



EU Commission Starts Consultation Process for EU Health Services Directive

- **Crucial phase for future EU health policy**
- **EHFG President Leiner criticizes indifference among important EU representatives**
- **EHFG to award prize for model health care initiatives**

At the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) in Bad Hofgastein, the most important health policy event in the EU, Andrzej Rys, director of public health on the EU Commission, emphasized the importance of the EU Health Services Directive currently being developed. With the consultation process launched a few days ago, the crucial phase has begun. “The German EU Council Presidency starting in a few months will be the most important period for the EU’s future health care strategy.”

Rys also emphasized the importance of the European Health Forum: “Gastein is a set point on the agenda for the commission’s work and is the best opportunity to present the work of previous years and plans for next year to experts.”

In the increasing awareness of the necessity of the EU-wide coordination of measures for health care systems, EHFG President Günther Leiner also finds confirmation of the concept of the European Health Forum Gastein: “It took a long time for it to become recognized that national health care systems cannot succeed in isolation and that it is emblematic of the added value which can be achieved through international cooperation.”

The opportunities for cooperation go far beyond those in the area of clinical research. The exchange of experience in the organization of the health care industry can make enormous advances possible for European countries. “For ten years we have provided a perfectly functioning platform, which has become an absolute must for an increasing number of experts.”

Yet Leiner is not sparse in his criticism of the EU’s work. “What functions very well at an expert level is in no way true at the level of policy. Experts have to develop solutions, but politicians also have to adequately communicate this to the public.” Sometimes I have the impression that at least certain EU Commission members have no great interest in this. As long as leading EU Commission representatives are ambivalent about the work of their own experts and with regard to adequate information for the populace, then no one should be surprised that in many countries, and not just in Austria, the EU fails to enjoy the credit it actually deserves.”

Leiner also announced that for the 10th European Health Forum Gastein in 2007 a prize for model health care initiatives will be awarded at a municipal or regional level: “With this award we want to see to it that the many excellent ideas being developed throughout Europe achieve the recognition they truly deserve. If successful initiatives can be launched in other regions or countries, we can make an important contribution to a healthier Europe.”

EHFG – Press Office, Mag. Thomas Brey, info@mbdialog.at
Tel.: + 43 (0) 64 32 / 3393 / 237, Mobile: +43 (0) 676 / 542 39 09

Further press information on the EHFG and pictures can also be found at www.ehfg.org