



## **The Czech Republic and Sweden Present Health Priorities in the Coming EU Presidencies**

The next two countries presiding over the EU Presidency, the Czech Republic (first half year of 2009) and Sweden (second half year of 2009) presented the priorities of their presidencies in the area of health care at the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG). The leading health policy in the EU with considerably more than 600 experts in the areas of health policy, health administration, medicine, research, industry and NGOs taking place from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> of October in Bad Hofgastein, Austria.

Five common key themes have been defined in cooperation with France who currently holds the EU Presidency:

- Promoting a EU for patients
- Improving health security at European level
- Ensure safe and efficient pharmaceuticals
- Addressing disease prevention and health promotion
- Promoting actions for a healthy, active and dignified ageing

In the range of themes concerning healthy active and dignified ageing, Czech Republic will focus on financial sustainability while Sweden will highlight the dignity aspects of elderly care, promoting closer cooperation between the health and social policy areas. Another focal point of the two presidential periods is the antimicrobial form of resistance, which are becoming an increasingly big problem not only in hospitals. The Swedish presidency will devote itself to the problem that there are hardly any new antibiotics in development which can replace older strains, against which massive resistance has developed. The possibilities should be evaluated concerning how research for new antibiotics can be accelerated.

The implementation of eHealth uses for improving patient safety and quality of care is also a common theme that will be on the agenda during both the Swedish and Czech Republic presidencies.

Another issue of the Swedish presidency will be the follow up on the EU alcohol strategy. A conference will be held that will look at progress made in implementing the strategy with the view to explore possible room for improvement. The conference might highlight topics such as young women and fatal alcohol syndrome, children in families with alcohol problems and the identification of “drivers” contributing to alcohol related harm.

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