

EU Health Highlights

News about health in the EU from EuroHealthNet Brussels Office

January 2006, Issue # 1

1. Main Stories

- **MEPs reject budget as EU public health “crisis” emerges**

In December 2005 ministers reached an agreement on the EU budget for the period 2007-2013 for an amount of 864 billion euros. This Council proposal reduces the Commission proposal of 1001.7 billion (with a budget of 1.2 billion for both health and consumer protection) and the European Parliament proposal of 975 billion.

Category 3(b) of the budget includes public health. Speaking at the European Voice *Healthcare 2006* Conference in Brussels on 26 January, the head of the cabinet of Health Commissioner Markos Kyprianou indicated that if the Council position is confirmed it would mean a cut to approximately 950 million euro for the new programme.

Initial estimates obtained by EuroHealthNet suggest that significant parts of the programme strands could be cut. Prominent health experts in Brussels have warned of a “crisis for EU public health policy”. EuroHealthNet director Clive Needle has informed network agencies of his concerns that health promotion work at EU level could be severely affected if national capitals do not revise the budget.

Members of the European Parliament have rejected with a high majority the budget proposed by the Council on 18 January on the basis that it ‘does not guarantee prosperity, solidarity and security for the future’. They have rarely used powers to block any deal.

Talks will continue in a trilogue between the European Parliament (President Borrell), European Commission (President Barroso) and Council President Chancellor Schüssel (Austria). The Commission is expected to hand in its draft inter-institutional agreement on the financial perspective in early February upon which parties will then negotiate. No deadline has been fixed, but Austria is optimistic that an agreement will be reached for the Spring.

http://www.europarl.eu.int/news/expert/infopress_page/034-4415-18-1-3-905-20060118IPR04414-18-01-2006-2006--true/default_en.htm

- **MEPs discuss the Health & Consumer programme**

The Environment, Public Health and Food Safety committee of the European Parliament discussed the Community Action Programme in the Field of Health on 23 January.

The European Parliament has asked to split the programme into two specific programmes: one for health and one for consumer protection. In committee the Rapporteur, Dr Antonio Trakatellis, asked his colleagues to agree on a budget of 1.5 billion euros to be able to carry out all the actions included in the Commission proposal.

There was a general consensus among members of the Committee to voice their worries over the financial perspective for 2007-2013 and the consecutive reduction in the budget allocated to health. Members of Parliament also insisted that the programme should focus on the added value of EU actions in the field of health: exchange of good practices, data collecting, and information.

The Committee will vote on the issue on Tuesday 31 January.

- **The health programme of the Austrian presidency**

The Austrian Minister for Health and Women, Maria-Rauch Kallat presented the health programme of the Austrian presidency to the European Parliament Committee on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety.

Mrs Kallat presented a long list of work areas including:

- Finding an agreement on the joint Health and Consumer Protection Programme,
- Health threats (such as the bird flu and HIV/Aids in neighbouring countries),
- Working towards the adoption of the proposed directive on paediatric medicine,
- Working towards the adoption of the food additive and nutritional claim on food products directives
- Reviewing medicine legislation and exploring alternative medicines
- Working on a EU alcohol strategy. In that matter Austria is waiting for the communication of the Commission to make a start but is planning to launch a campaign on the danger of abuse of alcohol targeting young people.
- Working on a EU strategy for sustainable development and its mainstreaming in all policies
- Injuries and infections (nosocomial infections) prevention
- Promote e-health for patients and health care structures

The two thematic priorities of the Austrian Presidency will be **women's health and diabetes type II**.

In the field of women's health, Austria will focus primarily on cardiovascular diseases, lung cancer, osteoporosis, endometriosis and depression and will ask the Commission to present a report on the health status of women in the enlarged EU Community by June 2006.

EuroHealthNet director Clive Needle has been invited to advise on policy recommendations in an associated publication of information about women's health commissioned by the European Institute of Women's Health with EC support.

In the field of Diabetes type II, The presidency will organise a conference in Vienna on 15-16 February and the Council will make conclusions on the issue of Obesity in March.

At a conference on e-health in Malaga on 10-12 May, the Presidency will present a charter on health. This charter has been presented by Minister Rauch Kallat as progressive and innovative.

The first EU conference on Injury prevention and safety promotion will be held in Vienna 25-27 June 2006. Abstracts may be submitted by March 1 via www.eurosafe.eu.com/events, where conference registration and information is available.

- **Finnish Presidency health programme (July-December 2006)**

Speaking at the European Voice healthcare 2006 Conference in Brussels chaired by EuroHealthNet director Clive Needle, Finland State Secretary for Health Terttu Savolainen presented the Presidency health programme for the period July-December 2006.

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The main theme will be **'health in all policies'** and will focus on fostering the cooperation between the employment, social and health sectors as this is where the EU has a clear mandate. A high level conference will be organised on that theme September 20 – 21.

Work will focus on the following fields:

- Revision of the directive on medical devices and the expected directive on advanced therapies
- Follow up on the Commission communications on alcohol strategy, mental health, nutrition and physical activity
- Follow up on the health and consumer protection programme
- Follow up on the pandemic preparedness
- Follow up on the European Strategy non-Communicable Diseases
- Follow up on the WHO activities related to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, the new international health regulations, Children's Environmental health

The Finnish Presidency will organise three major meetings:

- An informal meeting of Ministers of Employment, Social Policy and Health in July;
- The High level conference on 'Health in all Policies' in September ;
- And a conference on drugs ' Moving Forward together' in September.

- **2006: European year of Worker's Mobility**

2006 is 'European Year of Workers' Mobility'. Two key objectives are to raise awareness and exchange good practice on mobility and its benefits.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/workersmobility2006/index_en.htm

2. News from the European Council

- **Council may open up to public scrutiny**

EU Member States have agreed to hold parts of their debates in the Council of Ministers in public. This initiative was supported by the Civil Society Contact group (a coalition of NGOs promoting transparency in the EU), and followed criticism of Council "opaqueness" by the EU Ombudsman.

The European Commission's '*European Transparency Initiative*' launched in 2004 reinforces this move. The Commission is expected to issue a green paper on transparency in the EU in early 2006.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/commission_barroso/kallas/transparency_en.htm

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- **Future presidencies**

The Council of Ministers has confirmed the order of the half yearly rotation of the presidency of the European Union until June 2020. This shows that Slovenia will be the first of the new member states that joined in 2004 to take on the Presidency, in 2008.

Austria	January-June	2006
Finland	July-December	
Germany	January-June	2007
Portugal	July-December	
Slovenia	January-June	2008
France	July-December	
Czech Republic	January-June	2009
Sweden	July-December	
Spain	January-June	2010
Belgium	July-December	
Hungary	January-June	2011
Poland	July-December	
Denmark	January-June	2012
Cyprus	July-December	
Ireland	January-June	2013
Lithuania	July-December	
Greece	January-June	2014
Italy	July-December	
Latvia	January-June	2015
Luxembourg	July-December	
Netherlands	January-June	2016
Slovakia	July-December	
Malta	January-June	2017
United Kingdom	July-December	
Estonia	January-June	2018
Bulgaria	July-December	
Austria	January-June	2019
Romania	July-December	
Finland	January-June	2020

3. News from the European Commission

- **EC commits funds to prevent avian influenza**

Health officials and disease experts from 90 countries gathered in Beijing in a bid to raise €1.9bn at an international donors conference on human and avian influenza. For its part, the European Commission pledged €80 million in aid grants from the Commission's External Relations budget and the European Development Fund, and committed €20 million to research funds for avian influenza from the 6th Research

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Framework Programme, bringing the total European Commission contribution to €100 million.

European governments have until 7 February to send their national surveillance plans to the Commission.

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/49&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=fr>

- **EU injury database**

The Injury Database (IDB) is an Internet database set up by DG SANCO under the Injury Prevention Programme in 1999, in order to provide central access to the data collected in the Member States under the EHLASS Programme (European Home and Leisure Accident Surveillance System). IDB is the only data source in the EU that contains sufficient detail for developing preventive action against the rising tide of home and leisure accidents in Europe. The purpose of the IDB is to facilitate injury prevention in the Member States and at EU level - through trans-national aggregation and harmonization of data, and through reporting and benchmarking.

<https://webgate.cec.eu.int/idb>

- **A new framework for coordination of social protection and inclusion policies**

The EC has launched a communication setting new objectives to the Open Method of Coordination on social protection and social inclusion.

These new common objectives reflect the lessons from the analysis of the 2005 implementation National Action Plans (NAPs) for inclusion: that inclusion objectives need to be mainstreamed into relevant public policies, including structural fund programmes and education and training policies.

There are general objectives and specific objectives on:

1. The eradication of poverty and social exclusion
2. Providing adequate and sustainable pensions
3. Ensuring accessible, high-quality and sustainable health care and long-term care.

The EuroHealthNet office will draft a briefing on the issue for members.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/emplweb/news/news_en.cfm?id=110

- **Website on the EU and the Roma**



The European Commission has launched a new website dedicated to the Roma. It aims to provide information on the EU's activities in support of the Roma, gypsy and traveller communities across Europe.

The site does not contain information on health but contains a section on how the EU intends to promote the social inclusion of the Roma population (via the European Social Fund, Equal Initiative, the Community Programme for Social Inclusion).

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/fundamental_rights/roma/rfund/rempl_en.htm

- **Thematic strategy on urban environment**

The European Commission adopted the Thematic Strategy on the Urban Environment on 11 January 2006.

The Strategy is based on consultation with stakeholders and builds on existing European policy initiatives for improving the quality of the urban environment. It sets out new measures to support and facilitate the adoption of integrated approaches to the management of the urban environment by national, regional and local authorities.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/urban/home_en.htm

3. News from the European Parliament

- **Report denounces poor working conditions for women**

An own initiative report by Edite Estrela (PSE- Portugal) on the Lisbon Strategy from the gender point of view denounces poor working conditions and working hours for women in Europe. The report, which is an opinion without legislative impact, stresses that working part-time for women is often an obligation rather than a choice and can lead to social exclusion and poverty. The report also denounces the working conditions in large commercial chains that have led to miscarriages in some cases.

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade3?PUBREF=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2005-0402+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=0&NAV=S&LSTDOC=Y>

- **Gender Equality Institute set up by 2007**

DG Employment and Social Affairs proposed the creation of a new Community Agency: the 'Gender Equality Institute' in March 2005. The role of the Institute would be to provide the expertise needed to develop equality policies across the EU-25.

The European Parliament Committee on Women and equal Opportunities gave a strong support to the initiative and hopes to see the Institute set up and effective for 2007.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2005/mar/genderinstitute_en.html

4. Events and Publications

- **Final Conference 'In Good Health' of the Health and Social Inclusion project**

EuroHealthNet and NHS Health Scotland co-organised a Conference entitled '**In Good Health, Linking Social Inclusion and Health from Practice into Policy**', which took place in Edinburgh on 8-9 December 2005. The Conference brought together over 100 people from across Europe, and was an associated event for the UK Presidency of the EU 2005.

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The Conference marked the end of a three-year project on Health, Poverty and Social Inclusion, coordinated by EuroHealthNet in collaboration with the National Institute for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention (Phase I) and NHS Health Scotland (Phase II). The project, co-funded by DG EMPL in the context of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC) in the area of Social Inclusion, looked into the relation between these three issues, identified good practices across Europe to address them, and organised field visits in which practitioners in participating countries could exchange good practices in this area.

The main themes and outcomes of the project were presented and discussed during the Conference, which included presentations from the Scottish Executive, the European Commission DG Sanco and various academic and civil society speakers. The Conference Programme and speakers' presentations are available on the EuroHealthNet [website](#).

Participants also agreed on a set of recommendations on policies and strategies to reduce social exclusion in Europe. These recommendations will be available shortly on the EuroHealthNet [website](#).

- **Final Project Publication and DVD:**

EuroHealthNet, in collaboration with project partners, has also produced the final project publication, entitled “**Health and Social Inclusion in the EU: the value of trans-national exchange**”. This publication outlines the background to the EU’s current efforts to promote social inclusion in Europe, and presents the results of five exchange visits that were undertaken in the context of the project. The publication also includes a 20 minute film, entitled “**Show me how you do it!**” that provides additional insight into the field visits and the projects that were involved. The publication is available on the EuroHealthNet website.

Please contact k.lotz@eurohealthnet.org if you would like to receive a hard copy.

- **Healthy Ageing seminar**

On 19-20 January 2006, more than 40 health professionals and experts gathered in Prague to discuss the effectiveness of health promotion interventions among older people at the European Seminar on Healthy Ageing. This Seminar was coordinated by the Swedish National Institute for Public Health and hosted by the National Institute for Public Health of the Czech Republic.

Among the participants were representatives from WHO, EuroHealthNet and AGE European Older Peoples Platform. A second seminar will be organized in Finland during the Autumn of 2006.

Presentations are available at the project website www.healthyageing.nu

- **Updated report on mental health in EU states**

The report entitled '*Mental health promotion and mental disorder prevention across European Member States: a collection of country stories*' presents an update to the first overview, a snapshot of mental health promotion and mental disorder prevention across Europe describing the available policies and underlying challenges and areas for future development.

It constitutes a contribution to building a base line of the situation of mental health promotion and mental disorder prevention across EU Member States, and facilitates the identification of possible areas for future action.



http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_projects/2004/action1/docs/action1_2004_a02_30_en.pdf

- **New work for EU agency the Foundation for the improvement of living and working conditions**

The foundation's work programme for 2006 focuses on job creation, mobility, better working conditions and work-life balance.

<http://www.eurofound.eu.int/press/releases/2006/060118.htm>

- **EU Environment Agency report on Environment and Health**



The European Environment Agency has recently published a new report *environment and health*. The report presents a series of conclusions on the effect of the environment on health.

http://reports.eea.eu.int/eea_report_2005_10/en

- **'Quit & Win' - International smoking cessation contest**



'Quit and win' is an international smoking cessation contest for adults. Smokers from all over the world will try to abstain from smoking or using tobacco products for a four-week period in May.

<http://www.quitandwin.org>

- **Study on what Europeans expect from the Lisbon process**

A French study by INSEE entitled "*Looking forward to retirement, health and job satisfaction. A European comparative survey*" shows that Lisbon measures to keep workers in the labour market longer are quite unpopular. According to the study covering 10 European countries, a high proportion of workers expressed the will to retire early due to ill health and job dissatisfaction.

http://www.insee.fr/fr/ffc/docs_ffc/IP1052.pdf

- **European Health Insurance Card now in force**



Starting on 1 January 2006, the old E111 forms are no longer valid and have been replaced by the new credit-card sized EHIC 'European health Insurance Card'.

The card contains no medical information on the individual covered.

The card will entitle the holder to free or reduced health treatment as if they were a resident of the country they are visiting. It provides for health care under the state system of the EU country visited (which in many cases means it will be necessary to contribute towards the costs and claim reimbursement afterwards). It does not apply if the main purpose of any trip is to seek medical attention.

5. News from Member States / Organisations

- **Wales: Nutrition Network for Wales launches website**

The Wales Centre for Health and the Nutrition Network for Health have launched a website that aims to be a 'one stop shop' gathering a wide range of information on nutrition and healthy eating.

The latest nutrition news in Wales, education and training, data, research and surveys can be found on the website.

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sites3/home.cfm?OrgID=499>

- **Belgium: national health survey**

Belgium has carried out its third national health survey since 1997 on 12 945 persons. The survey shows that the general health status is relatively stable since 1997. The report shows that 23 % of the persons interrogated complain about their health. 13% report suffering from mental health problems.

Smoking is on the decrease especially among the young people but on the other hand it appears that people above 65 consume too much medication.

One worrying result of the survey is that the less well-off tend to postpone a medical visit for financial reasons (this percentage goes beyond 15% in Wallonie and Brussels) and this trend has worsened since the last review in 2001.

<http://www.iph.fgov.be/epidemiologie/epien/index.htm> (available in French and Dutch)

- **Belgium: smoking ban in the work place**

As of January 1 2006, smoking is banned in all enclosed work places in Belgium.

<http://fr.prevent.be/net/net01.nsf/p/392A144B1E5E52A6C1256E2F003AECFE>

- **Germany: safe sex for Valentine campaign**



BZgA and the German green industry are launching a HIV/Aids prevention campaign for the Valentines Day on 14 February entitled "For Little Angels and Little Devils".

Posters and postcards will be available at florist's shops to attract attention, and florists will have the possibility to give a condom to their customers.

Source: BZgA <http://www.bzga.de>

- **The Netherlands: report on the state of health in 2005**

The Inspection for Health (IGZ) issued the report "State of Health 2005; Public Health". The report assesses the health care system's effectiveness in addressing population health issues.

The report concludes that the health system and the quality of services provided at the municipal level (which has gained increasing responsibility in the area of health) have improved considerably over the past ten years. The report also concludes, however, that there is still too little focus on preventative care and on tackling upcoming health problems. The main problems identified are: growing number of overweight people, the increasing risk of large scale epidemics, psychosocial problems amongst youth, and providing basic care to uninsured people without residency papers. The report also establishes that the current national health care structures provide a good basis to tackle such problems.

The Dutch Minister of Public Health, Well being and Sport, H. Hoogervorst, noted that future health policy will focus on stimulating further implementation and improving effectiveness and at the municipal level, while strengthening the national level's ability to provide guidance and to play a coordinating role. An emphasis will also be placed on addressing the weaknesses that have been outlined in the report (mentioned above) and in improving the quality of municipal health policy.

More information on public health in the Netherlands can be found on the Ministry of Public Health, Well being and Sport website (English section.)
<http://www.minvws.nl/en/>

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- **Macedonia introduces smoking ban**

As of 1 January 2006, a law banning smoking in public places and cigarette advertising is enforced in Macedonia.

Source : European Network for Smoking Prevention <http://www.ensp.org/index.cfm>

6. Calendar of international events

2-3.02.2006 new !	Vienna , 'Save our Social Europe' http://www.solidar.org/Document.asp?DocID=5046&tod=183820
4.02.2006	World Cancer Day : 'My child matters' http://www.uicc.org/index.php?id=1170
15-16.02.2006	Vienna , Conference on Diabetes type II Austrian presidency event http://www.eu2006.at/en/
22.02.2006 new !	Luxembourg , DG Sanco information Day http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_programme/howtoapply/infoday_2006/info_day_en.htm
13-18.03.2006 new !	Liege , International Health Film festival 'Image Santé' http://www.imagesante.org
16-17.03.2006 new !	Vienna , 'The stigmatization and Discrimination of Persons with a Mental Illness' Austrian presidency event http://www.eu2006.at/en/Meetings_Calendar/Dates/March/1603Stigma.html
7.04.2006	World Health Day , 'Working together for Health' http://www.who.int/world-health-day/2006/en/index.html
25-27.04.2006	Brussels , EuroHealthNet General Assembly
25-27.04.2006 New !	Vienna , Informal meeting of Health Ministers Austrian presidency event
10-12.05.2006 New !	Malaga , 'e-health in the Europe of Regions' conference, Austrian presidency event http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_information/documents/e_v_20060510_en.pdf
22-27.05.2006	Geneva , WHO General Assembly http://www.who.int/en/
2.06.2006 New !	Luxembourg , Health Council
15-17.06.2005	Ejsberg , 5 th Nordic Health Promotion Research Conference

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	http://www.5nhprc.sdu.dk/
19-21.06.2006 New !	Vienna , 14 th European Social Services Conference http://www.socialeurope.com/pdfs/Vienna/en_possible_works_hop_themes.doc
26-28.06.2006 New !	Vienna , European Conference on Injury Prevention and Safety Promotion http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/environment/IP/PP/documents/ev_20060625_en.pdf
28-30.06.2006	Budapest , European Health Management Association annual conference http://www.ehma.org
4-8.10.2006	Gastein , European Health Forum http://www.ehfg.org
18-21.10.2006	Budapest , 7 th IUHPE conference 'Globalisation and Equity, Inequalities in Health' http://www.Equityinhealth2006.hu
16-18.11.2006	Montreux , EUPHA 2006 annual conference http://www.eupha.org/html/menu3_3.html

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Would you like to inform other members about new publications or events in your organisation or country? Please send contributions to l.coulet@eurohealthnet.org

Please see Events Calendar on www.eurohealthnet.org (under main menu item 'News') for upcoming events

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