

EUROPEAN HEALTH FORUM  
GASTEIN

# Twenty Years

20TH ANNIVERSARY  
1998 – 2017

*Dear Gastein friends,  
dear participants,*

*We are proud and privileged to present you the 20 years anniversary publication of the European Health Forum Gastein. With this book, we want to mark this special occasion by looking back to the beginnings of the Forum and portraying its development, by paying tribute to its pioneers and supporters, and by highlighting what makes the EHFG unique. We are grateful for the selected contributions of some of the many individuals who have helped shape and steer the association and the event, and regret not to be able to give a voice to all of them on these pages. Join us on the walk down memory lane, enjoy the personal stories of the people who have been crucial for the EHFG, look over the timeline to find the major milestones of the last 20 years, learn some EHFG trivia and enjoy some photos of the last two decades. Most of all, this is a big thank you to all of you for helping to make the EHFG what it is today!*

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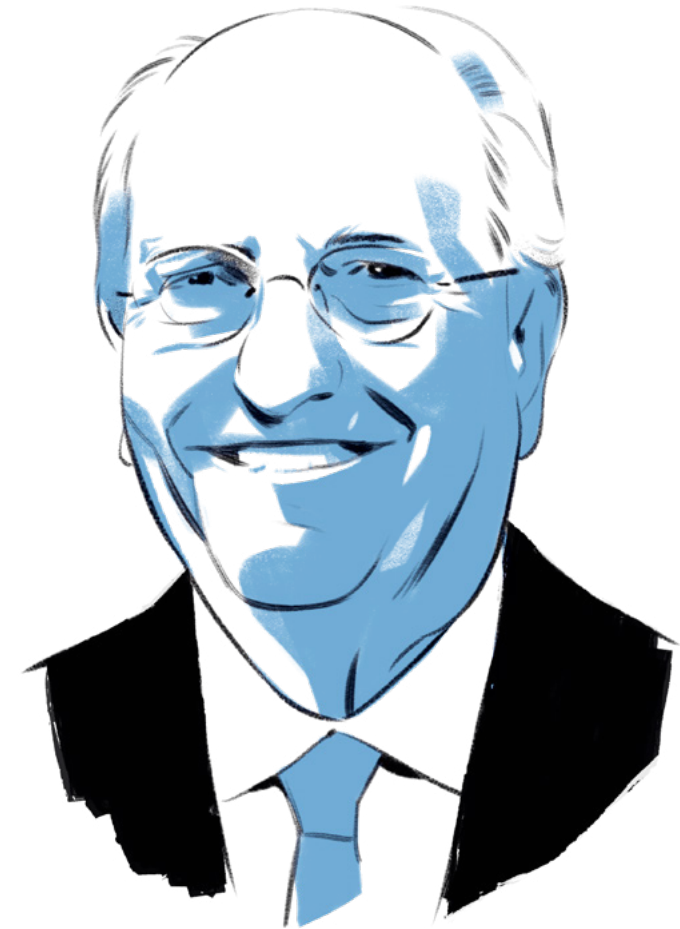
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# Günther Leiner



**EUROPE "AT A CROSSROADS" - WHICH WAY?** *We sat down with the man who founded the European Health Forum Gastein 20 years ago. Back then, at the turn of a new millennium, Prof Günther Leiner talked about European health policy "being at a crossroads". He asked in his opening speech of the first EHFG whether we would follow the model of the USA, providing the latest medical treatment for few, or develop our very own, European approach. On occasion of the organisation's anniversary, he agreed to look back with us at the long way the EHFG – and EU health policy – have come since then.*

You are the founder of the European Health Forum Gastein. Tell us more about the vision behind the event. What made you, despite your manifold obligations as a physician and politician, choose to dedicate this much energy and time to such an initiative?

You could say that it was precisely because of my work as a politician and physician that I started the Forum. The basic, yet quite vague concept formed in my head years before the first EHFG took place. As a politician, I noticed that there was simply no forum focusing on health policy, facilitating the exchange of experience and best practice across borders. This was a real gap needing to be filled: health policy goes far beyond the concerns of individual nations; health is one of the common denominators of governments and people across Europe and globally. Maybe more importantly even: health is something we cannot sustainably secure in isolation from each other, but something we need to work on together. A formal, structured environment in which experts and decision-makers can exchange their views on current topics is thus crucial for our health systems.

Another important motivation to found the Forum was my inner conviction that all stakeholders need to have a say in the process of health policy decision-making. This is the reason behind the EHFG resting on four pillars: public and private sector, science, and civil society. My vision was to devise actionable policy recommendations for local, national and European policy-makers which fuse the experience of all these pillars.

So, these are the ideas behind the EHFG. But how did you move from theory to practice?

Well, to be honest: it became more concrete one summer day during the Salzburg Festival. Our governor Franz Schausberger had invited Commissioner Pádraig Flynn and his wife for lunch, but had to cancel and asked me to jump in. At the end of the meal we were on a first-name basis, he had assured me of the Commission support for an initiative like the EHFG – and the beginning of what turns out to be a lifelong friendship was made. The funny thing was: at that point I had no clear idea of what I was going to do exactly. But I knew I was going to do it.

Would it not have been more sensible, and easier, to have the event take place in Brussels?

In fact, having the initiative take place under national ownership was what made it so interesting for all parties involved from the beginning. The then Austrian Vice-Chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel had suggested already two years earlier that we should try to lay the foundations for more activities in Austria which are meaningful beyond our own borders, which are relevant for other countries and for EU level decision-making. And the Commission saw a chance for us to explore concerns and ideas on behalf of them, and then play the output back to Brussels.

“This was and is my great personal pleasure and joy: witnessing how we have achieved to create an environment where our participants can comfortably discuss very concrete problems, while feeling at ease and having that bit of deceleration that is so crucial for taking a step back and getting a clearer view of things.”



“I have always been on the sunny side of life, and am very thankful for that. The Forum was more than a job for me. It was and is my passion, and I never doubted it.”



Still, it sometimes seems curious that such an international event takes place in a somewhat remote spot. The Gastein Valley is rather hard to reach, a quiet place, seemingly detached from the “real world”.

The Forum takes place in a valley, which is exactly why it is worthwhile undertaking the journey. Because there is no real opportunity for people to scatter, you actually meet them. You get to not only see the EU Commissioner for Health, but you get to know the person behind the position. This was and is my great personal pleasure and joy: witnessing how we have achieved to create an environment where our participants can comfortably discuss very concrete problems, while feeling at ease and having that bit of deceleration that is so crucial for taking a step back and getting a clearer view of things.

When you think of it, Gastein is quite an obvious place to choose. The valley has a long tradition in both health and European politics – many famous personalities have come here to benefit from the healing powers of the local thermal waters, and as early as during the Middle Ages international treaties were signed.

Now in its 20th year, the conference really seems to have proven its right to exist.

What was the key to success?

The people working on it. In the beginning, we were a very small team composed of quite a unique set of individuals bringing their very own skills to the table: Christoph Köstinger, my daughter Elisabeth Leiner, and myself. Christoph for example, who was on my side when first setting up the Forum, is actually a physicist by training. He is equipped with a very logical and straightforward way of thinking – an incredibly helpful asset when launching an initiative like the EHFG. His brother Martin has been part of the IT team since the beginning. Some of our shuttle staff has been working with us since day one. The conference is what it is because there is a lot of lifeblood in it. Another person who has worked by my side throughout the years and has been of tremendous support is the third EHFG Secretary General Matthias Schuppe. The EHFG board members, like Harald Gaugg, former Director General at the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health, have consistently provided a great backing and helped in a number of ways. I could continue this list endlessly.

Also, internationally I have always met with a lot of support, both in terms of advice and in terms of financing. The Commission has always been by our side, and so has the Austrian government and institutions like the World Health Organization. Without these, we would clearly not be where we are today.

In other words, the key to success is people – meeting them, getting along with them, convincing them that what you are doing is the right thing.

Yes. What also matters: you have to be true to yourself and act in all conscience. I have always done what I believed to be right, and had confidence that if I acted accordingly, everything would turn out just fine in the end. Most of the time this approach has worked. I must say, I have always been on the sunny side of life, and am very thankful for that. The Forum was more than a job for me. It was and is my passion, and I never doubted it.

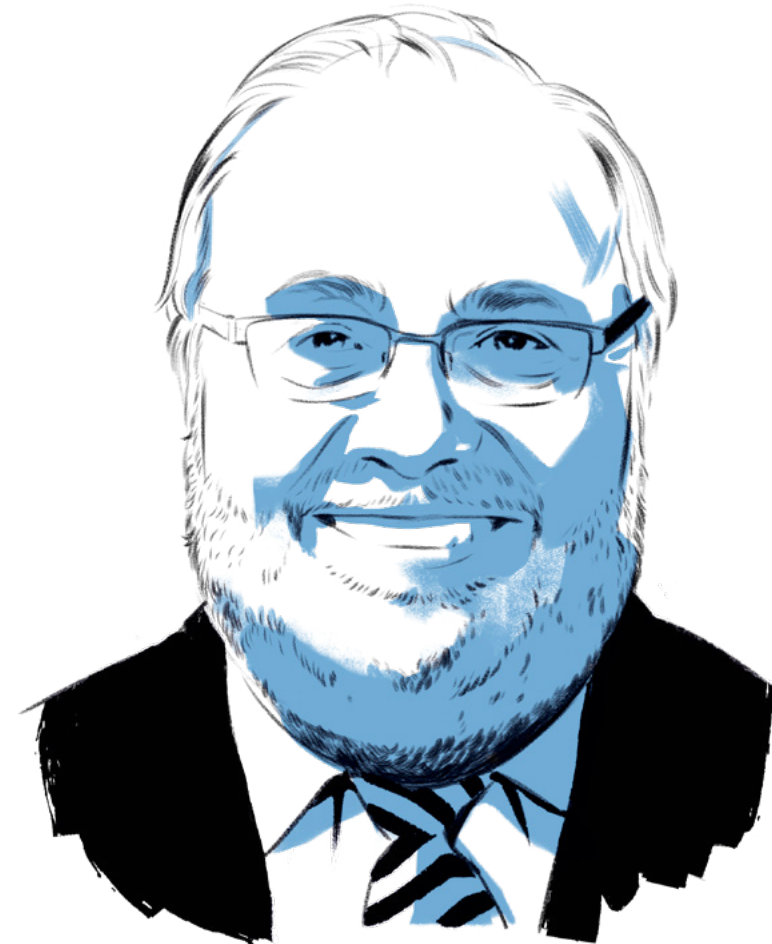
So, you have never questioned what you built?

Of course, there were rough patches, yes. But I never feared that I would be forced to stop the Forum, or that it was the wrong project to begin with, or that it had become redundant.

Back then, you said health policy in Europe was at a crossroads. Do you feel that we took the right path?

Basically, yes. But there is room for improvement. In my opinion, matters that have influence on health across borders should also be a shared responsibility across borders; what goes beyond the national level in terms of impact needs to be lifted on a European level of decision-making. The topic of access to medicines and HTA is but one example for this, you can name many more – from care for rare diseases to a common ethical concept in medicine. I am strongly in favour of a centralised, European approach to these issues. Otherwise I fear we will miss out on opportunities to advance matters of social justice and to catch up where there is a backlog, within and between countries.

# Hans Stein



**IN CONVERSATION WITH HANS STEIN** *We talked about changing attitudes, (not) giving advice, and how a German civil servant ended up supporting the launch of the EHFG. Hans Stein, former Head of Unit “EU Health Policy”, German Federal Ministry of Health, was one of the persons backing the very foundations of the Forum in 1997, as part of his assignment to develop a meaningful EU health policy, and has been a highly valued consultant throughout the years.*

**“The EHFG was fascinating to me because it was completely different to the EU surroundings I was used to. When I spoke in Brussels, it was not me, it was Germany speaking.”**

**What is the most interesting thing about you that we would not learn from your résumé alone?**

Having been on the EU health stage since 1977, right from when the first Health Council took place – when there were only six Member States, when there was no EU Treaty and therefore no legal EU health competence – it was part of my job at the German Health Ministry not only to witness, but to contribute to the slow and difficult process of developing a meaningful EU health policy. I had to ensure that the activities were in line with national German interests. Unexpectedly, in 1997, the support of the creation of the EHFG during the first Austrian EU-presidency became a part of my job. Usually, it cannot be the task of a German civil servant to work for a project in another country. But the order to do it came from the very top, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. For many years, he came to Bad Hofgastein, to do something for his health. During his stay, he got acquainted with the founders of the EHFG. They told him their plans and he assured his support. What can be more in the national interest than to help the head of government to keep his promise?

**Are you a EuroOptimist?**

In order to have an opinion about the present and future EU situation it neither helps to be too optimistic, nor being a pessimist fearing the worst. I try to be realistic, basing my views on facts and experiences. For many years, the EU has been, and still is, in a very critical situation, resulting in the UK intending to leave. Quite surprisingly it seems that Brexit is bringing the remaining 27 countries closer together. The crisis has a number of different reasons, such as the fact that structures created for six Member States cannot function for 27, or the economic gaps between individual members and the financial crisis.

For a long time, health has been considered to be first and foremost a national task. National governments have jealously tried to prevent the transfer of substantial health policy competencies to the supra-national level. They have had difficulties accepting health policy as a matter of EU concern. Sometimes, it

appeared that health policy was one of the last retreats of national policy competence. These national views are changing as countries realise that many of their health problems cannot be solved at a national level, but need EU-level and sometimes even global answers, cooperation, governance and partnership. The best and latest proof for these changing attitudes may be that health has become a permanent item on the agenda for the G20 meetings.

**What inspires you?**

I am inspired and passionate about the EU, because I believe that the EU can give at least some of the needed answers. The specific legal health competence may be and may remain rather weak. But it has a worldwide unique instrument laid down in art. 168 in the Treaty of Lisbon as well as in art. 35 in the Charter of Fundamental Rights, namely the principle of “Health in All Policies” (HiAP). This is much more than just a technical instrument or an academic exercise, a cooperation or partnership. It is an encompassing legal base as well as a mandate, containing a vision which to my disappointment up to now has not yet been implemented sufficiently. On the contrary; some of the austerity measures to solve the economic and financial crisis have had negative effects on health and health systems in the countries concerned. It is my hope that in the future the needed health impact assessments will be made when – and wherever negative health implications are possible and that in the unavoidable conflicts between economic and health interests the health side will win, at least in some cases. There is more to politics – and life – than just the economy.

**What advice would you give the young generation of today?**

The younger generation does not need any advice, especially not from past and elderly actors. As the UK Brexit vote has shown, it was the old and not the young who voted for leaving. The young generation today may not have the same emotional feelings towards the EU that my generation has. However, it is quite sufficient that they accept it as a permanent reality. Criticism is not only allowed, but needed. Young Europeans travel, live, study and work in other EU countries, and they want to continue to be able to do so. They know the EU's benefits for their everyday lives quite well. It is not surprising that „Erasmus“ is one of the most successful EU projects. It is not the young generation that has to discover the EU, it is the EU that should give them and their needs more attention. The Young Forum Gastein network is a perfect example of how this could be done. A final word to the young: stand up, fight for and defend your interests when they are in danger. Make your voice heard.



## What does / did the EHFG mean for you, personally and professionally?

The EHFG means a lot for me, both personally as well as professionally. Even after my retirement in 2002, I continued to participate for many years. I did not agree with all that was said but a forum without controversial debates is very boring. Sometimes I consider it to be too academic and scientific, that it covers too many public health research issues and does not give political topics enough attention, but it certainly never is boring.

The EHFG was fascinating to me because it was completely different to the EU surroundings I was used to. When I spoke in Brussels, it was not me, it was Germany speaking. My own views did not count at all. I had to present the official German position, which was the result of a lengthy struggle within the Health Ministry, with other Ministries, with the Bundestag and – often the most difficult part – the Bundesländer. I tried to influence this process, but I was not always successful. In Bad Hofgastein, I always felt free to say whatever I wanted to.

The EHFG debate I remember best was the one about the implications of the famous Kohl/Decker ECJ judgments in 1998 about patient mobility. They caused a major stir in the Member States, who feared that their cherished health systems were being taken over by the EU. Even the Commission was not sure about how it should react. It took a long time – 13 years, many conferences and even an informal Health Ministers Meeting – before the Council and the European Parliament agreed to the Directive on Cross-border Healthcare in 2011. And it took another three years for the Member States to transform it into national law. I am still proud that the EHFG contributed to this process, as it was one of the first – if not the very first – Forum that freely discussed the consequences of the judgments.

As this was also one of the first important examples of how a non-health EU policy – Internal Market – influenced health, it might be worthwhile for the EHFG to trigger similar developments in other areas.

# Baldur Wagner



**IN CONVERSATION WITH BALDUR WAGNER** *We talked about morning briefings with Chancellor Kohl, the European process, and what a Ministerial Meeting meant for the EHFG. Baldur Wagner served as State Secretary under German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and met the soon-to-be founders of the European Health Forum Gastein during a Meeting of Health Ministers in the Gastein Valley. He helped push the “start button” for the initiative and has been a supporter ever since.*

**“There were times one even had to worry whether politics had not outpaced its citizens, whether we were moving towards a Europe without Europeans.”**

**What is the most interesting thing about you that we would not learn from your résumé alone?**

Two years after Helmut Kohl was elected Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, a career dream came true for me. He summoned me into the Federal Chancellery, where I was appointed Ministerial Director, taking on coordination responsibilities for several ministries.

One of the unique experiences I made back then, and one I still like to look back on, was taking part in the morning briefings that were held at 8:00 each day in the Chancellor's office. These briefings formed the basis for many of the decisions taken throughout the day, both formally and informally. Strict loyalty was expected from the small group attending the meetings. We had to be on call around the clock, often until late in the night, and sometimes battling with the Chancellor's mood swings. This was a trying, but incredibly enriching period in my life. And knowing you belong to the inner circle of power compensates for a lot.

**Are you a EuroOptimist?**

The European Union has a future – despite all current problems, there are numerous reasons for and many advantages speaking in its favour. One of them is its contribution to social justice. True, its sociopolitical competencies are still limited; but thanks to the EU, the citizens of its Member States have the right to equal pay for equal value of work, to name but one important example. Another example are regulatory measures directly impacting citizens' well-being, such as the EU-wide ban on tobacco advertising. The EU is one of the regions with the highest social standards worldwide and a guarantee that even in times of globalisation, social achievements can be sustained. The dynamic of the European process will eventually also lead to a broader opening towards a European welfare state, with an increasing demand for European solutions in health-related fields such as nutrition, work environments and urban architecture.

What makes the EU unique and particularly worthy of preservation is its openness towards its neighbours – without occupation. The EU takes its neighbours in and gives them a fair place within the community and the right to co-determination. An experiment like this has not been ventured by any other group of states, and there are many nations in the world striving for European values, law and welfare. The EU also means a Europe without borders. Only we EU citizens are allowed to live and work in 28 countries without major hurdles in the way. This freedom, this privilege, is matchless worldwide.

And for those who want strategic considerations: in future, big states like the USA, China or Russia will determine the developments of this world even more than they do today. There is no place for sectionalism among the major players. For this reason alone, when it comes to safeguarding our values, when it is about democracy, law and freedom, European states will only be able to make their voice heard as a union.

**What inspires you?**

The making of Europe has accompanied me nearly throughout my whole life, and I am happy about what has been achieved in terms of a joined Europe – both economically and societally. These developments would have been deemed possible by hardly anyone 30 or 40 years ago; there were times one even had to worry whether politics had not outpaced its citizens, whether we were moving towards a Europe without Europeans. Luckily, the advantages of a borderless Europe, including freedom of professional and personal movement, are by now appreciated by citizens as an indispensable basis of their lives.

I was fortunate to work on these exciting European structures. For example, I was leading the German delegation negotiating the Schengen Agreement in its early years. Today, nearly every EU country is a member of this contract and the Agreement is one of the fundamental pillars of the EU.

Despite numerous challenges facing Europe, like Brexit, the recent influx of migrants, terrorist threats and financial problems, coupled with a supposed inability of European heads of state to adequately address these challenges, there is an improvement of the EU's reputation within Europe itself. A cause for confidence is particularly that young people stand up for Europe and appreciate the peace that has been created, the work opportunities and the mobility. This is a sound precondition for Europe further growing together. Europe needs the trust of its citizens for a positive development. To ensure that this is possible in the long run, the EU needs to considerably improve its communication efforts.

### What advice would you give the young generation of today?

I am quite certain that future generations will find their own way, no matter which experiences the older generations have made. Therefore, I will refrain from giving concrete advice here.

Future generations will be more globally oriented and able to dispose of more information on life choices than our generation could. Therefore, I am confident that they will recognise the fact that conflicts between regions, ethnicities and religions will not be solvable by force in the long run, and act accordingly. Wars, natural disasters and famines with their horrible consequences must be addressed by political means, if the world is to experience sustainable peace. With this in mind, I wish the future generations smart and responsible politicians.

### What does / did the EHFG mean for you, personally and professionally?

In 1997, Austria had – as part of the preparations for its EU Council presidency – invited the EU Ministers of Health for an unofficial meeting to Bad Hofgastein. I represented Germany, and met the Austrian delegate Prof Günther Leiner. Living in the town as a practitioner and health policy spokesman of the national Austrian ÖVP parliamentary group, he was naturally very interested in such a ministerial meeting, and we began to talk. I mentioned that I had been attending the World Economic Forum in Davos several times, and that I had perceived the events there as an extraordinary possibility to exchange thoughts and to learn. We quickly turned to the question of whether the Gastein Valley would not also lend itself beautifully as a location for a similar series of events. We came to the conclusion that yes, it would, and both agreeing that health was of increasing and international significance the idea of a European Health Forum Gastein was born.

I assured Prof Leiner of my support from Germany, since I could also count on the complaisant backing from Federal Chancellor Helmut Kohl. Prof Leiner was very enthusiastic, immediately met with the then chairman of the Gastein Valley Tourism Board, Franz Weichenberger, and began with the implementation of his plan. For further consultation, I received Günther Leiner and Franz Weichenberger on 23 December 1997 in my office in Bonn. Completely undisturbed, as the Ministry was nearly deserted right before Christmas, we discussed final details. Together they had in the meantime developed a plan for which they only had to push the start button. I am proud of Prof Leiner and his team for managing to put this by now so successful project into practice.

# Andrzej Rys



**IN CONVERSATION WITH ANDRZEJ RYS** *We talked about Europe's best project, moving targets, and the perks of being a father. Andrzej Rys, Director at DG SANTE, European Commission, has contributed to numerous of the policy debates that have taken place in Gastein over the years, including preliminary talks about the Directive on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare. Eleven years ago, he was one of the conceptual founders of what today is a vibrant network for young professionals: Young Forum Gastein.*



**“Whatever you thought you had fully understood and secured, there is always something else still to be discovered. This makes working in the field always interesting; I do not feel bored, ever.”**

**What is the most interesting thing about you – that we would not learn from your résumé alone?**

I am the father of four beautiful children, three of which have each found their own way in life already. They are successfully striking the middle ground between what I call “to have and to be” – being innovative entrepreneurs and contributing to society. The fourth one is little Viktoria, and will thus be home for a few more years – luckily. I am extremely proud of all of them, and it makes me happy to see how they are progressing, each making an impact on society in a different field, but all as “normative entrepreneurs”, so to speak. Maciej has started “Smogathon”, and he is bringing innovative solutions to the global battle against smog. Anna works in Artificial Intelligence, has created the AI Krakow community and is also an actress, Michał is the co-founder of DrOmnibus, developing therapeutic games for autistic children and working in a charity for handicapped children. This fatherly pride is something you will find in none of my CVs, neither short nor long.

As a former director of Krakow’s School of Public Health I love to follow my students’ careers and I can witness after 26 years how planted seeds can bring great fruits – great moments for academia and for teachers. Another fact that may be slightly unusual is that I have made my mother’s profession my hobby – I really enjoy reading history books. It puts things into perspective.

**Are you a EuroOptimist?**

In order to work in a European institution, you have to believe in Europe. You cannot work there without understanding the values and principles behind the creation of the EU, and believing in them. You need to see why it still is the best project the European continent can have at this moment in time. I am an optimist through and through, but also realistic enough to rationally assess that European citizens are in fact still looking for European solutions, though maybe not always fully aware of it,

as the boundaries of what is national and European are not always clear today. As we see also in the current Brexit discussion, many citizens understand more and more how complex the system we live in is, and how much Europe is worth.

Why I believe in Europe? Well, I am of the conviction that in any development, there are difficult and good moments. Of course, the difficult moments can be very tough – but you know the sun will come up again. Also, now, there is more and more promising news about Europe, for example from election results in a number of countries, and countries that are struggling back to find again stability after the financial crisis. We already managed other, even bigger global challenges and I think the only answer for me as the son of a history teacher is that we need to walk together and believe in who we are and what we are doing. Finally, the EU is also about peace and freedom. I know this very well coming from Poland and my own activities in the anti-communist movement.

**What inspires you?**

My career so far has been a rich mix of different strands of experience – public health, medicine, but also regional development and innovation, and I have been passionate about all. I was with patients, working in academia, managed important reforms in the city of Krakow and on the national level, finally working in the Commission. What particularly inspires me in health is that it is like a never-ending story, in the sense that you always face new challenges. You may make some agreements, stabilise some concepts and developments. But then the next big question comes up because of science, or technological progress, or societal changes. What is absolutely incredible is that all these things happen in relatively short periods of time if we view them in the context of history. Just look at the developments in medicine in the last 20, 30 years! Incredible changes have happened in all the areas I just referred to, in technology, society, culture, in relations in medicine – new roles for doctors, nurses, patients. So, whatever you thought you had fully understood and secured, there is always something else still to be discovered. This makes working in the field always interesting; I do not feel bored, ever. Maybe sometimes, we are tired of not finding solutions, because the target is always moving. But this is no valid excuse for not keeping up the effort, for continuing to look for answers. I think we should be patient, realise that things are on the move, and admit that solutions are not all that easy to find.

**What advice would you give the young generation of today?**

My advice would be what I also keep saying to my children. First of all, be open. Secondly, look around. Sensitise yourself for the needs and challenges out there, but also for the solutions you can discover. Be clear about your goals, to yourself

and to others. And lastly, believe in all the things you are doing. Young people should avoid the quick gains in the sense that you begin your career feeling almost retired before you even started – no fun, no experiences, no risks, no challenges. You need to combine patience and passion in the way you do your job, and always keep looking for opportunities. The last thing anyone should do in my opinion is approach life thinking “I am going to be rich and make my fortune in the next year or two”, or even five years. Maybe I am wrong, because I am of course getting older (though not necessarily wiser), and these things are easy to say. But this is my experience, that the first thing in your life should be values and beliefs, and then the rest will come on its own.

#### What does / did the EHFG mean for you, personally and professionally?

I was in Gastein from the second meeting onwards, so really from the beginning, and have attended the Forum a number of times after that. What it means for me as a professional is that I have always found a place there, where I was able to have exchanges over important issues, and in different moments of my life a place where I could learn things, or provide my knowledge and expertise to others. Lastly, and maybe most importantly, it is a place where I could not only participate, but also have open debates in very important areas. From the years in the Commission, there were two particularly interesting moments. One was when the discussions about the Cross-border Directive took on momentum. Back then, the topic was growing, and people chose to either agree or disagree. It was good to hear all kinds of voices in Gastein, it helped shape the direction we took later on, when drafting our policy proposal. The second was also a quite remarkable moment, when Ilona Kickbusch introduced the concept of global health to Europe. This was almost a kind of starting point for my team to bring the concept back for discussion to the Commission, and we were finally able to develop a policy in this field. These are two examples, but there are many others, of course. The EHFG is also an important Austrian contribution to the European project.

From a more personal point of view, it was always great to see people building relations with each other, with individuals and with organisations. And to be part of this community – because this is what the Gastein Forum is, a community. I am particularly proud of the chance I had to be co-creator of the Young Forum Gastein, something that happened basically “on stage”, with Gabi Burgstaller, then Governor of the Federal State of Salzburg. This is exactly what makes Gastein what it is. It is not enough to simply maintain formal relations from a distance, it is important to also make the time to meet people in person, to get to know them, to make room for open exchanges and new ideas to develop.

# Maria Rauch-Kallat



**IN CONVERSATION WITH MARIA RAUCH-KALLAT** *We talked about complementary medicine, taking on responsibilities, and what it means to be a committed European. Maria Rauch-Kallat, former Austrian Federal Minister of Health and now management consultant, was one of the first in a long list of Austrian government officials to support the Forum and recognise its value – as a European project under Austrian patronage.*

**“We all need to set positive impulses, initiate and carry through showcase projects instead of building excessive bureaucratic obstacles. As yet, there are enormous inequalities; a lot remains to be done and we all must learn from each other.”**

**What is the most interesting thing about you that we would not learn from your résumé alone?**

More than 40 years ago, when conventional practitioners had given up on treating the blindness of my then five-year-old daughter, I grasped for any straw I could find and began to fight. I made myself familiar with homeopathy, macrobiotics and many other alternative cures – and have at times applied them with great success since. This was what enabled my daughter to graduate from school writing her final exams in conventional black print with the minimal eyesight she had regained. It enabled her also to engage in activities other young girls do, and to get an education at the Federal Pedagogic Academy. Today, she is 47, nearly blind, and after many years of teaching at a primary school is now employed at the University College of Teacher Education in Baden. She lives (alone) in Vienna, likes to travel (sometimes also alone), enjoys skiing, ice skating, swimming, has a sailing license and started rowing two years ago. After dual Master's studies, she is now writing her dissertation on the situation of blind people in Austria.

For more than 40 years I have been observing both conventional and alternative medicine from a distance. And whenever ill myself, I start with the lightest treatment there is.

**Are you a EuroOptimist?**

I am a full-hearted European and convinced that the European Union has been the best and most successful peace project of the 20th century. I hope that future generations will not easily put at risk what has been achieved. The impending exit of the United Kingdom is bound to be an acid test for the Union.

Any committed European should tackle the multitude of tasks and challenges we are facing with great motivation and a sense of proportion to achieve improvements in income, standard of living, provision of healthcare and social

security in all Member States. We all need to set positive impulses, initiate and carry through showcase projects instead of building excessive bureaucratic obstacles. As yet, there are enormous inequalities; a lot remains to be done and we all must learn from each other. What is more, health threats, like for example avian influenza, have demonstrated that a virus does not halt at borders. The international cooperation worked excellently back then – also beyond the European Union.

**What do you feel truly passionate about?**

I would like to see more openness between traditional and complementary medicine. There is so much between heaven and earth that we cannot (yet) explain. A lot of age-old knowledge is buried or has even got lost. We need to take off the blinders in both our thoughts and actions, and allow ourselves to be curious about unusual things – and thereby get closer to nature again.

Each of us carries part of the responsibility for his or her health. “Mens sana in corpore sano” is just as valid today as it was back in ancient Rome. To listen to ourselves and our own body may prevent a lot of pain and suffering. This is something we should teach our children at home, in kindergarten and at school.

**What advice would you give the young generation of today?**

Like I mentioned before: To take one's own responsibility for life and health seriously and help those that – for whatever reason – cannot adequately do the same. We carry responsibility not only for us but also for our society and our environment – and the future of our world.

**What does / did the EHFG mean for you, personally and professionally?**

As Austrian Federal Minister of Health I took part in the Forum several times in the “second quarter” of these past 20 years, and was impressed by the variety of both topics and participants. The founder of the Forum, the health spokesman of the Austrian People's Party, Prof Günther Leiner, succeeded with this initiative not only to launch a project of such a big format, but also to further invigorate this amazing region in the Austrian Alps. It is surely thanks to him and his excellent team that the Forum has not lost any of its topicality and continues to enjoy great popularity. I wish the Forum the best of luck and success for the next 20 years.

# EHFG & Gastein Valley



## THE MAKING OF THE FORUM – AND ITS MEANING FOR THE GASTEIN REGION

By Franz Weichenberger

The Gastein Valley draws upon nearly 200 years of experience in tourism – a lot more than most other destinations in the Alps. From the very beginning, the “Health and Wellness” aspect played a substantial part in attracting visitors. Over the decades, the health tourism in Gastein evolved from simple treatments like radon and thermal baths to include holistic medical approaches. As a result, a number of tourism-related businesses in different categories have settled in the valley, among them numerous health and rehabilitation clinics. Furthermore, a variety of medical professional and training conferences were established and now form a fixed part of the valley’s annual calendar.

These developments, as well as the many discussions with conference participants from the health sector contributed to forming the idea that an international event was missing in the region. The aim was to bring to the table the opinions and concerns of different stakeholder groups early on, and thus reconcile and attune their topics and jointly work on solutions. The potential for saving time and resources was huge; now it was about convincing the four main interest groups in the health sector of the value of this idea – public and private sectors, science and academia, and civil society, which later were to become the four EHFG pillars, still forming the basis of the organisation now. With support from former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl – who was a loyal guest in the Gastein Valley – we managed to convince the German Federal Ministry of Health and its then Minister

Horst Seehofer of our idea. In this context, I would like to particularly highlight two persons who lent a helping hand both in terms of content as well as resources and contacts from the very beginning. These were former State Secretary Baldur Wagner and his colleague, Dr Hans Stein – a big thank you to both of you! Without your help, the first EHFG conferences would not have been as successful. In the course of the Austrian EU Council Presidency, Prof Günther Leiner succeeded in convincing EU Commissioner Pádraig Flynn to get involved – thus, the circle was closed, and a very successful first Forum could be organised in 1998.

The event remains meaningful for the region. Few tourism regions have the marketing budget to attract potential visitors from over 40 different countries. Big events, concerts, competitions, conferences and such are thus a vital element to achieve that goal. The EHFG fits in smoothly with what the region stands for: health and wellness; and has established itself as one of the most important events throughout the year. Most of the participants did not know the region before, and have come here for the first time because of the conference. And they seem to have fallen for its beauty – many of them said they would come again during their leisure time, and also happily recommend it to others.

The EHFG is thus a kind of “business card” for Gastein, with its international media coverage helping the valley to acquire a reputation abroad. It is a particularly valuable addition to what “normal” marketing can achieve, because well-organised conferences and events are known for creating a lasting positive impression on participants and guests. The EHFG and the Gastein region are thus intertwined, mutually benefiting from each other: The location is what creates this very unique atmosphere for the EHFG, unusual for international events, perfect for networking, and the conference complements what the region is known for – its contribution to health.

## GASTEIN GOES EUROPE

By Eva Irrnberger

“Creating a Better Future for Health Systems in Europe” was the main conference theme back in 1998. What an ambitious goal! Now, 20 years later it remains as important and challenging a goal as ever. As a result, over time the organisers have developed the biggest health policy conference and platform for health stakeholders in Europe, through which the European health community can discuss the ongoing challenges and develop policy recommendations for realising this better future for health in Europe. Every year we are delighted to have the unique opportunity to welcome European friends to our beautiful valley, and we are more than honoured to host the Forum here.

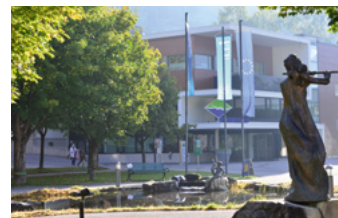




Conference Centre – where the EHFG happens



Our participants networking (EHFG 2011)



Bad Hofgastein in the morning



Paola Testori Coggi and Robert Madelin



Networking break (EHFG 2009)



In between the sessions (EHFG 2016)

# From the EHFG Board

## HEALTH IS A PRECIOUS VALUE

By Karin Kadenbach

Health is a precious value. Good physical and mental health are arguably the most essential and greatest commodities a person can have. Healthcare systems across Europe rank among the best in the world, but we are facing challenges today – from a growing funding shortfall to ensuring accessibility for all, from tackling the challenges of non-communicable diseases to the provision of reliable information. These convictions and concerns are the core motivation for the experts and decision-makers from a variety of different backgrounds who form the EHFG Board and who take an active part in the undertakings of the Forum, from shaping the content of each year's conference to discussing its long-term, strategic orientation. The Forum is rooted in the heart of the ongoing debates on European health matters, and has established itself as an important platform for information and exchange.

On behalf of the entire Board I want to highlight that it is the interaction between participants, session organisers and contributors who make the EHFG unique. Gastein is Gastein because of you, and therefore let me thank you for your continued support of the Forum!

## TWENTY YEARS: THE START FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE

By Albert van der Zeijden

This year we celebrate our twentieth anniversary. Certainly, a moment to look back to what we achieved from the first Forum in 1998. Yet, I am more interested in the future. We hear a lot about a Europe of the citizens, but then the citizens must have their place to express their knowledge, their views and their interests. It is my desire to see the EHFG's continuous growth in the next twenty years as the European forum where all stakeholders, united in the four pillars of the EHFG, come together to build on a bright future for public health: innovative and influential.

THE BOARD MEMBERS: 1998 – 2017 | *Past Members* / *Current Members*

**Clemens Martin Auer** / **Richard Bergström** / *Günther Bernatzky* / *John Bowis* / *Helmut Brand* / **Armin Fidler** / **Josep Figueras** / *Harald Gaugg* / *Manfred Gruber* / *Elisabeth Haschke-Becher* / *Dietmar Huber* / **Karin Kadenbach** / **Andrijka Kashan** / *Benedikt Lang* / **Günther Leiner** / *Martin Zeppezauer* / *Michaela Moritz* / *Heinrich Neisser* / *Viktor Oberlojer* / *Mieczyslaw Pasowicz* / *Andreas Penk* / *Eberhart Pirich* / *Reinhard Salhofer* / *Michael Schafflinger* / *Karl-Jürgen Schmitt* / *Markus Schwarz* / **Albert van der Zeijden** / *Adolf Weber* / **Franz Weichenberger** / **Ulrich Wiedemaier** / *Walter Wihart* / *Heinrich Wrбка* / *Klaus Zapotoczky*

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS 2017 | *Institutional Members* / *Individual Members*

*Communities Bad Hofgastein & Bad Gastein* / *Kur- und Tourismusverband Bad Hofgastein & Bad Gastein* / **John Bowis** / **Helmut Brand** / *Gastein Tourismus GmbH* / *Gesundheit Österreich GmbH (GÖG)* / **Christoph Köstinger** / *Federal State Land Salzburg* / *Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs, Austria* / *Pfizer Deutschland GmbH* / **Eberhard Pirich** / **Josef Probst**



# People behind the Forum

## Secretary Generals



**CHRISTOPH KÖSTINGER**

Christoph was the first Secretary General of the EHFG from 1998 until 2002. Together with the executive committee, Christoph not only laid the organisational and financial foundations of the association and the yearly event, but they also secured the location Gastein. Within the first four years, the number of participants was doubled. After that, Christoph took over the management of the unique Gastein Healing Gallery, which he still runs now. Starting in 2014, he also took over the management of the health centre Bärenhof in Bad Gastein. Both businesses are essential for spa and rehabilitation therapies in the Gastein Valley.

**Looking at your time as at the EHFG – what are you most proud of?**

*“In my job as the first Secretary General, I managed to build the basis for the EHFG together with the executive committee. The first years required a tremendous effort and I am proud to say that we never ceased to believe in the idea and never thought of giving up. This has even more weight now – when looking back at 20 years of the EHFG.”*

**In your opinion, what makes the EHFG unique?**

*“What makes the EHFG unique is the combination of participants and the Gastein Valley. The spirit behind it has strengthened the event for all these years both from a content as well as from an informal perspective. The EHFG has from the outset placed particular focus on cross-border topics in European health policy. This approach distinguishes it from other conferences, integrating the European perspective but focusing on a single Member State only.”*

**FRANK BERNDT**

Frank joined the Gastein Forum in 2002 and held the position until the end of 2004. After the EHFG he successfully reoriented his career path into human resources. He currently lives in Stuttgart, Germany, where he leads the HR department of the Uckermärkische transport company.



**MATTHIAS SCHUPPE**

In 1999, Matthias joined the Gastein Forum as a Policy Officer responsible for programme development. From 2004 to 2012 he managed the day to day operations as Secretary General. Following a brief role as consultant to the European Public Health Alliance in Brussels, he joined the European Commission as Policy Officer in the health threats units in 2013. Currently he works on country knowledge as part of the team responsible for the State of Health in the EU cycle, a DG SANTE flagship initiative.

**Looking at your time at the EHFG – what are you most proud of?**

*“Taking the EHFG to the next stage of development, by building on the achievements of my predecessors, increasing participation to new benchmark levels and developing the financial basis of the organisation is what I am most proud of. This provided the sustainable foundation for launching the Young Forum Gastein and the European Health Award, which to this date are still EHFG signature initiatives.”*

**In your opinion, what makes the EHFG unique?**

*“Engaging representatives of the four pillars in cutting edge policy discussions remains one of the defining elements of the EHFG. This unique mix of stakeholders provides the mutually inspiring and innovative atmosphere, which is needed to tackle today’s complex health challenges.”*



**DORLI KAHR-GOTTLIEB**

Dorli has been in her position as Secretary General of the EHFG since 2012. She is responsible for the overall management of the association and the joint development of the association with the team, Board members and national & international partners. Dorli has been passionately involved in public health and health policy for the last 15 years, starting with her employment in the first Austrian Master of Public Health programme at the Medical University of Graz. This led to her initial contact with the European Public Health Association (EUPHA), where she was in charge of the coordination of the European Public Health Conference from 2006 onwards. Dorli holds a degree in Intercultural Competences and has been involved in intercultural projects and culture & health trainings.

*Looking at your time at the EHFG – what are you most proud of?*

*“I always feel proud when being reminded in meetings with colleagues in Brussels and beyond that the EHFG in its 20th year is known and seen as the major European health policy event. And I am proud of the EHFG team with all their enthusiasm and never-ending ideas to keep developing the EHFG further.”*

*In your opinion, what makes the EHFG unique?*

*“What makes the EHFG unique in my eyes are the candid debates about burning health policy issues facilitated in innovative workshop formats, but also the informal exchange between experts from the four EHFG pillars, all of this enhanced by the exceptional tranquillity and beauty of the Alpine setting.”*

## Participants



### YOU – THE GASTEIN COMMUNITY

It has been emphasised throughout the history of our organisation, and has thus naturally been highlighted in many of the contributions in this book, that the EHFG would not be what it is today, would not have achieved what it has, without its participants. This is a warm and heartfelt thank you from us to you, who keep discussing with us, opening our eyes to new topics, adding to the value of each and every session by providing valuable input. Thanks for criticising us, believing in us, testing us, challenging us, being loyal to us throughout the years. It is a great pleasure to be working with you – to the next 20 years of debating and shaping European health policy, to create a better future for health in Europe.

*“Like no other event in Europe, the EHFG is a unique place to discuss health policy. The rich mix of different stakeholders and the high quality of the participants provide a great opportunity to discuss health system policy and research and how they improve health outcomes for EU patients. It has been a tremendous learning experience to actively participate in the Forum and the discussions that are only possible there.”*

BORIS AZAÏS, MSD



# EHFG Staff



## A SPECIAL PLACE

By Tommy Kaiser

The EHFG has been a recurring event in my schedule for almost 15 years. What started out as a student job quickly developed into something very special. It's the interesting people, beautiful location of Gastein and the family-friendly environment that make the conference unique. The Information Desk is a meeting point for many people, and I always do my best to help and find a solution to all types of questions. Talking with such an international audience from all over the world makes my task at the Info Desk so interesting and exciting. The EHFG represents a huge family and in my opinion the event deserves to stay in the stunning location of Gastein; a special place for special people, and I hope to experience many more great forums in the future.

## PUBLIC HEALTH HEROES

By Lucy Freundel (EHFG team member from 2010–2015)

Looking back at my time at the EHFG, I met some incredible people. Some are still part of my life, others had a major impact on me and my career. Working in a small team taught me to master undreamt-of tasks far removed from my job description, and I still profit from the diverse skills I learned. The EHFG also broadened my horizons; Europe came to Gastein annually, and I represented Gastein abroad. My most memorable moment? As I was basically a public health groupie, meeting Martin McKee, since my student days my public health hero No. 1.

THE EHFG STAFF: 1998 – 2017 | Past Members / Current Members

## SECRETARIAT – CORE STAFF

Jaqueline Benn | Frank Berndt | **Lisa Bornscheuer** | Louise Boyle | Maria Dziubińska  
Lucy Freundel | Katharina Gaggel | Borianna Goranova | Johanna Haselbauer  
Sebastian Hesse | Maximilian Hesse | **Christine Huttegger** | Alexandra Illmer  
**Dorli Kahr-Gottlieb** | Christoph Köstinger | Kathrin Ludwig | **Martina Monuth**  
Claudia Pfarrmaier | Christina Scharfetter (Gracher) | Matthias Schuppe  
Silvia Stuppäck | **Josef Wenninger** | Judith Wimmer

## SECRETARIAT – TEAM ASSISTANTS

Luise Artner | Rene Baumgartner | **Max Göttl** | Sabine Lüdtko  
Katharina Nemluwil | Dominique Reiter | Fabian Schober

## SECRETARIAT – SUMMER STAFF

Lena Frieg | Magdalena Gruber | Theresa Gschwandtner | Lisa-Marie Habetseder  
Sandra Hagenauer | Annemarie Hutter | Robert Klarecki | Radhika Kothari  
Victoria Kumar | Elisabeth Leiner | Thomas Linder | Katharina Pokorny | Mari Pollari  
Alexandra Portenkirchner | Alexandra Putz | **Isabell Schober** | Silvia Steinbauer  
**Rafaela Tripalo** | Karin Voß | **Anna Wiedemaier**

## IT DEPARTMENT

Clemens Bauer | Manfred Eckschlager | Christoph Gruber  
**Martin Köstinger** | **Patrick Oberbichler**

## SHUTTLE MASTERS

**Christian Habetseder** | Hannes Mitterbauer | **Sigi Raschka**

## INFORMATION FRONT DESK

**Tommy Kaiser**

## CONFERENCE HELPING HANDS

**Gaston Gruber** | Thomas Gruber | **Markus Jebinger** | **Rudi Keuschnigg**  
**Sabine Kreyca** | Katharina Kurz | Felix Lackner | Josef Pichler | **Karl Pichler**  
Agnes Reinthaler | Maria Reinwald (Trigler) | **Florian Schober**  
Alexander Standteiner | **Maximilian Thaler** | Patrick Zarfl

Brian Ager | Sibylle Angele | Timothy Farke | **Natasha Azzopardi-Muscat** | Walter Baer  
 Brendan Barnes | David Barron | Pauline Bastidon | **Nicola Bedlington** | Birgit Beger | Nils  
 Behrndt | **Paul Belcher** | **Kolia Benie** | **Stephane Berghmans** | Nina Bergman | Richard  
 Bergström | Philip Berman | Frank Berndt | Umberto Bertazzoni | Marie Bjerborg | Ulrich Bode  
**John Bowis** | Nick Boyd | Angela Brand | Helmut Brand | Jeni Bremner | Reiner Brettenthaler  
 Marc Brodin | Chris Brookes | Peter Brosch | Michael Brown | Thomas Bruhn | Philippe Brunet  
 Reinhard Busse | Concepción Camacho | Gordon Chambers | Graham Chambers | Peter Chang  
 Chang | Yves Charpak | **Francesca Colombo** | John Considine | Caroline Costongs | Marc  
 Danzon | **Maggie Davies** | Christine Dawson | Christophe de Callatay | Paul de Raeve | Patrick  
 Deboysers | **Nicole Denjoy** | Nelly Devic | Hervé Doaré | Elizabeth Docteur | Malte Enderlein  
 Rolf Engelbrecht | Malte Erbrich | Harald Ettl | Adeline Farrelly | Armin Fidler | **Josep Figueras**  
 Marilies Flemming | Pdraig Flynn | Giovanni Fraccia | Ursula Fronaschütz | Pascal Garel  
 Lara Garrido-Herrero | Harald Gaugg | Frank George | Elita Georgiana | Flora Giorgio | Raquel  
 Goicoechea | Tamara Goosens | Marion Grote Westrick | Jo Groves | Alois Grüner | Claudia  
 Habl | Helmut Hahn | Manuel Hallen | **Johan Hansen** | Steffen Hansen | Loraine Hawkins  
 Lex Herrebrugh | Maria Hofmarcher | Tung-Ming Hsiao | Michael Hübel | Andreas Huber  
 Jeremy Hurst | Swantje Jäger-Lindemann | **Zsuzsanna Jakab** | Genon Jensen | Robert Johnstone  
 Wolfgang Jungk | Monika Kaiser | Wolfgang Karl | **Ilona Kickbusch** | Andreas Kiefer | Julie  
 Kjestrup | Sophie Koettlitz | Pasi Korhonen | **Monika Kosinska** | Virpi Köykkä | Wilfred  
 Kreisel | Ken Kuo | Ludovic Lacaine | Eero Lahtinen | Marc Lange | Aline Lautenberg | Nelly Le  
 Dévic | Alain Lefebvre | Suszy Lessof | Günther Liebeswar | Paul Lincoln | Colin J. Mackay  
 Brigitte Magistris | Maya Matthews | Mathias Maucher | Kevin McCarthy | David McDaid  
**Martin McKee** | Leen Meulenbergs | Piotr Mierzewski | Marianne Minkowski | Iva Misigova  
 Jonathan Mogford | Elias Mossialos | Arun Nanda | Clive Needle | Daniela Negri | Jürgen  
 Neisse | Jerry O'Dwyer | Wlodek Okrasa | Laura Otero Garcia | **Willy Palm** | Mark Pearson  
 Robert Pederson | Michaela Petz | Tapani Piha | Eberhard Pirich | **Josef Probst** | Nicole  
 Pruniaux | Mike Rayner | Pamela Rendi-Wagner | **Nina Renshaw** | Sofia Ribeiro | Sandra  
 Ribón Martinez | Tessa Richards | Anna Ritsatakis | Vincent Rollet Rollet | Tamsin Rose  
 Magdalene Rosenmöller | Ingrid Rosian | Albrecht Rothacher | Anne-Marie Sacre-Bastin | Xenia  
 Scheil Adlung | Hugo Schepens | Lisette Schermer | Francois Schiltz | Marina Schmidt | Karl-  
 Jürgen Schmitt | Julia Schröder | Peter Schröder | Michael Schubert | Stephan H. Schug | Tobias  
 Schulte in den Bäumen | Claudia Sedlmeier | Raluca Sfetcu | Markus Siebert | Gerhard Steffes  
 Hans Stein | Graham Stokoe Stokoe | Karl A. Stroetmann | Brian Synnott | Nicoline Tamsa  
 Franz Terwey | Lisette Tiddens-Engwirda | Michaela Told | Eva Török | Jaakko Tuomiletho  
 Eva Turk | Gabriele Ullrich | Stephan van den Broucke | Stefaan Van der Spiegel | Albert van der  
 Zeijden | Céline van Doosselaere | Johan Vanhemelryck | Tobias Vogt | Sigurd von Ingersleben  
 Baldur Wagner | Diane Whitehouse | Abdo Yazbeck | Herbert Zöllner

# Advisory Committee

## CHECKS AND BALANCES

By Paul Belcher

It has been an honour to be part of the EHFG Advisory Committee since the early days of Gastein, graduating from a “Young Age Gasteiner” in the 1990s to a somewhat more “Middle Age Gasteiner” in this 20th anniversary year. The Committee plays a valuable role in reflecting views from the wider health community to develop and improve the conference programme. Its composition has changed over the years, but the breadth of skills has remained consistent by spanning the four EHFG pillars of government, industry, civil society and academia. Inevitably, as in the health policy world outside, our perspectives on conference topics can be very different. However, a strong spirit of co-operation and commitment to the EHFG has enabled us to have honest exchanges on how best to develop conference debates on controversial subjects such as patient access to costly medicines, as well as key organisational issues like improving disabled access and gender balance.

Progress has been made over the last two decades in tackling some of the policy areas that Gastein has featured, such as global health which was the controversial theme for the EHFG 2004 and which this year occupied the G20 political agenda for the first time. The Committee is not shy of suggesting challenging subjects and must continue to develop innovative ways for the EHFG to address new and ongoing health challenges, such as the commercial determinants of health and non-communicable disease. I hope we can find policy solutions to these more persistent health challenges, long before I become an “Old Age Gasteiner” at its 30th birthday in 2027.

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LEGACY

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# Gastein The Legacy

**FOREWORD BY JOHN BOWIS** *The EHFG legacy is a breath of fresh air – often quite literally as one breathes the pure mountain air, but also in terms of the forum it creates for fresh thinking on European health issues. Over the many years I have known it, the combination of an ongoing network of patients, professionals, policy-makers, scientists and academics and a programme of relevant and topical presentations and seminars has re-charged my policy-maker's batteries and opened my politician's eyes. One rarely comes away from the Gasteinertal without a better understanding of Europe's potential to change or influence health policy for the better. I have always left determined to find a way through the complexities of EU competencies and inter-departmental rivalries and to make a reality of our stated belief that health is a pre-requisite for economic well-being and that health can only be achieved if it is understood across every section of government and every Commission Directorate.*

# The European Health Forum Gastein – an inclusive platform

## What distinguishes the EHFG from other conferences?

*“Gastein brings together the worlds of politics, academia, industry, and civil society to assess where everyone is equal. Ideas flow freely and while each of these groups has its own narrative, none is ever dominant.”*

MARTIN MCKEE, LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL MEDICINE

### THE FOUR EHFG PILLARS

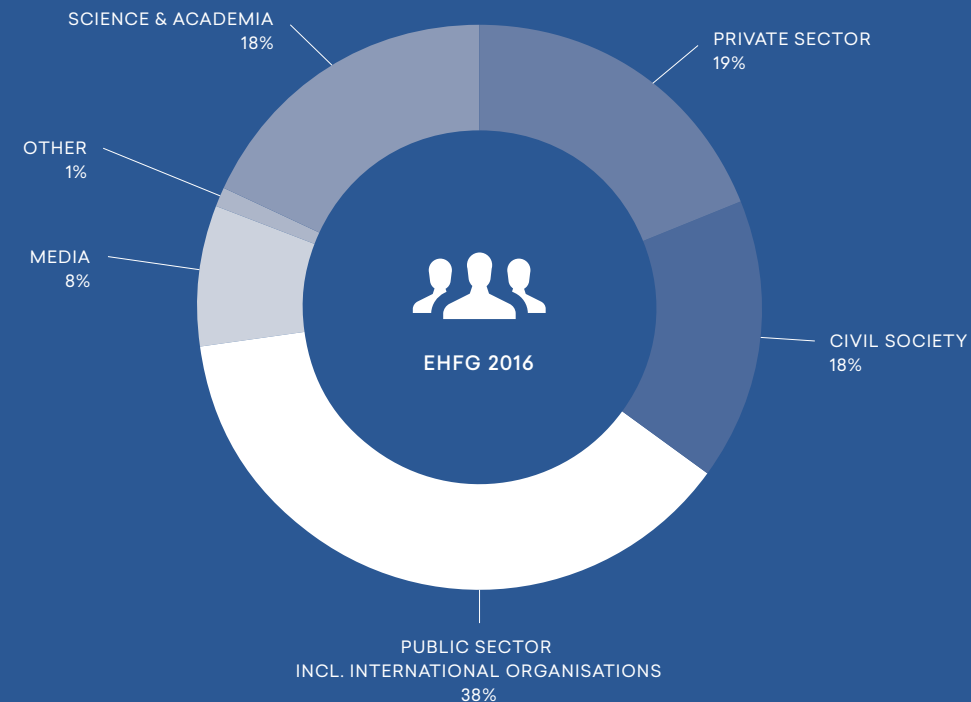
By Nicola Bedlington

As the EHFG celebrates its 20th anniversary, multi-stakeholder collaboration is widely recognised as a pre-requisite to advancing health policy, practice and innovation across all interest groups. While today numerous very powerful examples for this kind of collaboration exist, the EHFG was a trailblazer in this respect. From the onset, two decades ago, one of the organisation’s founding principles was that stakeholders from the four key pillars (public sector, private sector, science and academia and civil society) should have the opportunity during the EHFG to voice their perspectives and to engage in meaningful and honest dialogue to help shape and nurture policy at European and national level. This echoes the vision behind the EHFG: to address power relations between different sectors head-on through an inclusive platform respecting the expertise and experience of all.

This quintessential four-pillar approach is reflected in the Forum’s governance structures, and the planning and implementation of the EHFG sessions, but also the EHFG activities taking place throughout the year, such as the EHFG Health Futures project and the Gastein Outcomes event. Over the years, the WEHFG has become increasingly participatory, experimenting with interactive sessions that engage fully the audience and capture the diversity and richness of all Gasteiners, including, of course, Young Gasteiners – whose networking and exchange flourishes far beyond the autumn meeting.

The unique character of Gastein Valley, the location, its tranquility and charm creates an unusual atmosphere where you get to meet the individual, not only the official, the company representative, the academic or the NGO person – and thoughtful and thought-provoking conversations on how to move forward for better health happen during and between individual sessions.

### THE FOUR PILLARS OF THE EHFG



### OUR PRINCIPLE

We provide **the** forum for discussion to our key stakeholders to network, learn from each other, share the latest health policy developments in their countries and across Europe, and shape the future of health. We further consider the vertical organisation of societies and the EU by integrating **regional, national, European and international levels** and thus facilitating the exchange of views and experience amongst key actors and experts from the 28 EU members and the EEA countries, but also from the 52 countries of the WHO European region. The **unparalleled mix of participants** is especially critical to our event.

TIMELINE

**2007: YOUNG FORUM GASTEIN INITIATIVE KICK-OFF**

34 Young Forum Gasteiners build the fundament of the network. A closed meeting with EU Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection Markos Kyrianiou took place.

**2011: 5TH ANNIVERSARY**

As part of a pilot project, WHO Europe joined, sponsoring several scholars from Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The initiative expanded not just in numbers and countries represented, but also in tasks and responsibilities during the conference.

**2013: THE INITIATIVE DEVELOPS FURTHER**

For the first time, a number of NGO representatives joined as YFG scholars, representing the third of the EHFG participation pillars.

**2016: 10TH ANNIVERSARY**

The Young Forum Gastein offered its scholars a tailor-made programme including a skills-building workshop and a topical session on the future of public health training in Europe. Young Gasteiners had an informal meeting with Commissioner Vytenis Andriukaitis, as well as the opportunity of careers talks and mentoring sessions.

**2010: GROWING STRONG – 160 MEMBERS**

71 young researchers & officials from 28 European countries attend the conference. A Young Forum Gastein networking workshop & specific working groups took place. Scholars met with EU Commissioner John Dalli and Director General for Health and Consumers Paola Testori Coggi.

**2012: 30 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED IN THE YFG**

Young professionals from 30 countries were awarded the scholarship. The mix was 43% policy-makers and 57% researchers, and 60% alumni vs. 40% newcomers.

**2015: THE NEW MIX**

76 scholars, representing 23 countries. 60% newcomers – 40% alumni. 46 females & 30 males. 32% policy-makers, 48% researchers, 8% working for NGOs, 12% classified themselves as "others".

2017

# Young Forum Gastein

## The Network

**INVESTING IN A BETTER FUTURE FOR HEALTH**

The Young Forum Gastein network celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2016. The initiative was established by the Gastein Forum with the support of the European Commission in 2007. The project brings together promising young health professionals from different backgrounds and with diverse professional experience, to participate in learning and networking activities. In the framework of an engaging and dedicated programme, the scholarship offers a unique opportunity to:

- Learn about the latest health developments in Europe and across the world;
- Develop important public health competencies such as the ability to build alliances and partnerships, learn advocacy and persuasion skills and develop presentation and communication skills;
- Network and make new contacts with an enthusiastic young international, inter-cultural and inter-professional peer group, as well as senior experts in the sphere of health;
- Have privileged access to senior policy-makers and academics in special closed workshop sessions;
- Participate in tasks related to the EHFG, such as undertaking interviews, writing session reports, working on social media activities, or acting as speakers or session rapporteurs;

By becoming a part of the Young Forum Gastein Network our Young Gasteiners can draw on the support of around 400 members working all over the world, and receive year-round special opportunities to participate in workshops, summer schools and conferences.







Young Forum Gastein scholars of 2016

#### PROMOTING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

*By Walter Baer and Kevin McCarthy*

Right from the beginning in 2007, the Young Forum Gastein initiative, supported by the European Commission, was conceived for young officials and researchers from Member States. We welcome and are very much encouraged that this inspiring scholarship initiative still continues to offer a unique opportunity for young professionals to come to Gastein to learn and get to know like-minded people committed to a healthier Europe. By bringing together diverse views they gain valuable insight and mutual understanding between all actors is promoted.

We were both involved from the beginning and continue to follow the Young Gasteiners with great interest. It continues to be of particular importance to involve young professionals from Member States and beyond in the broad discussion about health policy issues in Europe, including their active involvement in the conference programme, such as speaker or rapporteur. It is a best-practice model of sustainable EU added value.

“There is literally nothing more important you can make out of a conference than establishing new connections which may enrich your professional and personal horizons. And this is what Young Forum Gastein does best.”

ALEXANDER NAWKA, ASSISTANT LECTURER AND CONSULTANT PSYCHIATRIST,  
CHARLES UNIVERSITY, CZECH REPUBLIC | CO-FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR,  
INSTITUTE OF NEUROPSYCHIATRIC CARE, CZECH REPUBLIC

“For me, the Young Forum Gastein is the ultimate opportunity to engage with professionals from various other disciplines, all with a passion for health. It will be a great platform for me to further the debate with policy-makers, bridge gaps with other fields and across hierarchical levels, and work on multidisciplinary out-of-the-box solutions – all in order to leave no one behind.”

ARJAN VAN DER STAR, PHD CANDIDATE, KAROLINSKA INSTITUTET  
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE SECTION ON SEXUAL & GENDER MINORITY HEALTH,  
EUROPEAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION, SWEDEN

“As a Young Gasteiner, I have met brilliant and dedicated academics, policy-makers, healthcare professionals, and advocates. Sharing ideas with experts and my peers from all over Europe has inspired me to think outside the box, and from a more global public health perspective.”

MARIE DELNORD, EPIDEMIOLOGIST, FRENCH NATIONAL INSTITUTE  
OF HEALTH AND MEDICAL RESEARCH INSERM, FRANCE







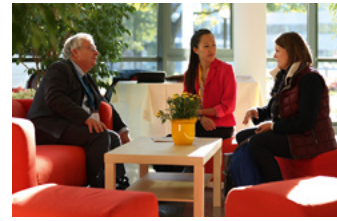
Skills-building workshop (EHFG 2016)



EU Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis Andriukaitis & Young Gasteiners (2015)



YFG kick-off meeting (2015)



Mentoring session with Martin McKee



Closed workshop – career paths in international organisations



Public speaking and facilitation workshop (2016)



# Contributing to European health policy since '98

## CREATING A BETTER FUTURE FOR HEALTH IN EUROPE

By Dorli Kahr-Gottlieb

“So, what do you do all year long?” This is a question with which we meet quite frequently. One conference to organise – that is not that much, is it?

The answer, apart from purely logistical and organisational matters, is: We are working towards getting “it” right. From the very decision on the main theme for the next year to defining content tracks, from scanning the field for potential session organisers to providing support in the fine-tuning of individual sessions, to the final programme and the conference report after the event – we aim to process recent crucial developments in health and beyond, leave room for late-breaking topics at the time of the conference, and anticipate what needs to be tackled tomorrow. We are consulting, thinking and debating, making decisions – and revoking them at times – to create an environment in which our participants are truly at the pulse of European health policy.

It is our goal to help shape European health policy by providing a platform close enough to policy-making to help our participants move it forward, and at the same time detached enough to look at the bigger picture, leaving space for new ideas and opening eyes for yet unperceived or underexploited opportunities. When asked to demonstrate which debates the EHFG has contributed to, or even triggered, we turned to our long-known and trusted companions over the last 20 years who were actually part of those debates. Right at the start, triggered by the Kohl/Decker case, discussions at our Forum showed just how divided decision-makers were on the matter of cross-border healthcare. The patchwork of different views helped formulate future policy proposals and thereby contributed to the Directive published in 2011. Another major topic recollected by many as having taken momentum in the Gastein Valley was global health – in the European context. Health literacy was also showcased at an early stage in Gastein, and the relevant developments have accompanied us throughout the years, sparking many discussions. More recently, controversial debates on personalised medicine have taken place. In this context, it is worth mentioning that the EHFG offered an initial platform for dissemination of the ICPeMed Horizon 2020 project outcomes, which have advised European health policy-making since. Of late, there are new challenges that needed to be addressed, like the peaking migration crisis, which was prominently on the agenda in 2015. It was approached with a hands-on attitude, not



Christopher Fearné, Minister of Health of Malta and Tomáš Drucker, Minister of Health of Slovakia (EHFG 2016)

only looking at challenges, but also at chances – at the peak of a highly sensitive period. While decision-makers certainly do not leave the valley with ready-made solutions for major issues in health policy-making, they will hopefully have heard and discussed something new, which in turn will contribute to next steps or kick-start a new development. For the 2017 edition of our conference, being at the pulse of European health policy means facing up to heightened Euroscepticism, sometimes resulting in healthcare becoming a plaything of election campaign rhetoric – leaving frustrated and distrustful voters. Discussing health against this background now is in a sense perfect timing: It makes the look back at the past 20 years of EHFG, and thus of EU (health) policy, more meaningful – it reminds us of what has been achieved to date.

Even though the EHFG does not advocate a particular approach or direction of topics on the agenda, it is an intrinsic part of its legacy to provide a shared platform for those who work, to one degree or another, based on the same assumption: That there is the need for multi-stakeholder collaboration, across sectors, political responsibilities, generations and national borders, to achieve the optimum outcome possible for the health of European citizens: A better future for health in Europe.

### *Which policy debates did the EHFG most notably contribute to, or possibly even trigger?*

*The conference has addressed some of the fundamental and often rapid changes that national health policies have faced, and still face – health inequalities, free movement and increasing interactions between health systems, health in the context of economic governance, and the globalisation of health issues.*

MARTIN SEYCHELL, DG SANTE, EUROPEAN COMMISSION

*Health literacy, health diplomacy, sustainability of health systems, the impact of the economic crisis on health.*

NICOLA BEDLINGTON, EUROPEAN PATIENTS' FORUM

### *What distinguishes the EHFG from other conferences?*

*What sets the EHFG apart is the sheer range of participants: representatives of all EU and EEA countries and many third countries, stakeholders representing healthcare professionals, patients, disadvantaged groups and industry, all ages from “Young Gasteiners” to professionals with life-long experience.*

VYTENIS ANDRIUKAITIS, COMMISSIONER FOR FOOD & HEALTH SAFETY

*The EHFG filled a very important vacuum in European policy-making by providing a privileged platform for debate on key European policy issues.*

JOSEP FIGUERAS, EUROPEAN OBSERVATORY ON HEALTH SYSTEMS AND POLICIES

### *Why was it important to found a platform like the EHFG?*

*We live increasingly busy lives, with far too little time for reflection on the many changes in the world around us. Yet Gastein offers an opportunity to step back for a few days every year, to listen, to exchange ideas, to test theories, and to learn from each other in an environment that is intellectually stimulating, surrounded by mountains that inspire us to aim for higher things.*

MARTIN MCKEE, LONDON SCHOOL OF HYGIENE AND TROPICAL MEDICINE

*It enabled the uncomplicated interface between decision-makers in health and other actors, especially the European Commission. Policy ideas could be launched that over time found their way into the EC programme. That made it very special. We were able to use the EHFG to move health literacy and global health forward.*

ILONA KICKBUSCH, GLOBAL HEALTH CENTRE, GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

## European Health Award

*“The EHA has had an affirming, fertilising, sustaining and developmental effect and impact on our work. We have, in a sense, been empowered, we now have a more international focus, we open up new areas of activity and we use new structures to expand to new regions and countries.”*

HEALTH WITH MIGRANTS FOR MIGRANTS IN EUROPE (MIMI) PROJECT, WINNER OF THE EHA 2015

### TAKING INNOVATIVE INITIATIVES FORWARD

Since 2007, the EHFG explicitly honours noteworthy initiatives working on cross-border healthcare, by each year awarding a prize endowed with € 10.000. By 2017, 11 different winning projects will have been selected, totalling € 110.000 invested in healthcare projects that are innovative, transferable and sustainable. The very first award winner was selected by the EHFG Board, today the jury is comprised of an EHFG Board member and representatives from the four EHFG pillars – public and private sector, civil society, and science and academia – who make the decision. The award has gone to projects from a variety of different focus areas, ranging from migrant health to mental health, to health literacy.

This effort would have not been possible without the committed support of our partners, and particularly the Federal Austrian Ministry of Health, who has been involved with the prize from its inauguration on and FOPI, who has been supporting the initiative since 2012.

### PAST AWARD WINNERS

European Antibiotics Awareness Day project (2016)  
Health with Migrants for Migrants in Europe (MiMi) project (2015)  
EpiSouth-plus project (2014)  
Recreational Drugs European Network – ReDNet project (2013)  
European Health Literacy – HLS-EU project (2012)  
Child Safety Report Cards (2011)  
European Chronic Disease Alliance (2010)  
European Practice Assessment initiative (2009)  
Cooperation And Working Together renal project (2008)  
European Alliance Against Depression (2007)





Ingo Raimon, EHA Winner 2015 – MiMi Project represented by Ramazan Salman, Helmut Brand and Peter Brosch



Günther Leiner, Helmut Brand, Ingo Raimon, EHA Winner 2016 – European Antibiotic Awareness Day (EAAD) initiative, represented by Andrea Ammon & Giovanni Mancarella, and Pamela Rendt-Wagner

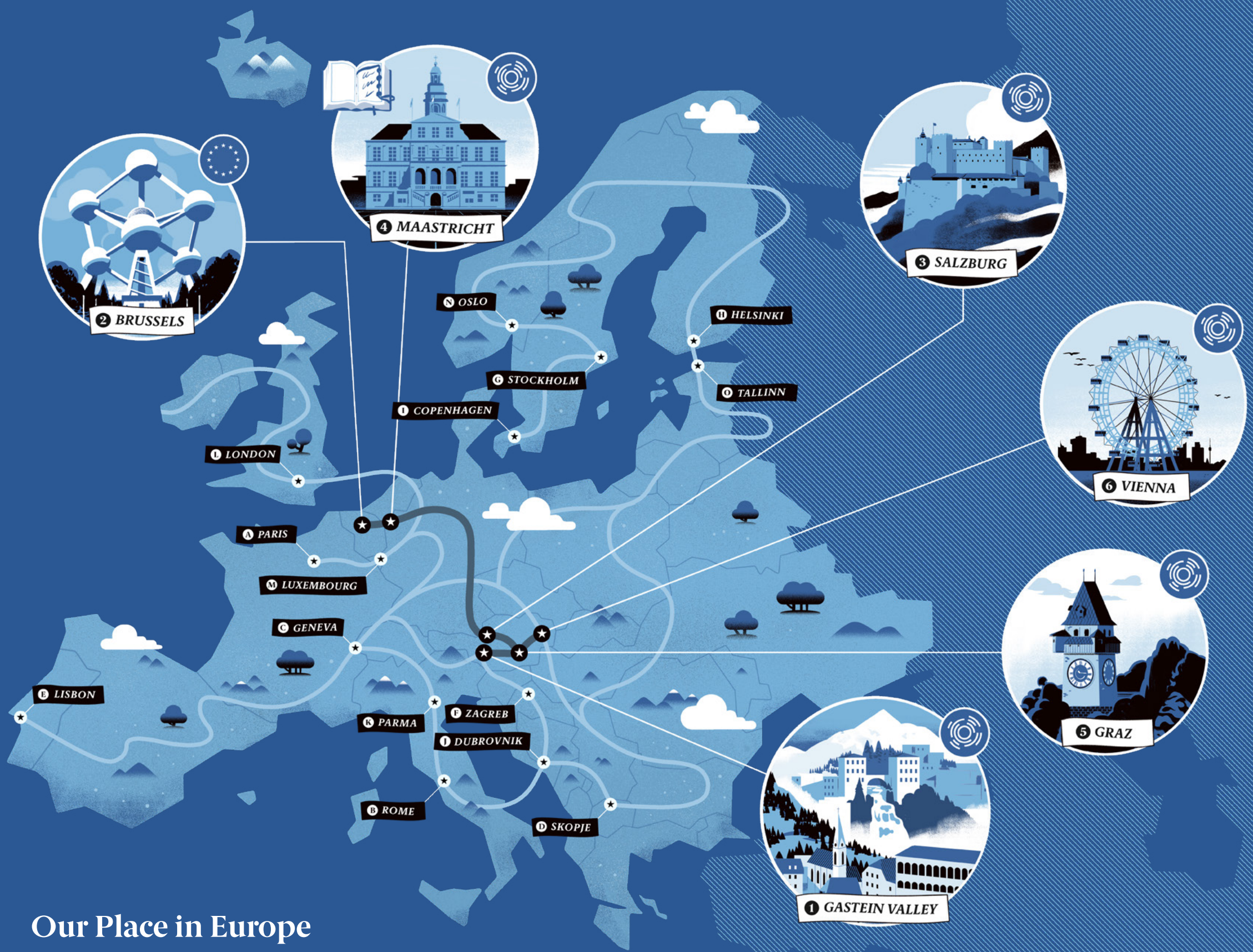


Günther Leiner and Ulrich Hegerl from the first EHA winning project - the European Alliance Against Depression









# Our Place in Europe



# Map Legend

## 1 GASTEIN VALLEY

The Gastein Valley is where the EHFG takes place. It has a long-standing reputation as health resort and spa, already visited by personalities such as Bismarck or Elisabeth of Austria (Sisi). It is comprised of three distinct municipalities: Dorfgastein, Bad Hofgastein and Bad Gastein. **The EHFG Headquarters is in Bad Hofgastein.** With its unique scenery, the valley creates the perfect atmosphere for deceleration, enabling the conference participants to take a step back, explore new ideas and see familiar ones in a new light.

## 2 BRUSSELS

The **Brussels bubble** with its many European institutions is at the core of EU policies and politics, and thus also the centre for health in the EU. This great density is both advantage and disadvantage: A walk across the city takes you to the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and many of the EU's agencies, to name but a few examples. At the same time, the buzzing and high-paced environment might make a break from "business as usual" more than welcome.

## 3 SALZBURG

Most famously known for composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the Salzburg Festival and the musical film "The sound of music", Salzburg has also one of the best-preserved city centres north of the Alps and is UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is the location of the **second EHFG office**, with core staff members working from here since 2007.

## 4 MAASTRICHT

The Maastricht Treaty was signed here in 1992 by the then Members of the European Community, integrating Europe further by creating the three pillars structure of the European Union and leading to the creation of the single European currency. The second **EHFG President Helmut Brand** works from Maastricht.

## 5 GRAZ

Graz is the second-largest city in Austria, and seat of six different universities. Like Salzburg, its old town was added to the UNESCO World Heritage List, for the harmonious co-existence of typical buildings from different epochs. The current **EHFG Secretary General Dorli Kahr-Gottlieb** lives in and partly works from Graz.

## 6 VIENNA

The Austrian capital is home to nearly one third of the country's population, and has gained a reputation for both being the city of music and The City of Dreams, as home to the world's first psychoanalyst – Sigmund Freud. It continuously ranks high among the cities considered to be particularly livable. The Austrian Federal Ministry of Health and Women's Affairs, has its seat here, and its Director General and from 2017 on also **EHFG President Clemens Martin Auer** works in Vienna.

## A PARIS

The **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948 at the Palais de Chaillot. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and has been translated into over 500 languages. Its fourth column (articles 22–27) covers social, economic, and cultural rights, comprising also "the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being."

## B ROME

The **Universal Declaration on the Eradication of Hunger and Malnutrition** was adopted on 16 November 1974 by the World Food Conference, attended by representatives from 135 countries and several international organisations. It sought to remind the world that the access to adequate food is an essential factor in the full development of an individual's physical and mental faculties.

## C GENEVA

In 1981 the WHO defined the **Health For All** concept: "health is to be brought within reach of everyone in a given country. And by 'health' is meant a personal state of well-being, not just the availability of health services – a state of health that enables a person to lead a socially and economically productive life."

## D SKOPJE

The **Skopje Pledge** is the second document on cross-border health development in the SEE region. The signatories affirmed a continued cooperation beyond 2005 on the "Health development action for south-eastern Europe: The South-eastern Europe Health Network", of which the EHFG is a partner since 2011.

## E LISBON

The **Treaty of Lisbon** turned the EU into a consolidated legal personality and abandoned the three pillars structure the Treaty of Maastricht had introduced. It entered into force in December 2009, and is deemed to have enhanced the importance of health policy, stipulating that "a high level of human health protection shall be ensured in the definition and implementation of all Community policies and activities."

## F ZAGREB

Following from the 2008 International Healthy Cities Conference in Zagreb, mayors and senior political representatives of European cities issued the **Zagreb Declaration for Healthy Cities**. It expresses their clear and strong commitment to strengthen and champion action on health, health equity, sustainable development and social justice on the local level. The WHO European Healthy Cities Network to date comprises of about 100 cities and towns from 30 countries.

## G STOCKHOLM

The **Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants** is an international environmental treaty, signed in 2001 and effective from May 2004, aiming to eliminate or restrict the production and use of listed substances. As of April 2017, there are 181 parties to the Convention, including the EU. Notable non-ratifying states include the United States, Israel, Malaysia, and Italy. Stockholm (Solna) is also the seat of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

## H HELSINKI

The eighth **WHO Global Conference on Health Promotion** was held in Helsinki in June 2013. It defined the concept of Health in All Policies as "an approach to public policies across sectors that systematically takes into account the health and health systems implications of decisions, seeks synergies, and avoids harmful health impacts, in order to improve population health and health equity."

## I COPENHAGEN

Copenhagen host the so-called UN city, comprised of nine UN agencies on two different campuses, among them the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Europe. Denmark's capital has been home to a number of international summits, among them the 2009 **United Nations Climate Change Conference**, which has by many been considered a disappointment, failing to radically name and tackle the problems it set out to address.

## J DUBROVNIK

The **Dubrovnik Pledge** was signed on 2 September 2001, and is the first-ever political document on cross-border health development in SEE. Its focus is on meeting the health needs of vulnerable populations in the SEE region, constituting a cornerstone agreement for cooperation and action on health.

## K PARMA

Parma is the seat of the **European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)**, an EU agency that advised the European Commission and other EU institutions on all matters relating to possible food – and feed-related risks. It works on a variety of different areas, including animal health and welfare, plant protection and health, and nutrition.

## L LONDON

The **European Medicines Agency (EMA)** has worked to protect public and animal health by assessing medicines since 1995 and is based in London. With the impending Brexit, a number of European cities vie for becoming the agency's new site after its relocation

## M LUXEMBOURG

Amongst others, Luxembourg is the seat of the **European Court of Justice**, and has a special meaning for European health policy: it argued in the cases Kohll/Decker, that the freedom of the Internal Market was to be extended to the healthcare sector. Following this argumentation, there have been numerous legal decisions on matters of cross-border healthcare – something the Patient Directive aims to codify.

## N OSLO

The Oslo Ministerial Declaration, issued on 20 March 2007, is a statement on **global health as a pressing foreign policy issue** of our time, agreed upon by seven Foreign Ministers from Europe and beyond. The statement highlights that in today's era of globalisation and interdependence, there is an urgent need to broaden the scope of foreign policy.

## O TALLINN

The Tallinn conference (2008), organised by WHO/Europe, became a major turning point in the evolution of public health, and led to the adoption of the **Tallinn Charter: Health Systems for Health and Wealth**. Underlying the Charter is, amongst others, the core message that health systems involve more than health care, as effective health systems promote both health and wealth.

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TRIVIA

ABOUT YOU ..... 70

ABOUT US ..... 72

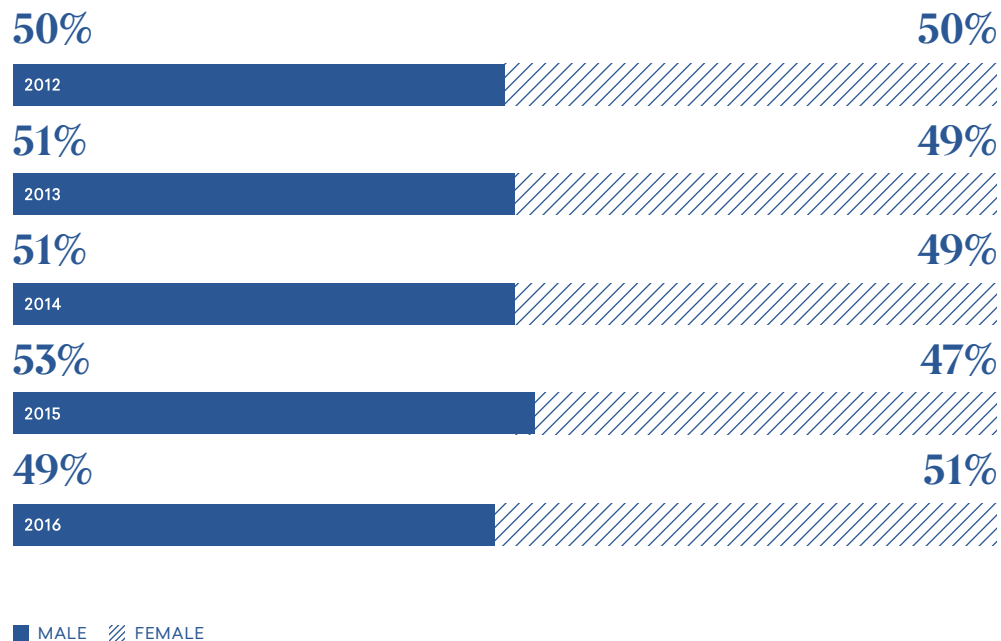


# Participants

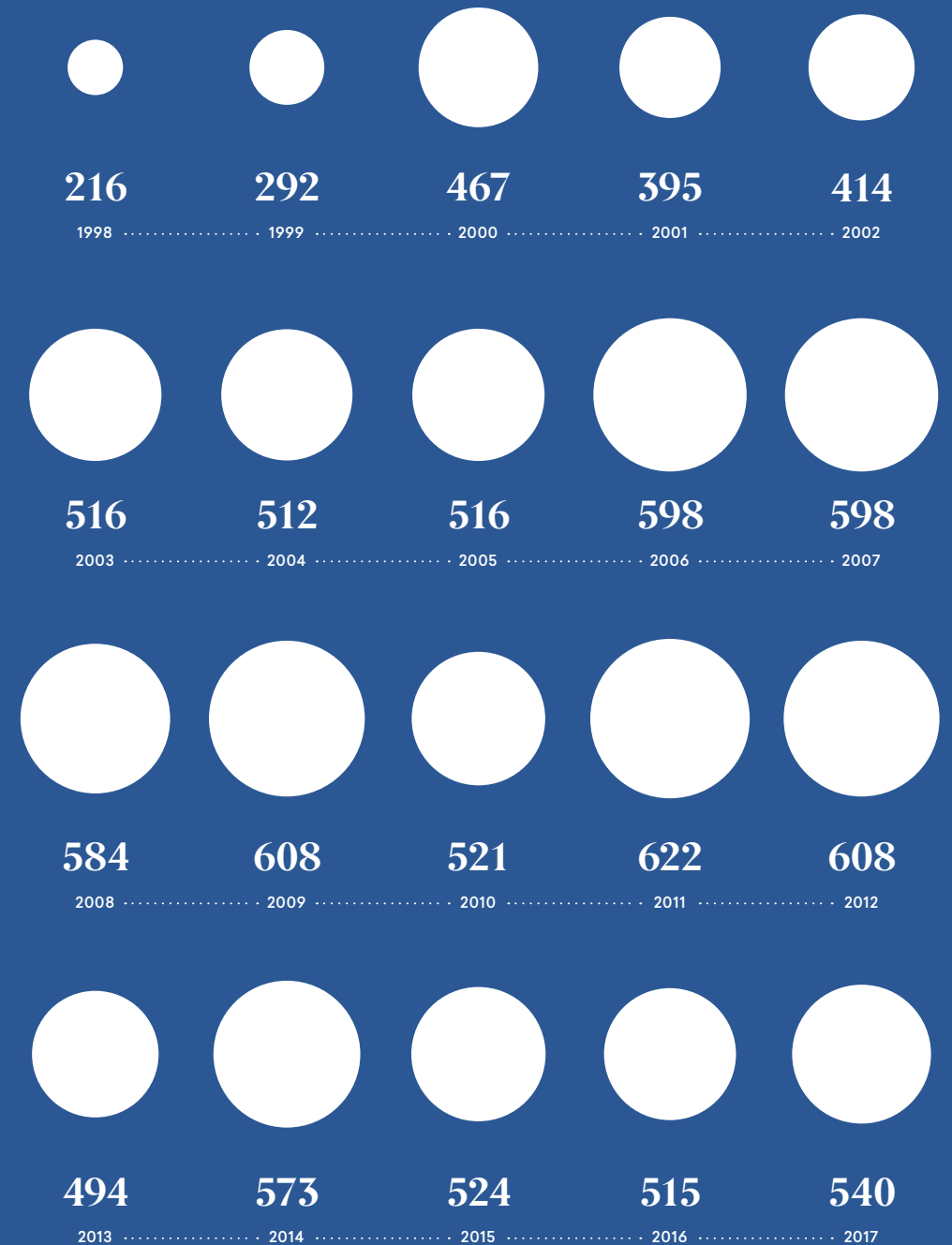
Over the **twenty** years, **10,063** participants\* joined the EHFG conference. Our database includes **5,063** unique participation records – with the recurring rate of **1.88** per person. Between **1998** and **2017**, people from **88** countries participated in the conference: from **49** European countries, missing only **Vatican City** and **Monaco**, and from another **39** non-European countries from **five** continents, missing only **Antarctica**. This means that **44.9%** countries worldwide were at some point represented at the EHFG.

\* Estimated number of participants 2017, total number includes recurring participants.

## MALE TO FEMALE RATIO



## NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS OVER THE YEARS





## We've got mail!



**2,929**

E-MAILS SENT  
PER PERSON / YEAR



**9,658**

E-MAILS RECEIVED  
PER PERSON / YEAR



**25%**

OF OUR TIME IS  
DEVOTED TO E-MAIL

### Electronic correspondence – how much time does it really take?

We did an inventory of an average EHFG team member's mailbox. Assuming, that it takes about **10** minutes to complete an e-mail, with **2,929** emails/per person x **10** min = **29,290** min = **488** hours = **61** working days in a year. We devote **25%** of our time to writing e-mails!

## EHA



## Media Facts



## We do walk a lot!

We have counted the number of steps made by the members of the secretariat on average during the **three** days of the EHFG conference.

DAY 1	DAY 2	DAY 3	TOTAL
<b>15,755</b> STEPS AVG.	<b>16,196</b> STEPS AVG.	<b>13,149</b> STEPS AVG.	<b>45,100</b> STEPS AVG.
<b>12.0</b> KM AVG.	<b>12.3</b> KM AVG.	<b>10.0</b> KM AVG.	<b>34.3</b> KM AVG.

## Benefits of walking

Walking can help decrease the risk of heart attack, decrease the risk of developing **type 2** diabetes, and can even reduce the risk of bone fracture. Additionally, brisk walking can reduce stress and depression levels. Experts suggest walking **6,000** steps a day to improve health and **10,000** steps a day to lose weight. Keep walking!

### CONFERENCE BEST DAY OF WALKING

 **20,352**  
STEPS

 **15.5**  
KM

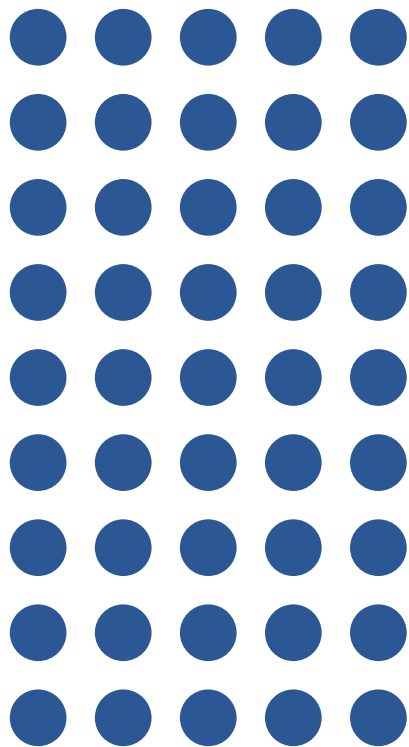
 **893**  
KCAL BURNED

## You make the EHFG happen!

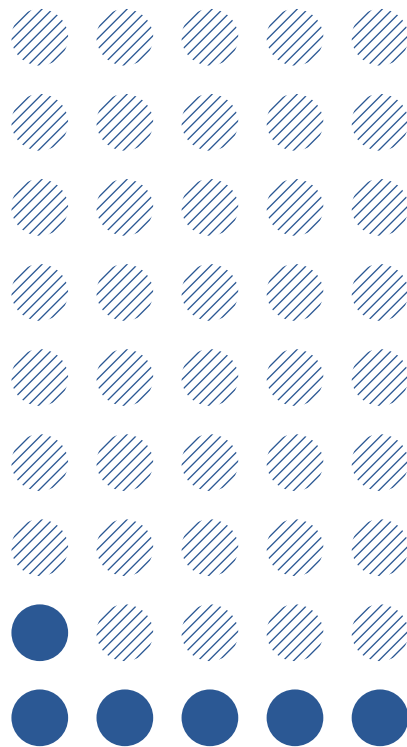
**200** partners – sponsors, hosts and session organisers have worked on over **500** various programme sessions between **1998** and **2017**.

## Getting the location ready!

We spend about **150** hours in total to set everything up, with multiple teams working intensively in parallel for **five** days prior to the event. It only takes us **20** hours to tear it all down!



SET-UP TIME: 150H



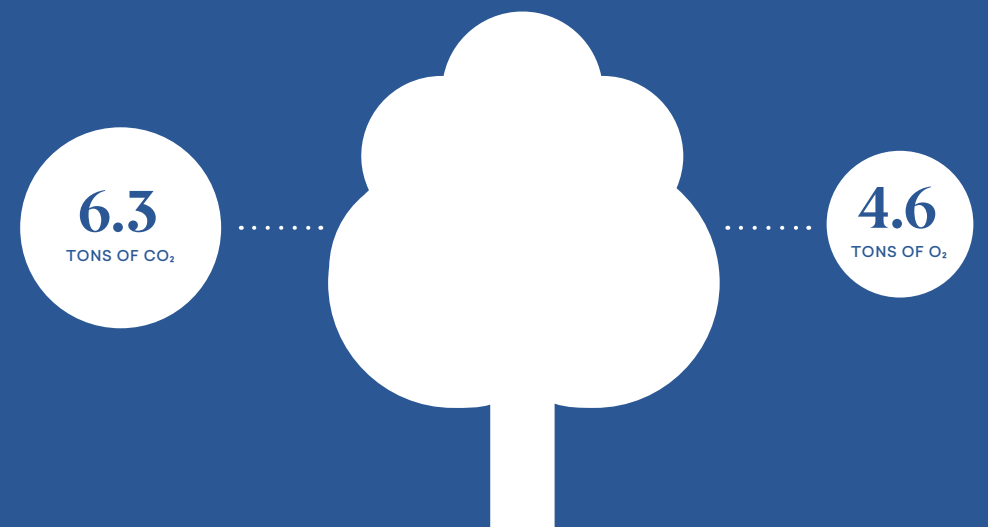
TEAR-DOWN TIME: 20H

## Young Forum Gastein

Over the past **eleven** years we have received **1,022** applications and were able to award **737** scholarships. Our YFG network currently counts **409** members. The application rate stays at about **100** per year, but **two** major peaks of interest can be noticed – in **2010** & **2017** – when it rose by **50%** compared to the previous year.

## What happens between conferences?

One **100 year-old** beech tree produces **4.6** tons of oxygen and processes **6.3** tons of carbon dioxide. Out of light, air, water and minerals the beech produces around **4,300** kg of bio substances. **One** healthy beech can filter **1** ton of dust and toxin from the air in **one** year.



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VOICES

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# Voices

## The EHFG Presidents

*Three EHFG presidents have thus far overseen the organisation's work towards the ambitious goal of creating a better future for health in Europe. Founder Prof Günther Leiner was in office for fifteen years, followed by Prof Helmut Brand. Taking over this year is Dr Clemens Martin Auer. What the EHFG set out to be, what it is today, and what it might be tomorrow: some thoughts on a groundbreaking initiative.*

# The idea behind it all

## Günther Leiner

### PAST: THE FOUNDER'S VISION

I founded the Forum with the conviction that it was high time to counteract real and perceived imbalances in power between the stakeholders in the field of health and healthcare. The four pillars the EHFG rests on form the basis for the legitimacy of all discussions taking place at the Forum. All actors, be they from the public realm, the private sector, science and academia, or civil society, can voice their concerns freely in the more formal frame of one of our workshops – or informally, at one of the networking dinners or morning hikes. While not always of the same opinion, we often share more than we think. Gastein is, in all its remoteness, the perfect place for being reminded that health surely is a mighty common denominator.

The overall aim I set out to reach, and in some instance hopefully succeeded in doing, was to create actionable policy recommendations at the Forum, or at least noticeably contribute to their development. And what I truly felt, and continue to feel passionate about, is fostering the exchange of best practices with Southeastern and Central Europe and its health systems and experts. There continues to be a widespread lack of awareness regarding what the EU can help this region achieve. Health inequalities persist, and my hope is that the EHFG will contribute to reducing and eventually removing them. I am still convinced that there is room for the EU to grow in the health field. We cannot tackle health problems individually, we need each other. I see the EHFG as a direct expression of this reality.

By the time I handed the organisation over into the trusted hands of Prof Helmut Brand, it had grown considerably: from 200 participants to about 600 each year, meeting to discuss health policy in the Gastein Valley. Together, we set important initiatives in areas such as cross-border care and rare diseases. This is something I am proud of – and I am excited to see how the Forum will further develop in the future.

“The four pillars the EHFG rests on form the basis for the legitimacy of all discussions taking place at the Forum.”



## Where we are now

### Helmut Brand

#### PRESENT: AN INTERIM ASSESSMENT

Taking over the office from Prof Günther Leiner was not an easy task – fifteen years of good work meant: expectations were high. I was and am convinced of the legitimacy and purpose of the EHFG, and made clear when assuming my position as president that evolution rather than revolution was my way to go forward regarding the further development of the Forum. Together with the EHFG Secretariat and the Advisory Committee I continuously worked towards a closer thematic alignment of all our sessions and an improvement of internal quality management processes. The second impulse I chose to set was putting a stronger focus on both triggering new discussions and reacting to burning issues at the core of health policy agendas across the EU, such as the financial and migration crises. I am also particularly happy to have seen important developments in the fields of personalised medicine and health literacy being kickstarted at the conference during my presidency.

What the EHFG is about first and foremost is EU health policy. And celebrating 20 years of the organisation is a good opportunity to stop for a moment and appreciate what the EU has achieved thus far: the set-up of structures such as DG SANTE itself, the development of health strategies and programmes, and the contributions these have made to improving the health protection of more than 500 million citizens. Now on to getting even better – and turning missed opportunities into new realities. The anniversary theme of Health in All Politics embodies the sense of urgency to reach the next level of health policy-making.

“What the EHFG is about first and foremost is EU health policy. And celebrating twenty years of the organisation is a good opportunity to stop for a moment and appreciate what the EU has achieved thus far.”





# The road to take

## Clemens Martin Auer

### FUTURE: A LOOK AHEAD

For an incredible 20 years, the European Health Forum Gastein has been the market place for major health policy topics. And during this entire period, the EHFG has been stimulated by the lively debates of decision-makers from different capitals of EU Member States, the European Commission and the many experts in academia, the field of public health, patient groups and professional associations. It is fantastic to see that this dialogue has never lost its excitement and power.

Yet, it is now time to break new ground. As a decision-maker in a health ministry, I know of the importance of connecting the analysis of facts with the actual implementation in health policy-making. It is therefore my goal to turn the EHFG into a comprehensive policy dialogue, where the many exciting findings will be anchored in the real world of health systems. I would like to reconcile theory and practice and offer decision-makers who are continuously driving reform processes a Forum for exchange and for encounters. A forum where best analysis meets best practice and where we can all learn from each other.

“I would like to reconcile theory and practice and offer decision-makers who are continuously driving reform processes a forum for exchange and for encounters. A forum where best analysis meets best practice and where we can all learn from each other.”





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TIMELINE

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# Our Place in Time

## History & Health



### ABOUT THIS TIMELINE

We have put together a very limited selection of world events from the past years. We invite you to join us in developing the timeline further – at the EHFG 2017!

# Impressions

## 1998 – 2017



Hans Kluge, Svetlana Axelrod, Dinara Saginbaeva, Günther Leiner, Elena Tkacheva, Bernd Rechel, Erica Richardson, Oleg Chestnov, Josep Figueras and Willy Palm (EHFG 2012)



Franz Weichenberger, Clemens Martin Auer, Pamela Rendt-Wagner, Zsuzsanna Jakab (EHFG 2016)



Tamsin Rose



Dorli Kahr-Gottlieb and Ulrich Wiedemaier



Franz Weichenberger, Marc Danzon, Anders Gustav, Maria Rauch-Kallat and Günther Leiner (EHFG 2004)



Vytenis Andriukaitis in the Closing Plenary Session (EHFG 2015)





Lydia Mutsch and Richard Bergström (EHFG 2015)



Günther Leiner, John Dalli, David Byrne and Pádraig Flynn (EHFG 2011)



Matthias Wismar



Ilona Kickbusch, Piroska Östlin and Andrzej Rys (EHGH 2015)



Walter Baer, Michael Hübel and Kevin McCarthy



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