

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!

1 2 3 4 5 6

PEOPLE

FOUNDING FATHERS 09
EHFG & GASTEIN VALLEY 30
FROM THE EHFG BOARD 34
PEOPLE BEHIND THE FORUM.. 36
PARTICIPANTS 39
EHFG STAFF..... 40
ADVISORY COMMITTEE 43

LEGACY

GASTEIN - THE LEGACY 47
AN INCLUSIVE PLATFORM 48
YOUNG FORUM GASTEIN 50
CONTRIBUTING TO EUROPEAN
HEALTH POLICY..... 56
EUROPEAN HEALTH AWARD... 59

PLACES

OUR PLACE IN EUROPE 64
MAP LEGEND 66

TRIVIA

ABOUT YOU 70
ABOUT US 72

VOICES

THE EHFG PRESIDENTS 79
THE IDEA BEHIND IT ALL 80
WHERE WE ARE NOW 82
THE ROAD TO TAKE 84

TIMELINE

OUR PLACE IN TIME 88
IMPRESSIONS 90

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)

Imprint

PUBLISHED BY

*European Health Forum Gastein
Tauernplatz 1
5630 Bad Hofgastein
Austria*

—

*info@ehfg.org
www.ehfg.org*

ART DIRECTION & DESIGN

*C RCL .
www.wearecircle.at*

EDITORIAL TEAM

*Lisa Bornscheuer
Maria Dziubińska
Dorli Kahr-Gottlieb*

ILLUSTRATION

*Señor Salme
www.srsalme.com
Represented by Synergy Art*

PHOTOGRAPHY

*Gasteinertal Tourismus GmbH
Anna Dziubińska
Nadine Bargad
Fabian Kapo
Franz Pfluegl
Andreas Steger*