

EU Health Highlights

News about health in the EU from EuroHealthNet Brussels Office
February 2009

1. Main EU Stories

- ***Patients' rights in cross-border healthcare***

The European Council (the EU body comprising national governments) has submitted amendments to a European Commission proposal for a directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare. The amendments are currently being considered by several parliamentary committees. EU Health Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou pointed out that the three main objectives of the directive are:

- *Clarify established rights;*
- *Ensure quality and safety of healthcare in the EU;*
- *Foster cooperation between member state healthcare systems*

The commissioner stated the directive did not aim to promote mobility in healthcare treatment, but rather make people aware of their existing rights. MEPs have however expressed concern about the need to regulate and address the potential impact of more people seeking treatment abroad. There are also concerns about ensuring an equal level of treatment for all EU citizens, given the varying ability among member states to introduce reimbursement schemes for treatment abroad. This has raised concerns if the plan will increase health inequities. The directive is due to go to vote in the parliament's plenary session on 23 April.

http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/news/streaming/crossborder/crossborder_en.htm

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5661632>

- ***Start of Czech presidency of the EU***



The Czech Republic takes over the Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2009, and has set out its priorities for health on the presidency website www.eu2009.cz. The Czech health minister, Tomáš Julínek, also spoke about the priorities in a meeting with the European parliament environment committee on 23 January.

- Among the priorities, Mr Julínek highlighted the following key areas:
- *Cross-border healthcare and financial sustainability of health care;*
 - *Rare diseases*

- Antibiotic resistance
- Telemedicine and e-health;

Czech presidency health priorities:

<http://www.cz2009.eu/en/eu-policies/employment-social-policy-health-and-consumer-affairs-council/health/health-675/>

Full text of speech by Tomáš Julínek:

<http://www.cz2009.eu/en/news-and-documents/speeches-interviews/speech-of-minister-tomas-julinek--in-the-envi-commitee-of-the-european-parliament--7031/>

- ***EU Health Policy Forum***

The EU Health Policy Forum (EUHPF) took place on 21 January in Brussels. The significant impact of the financial crisis on health was the most pressing issue for the forum participants, and the need to act quickly led to the drafting of an Open Letter calling for action to be taken. The final document will be distributed to all EUHPF members for their approval by mid-February.

Concerning the implementation of the Health Strategy, the European commission felt it was important for the EUHPF to contribute to the implementation of the strategy and will be collecting inputs on the specific priorities.

A draft resolution to the EUHPF was presented by Clive Needle, with key aspects including the importance of improving partnerships with stakeholders to deliver the 'together for health' COM objectives and for member organisations to work collaboratively to develop effective health approaches across EU. The draft resolution was adopted unanimously.

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/health_forum/health_forum

- ***The European Open Health Forum conference: "Developing and Implementing Health in the European Union"***

The European Open Health Forum conference took place in Brussels, with an opening address by Health Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou, with the aim of increasing the profile of health in the EU policies through discussion between EU policy makers and stakeholders on pressing public health issues and their impacts on the Community. Numerous EuroHealthNet members participated, and network office director Clive Needle made a keynote speech in the first session on the EU health strategy.

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/health_forum/open_2008/index_en.htm

- ***European commission adopts Green paper on the EU Workforce for Health***

The Commission has adopted a Green paper on the EU Workforce for Health, which looks at how Europe can develop a high-quality health workforce of sufficient capacity and with the right skills. This includes whole health systems approaches.

A public consultation process on the Green paper was also launched, to obtain stakeholders' views on a wide range of issues connected with the healthcare workforce and preparing for the care of an ageing population.

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_systems/workforce_en.htm?e

- ***EU-wide School Fruit Scheme***

The European Commission held a conference on the EU-wide School Fruit Scheme, together with around 300 stakeholders, to discuss existing initiatives and the many issues connected with running school fruit schemes effectively.

The EU-wide School Fruit Scheme was originally proposed by the Commission and was set up following an agreement in 2008 among EU agriculture ministers, to provide fruit and vegetables to school children. The scheme requires participating Member States to set up strategies and to share best practices and will begin at the start of the 2009/2010 school year.

http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/markets/fruitveg/sfs/events/conference/index_en.htm

- ***The effects of indoor environments on children's health***

On 28–29 January European policy-makers met in Luxembourg at the Thematic Meeting on Healthy Environments to recommend actions and policies to protect children's health from poor indoor air quality, obesity and injuries. Following on from concerns about the possible increase in the use of cheap heating fuels due to the financial crisis, with data showing that 10,000 children aged 0–4 years are estimated to die each year from households' use of solid fuel, 90% of them in low- and middle-income countries.

The meeting was set up to evaluate the implementation of the 2004 Children's Environment and Health Action Plan for Europe (CEHAPE) to substantially reduce children's mortality and morbidity by improving the quality of indoor air, in preparation for the Fifth Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health, which is being organized by the WHO Regional Office for Europe and will be hosted by the Government of Italy in 2010.

http://www.euro.who.int/eprise/main/WHO/MediaCentre/PR/2009/20090126_1?language=

- ***Joint conference on well-being in the workplace***

A joint conference on well-being in the workplace is due to take place in Berlin on 17 & 18 March, organised by joint conference of the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe and the German Alliance for Mental Health, in co-operation with the European Commission, DG Health and Consumers, and supported by the German Federal Ministry of Health.

The conference will focus on maintaining good mental health at the workplace through the social integration and empowerment of vulnerable people, as well as looking at how to tackle the stigma and prejudices relating to mental health problems.

<http://www.mental-wellbeing.net/>

- ***“Help 2.0” campaign launched***

The first phase of the new "Help 2.0 – For a Life Without Tobacco" campaign was launched on 19 January. The aim of the campaign is to collect messages from young people, with the help of youth organisations, about how not to start smoking, how to stop smoking, and how to avoid the dangers of passive smoking.



<http://www.needyourhelp.eu/>

- ***Europe needs to intensify and double cancer screening***

In its first implementation report on cancer screening, the European Commission has said that despite the progress that has been made in the field of cancer screening, less than half of the minimum recommended numbers of screenings take place in the EU each year.

The report states that:

- For breast cancer, only 22 Member States are running or establishing population-based screening programmes;
- For cervical cancer, only 15 Member States are running or establishing population-based screening programmes;
- For colorectal cancer, only 12 Member States are running or establishing population-based screening programmes

The report recommends that Member States improve or implement population-based cancer screening programmes, and it is hoped that these findings will help to renew the commitment to put in place breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening as a crucial and cost-effective measure to reduce the burden of cancer in the EU.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/113&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN>

The report:

http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/genetics/documents/com_2008_882.en.pdf

2. News from Member States / Organisations

- ***INPES calls for proposals on health promotion and tackling HIV***

The French institute INPES (L'Institut National de Prévention et d'Education pour la Santé) has launched two new calls for project proposals, one concerning the prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and the other for projects on health promotion and health education.

The call regarding the prevention of HIV and STIs is concerned with supporting local associations in four key areas: to maintain a high level of information and rate of prevention of these conditions among the general population, the promotion of preventative behaviour among those most at risk, promoting HIV detection services and providing support for people infected with the condition, to helping them to lead as full lives as possible. The funding allocated for these projects is on average €40 000 per project.

The institute says that the work is important in dealing with the fact that many people are unaware of, or unconcerned about, the dangers of these conditions. Furthermore, there are large differences when it comes to knowledge about HIV and STIs, depending on a person's generation, level of education and gender.

The other call for proposals looks at establishing regional centres of health, with the aim of focusing health expertise at the regional level to provide greater local support for health promotion and education. A total of €7m in funding has been allocated for the implementation of these projects.

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

- ***Cancer biggest cause of death in Netherlands***

Statistics Netherlands reports that in 2008, cancer mortality exceeded cardiovascular mortality for the first time, with 33.9 thousand individuals dying of cancer compared to 33.1 thousand cardiovascular deaths in the first ten months of the year. The data shows that the risk of dying from cardiovascular diseases has been reduced considerably since the mid-1980s, while at the same time, the number of cancer deaths has gradually risen.

<http://www.cbs.nl/en-GB/menu/themas/gezondheid-welzijn/publicaties/artikelen/archief/2009/2009-2687-wm.htm>

- **Wales Centre for Health Annual Report Released**



Wales Centre for Health
Canolfan Iechyd Cymru

Highlights include the launch of the All Wales Mental Health Promotion Network and the continuing work of the Physical Activity and Nutrition Networks for Wales.

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/news.cfm?orgid=568&contentid=11282>

- ***Swedish Environment Ministry publishes priorities***

Climate change, the marine environment, biodiversity and green economics are among the top priorities for Sweden's Ministry for the Environment during the country's forthcoming presidency of the EU, as outlined in a document which sets out their main areas of focus and key meetings in the second half of the year.

<http://www.sweden.gov.se/sb/d/2023/a/119561>

- ***6th Nordic Health Promotion Research Conference***

The 6th Nordic Health Promotion Research Conference will take place on 20-22 August, with the following theme: "The role of health promotion in the transition of the Nordic welfare states". The deadline for submitting abstracts to this conference is March 1 and the deadline to register for the event is July 31.

http://www.nhv.se/customer/templates/InfoPage_1422.aspx?epslanguage=SV

- ***WHO sets out timeline and budget for global health strategy***

The WHO has released an important draft budgeting document which sets out proposed timeframes and the estimated costs of implementing its 'Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property', mid-way through the 124th session of the organisation's executive board in Geneva from 19 to 26 January.

The document sets out the funding required from 2009 to 2015 for the implementation of the strategy, with an estimated total cost of approximately US\$149 billion. Among the proposed objectives and timelines are:

- mapping global research and development with a view to identifying gaps in research and development on diseases that disproportionately affect developing countries
- Framing, developing and supporting effective policies that promote the development of capacities for health innovation
- supporting information sharing and capacity building in the application and management of intellectual property with respect to health related innovation and the promotion of public health in developing countries

http://www.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/EB124/B124_16Add2-en.pdf

- ***WHO receives funds for children's medicines***

The WHO has received US\$ 9.7 million in grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to work with UNICEF to carry out research in children's medicines, with the aim of increasing the number of medicines designed and formulated specifically for children. The grant will support research in the following key areas:

- determine the optimum dosage forms for paediatric medicines (e.g. small tablets, dispersible tablets, powders);
- develop dosing guides (e.g. a review of existing priority medicines and the identification of the appropriate doses for new medicines for children);
- develop guidelines for testing, treatment and use of medicines in children, including guidelines on conducting clinical trials in children.

http://www.who.int/entity/mediacentre/news/releases/2009/childsize_medicines_2009_0121/en/index.html

- ***Injuries affect poor children most, says WHO report***

The WHO Regional Office for Europe has released a report entitled '*The European report on child injury prevention*,' which reveals that 5 out of 6 childhood deaths from injuries occur in poor countries. The report adds that there are up to eight times as many deaths in the countries in the European Region with the highest rates of injury compared to those in the countries with the lowest injury levels.

The report also shows that the risk can be equally high for children in affluent countries who are living in poverty, with a poor child living in the suburbs of an affluent western metropolis, such as London or Paris, possibly having the same risk of injury as one living in a country with developing economy.

The report was released as a companion to the joint WHO–United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) World report on child injury prevention, which was launched at the same time in Hanoi, Viet Nam.

http://www.euro.who.int/mediacentre/PR/2008/20081208_1?language=English

- ***Essential medicines out of reach for many, says new WHO report***

An alarming lack of availability of essential medicines in the public sector drives patients to pay higher prices in the private sector or go without, according to a WHO study reported in the *The Lancet*.

The study shows that among the countries surveyed, there is an average public-sector availability of only 38%, and that patients are forced to buy medicine from the private sector where treatments are frequently unaffordable

http://www.who.int/entity/medicines/news/MedPrices_Word2.pdf

- ***WHO data shows increase in newly reported HIV cases in Europe***

Case reporting data from 2007 show that the number of newly reported cases in the WHO European Region continues to rise, with the annual rate of HIV infection almost doubling between 2000 and 2007, from 39 to 75 per million people.

Zsuzsanna Jakab, Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), said: “HIV/AIDS remains a major public health challenge for the whole of Europe. ECDC and the WHO Regional Office for Europe are working together closely to address this challenge.”

http://www.euro.who.int/mediacentre/PR/2008/20081128_2?language=English

3. Other Events and Publications

- ***ISEqH international conference: call for abstracts***

The International Society for Equity in Health (ISEqH) has issued a call for abstracts for its 5th International Conference, organised in partnership with Greek School of Public Health and Canadian Society for International Health which will take place on June 9-11 in Crete, Greece.

<http://www.iseqh-conference2009.com/>

- ***NICE releases conceptual framework for public health***

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) in the UK has released its emerging conceptual framework for public health. This is based on the experience of the first 3 years of producing public health guidance at NICE (2005–2008).

The framework has been used to shape the revisions to NICE's public health process and methods manuals for use after 2009, and will serve as the basis for public health guidance, which NICE will produce from April 2009.

http://www.sciencedirect.com/science?_ob=ArticleURL&_udi=B73H6-4V5NT10-3&_user=3824252&_rdoc=1&_fmt=&_orig=search&_sort=d&_view=c&_acct=C000055308&_version=1&_urlVersion=0&_userid=3824252&md5=878b290fb9931fd8f676165b79e9abe4

- ***NICE issues public health guidelines on promoting physical activity for children***

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) in the UK has issued guidance on promoting physical activity and sport for all children and young people both at school and with the family.

The guidelines have been issued following studies which show that the national recommended levels of physical exercise among young people are not being met, which is causing concern about the rising levels of obesity in the country.

<http://www.nice.org.uk/media/185/55/2009002PromotingPhysicalActivityForChildren.pdf>

4. Calendar of international events

13.02.2009	Vienna: International Meeting on Emerging Diseases and Surveillance http://imed.isid.org/
18-20.02.2009	Prague: eHealth 2009 - "eHealth for Individuals, Society and Economy", organised by Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic in cooperation with the European Commission http://www.ehealth2009.cz/Default.aspx
20.02.2009	World Day of Social Justice
12-13.02.2009 (tbc)	Riga, Latvia: Health in All Policies (HiAP) in the Latvian context: (Policy dialogue) http://www.euro.who.int/observatory/About/20090112_1
12-13.02.2009	Bonn, Germany: Environmental burden of disease (EBD) in the European Region http://www.euro.who.int/envhealth/data/20090108_1
10-11.03.2009	Vienna: Conference on health promotion in school, organised by Fund Healthy Austria
12-13.03.2009	Edinburgh, UK: EuroHealthNet General Assembly By invitation
27-28.04.2009	Perugia, Italy: 6th European Conference on Promoting Workplace Health
27.04. – 01.05.2009	Istanbul: 12th World Congress on Public Health

Also see Events Calendar on www.eurohealthnet.eu for upcoming events

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

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