



10th Anniversary of the European Health Forum Gastein: EHFG 2007 reaches new dimensions

- **600 participants from around 50 countries**
- **High profile list of participants with numerous politicians, top managers and leading experts**
- **“Think tank for European health policy”**

The European Health Forum Gastein will be held for the tenth time this year. Over the past decade, the annual Autumn meeting between leading representatives from the realms of politics, administration, business and science has established itself as the most important platform for presenting and debating new developments in European health policy and the organisation of the healthcare systems in European countries.

This year, around 600 participants are expected to attend the EHFG. Around 150 presentations and discussions will be held over four days from the 3rd to 6th of October. Notable representatives from the field of politics include, amongst others, EU health commissioner Markos Kyprianou, Portuguese health minister and representative of the EU Council presidency António Fernando Correia de Campos and Slovenian health minister Andrej Bručan. Austrian representatives include chancellor Alfred Gusenbauer, health minister Andrea Kdolsky and provincial governor Gabi Burgstaller. Of the experts, Robert Madlin, Director General of the European Commission’s Directorate General for Public Health and Consumer Protection for Health and Consumer Protection, Reinhard Busse from the Berlin University of Technology and Sir Michael Marmot of the WHO are amongst the best known. In addition to the health programme, there will also be a ceremony to mark the 10th anniversary of the EHFG, with Austrian health minister Andrea Kdolsky to hold the key note speech.

“In its tenth year, the European Health Forum Gastein can more than ever lay claim to being the leading expert health policy even within the European Union”, enthuses EHFG President Günther Leiner. “Gastein is where developments are prepared that often shape health policy in Europe for years to come.”

The EHFG is unique, as it manages to bring together leading figures from the fields of politics, health administration, NGOs, business and science. “There are a large number of congresses where researchers meet, conferences for industry representatives or conventions for administrative representatives”, Leiner explains. “As an event that provides an institutionalised forum for exchanges between these groups, the EHFG is one of a kind in Europe, at least in such a comprehensive form.”



The EHFG is of particular importance in 2007, according to Leiner, as the coming months will see important decisions that will set the course for future European health policy. “The opportunities that result from European integration in the health sector can yet be better

harnessed. Specific EU measures concerning health services are in the final stages of preparation. This initiative will lead to much higher legal security and more transparent health services across Europe, which will dramatically facilitate the mobility of patients and healthcare providers within Europe. The EHFG is practically the last chance for experts to discuss the EU commission's proposals before a final draft is submitted.”

Leiner leaves no doubts that there are areas where the EU can make a significant contribution towards improving healthcare in Europe. “With increasingly mobile patients, it is of paramount importance that healthcare providers know which services they can provide and under what terms. The EU can provide a uniform legal framework, thus making life easier for both patients and healthcare providers. It is extremely important to patients to be able to rely upon safe healthcare of a high quality throughout Europe.”

Further information:

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