

## PRESS RELEASE

### European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) 2024: Shifting sands of health – Democracy, demographics, digitalisation

- Today marks the start of the EHFG 2024, a four-day hybrid conference running from 24 - 27 September. With over 25 sessions, three plenary discussions, two press conferences, and ample opportunities for networking, this year's Forum promises engaging and critical discourse.
- The EHFG 2024 gathers representatives from science and academia, civil society, industry, and the public sector, to explore solutions for the complex "3D" interplay of democracy, demographics, and digitalisation. Notable speakers include **Johannes Rauch**, Federal Minister of Social Affairs, Health, Care, and Consumer Protection, Austria, **Viktor Liashko**, Minister of Health, Ukraine, **Pamela Rendi-Wagner**, Director of the European Centre Disease Control, and **Vytenis Andriukaitis**, Member of the European Parliament.

[Register here](#) to follow the EHFG 2024 online.

**24 September 2024, Bad Hofgastein, Austria** – As Europe continues to grapple with an evolving health landscape driven by demographic shifts, digital advancements, and political dynamics, the need for cohesive and forward-thinking health policies has never been greater. Today marks the start of the 27th European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG), which will focus on the critical and interconnected transformations shaping health systems and society as a whole.

Central to this year's discussions are the "3D" forces: democracy, demographics, and digitalisation. The demographic shift, characterised by migration, ageing populations, and changing workforce dynamics, poses significant challenges to the sustainability of healthcare systems across Europe. At the same time, rapid digitalisation offers both unprecedented opportunities for innovation and new challenges in ensuring equitable access and protecting privacy. Perhaps the most concerning threat is the erosion of democratic principles by populist and autocratic movements. The health community faces a stark choice: mobilise in this new landscape or collude with the health consequences.

"The 27th European Health Forum Gastein comes at a crucial time for Europe's health systems, which are increasingly challenged by democratic upheavals, demographic shifts, and rapid digitalisation", says EHFG President Clemens Martin Auer. "Neglecting

the health sector amid these challenges threatens not only public health but also democratic stability and social cohesion. We must urgently push for a new social contract that ensures health systems remain adequately funded and prioritised amidst competing budgetary pressures".

The EHFG 2024, co-organised by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, with support from the European Union, and in collaboration with the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, brings together diverse participants to generate innovative strategies and forge strong alliances to safeguard and promote health in a rapidly changing world.

The complete programme, detailing sessions and speakers, is available [here](#).

For any inquiries, please contact the press office at [press@ehfg.org](mailto:press@ehfg.org).

#EHFG2024

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#### About European Health Forum Gastein

The European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) was founded in 1998 as a European health policy conference. It brings together stakeholders and decision-makers from the public and private sector, civil society, and science and academia, who together form the four pillars of the EHFG. Over the past 27 years, the EHFG has established itself as an indispensable institution in the scope of European health policy. With its annual conference and other events and projects, it has made a decisive contribution to the development of guidelines and above all the cross-border exchange of experience, information, and cooperation. Leading European experts traditionally participate in the annual conference held in the Gastein Valley in the Austrian Alps in late September.



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