supporting the corporate objectives of individual stadia, and can include initiatives such as promoting increased physical activity, healthier diets and tobacco free environments.

The European Healthy Stadia Network is coordinated by Liverpool (UK) based cardiovascular disease prevention charity, Heart of Mersey. It has supported sports stadia across Europe to become healthier environments to both visit and work in for over five years. The Network builds upon a highly successful pilot project, funded by the European Commission, that has worked in eight European countries to help stadia plan, develop and evaluate healthy initiatives with the support of local service providers. The Network already has over 150 member organisations, including many famous clubs and stadia, such as Liverpool FC, AC and Inter Milan, FC Sevilla, Lord's Cricket Ground and the Finnair Stadium in Helsinki.

Through this new collaboration with the world's only global body dedicated to heart disease and stroke - the World Heart Federation, the Network is set to grow even further. In its role as official health partner for UEFA, the World Heart Federation will part-fund the European Healthy Stadia Network over the remainder of 2010 to engage new sports clubs and key stakeholders from the complementary areas of sport and health. The Network will also aim to work more closely with organisers of large scale sporting events, such as the London 2012 Olympic Games, to adopt healthy policies and practices.

Not only will the Network encourage sports stadia to promote healthy lifestyles to fans and visitors, but stadia representing different sports from many countries will be encouraged to submit examples of how they can become healthier workplaces for stadia staff. A number of these examples will be used as case studies to illustrate best practice in 'workplace wellness', which will be the theme for this year's World Heart Day.

The World Heart Federation, CEO Helen Alderson said 'We are delighted to be working with the Healthy Stadia Network, as it gives us the opportunity to deliver our heart-health message to a wide range of audiences across Europe. It will also help support our work with members promoting active living to both adults and children. The resulting case studies in workplace health can then be promoted on World Heart Day and beyond.'

The European Healthy Stadia Network is part funded by the World Heart Federation through its partnership with UEFA





Commenting on this new collaboration, Robin Ireland, Chief Executive of Heart of Mersey and Network Director said: 'This is a wonderful opportunity for the European Healthy Stadia Network to raise the profile of health through sport by developing health policies and practices with new sports stadia, leagues and governing bodies of sport across Europe. We are very grateful to the World Heart Federation for its support in 2010, and look forward to working with its members in raising awareness of World Heart Day through our new collaboration.'

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About the European Healthy Stadia Network

The European Healthy Stadia Network supports sports stadia across Europe to promote public health interventions to the mutual benefit of fans, staff, local communities and clubs/stadia themselves. The Network builds upon a highly successful 30 month pilot project funded by the European Commission, and already has over 150 member organisations.

About the World Heart Federation

The World Heart Federation is a nongovernmental organization which unites its members and leads the global fight against heart disease and stroke, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries. Its membership is comprised of 202 medical societies and heart foundations from over 100 countries.

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