



“European Alliance against Depression” First Winner of the “European Health Forum Award”

- **Distinction for groundbreaking healthcare projects in the EU**
- **25 applications from all EU countries**
- **Winning project achieves enormous success in suicide prevention**

The “European Alliance against Depression” is the winner of the “European Health Forum Award” presented this year for the first time. With the prize the European Health Forum Gastein, the most important health policy event in the EU, honours outstanding initiatives in the area of healthcare that have had verifiable scientific successes.

25 applications were submitted for the European Health Forum Award, with all EU countries involved in one or more projects. Six finalists were initially selected in the scope of a two-stage process. In addition to the winning project these were:

- **“Medicine Safety Belt”**: help for proper use of medications by patients (Austria, Germany).
- **FINDRISC**: screening system for early recognition of the risk for Type 2 Diabetes (16 EU member states).
- **The Maas-Rhein Cross-Border Healthcare Programme**: a trilateral network for improved cross-border use of healthcare facilities in border regions (Germany, Belgium, Netherlands).
- **Quality Assurance in Breast Cancer Screening**: network of pilot projects to develop best-practice recommendations and guidelines (19 European countries) for the prevention and early recognition of breast cancer.
- **Smokefree Class Competition**: European prevention programme for adolescents on the basis of social learning and group dynamic processes (19 European states).

With its persuasive initiative the **European Alliance against Depression** is focused on the alarmingly high number of suicides. Twelve percent of Europeans suffer from serious depression at least once in their lives, with a large percentage of the 58,000 suicides per year in the EU a result of depression. With a four-stage approach – intervention with primary care physicians, the start of a media campaign, special training for key groups such as teachers, clergymen, police, pharmacists, etc., the initiation of self-help groups and an emergency card for people at risk - significant declines in suicide rates have been achieved in the target region. *(17 countries)*

“The European Alliance against Depression is a truly worthy prizewinner,” says EHFG President Günther Leiner about the high-quality project submitted for the EHFA. “I’m convinced that with this newly established prize an important signal has been sent that self-initiative and the personal commitment of individuals continue to be of overwhelming importance in an age when the healthcare industry as a whole is dominated by large apparatuses. We owe our thanks to the men and women who initiate such exemplary projects

and they deserve to have their work honoured. The EHFA is also certainly a motivation for the many others who do valuable work for people in Europe in countless important healthcare projects.”

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Further press information and photographs of the EHFG can be found at www.ehfg.org.