



# EPHA Newsletter

April 2003

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### THE COUNCIL

#### **Accession treaty signed**

The accession treaty was signed on 16 April 2003 at the informal European Council by the current 15 EU Member States and Cyprus, Czech republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia. The 5<sup>th</sup> enlargement of the EU will take place on 1 May 2004, although these government representatives will participate in Council and Parliament activities as observers between now and next May. <http://ue.eu.int/pressData/en/ec/75475.pdf>

#### **Next candidates for accession?**

Bulgaria and Romania are expected to enter the EU in 2007 if they fulfil all the membership criteria. Turkey's candidature will be reviewed at the end of 2004 and Ankara will be able to start accession negotiations if it fulfils the Copenhagen political criteria. On 14 April 2003, the Council asked the Commission to submit its opinion on Croatia's formal application to join, submitted in February 2003. The Commission has also offered the possibility of closer cooperation and potential EU membership to Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, FYROM and Serbia-Montenegro. The plans were contained in the second annual Stabilisation and Association Process report, released on 26 March 2003.

[http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p\\_action.getfile=gf&doc=IP/03/433|0|RAPID&lg=EN&type=PDF](http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.getfile=gf&doc=IP/03/433|0|RAPID&lg=EN&type=PDF)

### THE PARLIAMENT

#### **SARS outbreak and EU competence on health**

On 7 April 2003, MEP Proinsias DE ROSSA (PES, Ireland), urged an EU wide response to the recent outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). He also called for the EU to be given similar powers for the protection in human health as it has for the protection of animal health.

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+DN-20030407-1+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&L=EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N#SECTION4>

#### **EP Approves Pet Passport Regulation**

On 10 April 2003 the EP approved the draft Regulation on pet passports, meaning that the measure will soon become EU law. The Regulation applies to non-commercial movements of cats, dogs and ferrets. <http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?L=EN&OBJID=11005&LEVEL=4&MODE=SIP&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N>

#### **European Patent Office confirms revocation of baby blood patent**

The European Patent Office (EPO) confirmed on 8 April 2003 its decision made in 1999 to revoke all the PharmaStem (formerly Biocyte) patent claims on collecting, freezing and using blood from foetuses and umbilical cords for transplants and medical and therapeutic treatments.

<http://www.greens-efa.org/en/press/detail.php?id=688&lg=en>

#### **MEPs vote to ban stem cell research**

MEPs voted on 10 April 2003 against the practice of creating human embryos for medical research purposes, the first major step towards an EU-wide ban. The practice of so-called 'therapeutic cloning', banned in some EU countries but legal in the UK, sees embryos created in order for their stem-cells (or master cells) to be used for medical research. Following the plenary vote, the Industry Committee organised a hearing of experts on the wider aspects of research involving embryonic stem cells, the debate focused on when human life starts and the moral and legal status of the human embryo.

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+DN-20030410-1+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=S>

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?PUBREF=-//EP//TEXT+PRESS+NR-20030425-1+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&LEVEL=2&NAV=S>

#### **Debate on free movement in the EU**

On 28/29 April 2003 the EP Committee on Employment and Social Affairs of the European Parliament discussed the report by Jean Lambert MEP (Greens/EFA, UK) on freedom of movement

of European citizens. MEP Herman Schmid, (European United Left/Nordic Green Left, SE) raised the concern that more flexible rules could lead to health tourism which could not be controlled or stopped. Professor Yves Jorens from the University of Ghent, on the other hand, stated that there is no need to be afraid of health tourism. If there is a better health system in another country, why not allow people to cross the border? Mr Jorens asked MEPs. Rapporteur Jean Lambert pointed out that Commission and Council do not want to harmonise Member States' social security systems, but new regulations are needed for better co-ordination. If EU citizens cross the border, they automatically enter another country's health system. One of the main points of the agenda was the freedom of movement of patients, following recent rulings from the European Court of Justice (ECJ). The conclusions of the debate were that a co-ordination of the Health Care systems of the Member States was needed and that greater policy initiatives at EU level is preferable to allowing the ECJ to create de-facto policy. The Commission and Council will continue to work on the co-ordination of social security system regulations and it will be discussed again in June.

Report by Jean Lambert MEP <http://www.europarl.eu.int/meetdocs/committees/empl/20030429/479921en.pdf>

More info from [http://www.europarl.eu.int/press/index\\_public\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/press/index_public_en.htm)

### **Dangerous substances document approved**

On 9 April 2003 the EP approved without amendments the Common Position of the Council on restrictions on the marketing and use of certain dangerous substances and preparations (substances classified as carcinogens, mutagens or substances toxic to reproduction - c/m/r).

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?L=EN&OBJID=11003&LEVEL=3&MODE=SIP&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N>

### **Reform of the UN Conventions on drugs - rejected**

Plans to mandate the European Council to reform the UN Conventions on drugs were rejected at the 8 April 2003 plenary of the European Parliament. Rapporteur MEP Kathalijne Maria Buitenweg (Greens/EFA, Netherlands), was so dissatisfied by the amendments made by the EPP-ED and EDD political groups to her report of 24 March 2003 that she voted against her own report. MEPs decided to maintain support for the current UN Conventions and to call for full implementation by the Member States of the Conventions. MEPs voted also that prevention should be a central goal for the EU drugs strategy instead of reducing drug use.

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?L=EN&OBJID=10935&LEVEL=3&MODE=SIP&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N>

### **Sweeteners in the spotlight**

On 10 April 2003 the EP adopted a resolution calling on the Commission to tighten proposed restrictions on cyclamates in soft drinks. The resolution, adopted by 440 votes to 20, with 13 abstentions, extends the new limit to milk-based drinks in addition to water-based drinks. Furthermore the EP accepted the Commission's proposal to authorise two new sweeteners, *sucralose* and *aspartame-acesulfame* salt but with a review of their use within three years and a re-examination of the use of two other sweeteners, *aspartame* and *stevia*, in particular, proposals to improve the labelling of products containing aspartame.

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?L=EN&OBJID=10814&LEVEL=3&MODE=SIP&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N>

### **Call to phase out phosphates in detergents**

10 April 2003, the EP amended and tightened up the Commission's text of a Regulation on detergents by including stricter conditions on derogations from biodegradability rules and clearer labelling for consumers. The MEPs also took a stand on phosphates by urging the Commission to table a new legislative proposal specifically to phase out phosphates or restrict them to specific applications, three years after the Regulation takes effect. The Parliament supported the rapporteur's view (Mauro NOBILIA UEN, Italy) that too much cryptic information on labels can lead to confusion which contradicts the reason for such label information. MEPs also adopted an amendment saying that if a detergent product carries any claim to be 'green' but not the European Eco-label, then it must clearly indicate which of the Eco-label criteria it does not fulfil. This must be indicated on the packaging next to and in same letter size as the 'green' claim (am 48).

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?L=EN&OBJID=11013&LEVEL=3&MODE=SIP&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N>

## THE COMMISSION

### Who do Europeans trust to give them health information?

Health professionals, such as doctors and pharmacists, are still by far the most important source of health information for Europeans and the traditional media - television, newspapers, magazines - still outperform the internet. A Eurobarometer survey published by the European Commission showed that medical and health organisations achieve the highest trust rating on health issues (84%), while businesses and political parties receive the lowest (16% and 11% respectively). Across the EU, nearly one in four Europeans (23%) use the internet to get health information. There is considerable variation across Europe: in Denmark and the Netherlands around 40% of people use the internet for health information, while in Greece, Spain, Portugal and France usage is at 15% or less.

[http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p\\_action.gettxt=qt&doc=IP/03/550|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=](http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=IP/03/550|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=)

### Avian flu outbreak in the EU

EU veterinary experts have recommended an extension on the restrictions on movement of poultry and eggs from Belgium and the Netherlands throughout the Union and beyond. The measures restricting export of live poultry, hatching and fresh eggs to other EU or third countries has been extended until 12 May 2003. A total of 18 million birds have been culled. The disease rarely affects other animals or humans, but can cause conjunctivitis in people.

[http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p\\_action.gettxt=qt&doc=IP/03/564|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=](http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=IP/03/564|0|RAPID&lg=EN&display=)

### Annual analysis of pesticides in fruit and vegetables

Pesticide levels in fruit and vegetables across the EU remain constant. The European Commission annual survey published on 22 April 2003 notes that 59 % of samples have no detectable residue, but 37 % contained traces of pesticides at or below the Maximum Residue Level (MRL) and 3.7 % exceeded the MRL. However, one trend causes concern, 18 % of the samples showed more than one pesticide present. This is an increase from previous years. The products tested were apples, grapes, tomatoes, strawberries and lettuce. Another critical issue is that only 11 of the 18 participating states (EU+EFTA) had implemented the necessary accreditation process for testing laboratories. This means that in situations where the government needs to take action because MRLs have been exceeded, there is no legal clarity about the test results.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/inspections/fnaoi/reports/annual\\_eu/exp\\_summary2001\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/food/fs/inspections/fnaoi/reports/annual_eu/exp_summary2001_en.pdf)

### Rise in drug use in CEE

While EU-15 Member State drug consumption has stayed relatively stable, consumption of illicit drugs has seen a sharp increase in the countries now joining the Union. These are the findings of a report issued by the EU's drugs agency, EMCDDA. The agency notes that drug use has increasingly come to be seen as a leisure activity in these countries and the consumption levels have risen steadily in line with alcohol and tobacco use. Of particular concern is drugs in youth culture and the associated numbers of young people experimenting with drugs. Heroin has seen the biggest increase in consumption, replacing locally produced drugs, while cannabis is most widely used. The EMCDDA warns that the EU must take more concerted action to reverse this trend by encouraging harm reduction, prevention and treatment, rather than purely 'law-and-order' measures. Their report calls for EU-15 states to provide more support to the CEEC. <http://www.emcdda.org/data/docs/45en.pdf>

### Prodi calls on US to shift position on cheap drugs

Speaking in Brussels on 28 April 2003, Commission President Romano Prodi, asked the United States for a "positive signal" to help break the deadlock in WTO negotiations designed to improve developing countries' access to cheap medicines. The President told a gathering of business leaders, NGOs and politicians that the EU is "waiting for a positive signal" from Washington to end the stalemate in key WTO negotiations.

[http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p\\_action.gettxt=qt&doc=SPEECH/03/215|0|RAPID&lg=EN](http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=SPEECH/03/215|0|RAPID&lg=EN)

### Precautionary Principle and EMF

Proceedings of the conference on "Application of the Precautionary Principle to Electromagnetic Fields (EMF)" which was held in Luxembourg, on 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> February 2003 are now available.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph\\_determinants/environment/EMF/conf\\_february\\_2003\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/health/ph_determinants/environment/EMF/conf_february_2003_en.htm)

## **12 EU countries not implementing GMO laws**

The EU Commission is preparing to take legal action over poor implementation of environmental laws on genetically modified organisms (GMO). It has taken the second step in the procedure to force 12 Member States to comply with EU laws covering the release of GMOs into the environment.

[http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p\\_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/528|0|RAPID&lg=EN](http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/528|0|RAPID&lg=EN);

## **European Commission amends proposed Herbal Medicines Directive**

On 9 April 2003 the Commission adopted a new position on this Directive, extending the simplified registration procedure to medicinal products containing non-herbal ingredients. The European Parliament's first reading and vote on Commission's original proposal was finalised in November 2002 and the new Commission position takes account of some of the Parliament's 24 amendments. The changes are;

- broadened responsibilities of the new Committee for Herbal Medicinal Products of the European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products (EMA) to comprise arbitration procedures in case of disagreements between Member States;
- extended simplified registration procedure to include medicinal products containing non-herbal ingredients (such as vitamins and minerals);
- required labels and leaflets to state that the safety and efficacy of the product are based on information on the long-term traditional use and not regular scientific data.

The European Council is expected to come to a common position on this proposal in June 2003.

[http://pharmacos.eudra.org/F2/pharmacos/docs/Doc2003/COMM\\_PDF\\_COM\\_2003\\_0161\\_F\\_EN.pdf](http://pharmacos.eudra.org/F2/pharmacos/docs/Doc2003/COMM_PDF_COM_2003_0161_F_EN.pdf)

## **eHealth Ministerial Conference : EPHA can send 5 delegates**

The Commission, in collaboration with the Greek Presidency is organising a high level conference on eHealth on the 22nd and 23rd May 2003 in Brussels. This event will include a two-day exhibition of 30 eHealth applications and an award ceremony for the first eEurope Awards. The conference is aimed at ministers and senior representatives of stakeholder groups such as professional and user organisations, while developers along with current users of eHealth applications will participate in the exhibition. EPHA can nominate 5 delegates to the invitation-only conference, but the names must be sent to the Commission as soon as possible. No travel costs are provided. If you would like to participate, please send an email to [tamsin@epha.org](mailto:tamsin@epha.org)

[http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/eeurope/ehealth/conference/2003/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/ehealth/conference/2003/index_en.htm)

## **Overview of social protection in the candidate countries**

Following a Conference on the modernisation of social protection systems in the candidate countries in December 2002, the European Commission has released on its website full reports on the situation per country. The 13 reports are available in English at:

[http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/soc-prot/social/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/soc-prot/social/index_en.htm)

## **Water aid package in pipeline for poor countries**

The European Commission adopted a plan on 23 April 2003 for creating an EU Water Fund worth one billion euros. The Fund is designed to help developing countries provide clean water for their citizens and help reach a key international development goal.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/commissioners/prodi/pdf/water\\_paper\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/commissioners/prodi/pdf/water_paper_en.pdf)

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/commissioners/prodi/pdf/water\\_letter\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/commissioners/prodi/pdf/water_letter_en.pdf)

## **THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION**

### **Convention timetable and referendum**

The Convention must finish its work by June 2003, the planned endpoint. The many calls for an extension of the Convention's work were ignored by Member States at the Athens summit. 64 Convention members, representing parliaments and governments from 25 countries, have called for the ratification of the future EU Constitutional Treaty via a referendum. On March 31 2003 they tabled a proposal for a referendum to be held in June 2004 on the same day as European Parliament elections. A referendum would be important because it provides the voice of the European citizens on the Constitutional Treaty. It would be the third and final step for the new Constitution of Europe: Convention, ICG and Referendum. <http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/03/cv00/cv00658en03.pdf>

## Thursday 24 and Friday 25 April: convention plenary

At the beginning of the Plenary session the Praesidium presented the new draft articles on the Institutional reform, the External Relations (Title VIII, Part I) and the CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy) and Defence (articles 29 and 30). These articles will be debated in the next Plenary (15th and 16th May), and are considered as the most controversial ones.

The plenary debate was overshadowed by the general discontent with Mr Giscard d'Estaing's controversial proposals on the reform of the Institutions. His document has a strong intergovernmental flavour and was leaked to the press before being presented to the Convention. This provoked strong criticism from all sources. The Praesidium met on Wednesday 23 April 2003 in an intense debate which focused on Mr Giscard's proposals, trying to water them down for Thursday 24 April 2003 Plenary session. Agenda: <http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/03/cv00/cv00686en03.pdf>

## Optimism for public health in the treaty

On 15 April 2003, Commissioner David Byrne delivered a speech in the Institute of Politics at John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University Cambridge (US), where he said: "I am pressing for increased competencies at EU level to cope with common health threats such as communicable diseases, bio terrorism and other public health concerns that do not respect national frontiers. My reasoning for 'more Brussels' in this area is supported by all Health Ministers".

[http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cqi/guesten.ksh?p\\_action.gettxt=qt&doc=SPEECH/03/2010|RAPID&lg=EN&display=](http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cqi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=SPEECH/03/2010|RAPID&lg=EN&display=)

## EUROPEAN COURT RULINGS

### All time spent by a doctor on call in a hospital constitutes working time

On 8 April 2003 the Advocate-General released his Opinion in Case C-151/02 regarding working time of doctors on call in a hospital. <http://www.curia.eu.int/en/actu/communiqués/index.htm>

## EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

### Draft Opinion on Healthcare

The Employment, Social Affairs and Citizenship on Healthcare has prepared a preliminary draft Opinion on access, quality and the financial viability of healthcare systems in EU Member States. This is an own-initiative opinion and it was discussed on 25 April 2003, with adoption foreseen for July 2003. [http://www.esc.eu.int/scripts/travaux\\_inprogress.asp?nr=140&section=Soc&langcode=en](http://www.esc.eu.int/scripts/travaux_inprogress.asp?nr=140&section=Soc&langcode=en)

## EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS CALENDAR

*In this section, you will find not only the events organised by the EU institutions (Council of Minister meetings, European Parliament plenary sessions and committee meetings, Commission meetings) but also conferences and seminars organised by EU institutions. Information also at [www.epha.org](http://www.epha.org)*

### The Council of Ministers (<http://ue.eu.int/en/summ.htm>)

Informal General Affairs Council, 2-5 May 2003  
Education, Youth & Culture Council, 5-6 May 2003  
Informal Environment Council, 5 May 2003  
Justice and Home Affairs Council, 8 May 2003  
Informal Agriculture Council, 12-13 May, 2003  
Internal Market, Industry and Research Council, 12-13 May 2003  
Economic & Financial Affairs Council, 13 May 2003  
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council, 14 May 2003  
General Affairs and External Relations Council, 19-20 May 2003  
Internal Market, Industry and Research Council, 20 May 2003  
Informal Culture Council, 24 May 2003  
Agriculture & Fisheries Council, 26-27 May 2003

## **European Union enlargement, health and health care - prospects and challenges**

15 - 17 May 2003. Athens, Greece

Organised in the context of the EU Greek Presidency, under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and Welfare of Greece, in collaboration with the National School of Public Health of Greece and the European Commission's Directorate General for Health and Consumer Protection.

E-mail: [nsph-kyr@ath.forthnet.gr](mailto:nsph-kyr@ath.forthnet.gr), Internet: <http://www.nsph.gr/oikonomika>

### **The European Parliament**

#### **Plenary sessions**

1- 4 September 2003, Strasbourg

22-25 September 2003, Strasbourg

8-9 October 2003, Brussels

20-23 October 2003, Strasbourg

5-6 November 2003, Brussels

17-20 November 2003, Strasbourg

3-4 December 2003, Brussels

15-18 December 2003, Strasbourg

Info: [http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default_en.htm)

#### **Meeting of the European Parliament's Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy, Brussels, Belgium**

The dates of meetings from September onwards will be available soon at the below-mentioned website. Contact: [http://www.europarl.eu.int/committees/envi\\_home.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/committees/envi_home.htm)

### **The Convention**

MAY

08, Presidium meeting

14, Presidium meeting

15-16 Convention plenary session

22, Presidium meeting

28, Presidium meeting

30-31, Convention plenary session

JUNE

04, PRESIDIUM MEETING

05-06 Convention plenary session

11, Presidium meeting

12-13, Convention plenary meeting

**20-21, European Council, Thessaloniki, Greece**

## **EPHA SECRETARIAT NEWS**

### **Children's health in Europe: Tracking environmental threats**

On World Health Day, 7<sup>th</sup> April 2003, EPHA launched a publication '*Children's health in Europe: Tackling environmental threats*', which looks at some of the main challenges to children's health linked to the environment. Over 40% of the global burden of disease attributed to environmental risk factors falls on children under five years of age, who account for only 10% of the world population.

Five priority health challenges included are:

- Asthma and allergies, which are on the rise in western Europe
- Injuries -- the bigger killer of children age 1-14 across Europe
- Cancer
- Water and food-borne diseases -- a major cause of diarrhoeal disease in Europe, and a cause of infant death in the poorer regions in Europe and globally
- Neurodevelopmental disorders, which are irreversible, and are growing in some areas of Europe

*EPHA Newsletter April 2003*

The publication and a press release that summarises some of the main findings can be downloaded at [www.epha.org](http://www.epha.org) or a copy paper may be requested from the EPHA secretariat ([carole@epha.org](mailto:carole@epha.org)). The new booklet was launched in Oslo together with Commission Wallstom and the World Health Organisation which also announced a campaign on children's health and environment. [http://www.euro.who.int/mediacentre/PR/2003/20030404\\_1](http://www.euro.who.int/mediacentre/PR/2003/20030404_1)  
The European Commission also endorsed the theme of this year's World Health Day, which is devoted to "Shape the future of Life: Healthy Environments for Children"  
[http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p\\_action.gettxt=qt&doc=IP/03/49710|RAPID&lg=EN&display=](http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=qt&doc=IP/03/49710|RAPID&lg=EN&display=)

### **Convention final steps**

EPHA has been following the latest developments in the Convention for the Future of Europe sending regular emails to our members and other interested representatives of other organisations as well as European Institutions. EPHA activity is now focused on the Convention final steps:

- Before the 15 May: EPHA will contact the members of the Praesidium to remind them of the importance of including public health in their draft text as an objective of the Union in article 3 and a shared competence in article 12. As well as advocating for a stronger legal bases of public health in article 152 of the EC Treaty.
- From 19 May until 30/31 May: EPHA will contact the members of the Convention to encourage them to support/amend the text presented by the Praesidium in order to include our demands.
- 2/3 June: EPHA will press the Praesidium to take into account all the support/amendments from the Convention members.

For more info: [lara@epha.org](mailto:lara@epha.org)

The joint OSI/EPHA seminar '*Effective Advocacy for health in Europe*' was organised in Riga, Latvia from 3-5 April 2003. Attended by about 100 participants, it covered EU institutions and working methods, NGO core skills such as alliance building, media relations and partnerships and interactive workshops on issues such as AIDS, sexual and reproductive rights. All of the presentations and background material are available online at <http://health.osf.lt/en/about/>. A full report on the seminar will be sent to EPHA members shortly.

EPHA Policy Director Genon Jensen attended the Environment and Health Committee (EHC) meeting in Copenhagen from 28-30 April 2003. The EHC is preparing for the June 2004 Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health to be held in Budapest. Genon provided an overview of NGO preparations for the conference and called for adequate resources (financial and structural) to be pledged by governments in order for a well planned NGO event to accompany the Budapest conference. The newly formed Epha Environment Network (EEN) will be a key platform in generating interest amongst civil society for Budapest as well as channelling the political priorities for action.

### **Unwelcome chemical contaminants in our home**

On 30 April 2003, EPHA participated in a press conference in Brussels to launch a report called 'Consuming Chemicals' produced by Greenpeace International. The research indicated considerable chemical contamination in house dust taken from homes primarily in the UK but also in other European countries. EPHA General Secretary Tamsin Rose spoke to highlight the negative health impact of the 5 families of chemicals identified, including endocrine disruptors and carcinogens. The data indicated that people are continuously exposed to these chemicals from everyday consumer products found in most homes. The report is timed to coincide with the opening of a public consultation on the first revision of the EU Chemicals Directives in 30 years. DG Environment will publish the draft legislation for comments for 5 weeks beginning in early May 2004. For a copy of the report, background data and advocacy options such as sending an email to Commission President Prodi, see [http://www.greenpeace.org/news/details?item\\_id=227907](http://www.greenpeace.org/news/details?item_id=227907)

The EPHA Secretariat has been requested by the International Aids Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) to act as the logistics organiser for a Symposium to be organised in the European Parliament on 17 June 2003. The event will bring together Parliamentarians, journalists, experts and advocates to raise awareness about the urgency of the need for an AIDS vaccine and to examine the potential contribution of European research and development.

## EPHA WORKING GROUP NEWS

### Food & Nutrition Working Group

The group was informed about the recent publication by the Swedish National Institute of Public Health of an analysis of the public health impact of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). It provides recommendations on fruit and vegetables, dairy fats, tobacco subsidies and the wine regime.

[http://www.fhi.se/shop/material\\_pdf/eu\\_inlaga.pdf](http://www.fhi.se/shop/material_pdf/eu_inlaga.pdf)

Also highlighted an article on the Greek Presidency website called "Food safety, environmental protection and the reform of the CAP: a new agricultural model for Europe?" by Allan Buckwell, Professor, Chairman, Policy Group of the European Landowners Organisation

<http://www.eu2003.gr/en/articles/2003/4/4/2431/>

### Environment & Health working group

The group received the working papers for the WHO European Environment and Health Committee (EEHC) meeting that took place on 28-29 April in Copenhagen. The documents are available from Genon Jensen, EPHA Policy Director, upon request. Email: [genon@epha.org](mailto:genon@epha.org)

### EPHA Policy Coordination Group

The latest meeting took place on Wednesday 30 April. The agenda, together with the minutes of the meeting of 5 March, was sent prior to the meeting.

Please contact Carole Défossé, EPHA Office Manager, at [carole@epha.org](mailto:carole@epha.org) for further information.

*Note: For members who would like to become a member of one or several working group(s) but are not yet in the email list, please send an email to Carole Défossé, our Office Manager at [carole@epha.org](mailto:carole@epha.org).*

## MEMBER NEWS

### Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME)

The CPME held its Board Meeting on the 29th March 2003, and issued the following policy documents on 9th April 2003:

- CPME Resolution on the publication of "Tobacco Under the Microscope - The Doctors' Manifesto for Global Tobacco Control"
- Drinking water
- Noise pollution and environmental action plan
- Plan to combat drug
- Statement on the legislative process for the adoption of amendments of the Community Code on medicinal products for human use as regards traditional herbal medicine products
- Free movement of patients: when is a treatment sufficiently tried and tested - How to decide?
- CPME statement on equality in medical education
- Policy statement on the CPME on the Commission proposal for a directive of the EP and the Council on setting standards of quality and safety for the donation, procurement, testing, processing storage and distribution of human tissues and cells.

Email [cpme@euronet.be](mailto:cpme@euronet.be) or internet <http://www.cpme.be/policies.htm>

### IPPF Europe Appoints New Regional Director

IPPF announced the appointment of Vicky Claeys as the new Regional Director of the European Network of IPPF. She replaces Lyn Thomas who now serves as the Deputy Director-General of the Federation. She was selected by a panel composed of senior regional volunteers and central office staff.

IPPF's news release states that for the past several years Vicky has been advocacy manager of the European Network, handling among other things the complex but close relationship with the European Commission in Brussels, as well as IPPF's advocacy vis-à-vis European governments and

parliamentarians. Prior to that, she served as Executive Director of the Flemish FPA for several years. Vicky brings a combination of deep knowledge of our field, strong advocacy skills, enthusiasm, diligence, and long-term commitment to our issues. <http://www.ippf.org/>

### **Stop AIDS Alliance launch**

The Stop AIDS Alliance, an initiative of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, UK, and Stop AIDS Now, Netherlands, was launched at the European Parliament on 23rd of April 2003. The launch followed a well-attended roundtable on the Challenges of Implementing Highly Active Anti-retroviral Therapy in Resource Poor Settings. The Stop AIDS Alliance aims to strengthen EU policy and programming on HIV/AIDS. More info on Stop AIDS Alliance: [wkamau@stopaidsalliance.org](mailto:wkamau@stopaidsalliance.org)

## **OTHER ITEMS**

### **News**

#### **Chocolate marketing campaign to Uk school children**

The chocolate manufacturer Cadbury is launching a £9m campaign to encourage children to buy 160m chocolate bars, containing nearly 2m kg of fat, to trade in for "free" sports equipment for their schools. The initiative is supported by the UK government because 'it will help to tackle obesity'.

The Guardian newspaper : <http://education.guardian.co.uk/schools/story/0,5500,945533,00.html>

#### **Future of Nuclear Energy in the EU and Candidate Countries**

Members of the European Convention are being called upon to reject proposals that would effectively introduce in a new EU constitution a primary legal requirement to promote nuclear power. In a letter sent to all Convention members, Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, WWF, the European Environment Bureau and over 100 other organisations have urged support instead for earlier proposals that would require the abolition of the Euratom treaty commitments.

[http://www.foeeurope.org/press/2003/MJ\\_02\\_April\\_EU\\_convention.htm](http://www.foeeurope.org/press/2003/MJ_02_April_EU_convention.htm)

Praesidium's approach: <http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/03/cv00/cv00621en03.pdf>

Contribution by the Greens/EFA <http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/03/cv00/cv00563en03.pdf>

The hot debate over whether Eastern European countries should keep their nuclear power – once they become full members of the EU – or wind down their current reactors, has shifted gear. According to the French daily Le Monde, Eastern European countries would prefer to continue using nuclear energy despite safety warnings from the West. A specific example is Lithuania which could build a new reactor in addition to the Ignalina nuclear plant that the EU has requested be shut down.

<http://www.euobserver.com/index.phtml?aid=11044>

<http://www.lemonde.fr/article/0,5987,3210-318205-00.html>

#### **Eucomed calls for better patient access to innovative technologies**

On 11 April 2003, 6th World Parkinson's Day, Eucomed, the European Medical Technology Industry Association, called upon EU decision-makers to encourage and actively promote equitable and timely patient and clinician access to existing medical technologies for Parkinson's Disease, and more research into new therapies to treat this debilitating condition. Parkinson's disease is the fourth most frequent disorder of the nervous system, after epilepsy, cerebrovascular disease and Alzheimer's disease. Because of the ageing populations (in Europe, by 2020, there will be 40% more people aged 75 and above than in 1990) Parkinson's disease will undoubtedly become a major public health issue in the coming years. <http://www.eucomed.be/docs/Press%20release%2012.03%20Parkinson%27s%20day.pdf>

#### **Health equity information**

The Global Health Watch project from the Epidemiology Unit of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine has published "Organisations, people, networks and resources of relevance to health equity work in low and middle income countries". It is an information resource detailing organisations, people, networks and resources relevant to work on health inequities, covering those with a strong interest in health inequities, as well as outlining the health equity interest of some of the large international and funding organisations. <http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/eu/projectinfo/inforesourcemoser.htm>

### **New Web-Based “Commonwealth Forum on Globalization and Health”**

Ronald Labonte, Professor, Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina, and member of the Canadian Coalition for Global Health Research, is the inaugural ‘host’ of a new web-based Commonwealth Forum on globalization and health sponsored by the Commonwealth Secretariat. Launched in April 2003, the Commonwealth Forum consists of a number of articles and excerpts on various facets of globalization and health, available directly from the Forum’s web-site (<http://www.ukglobalhealth.org/>) or through links to other URLs. Initial discussion questions are also suggested. Participants are encouraged to suggest new readings for future postings. New materials will be added on a monthly basis. To visit and/or participate in this Forum, go to the UK Partnership for Global Health web-site (<http://www.ukglobalhealth.org/>) and click on the heading “Commonwealth Forum” on the left-hand list.

### **Phillip Morris Appeal Bond Is Cut in Half**

A judge in Illinois, USA on 15 April 2003 halved the amount that Philip Morris must deposit while it appeals a recent court judgement. The decision averts a potential bankruptcy filing by the company and ensures that it can make a scheduled payment to state administrations. The close a tumultuous chapter for the company, investors and state officials that began in March when Judge Byron awarded \$12 billion in compensatory and punitive damages and lawyers’ fees against Philip Morris. The ruling came in a case in which Judge Byron found the company liable for failing to inform consumers that its “light” cigarettes were no less harmful to health than full-tar cigarettes. <http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/15/business/15TOBA.html?ex=1051411227&ei=1&en=891b8c433c5ba11c>

### **Partner search for projects on ageing issues**

The AGE (European Older People’s Platform) has launched a partner search for different projects and activities.

The Slovene Philanthropy Association

- Project: developing the information system on the needs of older people, who need home assistance. Contact: Mateja Kozuh, head of Health promotion unit, Slovene Philanthropy at [15193717@users.siol.net](mailto:15193717@users.siol.net)

Grands-Parrains

- Project: developing, at European level, foster parenting between older persons and children. Contact: [grandsparraains@chez.com](mailto:grandsparraains@chez.com); internet [www.chez.com/grandsparraains](http://www.chez.com/grandsparraains)

Voice of Older People project

- Project: Experience sharing on local level representativity of older people, Contact: Ann Marie Crosse, NWHB [AnnMarie.Crosse@nwhb.ie](mailto:AnnMarie.Crosse@nwhb.ie)

AZK (Arbeitnehmer-Zentrum Köningswinter)

- Project: International Meeting of older people from Belgium, France, The Netherlands and Germany, Contact: Mr Thomas HUGO [azk.hugo@t-online.de](mailto:azk.hugo@t-online.de) Tel: +49.22.23/73-168

Service Europe Ainés (SEA) / FIPEC / AGE

- Project: Lifelong Learning activities, Contact: Mrs Isabelle Boniver (SEA): [isabelleboniver@hotmail.com](mailto:isabelleboniver@hotmail.com) or AGE secretariat: [info@age-platform.org](mailto:info@age-platform.org)

### **World NGO Forum on Ageing**

The report of the World NGO Forum on Ageing has been finished. The Forum took place in Madrid from 5 to 9 April 2002 in parallel to the UN World Assembly on Ageing. The report (both in English and Spanish) is a useful tool which provides the list of activities carried out as well as the list of participants in the Forum, and information on the preparatory process. It also provides brief notes on the outcomes of the many workshops. Reports are available from the Organisation Committee members and information is still available on the Forum website at:

<http://www.forumageing.org/english/information/information.htm>

### **Towards Democratic and Responsible Regulation**

The Ethic, Science and Technology Commission (Québec/Canada) has published, last February, its very first Opinion Statement: The Ethical Issues of Genetic Databases: Towards Democratic and Responsible Regulation. <http://www.ethique.gouv.qc.ca/fr/ftp/AvisBanquesGen.pdf>

### **US orders companies to examine effects of chemicals**

US scientists and regulators are raising concerns about the potential health and environmental effects of an important family of industrial chemicals. Those concerns were highlighted on 15 April

2003 when the US Environment Protection Agency announced it was forcing the chemical industry to do further research on perfluorooctanoic acid, or PFOA, one member of that family. The broader group of chemicals, known as perfluorinated acids, is widely present in the environment and can be identified in the bodies of almost all Americans. No human health effects have been registered yet but E.P.A. officials' concerns were raised by recent toxicological data from animals.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/04/15/science/15EPA.html?ex=1051412229&ei=1&en=c9af2de10f5390fd>

### **Hair dyes and cancer**

More people are using permanent hair dyes and using them more frequently. This has become a serious cause of concern for BEUC and its members, because an American study reviewed by the SCCPNFP (Scientific Committee on Cosmetic Products and Non Food Products), reports and increased risk of bladder cancer for regular users of hair dye. The problem is that much remains to be done to assess the risk fully and to advise consumers on what they should do to avoid or reduce this risk. The Scientific Committee has been urging the Commission to take action in relation to hair dyes. In order to assess the safety and evaluate the potential risks of using hair dyes, the Commission must access all data and complete the evaluation of all dying products on the market, within a period of two years. The cosmetic industry still has not provided these data.

<http://212.3.246.142/1/NGMFMMJBLCKMPIIOHMPEEPJOPDB69DB3GY9DW3571KM/BEUC/docs/DLS/2003-00741-01-E.pdf>

### **BEUC looking for a policy assistant on health and safety issues**

BEUC is looking for a policy assistant to work on health and safety issues relevant to consumers.

More info: [environment@beuc.org](mailto:environment@beuc.org) (date of advert, 16 April 2003)

### **Nestlé dismisses small shareholders as unimportant**

On 3 April 2003, Nestlé held its Annual General Meeting of shareholders in Switzerland. Concerns about Nestlé's impact on infant health, the environment, coffee growers and its own staff were raised by shareholders. The Chair told one shareholder (Baby Milk Action's Policy Director, Patti Rundall OBE): "I think its inappropriate that small shareholders try to monopolise the meetings of this sort". Campaigners are planning a 'big noise to wake up Nestle' to take place nation-wide on 10<sup>th</sup> May. The annual demonstration at Nestlé (UK) HQ will take place in Croydon on 17 May 2003. The events are linked to National Breastfeeding Week.

<http://www.babymilkaction.org/>

<http://www.babymilkaction.org/press/press04april03.html>

<http://www.babymilkaction.org/action/bignoise03.html>

### **One third of cancer cases could be prevented through government action, says WHO**

According to a new publication by the World Health Organisation (WHO), cancer rates could be significantly reduced by stemming tobacco use and improving diet and physical activity. The EU addresses these factors in the framework of its Community Action Programme for Public Health

The WHO's World Cancer Report predicts the number of cancer cases will increase globally from 10 million in 2000 to 15 million by 2020. The sharp rise is a result of ageing populations, the prevalence of smoking and the adoption of unhealthy lifestyle. The highest percentage increase in cancer cases will affect Eastern Europe, where a 200 per cent rise is projected for 2020. In Western Europe, the increase will be 25 per cent, while in Southern Europe, the number of cancer patients is expected to grow by 18 per cent. The only region worldwide where a decrease in cancer occurrences is forecast is Northern Europe, where the number of cancer patients is projected to drop by 50 per cent. Among the different types of cancer, lung, liver, stomach, esophageal and bladder cancer affect males primarily, while most women die from breast cancer. On a more positive note, the WHO report states that a third of the cancer cases could be prevented if governments took action to reduce tobacco consumption, promote a healthy lifestyle and diet, as well conducting regular screening for early detection. <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/releases/2003/pr27/en/>

### **Publications**

#### **Your social security rights when moving within the European Union - Update 2002.**

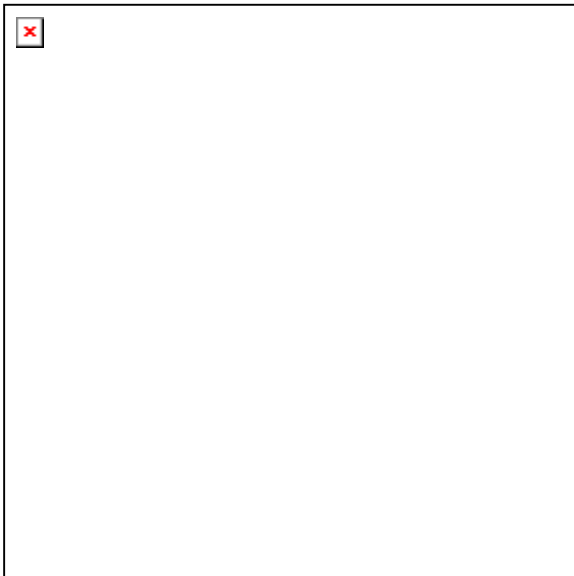
Guide published by the European Commission's DG Employment and Social Services. It gives a brief description of the organisation and functioning of the social-security systems of each EU country and EFTA (Norway, Lichtenstein and Iceland) countries. It also indicates the conditions under which

people are entitled to the various kinds of benefits and addresses the necessary formalities to be complied with. It also provides useful contact details for each EU and EFTA countries.

Info: Office of Official Publications of the European Communities Luxembourg.

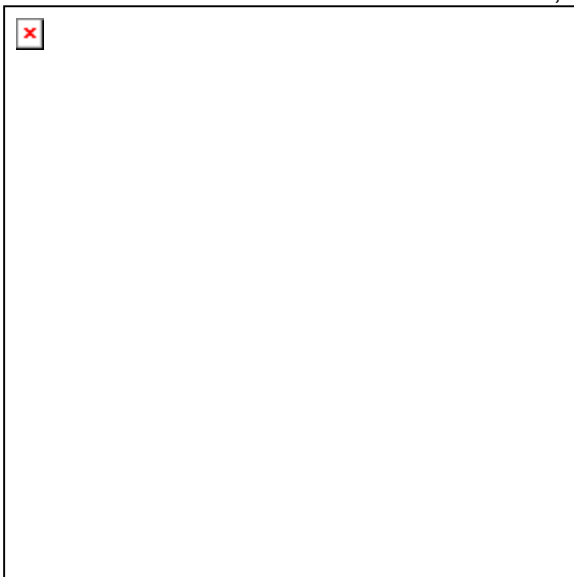
Tel: +352 29 29 42455 Fax: +352 2929 42758

E-mail: [info.info@opoce.cec.be](mailto:info.info@opoce.cec.be) Internet: <http://eur-op.eu.int>



#### **Patient information - What's the prognosis?**

Policy report published by Consumers' Association (UK). The report aims to identify what information patients - and other - seek about medicines, therapies and illness and to make practical recommendations for addressing current gaps and deficiencies in the provision of patient information. Info: Consumers' Association, website: <http://www.which.net/>



#### **Whose development agenda? - an analysis of the European Union's GATS requests of developing countries**

Edited by Clare Joy and Peter Hardstaff on behalf of World Development Movement (WDM). The report is part of WDM's ongoing campaign to change the rules of international trade to benefit the poor and the communities in which they live, rather than benefiting the multinational companies of the rich, industrialised North. Info: World Development Movement, website: <http://www.wdm.org.uk>

#### **World Cancer Report - WHO**

International Agency for Research on Cancer

Edited by B.W. Stewart and P. Kleihues

<http://bookorders.who.int>

### **Conference Report: Education and Health in Partnership**

"A European Conference on Linking Education with the Promotion of Health in Schools", Egmond aan Zee, the Netherlands, 25-27 September 2002. The conference focussed on partnership between education and health in political and professional agendas. Info: [dri@who.dk](mailto:dri@who.dk)

### **Towards a sustainable corporate social responsibility**

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. Edited by Philippe Bronchain. [www.eurofound.eu.int](http://www.eurofound.eu.int)

### **CIAA Annual Report 2002**

The Confederation of the Food and Drink Industries of the EU has issued its 2002 Annual Report. [www.ciaa.be](http://www.ciaa.be) [ciaa@ciaa.be](mailto:ciaa@ciaa.be)

## **FORTHCOMING EVENTS**

### **Health and well-being**

Bad Ischl, Austria. 21-24 May

6th triennial European congress of the European Society for Mental Health and Deafness (ESMHD)

Contact: Registration and information at the website: <http://members.nexttra.at/congress2003/>

### **"Applied Food Risk Communication"**

28 May 2003, 9:30-17:30h. Irish College, 5 rue des Irlandais, Paris

Workshop organised by EUFIC: [eufic@eufic.org](mailto:eufic@eufic.org)

### **EPIDOS Annual Conference – Patinnova'03**

Luxembourg, 10-12 November 2003, "Hemicycle"

Organised by the European Commission – DG Enterprise, European Patent Office, Ministry of Economy and the Luxembourg Intellectual Property Service.

Info: [www.patinnova.org](http://www.patinnova.org)

### **Health and Wealth: economic and social dimensions of health**

1-4 October 2003, in Bad Gastein, Salzburg, Austria

Organised by the International Forum Gastein, Federal Ministry for Social Security and Generations and the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation.

Info: [www.ehfg.org](http://www.ehfg.org)

### **Towards stronger partnerships in an enlarged Europe**

Warsaw, 22-23 May 2003. Organised by CEDAG (European Council for Voluntary Organisations)

[cedag@wanadoo.be](mailto:cedag@wanadoo.be)

### **Building Healthy Communities**

21<sup>st</sup> May 2003. Royal Hospital Kilmainham, Dublin. Organised by Combat Poverty Agency and the Department of Health and Children. [moorea@cpa.ie](mailto:moorea@cpa.ie)

### **13<sup>th</sup> International Conference in Cancer Nursing 2004**

8-12 August 2004. Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre. Sydney. Australia.

Organised by the International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care and the Cancer Nurses Society of Australia. [conference@isncc.org](mailto:conference@isncc.org)

### **Cross-border Care Within the EU**

Symposium, 9th May 2003, Stockholm

To coincide with Europe Day on the 9th May 2003 and the Ministerial Conference on European Health, The Institute of Medical Law is holding a Symposium on Cross-Border Care within the European Union. <http://www.imrab.se/english/conferences.php>

### **Mental Health and Schizophrenia in Europe: Open Minds, Open Doors?**

7<sup>th</sup> May 2003. European Parliament, Brussels.

Organised by Webershandwick and Bristol-Meyers Squibb. Conference and cocktail hosted by Professor Antonios Trakatelis MEP (EPP-ED, Greece). Speakers include Commissioner Byrne, WHO and the Greek Minister of Health. [rdowning@webershandwick.com](mailto:rdowning@webershandwick.com)

### **Social Welfare and EU Law**

13-14 June 2003, Cambridge.

The conference will highlight recent developments in EU law such as citizenship and social security, health care and education, to the impact of the Euro upon welfare economics.

Contact: Dr Michael Dougan [pmd1000@cam.ac.uk](mailto:pmd1000@cam.ac.uk)

### **Hospital-World 2003 Congress**

6th and 7th May 2003, Berlin.

<http://www.mcc-seminare.de/kongresse/hospitalworld2003/>

### **Europe in the world: the role of development in foreign policy**

May 19, Residence Palace, Brussels. Organised by: BOND, EADI, British Council

<http://www.bond.org.uk>

### **Tenth Session of the International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO (IBC)**

12-14 May 2003, UNESCO House, Paris

More info: [l.treguer@unesco.org](mailto:l.treguer@unesco.org)

### **Free movement and cross-border cooperation in Europe: the role of hospitals**

18-20 June 2003, Luxembourg. Organised by HOPE with the support of DG SANCO [hope.2003@ehl.lu](mailto:hope.2003@ehl.lu)