France wins tough consumer contest between 26 healthcare systems
“Room for large improvements in every country”

France has the most consumer-friendly healthcare system around Europe, says the 2006 Euro Health Consumer Index (EHCI), presented today in Brussels. The Index compares all the EU 25 national healthcare systems plus Switzerland from a consumer point of view. Measured by 28 indicators in five categories, France was closely followed by the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland and Luxemburg. Best value for money is provided by Slovenia and Estonia.

“This suggests that good healthcare is not only a matter of money but also the right priorities and smart design”, says Johan Hjertqvist, president of the Health Consumer Powerhouse (HCP) in Brussels, the Index provider. “From the consumer point of view there is room for large improvements in every healthcare system”.

For the second year EHCI compares the healthcare systems around Europe. The 2006 overall Index ranks the 26 nations as follows:

1. France 576
2. Netherlands 572
3. Germany 571
4. Sweden 566
5. Switzerland 563
6. Luxemburg 546
7. Belgium 533
8. Austria 498
9. Finland 496
10. Denmark 473
11. Italy 471
12. Slovenia 466
13. Malta 463
14. Hungary 453
15. United Kingdom 436
16. Portugal 435
17. Spain 434
18. Greece 434
19. Cyprus 422
20. Estonia 421
21. Poland 409
22. Czech Republic 403
23. Slovakia 369
24. Latvia 365
25. Ireland 359
26. Lithuania 340

(out of potentially 750 points)
The EHCI groups the 28 indicators into five categories – Patients rights and information, waiting times for treatment, Outcomes, The generosity of the healthcare system and Pharmaceuticals. Serving the healthcare consumer best in these categories were:

 Patients rights and information: The Netherlands.
 Waiting times for treatment: Belgium, France, Germany and Luxemburg.
 Outcomes: Sweden.
 The generosity of the healthcare system: France, Hungary, Malta and Sweden.
 Pharmaceuticals: The Netherlands and Sweden.

“Value for money”

Rated by a different scale – what the consumers get for the money spent on healthcare (“bang for the buck-index”) a number of nations with poor resources perform quite well, says the Index report. Here is the top-10 list regarding value for money in European healthcare 2006:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BFB-adjusted</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Slovenia</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Poland</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Netherlands</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>France</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Austria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“This suggests that good healthcare is not only a matter of money but also the right priorities and smart design”, says Johan Hjertqvist, president of the Health Consumer Powerhouse in Brussels, the Index provider. “A mix of the qualities delivered by the category winners would significantly improve healthcare. From the consumer point of view there is room for large improvements in every healthcare system.”
Press Release

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Weak consumers

The 2006 Index shows a number of eye-catching statistics revealing the still weak position of the European care consumer:

• Three quarters of the national health systems make many patients wait more than three weeks for a cancer treatment;

• Only one third of the Member States would allow you direct access to a specialist as well as the opportunity to get a second opinion;

• Medical records are inaccessible for the patient in half of the Member States.

Taking a strong consumer view, the 2006 Euro Health Consumer Index wants to add to already existing evaluations by institutions like WHO and OECD. Introducing a different perspective, our Index ranks how user-friendly the national healthcare systems turn out around the Union.

About the HCP

Health Consumer Powerhouse is the leading European provider of consumer information on healthcare. We analyse healthcare and compare the outcomes, designing consumer information tools like health care systems and illnesses indexes, consumer press and education. We are a registered Swedish entity working from Stockholm, Brussels and Canada. Our analysis and information are key tools for improvement and has a market value. Within the healthcare industry we have clients like healthcare providers, insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, national and regional authorities, patient organisations et cetera.

For more information about the Euro Health Consumer Powerhouse, please visit: www.healthpowerhouse.com

About the Swedish Health Consumer Index: www.vardkonsumentindex.se (also in English).

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