



EHFG: a “Think Tank” for European Health Policy

- **Venue for experts from politics, administration , business, medicine and science**
- **Focus: stronger integration of citizens into health care**
- **Increase of efficiency and quality improvement through electronization**

“The European Health Forum Gastein is now the most important think tank for European health policy,” EHFG President Günther Leiner emphasised at the opening of the 8th annual health policy event taking place in the Gasteinertal. “Here, in discussions between experts from all areas of the health care system, important contributions are developed for the technical basis of the health policies of tomorrow. The spectrum of topics and involvement of leading experts from the fields of politics, health administration, companies operating in the health care industry, medical practice and science make the European Health Forum Gastein a most unique venue for meetings.”

The EHFG’s great success – with more than 630 attendees last year’s numbers have been exceeded by a good 20 percent and a new record achieved – also shows that the concept of the EHFG has really taken off. “Politics and business need opportunities to meet where long-term developments can be discussed in a professional atmosphere.”

This year an important priority of the EHFG is the increased integration of citizens into the health care system, whereby the motivation for a healthier lifestyle is the centre of focus. Today, proper nutrition and a sufficient degree of physical activity are the keys to improving the overall health care situation. “All the doctors in the world cannot do as much for the health of individuals in affluent countries as individuals themselves can do by means of a reasonable lifestyle,” says Leiner.

The EHFG accords the topic of electronization in health care substantial attention as well. Under the slogan “e-health” in virtually all European countries far-reaching changes in the organisation of health care are being initialised and to some extent have already been implemented. From the exchange of experiences experts anticipate particularly ample benefits for the individual countries concerning the difficult process of implementing the new structures.

Further topics at the EHFG are the fight against fraud in the health care industry, the opportunity to improve patient safety, details on the new EU health care strategy and new developments in palliative medicine.

Austrian Minister of Health Maria Rauch-Kallat took advantage of the opening of the European Health Forum to introduce her health policy agenda for the Austrian EU Presidency

in the first half of 2006. The focus of activities will centre on diabetes and women's health. "We have to expect a dramatic increase in the incidence of diabetes, particularly among younger people. Here there is really a red alert," says Rauch-Kallat.

In the issue of women's health the work will focus not "only" on the classic health problems among women such as osteoporosis, but also diseases which have been underestimated. Among these are certain kinds of cancer such as lung cancer as well as cardiovascular diseases. "Here growth rates are considerably higher than among men."

An increase in the efficiency of health care and long-term financial feasibility of the health care system will also have high priority. The pillars of these activities are the reduction of under- and over-provisioning, increased implementation of telemedicine and reduction of the average hospital stay by replacing in-patient with out-patient treatments."

Further information

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Further press information on the EHFG and pictures at www.ehfg.org