

## **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.**