



EPHA Newsletter

February 2003

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS NEWS	2
THE PARLIAMENT	2
MEPs Seek Ban on Additive E 425 Konjac	2
Prevention and Reduction of Risks Associated with Drug Dependence	2
Community and National Measures in Relation to Breast Implants.....	2
THE COUNCIL	2
Greek Presidency Conclusions on Social Protection	2
Competent Authorities Meeting for Medical Devices	3
THE COMMISSION	3
Call for Proposals for the Public Health Programme	3
Creating a "Europe of Health"	3
Expert meeting on nutrition in the context of EU Enlargement.....	3
European breastfeeding promotion project	3
THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION	3
Social Europe Working Group, Plenary meetings	3
Romano Prodi Launches Internet Debate on «Penelope»	4
THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK.....	4
EIB Environment Report Published	4
EUROPEAN COURT RULINGS	4
ECJ Rules that Pensioners are Entitled to Treatment Abroad.....	4
Centrally authorised medicines should generally bear one single trade name.....	4
EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS CALENDAR	5
EPHA SECRETARIAT NEWS	6
New Policy Paper on Trade and Health Now on EPHA Website.....	6
World Health Day 2003	6
EPHA Environment Network launch meeting: 25 March	6
EPHA members keep up the pressure on the Convention	7
Enlargement	7
The Convention on the Future of Europe: State of play and future prospects.....	8
Legislation on Human Tissues and on Tissue Engineering.....	8
EPHA WORKING GROUP NEWS	8
Environment & Health Working Group	8
Food & Nutrition Working Group	8
Working Group on Non-Conventional Medicine	9
EPHA Policy Coordination Group	9
MEMBER NEWS	9
Mental Health	9
FORTHCOMING EVENTS	10
OTHER ITEMS	11
News.....	11
Publications	13

THE PARLIAMENT

MEPs Seek Ban on Additive E 425 Konjac

The EP adopted a report from Marit Paulsen (ELDR, Sweden) proposing a ban on the use of the food additive E425 konjac in jelly products, consumed primarily by children. This first-reading Opinion (adopted under the co-decision procedure) is in line with the European Commission's draft amendment to Directive 95/2, aiming to introduce a permanent ban on this food additive. This initiative follows reports that consumption of minicups containing the additive pose a risk of death by choking, particularly to children and old people. The Parliament amended the proposal to bring forward the ban to six months after the Directive enters into force.

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/pdf/2002/com2002_0451en01.pdf

http://europa.eu.int/prelex/detail_dossier_real.cfm?CL=en&DosId=175560

Prevention and Reduction of Risks Associated with Drug Dependence

Effective health and drug policy measures aimed at hard drug users would improve the health and well-being not only of drug addicts but also the general public, says the European Parliament Environment Committee in welcoming Commission proposals for preventing drug-related infections. In proposing a range of non-binding amendments by reporter Minerva MALLIORI (PES, GR) and other MEPs, the committee stressed the key role of local communities, arguing that local authority healthcare staff, police and social workers should be encouraged to take active measures to help drug users. Governments should pay more attention to high-risk environments such as prisons, while questions of drug abuse, drug-related illness and treating for overdoses should be included in all types of medical training. The committee urges national and local authorities to take practical action in response to new drug patterns, for example the widespread use of designer drugs and the much higher level of drug use among frequenters of discotheques, raves and night clubs. Standard rules should be drawn up to ensure safety inside and outside such venues, say MEPs.

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?L=EN&OBJID=10659&LEVEL=3&MODE=SIP&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N>

Community and National Measures in Relation to Breast Implants

The Environment Committee is urging the EU Member States to ban direct advertising to the public for breast implants or breast implant operations, as France has done. Since breast implants always entail risks, MEPs demand that objective, non-commercial information be provided through national public health services instead. These demands are made in a non-legislative draft resolution by Catherine STIHLER (PES, UK) on a Commission paper on breast implants. While welcoming the Commission's proposals, MEPs voice disappointment that they were purely advisory, i.e. not binding on the Member States. The committee says there is a need to regulate advertising in some Member States, which are fuelling the demand for implants without providing balanced information. MEPs call for better information for patients, tracking and surveillance, quality control and research. The committee urges that details of breast implant operations be recorded by a compulsory National Breast Implant Registration system in each Member State, to enable both producers and patients to be traced. Finally, the cost of implants should include a pre-meeting with the surgeon, clear informed discussion of the implications of having implants as well as the alternatives, a cooling-off period of no less than four to six weeks, a detailed pre-implant case history, post-counselling and periodic review.

<http://www2.europarl.eu.int/omk/sipade2?L=EN&OBJID=10608&LEVEL=3&MODE=SIP&NAV=X&LSTDOC=N>

THE COUNCIL

Greek Presidency Conclusions on Social Protection

In an informal meeting of Employment and Social Policy Ministers, the Council reaffirmed its goal of strengthening the social dimension of Europe.

<http://www.eu2003.gr/en/articles/2003/1/25/1682/>

Framework Convention on Tobacco Control concluded, 1 March 2003

After four years, the negotiations by the 192 Member States of the WHO have resulted in an agreement for a groundbreaking treaty on tobacco control. The Treaty will be submitted to the World Health Assembly in May 2003 for approval. This first international health treaty covers a range of issues including tobacco advertising, health warnings, tax issues, illicit trade (smuggling) and smoking cessation programmes. However important questions remain about the EU position on the Convention and particularly ratification by the EU Council, which must be unanimous. For more information contact EPHA President Andrew Hayes, hayes@globalink.org

Competent Authorities Meeting for Medical Devices

The medical devices Competent Authorities met in Athens, under the Greek Presidency, on the 16 and 17 January 2003. 21 countries were represented: European Union, Candidate countries and EFTA countries. Issues discussed include: Enlargement of the EU, Commission Communication on medical devices, Safety concerns presented by medical software, Transparency and Patient safety. http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/medical_devices/meeting16012003.pdf

THE COMMISSION

Call for Proposals for the Public Health Programme

The Call for Proposals for the Public Health Programme is expected to be published in the Official Journal in early March 2003. DG SANCO is preparing a CD-ROM with all relevant information about the Public Health Programme ready for dissemination. This will be available in a number of languages. An information day is planned for 21 March 2003 at DG SANCO offices in Luxembourg. The deadline for submission of proposals is expected to be early May 2003. Contracting of projects by the end of September 2003 and expected start date of activities, November 2003.

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2002/l_271/l_27120021009en00010011.pdf

Creating a "Europe of Health"

In January's electronic issue of Consumer Voice, the newsletter published by DG SANCO, Commissioner Byrne's vision for a 'Europe of health' focuses on the creation of the European Centre for Diseases Prevention and Control, tobacco control measures, patient mobility, and bioterrorism (as well as getting the tenders for the new public health programme launched).

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health_consumer/newsletter/200301/03_en.htm

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/health_consumer/newsletter/

Expert meeting on nutrition in the context of EU Enlargement

National nutrition experts from around 50 European countries met in Athens on 28/02 – 3/03 to evaluate progress on the development of European nutrition policies and discuss ways of accelerating their implementation. Representatives from FAO (Food & Agriculture Organisation) and UNICEF, and the European Commission also attended. Agenda points included public health and future food production policies e.g. the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) within an enlarged European Union. Poor eating habits related to lack of secure access to healthy nutritious food make a huge contribution to the burden of disease and premature mortality in the WHO European Region.

European breastfeeding promotion project

The first meeting of a project on promoting breastfeeding in Europe, funded by DG SANCO was held last 21-23 February in Trieste, Italy. The NGO participant was IBFAN - International Breastfeeding XX. The project will produce a "Blueprint for action", i.e. a document that countries can use to plan and implement activities. The USA have already produced an equivalent document (see link).

<http://www.4woman.gov/Breastfeeding/bluprntbk2.pdf>

THE EUROPEAN CONVENTION

Social Europe Working Group, Plenary meetings

Mr Katiforis presented to the Plenary session of 6/7 February 2003 the Report of the WG on Social Europe with the recommendations of including 'public health' into Article 3 and strengthening Article 152. During the debate, Mr Katiforis emphasised the strong support for strengthening the EU competence on Public Health, stating that the European Commission had convincingly pointed out

the need for stronger legal basis for EU action specifically regarding communicable diseases, bioterrorism and WHO agreements.

Comments from the Plenary sessions were divided into two main groups: those supporting Public Health as one of the Union's future competencies (particularly on bioterrorism, cross-border diseases and WHO's agreements) and those strongly opposed to any extensions of EU competencies on Public Health.

In concluding the debate on the WG Social Europe's report, Mr Katiforis announced that he will be making amendments to the Praesidium's draft first 16 articles. He emphasized that the WG had no intention of creating a European SuperState to be imposed on Member States, but of recognising that the EU has core values and mechanisms to implement those values.

<http://european-convention.eu.int/docs/wd11/6906.pdf>

Romano Prodi Launches Internet Debate on «Penelope»

President of the European Commission Romano Prodi launched an Internet debate with the public on a potential Constitution for Europe based on the working document "Penelope". Prodi and the experts who are drawing up the document personally respond to comments and proposals from the public on issues such as democracy, justice, and monetary policy. The debate as the Convention discussed the draft articles of the future Constitutional Treaty. The online discussion is part of the "Debate on the Future of the European Union", an initiative of the Nice Summit in December 2002. The ideas discussed and exchanged in the debate will contribute to the preparation of the next intergovernmental conference in 2004.

http://europa.eu.int/futurum/forum/Public/MessageList.cfm?&Thread_ID=31&lang=en

THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK

EIB Environment Report Published

THE European Investment Bank (EIB) has published its first ever environment report. The Report provides an account of recent environmental developments at the EIB, including new policy initiatives, changes in its environmental organisation and environmental lending in 2001-2002, defined by its status as a European institution.

http://www.eib.eu.int/Attachments/thematic/envreport0102_en.pdf

EUROPEAN COURT RULINGS

ECJ Rules that Pensioners are Entitled to Treatment Abroad

The European Court of Justice ruled on February 25 that pensioners are entitled to reimbursement of medical expenses incurred abroad even if they result from a chronic or pre-existing medical condition. This was the judgement of the Court in Case C-326/00 (Idryma Koinonikon Asfaliseon (IKA) -v- Vasileios Ioannidis), in which the Court decided that: "A Member State may not subject payment of the medical expenses of a pensioner who has visited another Member State either to authorisation or to the condition that the illness he suffers has manifested itself suddenly".

<http://www.curia.eu.int/jurisp/cgi-bin/form.pl?lang=en&Submit=Submit&docrequire=alldocs&numaff=C-326%2F00&datefs=&datefe=&nomusuel=&domaine=&mots=&resmax=100>

Centrally authorised medicines should generally bear one single trade name

In its judgement of 10 December 2002, the Court of First Instance annulled the decision of 1st March 2000, that had refused to vary the name and package layout of a centrally authorised medicine. The reason for the annulment is that the decision was not sufficiently motivated. On the merits, the Court states that the letter and spirit of Regulation 2309/93 suggests that a Community marketing authorisation will contain as a general rule only one name. That name can be varied by adding another name only where the marketing authorisation holder demonstrates that this is rendered necessary by exceptional circumstances which may adversely affect public health and where the Commission has ascertained that the variation applied for satisfies the criteria of the quality, safety and efficacy of the medicinal product.

<http://www.curia.eu.int/jurisp/cgi-bin/form.pl?lang=en&Submit=Submit&docrequire=alldocs&numaff=T-123%2F00+&datefs=&datefe=&nomusuel=&domaine=&mots=&resmax=100>

EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS CALENDAR

The Parliament

Committee on Environment, Public Health and Consumer Policy 21-22 May 2003
10-11 June 2003
16-17 June 2003
8-9 July 2003

http://www.db.europarl.eu.int/ep/owa/p_calag.meet_details?ipid=0&ilg=EN&idate=30-01-03&igen=&iorg=C09&isorg=&iloc=***&iclass=2&iorig=committees

Plenary Sessions

1-4 September 2003,
22-25 September 2003,
8-9 October 2003,
20-23 October 2003,
5-6 November 2003,
17-20 November 2003,
3-4 December 2003,
15-18 December 2003,

http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/cal2003_en.pdf

The Council

Informal Economic & Financial Affairs Council, 4 - 6 April 2003
Agriculture & Fisheries Council, 14 - 15 April 2003
General Affairs and External Relations Council, 14 - 15 April 2003
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
Informal Transport Council, 16 - 18 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
Employment, Social Affairs, Health & Consumer Policy Council, 2 - 3 June 2003
Informal Development Council, 2 - 3 June 2003
Economic & Financial Affairs Council, 3 June 2003
Justice and Home Affairs Council, 5 - 6 June 2003
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council, 5 - 6 June 2003
Informal Civil Service Council, 6 June 2003
Agriculture & Fisheries Council, 11 - 12 June 2003
Environment Council, 13 June 2003
General Affairs and External Relations Council, 17 - 18 June 2003
European Council, 20 June 2003 (*Thessaloniki, Greece*)
Employment, Social Affairs, Health & Consumer Policy Council, 24 June 2003

For information on the dates of all Council meetings, visit: <http://ue.eu.int/en/summ.htm>

The Commission

Mid-term Review of the Social Policy Agenda: Achievements and Perspectives
19 to 20 March 2003. Charlemagne building.

Tobacco Control and Development Policy

EPHA Newsletter January 2003

3-4 February, Brussels. Organised by the European Commission in collaboration with the World Health Organisation and the World Bank.

2003 edition of Green Week: 2-5 June. The main aim of Green Week is to encourage people to "think aloud" about how we can really change our environmental behaviour and make the world a more environmentally friendly and healthy place to live in.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/environment/greenweek/index_en.htm

EPHA SECRETARIAT NEWS

New Policy Paper on Trade and Health Now on EPHA Website

The Policy Paper on "Making Trade Work for Health" is now available as a PDF on EPHA website. The paper has been drafted by the Secretariat, and adopted as a Policy Paper after the comments, additions and suggestions made by the network members. Four key areas of concern have been identified: **intellectual property, environment, trade in commodities hazardous to health** (alcohol and tobacco in particular) and **trade in services**. The policy paper deals specifically with these four issues, and contains a number of policy recommendations specifically targeted to the European Union. As stated in the paper: "Over the next 18 months, the **reform of the EU Treaty and the historic enlargement of the EU are opportunities not to be missed. The EU must champion fair trade to improve public health for all the world's citizens and to ensure the quality of public services**. The European Union should work to ensure that **good governance and transparency** become the guidelines of the future debate on international trade. It can really become **the guardian of our health**". <http://www.eph.org>

World Health Day 2003

"Healthy Environments for Children" is the title of this year's World Health Day, which will take place on April 7. EPHA will also be launching its booklet, "A Healthier Future for Europe's Children" which includes comments from WHO Europe's Regional Director, Marc Danzon, and Environment Commissioner Margot Wallstrom. EPHA aims to widely disseminate this booklet on April 7 to national and European press and other contacts, and generate as much media interest as possible. EPHA will send out a press release and postcard for action, and would very much appreciate EPHA's Members help in:

- Disseminating this information to their own member organisations and contacts.
- Informing EPHA if their organisation, or member organisation, will be planning anything on April 2003 so that EPHA can highlight it in its press release.

EPHA is working with its members, DG Environment and WHO's Network of Health Promoting Schools to coordinate an event in Norway at which Environment Commissioner Margot Wallstrom could participate on World Health Day. If you have contacts in Norway or would like to inform your member organisations of developments on this day, please send an email to genon@epha.org.

World Health Day 2004 will be dedicated to "Safe Roads", creating an opportunity to draw the general public's attention to the growing but preventable problem of road traffic injuries.

<http://www.world-health-day/2003/en>

http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/

EPHA Environment Network launch meeting: 25 March

EPHA and some of its member organisations have taken the lead in creating a new organisation, the EPHA Environment Network (EEN). EEN's mission statement is to improve the environment in Europe as a means of improving health status of Europeans. EEN will provide an ongoing platform for health and environmental organisations to share information, develop joint policy positions/strategies and carry out advocacy work on environment and health policy.

We would like to invite all interested EPHA members to attend the first meeting in Brussels on Tuesday, 25 March. The agenda for the first meeting will aim to:

- * Launch the network and present its objectives
- * Share the EU's priorities on Environment and Health
- * Elect executive of the EEN

EPHA Newsletter January 2003

- * Discuss the draft 2003 work plan
- * Share priorities of interested organisations
- * Discuss membership fees
- * Discuss working methods

EPHA members are encouraged to join EEN. The criteria for joining EEN will be the same as for EPHA (eg; not-for-profit and committed to the mission statement) and EEN will offer two types of membership, Full and Associate.

EPHA members keep up the pressure on the Convention

The Convention Praesidium published a new draft of the first 16 articles of the Constitutional Treaty at the early February Plenary session. Convention members were invited to comment or amend these articles by the deadline of Monday 17 February. The draft document did not take into account the conclusions of the WG on Social Europe and particularly their references on health.

EPHA sent an alert to members calling for advocacy towards the Convention members to support the inclusion of the Social Europe WG recommendations into the draft Constitutional Treaty. Many members wrote letters to national Convention representatives and EPHA President Andrew Hayes sent a personalised letter to all members of the Convention Praesidium. Responses acknowledging this letter were received from Mr Brok MEP, Mr Iñigo Méndez de Vigo MEP and a joint letter from Commissioner Barnier, Commissioner Vitorino and Mr David O'Sullivan.

Senior members of the Convention on the future of the EU have admitted that they face an "enormous" task to draft the European constitution by June and are talking of pushing the deadline back to October.

EPHA policy assistant Lara Garrido-Herrero is following the Convention and has sent out to EPHA members briefing notes about the two Plenary sessions in February. For more information, contact Lara, lara@epha.org <http://european-convention.eu.int/docs/Treaty/cv00528.en03.pdf>

Enlargement

Preparation of Hungarian NGOs for the Public Health Programme

EPHA General Secretary gave a presentation to Hungarian NGOs at a one day seminar organised by the Hungarian Ministry of Health in Budapest in early February. The event was designed to prepare NGOs for the new EU Public Health Programme and included speakers from several European organisations to share their experience of project development, working with the EU (advantages and disadvantages) and writing project proposals.

EPHA participates in a workshop on the draft Bulgarian Public Health Law

The Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office (TAIEX) of DG Enlargement in co-operation with the Bulgarian Ministry of Health, DG Sanco and WHO Europe organised on 24-26 February 2003 to support and inform the Bulgarian Government in refining its ambitiously comprehensive new law on Public Health. (Bulgaria is an accession country currently aiming to achieve membership in 2007.) Stephen Gordon, General Secretary of the European Council for Classical Homeopathy represented EPHA at the seminar. Using input from several EPHA members, Stephen made a number of interventions on subjects such as the role of NGOs and citizens in developing and delivering health care policy, regulation of health care professions, alcohol policy, 'alternative' medicine, and actual public health issues. The open and constructive approach to developing their legislation adopted by the Bulgarian Ministry is welcomed.

'Effective Advocacy for health in Europe', OSI/EPHA conference, 3-5 April 2003, Riga

Preparations continue for the conference including identifying speakers and workshop coordinators. The event will bring together 100 NGOs from across the EU and CEE and the agenda covers and introduction to the EU institutions and policy-making process, sharing of key skills such as advocacy and coalition building, and thematic workshops on health inequalities, HIV, sexual and reproductive rights etc. Participation in the conference is free and EPHA members are encouraged to offer the opportunity or participation to their member organisations in CEE. For more information contact Lara, lara@epha.org.

On 18 February EPHA assisted an informal exchange of views with MEPs from the Environment Committee the Health and Enlargement recommendations by the European Health Policy Forum (EHPF). DG SANCO briefly presented the document (the Forum, methodology and main conclusions) and EPHA and the European Heart Network provided the viewpoint of civil society organisations. The informal meeting also discussed the lack of resources available for health and supporting NGOs from CEE countries. The European Parliament is drafting a general report on enlargement which will be adopted in plenary in April.

The Convention on the Future of Europe: State of play and future prospects

EPHA participated in the European policy Centre breakfast briefing by Alain Lamassoure, MEP and Convention Member. Mr Lamassoure stated that the debate in the Convention had moved forward significantly on key issues such as a written constitutional treaty and inclusion of the charter of fundamental rights into the treaty. He added that national parliaments had the tendency to invoke the principle of subsidiarity whenever they saw that the public was more inclined to a European approach, as in the case of health issues. However the critical issue of how a common foreign and security policy would work is illustrated by the divergent attitudes and positions of EU and CEE countries on Iraq.

<http://www.theepc.be/documents/breakdet.asp?SEC=documents&SUBSEC=breakfast&SUBSUBSEC=&REFID=1064>

Legislation on Human Tissues and on Tissue Engineering

A briefing note on the ongoing EU legislation on human tissues and on tissue engineering was sent to all EPHA members, summarising the main points of the issue and setting out the next steps in the legislative timetable. Contact: francesco@epha.org

EPHA WORKING GROUP NEWS

Environment & Health Working Group

1. WHO brochure on children's health & environment

The WG received a call for input and potential case studies to be included in the EPHA booklet, *The A healthier future for Europe's children*. Over 15 member organisations responded with ideas and examples of what NGOs are doing to address priority issues in environmental threats to children's health. These members were then invited to provide their comments on the draft text, and contribute to the overall recommendations to policy makers at the end of the booklet. The recommendations will be important for work leading up to the Budapest conference in June 2004. The booklet will be accompanied by a postcard and a press release, highlighting the recommendations and the case studies.

Finally, the group was invited to keep EPHA informed of any activities they may be planning for April 7, and to continue to send EPHA their case studies, as EPHA would be publishing a more comprehensive document on our website with a list of NGOs working on children's environment and health issues in the future.

2. 2004 Budapest Ministerial Conference on Environment and Health

The group received the final report from the 7th EEHC (European Environment and Health Committee) meeting held in Budapest on 28-29 November. They were also invited to provide comments and input on several developments related to the Budapest conference including proposals for a NGO ministerial roundtable and the participation of children in the conference.

For more information contact Genon Jensen, EPHA Policy Director at genon@epha.org

Food & Nutrition Working Group

The group received the preliminary draft proposal for a Regulation on the addition of vitamins, minerals and certain other substances to food, commonly referred to as food fortification. The European Commission's DG for Health and Consumer Protection invited EPHA to send three representatives to a meeting being held on 24 February in Brussels to discuss this draft regulation.

EPHA Newsletter January 2003

Genon Jensen, EPHA Policy Director, attended the meeting, with EPHA members the European Heart Network, and the Standing Committee of European Doctors.

The working group also received a request to provide information in response to a written consultation on nutritional labelling by the European Commission, as the EPHA Secretariat hoped to prepare an EPHA response by the deadline of March 7. Members were invited to respond to issues such as:

- whether nutritional labelling should be voluntary or mandatory;
- what key nutritional information should be provided, and in what format
- how it can be linked with recommendations regarding healthy diets and lifestyles
- providing examples of educational programmes on healthy diets and lifestyles carried out by health authorities, agencies and NGOs
- should definitions such as 'dietary fibre' be revised, and should other definitions be added
- examples of economic, social and public health impacts of nutritional labelling

The comments from the consultation will be used to revise the Council Directive 90/496/EEC on Nutrition Labelling to bring the provisions on nutritional labelling in line with consumer needs and expectations, and support public health strategies.

The consultation specifically requests the "perspective of nutrition and health professionals regarding the usefulness of the current nutrition labelling format as an information tool to support information and educational campaigns regarding healthy diets and lifestyles."

If you would like to provide input and or viewpoints on food and nutrition issues or plan on submitting responses to the consultation, please contact Genon Jensen at genon@epha.org

Working Group on Non-Conventional Medicine

The group was informed about a meeting organised jointly by the Health Intergroup's Working Group on Complementary and Natural Medicines and the Tibet Intergroup on the theme **Tibetan Medicine**. The meeting was held on 12 February in the European Parliament, Strasbourg. For any further information about future meetings, please contact MEP Nuala Ahern, Chairwoman of the Health Intergroup's Working Group on Complementary and Natural Medicines, at +32 2 284 51 39, Email: nahern@europarl.eu.int

EPHA Policy Coordination Group

The group received the draft minutes of the meeting held on 15 January. The group was invited to make any comments or additions on it. The next meeting will take place on Wednesday 5 March from 12.30 to 14.00 at IPPF offices, 146 Rue Royale, 1000 Brussels.

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.

MEMBER NEWS

Mental Health

Advocacy France and a number of French and European mental health organisations, in partnership with Mental Health Europe, are organising a Forum on Mental Health in the framework of the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003. It will take place at the City Hall in Paris, France, on 21-22 October 2003. The Forum aims to develop reflection and discussion on discrimination faced by people with mental health problems, to denounce the different forms of discrimination, to value equal opportunities by providing information on best practices, and to raise awareness among the public, decision-makers and public authorities by confronting them with the realities of the field work. We hope that many of you will register for this important event. Please contact the organisers directly for any additional information: advocacy-caen@wanadoo.fr

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Commission on Sustainable Development

28 April/ May 2003. Next session of the Commission on Sustainable Development, at United Nations Headquarters in New York. This is the first meeting of the Commission post World Summit on Sustainable Development that took place in Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August- 4 September 2002. Contact: Zehra Aydin, Major Groups Program Coordinator, CSD Secretariat, United Nations. Tel: 212-963-8811, Fax: 212-963-4260 Email: aydin@un.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 and the Stockholm Huddinge University Hospital are organising a Symposium on Cross-Border Care within the European Union. The event will be led by international experts in cross-border care, examining the newly granted rights of patients to travel to other member states for treatment and the implications for public and private health care providers, policy makers and national health insurers. To view the programme in pdf go to:- <http://www.imrab.se/english/conferences.php>

35th Lancaster Educational Symposium

10th – 12th July 2003: "Health & Safety: Meeting the Challenge" Lancaster Educational Health & Safety Symposium. Organised on behalf of the North Western Centre of Chartered Institute of Environmental Health. President: Peter Wright. For more info Rob Faulkner (Hon. Symposium Secretary) Rob.faulkner@liverpool.gov.uk Tel. +44 151 289 1228

Information to patients

Weber Shandwick | Adamson is setting up an exhibition on information to patients, which will be part of a conference in the European Parliament, organised by Cambridge University Health (CUH). 'The Informed Patient', a CUH project, will be launched, and it is hoped that this will lead to further joint action at EU level. They are looking for examples of how patient groups inform their members and the wider audience (by means of flyers, Internet, telephone helplines etc). Contact: Christine Marking Tel + 32 2 282 1632, Fax + 32 2 230 1496, email: cmarking@webershandwick.com

High level conference on drugs

6 - 8 March 2003 *Athens, Greece*

Conference organised in the context of the Greek Presidency by the Greek Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Health and Welfare, Justice and Public Order, in association with the European Commission and the European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction. Contact: Website of the Greek Presidency: www.eu2003.gr

Mid-term review of the social policy agenda: achievements and perspectives

19 - 20 March 2003 *Brussels, Belgium*

Organised by the European Commission's DG Employment and Social Affairs. http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2001/oct/socpolag/social_pol_ag_en.html

Efficiency and effectiveness assessment of new medicines - A European approach

21 March 2003 *Athens, Greece*

International conference organised by the Association Internationale de la Mutualité (AIM) and the Federation of Greek Mutualities, in cooperation with the European Observatory on Health Care Systems. Contact: AIM Brussels, Belgium Email: aim-secretariat@aim-mutual.org Internet: <http://www.aim-mutual.org>

International Plasma Protein Congress

25 - 27 March 2003 *Brussels, Belgium*

Organised by Plasma Protein Therapeutics Association (PPTA). Contact: Internet: <http://www.ppta-eu-congress.com>

EPHA Newsletter January 2003

World Life Sciences Forum

8 - 11 April 2003 *Lyon, France*

Organised by the Scientific Foundation BioVision in association with French Region Rhône-Alpes.

Contact: Scientific Foundation Bio-Vision Lyon, France Tel:+ 33 4 78 92 70 00 Fax: +33 4 78 92 70 15 Email: biovision@biovision.org Internet: <http://www.biovision.org>

European congress on independent living

24 - 26 April 2003 *Tenerife, Spain*

Organised by Spain's Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs in associations with the European Disability Forum and other NGOs in the context of the European Year of People with Disabilities.

Contact: Internet: <http://www.congresovidaindependiente.org>

International Conference on Poverty, Food and Health

1 - 4 July 2003 *Lisbon, Portugal*

Organised by the Instituto de Medicina Preventiva. Health inequalities is the key theme of the conference. Contact: Internet: <http://www.pfh2003.org>

6th international conference of AIDS Impact. The key theme is the biopsychosocial aspects of HIV infection.

7 - 10 July 2003 *Milan, Italy*

Contact: Internet: <http://www.aidsimpact.org>

OTHER ITEMS

News

Alert on Genetic Tests advertised via the Internet

The European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies has issued an statement on advertising genetic tests via the Internet. There is a proliferation of internet-based offers of genetic tests aimed especially at establishing fatherhood as well as tests for predisposition to several diseases - heart diseases, diabetes, etc. Advertising is getting increasingly aggressive and pervasive in Europe; in some countries this can even be found in popular chain stores, service stations, highway restaurants and television.

http://www.europa.eu.int/rapid/start/cgi/guesten.ksh?p_action.gettxt=gt&doc=IP/03/273|0|RAPID&lg=EN

Sweden to clash with EU on alcohol policies

The traditional Swedish alcohol policy is under pressure from EU harmonisation, as the Market Court in Stockholm has ruled that the country can no longer keep up its ban on advertisements for alcohol. At the same time, Sweden finds the new EU rules on drugs too slack, as the country has until now maintained a policy of zero toleration.

<http://www.euobserver.com/index.phtml?aid=9343>

Stockholm conference: Health care services shall be provided on equal terms

The first conference of the International Forum took place in Stockholm on 30-31 January 2003. Ministers for Health from seven countries (Chile, Germany, Greece, New Zealand, Slovenia, the United Kingdom and Sweden) met for two days to discuss how care services on equal conditions can be maintained and developed.

http://social.regeringen.se/inenglish/forum/press/press_release030131.htm

http://social.regeringen.se/forum/pdf/final_statement.pdf

Report on Marketing of Food to Children

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has indicated to the International Association of Consumer Food Organization (IACFO) that it welcomes a report on the marketing of food to children, as part of WHO's consultation process on food strategy. This report will include data on the marketing of food to children from several countries across the world. The Food Commission, an independent non-

governmental organisation campaigning for safer, healthier food for all, is coordinating the report; gathering material from colleagues in IACFO supplemented by material from other international networks of consumer and civil action groups.

Contact Elizabeth Hanna elizabeth@foodcomm.org.uk Tel: +44 (0) 20 7837 2250 Fax: +44 (0) 20 7837 1141 The Food Commission, 94 White Lion Street, London, N1 9PF (UK)

United Nations Environment Programme Governing Council meeting, 3/7 February

The UNEP Governing Council was established to provide a forum for the international community to address major and emerging environmental policy issues and generally meets every two years. It promotes international environmental cooperation and recommends policies. The high-level ministerial consultation will focus this time on the implementation of the outcomes of the Johannesburg Summit.

<http://www.unep.org/GoverningBodies/GC22/>

WHO and FIA joint efforts for road safety

Leaders from around the world met in London on the 11 January in a joint effort to improve road safety and reduce road traffic related deaths. Among them, Gro Harlem Brundtland, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Max Mosley, President of the Federation Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA), and ministers from several countries. With experts in road safety, they come together to expose the phenomenal increase in road traffic injuries in recent years.

http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/

Pressing Worldwide Challenge of Long-term care for ill and disabled presents difficult

Long-term care for people with chronic illnesses and disabilities presents an urgent challenge around the world, as existing systems of care have come under great strain and are unable to fully meet growing demands. The critical ethical issues related to long-term care ? which all people are at risk to face during their lifetimes ? are the focus of a new World Health Organization report.

http://www.who.int/ethics/nfp_disabled/en/

Trust Fund to Help Poor Countries Participate in Codex Alimentarius

A \$40 million Trust Fund to help the world's least developed countries participate in Codex Alimentarius was launched in Geneva on the 13 February by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Codex Alimentarius sets food standards that protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in food trade, so it is equally important to developed and developing countries. However, many developing countries, particularly the least developed ones, have not fully participated in the work of the CAC because of the cost involved in attending meetings and working groups. The new Trust Fund will help some 120 developing countries and countries in transition increase their participation in the work of the Commission. The fund will also help regulators and food experts from all areas of the world to participate in setting international standards and enhance their capacity to develop effective food safety and quality standards, both within the framework of the Codex Alimentarius and national food safety systems in their own countries.

ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/alinorm03/alx3_05e.pdf

<http://www.fao.org/english/newsroom/>

<http://www.who.int/>

Reclassification of artificial hip joints: Eucomed calls for justification and consultation

Eucomed, the European Medical Technology Industry Association calls upon the European Commission to ensure that the reasons for its initiative on reclassify hip joint replacement medical devices as "high risk", are justified clearly and that all stakeholders have the opportunity to contribute to any decision in this respect, including all national competent authorities, the European medical technology industry and the European medical community.

<http://www.eucomed.be/docs/Press%20release%2007.03%20reclassification%20of%20hip%20implants.pdf>

http://www.europa.eu.int/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexapi!prod!CELEXnumdoc&lg=EN&numdoc=31993L0042&mod el=guichet

Three year extension to GASPP Programme - New Partners join Programme

The GASPP programme (Globalism and Social Policy Programme) has secured funding from STAKES (the Finnish National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health) for a

EPHA Newsletter January 2003

further three years. Therefore they will continue their policy analysis work until at least the middle of 2005. At the same time GASPP is being transformed from an Anglo-Finnish programme based on two centres to a network of GASPP centres world-wide. Two new partners are joining STAKES and the University of Sheffield: the Institute on the Study of Globalisation and the Human Condition at McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada and (subject to formal confirmation) the Centre for Social Medicine and Community Health, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, India.

<http://www.gaspp.org>

Papers Indicate That Bayer Knew of Dangers of Its Cholesterol Drug

Newly disclosed company documents indicate that some senior executives at Bayer were aware that their anticholesterol drug had serious problems long before the company pulled it from the market. The documents, made public by lawyers suing Bayer, include e-mail messages, memos and sworn depositions of executives that suggest that Bayer promoted the drug, Baycol, even as a company analysis found that patients on Baycol were falling ill or dying from a rare muscle condition much more often than patients on similar drugs.

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

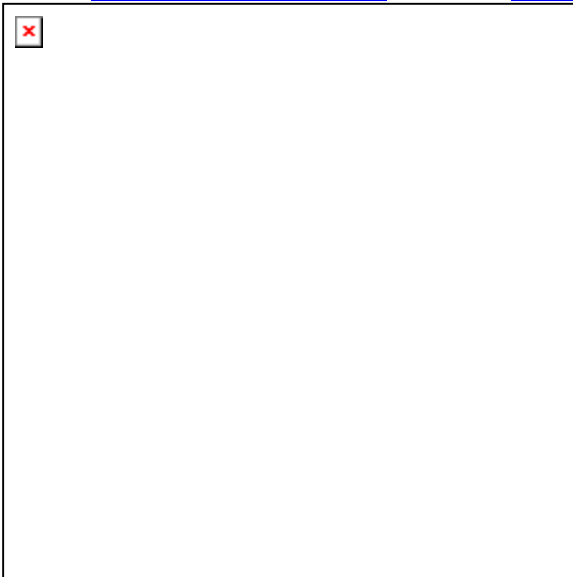
Publications

Reducing the burden of headache

February 2003, 425 pages.

Edited by Jes Olesen, Timothy Steiner and Richard Lipton from the Frontiers in Headache Research. This is the first book devoted to the study of the social and economic consequences of headache. It analyses the financial cost of headache diseases, the disability and suffering they cause and the impact they have on the quality of life of the sufferers and their families. Info:Oxford University Press

Email: medicine.books@oup.co.uk Internet: <http://www.oup.com>



Monitoring progress on poverty

October 2002, 116 pages.

Policy guide on the use of social indicators edited by Guy Palmer and Mohibur Rahman from the New Policy Institute and published by Combat Poverty Agency (CPA), the statutory advisory body on poverty in Ireland. Info: CPA, Dublin (Ireland) Internet: <http://www.cpa.ie>