

## **Eurocare comments to the EU Health Policy Forum: Strategic priorities, Workplan 2009 – 2010, Open Forum**

Eurocare supports the EU Health Policy Forum and sees it as an important forum for strategic discussions among members of the public health community.

We do agree with EuroHealthnet and European Heart Network that the Forum should review how EU competences and instruments can be used to protect and promote public health in the EU and hopefully in the wider Europe by example.

It is important to have a schedule of future legislative proposals/policy reviews and analyse how they may impact public health. It would enable NGO's to better prepare policy options and feedback on policy proposal.

We do see the Forum as an important communication channel between policy makers and stakeholders on EU health policy issues. In addition discussions in the Forum can also help NGO's in building partnership with each other and thereby develop coherent approaches towards policy developments at EU level.

We do agree that the Forum should focus in its work plan in 2009 and 2010 on the implementation of the EU health strategy 'Together for health'. However Eurocare (The European Alcohol Policy Alliance) is an alliance of some 50 NGO's across 20 European countries working on the prevention of alcohol related harm in Europe. Our member organisations are involved in research and advocacy; education and training of voluntary and professional community care workers; the provision of counseling services and residential support for problem drinkers, of workplace and school based programmes as well as the provision of information to the public. Eurocare's specific contributions would be connected to pushing issues related to alcohol policy developments. However, many of these are cross-cutting issues like:

- Information to consumers – e.g. labeling
- Marketing – advertising – especially the volume of unhealthy products
- Minimum taxes, affordability/availability
- Social marketing – is this a way forward at EU level? Can money from DG Agri – information campaigns be used more to promote public health?
- Inequalities among European citizens

Open Forum: We see the Open Forum as an important event for participation from a wider community of supporters of EU health policy. The aim should be to give presentation on ongoing discussions at EU level to an audience that normally not participates in "Brussels meetings".

For the December meeting we suggest a presentation on the draft labeling proposal with an update from the Rapporteur in the Parliament, the Alcohol Strategy and an up to date review of its outcome, maybe also a session on the EU Alcohol and health Forum with its taskforces. Eurocare would be happy to participate in the preparation and planning.