**International Forum Gastein calls for applications for the 2015 European Health Award**

**Bad Hofgastein, March 6, 2015** – In advance of the eighteenth European Health Forum Gastein conference, this year themed “**Securing Health in Europe. Balancing priorities, sharing responsibilities**” which will take place in Austria´s Gastein Valley from 30th September to 2nd October 2015, the International Forum Gastein has announced its annual search for a winner of its European Health Award. The award of €10,000 will be sponsored by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health and FOPI, the association of research-based pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies in Austria.

The International Forum Gastein initiated the European Health Award on the occasion of the European Health Forum Gastein´s tenth anniversary in 2007. The Award is intended to celebrate achievements in initiatives addressing European health challenges.

“The purpose of the European Health Award is to promote cross-border working and celebrate European initiatives that tackle today´s health challenges which are more complex and multi-faceted than ever,” says EHFG President Professor Helmut Brand. “Promoting multi-country working and the development of innovative and sustainable initiatives will help us to meet our vision of a healthy, social and prosperous Europe.”

In 2014 the Award was won by the EpiSouth Plus Project. This Project is aimed at increasing health security in the Mediterranean Area and Balkans by enhancing preparedness to threats, which can affect health security, and to bio-security risks at national/regional levels in the framework of International Health Regulation implementation. Building upon the Network of 27 EU and non-EU Countries established by the previous project EpiSouth (2006-2010), the whole initiative has lasted more than seven years (2006-2014). The project has strengthened countries' capacity to cope with health threats through several concerted and coordinated capacity building activities.

**The selection criteria**

1. The initiative must already be in its implementation phase, although it does not have to be completed at the time of application.
2. Applicants should be able to provide some initial results from their initiative.
3. The initiative must be implemented in at least two European countries.
4. The initiative should focus on public health or health care delivery and address an important threat to the health of the population in terms of prevention or health promotion, improving quality of care or access to care or through increased efficiency or cost-effectiveness.
5. The initiative should be innovative and/or demonstrate how it improves on other similar projects.
6. The initiative should be sustainable and have the potential to be transferable to other countries.

Submitted applications will be evaluated by a renowned jury consisting of representatives from the fields of health care, science, politics and economics. Applications to be considered for the award must be submitted by **midnight on Friday, 29 May 2015**. Information and an application form can be found at [www.ehfg.org/award.html](http://www.ehfg.org/award.html)

Photos from the evening Award Ceremony at the EHFG 2014:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/ehfg/sets/72157647916720830/>