

6. European Health Forum Gastein "Health & Wealth"

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Wealth vs. Health in Europe

The social character of the health care system in Europe

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Equal access to health care systems will play a more and more important role in our society in the future. The health care system will probably not be able to keep its present course. Therefore Elias Mossialos (London School of Economics) suggests thinking about technical efficiency of production in the public health sector, quality management, etc. The question for him is what can be privatized and what has to remain a public good. The patients themselves should be included in this transformation process.

20% of the EU population are of the opinion that new packages shall be provided in health care. It is refused to force a uniform health law upon EU member states.

According to the Vice President of the expert committee for economic and social policy (ECOS), Anders Gustav, EU member states shall share the responsibilities for health within the EU. The level of competence is to be compensated by the exchange of information and experience. This means an improvement of information as well as the promotion of health preventions. The objective shall be to call on one and the same medical service EU wide. At present the situation within EU states still looks different.

For the Secretary-General of the European Health Alliance wealth is the most important condition for health. Income differences grow and have effects on the health care system and on society. The objective shall be to establish a certain level of wealth. To promote European health measures the Union will have to get hold of higher financial means. But health questions are still not on the agenda of the EU.

Ursula Stenzel, member of the European Parliament, regards non-synchronized economies as a danger for a two-tier-society. In non-EU states health problems are mainly connected with poverty and the social system. But industrial states are also more and more confronted with an increase of problems in the social sector and public health.

Whereas developing countries face famine and lacking hygiene in industrial states there is the problem of corpulence attributing to malnutrition or lacking exercise. The main objective should be the maintenance of the highest possible quality in public health. In the future there shall be stronger co-operation between EU member states and a standardization of medicines.