

EPF's Policy Statement on the White Paper: "Together for Health: A strategic approach for the EU 2008- 2013"

November 2007

EPF welcomes that:

- the Commission recognises the need to improve health and well-being in order to achieve the EU's strategic social and economic objectives, i.e. prosperity, solidarity and security, as reflected by the Lisbon agenda;
- the recently agreed Reform Treaty (Lisbon, 19 October 2007) proposes to reinforce the political importance of health;
- a core value of the Strategy is citizens' empowerment;
- further work is planned to reduce inequities in health;
- there is an explicit recognition of citizens' and patients' rights as a key starting point for Community health policies;
- the Strategy revisits the Council Conclusions on Common Values and Principles in European Union Health System, i.e. universality, access to good quality care, equity and solidarity;
- there is an explicit reference to and an acknowledgment of the fundamental importance of health literacy;
- a lot of the points that EPF raised in the response to the consultation have been taken on board and we value that.

EPF recommends:

- involving patients organisations in impact assessment and evaluation of the Strategy and in establishing indicators (both quantitative and qualitative);
- stronger emphasis on mental health and well-being;
- stronger recognition of the role of families and carers and their contribution to the health care system;
- including quality of life indicators, alongside healthy life years in the System of European Community Indicators;

- more specific definition of the new EC level structured cooperation mechanism, that is supposed to advise the Commission and to promote coordination among Member States;
- further action from the Commission in supporting/recommending recommend MS to provide financial mechanisms to support health and patient NGOs , so that they are in a position to work effectively and consistently with Commission and Member States governments
- further action from the Commission in supporting/recommending exchanges of good practices among Member States in relation to information to patients, patient involvement, health literacy and patients' safety.

The Health Strategy fits very well with EPF policy priorities.

EPF reaffirms its commitment to be a strong and constructive partner in the implementation and the monitoring of the Health Strategy.