

1 Public health

- European Commission: consultation on the preliminary opinion on competition among healthcare providers
- European Commission: publication of the MACELI report on the 'Comparative efficiency of health systems, corrected for selected lifestyle factors'
- European Commission: publication of the Evaluative study on the cross-border healthcare Directive (2011/24/EU)
- Special Eurobarometer: patients' rights in cross-border healthcare
- European Commission: opinion on the safety of dental amalgam and alternative dental restoration materials
- HTA network: publication of a reflection paper
- European Commission: launch of a tool on the use of European structural and investment funds
- European Commission: study of the national laws on electronic health records (EHR) in the EU Member States
- Corporate Europe Observatory: endocrine disruptors: a report condemns lobby groups and the European Commission
- EPF: European patient empowerment campaign
- European Parliament: resolution on safer healthcare in Europe
- ECDC: prevalence of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis remains high

2 Medicines and medical devices

- European Commission: legislation on human tissues and cells
- EMA: recommendation to suspend medicines already on the market
- Orphan drugs: Belgium and the Netherlands plan joint negotiations
- EMA: new rules on declarations of interests for scientific committee members and experts

3 Healthcare services in the internal market

- Mutualités libres: an increasing number of Belgians are receiving healthcare abroad
- European Parliament: Petition on licences for third country nationals to establish pharmacies in Greece
- European Parliament: petition from an Indian national on recognition of his professional qualification as a dentist in the UK.

4 Social policy

- European Commission: modernisation of social protection systems. Taking stock of reforms in Member States
- European Parliament: study on the impact of the crisis and of austerity measures on fundamental social rights
- European Commission: employment and social developments: the annual report highlights the main factors in resilience vis-à-vis the crisis
- SPC: reports on the Joint Assessment Framework (JAF) in the area of health
- SPC: social protection performance monitor

5 e-Health

- European Data Protection Supervisor: opinion on 'Mobile Health'

6 Economic policy

- Ireland: results of the third post-programme surveillance mission
- ECOFIN: Council Conclusions on the sustainability of public finances in the light of ageing populations
- ECOFIN: the Council agrees its negotiating stance on the European fund for strategic investments
- ECOFIN: 2015 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the 28 EU Member States (2013-2060)
- European Commission: publication of the draft country-specific recommendations
- WHO: study of the viability of health insurance options for sector reform in Cyprus
- European Commission: results of the public consultation on the Europe 2020 strategy
- European Commission: proposals for integrated guidelines for economic and employment policies
- European Commission: Spain fined for misreporting data on health expenditure
- EIB: 'Juncker' plan, EUR 300 million from the EIB to prefinance 4 projects

7 International trade agreements

- TTIP: joint EU/US statement on public services
- EU negotiator: the TTIP could reduce the cost of medicines
- European Parliament: trade agreements must not weaken European data protection laws
- Public health experts: TTIP a threat to health
- Council: broad support for the concept paper on ISDS
- European Commission: the Commission defends the inclusion of health in the TTIP
- European Parliament: the INTA Committee, in a motion for a resolution, gives the go-ahead to further discussions on the ISDS
- European Parliament: the ENVI Committee asks for health to be excluded from the TTIP
- European Parliament: strong demands from the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on the TTIP
- European Parliament: the Committee on Legal Affairs against the inclusion of an ISDS mechanism in the TTIP
- NHS: a website on the TTIP

8 Judgments of the EU Court of Justice and the General Court

- Judgment, Court of Justice: application of a reduced VAT rate
- Opinion of the AG: exclusion of training hours for hospital doctors
- Judgment, Court of Justice: homosexuals may be excluded from giving blood, but subject to certain conditions
- Judgment, Court of Justice: calculation of invalidity pensions and discrimination on grounds of sex
- Judgment, Court of Justice: removal of medicinal products from a list of pharmaceutical proprietary products covered in addition to fixed payments for hospital treatment – Obligation to state reasons
- Judgment, Court of Justice: right to maternity leave and contribution period
- The EU Court of Justice will examine the certification of medical products

9 Competition

- State aid: the Commission approves German exemptions from mandatory rebates for certain pharmaceutical companies
- Mergers: the Commission approves the acquisition by Zimmer of the orthopaedic implants producer Biomet, subject to conditions
- Croatian competition authority: opinion on a new prescription drugs reimbursement model
- State aid: Commission decision on the measures implemented by the Slovak Republic
- State aid: new guidance to Member States on local public support measures

10 Infringement Proceedings

- Employment: the Commission asks Spain to respect the rights of night workers under the Working Time Directive

11 Publications

- Eurohealth: Reducing inequalities in health and healthcare
- WHO: Access to new medicines in Europe
- WHO: Promoting better integration of health information systems: best practices and challenges
- OSE: European Union politics and law: developments with an impact on national healthcare policy
- LSE: The TTIP, international trade law, health systems and public health
- WHO: Building primary care in a changing Europe
- WHO: Assessing chronic disease management in European health systems: country reports
- EU Country Specific Recommendations for health systems in the European Semester process: trends, discourse and predictors

12 Miscellaneous

- EPHA: analyses in relation to the European Semester
- Council of Europe: conference on the future of the protection of social rights in Europe

1 Public health

European Commission: consultation on the preliminary opinion on competition among healthcare providers

The Expert Panel on effective ways of investing in health has published an opinion, addressing the role of competition among healthcare providers as an instrument to improve efficiency in the use of health system resources.

DOC [EN](#) PDF

European Commission: publication of the MACELI report on the 'Comparative efficiency of health systems, corrected for selected lifestyle factors'.

The study covers the EU-28 Member States, Iceland and Norway, and compares the cost-effectiveness of the European health systems, taking account of variations in lifestyle between countries.

DOC [EN](#) PDF

European Commission: publication of the Evaluative study on the cross-border healthcare Directive (2011/24/EU)

The study aims at analysing the functioning of Directive 2011/24/EU on the application of patients' rights in cross-border healthcare, considering the reimbursement of cross-border healthcare, the quality and safety of this care and waiting time for accessing this care. The study covered the 28 Member States, with the aim of gathering reliable and comparable information from all Member States on the implementation of the Directive.

DOC [EN](#) PDF

Special Eurobarometer: patients' rights in cross-border healthcare

The number of people receiving cross-border healthcare in the European Union has not increased since 2007. 5% of those questioned received medical care in another EU country over the past year. Nevertheless, around half of respondents showed some willingness to get medical treatment in another EU country, some of these subject to certain conditions.

DOC 1 [EN](#) PDF | DOC 2 [FR](#) - [EN](#) PDF

European Commission: opinion on the safety of dental amalgam and alternative dental restoration materials

The European Commission and its Scientific Committee on Emerging and Newly identified Health Risks (SCENIHR), published a final opinion on the safety of dental amalgam and alternative dental restoration materials for patients and users. It aims to assess the safety and performance of dental amalgam and other dental restoration materials, evaluating the scientific evidence about any links between either amalgam or possible alternatives, and allergies, neurological disorders or other adverse health effects.

DOC [EN](#) PDF

▶ **HTA network: publication of a reflection paper**

The Health Technology Assessment (HTA) network published a reflection paper on the reuse of joint work in national HTA activities.

DOC [EN](#) PDF

▶ **European Commission: launch of a tool on the use of European structural and investment funds**

The Commission has launched a tool to support Member States in using European structural and investment funds for effective health investments, as part of the project 'ESIF for health', co-financed by the EU Health Programme.

DOC [EN](#) HTML

▶ **European Commission: study of the national laws on electronic health records (EHR) in the EU Member States**

This study gives an overview of national laws on electronic health records in the EU Member States, and assesses the interaction of these laws with the provision of cross-border eHealth services mentioned in Directive 2011/24/EU. For each EU Member State (and Norway), a specific country report on EHRs is available.

DOC 1 [EN](#) PDF | DOC 2 [EN](#) PDF

▶ **Corporate Europe Observatory: endocrine disruptors: a report condemns lobby groups and the European Commission**

Industry lobby groups and some European Commission departments are condemned as responsible for the Commission's delay in taking action against endocrine disruptors, despite its legal obligations, according to a report from the CEO (Corporate Europe Observatory), entitled 'A Toxic Affair'.

DOC [EN](#) PDF

▶ **EPF: European patient empowerment campaign**

The European Patients' Forum (EPF) officially launched a one-year campaign on patient empowerment. Throughout this campaign, the EPF will work with the health community to promote European discussions on this crucial topic, with a view to encouraging specific actions to improve healthcare systems in Europe.

DOC [EN](#) HTML

▶ **European Parliament: resolution on safer healthcare in Europe**

MEPs adopted a resolution calling for safer healthcare. They strongly regret the negative effects of the economic crisis on national health budgets, and call on Member States to ensure that patient safety nevertheless remains unaffected.

DOC [FR/EN/NL](#) HTML

▶ **ECDC: prevalence of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis remains high**

The incidence of tuberculosis is still falling in the European Union, according to the most recent statistics published jointly by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO)'s Regional Office for Europe. This decline is nevertheless too slow in the view of the experts, who also fear a rise in multidrug-resistant tuberculosis.

DOC [EN](#) PDF

2 Medicines and medical devices

European Commission: legislation on human tissues and cells

The European Commission adopted two new sets of rules on human tissues and cells. Firstly, Directive 2015/565/EU aims to facilitate the screening of all tissues and cells from the donor to the recipient and vice versa. The Commission will establish a 'Single European Code' and an IT platform to ensure uniform labelling and traceability of all the tissues and cells distributed in the EU. Directive 2015/566/EU, moreover, establishes procedures to ensure that tissues and cells imported from third countries meet the same safety and quality standards as those obtained, processed and distributed in the EU.

DOC 1 [FR/EN/NL](#) HTML | DOC 2 [FR/EN/NL](#) HTML

EMA: recommendation to suspend medicines already on the market

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) has confirmed its recommendation to suspend a number of medicines for which authorisation in the European Union (EU) was primarily based on clinical studies conducted at GVK Biosciences in Hyderabad, India, the reliability of which has been questioned.

DOC [EN](#) HTML

Orphan drugs: Belgium and the Netherlands plan joint negotiations

The Belgian (Maggie De Block) and Dutch (Edith Schippers) Ministers of public health have signed a memorandum of understanding allowing the countries to jointly negotiate the reimbursement of orphan drugs with pharmaceutical companies. Orphan diseases are rare diseases affecting fewer than 5 in every 100,000 people. There are currently around 8,000 orphan diseases, for which only around 150 medicines are available on the market.

DOC 1 [FR](#) - [NL](#) HTML | DOC 2 [EN](#) HTML | DOC 3 [EN](#) HTML

EMA: new rules on declarations of interests for scientific committee members and experts

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) has updated its rules on declarations of interests for scientific committee members and experts, to restrict the involvement of experts in the scientific evaluation of medicines if they plan to take up a job in the pharmaceutical industry.

DOC [EN](#) HTML

3 Healthcare services in the internal market

Mutualités libres: an increasing number of Belgians are receiving healthcare abroad

According to data from the Mutualités Libres (independent health insurance funds), the number of Belgians travelling to another EU Member State to receive healthcare has increased by 20% since 2011, with the main country of destination being Germany. In 2014, 3,445 Belgians crossed the border to consult a doctor or purchase medicines (+5% compared to 2011). Most of the cases received out-patient care. The number of cases receiving hospital care or expensive out-patient treatment has increased by 39% compared to 2011.

DOC [FR](#) - [NL](#) HTML

European Parliament: petition on licences for third country nationals to establish pharmacies in Greece

A Lebanese national, married to a Greek citizen, was refused authorisation to open a pharmacy in Greece because she was a third country national. A petition was submitted to the European Parliament's Committee on Petitions, which confirmed the Greek decision, since her spouse had not exercised his free movement rights. The Committee advised the

petitioner to apply for long-term resident status, which would give her the same rights as Greek nationals as regards self-employed activities.

DOC [FR](#) - [EN](#) PDF

European Parliament: petition from an Indian national on recognition of his professional qualification as a dentist in the UK.

While the British authorities recognised that the qualifications gained by an Indian national in Romania are compliant, they refused him authorisation to practise in the UK, on the grounds that he had not practised continuously. The European Parliament's Committee on petitions confirmed that pursuant to the directive on the recognition of professional qualifications, the dentist would need to demonstrate three years of professional experience in the Member State which first recognised the diploma (Romania), to be granted automatic recognition by the British authorities.

DOC [FR](#) - [EN](#) PDF

4 Social policy

European Commission: modernisation of social protection systems. Taking stock of reforms in Member States

The EC has published the report drafted, at its request, by the independent experts of the European Social Policy Network. The report shows that, in many Member States, social investment strategies are a well-established part of social protection systems. In other Member States, however, attempts to carry out reforms have sometimes been hampered by the crisis and by budgetary constraints.

DOC 1 [EN/FR](#) HTML | DOC 2 [EN](#) PDF

European Parliament: study on the impact of the crisis and of austerity measures on fundamental social rights

The economic crisis and austerity measures have had quite a significant impact on fundamental rights in Europe, according to a study carried out for the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs. The study identifies a clear decline in several fundamental rights. As well as access to employment and the right to a pension, the education, health and justice sectors have also been affected by the crisis and by austerity measures.

DOC [EN](#) HTML

European Commission: employment and social developments: the annual report highlights the main factors in resilience vis-à-vis the crisis

According to the 2014 report on Employment and social developments in Europe, which examines the impact of the recession, countries combining high-quality employment with efficient social protection and strong investment in human capital have best weathered the economic crisis. The report nevertheless reveals that the share of the population unable to access medical examinations or treatment increased between 2007 and 2011 in most Member States.

DOC [EN](#) PDF

SPC: reports on the Joint Assessment Framework (JAF) in the area of health

The Joint Assessment Framework (JAF) on health is a mechanism making it possible to detect countries deviating from the European average with regard to a given indicator. Its purpose is to identify the specific challenges facing any such countries on the basis of quantitative information. The Social Protection Committee (SPC) has decided to extend the mandate of the 'Indicators' sub-group, to allow them to continue working on the JAF Health.

A first report explains how the JAF Health was used during the 2014 European Semester. A second then explains the JAF methodology, gives an overview of data sources, and presents the conceptual framework used to adjust the particular health system.

DOC 1 [EN](#) PDF | DOC 2 [EN](#) PDF

SPC: social protection performance monitor

The Social Protection Committee published the 2014 Social Protection Performance Monitor (SPPM). This shows an increase, since 2008, in non-covered medical care needs in nine Member States.

DOC [EN](#) PDF

5 e-Health

European Data Protection Supervisor: opinion on 'Mobile Health'

In its opinion on 'mobile health', the Supervisor recommends that those involved in the development, provision and operation of health applications should take a responsible approach, and that account should be taken of data protection at the design stage ('privacy by design').

DOC [EN](#) PDF

6 Economic policy

Ireland: results of the third post-programme surveillance mission

The surveillance mission concluded that further efforts are needed to reduce public expenditure on pharmaceuticals and to improve cost effectiveness in the delivery of healthcare, especially for hospitals.

DOC [EN](#) HTML

ECOFIN: Council Conclusions on the sustainability of public finances in the light of ageing populations

Given the projected increase in ageing-related public expenditure, and the current economic situation as presented in the Ageing Report, the Council reaffirmed the need to continue appropriate policy action in the EU in all age-related areas, notably pension, health and long-term care reforms.

DOC [EN/NL/FR](#) HTML

ECOFIN: the Council agrees its negotiating stance on the European fund for strategic investments

The EFSI will be established within the European Investment Bank by an agreement between the Commission and the EIB. It will support projects in a broad range of areas, including transport, energy and broad band infrastructure, education, health, research and risk finance for SMEs. It will target socially and economically viable projects.

DOC [FR/EN/NL](#) HTML

➤ **ECOFIN: 2015 Ageing Report: economic and budgetary projections for the 28 EU Member States (2013-2060)**

The ageing report, published every three years, analyses the future impact of demographic changes on the EU economy. This report is used as a basis for the assessment of the long-term sustainability of public finances in the field of health, long-term care and pensions, and for the country-specific recommendations in these areas.

DOC [EN](#) PDF

➤ **European Commission: publication of the draft country-specific recommendations**

The Commission recommends that reforms of the healthcare and pension systems should be continued in Bulgaria, Croatia, Spain, Finland, France, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania and Slovenia. It recommends that France, for example, should take steps to remove barriers to competition. In the view of the Commission, the numerus clausus for access to health professions could be reviewed without jeopardising quality and safety.

DOC 1 [EN](#) HTML | DOC 2 [FR](#) - [EN](#) PDF

➤ **WHO: study of the viability of health insurance options for sector reform in Cyprus**

In support of health sector reform in Cyprus, the Ministry of Health and WHO/Europe have undertaken a national study to compare the efficiency and sustainability of various health insurance schemes. The aim of the study is to determine the potential costs, benefits and risks of operating a national health insurance scheme via multiple insurance organisations.

DOC [EN](#) HTML

➤ **European Commission: results of the public consultation on the Europe 2020 strategy**

The Commission adopted a communication on the results of the public consultation on the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. These results will pave the way for a review of the strategy. Healthcare is not mentioned in this strategy.

DOC 1 [FR/EN](#) PDF | DOC 2 [FR/EN/NL](#) HTML

➤ **European Commission: proposals for integrated guidelines for economic and employment policies**

The Commission has published draft integrated guidelines for economic and employment policies, to be adopted by Council. The integrated guidelines for economic policies call, in particular, for structural reforms in social security systems, but no longer refer specifically to health systems. The employment policy guidelines call on Member States to modernise their social protection systems to provide effective, efficient and adequate protection, ensuring fairness and addressing inequalities, including with respect to accessible healthcare.

DOC [EN](#) [PART.1](#) - [PART.2](#) PDF

➤ **European Commission: Spain fined for misreporting data on health expenditure**

On Thursday 7 May, the European Commission drew, for the first time, on its new powers to impose fines on Member States for manipulating debt and deficit data. The Autonomous Community of Valencia was guilty of 'serious negligence' in having systematically sent incorrect data to the national statistical authorities between 1988 and 2012, especially with regard to health expenditure.

DOC [EN/FR](#) HTML

➤ **EIB: 'Juncker' plan, EUR 300 million from the EIB to prefinance 4 projects**

The European Investment Bank (EIB) announced that it is to prefinance 4 investment projects in 4 Member States which will ultimately receive support from the 'Juncker' investment plan. This operation, for an amount of EUR 300 million, will be used to finance projects which include a health research centre and the construction of 14 new health centres in Ireland.

DOC [EN/FR](#) HTML

7 International trade agreements

TTIP: joint EU/US statement on public services

The European Union and the United States published a joint statement on public services, in which both sides confirmed that trade agreements do not prevent governments, at any level, from providing or supporting services in areas such as water, education, health and social services.

DOC [FR/NL/EN](#) HTML

EU negotiator: the TTIP could reduce the cost of medicines

Regulatory cooperation between the United States and Europe, which should be enhanced by the TTIP, could reduce the cost of medicines. Sébastien Goux, from the Commission's DG SANCO, the EU's TTIP negotiator on pharmaceuticals, said that the EU and the United States are discussing how to exchange confidential information on regulatory inspections. The authorities will then discuss how to exchange other types of information, such as clinical trials for pharmaceutical products.

DOC 1 [FR](#) HTML | DOC 2 [EN](#) HTML

European Parliament: trade agreements must not weaken European data protection laws

In an opinion, the EP's Civil Liberties Committee recommends the incorporation of a comprehensive and unambiguous horizontal self-standing provision that fully exempts the existing and future EU legal framework for the protection of personal data from the agreement, without insisting that it must be consistent with other parts of the TTIP.

DOC [FR](#) - [EN](#) - [NL](#) PDF

Public health experts: TTIP a threat to health

In a joint statement, 71 public health organisations from 41 European countries condemned the proposed TTIP, which, in their view, would undermine public services, entrench inequality, and introduce measures that could lower vital standards on health and consumer safety.

DOC 1 [EN](#) HTML | DOC 2 [EN](#) HTML

Council: broad support for the concept paper on ISDS

The Foreign Affairs Council welcomed the concept paper from Commissioner Cecilia Malmström, setting out ideas for further improvements to the investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism in the TTIP and other future free trade agreements.

DOC [FR](#) - [EN](#) PDF

European Commission: the Commission defends the inclusion of health in the TTIP

The EU negotiators on pharmaceutical products, medical devices and cosmetics in the TTIP met with civil society organisations, to defend the inclusion of health in the trade deal.

DOC [FR/EN](#) HTML

European Parliament: the INTA Committee, in a motion for a resolution, gives the go-ahead to further discussions on the ISDS

The EP's INTA Committee adopted the Lange report, containing recommendations from the EP to the Commission on the negotiations for the TTIP. MEPs adopted compromise amendment 22, calling for water, social services, health systems and education to be excluded from the scope of the TTIP. This exclusion should apply irrespectively of how these services are provided and financed.

DOC [EN](#) - [FR](#) - [NL](#) PDF

➤ **European Parliament: the ENVI Committee asks for health to be excluded from the TTIP**

The Committee on the Environment, Public health and Food safety (ENVI) adopted an opinion calling on the Commission to ensure that there will be no agreement on public healthcare services, GMOs, the use of hormones in the bovine sector, REACH and its implementation and the cloning of animals for farming purposes.

DOC [FR](#) PDF - [EN](#) - [NL](#) DOC.

➤ **European Parliament: strong demands from the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs on the TTIP**

In its opinion on the European Parliament recommendations on the free trade agreement between the EU and the United States (TTIP), the European Parliament's Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL) asks in strong terms for public services to remain within the remit of Member States, and also asks for the exclusion of public services including water, education, social security and health systems from the scope of the TTIP.

DOC [FR](#) DOC. - [EN](#) - [NL](#) PDF

➤ **European Parliament: the Committee on Legal Affairs against the inclusion of an ISDS mechanism in the TTIP**

In its opinion on the European Parliament recommendations on the free trade negotiations between the EU and the United States (TTIP), the Committee on Legal Affairs opposes the inclusion of an investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) mechanism in the future agreement, and calls upon the Commission to exclude public services including water, health, social security systems and education from the agreement, allowing national and local authorities enough room for manoeuvre to legislate in the public interest.

DOC [FR](#) - [EN](#) - [NL](#) PDF

➤ **NHS: a website on the TTIP**

The NHS Confederation, representing organisations responsible for the planning and delivery of services in the UK health service (NHS), has created a special website on the TTIP.

DOC [EN](#) HTML

8 Judgments of the EU Court of Justice

➤ **Judgment, Court of Justice: application of a reduced VAT rate**

By applying a reduced VAT rate to supplies of medical equipment which are not solely reserved for the personal and exclusive use of disabled people, or which are not generally intended for the relief or treatment of disabilities, as well as to products which are not pharmaceutical products generally used in healthcare, Poland failed to fulfil its obligations under the VAT Directive.

DOC [FR](#) HTML

➤ **Opinion of the AG: exclusion of training hours for hospital doctors**

By excluding the training hours of non-consultant hospital doctors, as scheduled in the duty roster and falling outside on-call periods, from the concept of 'working time' in the 'Working Time' Directive, Ireland has failed to fulfil its obligations under this directive.

DOC [FR/EN/NL](#) HTML

➤ **Judgment, Court of Justice: homosexuals may be excluded from giving blood, but subject to certain conditions**

The EU Court of Justice, in a judgment in case C-528/13 handed down on 29 April, finally ruled that by permanently banning all male homosexuals from giving blood, France might not have respected the principle of proportionality.

DOC 1 [FR](#) - [EN](#) - [NL](#) PDF | DOC 2 [FR/EN/NL](#) HTML

• **Judgment, Court of Justice: calculation of invalidity pensions and discrimination on grounds of sex**

According to a judgment of the Court of Justice in case C-527/13, Spanish law on the calculation of permanent invalidity pensions is compatible with EU law. Although a provision in this legislation effectively reduces the amount of the permanent invalidity pension for certain part-time workers, it does not constitute discrimination on grounds of sex.

DOC 1 [FR](#) - [EN](#) - [NL](#) PDF | DOC 2 [FR/EN/NL](#) HTML

• **Judgment, Court of Justice: removal of medicinal products from a list of pharmaceutical proprietary products covered in addition to fixed payments for hospital treatment – Obligation to state reasons**

In the joined cases C-271/14 and C-273/14, the Court recalled that according to Article 6 of Directive 89/105/EEC relating to the transparency of measures regulating the pricing of medicinal products for human use and their inclusion in the scope of national health insurance systems, there is an obligation to state reasons for any decision which restricts the conditions of reimbursement or reduces the level of coverage of a medicinal product by excluding it from the list of proprietary medicinal products covered by compulsory health insurance schemes in addition to services relating to hospital treatment covered by fixed payments in respect of periods of hospitalisation and hospital care.

DOC 1 [FR](#) - [EN](#) - [NL](#) PDF | DOC 2 [FR/EN/NL](#) HTML

• **Judgment, Court of Justice: right to maternity leave and contribution period**

In the case *Rosselle v. INAMI*, the Court ruled that Article 11 of Directive 92/85/EEC precludes a Member State from refusing to grant a worker a maternity allowance on the ground that, as an established public servant having obtained non-active status for personal reasons in order to work as a salaried employee, she has not completed, in that salaried work, the minimum contribution period required under national law in order to be eligible to receive that maternity allowance, even if she has worked for more than twelve months immediately prior to the presumed date of confinement.

DOC [FR/EN/NL](#) HTML

• **The EU Court of Justice will examine the certification of medical products**

The scandal of the breast implants produced by the French manufacturer PIP (Poly Implant Prothèse), containing substandard gel, will be examined by the EU Court of Justice. On Thursday 9 April, the German Federal court decided to refer to the European court the issue of whether the German company TÜV Rheinland, a world leader in the field of quality control, is liable in this case. TÜV Rheinland certified the defective breast implants which caused health problems for hundreds of thousands of women.

DOC [FR](#) HTML

9 Competition

• **State aid: the Commission approves German exemptions from mandatory rebates for certain pharmaceutical companies**

Following an in-depth investigation, the European Commission has concluded that a German scheme exempting certain pharmaceutical companies from mandatory rebates is in line with EU state aid rules. In particular, the Commission found that the scheme allows the costs of the public health system to be kept under control through price freezes on certain medicines, without going beyond what is strictly necessary for this purpose.

DOC [EN](#) HTML

➤ **Mergers: the Commission approves the acquisition by Zimmer of the orthopaedic implants producer Biomet, subject to conditions**

The European Commission has approved under the EU merger regulation the proposed acquisition of Biomet Inc. by Zimmer Holdings Inc., both of the United States. Both companies produce orthopaedic implants and related surgical products. The approval is conditional upon a commitments package submitted by Zimmer. The commitments offered by Zimmer have removed the Commission's concerns that the merger might result in possible price increases for a number of orthopaedic implants in the European Economic Area (EEA).

DOC [FR](#) - [EN](#) HTML

➤ **Croatian competition authority: opinion on a new prescription drugs reimbursement model**

The Croatian competition authority has issued an opinion concerning the exclusionary effect of a new prescription drugs reimbursement model.

DOC [EN](#) HTML

➤ **State aid: Commission decision on the measures implemented by the Slovak Republic**

In the view of the European Commission, a predominantly solidarity-based scheme should not be seen as an economic scheme when the operators have very little scope for competing on quality and taking advantage of effective service-provision.

DOC [EN](#) PDF

➤ **State aid: new guidance to Member States on local public support measures**

The European Commission has concluded in relation to seven measures granting public support to purely local operations that they do not involve state aid within the meaning of EU rules, because they are unlikely to have a significant effect on trade between Member States. Two decisions concern the financing of health structures in the Czech Republic and Germany.

DOC [FR/EN/NL](#) HTML

10 Infringement Proceedings

➤ **Employment: the Commission asks Spain to respect the rights of night workers under the Working Time Directive**

The European Commission has asked Spain to ensure the correct implementation of EU rules on working time. Spain has not transposed the 8-hour absolute limit on night work involving special strain into its national legislation. Moreover, as regards the National Police Force, Spain does not provide night workers with a sufficiently effective procedure to request transfer to daytime work for health reasons.

DOC [FR/EN/NL](#) HTML

11 Publications

➤ **Eurohealth: Reducing inequalities in health and healthcare**

The most recent edition of Eurohealth looks at the reduction of inequalities in health and healthcare in Europe.

DOC [EN](#) HTML

WHO: Access to new medicines in Europe

This report, entitled 'Access to new medicines across Europe: technical review of policy initiatives and opportunities for collaboration and research', with a focus on sustainable access to new medicines, reviews policies which affect medicines throughout their lifecycle (from research and development to disinvestment), examining the current data for Europe.

DOC [EN](#) PDF

WHO: Promoting better integration of health information systems: best practices and challenges

This report addresses the current trends in Member States of the European Union and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) in how to promote better integration of health information systems.

DOC [EN](#) HTML

OSE: European Union politics and law: developments with an impact on national healthcare policy

The influence of the EU on national healthcare systems is largely the result of legislation and policies in other areas, such as European-level coordination of macroeconomic policies and the internal market. This OSE briefing paper explores recent developments in this field, and considers the emergence of a European agenda on reforming healthcare.

DOC [FR/NL](#) HTML

LSE: The TTIP, international trade law, health systems and public health

The London School of Economics published a study entitled "The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership: International Trade Law, Health Systems and Public Health". It summarises and critically evaluates available evidence on the health-related risks and benefits of TTIP. It assesses the overall impact on global health and provides guidelines to the European public health community about priorities to focus on during the TTIP negotiations.

DOC [EN](#) PDF

WHO: Building primary care in a changing Europe

This study gives an overview of primary care in 31 European countries, and addresses the issues of governance, financing and the extent of service provision. The book describes the various dimensions of essential primary care, such as accessibility, continuity and coordination, and indicates the priority areas to be examined.

DOC [EN](#) PDF

WHO: Assessing chronic disease management in European health systems: country reports

This document carries out a systematic examination of the experiences of 12 countries in Europe, taking an explicitly comparative approach and using a common assessment framework in order to gain a better understanding of the diverse contexts within which these new approaches to chronic diseases are being implemented, and to assess the outcomes of these initiatives.

DOC [EN](#) PDF

EU Country Specific Recommendations for health systems in the European Semester process: trends, discourse and predictors

The purpose of this study was to examine the manner in which health systems are being addressed as targets for reform. This was done by documentary analysis of the country-specific recommendations and by a statistical analysis of the potential predictors.

DOC [EN](#) HTML

12 Miscellaneous

EPHA: analyses in relation to the European Semester

The EPHA (European Public Health Alliance) examines health aspects in the 2015 Country Reports and analyses the country-specific recommendations issued by the Council.

DOC [EN](#) HTML

Council of Europe: conference on the future of the protection of social rights in Europe

The reference documents and speeches given at this conference, including by Maggie De Block, are available on line.

DOC [EN/FR/NL](#) HTML

«European Health Care News»

is an electronic newsletter published by the European Social Observatory (OSE), commissioned by the National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance (NIHDI).

Editor: Rita Baeten and Dalila Ghailani

E-mail : baeten@ose.be

Website: <http://www.ose.be>

To subscribe to the mailing list :

http://www.ose.be/health_newsletter/