

HFE Training Event

September 2009

European Parliament

On 30th September, Health First Europe (HFE) organised a training event at the European Parliament which was hosted by MEP Marian Harkin and supported by MEP Antonia Parvanova, who were representing the European Parliament and the Environment Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) Committee.

With this training event, HFE, as a platform for healthcare stakeholders, wanted to continue contributing to the political debate on EU health. As its first event after the European elections in June, HFE contributed to the disseminating of knowledge on the current and future state of health policies in the European Union

The approaching referendum of the Lisbon Treaty in Ireland prevented MEP Harkin from attending the event as she was obliged to be in her constituency to take part in the campaign. MEP Antonia Parvanova supported the initiative and opened the training session in her place.

The event attracted over 35 participants from varied backgrounds, from Members of the European Parliament e.g. the former Portuguese health minister Correia de Campos and MEP Gay Mitchell, to MEP Assistants and members of staff from numerous health concerned associations.

The event, chaired by Bert Van Caelenberg, Secretary-General at EUROFEDOP and HFE Member, profited from the participation of European Commission representative, Marie Lagarrigue, DG SANCO, who gave a presentation on the European Commission working programme (2008-2013).

Frazer Goodwin, Global Health Project Manager at the European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) started off the training session by explaining the subsidiarity principle and its effects on EU Health policy-making. Frazer Goodwin defended the need for a regulatory framework that allows for informed choice and is complementary in its entirety, instead of a fragmented approach that stretches between the EU Commission, the Parliament and Member States.

Following the EPHA presentation, Sebastian Rohde, an HFE Member, underlined the importance of European cooperation in Health Care and the fact that with infectious diseases and other such issues, health policy will increasingly become a European problem. Furthermore Sebastian Rohde mentioned the relevance of latest EU Law developments as applied to cross border health care and the progress in specific technical dossiers.

The closing key note speaker, Joanne Groves, CEO of the International Alliance for Patients' Organisation (IAPO), and a member of HFE, concluded the session by talking about the manner in which civil society is able to take part in the processes leading up to decision-making within the EU institutions and indeed should play its part.

Overall the training event was an interesting gathering of ideas from the many areas and groups working on the monitoring and developing of the European health system and its priorities. It ended with a reception in the European Parliament where the participants were able to exchange view points and continue a debate that will certainly further develop in the future.