



EU Commissioner Vassiliou Warns of Budget Cuts in Healthcare

- **Serious risk of a decline in health standards**
- **Crisis will lead to considerably more demand for health services**
- **Even more concentration on prevention and support for a healthy lifestyle**

EU Health Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou has directed a serious warning to her fellow policymakers in a greeting to the participants of the 12th European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG), the most important health policy conference for experts and decision-makers in the European Union: “There is now a risk that decision-makers are being tempted to think short term and to make cuts in the health budget.”

It is expected that the crisis will lead to a decline in the health status of Europeans: “The crisis is causing increased psychosocial stress and in many cases an increase in hazardous behaviour such as alcohol abuse, smoking and unhealthy nutrition. For this reason the demand for health services will significantly rise as a result of the crisis.”

This is all the more reason to do everything to increase the efficiency of public healthcare, something the Commission is also contributing to with a series of initiatives:

- In the area of **medical technology** the Commission supports cooperations between the member states for the evaluation and approval of new technologies.
- The Commission proposal on the issue of **patient safety** has made quality assurance a highly-regarded healthcare issue throughout the EU.
- The **European Partnership against Cancer** initiated by the Commission facilitates coordinated cross-border measures.
- The further development of **e-health solutions** advanced by the Commission enables extensive increases in productivity.

“In the crisis we should be investing in health rather than cutting budgets,” Vassiliou concluded. “But we also have to seek favourable cost solutions just as much and grant prevention and health promotion, in particular, a greater priority.”

Press contact:

EHFG Press Office

Thomas Brey

info@mbdialog.at

Tel.: +43 676 542 39 09