



# EU Health Highlights

October I



Dear Health Highlights Subscribers

Please find below the right version of the first October edition of EuroHealthNet Health Highlights. Please, do not take it account the first newsletter sent today. We apologise for the inconvenience.

Best regards

## CONTENTS LIST

### Main News Stories

News from EuroHealthNet  
News from the Council and the EU Presidency  
News from the European Commission  
News from the European Parliament  
News from other EU Bodies and Agencies  
Other International News  
Other National and Local News  
Events

## MAIN NEWS STORIES

**Greece - Augmentation of 40% of rate suicide**



Already, last July, the BBC reported a study suggesting that the financial crisis "almost certainly" led to an increase in suicides across Europe. The analysis by US and UK researchers found a rise in suicides was recorded among working age people from 2007 to 2009 in nine of the 10 nations studied. The increases varied between 5% and 17% for under 65s after a period of falling suicide rates, The Lancet reported. The report came after a BBC investigation earlier this year found there had been a rise in anti-depressant prescribing during the financial crisis. Prescriptions for drugs such as Prozac rose by more than 40% over the past four years with GPs saying more and more people were coming to them with money worries.

EuroHealthNet director Clive Needle added *"This shows policymakers in EU states and institutions need to act now for mental and physical wellbeing in national and EU policies: starting right at the top with the EU 2020 process. It is not good enough to just go for growth and hope recessions do not recur – they are cyclical and systemic. We know enough now to act to support individual and community resilience – as the example of Austria shows, to make economies work for people not vice versa. We call on the EC to urgently review its core economic and social programmes for this decade to protect and promote wellbeing – the health of people comes before business profits."*

The report of the Social Protection Committee on the social dimension of the EU2020 strategy confirms this consideration when it underlines: "It remains difficult to evaluate the specific impact of the crisis compared to other possible factors or already existing health trends. However, Member States have identified negative impacts of the crisis on citizens' mental health status, notably in the following areas: depression, anxiety, increased alcohol consumption and suicidal behaviours. In some Member States particularly affected by the crisis provisional data show a clear and very worrying increase in suicides.



To access information delivered by the Greek Health Minister, click [here](#).

To access the BBC report, click [here](#).

## **First Annual Convention on the European platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion**



This will be the first stage of a transition to the Convention's final format. Its key objective is to give visibility and political weight to the European Platform against Poverty and build support across various policies and institutions, different levels of government and civil society actors. The Convention will build on the lessons learnt from the European Year on Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010 and will bridge between the objectives of the Year and the social objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Three sessions will address the objectives of the Annual Convention :

- Several Ministers will present their views and ambitions on setting their national poverty target and their priorities;
- Commission services will debate with the audience about their work on poverty

and inclusion and how they have implemented the Platform against Poverty in 2011;

- Participants will be able to make suggestions for future actions in five parallel sessions, followed by a report back to the closing Plenary Session.



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

## High-level conference on Inequalities in Europe and the future of the welfare state



The debate is in line with the focus of the EU's Europe 2020 strategy on inclusive growth, and notably on sharing the benefits of growth widely. It will serve as inspiration for European policy making and its results will be summarised in a flash report to be released after the conference.

The participants include both policy makers, social partners, academics and Commission staff. Seven panels will deal with crucial aspects of inequalities:

- Labour market inequalities and their mitigation;
- Geographic dimension of social inequalities and their mitigation;
- Mitigating inequalities through taxation – taxing fairly and efficiently;
- Role of health and equal opportunities policies in mitigating inequalities;
- Redistribution, cash benefits for mitigating inequalities;
- Role of education and child policies - tomorrow's inequalities are here, in our children;
- Conclusions, Europe 2020 and the future of a sustainable welfare state in the EU.



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

## WHO - World Conference on Social Determinants of Health



The conference will bring together states and stakeholders to share experiences on policies and strategies aiming to reduce health inequities.

EuroHealthNet contributes and encourages research and exchange of information related to social determinants not only through its projects but also via The Equity Channel that aims at connecting interested people who want to see action on the social determinants of health.

To visit the Equity Channel, click [here](#).



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

To visit the Equity Channel, click [here](#).

## WHO - EU - Interim second report on social determinants of health



World Health  
Organization

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR  
Europe

Coordinated by Sir Michael Marmot, the interim report on social determinants of health and the health divide in the WHO European Region furthers the approaches to tackling health inequalities outlined in the first report from the WHO European Region in September 2010 and new developments ever since.

The review presents a synthesis and overview of the themes and issues, which will inform the new policy for health for the European Region, Health2020.

The key findings are:

- the global economic downturn has profound importance for the health and well-being of populations and is likely to worsen health inequity. Those who are already most exposed to vulnerability and disadvantage feel the effects of the global economic downturn more strongly, similar to the effects of natural disasters ;
- sustaining a growing ageing population across the European Region requires increasing the focus on prolonging good health and well-being throughout the life course. This especially emphasizes taking a life-course approach to achieving equity in health and well-being and being responsive to the gender issues involved in health and survival.
- local-level action is key to addressing the social determinants of health, due to an advantage of proximity to peoples' lives and experiences. However, it is frequently constrained by national and global economic influences and power relationships. As a result, local action - as long as it remains local - is limited in changing the underlying influence and distribution of power, money and resources that perpetuate health inequity in society. For this reason, a concerted, multi-level approach is required in the process of developing, implementing and reviewing policy.

Leadership for health:

Action to reduce health inequity and to promote health equity requires the whole of government and society to be involved. This includes the health system together with stakeholders and sectors within and beyond the boundaries of the health system. This can be achieved in four ways :

- advocating : because population health and levels of inequality in health measure how well societies are functioning, every sector influences health and well-being ;
- emphasizing core public health activities more strongly through health promotion, disease prevention, intersectoral working and ensuring equitable access to healthcare ;
- health ministries, WHO and others need to actively generate evidence and knowledge of what works in the field of health inequities reduction, monitoring the effects of cross-societal actions and using this information to enhance systems ;
- at a global level, political, social and economic policies have transnational effects, and therefore health equity should be at the heart of all policy-making.

Next steps:

A consultation paper is being developed, based on the report and the sub-reports of specific task groups around different themes of the overview. A stakeholder consultation is to be held, in which EuroHealthNet is participating. A final review report will be

prepared for the sixty-second session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe in September 2012



The interim second report on social determinants of health and the health divide in the WHO European Region, by Sir Michael Marmott, is available [here](#).

## WHO - EU - Governance for Health in the 21st Century



World Health Organization

REGIONAL OFFICE FOR Europe

The study makes recommendations on how governments can strengthen governance for health through collaboration and will feed into the new Health2020 strategy for health in Europe.

The report 'Governance for Health in the 21st century' makes a strong case for health becoming an overarching goal and a joint responsibility of governments (all sections and agencies), businesses, communities and individuals. In this concept, it is urged to pursue health through both 'whole-of-government' and 'whole-of-society' approach, intersectoral action, healthy, coherent and integrated public policy and health in all policies.

The study's findings and recommendations were presented and discussed at the WHO Regional Committee for Europe meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan from 12 to 15 September 2011 and will feed into the WHO EURO draft Health 2020 strategy.



The report on Governance for health in the 21st century available [here](#).

## EU - Health priorities within the Europe 2020 strategy



Promoting good health is an integral part of Europe 2020, the EU's 10-year economic-growth strategy. More specifically, health policy is important to Europe 2020's objectives for smart and inclusive growth because:

- keeping people healthy and active for longer has a positive impact on productivity and competitiveness
- innovation can help make the healthcare sector more sustainable and find new cures for health conditions
- the healthcare sector has an important role to play in improving skills and creating jobs as it employs 1 in 10 of the most qualified workers in the EU
- with a projected 45% increase in the number of people aged 65 and over in the next 20 years, financing rising healthcare costs and access to a dignified and independent life for the aging population will be central to the political debate.

Of the 7 EU2020 flagship initiatives, the 4 most relevant to public health are:

- Innovation Union
- Digital agenda for Europe
- Agenda for new skills and jobs
- European platform against poverty



For more information, contact EuroHealthNet Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, [Stecy Yghemonos](#).

## EU - Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council (EPSCO Council)



The EPSCO Council held a debate on the future shape of the European Social fund and its role in the implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy. It also adopted conclusions on the role of voluntary work in social policy and on demographic challenges through better reconciliation of work and family life. Finally, the Council took note of the comments of different Member States on the aid programme for the most deprived persons in the EU.



To access the EPSCO Council conclusions, click [here](#).

## NEWS FROM EUROHEALTHNET

### EUROHEALTHNET

#### EuroHealthNet at the 14th European Health Forum Gastein



The 14th EHFG will take place in Gastein, Austria. This year's theme is *Innovation & Wellbeing - Europe's Health in 2020 and beyond*.

The European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) was founded in 1998 as a European health policy conference with the aim of providing a platform for discussion for the various stakeholders in the field of public health and health care.

The main topics will be:

- Active & healthy ageing
- Non-communicable diseases
- Future of medicine
- Health2020
- Social innovation and HTA

EuroHealthNet Director, Clive Needle, will moderate two panels "What to do to make a partnership a success?" and "From a strategic plan to reality - The Way Forward". He will also chair the round table related to "What does Social innovation needs for Europe's health, especially for Europe's ageing population?"



Click [here](#) to access the programme.

## Innovative responses to the social impact of the crisis

The conference:

- Discussed the impact of the crisis on the European societies and on social protection schemes, and the need to intensify innovation for ensuring high level of protection to citizens. A ministerial panel will be dedicated to this;
- Promoted social experimentation as a key tool to improve the quality and the cost-effectiveness of social policies, and provide an overview of the best knowledge and expertise existing at EU level in this field. The European platform against poverty and social exclusion, which is one of the flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 strategy, develops an evidence-based approach to social innovations.



For more information, contact EuroHealthNet Policy and Advocacy Coordinator, [Stecy Yghemonos](#).

## SPREAD - Practices of sustainable lifestyles



A group of experts from business, design, architecture, urban planning, sustainable housing, sustainable consumption, communication and health promotion have brought innovative ideas and built visions for the future. EuroHealthNet's role was to ensure that health, well-being and equity perspective are included within the overall sustainable lifestyles.

SPREAD is a project aiming at consolidating the existing knowledge experience and best practices on linking health and sustainable ways of living, moving and consuming and to provide a roadmap towards scenarios of sustainable lifestyles in 2050.



For more information, contact [Cristina Chiotan](#).

Further information on the meeting outcomes will be published on the project's [website](#).

If you are interested and would like to discuss further about sustainable lifestyles please join the on line community [here](#).

## EUROHEALTHNET MEMBERS

### EuroHealthNet Member - England - Department of Health (DH) - New Health Research Authority comes in step closer



Legislation to establish the Health Research Authority (HRA), which will provide a new pathway for the regulation and governance of health research, was laid before Parliament. Created initially as a Special Health Authority, the HRA will have the National Research Ethics Service at its core.



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

### EuroHealthNet Member - England - Department of Health (DH) -

## Online tools aid patient health decisions



Eight online Patient Decision Aids (PDAs), commissioned by NHS East of England, give patients information on the pros and cons of different treatment options available to them.

Developed by NHS Direct and available on their website for patients to use anywhere across England, the online tools help patients learn more about their condition and the options for tests and treatments on conditions such as cataracts and breast cancer. Patients are able to see what choices are available to them, input their personal preferences and have an informed discussion with their clinician about their options. These tools do not replace a doctor's clinical advice but are in addition to help patients prepare for a consultation and any decisions they make afterwards.



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

## EuroHealthNet Member - Sweden - Swedish National Institute of Public Health - Study regarding availability restriction methods for tobacco



In a report published by the Swedish National Institute of Public Health, an interview study was conducted among 26 municipalities in Sweden. The results of the interview study present the practical tobacco supervision work in each municipality.



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

## NEWS FROM THE COUNCIL AND THE EU PRESIDENCY

### Council conclusions on the launching of joint programming initiative "More Years Better Lives"



This agenda will then be implemented through joint actions and projects involving a substantial commitment of funding and participation from involved countries. The European Commission will provide financial support for the coordination of the initiative; which is expected to start delivering concrete results after 2012, such as science based recommendations for adapting pension systems based not only on age, as is currently the case, but on people's capacity to work. An example of innovative policy making comes from Denmark, where the Finance Ministry has established a €400 million fund to accelerate innovation in care driven by the public sector to create new markets while solving societal problems.



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

## NEWS FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

## HEALTH

### European Commission provides € 5.2 million to help lower income countries in tobacco control



The WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC), an evidence-based international treaty negotiated under the auspices of the World Health Organisation, is the basis for governments worldwide to implement effective tobacco control policies and to address the risk factors of tobacco consumption and exposure.

The main focus of EU support will be to assist with needs assessment in the area of tobacco control in order to help these countries to fully implement the FCTC and to better integrate tobacco control policies into their national health programmes and strategies. This contribution complements the various global efforts to reduce the burden of noncommunicable diseases, which are on the rise worldwide. It is estimated that tobacco use is one of the leading global causes of preventable death, killing more than five million people worldwide each year.

The UN High Level Meeting on non-communicable diseases on 19 and 20 September 2011, in its political declaration committed to "accelerate implementation by States parties of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control,...".



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

### TobTaxY - Making Tobacco Tax Trendy



TobTaxY (making Tobacco Tax TrendY) is a new European Commission funded capacity building project with the aim of training the public health and tobacco control community on tobacco taxation and smuggling issues.



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

### Hearing on Health effects of Artificial Light



The opinion has been published on the internet for public consultation.

The planned hearing aims to complement the internet consultation and provide stakeholders and the public with an opportunity to present to the SCENIHR Working Group experts scientific evidence and argumentation on the subject of the opinion.



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

## New publication: Project management in Public Health



The European Commission published a brochure "Project Management in Public Health in Europe" aiming at presenting all projects and actions currently financed by the EU health Programme.



To access the brochure, click [here](#).

## World heart Day - Statement by John Dalli



In the frame of World Heart Day, Commissioner responsible for Health Policy, John Dalli, reminded cardiovascular diseases are largely preventable. This is also why the European Commission puts prevention at the heart of its EU Health actions, using different tools. For instance, EU legislation on tobacco products or policy related to nutrition or alcohol related harm, aim at contributing to the "heart health community".



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

## Commission requests Ireland and Greece to comply with the EU rules



The European Commission has requested Ireland and Greece to ensure full compliance with the EU rules on limits to working time for doctors in public health services.

The request takes the form of a 'reasoned opinion' under EU infringement procedures. Ireland and Greece now have two months to inform the Commission of measures they have taken to bring their legislation into line with EU law. Otherwise, the Commission may decide to refer Ireland and Greece to the EU's Court of Justice.



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

## SOCIAL

## Speech from President Barroso on the State on the European Union



This is a financial, economic and social crisis. I believe we can say that the sovereign debt crisis today is, above all, a crisis of political confidence,' said President Barroso in his annual State of the European Union Address 2011 titled "European Renewal". President Barroso stressed that there are solutions to the crisis, which he later also presented.

He outlined the Commission proposal for the Financial Transaction Tax (FTT) and added that the banking sector should also make a contribution to society. President Barroso concluded: 'The reality today is that intergovernmental cooperation is not enough to get Europe out of this crisis, nor to provide a future for Europe.



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

To access President Barroso speech, click [here](#).

## EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review – September 2011



The review analyses the situation in the transport sector and takes a closer look at the labour markets and social situation in Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and the United Kingdom. According to the new EU Employment and Social Situation Quarterly Review, against the backdrop of slower economic growth in many Member States, the hesitant recovery of the EU labour market seems to have come to a halt, while divergence continues to prevail among the 27 labour markets. The number of people in employment is still well below that recorded before the crisis, although gradual improvements have been seen, mainly driven by increases in part-time and temporary jobs.

Long-term unemployment is high and slightly increasing, at a rate of around 4% in the first quarter of 2011. There is a great danger that weaker GDP growth might slow down or postpone the previously foreseen labour market recovery. The precariousness of young people is worrying, as they are more affected than other age groups by part-time – including involuntary – and temporary work, if employed at all. These developments intensify social risks apparent in the EU, notably by making vulnerable groups particularly prone to poverty and social exclusion.



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

## Commission calls for partnerships to tackle societal challenges

An invitation to public and private actors to join forces at European level to apply research and innovation solutions to major challenges facing society has been issued by the European Commission.

The Commission Communication draws on first experience from pilot projects and outlines steps that will lead to more, and more effective, public-private and public-public

partnerships.

Proposals building on the approach outlined in the Communication will form part of the Commission's Horizon 2020 package later this year.



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

## ENVIRONMENT

### Environment and health indicators system

An environment and health (EH) information system is an essential tool to support policy-making, allowing priorities to be set on the basis of evidence, enhancing access to information and facilitating communication with the public.

WHO/Europe established and runs ENHIS, a harmonized and evidence-based information system on environment and health to support public health and environmental policies in the WHO European Region. It consists of a set of 22 indicators. These indicators on exposure, health effects, and policy actions were selected for their relevance towards EH factors. These developments are important elements for the European Environment and Health Strategy.



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

## NEWS FROM THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

### EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

#### Conference - FUTURAGE Road Map / Ageing population



The Road Map will be one of the major strategic European initiatives addressing the grand challenge of an ageing population and will provide a European research agenda for ageing for the next ten years. The FUTURAGE Road Map is one of the major strategic European initiatives addressing the grand challenge of the ageing population, which will provide a European research agenda for ageing research for the next 10 years.

The Road Map will be presented in the European Parliament at this conference hosted by the STOA Panel of MEP's. Drawing on two years of work, eight stages of consultation with over 700 contributors, the Road Map will shape the ageing research agenda in Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation.

Parallel initiatives, including the Active and Healthy Ageing Innovation Partnership, the European Research Area in Ageing, Joint Programme Initiative and the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between generations 2012, will also be participating, as will EurohealthNet.



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

To register, click [here](#).

## Conference - "Alcohol Policy in Poland and around the Europe: Medical and Economic Disadvantages of Using Alcohol" MEDUSA



On 11-12 October, under the patronage of the European Parliament Chairman – Professor Jerzy Buzek, the expert conference will cover recent advances in the alcohol related issues including such important topic as: health consequences of alcohol use, FAS (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome), epidemiology, alcohol policy.



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

## RESPONSE TO PARLIAMENT QUESTIONS

### European food aid programme for the most deprived

**Commissioner Ciolos** reminds that, in September 2010, the Commission presented an amended proposal that, if endorsed by now, would have permitted the Commission to adopt a 2012 plan with a budget in line with previous years.

In its recent Communication on the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework, the Commission proposed to fund food aid for the most deprived people with EUR 2.5 billion out of heading 1 where this aid fits more appropriately with the poverty reduction target of the Europe 2020 Strategy. This would secure the scheme's long-term stability better.

### 75% cut in EU food aid programme for the most needy

The **Council** replies that, at its meeting on 24 and 25 March 2011, the European Council stressed its determination to carry through the Europe 2020 strategy and in particular to implement measures to combat poverty and promote social inclusion. The Council had already stated its full readiness to put the Council's expertise on social inclusion and social protection policies at the service of the European Council and to actively contribute to the successful implementation of the Europe 2020 Strategy.

In its conclusions entitled "The European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion: a European framework for social and territorial cohesion" of 6 and 7 December 2010, the Council stressed that action to prevent and alleviate poverty and social exclusion and meet the EU headline target for promoting social inclusion, in particular through the reduction of poverty, required a combination of all relevant efforts and instruments at EU and national levels. In particular, it considered that, in implementing the key areas for action of the Platform, EU funding should be made to deliver on the social inclusion and social and territorial cohesion objectives in the context of the Europe 2020 Strategy and without prejudice to future negotiations on the multi annual financial framework. Regarding the consequences of the judgment of the Court of Justice of the European Union, this concerns the partial annulment of a Commission Regulation and so the question should be put to the Commission.

On the more specific issue of the reform of the European food aid programme, in 2010 the Commission sent the European Parliament and the Council a proposal for a Regulation of

the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Regulations (EC) No 1290/2005 on the financing of the common agricultural policy[4] and (EC) No 1234/2007 establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (Single CMO Regulation)[5] as regards distribution of food products to the most deprived persons in the Union. The proposal is being examined by the Council's preparatory bodies.

Reform of the European programme of food aid for the most deprived members of society is one of the subjects that will be given high priority during the Polish Presidency of the Council.

## NEWS FROM OTHER EU BODIES AND AGENCIES

### European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) - Evidence based methodologies for public health



The report explores how methods of evidence-based medicine (EBM) can be applied in public health in the field of infectious diseases.

The report addresses questions related to giving evidence-based advice in situations where there is little evidence and shortness of time. Moreover, the need for adaptation of EBM tools for a public health setting, the usefulness of existing guideline development tools and the use of consensus methods in a setting of evidence-based public health are also examined in the report, as well as future challenges and research needs.



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

### Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) - Publication: Joining together to tackle HIV/AIDS in Europe

The brochure published by the EAHC summarises HIV-related initiatives and projects in Europe co-funded by the European Commission.



To access the brochure, click [here](#).

### European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) - Respect for and protection of persons belonging to minorities 2008-2010



The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights report examines what the Treaty of Lisbon means for the protection of minorities, and the policies the EU has recently adopted in this field. It provides evidence of the still persistent phenomenon of discrimination found in many areas of life, including

employment, housing, healthcare and education.

By examining what the Treaty and these new laws mean for the protection of minorities, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) provides analysis and evidence-based research, contributing to more nuanced debates on public policy. This report addresses a variety of concerns regarding minorities, including freedom of movement, integration, and both ethnic and racial discrimination. It takes an in-depth look at recent developments on the ground and reveals that discrimination is still present in many forms.



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

## European Environment Agency (EEA) – Publication of a reference guide for air quality

The EEA published a guide showing that computer models are increasingly used for estimating air quality or forecasting changes in pollution levels. Various different models are currently used across Europe.

The new FAIRMODE reference guide aims to make these models comparable, well documented and validated in order to achieve reliable results. In the past, assessment and reporting of air quality was largely based on monitored measurement data. This is changing - the European Directive on Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe (2008) places more emphasis on the use of models as a complement to monitoring data in order to conduct air quality assessment, forecasting and planning.

There is a pressing need to harmonise the way these models are applied since they have been used in various forms and with differing and often incomparable quality assurance methods across Europe, at both national and local levels.



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

## OTHER INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### G20 - How to strengthen employment and social policies



In the current difficult economic environment, the role of the employment Ministers and their contribution to the overall G20 discussions was particularly important. The two days of discussions focused on employment policies, especially youth employment and vulnerable groups. Ministers also looked at how to strengthen social protection, promote social and labour rights and improve coherence among International Organisations as well as between economic, employment and social policies.

Speaking at the G20, EU Commissioner Andor stated that the EU has "an ambitious policy agenda, but the real challenge lies now in its delivery as budgetary constraints are limiting the room for manoeuvre in many EU countries". The Commissioner also presented European experience and policies under the EU's Europe 2020 Strategy, namely the initiatives "Agenda for new skills and jobs", "European Platform against poverty and social exclusion" and "Youth on the move".

The results of the Ministers' discussions will translate into a set of concrete

recommendations for the G20 leaders who will meet in Cannes on 3-4 November.



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

## Cigarettes do women more harm than men - Study



The amount of tobacco exposure during a person's lifetime correlates with the thickness of carotid arterial walls in both men and women, but the effect is twofold in females. The result is an outcome of the IMPROVE ('Carotid intima media thickness (IMT) and IMT-progression as predictors of vascular events in a high risk population') project, a large-scale epidemiological study that clinched a EUR 2.5 million grant under the 'Quality of life and management of living resources' (LIFE QUALITY) Thematic

Programme of the EU's Fifth Framework Programme (FP5).

The World Health Organization (WHO) says despite the fact that the majority of European countries have reported a considerable drop in the number of men smokers, including Italy and Finland, the number of women smokers has remained relatively the same within a 30-year period. The number has even increased in Spain and France, the data show.



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

## European Diversity Awards

The European Diversity Awards 2011 were held in London. The awards are designed to showcase individuals and organisations who have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.



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

## AGE - Position paper on Active ageing through older volunteering

AGE has just launched a new Position Paper which explores the links between the European Year of Volunteering 2011 and the upcoming European Year 2012 on Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations. The objective of this paper is to encourage stakeholders to build on the momentum created by the European Year of Volunteering to foster active ageing in the community during 2012 and promote better recognition of the value that older volunteers bring for our societies.



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

## Family Platform - A Family Research Agenda for the European Union

Family Platform has released a roadmap for future research on families. The roadmap, which has drawn on the experience and knowledge of over 170 European scientific experts and Researchers, and sets out the challenges that need to be addressed by the policy makers and stakeholders in the years ahead and future research needs.



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

## OTHER NATIONAL AND LOCAL NEWS

### Belgium - Ministry for Health - Database of ingredients for tobacco products

Information related to the ingredients of tobacco products sold in Belgium are available [here](#). The new search tool allows users to know each component of the tobacco product as well as its quantity.

### Denmark - Towards the implementation of a food fat tax?

The tax applies to meats, including chicken and pork, cheese, butter, edible vegetable oil, margarine and other foods such as potato-based snacks. The tax, imposed on domestic and imported food, is levied on the weight of saturated fat contained in these foods, and charged at the rate of DKK13.50 per kg of saturated fat. The food sector has hit back, questioning that rationale and arguing that consumers will travel to neighbouring countries to buy the affected foods anyway.

Food considered as being unhealthy, including crisps, soft drinks and chocolate bars, are already subject the fat tax in Hungary. The new law, introduced on 11 July 2011, is aimed at "improving the health of the nation". Initially called 'the hamburger tax', the measure was dubbed 'crisps tax' or 'fat tax' after the Hungarian government decided that it would not affect fast food restaurants.

For EuroHealthNet, the Hungarian legislation and the position taken by the Danish Government represent a major step in the health promotion. Through its work carried out in the frame of the Policy Action Group on Nutrition and Physical Activity (PAG NPA), EuroHealthNet works in order to counteract obesity in EU Member States.



For more information about the Danish Government position, click [here](#).

To access EuroHealthNet report " Focusing on obesity through a health equity lens", click [here](#).

### England – Eight out of 10 British workers are overweight or have long-term illness

Workers who are both overweight and have three or more health conditions – more than 10% of the total – are taking over three weeks' sick leave every year. The findings come ahead of publication, due in October, of an independent review of sickness absence, commissioned by the government. That review is expected to warn that growing numbers

of workers are living with long-term conditions and need greater support to do so.

The study, by pollsters Gallup, is a 25-year collaboration with Healthways, an international wellbeing consultancy, in the UK, Germany and the US. Surveys in Britain began earlier this year and have so far involved almost 9,000 people in and out of employment. Conditions counted in the survey include recurring back or knee pain as well as diagnosed depression. However, they do not include stress or anxiety, which are among the fastest growing causes of sickness absence.

The international study has found that while obesity and most health conditions are more common in the US, Britain has the highest rate of asthma and a rate of depression 50% higher than in Germany.



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

## Poland - Conference on health differences in Polish population

The aim of the conference was to present the diagnosis of Polish population's health. The data used for the diagnosis come from Polish prospective cohort studies and some primary prevention activities (e.g. 200 years of vaccinations). Differences in health were discussed broadly, especially men/women differences, rural/urban differences, education and socioeconomic differences.



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

## UK – UK has 'worst quality of life in Europe'

The UK emerged as having the second lowest hours of sunshine a year, the fourth highest retirement age, and the third lowest spend on health as a percentage of GDP. Despite above average household income – the fourth highest in Europe – Britons have 5.5 fewer days holiday a year than the European average and endure a below average government spend on education.

The study examined 16 factors to determine where the UK sits in relation to nine other major European countries. Variables such as net income, VAT and the cost of essential goods were put under the microscope, as well as lifestyle factors such as hours of sunshine, holiday entitlement, working hours and life expectancy.

People in France, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden all expect to live longer than people in the UK. Spain, Italy, the Netherlands and Germany rounded out the top five best European countries for quality of life, with Denmark, Poland, Sweden and Ireland also above the UK in the table. Last year, Ireland was joint bottom with the UK.



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

## October 2011

- 5-7 October 2011:** "Innovation for Digital Inclusion" conference (Gdańsk, Poland)
- 5-8 October 2011:** 14th European Health Forum Gastein (Gastein, Austria)
- 6 October 2011:** Fighting fraud in healthcare and social security How to maximise results? (Krakow, Poland)
- 6-8 October 2011:** 21st Alzheimer Europe Conference (Warsaw, Poland)
- 7 October 2011:** International symposium on health benefits of foods (Prague, Czech Republic)
- 10 October 2011:** World mental Health Day
- 11-12 October 2011:** Policy in Poland and around the Europe: Medical and Economic Disadvantages of Using Alcohol (Poznań, Poland)
- 11-13 October 2011:** Global E-Health Forum: Hamburg 2011: Designing Personalized Healthcare (Hamburg, Germany)
- 12 October 2011:** Stakeholders seminar: The Future of families (Brussels, Belgium)
- 12 October 2011:** EHealth 2020 – What Synergies for Europe? (Brussels, Belgium)
- 17-18 October 2011:** First Annual Convention of the European Platform against Poverty and Social Exclusion (Cracow, Poland)
- 13 October 2011:** eHealth: Innovation, Implementation and Transferability (Maastricht, The Netherlands)
- 13-15 October 2011:** 12th Conference of Health Economics (Lisbon, Portugal)
- 13-15 October 2011:** 21st Alzheimer Europe conference (Warsaw, Poland)
- 16-19 October 2011:** World Alliance for Risk Factor Surveillance (WARFS) Seventh Global Conference (Toronto, Ontario, Canada)
- 17-18 October 2011:** Workshop on Social Experimentation to Develop Innovative Home Care Solutions (Brussels, Belgium)
- 19-21 October 2011:** World Conference on Social Determinants of health (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)
- 20 October 2011:** 7th International Congress on Vascular Dementia (Geneva, Switzerland)
- 20-21 October 2011:** European Mental health Systems (Brussels, Belgium)
- 21 October 2011:** Health Policy Forum (Brussels, Belgium)
- 21 October 2011:** Sense or nonsense of "Human Fragility" in contemporary European society (Brussels, Belgium)
- 21-22 October 2011:** Evolving Challenges in promoting cardiovascular health (Barcelona, Spain)
- 27-28 October 2011:** E-health 2.0 Europe 2011 (Berlin, Germany)

## November 2011

- 2-3 November 2011:** Ageing Globally – Ageing Locally" Planning all Our Futures (Dublin, Ireland)
- 7 November 2011:** AGE Platform Europe – Intergroup on ageing and intergenerational solidarity (Brussels, Belgium)
- 7-11 November 2011:** Qualitative and Quantitative Research methods in Health care and Medicine Use (Copenhagen, Denmark)
- 9-11 November 2011:** 6th World Congress on Tissue Banking (Barcelona, Spain)
- 10-12 November 2011:** Welfare Development and health (Copenhagen Denmark)
- 15 November 2011:** BIO-Europe 2010—16th Annual International Partnering Conference (Munich, Germany)
- 16-17 November 2011:** 2011 International Scientific Conference on EMF and Health (Brussels, Belgium)
- 20-23 November 2011:** 3rd International TEMOS Conference "Healthcare abroad and medical tourism" (Cologne, Germany)
- 23 November 2011:** Diet, Physical Activity and Cardiovascular Disease Prevention in Europe (Brussels, Belgium)
- 23-25 November 2011:** ECDC Annual meeting on antimicrobial resistance and healthcare-

[associated infections](#) (Warsaw, Poland)

**28 November-1st december 2011: [15th Annual Public Health Days](#) (Montreal, Canada)**

**30 November: 2nd December 2011: [Eurochild's Annual Conference 2011](#) (Cardiff, Wales-UK)**

## December 2011

**5 December 2011: [Medicine and surgery in optimising the care of obese patients](#) (Munich, Germany)**

**9 December 2011: [Synergy in prevention and health promotion: individual, community, and environmental approaches](#), (Lisbon, Portugal)**

**15 December 2011: [eHealth and Equity in the Global Health Communities](#) (Brussels, Belgium)**

## January 2012

**18: 19 January 2012: [IT @ Networking Awards 2012: Raise Awareness of the World's Most Innovative Healthcare IT Projects](#) (Brussels, Belgium)**

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

Want to express and share your views on Health equity issues?

Come and join the [Equity Channel Community](#) on the [Equity Channel Website](#)

## Using Health Highlights

**EuroHealthNet seeks to practice sustainable approaches - please do not waste resources by printing this publication unnecessarily, but do forward electronically to colleagues in your organisation, agency or institution.**

Would you like to inform other members about **new publications or events** in your organisation or country? Please send contributions to [a.moret@eurohealthnet.eu](mailto:a.moret@eurohealthnet.eu)

**EU Health Highlights is produced for the internal use of organisations, institutions, authorities and departments interested in health promotion, disease prevention and public health in the EU. It is funded only by fees paid to us.**

If any reader knows of people or bodies who might find it useful to receive Health Highlights, please do not copy it externally beyond your agency without our authorisation, but do send details to us at: [a.moret@eurohealthnet.eu](mailto:a.moret@eurohealthnet.eu)

**We will be pleased to make contact and offer our services, including a free trial period. Your comments and suggestions will also be welcome. Thank you for your help.**

If you wish to **unsubscribe from our Health Highlights**, please [click here](#).



This publication is commissioned by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity (2007-2013).

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.