



## **Palliative Care Still Unsatisfactory Throughout Europe**

- **Conference of experts on “World Hospice and Palliative Care Day” on 8 October**
- **Considerable differences in range of services in the EU states**
- **Austria occupies the middle range**

Medical support of people who are dying (palliative medicine) is still a stepchild in modern health care systems and millions of people worldwide die poorly cared for every year. On the occasion of “World Hospice and Palliative Care Day” today, at the European Health Forum Gastein, Europe’s most important health policy event, an international group of experts discussed possibilities for improving the situation in the European Union

In view of known demographic changes – the segment of the very elderly (over 80 years of age) has been growing substantially for years – palliative medicine is steadily gaining in importance. A study presented at the EHFG shows striking differences in the quality and concentration of palliative services offered in the EU member states. Great Britain, which has had a hospice movement since 1967, is in the lead: whether out-patient teams or stationary units, there are 16 palliative care facilities per one million inhabitants. In Italy and Switzerland there are six, in Hungary fewer than five, in Germany and Slovenia barely four. Those at the bottom of the scale were the Czech Republic and Slovakia: in these countries there is only one palliative unit per one million inhabitants. Austria occupies the mid-range with five stationary units per million inhabitants.

This data was collected by the European Association for Palliative Care (EAPC). The organisation now includes members from 21 European countries and campaigns for the promotion of palliative care. The goal of the study, said board member Carlos Centeno at the EHFG, is “the creation of an atlas of palliative care on the situation in all European countries.” The establishment of a European network of key persons and organisations working in palliative care is sought in order to institutionalise the international exchange long-established in other medical disciplines in this field as well. The EAPC demands that national and European health policies put palliative and hospice care on their agendas, establish clearly defined development plans for it and furnish the necessary funds for end-of-life support programmes.

### **Further information**

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