

**HFE attends FACE Workshop of Health Inequalities:
Fatal Determinants for Cancer Patients**

24 January 2011

Forum Against Cancer Europe (FACE) held a workshop in the European Parliament to discuss the need for policy in the arena of health inequalities as socioeconomic, educational, racial and legal social determinants continue to play a role in the access of patients to quality care throughout Europe. Chaired by MEP Petru Luhan (EPP, Romania), the panelists discussed how the EU institutions can contribute to modifying policy in this area and ensuring all EU Member States provide quality care regardless of social background.

Among the first panel of the workshop, Mr. Clive Needle of EuroHealthNet drew significant attention to the research undertaken both by the European Commission and by Sir Michael Marmot which clearly shows the need for policy addressing what he referred to as “the causes of the causes of ill health” in the EU. He argued for the social determinants approach of the European Commission which includes further investment in early years development, healthy ageing throughout life and sustainable development of health systems and securities. Mr. Arnaud Senn, Policy Officer in Healthcare Systems within DG EMPL, further illustrated the close connection between social inclusion/protection and poverty issues. He expressed that the Commission is currently working on determining the financial impact of long-term care on social protection so that health inequalities can be better tackled through policy. He also declared that the Commission has determined improving its knowledge base in this issue area and meeting the needs of vulnerable groups, are two of its top priorities.

The second panel of the conference looked at how health inequalities specifically affect cancer patients. However, Andrzej Rys of DG SANCO discussed how the European Commission is committed to protecting citizens from health inequalities regardless of their affliction. He also highlighted the need for developing the contribution of all policy across various sectors to health inequalities as the health of EU citizens impacts all areas of policymaking. Additionally, Professor Patricia Garcia Preito discussed the need for patient advocacy in assuring more equality of care for cancer patients.