



## **New EU Health Information and Knowledge System is to Facilitate International Comparisons**

- **EU Commission demands reorganization of health information systems**
- **Lacking comparability of data complicates health policy decisions**

**European Health Forum Gastein 2007.** According to the European Commission, the existing European health information system performs its functions only highly inadequately. The aim of rapidly providing high-quality and usable data and information in order to make health policy decisions on international, national and regional levels has not been achieved in a wide range of areas. This was the conclusion of a high-profile forum of experts at the European Health Forum Gastein, the most important health policy event in the EU. As the EU Commission states in an information paper, the poorly organized and vague division of responsibilities between various areas (for ex. Eurostat, Directorate General, Health, etc.) are primarily responsible for this.

For this reason the EU experts have demanded rapid implementation of the plans for a fundamentally reorganized EU Health Information and Knowledge System. The system must provide a common framework for data acquisition that enables the non-bureaucratic exchange of information at all administrative levels. The first step necessary to achieve this is a clear designation of areas of competency.

Just as important are clear specifications for data structures. These are the prerequisites for obtaining comparable data from all the member states, which in turn is necessary in order to create a basis for health policy decisions at the European level. The member states must also define standardized processes for the acquisition and transmission of data – which in several countries has yet to take place at all, even on a rudimentary basis.

The planned EU Health Information and Knowledge System is understood as a process of data collection and transmission at the EU level. Institutions of the public health, statistical and research programmes are to be availed in order to generate cooperation and synergies between public health systems, the statistical and scientific community.

### **Further information:**

**EHFG Press Office**, Mag. Thomas Brey, [info@mbdialog.at](mailto:info@mbdialog.at), Tel.: +43 (0) 64 32/20262, mobile: +43 (0) 676/542 39 09

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