



## Young people in the focus of the new EU health offensive

- **Health Commissioner Vassiliou presents the “Europe for Patients Campaign” at the European Health Forum Gastein**
- **Health prevention has to address people in their healthy years**
- **35 million Euro for youth-focused non-smoking campaign**

Young people are in the focus of the EU’s new health action plan presented by EU Health Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou this week. At her press conference at the European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG), the leading health policy congress taking place in Bad Hofgastein, Austria from 1 to 4 October, she stressed that the preeminent goal of her “Europe for Patients” campaign is to raise awareness of health issues among young people.

“Young people are our greatest asset. Their health is crucial for their ability to live successful and productive lives. Currently, however, the health of young people deteriorates all too often due to preventable factors.”

Commissioner Vassiliou points out that health prevention and health measures focussing on young people are far more effective than any other preventive measures: “People have to protect their health as long as they are healthy. Therefore we have to involve young people by tackling the health issues that obviously affect them. To be successful, it is important not to take isolated action in the field of health policy, but to create synergies with other areas, namely education, employment and the media.”

A key part of the Europe for Patients strategy is a campaign against smoking targeting young people over the next two years. EUR 35 million will be invested for this purpose.

Additionally, the European Commission will actively approach Member States to explore opportunities for collaboration in a wider campaign addressing nutrition, physical activity and alcohol abuse, as well. “Young Europeans live their lives more internationally than the older

## **Press Conference Vassiliou**

generations. Therefore it is crucial to combine national and European activities to be sustainably successful.”

Pan-European cooperation is also the idea of the “Young Forum Gastein,” which involves young policymakers and scientists from all the EU member states. “Health policy addressing young people must incorporate the points of view of young people. Therefore I am keen to hear their views concerning the crucial issues we must tackle in the years to come.”

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