



The HFE Secretariat wishes you Happy Holidays and a Happy New Year 2010!

Editorial

John Bowis, new Honorary President of HFE

I am honoured to have been elected new HFE honorary President for the term 2009-2011. For the next 2 years, I truly hope that in working with the HFE members will become a positive step to the further developing and improving of HFE's status as an indispensable actor in the European Health arena.

The development of BEST health practices is one of the driving forces of European integration and should constantly be in the minds of policy-makers throughout the EU.

Reducing development inequalities between Member States, ensuring patients better access to medical technology and professional care, providing clinicians with safe and reliable solutions to provide high quality care must progressively play an active role in European Policy.

Health First Europe works for the construction of a new public strategy for EU Health, one that focuses on the people, their needs and the concept that health care must be oriented towards returning patients into normal life. This patient-centric model holds great potential for evolving health systems.

Our slogan, "Improved healthcare through innovative solutions" translates our core objective, which is to develop the current European provisions on Health and provide them with alternatives through reforming the current available mechanisms. This demands making tough choices in budgetary spending, but with the overriding objective of returning patients to productive life as quickly as possible.

As the newly elected honorary HFE President I propose to see this objective thrive. I believe that there are weaknesses within EU and Member States mainly based on the false assumption that health provisions are about trade-offs in cost versus access. Health policies that need to be tackled effectively through a kind of cooperation and institutional dialogue that, not only involves civil participation but considers, in its development, the needs of patients, healthcare providers and governments together, but always considering how we adapt the health system to improve access.

Health First Europe is an essential player in developing and advancing EU health policy and I look forward to working in close cooperation with its members in the pursuit of a competitive Europe where Health Equals Wealth.



John Bowis
Honorary President
Health First Europe

HFE Training Event at the European Parliament

On 30th September, Health First Europe (HFE) organised a training event at the European Parliament which was hosted by MEP Marian Harkin and supported by MEP Antonia Parvanova, who were each representing the European Parliament and the Environment Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) Committee.

With this training event, HFE, as a platform for healthcare stakeholders, wanted to continue contributing to the political debate on EU health. This was HFE's first event since the European elections in June, aiming at the disseminating of knowledge on the current and future state of health policies in the European Union. The event attracted over 35 participants from varied backgrounds, from Members of the European Parliament e.g. the former Portuguese Health Minister Correia de Campos and MEP Gay Mitchell, to MEP Assistants and members of staff from numerous health concerned associations.

Overall the training event was an interesting gathering of ideas from the many areas and groups working on the monitoring and developing of the European health system and its priorities. It ended with a reception in the European Parliament during which the participants were able to exchange view points and continue a debate that will certainly develop further in the future.



European Parliament Better Treatment for Patients Day: Feedback Survey

An on-line survey was created in order to assess the success of the event and to collect some further feedback. HFE is keen on improving its action and image and greatly values the opinion of participants.

To access the survey, please click [here](#).

John Bowis elected HFE's honorary president

Health First Europe (HFE) elected former MEP and UK Health Minister, Mr John Bowis, as Honorary President. The election took place at the Association's Annual General Meeting on the 17 November 2009.

John Bowis describes himself as being a "health enthusiast" and is keen on pursuing his activities and political action towards a better EU health policy.

The former MEP will now carry on a 5 year mandate with Health First Europe and his aim is the recognition of the Association in Brussels and throughout Europe as a valid and coherent organisation, capable of advising and engaging in political discussions over the future of EU health and, in particular, the changes brought about by the Lisbon Treaty.

John Bowis was a UK Conservative MEP in 1999-2009 and before that, UK Minister for Health. *To read the press release, please click [here](#).*

HFE Roundtable "From Nice to Lisbon: an important step for EU Health?"

On 17 November Health First Europe organised a high-level roundtable at the European Parliament entitled "From Nice to Lisbon: an important step forward for EU Health?." Co-hosted by MEP Nessa Childers (Ireland, S&D) and MEP Antonio Correia de Campos (Portugal, S&D), the roundtable was attended by over 40 participants with an interest in EU Health policy. HFE members and other key stakeholders took this opportunity to gain valuable insights into the many changes that will have an impact on health policy in the coming years. The roundtable was promoted to celebrate Health First Europe's (HFE) 5 year anniversary and simultaneously initiate discussion over the future of EU Health policy within the Lisbon Treaty and the newly attributed powers of the European Parliament (EP).

The event was a great success in terms of exchange of opinions and the consideration of the different elements included in healthcare policy-making. Overall, the roundtable discussion fulfilled its primary goal and provided both the speakers and the representatives of stakeholders with a broader image of how the Lisbon Treaty will influence the future of healthcare in the EU.



Premed 2009, 18-19-20 September 2009, Portugal

The Premed Congress was co-organised by the European Medical Association and aimed at the dissemination of knowledge in the area of laboratory medicine and predictive medicine.

For more information and to access the programme, please click [here](#).

Eucomed: MedTech Forum, 6-8 October 2009, Brussels

The event was held under the patronage of Günter Verheugen, Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry and brought together over 400 policy and scientific community leaders. Additionally, it also helped gather representatives from the medical technology industry whose presence was essential for a consistent debate and consensus.

For more information, please click [here](#).

MEP Heart Group, 9 December 2009, Brussels

The European Society of Cardiology promotes the Members of Parliament Heart Group (MEP HG) by providing the group with a secretariat and funding and also by proposing initiatives and debates.

The MEP HG group met in Brussels on 9 December in order to once again promote dialogue and activities at a European level. During this meeting the highlighted topics were, naturally, cardiovascular diseases and the role of the European Institutions.

The meeting was attended by MEP Dirk Sterckx, MEP Linda McAvan, and Professor Simon Capewell from Liverpool University and Professor John Camm from St Georges University in London.

Members of national cardiovascular institutions also attended an event whose objective was to exchange experiences, information and data between stakeholders.

The Group globally aims to provide input and guidance on the conclusion of cardiovascular diseases in the EU's Public Health Programme and Health Strategy in the EU.

For more information, please click [here](#).

ETHEL Anniversary Symposium, 21-22 October 2009, Brussels

The European Health Telematics Association celebrated its 10th Anniversary on 21-22 October, with a symposium on "Joining for Visions of Person Centred Health".

The event was attended by health professionals and policy makers from the European Commission and national governments, as well as members of the medical industry and academics. It focused mainly on E-Health and future challenges as well as the current state of telematic medicine, routine medicine and the instruments available.

To access to the presentations given at the event please click [here](#).

International Diabetes Federation, World Diabetes Day, 14 November 2009

Among its numerous activities this autumn, the organisation helped to promote World Diabetes Day on 14 November.

According to the Federation's website over 1500 pictures have been submitted from across the world on the event that involved people dressing up in blue or lighting their homes with blue lights.

The International Diabetes Federation is a global organisation that intensively works on raising awareness of diabetes and its associated problems as well as the improvement of care for those suffering from the condition.

For more information on the World Diabetes Day, please click [here](#).

European Commission new mandate

The Treaty of Lisbon has brought some significant changes to the EU institutions and to specific areas of concern for HFE.

Two top positions have been appointed, that of

President of the European Council that went to the former Belgian Prime Minister Herman Van Rompuy and that of High Representative for Foreign Affairs, attributed to Baroness Catherine Ashton.

Following these appointments, the President of the European Commission, Manuel Barroso, proceeded in

nominating the future Commissioners and their respective portfolios.

France was awarded the Internal Market and Services post, Spain will be in charge of Competition and Germany will lead the Energy portfolio.

John Dalli (Malta) was nominated Health and Consumer Policy Commissioner and will replace Androulla Vassiliou (Cyprus).

Despite John Dalli's lack of health related experience he is regarded as a good manager and especially known for introducing a modern tax system in Malta. He is a respected former government member and a successful politician within national matters.

Future Commissioner Dalli will take on an expanded portfolio in which issues such as pharmaceutical products and medical devices will become part of the Health Commissioner's responsibility and are expected to reflect a greater European concern for patient's rights and protection.

The final step for the formation of the new European Commission team will take place from 11 to the 19 January 2010 when the European Parliament will conduct its hearings, both in Brussels and Strasbourg, with a final decision expected on 26 of January, when MEPs will vote on President Barroso's nominations.

For more information, please click [here](#).

EU Health News

Cross-border Healthcare

The Cross Border Health Care directive proposal was recently halted by the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO).

Some Member States, namely Spain and Hungary, were vehemently opposed to some of the proposed articles that interfered with national sovereignty and the respective national healthcare systems. The main objections of the proposal related to the reimbursement problem and types of medical care that would be available at a cross border level.

Currently, both the Council and the European Commission are considering dropping the proposal and leaving it to the next mandates to either reformulate or restart the process of negotiations.

In the meantime, the Spanish Presidency has communicated that it is considering reviewing the dossier during the first semester of 2010.

To read the article from the European Voice, please click [here](#).

Health Inequalities

The European Commission has recently released a Communication entitled "Solidarity in Health: Reducing Health Inequalities in the EU" aimed at complementing the Commission's 2008-2013 "Together for Health" strategy.

This Communication tries to tackle the gaps that exist between the Member States health systems by focusing on their inequalities and social impact. The European Commission proposes to improve data collection through the monitoring of the evolution of inequalities and by determining which need to be acted upon with more urgency and which best practices should be implemented. In addition, it

further highlighted the possibility in assisting Member States in making better use of the EU cohesion policy and structural funds to support activities and address factors contributing to health inequalities. The European Council will now analyse and debate the paper during the first months of 2010 under the Spanish Presidency.

Sharp Injuries in Hospitals

In October, the European Commission released a proposal for a directive on "the prevention from sharp injuries in the hospital and healthcare sector concluded by HOSPEEM and the EPSU", COM (2009) 577 final.

The proposal that follows an agreement reached in July 2009 between employers and trade unions of the sector, aims at the protection of workers at risk of injuries from all medical "sharp" devices (mainly needle-sticks). Principally it intends to provide an integrated approach to risk assessment, prevention, training and information as well as a response and follow up procedure mechanism.

In accordance to Article 139 of the EC Treaty the proposal is now at the European Council awaiting discussion and a unanimous vote reinforced by the normal consultation of the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions.

To view the Framework Agreement on Prevention from Sharp Injuries in the Hospital and Health Care Sector, please click [here](#).

To view the July 2006 European Parliament resolution on healthcare workers and blood-borne infections due to needle stick injuries, please click [here](#).

To consult the Communication from the Commission on 'Improving quality and productivity at work: Community strategy 2007-2012 on health and safety at work, please click [here](#).

Calendar of upcoming Events

23-25/02/10: 4th Global Patients Congress, Istanbul, Turkey

The International Alliance of Patients Organisations is organising its 4th Global Congress and is expecting a high turn up in participants. The Congress will have a whole day dedicated to members which will be opened by Ted Karpf, of the World Health Organisation Partnerships Office.

On the list for discussion during the 3 days are numerous topics of interest to European patients such as, building a health community, discussing access to treatment, debating future actions for combating chronic diseases and the matter of clinical trials.

For more information, please click [here](#).

For more information, please visit www.healthfirsteurope.org