**“European Health Award” 2015 goes to MiMi Project**

**Award presented to voluntary health project for migrants at the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG)**

*The MiMi project launched by the Ethno-Medizinisches Zentrum e.V. has been awarded with the prestigious European health prize “European Health Award” at the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG). “MiMi – Health with Migrants for Migrants in Europe” is an intercultural health programme run by and for citizens with a migrant background.*
**Bad Hofgastein/Salzburg, 2 October 2015.** Since 2007, the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) has presented the “European Health Award” at its annual conference in recognition of transnational projects that make a contribution towards improving public health and healthcare systems in Europe.  Helmut Brand, President of the International Forum Gastein (IFG): “The award supports initiatives that are focused on the development of sustainable and innovative concepts, which successfully address current challenges such as disparities in health status, access to healthcare and preventive healthcare services or improvements in medical care and treatment options.”

**European Health Award and 10,000 euro prize go to the MiMi health project**
Following evaluation of a large number of entries, the European Health Award jury chose the MiMi project – a successful intercultural health programme, which was first launched in 2003 in Germany by the Ethno-Medizinisches Zentrum e.V. Project partners in Austria are Volkshilfe Wien and Linz.
The MiMi health project is based on the intercultural setting approach, i.e. MiMi successfully trains well-educated, integrated and committed migrants who are fluent in German as intercultural health guides or so-called mediators. Ramazan Salman, Head of the MiMi project: “The project aims to support people from a migrant background in assuming responsibility for their own health and in taking measures aimed at preventive healthcare. It focuses on making a long-term contribution towards reducing disparities in terms of healthcare opportunities by enabling or facilitating equal access to preventive healthcare as well as to relevant healthcare information.”

**Jury praises impact, transferability and low-cost implementation of the MiMi project**
The jury confirmed that one reason for selecting the initiative is the fact that it is
already well-developed and is continuing to grow – more than 90,000 people with a migrant background living in Germany and Austria have already benefited from the project.
Measures covered by MiMi can also be implemented at relatively low cost. The jury: “In view of the current political situation, the project very much captures the mood of the moment and makes an important contribution towards efforts aimed at dealing with the challenges posed by the refugee crisis in Europe. We also selected the project because it is a low-tech initiative that is easily transferable to other countries. It is simple, provides peer-to-peer training and education and has been highly successful in reaching a large target audience.”
Dr. Clemens-Martin Auer, as jury member and representative of the Austrian Ministry of Health, sees the Initiative „Health with Migrants for Migrants“ as a very practical way to support migrants staying in their new surroundings und support them to facilitate their stepwise integration. Through the active involvement of migrants who already have a wealth of knowledge language and cultural barriers in the utilization of health services, but also in prevention and health promotion, can be easily overcome.

The European Health Award is kindly sponsored by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health and the Forum of the Research-based Pharmaceutical Industry in Austria (FOPI). “This year’s winning project MiMi highlights a problem, which not only due to the current refugee crisis is of huge importance: inequality is a “no go” – particularly when it comes to public health,” said FOPI President Ingo Raimon. “It must therefore be ensured that innovation benefits all patients. Firstly, because health can be a decisive factor in social inequality but secondly also because it is only those who are healthy that can fully participate in society. And the longer we live, the longer we are able to remain actively engaged in gainful employment. In ensuring that everyone has access to high quality medical treatment not only do we contribute to securing the health of the entire population but most importantly also to facilitating sustainable and affordable healthcare systems and social services.”

**Jury of high-ranking European health experts**
The winner of the European Health Award was selected by a jury made up of European health experts who represent the four IFG pillars: government and administration, business and industry, civil society and science and academia. This year’s jury members were Martin McKee (London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine), Michael Hübel (DG Health and Food Safety, European Commission), Ingo Raimon (FOPI), Albert van der Zeijden (International Forum Gastein) and Peter Brosch (Austrian Federal Ministry of Health).

**About the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG)**
The European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) offers a unique platform made up of and for experts, policy makers, opinion leaders and interest groups from the health policy field. Over the last 18 years, the EHFG has developed into an institution which addresses and discusses current and future trends and developments in European health policy and thus plays a role in shaping European health policy. The EHFG is in receipt of funding from various bodies including the European Commission, the Austrian Ministry of Health and the Province of Salzburg. The EHFG is organised by the International Forum Gastein.

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**Press contact:**
Milestones in Communication
Marion Velik
t +43 1 890 04 29 – 0
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