



EU Experts Present “European Statistical System” for the Area of Healthcare

- **Extensive cooperation between Eurostat and national statistical authorities**
- **Aim are common indicators and methodological guidelines**
- **Comparability of data in the EU countries facilitates adoption of successful health measures**

The European Statistical System Network on Public Health Statistics (ESSnet PH) was presented Wednesday in the scope of a workshop at the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG), the leading health policy congress for experts and decision-makers in the European Union. The aim is a uniform basis for data in the area of healthcare for all EU member states. ESSnet PH is launching in October 2009 and will build on the work of the informal *POartnership on Health Statistics* established in 2003.

All EU member states as well as Iceland, Norway and Switzerland are participating in ESSnet PH. The cooperation is to result in a set of public health indicators (European Community Health Indicators – ECHI). ESSnet PH will develop guidelines for the methodology of data collection, tools on sampling as well as specifications for data quality.

With it the comparability of health statistics on the status of health, health-influencing factors and the assessment of preventive measures in the EU member states will be improved and their analysis made easier. The indicators on which it is based include mortality rates, assessments concerning the number of “healthy life years”, statistics on the causes of death and indicators on people’s assessment of their own condition of health.

From ESSnet PH experts anticipate improvements in Europe-wide statistics on monitoring the implementation of EU health policy concepts. “As long as indicators in EU member states are not based on comparable, reliable and consistent basic data, it will be difficult to compare the results of joint policy measures in the member states in order to recognise successful approaches,” Hartmut Buchow of Eurostat explains. “In contrast, reliable and solid indicators based on uniform data sets allow comparisons between countries to be made. This permits successful health policy measures of other countries to be quickly adopted in one’s own country.”

One particular area of attention with the ESSnet PH program continues to lie in the improvement of statistical foundations for epidemiological and medical research.

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