



Austria Puts Diabetes and Women's Health on the EU Agenda

- **Incidence of diabetes increases dramatically**
- **More and more women suffering from classic “men’s diseases”**
- **Battle over life circumstances which make women sick**

At the European Health Forum Gastein, the European Union's leading health policy event, experts from the Austrian Ministry of Health are presenting the main health priorities of the Austrian EU Council Presidency in the first half of 2006. In addition to numerous issues which Austria will “inherit” from the British Presidency, that is, those which are already stipulated in the current agenda of the European Commission like the prevention of epidemics or risk of infection in hospitals, Austria will also launch its own important, new initiatives.

There are three priorities already planned:

- **Diabetes:** the spread of various types of diabetes has increased dramatically in Europe. The growth rates ominously suggest that the disease is also becoming an economic problem because younger people, that is, persons of employable age, are increasingly affected. In this area Austria intends to concentrate on the prevention of secondary diseases resulting from, for example, cardiovascular diseases as well as early preventive measures against Diabetes II and mitigation of social and gender-specific disadvantages in connection with diabetes.
- **Women's health:** improvement of the situation with women's health is an essential approach to improvement of the overall health situation. Austria's main priorities will be endometriosis, osteoporosis, cardiovascular diseases and the problem of smoking / lung cancer. The latter two points are an important political issue as these diseases are generally considered problems which affect primarily men. Yet women are worse off, catching up with and even surpassing men in this regard. The considerable growth rates in cardiovascular diseases among women are just as alarming as the steadily increasing share of women among smokers and the related increase in the risk of lung cancer.
- **Stress and life circumstances putting a strain on the health of women:** women suffer especially from stress resulting from their life circumstance, for example, the frequent double burden of career and family. The Austrian EU Council Presidency wants to create a basis for overdue counterstrategies by raising awareness.

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Further press information and illustrative material on the EHFG can be found at
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