



## **Strengthening health systems: measuring pays out**

- **Performing health systems not only improve health but also stimulate the economy**
- **Implementing WHO's Tallinn Charter requires effective measuring systems**
- **Decision-making regularly based on feelings rather than facts**

At the European Health Forum Gastein, WHO representatives and experts discussed ways to implement the “Tallinn Charter”, which was adopted at the recent WHO Ministerial conference in the Estonian capital in June 2008. In this Charter both national governments and international institutions express their commitment to invest in the health of their respective populations. They also acknowledged the beneficial effect for economic development. The Charter provides guidance and a strategic framework for strengthening health systems throughout Europe.

The EHFG is the most prominent congress on health politics in the EU with more than 600 high-ranking experts from the fields of health politics, administration, medicine, science, industry and NGOs participating.

“There is no doubt that health is influencing wealth”, says Josep Figueras, Director of the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies. “What we need are better evaluation and measuring systems for better assessing the effects of policies on the values and goals we have set for our health systems.” For instance, a close monitoring of the effect of out-of-pocket-payments on different income groups offers the possibility to refine protection mechanisms to ensure accessibility to care for all. Too often reforms are still more based on feelings than on evidence.

“Efficient measuring tools are a prerequisite for good health policies and they have to be in place before measures are even implemented”, says Figueras. Examples show that also lower income countries in the Eastern part of the European region can set up effective measuring systems for steering and strengthening their health policy. Investing in performance measurement pays out in outcomes.

**Press contact:**

**EHFG Press Office,**

c/o MB Dialog, Thomas Brey

Tel.: +43 1 917 51 18-25; mobile: +43 / 676 / 542 39 09

e-mail: [ehfg@mbdialog.at](mailto:ehfg@mbdialog.at)

[www.ehfg.org](http://www.ehfg.org)