

European Health Forum Gastein 2018 opens its doors to inspire bold political choices for Agenda 2030

Official event of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union focuses on 'Health and Sustainable Development – Bold political choices for Agenda 2030'.

The EHFG 2018 aims to inject a sense of urgency and the need to take bold choices into tackling Europe's health challenges.

The winner of the 2018 European Health Award and the EHFG's first-ever Hackathon will be announced.

Bad Hofgastein, Austria, 1 October 2018 – European Health Forum Gastein 2018 (EHFG 2018) opens this week for the 21st year. It will gather over 500 public health stakeholders from policy, academia, civil society and business to debate the need for bold political choices around health and sustainable development, which is a key item of the Agenda 2030 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The political dimension is not only reflected by the presence of Ministers of Health, the EHFG is an official event of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union and comes at an important time for health in Europe. With the European elections taking place in May 2019, and the subsequent institutional change-over, the right priorities and necessary commitments to realising health sustainability will need to be made today.

The Gastein Valley will be buzzing once again with lively discussions on health and new ideas, kicking off with a plenary that will highlight the need for urgency of addressing health across all sectors and borders. Riina Sikkut, the Estonian Minister of Health and Labour will be speaking alongside Martin Seychell, Deputy Director General for Health and Food Safety at the European Commission and Zsuzsanna Jakab, Regional Director at WHO Europe to reflect on what actions are needed for Europe to reach the SDGs.

The SDGs have engendered a new discourse for health, acknowledging the pivotal role of public health for economic and social prosperity and one that exposes the need to ensure the right balance between the interests of citizens and patients and the interests of market actors. The plenary session on Thursday, co-organised with WHO Europe and the European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies, will therefore explore the impact of health and health systems on economic development, while Friday's closing plenary will specifically touch upon the need to strike a balance between global health priorities and commercial and economic interests.

Dr. Clemens Martin Auer, President of the EHFG, states that the "*EHFG offers a safe space for controversial debates and thought experiments around Europe's contemporary health challenges. There is a wide variety of dynamics at play when it comes to securing health system sustainability - social, economic, as well as the commercial dynamics. In order to effectively and holistically address these, we need to be willing to think outside the box.*"

To achieve health for all, Europe needs to explore new and unknown avenues. That is why, with this year's theme, we are looking to challenge the participants to come up with 'bold' solutions and to be courageous in their approach towards Agenda 2030", adds Dorli Kahr-Gottlieb, Secretary General of the Forum.

The EHFG takes place between 3-5 October 2018 in Bad Hofgastein, Austria. The full programme, including session content, speakers and more details is available [online](#).

About European Health Forum Gastein

The European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) was founded in 1998 as a European health policy conference. It aims to provide a platform for all stakeholders from the fields of public health and healthcare, and beyond. Over the past decade, the EHFG has established itself as an indispensable institution in the scope of European health policy. It has made a decisive contribution to the development of guidelines and above all the cross-border exchange of experience, information and cooperation. Leading experts participate in the annual conference held in the Gastein Valley in the Austrian Alps for three days in October.

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