

Press Release



Do you have a weak heart? Move to Luxembourg if you want to get really good care! And get out of Romania as quick as you can!

Brussels, July 3rd 2008

The new Euro Consumer Heart Index conclusively demonstrates that effective prevention programmes deliver a clear return on investment. Europe-wide gap is between guidelines for heart disease management and the realities of day to day clinical practice is also evident. Few countries have national screening programmes and there is widespread under-use of medication, despite well accepted guidelines.

Of the 29 countries in the Euro Consumer Heart Index, Luxembourg tops the ranking with 836 points from a possible 1,000, followed closely by France, Norway and Switzerland. The Index compares how consumer-friendly care systems are around Europe, breaking down performance into five categories, covering 28 performance indicators.

According to European Court of Justice rulings patients have the right to choose cross border care. Still the new Euro Consumer Heart Index reveals that only one country, Luxembourg, routinely permits patients to cross borders for care.

EURO CONSUMER HEART INDEX AT A GLANCE:					
1	Luxembourg	11	Italy	21	Czech Rep.
2	France	12	Denmark	22	Portugal
3	Norway	13	Germany	23	Greece
4	Switzerland	14	Belgium	24	Hungary
5	Austria	15	Malta	25	Lithuania
6	Netherlands	16	Ireland	26	Poland
7	Sweden	17	Spain	27	Latvia
8	Slovenia	18	Cyprus	28	Bulgaria
9	UK	19	Estonia	29	Romania
10	Finland	20	Slovakia		

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“By denying patients proper preventive care countries put patients at risk and at the same time undermine the effectiveness of their healthcare expenditure.” says Dr. Arne Björnberg, Research Director for the Heart Index. “Steps like introducing national CVD screening programmes, incentivising care providers for preventive measures, smoking cessation assistance and more exercise in compulsory schools should be implemented to ensure long-term health investments.”

What more should be done to improve delivery of heart health in Europe?

“The European Institutions are working on a directive on patient rights at cross border care, paid for by the homeland healthcare system. To many patients it will contribute to better treatments.” notes the President of the Health Consumer Powerhouse, Mr. Johan Hjertqvist, analysing the Index. “No more delays for political reasons can be accepted and the proposed directive needs to be adopted as soon as possible!”

“Perhaps of even greater importance is the right to choose provider. All countries face variations in quality of care – patients need to be allowed to pick the provider they trust and knows will deliver best quality of care. In addition, by allowing consumer choice, overall standards will inevitably be improved.” Mr Hjertqvist added.

Sub category	Winners	Losers
Information, consumer rights, choice	Denmark	Greece
Access	Belgium, France, Luxembourg, Malta, Switzerland	Portugal
Prevention	France	Czech Rep.
Procedures	Norway, U.K.	Bulgaria, Italy, Poland
Outcomes	Switzerland	Latvia, Romania

About the Euro Consumer Heart Index

The Index provides a ranking of European national cardiovascular healthcare systems across five key areas: Information, Consumer rights and choice, Access, Prevention, Procedures and Outcomes. The Index is constructed from public statistics and independent research.

The producer of the European Consumer Heart Index is the Health Consumer Powerhouse, providers of analysis and information in healthcare. As with all the HCP's indexes it takes a consumer-centric position. The Heart Index was produced with the help of an unrestricted grant from Pfizer Inc.

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For more information and the explanatory report:

http://www.healthpowerhouse.com/archives/cat_media_room.html

About the Health Consumer Powerhouse: www.healthpowerhouse.com

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