

Opening Ceremony

of the

5th European Health Forum Gastein – on the future of health in Europe

25 to 28 September 2002-09-25

EHFG-Chairman MD Günther Leiner:

No more „white maximization-lies“ anymore

**Mag. Herbert Haupt, Austrian Federal Minister for
Health:**

EU-15 should focus their attention on the health
systems of MOE and Developing Countries

**Governor of the Province Salzburg, Dr. Franz
Schausberger:**

Strengthening regional competences!

Provocatively spoken, we Europeans should be rationalized out of existence. Because we are not affordable anymore. At least as far as health is concerned. Some predict the fall of the occidental security systems. Others still believe in health for everybody and its feasibility, even in times with a very high percentage of old people, recession and explosion of costs within health systems. In which direction will the European Health Systems develop? – On this issue the 5th European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG), Austria, will focus. About 450 well known experts, NGOs, politicians and those affected are going to meet between 25 and 28 September 2002 in order to find answers. Participants coming from countries of the EU as well as the MOE, which makes this congress an “European motor for reasoning” in terms of health matters, aim at a European-wide solution.

The medical laboratory progress opens up new, expensive ways of diagnosis and treatment methods, which increase health expenses above-average. At the same time, the increasing life-expectancy in combination with the decline in the birthrate lead to an above-average ageing of the population. This development leads to the necessity of discussing guidelines for quality assurance as an instrument of rationalisation, EHFG-Chairman M.D. Günther Leiner claimed today, Wednesday, at the inauguration of the 5th European Health Forum Gastein. “Not the maximization of care quality in every isolated case, but the fulfillment of certain norms and standards for appropriate care, are the goal.” With the “white maximization-lie on the best medical care for everyone”, one can not face the fact of resource shortage in the long



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run, the chairman of the EHFG underscores. "We need to fix more normatively, what we want to spend on health care."

The Austrian Federal Minister for Health, Mag. Herbert Haupt, was pleased about the fact that the former "small plant European Health Forum Gastein has grown to such stately size". The last four years of the European Health Forum were a success story. The congress had become a centre of competence in terms of health issues for EU Accession Countries. Haupt spoke highly about the – in his opinion to little appreciated - efforts of the MOE Countries to improve their health systems in order to approach European standards. On the other hand "the willingness of the EU core Member States to deal with the health sector problems of Third- and Fourth-World-Countries has to improve in order to gain the same value, the efforts to solve the problems in the health sector within the European Union, have."

How can the problem of financing health be met with on a European level? The Governor of Province of Salzburg, Dr. Franz Schausberger, calls emphatically for a sensible separation of responsibilities between regional, national and European authorities. "Hospitals, medical standby duties, health planning as well as social care belong to the organization and responsibility of communities and regions. It is good this way, because after all the financing of the systems is their duty as well. I just can't understand, that presidents and governors agree in conclusions of European councils, like in terms of open coordination, to work out common fundamentals for the geriatric care. This is not the duty of neither Europe nor their Member States." It would not correspond with the principle of assigning political responsibility, if the detailed standards were given on a European level, while the financing was left to lower political levels in the European hierarchy. Schausberger proposes, in terms of the future European architecture, "to introduce a 'category of separated responsibilities', in which the EU only functions integrally". For this category he suggests education, research, youth, culture, sports, health and disaster control. In his opinion EU-responsibilities were only justified for cross-boarder measures, for instance in the field of education for mutual acceptance of diplomas. The right place for regulating the basic health financing issues as well as social security, were the national governments. Schausberger pleads for regulating the educational criteria for medical professions on national – or regional – levels, because they should suit the national or regional health system.