

PRESS RELEASE

European Health Forum Gastein 2019 to spotlight disruptive forces that can transform health and well-being in Europe

- *“A healthy dose of disruption? Transformative change for health and societal well-being” is the guiding theme of the 2019 European Health Forum Gastein (2-4 October 2019).*
- *From climate activists to European health ministers, the EHFG in 2019 gathers over 500 representatives from academia, civil society, industry, and government, to explore what kind of disruption is needed to transform health in Europe. The wide range of engaging speakers includes **Stephen Klasko**, President of the Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia, **Indra Joshi** from NHSX England, and **Ran Balicer**, Chief Innovation Officer at Clalit in Israel.*
- *Winners of the EHFG’s first-ever European Health Leadership Award and the EHFG 2019 Hackathon on vaccine hesitancy will be revealed at the conference.*

Bad Hofgastein, Austria, 1 October 2019 – The 22nd edition of the European Health Forum Gastein starts tomorrow, welcoming more than 500 representatives from the realms of policy, academia, civil society, and business for lively discussions on what disruptive practices, policies and concrete actions are needed to address the pressing issues of our time and realise the much-needed transformation of health in Europe. This year’s overarching theme is *“A healthy dose of disruption? Transformative change for health and societal well-being”*.

The theme of disruption underscores the necessity to stir up the status-quo of health and well-being in Europe and to overcome wicked problems, such as health inequalities and non-communicable diseases, medicine and health workforce shortages, and the challenge of reframing the concept of economic growth to focus on well-being. In 2019, the EHFG will dive deeply into the controversial concept of disruption and explore what ‘healthy dose’ of it is required to counter deadlocks and realise transformative change. Showcasing catalysts for healthcare transformation, the EHFG will award its new European Health Leadership Award.

In focus at this year’s EHFG is also the digital transformation of healthcare and the question of how health systems can secure the “human touch” in an increasingly digital world. The EHFG 2019 will furthermore highlight the global climate crisis as the public health emergency of our time and the biggest health threat humankind has ever faced, with temperature rises of beyond 1.5°C leading to droughts, crop failure, mass starvation and the collapse of many urban civilisations. The topic of vaccine hesitancy, having emerged as one of the most serious backlashes in securing better health outcomes in Europe this year, will be addressed through a competitive 48-hour Hackathon. The winner will be announced at the closing plenary session on Friday, 4 October.

The 2019 EHFG programme, built on the four tracks of “disrupting innovation”, “systems for change”, “transforming societies”, and “future formulas” brings together a diverse range of speakers. This year’s keynote-speaker is **Stephen Klasko** President of the Thomas Jefferson University in Philadelphia and high-level speakers include European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis Andriukaitis, the newly elected Regional Director Elect for WHO Europe **Hans Kluge**, as well as ministers from Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Malta, Moldova and Slovenia. Other exciting speakers are **Indra Joshi** from NHSX England, and **Ran**

Balicer, Chief Innovation Officer at Clalit in Israel. The discussions will also be enriched with the energy of climate activists like **Extinction Rebellion**.

Clemens Martin Auer, President of the EHFG, said that “the EHFG in 2019 comes at a time of new beginnings for Europe. The next mandate of the new European Commission will soon start, and the WHO European Region just nominated a new Regional Director. Against this backdrop of transitions, it is important that policymakers and stakeholders are ready to take disruptive action for the benefit of patients and health systems. This is also why the EHFG will seek to channel the pioneer spirit of the participants and encourage them to share new, creative, and disruptive ideas, becoming trailblazers for health.”

Dorli Kahr-Gottlieb, Secretary General of the EHFG, added that this 22nd edition is not only focusing on disruption as a topic for discussion, but is also integrating disruptive thinking into the conference set-up by experimenting with different session structures and features. The new EHFG disruption lounge, fireside chats, and lightning talks, as well as formats like Open Space or Fishbowl are meant to “disrupt” the way participants engage and inspire new ideas for health transformation.

The EHFG takes place between 2-4 October 2019 in Bad Hofgastein, Austria. The complete programme, outlining the different sessions, speakers and conference details, is available [online](#).

Note to the editors

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.

For further information on the programme

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