

## Volume 16, Issue 1/2014 - News

### 2nd Joint European Hospital Conference

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November was a busy month for the EAHM. A week before the congress in Luxembourg members headed to Düsseldorf for the second Joint European Hospital Conference. Jointly organised by the EAHM, the European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE) and the European Association of Hospital Physicians (AEMH), the conference was another great success with informative presentations and inspiring roundtable discussions.

#### Implementing the Directive

Picking up from the last joint conference, the theme was implementing the European Directive on Patients' Rights. Andrzej Rys, Director of Health Systems and Products in the European Commission gave an interesting presentation on the Directive and the progress made so far.

He explained the various provisions of the Directive including patient entitlements, prior authorisation, national contact points (NCP), prices, access, information and prescriptions. Rys stressed the importance of cooperation from Member States, especially in terms of HTA and the EU Reference Networks, which will be finalised in early 2014.

Clearly there are still many issues to resolve. Rys stressed the importance of the Directive and that it is an extremely difficult piece of legislation to implement within the EU. He reminded delegates that the EU is still welcoming opinions and information regarding the Directive.

Next steps include a transposition check of national laws and reflection between the Commission and the NCPs on the functioning of the NCPs. The EU Commission will report regularly on the status of the Directive and transposition will also be monitored by individuals and stakeholders.

After hearing the Commission's perspective, delegates had the opportunity to learn about the practicalities of implementing the Directive and establishing the national contact points from representatives from Sweden, Hungary, Spain, Germany, Portugal and Poland. These presentations often told a different story, highlighting the many obstacles and limitations of the NCPs in practice. It was widely noted that for many countries cross-border healthcare is already a reality. Questions raised included how to define international recognised good medical practice, the issue of continuity of care and whether the Directive will create a new medical tourism market. A lively roundtable followed the first session, highlighting that the Directive will have a profound effect on health systems across Europe. It also illustrated the fact that different countries are at very different stages in implementation and that there is a lot of work still to be done, especially in terms of quality.

#### Innovation Access in Europe's Hospitals

The second session of the conference moved from the Directive to innovation in European hospitals. President of the EAHM, Heinz Kolking opened the session and stressed that innovation is a necessity in terms of patient care. He also warned against innovations being implemented too early without clear mechanisms for financing and evaluation. Regulation is another key issue when talking about innovation.

Serge Bernasconi, CEO of European Medical Technology Industry Association (Eucomed) gave an interesting overview of innovation in medical technology in Europe stating that more than 500,000 medical technologies are currently registered. Medical technologies can have positive financial impacts and contribute to making healthcare more sustainable. For Bernasconi, successful medtech projects focus on the individualised patient and he believes patient expectation can be directly tied to innovation. Bernasconi also warned of over-reliance on HTA, highlighting that there are over 100 HTA agencies in Europe with very little coordination between them. Health Technology Assessment (HTA) can provide recommendations and look into cost-effectiveness but currently, we are not performing HTA with medtech in mind. Hospital-based HTA is the next step, assessing whether technologies bring value to the hospital in terms of quality of care and economic value. Following this presentation, representatives from the UK, France and Italy presented their views on the benefits of innovation in practice.

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