

Editorial

John Bowis, new Honorary President of HFE

Health First Europe recently welcomed the adoption of the Council Directive implementing the Framework Agreement on the prevention from sharp injuries in the hospital and healthcare sector concluded by the European Hospital and Healthcare Employers' Association (HOSPEEM) and the European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU).

As Health First Europe Honorary President and former MEP, this important achievement means a great deal to me.

In 2004, HFE was already willing to protect EU healthcare workers from injuries with used needles and other medical sharps. It has been campaigning ever since for the implementation of binding measures.

Together with MEPs Liz Lynne and Stephen Hughes, we supported this endeavour and facilitated the lobbying of various stakeholders towards the European Parliament. It started with the HFE event organised in the European Parliament entitled 'HFE warning on World AIDS day: Europe's healthcare workers at risk'. This seminar figured the start of a long process.

Throughout this legislative journey, there were many politicians contacted, stakeholders consulted, awareness raising campaigns organised. All this dedication and energy were necessary in order for us to have a directive. We can therefore be very proud of ourselves.

We can also recall the impulse given by past Commissioner for Employment, Vladimír Špidla, whereby he urged social partners to negotiate a European-wide framework agreement on measures to tackle the issue. They were successful in July 2009 after six months of intense negotiations.

We then embraced the initiative and pushed it forward, thus paving the way to the Council of Ministers.

On 8 March finally, the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council endorsed the Agreement making the directive legally binding in Europe.

The purpose of the directive is to achieve the safest possible working environment, to prevent injuries and to protect workers at risk by setting up an integrated approach in risk assessment, risk prevention, training information, awareness raising and monitoring.

Although the twenty-seven Member States and the three EEA countries still have three years to turn the directive into national rules, it surely has represented a collective sigh of relief from doctors, nurses and healthcare workers.

It is indeed estimated that, each year, almost one million sharp injuries are preventable. Some of them can be harmful while some of them lead to serious infections such as HIV or hepatitis. The physical and psychological burden is not solely borne by workers but also by their families, health systems and society. Workers who spend their times saving others' lives should not pay a heavier price.

Last 23 March, Health First Europe organised a reception gathering nearly 40 people from across the healthcare sector (policy makers, regional officers, industry representatives, health workers and insurers) to celebrate the adoption of the new legislation. This event which was hosted by MEP Elizabeth Lynne in the European Parliament showed, once again, that they were many reasons to be optimistic and thankful for.

We now look forward to the careful implementation and follow-up.

Yours sincerely,

John Bowis
Honorary President Health First Europe



Health First Europe reception at the European Parliament: “EU legislation to reduce injuries for healthcare workers”

On 23 March 2010, HFE celebrated the adoption by the EPSCO Council of the Directive implementing the Framework Agreement on the prevention from sharp injuries in the hospital and healthcare sector.

Over 40 people from across the healthcare sector (policy makers, regional officers, industry representatives, health workers and insurers) attended this event which was hosted by MEP Elizabeth Lynne (ALDE, UK) in the European Parliament.

Among the distinguished speakers were Mr Roy Bridges, an HFE Executive Committee member, MEP Elizabeth Lynne, Mr Máximo González, President of the Spanish General Council of Nurses, Ms Ana Salegui, a Spanish nurse who got infected following a needle-stick injury, Mr Paul de Raeve, Secretary General of the European Federation of Nurses and Mr Bert Van Caelenberg, EUROFEDOP Secretary General.

“The European Parliament may get a lot of criticism from national press but this is a good example of practical progress.” “Working together can lead to positive achievements which are cause for thanks and celebration”, commented Mr Bridges before opening the reception.



From left to right: Jeremiah Mwangi (Policy and External Affairs Director, IAPO); Patricia Lamas Sánchez (HFE Secretariat); Hussain Jafri (IAPO Chair)

This Congress was a unique experience for HFE to be in contact with other patient organisations and global healthcare stakeholders. Around 130 patients’ groups representatives and other health stakeholders gathered in Istanbul, Turkey on that occasion.

Some of HFE members participated in the Congress for instance the International Diabetes Federation or the Pelvic Pain Support Network which also shared their insight knowledge on patient advocacy.



From left to right: Albert van der Zeijden (former IAPO’s Chair and HFE member) and Patricia Lamas Sánchez (HFE Secretariat) at the HFE stand

To know more about the Congress, please click [here](#).



From left to right: Ana Salegui; Roy Bridges; Paul de Raeve; Liz Lynne MEP; Máximo González

To read a full report of the event, please click [here](#).

HFE at IAPO’s Global Patients Congress

Last February, HFE attended the International Alliance Patients Organisation’s (IAPO) 4th Global Patients Congress that focused on 'Strengthening Healthcare Systems Globally: The Value of Patient Engagement'.

HFE welcomes two MEP Supporters

Nessa Childers, an MEP elected in the constituency of Ireland East, joined HFE as MEP Supporter in March this year. She is a member of the S&D group of the European Parliament and sits in the ENVI Committee.

Along with MEP Childers, António Fernando Correia de Campos joined HFE. He is a socialist MEP from Portugal and was Minister for Health of his country for several years. He sits in IMCO Committee and also in ITRE Committee as an alternate Member.

The number of HFE MEP Supporters is currently eighteen.

Eucomed (European Medical Technology Industry) releases information on late payments

Under the title "Brazil and Mexico pay suppliers faster than many EU countries", Eucomed latest press release warns about the recurring problem whereby suppliers from the private sector suffer delays in being paid administrations, mainly hospitals. This problem causes acute accounting issues for small and medium technology firms which cannot handle the financial pressure.

To read more, please click [here](#).

The European Federation of National Associations of Orthopaedics and Traumatology (EFORT) is preparing for the 11th EFORT Congress Madrid 2010

The 11th EFORT Congress will bring together many orthopaedic and trauma specialists from across Europe. This year conference will take place in Madrid (Spain) before the end of the Spanish Presidency of

the Council of the European Union, starting on 2 June. This 3 days seminar aims to focus on the exchange of scientific data.

To read more, please click [here](#).

The European Union of Private Hospitals (UEHP) is organising the 1st European Congress of Private Hospitals

The Congress will take place in Paris on 27-28 May in Paris. It is entitled "Towards a Europe for Health: free choice, efficiency and quality of healthcare – Why Europe needs private hospitals". Under this promising headline, the event is expected to bring together many prominent stakeholders and politicians (Commissioner Dalli, HFE President Bowis, MEPs Grossetête, Parvanova, Kadenbach, Cabrnock, French Minister for health Bachelot, UEHP representatives, etc.).

To read more, please click [here](#).

EU Health News

New appointments for Commissioner Dalli and moves within DG SANCO

The newly appointed Maltese Commissioner in charge of Health and Consumer Policy, John Dalli, has recently built up his Cabinet and transformed the composition of the Directorate General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO).

Joanna Darmanin (Malta) is joining as Head of Cabinet and Nils Behrndt (Germany) as Deputy Head. He will now be in charge of health dossiers which were removed from DG Enterprise to be allocated to DG SANCO, namely pharmaceuticals, medical devices and cosmetics.

Within the DG SANCO, cosmetics and medical devices will from now on be part of the Consumer affairs Unit, while pharmaceuticals will be handled within the Public health Unit headed by Andrzej Ryś. Nick Fahy, under the supervision of Mr Ryś, will head the Health information service dealing with e-health issues.

Further positive news for health stakeholders is the nomination of Paola Testori Coggi, the former deputy head of DG SANCO, to Director General of DG SANCO replacing Robert Madelin (the head of DG SANCO for the past 6 years) who will head up the Directorate General Information Society (DG INFSO). It is worth

highlighting the fact that the most important focus of DG INFSO is the European digital agenda, including e-health issues.

EP intergroup on ageing

The European Parliament's Intergroup on Ageing and Intergenerational Solidarity had their first meeting in Strasbourg on 21 January. A second meeting took place in Brussels on 24 February with the Bureau members.

MEPs Elizabeth LYNNE (ALDE, UK), Kartika Liotard (GUE/NGL, Netherlands), Milan Cabrnock (ECR, Czech Republic) and Kinga Göncz (S&D, Hungary) attended. MEPs Lambert Van Nistelrooij (EPP-ED, Netherlands) and Cristina Gutierrez-Cortines (EPP-ED, Spain) were also represented. During this last meeting, which aimed at finalising the work programme of the intergroup regarding the committees work priorities, no detailed timetables were agreed on.

The Intergroup on Ageing was re-established on 10 December 2009 after ensuring the support of 40 MEPs.

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

Organ Transplantation

Health

Last 16 March, the European Parliament's Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI Committee) approved its report on the draft directive establishing "Standards of quality and safety of human organs intended for transplantation," under the rapporteurship of MEP Miroslav Mikolášik (EPP, Slovakia).

Miroslav Mikolášik explained after the vote that "the objective is to have more organs for more patients." Moreover, he stressed that one of the requirements for this initiative is to successfully implement the phase concerning the "reinforced cooperation between Member States".

Currently many States are excluded from the two existing trans-European transplant organisations, yet "there are organs of good quality with good traceability" in all countries, he added.

To read the text of the draft directive, please click [here](#).

E-health conferences

Firstly, the conclusions of the conference entitled "E-health – a driver for growth and innovation?" have been published on the website of European Voice (the most read EU news publication).

This event was held on 23 February during the course of a transatlantic debate and targeted two questions:

- "What can information technologies do to improve the delivery of healthcare?"

- "How should the gap between promise and practice be closed?"

Secondly, the e-Health week 2010 took place in Barcelona from 15 to 18 March. Many high level debates were held following the motto of the Ministerial conference: "eHealth for sustainable healthcare: global changes through local actions".

All presentations are now available online thus allowing an interesting review of the state of things and opinions of varied stakeholders.

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

To download the presentations, please click [here](#).

Medicinal products for human use: information on products subject to medical prescription

Last 19 March the EP Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE Committee), led by its rapporteur MEP Jorgo Chatzimarkakis (ALDE, Germany) voted in favour of an opinion report on the draft directive and regulation regarding information on medicinal products for human use that aim to improve information on prescription drugs in the European Union.

The draft directive and regulation are part of the so called "Pharma-package" that was presented by the European Commission on 10 December 2008. While the information to patients' initiative has raised many questions, the other two other drafts of the Pharma-package (counterfeit medicines and pharmacovigilance) have not presented many complications nor encountered a great deal of opposition.

All EP Committees' rapporteurs (MEP Christofer Fjellner (EPP, Sweden) for the ENVI Committee, MEP Jorgo Chatzimarkakis for the ITRE Committee, MEPs Cristian Buşoi (ALDE, Romania) and António Fernando Correia De Campo (S&D, Portugal) for IMCO Committee) agree on some basic elements: patients should have access to quality, evidence-based, clear, user-friendly, unbiased information.

For more information on the pharmaceutical package, please click [here](#).

EU health: launch of Journalists Prize

On 25 March 2010, the European Commission launched the 2010 EU Health Prize for journalists. As in the first edition, the prize is dotted with 5,000 euros for first place.

It aims at rewarding journalists who have contributed in a significant way to inform citizens on health issues, especially patient rights. Journalists who wish to participate should submit their contribution by 1 July.

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

14-16/04/10: 18th International Conference on Health Promoting Hospitals & Health Services

The International Conference will take place in Manchester and aims to shed some lights over health inequalities following the WHO Marmot Report (2008) and how to ensure access to quality healthcare through hospitals and health services.

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

22-23/04/10: Informal Health Ministers Meeting

19-20/05/10: The 6th Annual World Health Care Congress—Europe

The 6th Annual World Health Care Congress—Europe is a major international forum where over 400 leaders from all sectors of healthcare can share the best practices and successful initiatives for improved delivery and outcomes in Europe. The 2010 Congress will deal with business models, ICTs, hospital management, medical devices, chronic diseases and prevention, amongst others, with the view of obtaining sustainable health systems in Europe.

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

19-21/05/10: Health Executive Summit

A Health Executive Summit on chronic disease management, on eHealth and on sustainable development is organised by EHTEL in Paris.

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

01-02/06/10: EU Summit on Sharp Injuries

The Spanish General Council of Nursing is organising an EU Summit on Sharps Injuries, supported by the Spanish EU Presidency, focusing specifically on the way how to implement the EU Directive at national, regional and local level.

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

03-04/06/10: Conference on Patient Safety

The Spanish Presidency is organising a Conference on Patient Safety: Healthcare-related Infections, taking place in Madrid.

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

07-08/06/10: Employment & Social Affairs Council

16-18/06/10: Seminar on “Mobility of health workers within the EU”

CESI-Europe is organising a seminar focusing on the “Mobility of health workers within the EU”, taking place in Riga (Latvia).

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

For more information, please visit www.healthfirsteurope.org