## EHFG 2013: HEALTH AND TTIP – CALL FOR FULL HEALTH INTEGRATION AT THE EU LEVEL

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**Bad Hofgastein, 4 October 2013** – High level stakeholders participating in the Forum on Free-Trade Zone EU-US, held a this year's European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG), concluded that Europe has great strengths in health but is underplaying it.

As negotiators will assemble on 7 October 2013 for the second round of TTIP discussions, participants in the session urged greater efforts to make health a priority in Europe. “Health should be taken into account in these negotiations, which are designed to shape much of the future of the two biggest economic regions in the world,” according to Prof Detelf Ganten, President of the World Health Summit. “The health sector is a major economic activity and a political priority. It has a crucial influence on the lives to citizens so it deserves a place at the negotiating table.”

“But Europe is not speaking on health as it should with one voice”, said Petru Luhan, Member of the European Parliament. “It has yet to realise its full potential – both as a leading provider of health goods and services. Moreover, Europe is seen as a community of values in which health is seen as vital to the lives of it citizens.”

Stakeholders participating in the meeting called for a full integration of health at the EU level so that Member States can work together to maximise Europe's voice in this vital area in the appropriate legislative framework.

Moreover, they stressed, a Europe-wide body should be created to improve the health of the EU citizens by tackling and harmonising tools and processes to foster human health across the EU, sharing best practices and ensuring equal access to high quality healthcare across the EU.

In conclusion, the high level stakeholders recommended to:

* Introduce health into the TTIP negotiations, reaffirming the common European values and principles on health matters
* Make health a full EU competence with a clear European health policy which should be supported by an independent European Body.

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