



## Press Release

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## **Members of the European Parliament Discuss Patient Safety and Quality of Heart Care across borders**

**Brussels, 4 November 2008 - Members of the European Parliament Heart Group meet today, in Brussels, with the Cardiology profession and heart patients' representatives to discuss ways to ensure high quality of care across the EU by means of elevated standards of training and first-class medical practices.**

This discussion takes place in the context of the current debate on the proposal for a directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare presented by the European Commission in July this year. The proposed directive aims at providing European patients with a better understanding of their rights to access proper healthcare, regardless of their place of residence, while respecting the responsibilities of Member States for healthcare organisation.

The European Society of Cardiology (ESC) and the European Heart Network (EHN), coordinating the MEP Heart Group, welcome the new Commission proposal and support the EU Institutions in their effort to enhance quality and safety of care for patients across Europe. Cardiovascular disease is the number one killer in Europe, accounting for 4.3 million deaths in Europe and costing the EU over 192 billion Euros each year.

Prof. Georgs Andrejevs, Co-Chair of the MEP Heart Group, is of the opinion that "European patients have waited too long for this proposal and it is now time that they all have equal access to high quality care across borders."

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European Cardiologists pioneer “heartcare without borders” by developing a number of quality assurance strategies, including initiatives such as a Core Curriculum and a Web-based platform that will facilitate harmonised training methods in Europe.

“Raising the standards of professional education, certification and revalidation in cardiology are practical and important steps to address understandable concerns regarding quality of care and patient safety”, explains Doctor Peter Kearney, ESC Fellow and spokesperson at today’s MEP Heart Group meeting. “Today, there are striking and important differences in the training structures applying in different Member States which give rise to uncertainties for patients regarding the quality of care they may receive. Additionally, migration of doctors within the EU is hampered by lack of a co-ordinated approach.”

“Without any doubt, our patients want high-quality care and, more importantly, transparency on the quality of treatment,” says Susanne Løgstrup, Director of the European Heart Network. “When we talk about the patient’s journey, we do not refer to travelling to another country for treatment. We refer to ensuring that our patients get the necessary support throughout their treatment. Our patients should be informed, involved and reassured. Often though, they are left disempowered, confused and anxious. I think securing the patient’s journey across borders represents a great challenge.”

“Top quality patient care may be shaped by EU legislation, but it depends first and foremost on systematically delivered structured training, which is why we believe in harmonised education”, adds Doctor Peter Mills, Co-Chair of the European Board for the Specialty of Cardiology, the organisation tasked with harmonising the training of cardiologists across Europe.

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The main objective of the **MEP Heart Group** is to promote measures that will help reduce the burden of CVD in the European Union and to raise awareness of the disease among target audiences by a series of dedicated activities. The MEP Heart Group is led by two Co-Chairs, Georgs Andrejevs, MEP and Adamos Adamou, MEP. The European Heart Network and the European Society of Cardiology ensure the support of the MEP Heart Group.

For further information about the MEP Heart Group, please visit:  
[http://www.escardio.org/Policy/prevention/initiatives/MEP\\_Group/Pages/About%20the%20MEP%20Heart%20Group.aspx](http://www.escardio.org/Policy/prevention/initiatives/MEP_Group/Pages/About%20the%20MEP%20Heart%20Group.aspx) or <http://www.ehnheart.org/content/listevent.asp?level0=2133&level1=2138>

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The **European Society of Cardiology (ESC)** represents more than 50,000 cardiology professionals across Europe and the Mediterranean. The ESC comprises 4 Councils for Cardiology Practice, 5 Associations, 19 Working Groups and 50 National Cardiac Societies. Its mission is to reduce the burden of cardiovascular disease in Europe. For further information about the ESC, please visit: [www.escardio.org](http://www.escardio.org)

The **European Heart Network (EHN)** is a Brussels-based alliance of heart foundations and other concerned non-governmental organisations throughout Europe. EHN has 31 members in 26 countries. The European Heart Network plays a leading role in the prevention and reduction of cardiovascular disease through advocacy, networking and education so that it is no longer a major cause of premature death and disability throughout Europe. For further information about the EHN, please visit: [www.ehnheart.org](http://www.ehnheart.org)

The **European Association for Cardiovascular Prevention & Rehabilitation (EACPR)** aims to promote excellence in research, practice, education and policy in cardiovascular prevention and rehabilitation in Europe. For further information about the EACPR, please visit: [www.escardio.org/bodies/associations/EACPR/](http://www.escardio.org/bodies/associations/EACPR/)

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