

March 2011



EU HEALTH HIGHLIGHTS

[www.health-inequalities.eu](http://www.health-inequalities.eu) [www.eurohealthnet.eu](http://www.eurohealthnet.eu)  
[www.health-gradient.eu](http://www.health-gradient.eu) [www.equitychannel.net](http://www.equitychannel.net)

## Calendar of events

### April

1-2 April 2011: [11th Spring Meeting on Cardiovascular Nursing](#) (Sophia Antipolis, France)

4 April 2011: [Brain Forum 2011 - The color of thought](#) (Milano, Italy)

5 April 2011: [Bending Over Backwards: Osteoporosis And The EU Policy On Active Ageing](#) (Strasbourg, France)

5-8 April 2011: [International Forum on Quality & Safety in Healthcare](#) (Amsterdam, The Netherlands)

6 April 2011: [Healthy Workplaces Campaign Stakeholder Seminar - Slovenia](#) (Ljubjana, Slovenia)

6-8 April 2011: [The International e-Health Telemedicine and Health ICT Forum](#) (Luxembourg, Luxembourg)

6-9 April 2011: [4th International Congress on pre-diabetes and the Metabolic Syndrome](#) (Geneva, Switzerland)

7 April 2011: [World Health Day](#)

7-8 April 2011: [Kick-Off meeting of the EU Joint Action on Health Inequalities \(Equity Action\)](#) (Luxembourg, Luxembourg)

11-12 April 2011: [5th European Patients' Rights Day](#) (Brussels, Belgium)

12-13 April 2011: [Children's health and the environment](#) (Paris, France)

13 April 2011: [Tackling Under-Age Drinking in Europe: Towards a Comprehensive EU-Wide Partnership](#) (London, UK)

13-14 April 2011: [World Health Care Congress](#) (Brussels, Belgium)

14 April 2011: [Workshop "Active](#)

Would you like to promote events or new publications of your organisation in health highlights? [Please send us your contributions!](#)

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## Main News Stories

### Doubts increase about EU health promotion commitments as healthy ageing initiative takes shape.

EuroHealthNet has expressed its concerns to the European Commission Directorate General For Health & Consumer Protection regarding the lack of health promoting expertise in its new healthy ageing initiative, the European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing.

The composition of the steering group has been confirmed by the SANCO Director General, Paola Testori Coggi, to include representatives of Ministers, several companies, patient and older peoples' networks, researchers, hospitals and the medical profession plus MEPs and regional bodies. The aims of the Innovation Partnership will be to identify and implement measures to improve average healthy life years by two years by 2020: further details may be found [here](#).

EuroHealthNet was among 527 bodies who contributed views to the consultation on the initiative. It has been assured there will be 'other opportunities' for participation by health promotion experts and that the Steering Group will solicit input and proposals from interested parties. It has been reassured that there will be inputs from relevant experts and authorities with significant knowledge of health services.

However the EuroHealthNet Board has viewed such developments with increasing concern in the light of EU Treaty commitments on wellbeing and health, compared with Treaty restrictions on organisation of health and care, which are national responsibilities.

EuroHealthNet director Clive Needle said "We will monitor all developments very carefully but our support should not be taken for granted in future. Our members, led by the Swedish National Institute for Health, worked hard to produce recommendations for the EC on healthy ageing at a time when few others were interested. Now innovation is seen as the way to reduce risk or burdens on health and care systems, while increasing productivity is the main aim. We remain to be convinced that health promotion and equity will be sufficiently addressed in this plan, and will use our new website [www.healthy-ageing.eu](http://www.healthy-ageing.eu) to promote those priorities when it is launched in support of the 2012 EU Year for Active Ageing and Inter-generational Solidarity.'

### "Towards the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012)"

The European Commission will organise a conference "Towards the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012)" in Brussels, on 29 April 2011. The conference will be an important milestone towards the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations (2012) and should help to mobilise stakeholders at all levels.

Ageing and Empowerment of Migrant Elders"  
(Brussels, Belgium)

**14 April 2011:** Europe 2020: delivering a healthy and sustainable future for all?  
(Brussels, Belgium)

**14 April 2011 :** EU-US cooperation on e-Health: ongoing and planned action  
(Brussels, Belgium)

**14-15 April 2011:** Annual Conference on European Pharmaceutical Law 2011: Towards Better Patient Protection In Europe  
(Brussels, Belgium)

**14-15 April 2011:** Advances in drug discovery from molecular to clinical  
(London, UK)

**14-15 April 2011:** International HIA 2011 Conference in crisis time, healthier ways  
(Granada, Spain)

**14-17 April 2011:** VII European International Congress  
(Bologna, Italy)

**18-20 April 2011:** Geneva Health Forum  
(Geneva, Switzerland)

**19-20 April 2011:** High Level Conference on New Challenges in the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020  
(Budapest, Hungary)

**21-29 April 2011:** World congress on public health - Towards Global Health Equity: Opportunities and Threats  
(Addis Ababa, Ethiopia)

**27 April 2011:** WHO global forum "Addressing the challenge of non communicable diseases  
(Moscow, Russia)

**28-29 April 2011:** First global ministerial conference on healthy lifestyles and non communicable disease control  
(Moscow, Russia)

**29 April 2011:** Conference on health and technology  
(Guarda, Portugal)

## May

**10 May 2011:** Social Innovation: European vision, local action  
(Brussels, Belgium)

**10-12 May 2011:** E-Health Week 2011  
(Budapest, Hungary)

**12 May 2011:** Innovation in

Member States, regional and local authorities, social partners and civil society organisations will be invited to commit on specific objectives and activities in view of the European Year 2012. A first version of the future website of the European Year 2012 will be launched. The conference will also mark the 3rd European Day on Solidarity between Generations.

You can preregister for this conference [here](#).

For more information, click [here](#).

- *EuroHealthNet called for effective measures for a healthy and active ageing. In its reply to the European Commission's consultation on the pilot European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing, EuroHealthNet highlighted the barriers to innovation in relation to active and healthy ageing. In the light of existing programmes in Member States, EuroHealthNet called for the establishment of new innovative ways to encourage active and healthy ageing, including actions promoting physical activity and healthy diets, increasing social relations and meaningful activities while also ensuring some form of financial security for older people. Any potential benefits from the European Innovation Partnership should be distributed equitably across the whole of society.*

## Data on the Healthy Life Years in the European Union

A Healthy Life Years (HLY) improvement is the main health goal for the EU. At present HLY at birth in the EU is, on average, 15 years shorter than overall life expectancy for men and 20 years shorter for women. The [data calculated by Eurostat for the year 2009](#) shows clear differences between Member States in life expectancies without disability. As a whole men in the EU27 were expected to live 79.7% of their life without disability in 2008.

For more information, click [here](#).

## WHO - Consultation on action plan for non communicable diseases

WHO launched a consultation aiming to bring together national focal points from European Member States and other stakeholders to develop a five-year operational plan for implementation of the European Strategy for the Prevention and Control of non-communicable diseases. The consultation has three main objectives:

- To review the responses to non-communicable diseases (NCD) across the European Region;
- To agree on a practical set of actions that can be taken by Member States, by WHO and by partners to address the NCD epidemic in the five years to 2016;
- To contribute to the development of a European position in advance of the First Global Ministerial Conference on Healthy Lifestyles and NCD Control (Moscow, Russian Federation, 27 April 2011).

For more details on WHO global forum "Addressing the challenge of non communicable diseases" (27 April 2011), click [here](#).

For more details on the first global ministerial conference on healthy lifestyles and non communicable disease control (28-29 April 2011), click [here](#).

For more details on the United Nations high-level meeting on non communicable disease prevention and control (19-20 September 2011), click [here](#).

*EuroHealthNet is liaising with its members (many of whom are WHO Collaborating Centres or state bodies) and WHO concerning the European Action Plan. Further information will be included in the membership publication 'Health Action Memo'.*

## WHO - No Health Without Research

WHO will publish the World Health Report (WHR) for 2012 on the theme of "No Health without Research". This flagship report will, for the first time, focus on research for better health. The primary target audience of the report will be ministers of health in the WHO Member States, and the goal of the report is to provide new ideas, innovative thinking, and pragmatic advice for member states on how to strengthen their own health research systems. The report will have the three following aims.

[Healthcare - Improving Care, Driving Efficiency](#)  
(London, UK)

**12-13 May 2011:** [Smart Mobility for better cities](#)  
(La Rochelle, France)

**19 May 2011:** [A smart social inclusion policy for Europe 2020: the role of education and training](#)  
(Brussels, Belgium)

**19-20 May 2011:** [Prevention days](#)  
(Paris, France)

**24-27 May 2011:** [Green Week](#)  
(Brussels, Belgium)

**26 May 2011:** [European Flu Summit](#)  
(Brussels, Belgium)

**26 May 2011:** [E-Health Congress 2011 - Innovative Support for Clinical Decision](#)  
(Bucharest, Romania)

## June

**9-10 June 2011** - [FP7 Health: Open Information Day & Brokerage event](#)  
(Brussels, Belgium)

**10-11 June 2011:** [Jornadas Internacionales de Alimentación y Salud Mental de la Mujer](#)  
(Madrid, Spain)

**17 June 2011:** [Info Day on FP7 Environment Research](#)  
(Brussels, Belgium)

**30 June 2011:** [Mainstreaming Health Promotion: Promoting Health Across Sectors](#)  
(Galway, Ireland)

## July

**12-13 July 2011:** [Rights and Needs of Older Patients](#)  
(Warsaw, Poland)

**25-27 July 2011** - [Environmental Health Risk](#)  
(Riga, Latvia)

## August

**25-26 August 2011:** [Swiss Public Health Conference "Chronic diseases – A global challenge"](#)  
(Bale, Switzerland)

## September

**8-9 September 2011** - [Public Health Conference 2011](#)  
(London, UK)

**19-20 September 2011:** [United](#)

- To show that research is important for meeting health needs and improving health outcomes;
- To encourage countries to therefore invest more resources in developing and strengthening their national health research systems;
- To argue that countries should not see research as an expense or as an afterthought, but as an investment for a better, healthier future.

The WHR 2012 aims to provide impetus for a change to the problematic state of affairs of health research.

For more details, click [here](#).

## WHO - Web-based public hearing

WHO launches a public hearing on the draft Guidelines - Member States, health workers, recruiters, employers, academic and research institutions, health professional organizations, and any relevant sub regional, regional and international organizations, whether governmental or non-governmental. Contributions can be submitted in any of the six official languages (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish).

**Comments can be submitted by fax (+ 41 22 791 47 47) or by [email](#) from 21 March to 17 April 2011.**

The web-based public hearing and the draft Guidelines can be accessed [here](#).

Complementary documents concerning the Code are also available [here](#).

## EU News

### European Council

The European Council of Heads of State adopted a comprehensive package of measures to respond to the economic and social crisis, preserve financial stability and lay the ground for smart, sustainable, socially inclusive and job-creating growth. This will strengthen the economic governance and competitiveness of the euro area and of the European Union. Within the new framework of the European semester, the European Council endorsed the priorities for fiscal consolidation and structural reform. It underscored the need to give priority to restoring sound budgets and fiscal sustainability, reducing unemployment through labour market reforms and making new efforts to enhance growth. All Member States will translate these priorities into concrete measures to be included in their Stability or Convergence Programmes and National Reform Programmes. On this basis, the Commission will present its proposals for country-specific opinions and recommendations in good time for their adoption before the European Council that will be held next June.

The conclusions of the Council are available [here](#).

### Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Ministers adopted conclusions on the [Common Agriculture Policy towards 2020](#). Debating on a balanced territorial development, some of the national delegations noted that rural development policy would remain important for Europe's rural areas, but saw a need for more coordination and synergy with other EU policies such as regional and cohesion policy. In addition, the improvement of the rural economy should be based on diversification, development of local markets and other agriculture-related activities.

The conclusions of the Council are available [here](#).

- *In the frame of its response to "The reform of the CAP towards 2020 - Impact Assessment", EuroHealthNet underlined that while quality is important in maintaining EU competitiveness in agriculture, this must not be at the expense of the affordability of a safe and nutritious diet for all. The primary role of EU agriculture is and should remain guaranteeing the production of safe, nutritious, affordable food. CAP should not promote production and export of "crops" or products defined as public health damaging (such as tobacco) whilst the EU is increasing efforts and funding to encourage healthier lifestyles.*

[Nations high-level meeting on non communicable disease prevention and control](#)  
(New-York, USA)

**26-27 September 2011:** [Assets for health and wellbeing across life course: International Conference 2011](#)  
(London, UK)

## October

**10 October 2011:** [World mental Health Day](#)

**16-19 October 2011:** [World Alliance for Risk Factor Surveillance \(WARFS\) Seventh Global Conference](#)  
(Toronto, Ontario, Canada)

## November

**2-3 November 2011:** [Ageing Globally – Ageing Locally” Planning all Our Futures](#)  
(Dublin, Ireland)

**23-25 November 2011:** [ECDC Annual meeting on antimicrobial resistance and healthcare-associated infections](#)  
(Warsaw, Poland)

## More online

For a full list of upcoming events, please visit the Equity Channel [calendar](#)

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## New Publications

**EU-WHO** - Poverty, social exclusion and health systems in the WHO European Region

Available [here](#)

**EU-WHO** - How health systems can address health inequities through improved use of Structural Funds

Available [here](#)

**EU-WHO** - How health systems can accelerate progress towards Millennium Development Goals 4 and 5 on child and maternal health by promoting gender equity

Available [here](#)

**EU-WHO** - Cross-border health care in the European Union. Mapping and analysing practices and policies

Available [here](#)

**ASPHER** - Measuring the quality of long-term care

Available [here](#)

*For EuroHealthNet, the CAP should address extreme price volatility in food prices, not just to ensure the livelihood of farmers, but ensure that food is affordable for all layers of society. Instruments should be developed that not only manage crisis but work towards a more sustainable and fair food system, addressing concentration and power in the food system to prevent distortions and instability in prices or food availability. CAP must also support investment in innovation in agriculture and food, providing a balanced research agenda that not only invests in new technology, but agro-ecological and human ecological models of research.*

EuroHealthNet's response to the "The reform of the CAP towards 2020 - Impact Assessment" is available [here](#).

## Presidency Conference on "Discovery research in neuropsychiatry: depression, anxiety and schizophrenia in focus"

The Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Hungarian Presidency organized the conference on "Discovery research in neuropsychiatry: depression, anxiety and schizophrenia in focus", in Budapest. Commissioner Máire Geoghegan-Quinn underlined the link between the number of diagnosed mental disorders steadily increasing across the EU and the ever-increasing complexity of contemporary life, the increasing atomisation of the society, and in recent years in many countries, social and economic difficulties that create stress for millions of people. A recent European study of the situation in six Member States found that at any one time around 15% of women and 8% of men of adult age suffer from some form of mental illness. According to the World Health Organisation, mental health problems already form the biggest share of disorders in several of our Member States. And another survey reveals that some 27% of people in the EU between 18 and 65 years of age were affected by at least one mental disorder in the previous 12 months.

The speech by Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinn is available [here](#).

## European Commission

### European Commission - Towards a comprehensive strategy for a competitive transport system (Transport 2050)

The European Commission adopted a comprehensive strategy (Transport 2050) for a competitive transport system intended to increase mobility, remove major barriers in key areas and fuel growth and employment. At the same time, the proposals will dramatically reduce Europe's dependence on imported oil and cut carbon emissions in transport by 60% by 2050. The quality of transport services has a major impact on people's quality of life. On average 13.2% of every household's budget is spent on transport goods and services. [The Transport 2050 roadmap to a Single European Transport Area](#) sets out to remove major barriers and bottlenecks in many key areas across the fields of: transport infrastructure and investment, innovation and the internal market.

The full list of initiatives foreseen in the Transport 2050 roadmap — in over 40 areas of road, rail, air, maritime and inland waterway transport — are available [here](#).

All documents related to the White Paper - Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area - Towards a competitive and resource efficient transport system are available [here](#).

The speech by Siim Kallas, Vice-President of the Commission, responsible for transport, held at the press conference on the adoption of the White paper on Transport 2050 Brussels, is available [here](#).

- *EuroHealthNet is liaising with the European Commission on road safety strategies and will work with members on responses to the Transport Communication.*

### Commissioner Dalli - Conference on 'E-Health: Working Towards a New Holistic Healthcare Plan for Europe'

In the frame of the conference '[E-Health: Working Towards a New Holistic Healthcare Plan for Europe](#)', Commissioner Dalli underlined the importance to improve the quality of healthcare and

access to care, to increase the efficiency of health systems and to support patient-centred health systems. This is why, among others, the European Union is setting up a European Reference Network which would make available high quality and cost-effective healthcare to all Europeans, regardless of where they live. E-Health applications can also enable patients to access the best medical expertise from the comfort of their own home; and to have their condition continuously monitored from a distance.

The speech by Commissioner Dalli is available [here](#).

### WHO and the European Commission agree future common action in key areas

Senior officials and technical experts from WHO and the European Commission met to outline and agree how the two partnering organizations will work more closely together in priority areas of shared interests. The senior officials of the two organizations agreed on strategic cooperation on health security, health innovation, health systems, health information, health inequalities and country collaboration. This cooperation may take diverse forms – from exchange of information and views to joint advocacy work and implementation of activities. An administrative agreement between the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and WHO/Europe was also signed in Brussels, and the EC and WHO finalized road maps for implementing the commitments they had made in a joint declaration, "A shared vision for joint action", that was signed at the WHO Regional Committee for Europe's session in Moscow in September 2010.

For more information, click [here](#).

### Pharmaceuticals: Online launching of the EU Register of Clinical Trials

All EU citizens will have now access to information on the thousands of authorized pharmaceutical clinical trials that are underway in the EU. The aim of this official public register is to make clinical research on pharmaceuticals more transparent for patients and others and to avoid unnecessary duplication of clinical trials. The Clinical Trials register contains information about clinical trials authorized in the EU, whether they take place in one Member State or several. The register is part of the overarching EU public database EudraPharm, which also centralizes information on medicines authorized by the EU, such as the patient information leaflet.

The clinical trials register is available [here](#).

For more information, click [here](#).

### Pricing and reimbursement of medicines: Commission consults on EU transparency rules

The European Commission has launched a public consultation in view of modernising rules on the transparency of Member States' decisions regarding the pricing and reimbursement of medicines. The consultation invites all interested parties to share their views on the review of [Council Directive 89/105/EEC](#), often referred to as the 'transparency directive'. This directive has not been amended since 1989 despite substantial changes in the pharmaceutical market. Although the prices of medicines and reimbursement are decided at national level, the Transparency Directive is aimed at facilitating the free movement of medicines in the EU. **The deadline for submitting contributions is 25 May 2011.**

The consultation can be found [here](#).

For more information, click [here](#).

### Launching of the Social Innovation Europe Initiative

President Barroso, Commissioners Máire Geoghegan-Quinn and Lázsló Andor were present at the launching of "Social innovation Europe". Funded by the European Commission, *Social Innovation Europe* aims to create a dynamic, entrepreneurial and innovative new Europe. By 2014, *Social Innovation Europe* will have become the meeting place - virtual and real - for social innovators, entrepreneurs, non-profit organisations, policy makers and anyone else who is inspired by social innovation in Europe. Through a series of gatherings, and a new online resource, Social Innovation Europe wants to:

- connect projects and people who can share experiences and learn from each other;

- develop an easily accessible resource bank - so you can find about other projects, organisations and ways of working;
- develop a resource bank of up to date policies at local and national levels and provide information on funding opportunities;
- facilitate new relationships between civil society, governments, public sector institutions and relevant private sector bodies;
- develop concrete recommendations in financing and in upscaling/mainstreaming of social innovation in Europe.

Social innovation is about new ideas that work to address pressing unmet needs. *Social Innovation Europe* is being run by a consortium of European partners including the Danish Technological Institute and Euclid Network, and led by the Social Innovation eXchange (SIX) at the Young Foundation, UK. The initiative is financed under the EU's Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP).

For more details on social innovation, click [here](#).

The speech by President Barroso is available [here](#).

The speech by Commissioner Geoghegan-Quinnand is available [here](#).

The speech by Commissioner Andor is available [here](#).

### **Pensions: Towards a White Paper in the third quarter of 2011**

After having collected positions from relevant stakeholders for its Green Paper on pensions, the Commission's next move will be to publish a White Paper in the third quarter of 2011, which will define more clearly the EU executive's objectives regarding pension reform.

Full Summary and report to the Council of consultation responses to the Green Paper towards adequate, sustainable and safe European pension systems are available [here](#).

- *For EuroHealthNet, the link between pensions and health equity must be underlined. Adequate income for a healthy life, including through retirement by provision of pension support, is important to ward off the threat of poverty, ill health and social exclusion for older vulnerable people. Calling for the inclusion of the health equity dimension within European pension systems to strive towards social justice and economic efficiency.*

EuroHealthNet recommends specific approaches. The EuroHealthNet position is available [here](#).

### **Social considerations in public procurement**

A new guide to take social considerations into account in public procurement has been published. It highlights the contribution public procurement can make to stimulate greater social inclusion. Public procurement represents 17% of the GDP of EU Member States. While preserving competition and transparency, it may be used in a way to steer the market in a more socially responsible direction and thus contribute more generally to sustainable development. The guide will allow public purchasers to integrate with greater confidence social considerations in public procurement, while ensuring equal access to all European interested bidders and guaranteeing an efficient use of public money. The exercise is in line with the Europe 2020 Strategy and the EU goals for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. The Commission also published another guide to help public authorities, especially at local level, to provide [high quality and efficient services in line with the EU rules](#).

For more information, click [here](#).

### **Research on population ageing: Commission awards new EU legal status to cross-border databank**

The European Commission decided that the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) will become the first European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC). SHARE-ERIC is hosted by Tilburg University in the Netherlands, provides open and free of charge access to data, and aims to help researchers understand the impact of population ageing on European societies and thus to help policy makers make decisions on health, social and economic policy. SHARE was set up in 2004 and is building a multidisciplinary and cross-national data set on the health, socio-economic status, and social and family networks of more than 45,000 individuals aged 50 and over. Access to data is open and free of charge. SHARE helps policymakers to

understand for example: the implications of ageing for public finances, the labour market, income distribution and family life. The analysis of SHARE data will help European countries to more effectively prepare for the continuing challenges to their welfare systems in an ageing society. SHARE is expected to become an important asset to other initiatives on population ageing such as the pilot European Innovation Partnership on Active and Healthy Ageing, currently being launched.

For more details about SHARE, click [here](#).

For more details on European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ERIC), click [here](#).

### **European Research on Environment and Health Funded by the Seventh Framework Programme**

After the first three calls for proposals, over seventy multidisciplinary pan-European research projects dealing with environment and health issues have been funded by the European Commission's Research and Innovation Directorate-General in the Seventh Framework for Research (2007-2013). The projects presented address a multitude of scientific issues ranging from health impacts of climate change to environmental and health impacts of nanoparticles or chemicals.

The report is available [here](#).

### **New strategy needed to stop tuberculosis reoccurring in poorer patients**

The standard approach to re-treating tuberculosis in low and middle income settings is failing, according to new research. In a study published in the journal *PLoS Medicine*, scientists call for improved access to rapid diagnostics for drug-resistant TB, second-line TB treatment and antiretroviral HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) therapy. They point out that each year, between 1 in 10 and 1 in 5 patients treated for TB see their disease return after failing, interrupting or relapsing from treatment. The aim of this study, by researchers in South Africa, Uganda, the UK and the US, was to investigate treatment and survival outcomes in patients who had been treated for TB in the past and identify the factors associated with poor treatment outcomes. The findings highlight the need for more effective strategies to treat people with recurring TB.

For more information, click [here](#).

### **On-line gambling in Europe: Green Paper consultation**

The European Commission launched a consultation about on-line gambling. It is a fast developing business in Europe, with almost 15,000 websites already identified and total annual revenues exceeding € 6 billion in 2008 and expected to double in size by 2013. National legal frameworks vary enormously across the EU, with different rules applying to licensing, related on-line services, payments, public interest objectives, and the fight against fraud. The primary aim of the Green Paper consultation is therefore to obtain a facts-based picture of the existing situation in the EU on-line gambling market and of the different national regulatory models. The Commission seeks the views of stakeholders and wishes to collect detailed information and data on key policy issues such as organization of on-line gambling services and enforcement of applicable laws; consumer protection and other relevant public policy challenges as well as commercial communications and payment services. Among others, the consultation aims to collect information on problem gambling and addiction and the measures pursued to protect players and prevent or limit such problems. Another key issue is how to ensure the protection of minors and other vulnerable groups. Questions raised relate to the promotion and marketing of on-line gambling and systems in place for customer identification, both for opening an account and for processing payments.

- *EuroHealthNet sees this as a public health issue and plans to respond to the consultation.*

**Contributions to the consultation, which can be submitted until 31 July 2011**, will

determine the need for and form of any EU follow-up action in this field. Expert workshops on specific themes will be organized to complement this consultation. The information and data received at the end of this process will be thoroughly assessed by the Commission in determining follow-up action.

The public consultation is available [here](#).

For more information, click [here](#) and [here](#).

## European Parliament

### Social Platform amendments to the EP report on the future of social services

The Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament adopted a [report](#) on the on the future of social services of general interest. The European Parliament will vote on this report by the next three months, in the frame of its Plenary session.

In December 2010, the Council adopted [conclusions](#) entitled "Social Services of General Interest: at the heart of the European Social Model", calling upon the Social Protection Committee to work further on this issue with the aim inter alia of preparing for the next Forum on social services of general interest. The conclusions invited the Commission to further clarify the application of EU rules to social services of general interest, in order to enhance their legal certainty. The Commission should also for instance outline its views on how to identify a social service as an economic or non-economic service of general interest.

For the [Social Platform](#), the draft report on the future of social services of general interest highlights that SSGI and their users have specific characteristics which differentiate them from other SGI and that this has to be reflected while reviewing EU legislation. It calls on the European institutions and on Member States to ensure an adequate financial framework for SSGI which guarantees quality and continuity of service provision and good working conditions for the workers of the sector.

### Future of alcohol labels

Politicians, public health experts and alcohol industry met at the European Parliament to discuss labelling of alcoholic beverages, what would be effective and why it should be done at the EU level. The focus of the meeting was on the [PROTECT project](#), a research which gathered the opinions of 18-25 years old young people towards health warning labels in 6 European countries (Belgium, France, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania and Spain). The European Parliament is currently debating the Commission's proposal on the "[Provision of Food Information to Consumers](#)". Unlike soft drinks and juices, beer, wine and spirits have been exempted from the obligation to list ingredients and provide nutritional information. Alcohol is one of the leading risk factors for death and ill health in the EU, especially among young people. It increases the risk of getting cancer in digestive system and breasts, it is responsible for 25% of young men deaths, causes depression etc. The meeting was hosted by MEP Alyn Smith (Scotland, The Greens).

For more information please contact MEP Alyn Smith Office [here](#).

For more details, click [here](#).

### European health professionals call for non-discriminatory access to healthcare

The European Declaration of health professionals was presented in the European Parliament by Médecins du Monde, the Standing Committee of European Doctors and supporting MEPs Antonyia Parvanova and Edite Estrela to the Hungarian presidency. They urged EU institutions and Member States to take action to allow health professionals to respect the medical ethical obligations when providing care to every patient, especially undocumented migrants. The *European Declaration of health professionals towards indiscriminate access to healthcare*, launched by Médecins du Monde in May 2010, was signed by 141 health organisations, representing over 3.000.000 health professionals.

The text of the European Declaration is available [here](#).

The link to a video on the European Parliament public hearing “Preventing undocumented women and children from accessing healthcare: fostering health inequalities” on 8 Dec. 2011 is available [here](#).

For further information, please contact: [Birgit Beger](#), from [CPME](#) or [Benoit Blondel](#), from [Medecins du Monde](#).

## Conference - At the Heart of Innovation: e-Health under Scrutiny, 15 March 2011

On 15 March, the MEP Heart Group met for the first time in 2011 to discuss how innovation and notably e-Health technologies in cardiology, may provide real benefits to EU citizens and help to tackle major societal challenges such as health and ageing.

The minutes and all documents of this meeting are available [here](#).

Pictures of the event are available [here](#).

## Formal Responses to Parliamentary Questions

### Achieving a unified EU position with a view to the UN Summit on Non-Communicable Diseases

**Baroness Sarah Ludford (UK, ALDE), Simon Busuttil (Malta, PPE), Marisa Matias (Potugal, GUE/NGL) and Christel Schaldemose (Denmark, S&D)** ask the Council if it will discuss of the UN High-Level Summit on Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), which will take place in New York in September 2011 in order to present an unified EU position.

**The Council** replies that the EU has a central role to play in accelerating progress on global health challenges, including non-communicable diseases as well as the Millennium Development Goals on health, through its commitment to protecting and promoting the right of everyone to enjoy the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. The Council has not specifically discussed the issue and no EU position has been adopted yet. The EU Member States presented a coordinated and unified position in negotiations with UN Member States. At this stage it has not been decided if and how the Council will be involved in further preparations for this High-Level Meeting.

### Heavy social costs of alcohol for the EU

**Mr. Oreste Rossi (Italy, EFD)** underlines that in 2006 alone, the social cost of alcohol in Italy was USD 11.5 million, comprising USD 2.3 million in direct healthcare costs for the treatment of liver cirrhosis. In view of all diseases and costs provoked by alcohol, what measures does the Commission intend promoting in order to tackle effectively the problem of alcohol in Europe.

**Commissioner Dalli** reminds the EU Alcohol Strategy adopted in October 2006. It includes five priority areas for which EU action to complement and coordinate national action provides an added value, including the protection of young people, children and the unborn child, and the reduction of injuries and death from alcohol-related road accidents. This strategy is running until the end of 2012, and aims to support Member States action. It includes five priority areas for which EU action to complement and coordinate national action provides an added value. In September 2009, the [first Progress Report](#) on the Implementation of the EU Alcohol Strategy gave an overview of actions taken by Member States, stakeholders and the Commission. A second progress report is foreseen in 2012.

### Future national contact points for healthcare provided outside a patient's own country

**Ms Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (Lithuania, S&D)** wants to know the measures the European Commission wants to take in order national contact points to be set up, as underlined in the directive on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare to improve health services in individual Member States and enhance their effectiveness.

For **Commissioner Dalli**, these contact points (at least one per Member State) will cooperate closely amongst themselves, and provide information to patients on conditions and levels of reimbursement for healthcare in another Member State, healthcare providers, quality and safety

standards and procedures for redress. The Commission will support the setting up of a network of national contact points, for example by publishing their contact details in order patients to have a clearer idea on the quality and safety standards of healthcare provided abroad, which will lead to more informed choices on cross-border healthcare.

### Salt intake and other reduction targets

**Ms Daciana Octavia Sârbu (Romania, S&D)** reminds that as part of the Commission's 2007 strategy on nutrition, overweight and obesity, Member States subsequently agreed to 'national salt initiatives' with the aim of reducing salt intake by 16 %. Can the Commission explain why reduction targets did not seek to achieve healthy levels of salt intake? Similar reduction initiatives are envisaged for fats and sugars. Will the Commission work to ensure that reduction targets reflect the nutritional advice given by EFSA and the WHO?

For **Commissioner Dalli**, the overall goal of the EU framework on salt reduction is to contribute towards reduced salt intake to achieve national or World Health Organization recommendations. The framework was developed by Member States for 2008-2013 as part of the [Strategy on nutrition, overweight, and obesity-related health issues](#). In this context, it became clear that it would not be possible for all countries to reach their intake recommendations by 2013, and that work would have to continue beyond the end of the Strategy. Based on the experience of salt reduction initiatives in some Member States, a benchmark for salt reduction of a minimum of 16 % in 4 years against the individual baseline levels of 2008 was established. Member States considered the target as realistic and achievable. The framework highlights that national benchmarks and plans could differ; and encourages food producers to reduce the salt levels beyond 16 % towards the lowest salt level achieved in the market for the specific product in question. Work on reformulation initiatives for nutrients other than salt is ongoing. Exchange of best practice and, as appropriate, agreement of suitable and realistic targets, will continue in 2011.

### Inequalities in the health sector

**Konstantinos Poupakis (Greece, PPE)** reminds that Greece, facing serious public finance problems, has got plans to make cuts in the order of EUR 2.1bn in the health sector. What further action does the Commission intend to take to support Member States' efforts to promote equality in the health of their populations by reducing inequalities?

**Commissioner Dalli** stresses that the Europe 2020 strategy identifies that a major effort is needed to reduce health inequalities to ensure that everybody can benefit from growth. The Commission has set out a framework for action in the Commission Communication on solidarity in health which is being taken forward together with Member States and stakeholders. Reducing inequalities in health care and health outcomes is also an objective of the Open Method of Coordination on Social Protection and Social Conclusion, and is part of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion. In 2010 a three-year joint action supported through the health programme and involving 15 Member States, including Greece, was agreed upon to support exchange of information and good practice on this issue. Support is also being provided through the PROGRESS programme and the research framework programme. The Commission is taking steps to raise awareness amongst Member States about the opportunities to address health inequalities through the use of the structural funds and agricultural funds, including through the implementation of the EU School Fruit Scheme and the School Milk Scheme, since the decision on their use lies mainly with the Member States themselves. Member States have allocated a total of EUR 5.2 billion of Structural Funds for health related activities, of which Greece has allocated EUR 413 million. While the Commission is developing its work on indicators of health inequalities, at this stage it is not in a position to assess or comment on the position of Greece relative to other countries.

- *In the frame of the Joint Action on Health Inequalities project, EuroHealthNet carries out action to tackle health inequalities is required at EU, national, regional and local level, with a wide range of stakeholders across a range of policy areas. The general objectives of the Joint Action are to help reduce health inequalities by:*
  - *Developing knowledge for action on health inequalities;*
  - *Supporting the engagement of Member States, regions and other stakeholders*

- in action to tackle socio-economic health inequalities;*
- *Sharing learning between Member States and other actors;*
- *Supporting the development of effective action to tackle socio-economic health inequalities at the European policy level.*

*EuroHealthNet will be involved in the establishment of a regional network which will identify through a case study approach the focus, information, resources, drivers, opportunities and barriers to regional action on HI, and access to structural funds. Recommendations will be made to inform the future drafting of structural funds. The Joint Action on Health Inequalities will run for 36 months and is led by the National Heart Forum and Health Action Partnership International (HAPI) in the UK. The project started in February 2011 and involves 19 main partners – mainly public health and health promotion Ministries and National Agencies.*

For more information, click [here](#) or contact [Yoline Kuipers](#) or [Claudia Marinetti](#).

### Delayed Publishing of Indoor Air Quality Report

**Linda McAvan (UK, S&D)** wants to know when the Commission intends to submit a proposal to address the health concerns from its findings on Indoor Air Quality.

**Commissioner Dalli** reminds that the results of the Indoor-Expo project initially expected to be completed in early 2010 has been prolonged until December 2010. The report in question is currently being finalised. The Commission services will evaluate the report and a decision will be made about an appropriate follow-up. The results of the INDEX project were published in 2004. This project developed harmonized criteria for indoor air monitoring protocols and techniques for five priority chemicals.

### Health services in other Member States

**Ms Vilija Blinkevičiūtė (Lithuania, S&D)** underlines that the rules relating to the use and reimbursement of cross-border healthcare are not always clear or well understood. Regarding rare diseases, in the EU, almost 25 million people suffer from rare diseases and they must be guaranteed the best possible treatment. In the light of this situation, when does the Council expect to reach an agreement between the Member States on the treatment of rare diseases and on the as yet unresolved question of direct payment for treatment? Does the Council not consider that a list of all rare diseases should be included in this new proposal for a directive?

**The Council** reminds that European reference networks could also be focal points for medical training and research, information dissemination and evaluation, *especially for rare diseases*. Rare diseases are those that meet a prevalence threshold of not more than five affected persons per 10 thousand, in line with Regulation (EC) No 141/2000 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 1999 on orphan medicinal products, and they are all serious, chronic and often life -threatening. Articles 8, 12 and 13 provide for measures to support diagnosis and treatment capacity *in particular in the area of rare diseases*. As regards the direct payment, in conformity with Article 7 the costs of cross-border healthcare shall be reimbursed *or paid directly* by the Member State of affiliation up to the level of costs that would have been assumed by the Member State of affiliation, had this healthcare been provided in its territory without exceeding the actual costs of healthcare received.

### Other

#### European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) - Hearing discusses problem of ageing population

The EESC has conducted a hearing on 'The role of family policy in demographic change: Sharing best practice among Member States'. This meeting consulted a range of perspectives from a number of stakeholders on family matters, with a view to improving and sharing practices between Member States. According to the EESC, the social and economic benefits of the family should be appreciated. Insufficient support for families could result in a substantial increase in costs, especially in terms of welfare services. Demographic challenges need to be quickly tackled by providing incentives to work and viewing older people as an asset rather than a burden. The Committee is also committed to looking ahead and is already working with the

future Polish presidency on demography and the labour market. Furthermore, it intends to support the idea of proclaiming 2014 as a European Year for families. The Hungarian Presidency took the chance of this hearing to launch at EU level its thematic week "[Europe for families, Families for Europe](#)" which will be organised in Budapest and which will be concluded by an Informal Council of Ministers for family.

For more information, click [here](#).

### **European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) – WHO – Joint report on Tuberculosis: concern about multi drug-resistance and childhood**

While the EU/EEA Member States continue to mark a decline in the overall notification, the report "Tuberculosis surveillance in Europe 2009" highlights the need to address childhood TB as a key component on the way towards TB elimination: Almost 40 000 TB cases in children were notified in the past decade with more than 3 300 reported cases in 2009 – clearly indicating that TB diagnosis in children remains a major challenge even within the EU/EEA. Hence, ECDC highlights the importance of eliminating childhood tuberculosis across Europe with a number of publications and activities. ECDC has dedicated a theme website (Spotlight) on childhood TB highlighting key messages on childhood TB.

The report "Tuberculosis surveillance in Europe 2009" is available [here](#).

For more details on ECDC Programme for tuberculosis, click [here](#).

### **European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) – Tool to learn more about the detection and assessment of public health threats**

The European Center for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) promotes the implementation of Epidemic Intelligence (EI) activities at EU and national level. EI can be defined as the process to detect, verify, analyze, assess and investigate public health events that may represent a threat to public health. Providing early warning signals is a central objective of public health surveillance systems. This tutorial aims to illustrate the various Epidemic Intelligence steps in a European context and highlights the role both of EU Member States and of the Centre in promoting health security at the EU level. The tutorial has a broad target of potential users and should be considered as a training opportunity for national and international approaches to EI. It includes suggestions and material that can support in building up and improving capacities on EI principles and procedures in different working contexts.

To access the Epidemic Intelligence Tutorial, click [here](#)

### **European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (OSHA) – Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2010-2011**

Pan-European or international organizations/companies willing to get substantially involved in the new Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2010-11 on Safe Maintenance are invited to submit their application to become official partners of the Campaign. The third and last round of applications is **open from 21 March to 21 April 2011**.

More information about the [Campaign partnership offer](#).

More information about our [existing Campaign partners](#).

### **European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (OSHA) – Occupational safety and health in the transport sector**

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (OSHA) published a report "Occupational safety and health in the transport sector" describing the proportion of employment in the transport sector within the total work force and its evolution; the distribution by gender; the age structure; the types of contract; other work organisational factors, such as the organisation of working time (i.e. part-time work, shift work). Many of these contextual features influence

and interact with the OSH situation of the transport workers. This statistical portrait of the transport sector helps to clarify their status and to explain to some extent their occupational safety and health situation at work.

For more information, click [here](#)

### **European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) - New Foundation Focus 'Work and health: a difficult relationship?'**

The improvement of working conditions throughout a worker's career is a necessary condition to enable workers to continue to work for as long as possible. But what constitutes good working conditions, and what is required to allow older workers to remain in work? The new Foundation Focus explores the complex relationship between work and health, and asks European social policymakers what they will do to tackle the challenges of work and health, and an ageing society.

The Report "Health and work: a difficult relationship" is available [here](#).

### **European Ombudsman launches public consultation on ethical principles for EU officials**

The European Ombudsman has invited citizens, interest groups, and other organisations to submit comments on a draft statement of principles that should guide the conduct of EU civil servants. The draft "public service principles" take account of best practice in the Member States, established through a consultation with the European Network of Ombudsmen. Comments can be submitted until 15 May 2011 and will be considered before the principles are finalised.

For more information, click [here](#).

The full public consultation document (available in 23 languages), as well as documents related to the consultation of the European Network of Ombudsmen, are [here](#).

## **National and local news**

### **Denmark - National Board of Health - A health status of men in Denmark and a review of effective interventions for promoting men's health**

The Centre for Health Promotion and Disease Prevention of Denmark's National Board of Health has launched a project on the early detection of risk factors for disease and of diseases among men in Denmark. The purpose of the project is to promote men's health both quantitatively and qualitatively by focusing on the early detection of risk factors for disease and of diseases among men. The purpose of the report is to summarize the physical and mental health status of men in Denmark and selected determinants of health and risk factors for ill health and to identify sex differences where this is relevant. Thus, this report does not emphasize specifically focusing on sex differences. Another purpose of the report is to analyse whether selected socio-demographic factors (educational level and civil status) may contribute to explaining how men and women differ in their use of health services (hospital admission rate and use of general practitioner services) and differences in men's and women's health behaviour.

The report is available [here](#).

### **England - Life expectancy on the rise 'despite obesity epidemic'**

Life expectancy in the UK is on the rise, along with the rest of Europe, despite fears over the impact of obesity, a population expert has said. Analysing trends from the past 40 years, Professor David Leon credited a decline in deaths from heart disease for the continued rise. People in the UK are also living longer than those in the US, he says. Despite concern that health problems arising from obesity would affect life expectancy in high-income countries, such as the UK, there is no evidence of this to date. Professor Leon said that deaths from

cardiovascular disease in the UK have seen, "some of the largest and most rapid falls of any Western European country, partly due to improvements in treatment as well as reductions in smoking and other risk factors." But he admits that it may be too soon to see the impact of increasing obesity rates.

The analysis is available [here](#).

### **France – INPES – Launching of an information campaign about alcohol**

The "Institut national de prévention et d'éducation pour la santé" (Inpes) has launched a new communication campaign in order to inform people who drink regularly. From 13 March until 6 April 2011, a T.V spot is diffused on the TNT and on the terrestrial channels with view to show that regular excessive alcohol consumption is dangerous. A free phone line number has also been set up (From France: 0 811 91 30 30).

For more details, click [here](#).

### **France, Italy, United Kingdom, Bulgaria - Energy performance contracting in social housing - A feedback report from the FRESH project**

Lack of adapted funding is a major barrier to the energy retrofitting of social housing in Europe. Funding could be found through the Energy Performance Contracts (EPC), in which an Energy Service Company (ESCO) invests in a comprehensive refurbishment (building insulation and renovation of the heating systems), and repays itself through the generated savings. The main results will be the tested implementation of EPC for comprehensive refurbishment at four pilot sites, as well as concrete tools and recommendations to public authorities for possible replication at national and European level. The document explains how EPC's could help structure an economic model contributing to reduce greenhouse gases emissions in social housing by a factor 4 in 2050, by securing energy savings and attracting private capital.

For more information about the FRESH project, click [here](#).

### **Ireland – Institute of Public Health - Spotlight on the Health Well – better intelligence, better decisions, better health**

The Irish Institute of Public Health launched a new Website – "Health Well" – aiming to access health information, to work collaboratively over the web and to use information more effectively.

The Health Well aims to help policy-makers, health and social care professionals, managers and agencies. It contains a series of hubs on key public health themes such as Obesity, Fuel Poverty and Health Inequalities.

The Health Well Website is available [here](#).

### **Slovenia – Towards a reduction of health inequalities**

The Slovenian Government and EU-WHO organized a high-level forum in Slovenia to call for action to tackle the country's social inequities in health and to launch a report "Health inequalities in Slovenia". Cross-government commitment and coordination and inter-country collaboration were identified as key factors in reducing inequities and promoting health: a crucial resource for development. Slovenia's role was underlined as an active partner in developing Health 2020. Slovenia advocates health equity in its capacity as neighbour and sponsor of the South-eastern Europe (SEE) Health Network, as well as its work with European organizations and countries. The new health policy for Europe will be developed through a participatory process and underpinned by evidence covering the WHO European Region. A central component of this evidence will come from a European review of the social determinants of health. The final report is due to submitted to the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in September 2012.

- *EuroHealthNet will hold its General Assembly in Ljubljana 1-2 June and will receive a full report of this initiative as well as from the SEE network.*

For more details, click [here](#).

The report "Health inequalities in Slovenia" is available [here](#).

### **Sweden - Swedish National Institute of Public Health - Support when selling tobacco**

As a part of the "National Tobacco Project", the Swedish National Institute of Public Health has prepared information materials for those who sell tobacco products. These materials serve as a support to business operators and their staff to make it easier to comply with the sales regulations of the Tobacco Act, and as an aid in municipal supervisory efforts. Based on changes in the Swedish Tobacco Act that entered into effect on 1 August 2010 concerning more effective supervision and better compliance to the 18-year age limit, the Swedish National Institute of Public Health has prepared the brochure "Selling tobacco".

For more details, click [here](#).

### **Sweden - Study highlights obesity levels in children**

One in five children in Sweden is overweight, and that there is a link between low levels of education and overweight children, according to the country's first ever national study of the prevalence of overweight and obesity in schoolchildren. Published online in the journal *Obesity Reviews*, the study was part of a European project, the World Health Organisation (WHO) European Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative (COSI), that involved 17 European countries. This is the first national survey of the prevalence of overweight and obesity among schoolchildren to be carried out in Sweden. The study involved collecting data from 94 randomly chosen schools from the north to the south of Sweden and included 4 600 children aged between 7 and 9 years old. The researchers also observed a lower prevalence of overweight and obesity among children who live in urban areas compared to those in smaller towns and rural areas.

For more information, click [here](#).

### **Wales – "Time to Change" turns to TV to encourage mental health discussion**

A TV campaign for social organisation Time to Change will roll out with the aim of persuading people to talk about mental health. The 'It's Time to Talk. It's Time to Change' campaign, by Dare, will aim to rid general perceptions on mental health and normalise discussing it. Based on evidence that the best way to change attitudes and behaviour is through social content, the campaign will be lead by a TV advert that will run for four weeks, and be supported by ambient media and social media activity. Content placed on YouTube will also allow viewers to select their own ending. Also set to support the campaign will be local community projects, a national media campaign, legal test cases, training initiatives, and a network of grassroots activists who will aim to combat discrimination.

For more information click [here](#).

For more information about The "All Wales Mental Health Promotion Network", click [here](#).

## **Other international news**

### **European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies - Cross-border health care in the European Union. Mapping and analysing practices and policies**

The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies published a book mapping Cross-border Health Care in the European Union. This book explores these trends, looks at the legal framework and examines the legal uncertainties surrounding rights, access, reimbursement, quality and safety. It examines different approaches to these concerns and the methodologies to use to ease or resolve them. The information and analysis presented mark an important step in the continuing debate on a legal framework for cross-border health care and will be of considerable use to policy-makers and those with an interest in key aspects of cross-border

health care.

The report is available [here](#).

### **WHO/HBSC – Report published on Forum**

Ample evidence shows that young people living in poorer circumstances are more likely to be at risk of unintentional injuries and physical inactivity than those from more affluent families. The WHO/Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) Forum 2009, the third in a series designed to promote adolescent health, was held on 19–20 October 2009 in Italy. It concentrated on action on socio-environmentally determined health inequities among children and adolescents. This publication presents the summary of outcomes of the Forum.

The study is available [here](#).

### **WHO - The impact of health and health behaviours on educational outcomes in high-income countries: a review of the evidence**

WHO published a report on the impact of health and health behaviours on educational outcomes in high-income countries. Education is known to have an effect on health. But to what extent do good health and healthy behaviours contribute to educational attainment? This publication reviews current knowledge, especially in high-income countries, and finds evidence of a causal link. While gaps in research remain, these results have policy implications for the ways child health in richer countries may be used to improve educational outcomes.

The report is available [here](#).

### **WHO - Top 30 medicines to save mothers and children**

WHO's first ever list of priority medicines for maternal and child health recommends to countries which medicines are most important for saving lives. Access to appropriate medicines is vital to achieving global health goals. More than eight million children under the age of five still die every year from causes such as pneumonia, diarrhoea and malaria. An estimated 1 000 women die every day due to complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Almost all of these deaths occur in developing countries and the vast majority can be prevented when the right medicines are available in the right formulations and are prescribed and used correctly. The top 30 priority list was compiled by experts in maternal and child health and medicines who analysed the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines and the latest WHO treatment guidelines to establish which medicines would save the most lives. The top 30 priorities list also features five urgently needed medicines that do not currently exist for the prevention and treatment of tuberculosis, particularly in HIV-infected children, and for newborn care. Treatment guidelines for tuberculosis in children have been developed recently by WHO, but the recommended dosage requires a child to swallow many tablets a day over a long period of time. Combining the essential ingredients into one tablet results in a pill around the size of a one-euro coin -- too large for a child to swallow.

For more information, click [here](#).

### **UNEP - Towards a Green Economy: Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication**

UNEP published a report "Towards a Green Economy" where it defines a green economy as one that results in *improved human well-being and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental risks and ecological scarcities*. In its simplest expression, a green economy can be thought of as one which is low carbon, resource efficient and socially inclusive. In a green economy, growth in income and employment should be driven by public and private investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. These investments need to be catalysed and supported by targeted public expenditure, policy reforms and regulation changes. The development path should maintain, enhance and, where necessary, rebuild natural capital as a critical economic asset and as a source of public benefits, especially for poor people whose

livelihoods and security depend on nature. The concept of a “green economy” does not *replace* sustainable development, but there is now a growing recognition that achieving sustainability rests almost entirely on getting the economy right.

UNEP report “Towards a Green Economy - Pathways to Sustainable Development and Poverty Eradication” is available [here](#).

### **United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) - The State of the World’s Children 2011- Adolescence: An Age of Opportunity**

UNICEF published a report on the state of the world’s children 2011. The arguments for investing in adolescence are fivefold. It is right in principle under existing human rights treaties including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which applies to around 80 per cent of adolescents, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, which applies to all adolescent females. Investing in adolescence is the most effective way to consolidate the historic global gains achieved in early and middle childhood since 1990. The 33 per cent reduction in the global under-five mortality rate, the near elimination of gender gaps in primary school enrolment in several developing regions and the considerable gains achieved in improving access to primary schooling, safe water and critical medicines such as routine immunizations and antiretroviral drugs – all are testament to the tremendous recent progress achieved for children in early and middle childhood. Investing in adolescents can accelerate the fight against poverty, inequity and gender discrimination. Adolescence is the pivotal decade when poverty and inequity often pass to the next generation as poor adolescent girls give birth to impoverished children.

The report is available [here](#).

- *For EuroHealthNet, at EU level, reducing health inequalities is currently regarded as one of the most important public health challenges. Universal health policies are expected to improve everyone’s life but often they do not equally benefit the whole population. In fact, although life and health expectations have improved over time, the gap between those from different socio-economic groups in the EU has gradually increased and expanded. At present we do not have sufficient knowledge of what actions effectively level up this gradient in health inequalities. The **GRADIENT** project, a project funded under the EU Seventh Framework Programme and lead by EuroHealthNet, focuses on families and children, given that inequalities during childhood have long-lasting negative impacts on health and well-being. Moreover, research shows that the optimum impact can be obtained in these early years, by securing equal opportunities during childhood and adolescence.*

For more information, click [here](#) or contact [Giorgio Barbareschi](#)

### **OECD - Pension reforms must deliver affordable and adequate benefits**

Recent reforms will still be insufficient to cover increased pension costs in the future, despite increases in retirement ages in half of OECD countries, according to a new OECD report. The report “Pensions at a Glance 2011” says that by 2050 the average pensionable age in OECD countries will reach 65 for both sexes. This represents an increase of about 1.5 years for men and 2.5 years for women. But life expectancy is rising even faster, outstripping the increase in pension ages by about 2 years for men and 1.5 years for women. This means that in all but five OECD countries the time spent in retirement will continue to grow. Recent reforms are a step in the right direction to rein in public pension spending rising as a result of population ageing. The size of the working-age population in the OECD will peak around 2015 and decline by over 10% in 2050. But governments should consider the impact of benefit cuts on the most vulnerable. Pension reforms in OECD countries since the early 1990s have reduced future benefits on average by 20 per cent.

The report “Pensions at a glance – 2011” is available [here](#).

### **World Alliance for Risk Factor Surveillance (WARFS) - Seventh Global Conference October 16-19, 2011, Toronto, Canada**

The World Alliance for Risk Factor Surveillance (WARFS) 2011 Global Conference will be held in Canada on 16-19 October 2011. WARFS is the Global Working Group on Surveillance of the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUHPE). It supports the development of behavioural risk factor surveillance (BRFS) as a tool for evidence-based public health, acknowledging the importance of this information source to inform, monitor and evaluate disease prevention and health promotion policies, services and interventions. WARFS aims to integrate surveillance as a tool into the mainstream of health promotion work, to finalise the definition and conceptual framework of BRFS that can be shared and discussed globally, to serve as a reference for researchers, BRFS practitioners, and countries that are developing BRFS, and to share findings, results and experiences with IUHPE community to facilitate the discussion regarding the role of BRFS.

A conference website will be available to provide information on the preliminary program, registration and abstract submission. In the meantime, for more information, click [here](#).

### Key indicators of health in the USA

The US Government's Healthy People initiative aims to improve the health of Americans. The Institute of Medicine released [Leading Health Indicators for Healthy People 2020](#), prioritising 12 health indicators and 24 health objectives among 42 topics and nearly 600 objectives. Those health indicators are access to care services, quality of health-care services, healthy behaviours, physical environment, social environment, chronic disease, mental health, injury, maternal and infant health, tobacco use, substance abuse, and responsible sexual behaviour.

For more information, click [here](#).



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For more information see: <http://ec.europa.eu/progress>

The information contained in this publication does not necessarily reflect the position or opinion of the European Commission.

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