

European Health Forum Gastein 2017

Three scenarios for health in Europe in 2037

- *EHFG offers three scenarios for health in 2037: “The Future is Local,” “Your Health, Your Responsibility,” “Technology Delivers”.*
- *Scenarios offer checklist of options for policy makers*
- *EHFG 2017 (4–6 October) final programme [available online](#)*

19 September 2017, Bad Hofgastein, Austria – What will health in Europe look like twenty years from now? This is a theme for this year’s EHFG during its 20th celebratory edition, taking place from 4 to 6 October in Bad Hofgastein, Austria. This anniversary Forum will – for the first time - present results of the “EHFG Health Futures Project,” the outcome of a series of consultations with experts across Europe. Amongst others, their reflections have produced three scenarios for Europe’s health: “The Future is Local”, “Your Health, your Responsibility” and “Technology Delivers”. The outcome report including messages for policy makers and other stakeholder groups, will form the basis for some of the discussions at the Forum.

The first scenario, “The Future is Local,” assumes that social inequalities, unemployment and natural disasters have triggered violent social unrest, protests and labour strikes. In this scenario, achieving better quality of life is more important than economic growth. Health is tackled on the basis of a holistic approach, aimed at helping Europeans achieve overall ‘life satisfaction’. The second scenario, “Your Health, Your Responsibility,” was brought about by a shrinking labour force in the wake of declining birth rates and depleting public finances. Governments consequently launch ‘health contracts’, stipulating the respective responsibilities of the government and the individual for personal health. Moreover, an increased focus on prevention warrants the individual to be proactive about self-monitoring their health. In the third scenario, “Technology Delivers,” governments have become more explicit about the health problems they want to address and are proactively shaping the health tech market. The state acts as market “facilitator”, using grants and cross-sectoral health hacks to foster innovation.

The report aims to offer policy makers a non-exhaustive list of policy choices that will need to be made over the next few years. These are not confined to the individual scenarios, but function as a “menu” of possibilities, challenges and opportunities.

Over the last 20 years, the EHFG has been instrumental in shaping the discussions around the state of health in Europe. This year, EHFG will again take a forward-looking approach and explore the future of Europe’s health for the next 20 years.

Will better quality of life, with healthy behaviours at the heart of the everyday, be more important than economic growth, as the first scenario suggests? Or is it more likely that governments will set-up contracts between the state and individual patients, outlining the patient’s responsibility for their personal health? Perhaps, as depicted in the third scenario, governments resort to health technology and citizens come to the general assumption of technology as a cure for all ills, rejecting government advice on disease prevention.

Newly elected President of the European Health Forum Gastein Dr Clemens Martin Auer commented: *“We cannot know what the future holds, but now is the time to put in place the foundations to shape that future. The EHFG will be a crucial starting point for that discussion.”*

EHFG takes place between 4-6 October. The final programme, including session content, speakers and more details is now available [online](#).

Note to the editors

The 20th European Health Forum Gastein “Health in All Politics – a better future for Europe” will take place 4-6 October 2017, in Bad Hofgastein, Austria. Members of the media are invited to register for accreditation via the [online form](#). If you are interested in finding out more or featuring the EHFG in your editorial calendar, please contact the press office at press@ehfg.org or +32 2 321 90 16.

About European Health Forum Gastein

The European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) was founded in 1998 as a European health policy conference. It aims to provide a platform for all stakeholders from the field of health and beyond. Over the past decade, the EHFG has established itself as an indispensable institution in the scope of European health policy. It has made a decisive contribution to the development of guidelines and above all the cross-border exchange of experience, information and cooperation. Leading experts participate in the annual conference held in the Gastein Valley in the Austrian Alps for three days in October.