

European Health Forum Gastein: the Source of Ideas for EU Health Policy

- **For a decade the EHFG has supplied crucial ideas for innovations and improvements of the EU states' healthcare systems**
- **600 leading representatives from the areas of science, public health, health policy, business and patient organisations**
- **“European Health Forum Award” for outstanding healthcare initiatives**

In the past decade the European Health Forum Gastein has developed into an indispensable institution in the scope of European health policy. Held for the first time in 1998, since then it has made a decisive contribution to the development of guidelines and above all the cross-border exchange of experience and use of synergies. Furthermore, at the EHFG numerous initiatives and future areas of focus in EU health policy are presented for the first time to an audience of experts. This year, for example, the two holders of the EU Council Presidency in 2009, the Czech Republic and Sweden, will present the priorities of their health policy activities during their presidency.

About 600 leading experts will participate in the 11th edition of the EHFG in Bad Hofgastein from 1 to 4 October. The unparalleled mix of participants including leading country- and EU-level representatives from the areas of health policy, administration, science, business and patient organisations is especially critical for the success of this event. “This makes the EHFG a unique platform to meet and for the transfer of knowledge and opinions between various interest groups,” EHFG President Günther Leiner points out. “The events of the EHFG and the issues formulated there often shape EU health policy in subsequent years.”

This is also the essential function of the EHFG: “Health policy is subject to numerous economic, social and political constraints, which beyond the most urgent day-to-day problems results all too easily in the neglect of medium and long-term perspectives,” Leiner says. “This prevents, or at least delays, an increase in efficiency and quality. Orientation around successful models in other EU countries would often be enough to achieve improvements.”

The “European Health Forum Award” established in 2007 also follows this guiding principle. This award is presented to international health policy initiatives which help overcome key challenges in the area of public health and healthcare services. The prize is awarded by a high-profile jury of experts based on a two-stage process. In 2007 25 first-rate projects were submitted for it.

Further information:

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