



## **European Health Forum Gastein 2006 on Record Course with 580 Participants**

- **Top representatives from politics, science and administration make the EHFG the most important health policy event in the European Union**
- **Focal points are quality assurance in health care, migration in health care professions and cross-border cooperation**

The European Health Forum Gastein is aiming for new records at its 9<sup>th</sup> edition in Bad Hofgastein from 4 to 7 October 2006. With 580 participants, last year's record number of attendees has been practically repeated. With over 30 plenary sessions, fora and workshops, a greater variety of topics is offered than ever before. Even the share of participants from abroad has risen again.

EHFG President Dr. Günther Leiner is pleased that the enormous success of last year, when the forum profited from particular interest in the run-up to the Austrian EU presidency, will be able to be repeated this year and that nearly 600 high-profile experts will come to Bad Hofgastein: "This development demonstrates that there is continually greater recognition of how necessary close international cooperation is in the area of health policy and for the intensive exchange of experience in a unifying Europe." At the opening of the EHFG Mr Leiner said that the "European Health Forum offers an ideal, well-established platform which is necessary as a think tank for health policy and above all for health care administration in Europe."

The focal points of this year's European Health Forum are of particular interest for patients and to some extent have become unexpectedly current. Several events address diverse aspects of quality assurance in the health care industry.

The topic of cross-border cooperation in the health care industry is especially current as a result of the release just a few days ago of a memorandum by the EU Commission on the planned EU Health Directive. The directive is crucial for the extent to which patients will be able to claim benefits for services in other countries within the EU.

"Migration in health care professions" has been intensively discussed in numerous other European countries recently, specifically in the context of nursing and allied health care professions. At the EHFG longer-term perspectives will be discussed, focusing on the currently somewhat less observed migration of highly-qualified personnel, doctors in particular.

Leiner is convinced that "for the success and improvement of health insurance in Europe, convincing answers to this question are just as important as scientific progress in medicine," adding that "the success of a European think tank in the area of health care policy and organization, as the EHFG has established itself, is therefore of enormous practical significance."

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**Further press information on the EHFG can also be found at [www.ehfg.org](http://www.ehfg.org)**