

EU Health Highlights

News about health in the EU from EuroHealthNet Brussels Office

Issue # 14, September 2004

1. Main Stories

- **Europe facing AIDS epidemic**

Europe's AIDS problem is worsening as the rate of new infections in some new Member States are the highest in the World, the European Commission has warned. The proportion of newly reported HIV cases has also doubled in Western Europe since 1995. Health ministers and experts across the EU and its eastern neighbours will gather in Lithuania on 16-17 September to build a consensus on Europe-wide actions to combat the disease.

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/04/1076&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

See the Commission Working Paper on 'Coordinated and Integrated Approach to combat HIV/AIDS within the European Union and in its Neighbourhood' http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_threats/com/aids/keydocs_aids_en.htm

- **Commissioner Byrne's speech on Healthcare Costs in an ageing Society, informal Health Council.**

Commissioner David Byrne made a speech at the informal Health Council held in Noordwijk, The Netherlands on 10 September 2004. The speech entitled 'Prevention Key to Healthcare Costs in an Ageing Society' focused on five topics:

1. the challenge for healthcare in an ageing society is significant but not overwhelming.
2. solutions must be found that respect the fundamental values on which European societies are based.
3. improving the quality of health care and health promotion, should be done not by reducing solidarity and access to healthcare, nor by creating financially unsustainable systems.
4. it is possible, and European Cooperation can help all Member States to achieve these goals in practice.
5. investing in health is a vital contribution to the economic growth and sustainable development of our societies as a whole.

<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/04/396&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

- **WHO to establish a Commission on Social Determinants of Health**

The WHO has launched a call for nominations of commissioners on social determinants of health, the official call will be published soon in the WHO Bulletin.

The Commission will: compile and analyse scientific evidence on social mechanisms that shape health and health inequalities; develop policy recommendations to strengthen health and advance health equity through action on social determinants; and advocate for implementation of recommendations in countries, at WHO and among global health actors. The Commission's focus will be on translating knowledge into policy. Submission can be sent until 15 November 2005.

2. News from the European Commission

- **Conference on Mental Health of Children and Young People, 20-21/09/2004**

A conference in Luxembourg on 20 and 21 September will focus on what the EU and its Member States can do to promote positive mental health among children, adolescents and young people. The meeting will be organised jointly by the European Commission, the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Ministry for Health and Social Security of Luxembourg. It will constitute a pre-event to the WHO Ministerial Conference on Mental Health which will be held in Helsinki from 12 to 15 January 2005, where the Commission will also be a partner organisation.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/life_style/mental/docs/ev_20040921_mid_en.pdf

- **The European Commission tackles Obesity**

The European Commission has launched a round table process on obesity. Obesity, which is a major risk factor for diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and certain forms of cancer, is likely to be a high priority for Robert Madelin, the Commission's Director-General for Health and Consumer Protection.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health_consumer/newsletter/200409/2.htm

- **Community Public Health Programme 2003-2008 - updated information**

The Commission, DG Health and Consumer Protection, has updated its web page on the information strand of the Community Public Health programme 2003-2008.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_information/information_en.htm

- **Fact-sheets to combat violence and other health risks in the education sector**

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work has published three new factsheets providing advice to alleviate risks such as abusive pupils and parents, musculoskeletal disorders induced by lifting children and other dangers. The Agency has also produced a special web feature providing more in-depth guidance, case studies of good practice and links to organisations offering relevant information and health and safety advice. It also includes an online forum for discussing key issues.

http://agency.osha.eu.int/news/press_releases/en/06_09_2004/index.htm
http://europe.osha.eu.int/good_practice/sector/education/

- **Europeans consulted on climate change**

The European Commission has launched an Internet consultation for public authorities, NGOS, individuals, researchers, to give their advice on what the European policy should be concerning the climate change after 2012.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/climat/future_action.htm

- **DG Sanco, Event and Projects Outcomes**

-**Project: ‘Development of an European early identification function for emerging drug phenomena’**, Funded project 2001, final report.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_projects/2001/drug/drug_project_2001_full_en.htm#16

-**Project: ‘A call to osteoporosis action’**. Funded project 2002, action plan.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_projects/2002/promotion/promotion_2002_04_en.htm

-**Projects : ‘NEPHIRD 1 - Network of Public Health Institutions on Rare Diseases (Phase 1) and NEPHIRD 2 - A European Network for Epidemiological and Public Health data collection on Rare Diseases (Phase 2)**, Funded projects, final report and information updated.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_projects/2000/rare_diseases/rarediseases_project_2000_full_en.htm#9

http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_projects/2002/rare_diseases/raredis_2002_06_en.htm

3. News from the European Parliament

- **Hearing of candidate commissioners by the European Parliament**

The Parliament will vote whether or not to approve the new college of commissioners at the end of October.

27 September: the Employment Committee will hear **Vladimir Spidla**, nominee Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

28 September: The committee for Regional development will hear **Danuta Hubner**, nominee Commissioner for Regional Policy.

8 October: The committee for Environment, Health and Consumer Protection will hear **Markos Kyprianou**, nominee Commissioner for Health and Consumer's Protection.

4. Events and Publications

- **Brussels sugar exports ruled illegal by WTO**

The WTO has delivered its ruling that EU sugar exports have exceeded quotas for subsidised sugar by up to four times.

<http://www.euobserver.com/?sid=9&aid=17238>

- **Suicide is the cause of half of violent death in the world says WHO.**

10 September was the International Day for Suicide Prevention. On that occasion WHO called for a better prevention of suicide. The number of death caused by

suicide could reach 1.5 million per year by 2020. The suicide attempts are estimated as 10 to 20 times the number of actual death by suicide.

<http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2004/pr61/en/>

- **16th European Union Contest for Young Scientists**

From the 25-29 September 2004, Ireland will host the 16th annual EU Contest for Young Scientists. The best of Europe's young scientific minds will be competing to win prizes totalling €28 500. 105 young people from 34 countries will be exhibiting 74 innovative projects

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/press/2004/pr0809en.cfm>

- **Competitiveness and health**

According to research from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, the Dublin-based EU agency, European workers are producing more within a shorter time frame, due to the steady rise in levels of work intensity, stress and demand over the past decade. As a consequence of this gradual deterioration of working conditions, work-related health problems - such as backache, headaches and overall fatigue – are reported to be on the increase. In order to meet the challenges and objectives of the Lisbon strategy, the Foundation will focus its work over the next four years around four key priority themes: more and better employment, work-life balance, industrial relations and partnership, and social cohesion.

http://www.eurofound.eu.int/newsroom/archive_pressrelease/pressrel_040910.htm

- **Men fail to take their parental leave**

A Eurobarometer survey shows that most men are failing to take up their right to parental leave though they are aware of their right. The main factors deterring fathers from staying at home to look after a new baby or a small child are financial, lack of information and concerns about their careers.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2004/sep/parental_leave_en.htm

5. News from Member States / Organisations

- **New page on the tobacco policy of the Slovak republic on EurohealthNet Website.**

EuroHealthNet's member, the Public Health Authority of the Slovak Republic has provided us with information on the health status and tobacco policy in their country. It will be published online shortly on our Website.

- **Ban on tobacco for oral use confirmed by a recommendation of the European Court of Justice**

The Swedish smokeless tobacco 'Snus' should not be allowed on to the EU market, according to the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The dominant snus manufacturer had hoped to boost sales of this smokeless tobacco as bans on smoking have been introduced in several countries. The ban on this smokeless tobacco is in force in all EU-countries since 12 years except in Sweden. (The EU Court will form its final verdict later this year or early in 2005)

<http://curia.eu.int/en/actu/calendriers/index.htm>

- **Campaign against tobacco on Belgium TV proves to be efficient**

TV spots against tobacco showing shocking pictures have been proved efficient by a recent survey (Centre de Recherche et d'Information des Organisations de Consommateurs). The campaign was successful in raising awareness on the risk of smoking. On the other hand it failed to raise awareness on the dependence risk. The first cigarette is still not perceived as a dangerous gesture.

http://www.rodin-foundation.org/PDF//press/14_fr.pdf

- **Soft drinks and candies distribution machines banned from Brussels schools**

The city of Brussels, Belgium, has decided to remove distributing machines from kinder garden and primary schools to protect the health of the pupils and to reduce the risk of obesity among young people. In replacement the city will install water fountains, which are better for health and do not produce trash. The same measure should be applied on a later stage to secondary schools.

http://www.lesoir.be/rubriques/belg/page_5168_254073.shtml

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6. Calendar of international Events

20-21.09.2004	Luxembourg , Pre-conference on Mental Health of Children and Adolescents Contact : sanco-c2-health-information@cec.eu.int
20-21.09.2004	Stockholm , Safer Environments for Children in Europe, European Child Safety Alliance www.childsafetyeurope.org
22-24.09.2004	Bristol , 3rd Conference on Epidemiological Longitudinal Studies in Europe http://celse.alspac.bris.ac.uk/index.html
22-23.09.2004	Tallinn , Social integration and subjective well-being Seminar organised by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. http://www.eurofound.eu.int/living/qual_life/seminars04.htm
24.09.2004	Brussels , Public Health, consumer needs and the food chain: what can business do to help the EU ? European Commission Health and Consumer Protection Director-General Robert Madelin Contact: +32 2 540 90 30
25-29.09.2004	Dublin , 16th European Union Contest for Young Scientists
27.09.2004	Stockholm , Start up event of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
27-28.09.2004	Brussels , Europe's Coming Generations - Demographic Trends and Social Change Organised by the European Observatory on the social situation, Demography and Family. http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/eoss/index_en.html
27.09/8.10.2004	Brussels , European Parliament, hearings of the nominee European Commissioners.
27/30.09.2004	Brussels , 4 Open days to share ideas and experience on how the Structural funds should be used after 2007. http://www.cor.eu.int/opendays/opendays/
28-30.09.2004	Bratislava , 'Change and Continuity: social inclusion in an enlarged EU'. European Public Social Platform
4.10.2004	Luxembourg , Employment, Social Policy, health and Consumer's Affairs Council.
6-9.10.2004	Salszburg , 7 th European Health Forum http://www.ehfg.org/

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7-8.10.2004	Montreal , Colloquium on Alcohol, Drugs and Risk Behaviour. Organised by the University of Montreal and the University Lyon 2. http://www.cjc.univ-lyon2.fr
7-8.10.2004	Dublin , 'Learning from best Practice in Training and Employment with Disabilities in Europe' http://www.easpd.org/pdf/LABOrConfEASPDannouncement.pdf
7-9.10.2004	Oslo , EUPHA 2004, Urbanisation and Health – new challenges in health promotion and prevention. http://www.eupha.org/html/menu3_3.html
12.10.2004	London , Conference on Nutrition and Obesity. Organised by the Royal College of Physicians. http://www.rcplondon.ac.uk/calendar/2004/conf_2004_nao.htm
12-15.10.2004	Quebec , 2nd International Conference on Local and regional Health Programmes www.colloquequebec2004.com
14-16.10.2004	Texas , 12th Annual International HIV/AIDS Update http://www.valleyaids.org/
18-19.10.2004	The Hague , Round Table on Social Exclusion
18-22.10.2004	Building in Safety – European Week for Safety and Health at Work (aimed this year at the construction sector) http://ew2004.osha.eu.int/
19.10.2004	London , EHMA Workshop on e-Health
20.10.2004	Brussels , 2 nd European Forum for Responsible Drinking Organised by the Amsterdam Group. http://www.amsterdamgroup.org/conferences/docs/2004.10.20-Forum.pdf
21-22.10.2004	London , Making Health Care Safer http://www.bma.org.uk/forms.nsf/confweb/EIOU-5Z5GSQ
21-23.10.2004	Venice , Providing integrated health and social care for older persons - Facing the challenges in Europe. http://www.euro.centre.org/procare/
22-23.10.2004	Brussels , Final Conference of the project 'Included in Society' http://www.community-living.info
28-29.10.2004	Lisbon , Congress on drug dependence, mental health and the media. Organised by Portuguese association VITAE. http://www.assoc-vitae.org/actividad.html (in Portuguese)
29.10.2004	Rome , Signature of the EU Treaty
31/10-5/11.2004	Venice , ICAA 47th International Conference, Visions for the Future, Empowerment Integration Interaction http://www.icaa.de/

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Please note that EuroHealthNet is not responsible for the content of sites or publications mentioned in this publication.

Would you like to inform other members about new publications or events in your organisation or country? Please send contributions to l.coulet@eurohealthnet.org

Please see Events Calendar on www.eurohealthnet.org (under main menu item 'News') for upcoming events

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