

PRESS RELEASE

European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) 2020 to stimulate discussions on new partnership models to build back a stronger and healthier Europe

- At a time when the coronavirus pandemic has stretched health care systems to the limit and beyond, and turned our social, economic and political lives upside down, this year's European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) sets out to explore new partnership models to advance health for all. These discussions will take place under the theme "Dancing with elephants – New partnerships for health, democracy, business".
- The EHFG is delighted to announce a strong line up of speakers who will discuss the need for cross-sector and cross-border collaboration, while balancing concepts of well-being, democracy, sustainability, and economic recovery.
- The EHFG 2020 is, for the first time, embracing a digital format while retaining its unique "Gastein" character by offering a wide range of interactive plenaries, workshops, and press conferences.

Register for our online EHFG 2020 [here](#).

*Participation for accredited journalists at the EHFG 2020 is free.*

*On the registration page, please, in a first step, select standard fee, and for the coupon code please enter "EHFGJournalist2020". On the second page, please select "press and media".*

For any questions, please contact the press office at [press@ehfg.org](mailto:press@ehfg.org) or +32 2 321 90 16.

**31 July 2020, Bad Hofgastein, Austria** – Under the theme of "Dancing with elephants – New partnerships for health, democracy, business", the [European Health Forum Gastein 2020](#) aims to crystallise new partnership models for health and well-being. With an exciting line-up of speakers, plenaries and workshops, this year's EHFG will, for the first time since its creation in 1998, be held in an interactive digital format from **30 September – 2 October 2020**.

The coronavirus pandemic has revealed the limits of even the most sophisticated health care systems. It has also sparked a new wave of economic and political nationalism and disrupted hard-fought progress in other disease areas. At the same time, it has arguably created the momentum for sustainable, long-lasting change. Engaging in new intersectoral, cross-border partnerships to address political and commercial determinants of health in tandem will be crucial to navigate the waters of an uncertain future, and help build back a stronger, healthier, and more united Europe.

Setting the scene for this year's EHFG, the opening plenary discusses concepts and visions for a sustainable, democratic, and healthy recovery from the socio-economic repercussions caused by the global pandemic. The Thursday plenary focuses on the value and power of data, particularly in the context of COVID-19, and assesses Europe's ambitions to create a common standard for health data governance. Coming together in the closing plenary, speakers will highlight that now more than ever before is the time to strengthen health on the EU's political agendas and issue a call for action for a European Health Union.

The EHFG 2020 features four thematic tracks. The first, entitled “**Advancing innovation**”, critically analyses how stakeholders can speed up innovation and its sustainable and equitable uptake to address future health threats such as antimicrobial resistance. The second track, “**Resilient systems**”, dives deep into the intricacies of investing in health and into related questions of how to build back stronger health care systems after the crisis. Furthermore, COVID-19 had us recall that the very nature of research and science necessitates a continuous and critical engagement with what we think we know. Related questions of how to translate which evidence into action, and when, will be covered in the third track “**From data to decisions**”. Finally, the fourth track, “**Empowerment and agency**”, highlights what it takes for people to become agents of change in health policy making, and how they can make their voice heard by ‘dancing’ with the big players in health.

Among the key speakers at the EHFG 2020 are:

- Government representatives and health ministers from **Austria, Germany, Portugal, Malta and Slovenia**
- **Andrea Ammon**, Director, European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
- **Carly Kind**, Director, Ada Lovelace Institute
- **Caspar Klyng**, Vice President, European Government Affairs, Microsoft
- **Colin Crouch**, External Scientific Member, Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies, Cologne
- **Hans Kluge**, Regional Director for the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Regional Office for Europe
- **Ilona Kickbusch**, Founding Director of the Global Health Programme, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies Geneva
- **Katherine Trebeck**, Advocacy & Influencing Lead for the Wellbeing Economy Alliance

Underlining the importance of this year’s theme, Clemens Martin Auer, EHFG President said: “COVID-19 has challenged our health care systems and undermined the well-being and wealth of people as well as fundamental constitutional rights and liberties. With only ten years to go to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, we need to critically assess how new partnership models across sectors and borders can bring us back on track. Only by confronting controversial topics, can we aspire to emerge from the biggest health crisis of modern times stronger and move forward on ensuring equitable access to health.”

Embracing a fully virtual format, this year’s EHFG will continue its longstanding tradition of shaping health policy making in Europe and is looking forward to ‘dancing’ with the key players in the public health sphere.

#### 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 late September/ early October, which in 2020 will be replaced by a digital format due to the current situation surrounding COVID-19.