


Feature Stories




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Health is not business!



Innovation
Personalised medicine as solution to more effective treatments



European Commission
Jean Claude Juncker unveiled his new team



Prices of Drugs
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Fraud WG
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Top Tweets

 AIM @AIM_Healthcare
#EPhearings2014 @toiapatrizia to #Bienkowska: will you create a playing field for all kind of enterprises such as mutuals at european level?
↳ Répondre ★ Favori ↗ Plus

 AIM @AIM_Healthcare · 17 sept.
AIM considers #health is not a #business! Read the Joint Open Letter to President Juncker bit.ly/1mdlAiK
↳ Répondre ★ Favori ↗ Plus

 AIM @AIM_Healthcare · 30 sept.
#Andriukaitis: #mhealth and #ehealth offer bright prospects for European citizen's #health. #EPhearings2014
↳ Répondre ★ Favori ↗ Plus

Health is not business!

16 September - AIM published a joint open letter addressing President Juncker on the move of medicinal products and health technologies to the portfolio of the Commissioner for internal market and industry.

The letter, signed by 20 NGO's in the field of health, criticizes the announcement to move medicinal products and health technologies to the portfolio of the Commissioner for internal market and industry. It was sent to President Juncker who finally announced that shift would be carried out. Read the [Letter](#).

AIM President against the endangering of European citizens' health

12 September - AIM President Zahn was quoted in EPHA press release urging President Jean-Claude Juncker to repeal his decision to move health technology and pharmaceutical policy from DG Health to DG Enterprise and Industry (ENTR).

President Zahn stated that: "AIM regrets that the EU Commission is backpedalling by shifting vital elements related to health such as medicinal products and medical devices to DG Industry and Enterprise. AIM urges to put health of European Citizens in the right hands. This can only be done by DG Health!". Find the Press release [Here](#).

European Institutions

➤ **European Commission**

TTIP and European Citizen's Health

15 September – TTIP will undoubtedly have an impact on the health of citizens. In her article, Monique Goyens comments on the potential benefits and threats of the agreement.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership is meant to foster cooperation between American and European health authorities, thus improving access to innovative medicines as well as facilitating the exchange of information on safety rules and inspections. It could ease the sharing of clinical trial results and avoid the duplication of inspections regarding the quality of products and the compliance with good manufacturing practices. Thanks to the partnership, Europe would also benefit from the high safety standards applied to medical devices in the U.S. On the other hand, achievements such as the better transparency regarding clinical trials would be threatened. Pricing and reimbursement decisions might, if the negotiations are not handled properly, lie in hands of the industry and access to cheaper generic medicines hampered by a change in patents extension. It is thus for the sake of European citizen's health that TTIP should be taken with a pinch of salt.

For more information on the topic, please read the [Article](#).

New European Commission unveiled

10 September – The President of the European Commissioner unveiled his team.

The new European Commission was shaped to focus on tackling the big political challenges Europe is facing: getting people back to work in decent jobs, triggering more investment, making sure banks lend to the real economy again, creating a connected digital market, a credible foreign policy and ensuring Europe stands on its own feet when it comes to energy security. The new College will have seven Vice-Presidents, each leading a project team. They will be steering and coordinating the work of the 20 remaining Commissioners. The most important portfolios regarding mutuals' concerns are Better Regulation, Economic and Financial Affairs, Employment and social affairs, Internal market and Enterprise, Trade and Health. Beginning of October, the MEPs will adopt or reject the college of Commissioners. If accepted the new Commission will take office in November 2014 in any other case, President Juncker will have to adapt his team. Find more information [Here](#).

Nanotechnology to fight Cardiovascular Diseases

9 September – The EU-funded NanoAthero project, which started in 2013, brings together toxicologists, engineers, pharmacists, biologists and chemists in order to tackle the challenge of using nanoparticle-based therapy to diagnose and treat cardiovascular diseases.

Nearly half of the deaths in the EU are caused by heart attack and strokes, 80% of which, according to the World Health Organisation, are preventable. The Commission's project aims at using to potential of nanotechnology in order

to identify patients at risk and better deliver drugs. Indeed, the imaging agents or drugs encapsulated enable to spot, in the circulatory system, vulnerable plaques which could break, obstruct the flow of blood and cause strokes or attacks, and to deliver therapeutic agents to stabilize them. Following its objective to develop safe, effective and innovative nanosystems, the project will focus on two clinical situations, namely blood clots and the build-up of plaque in arteries. NanoAthero will no doubt contribute to fight Europe's top killer disease.

For more information on the topic, please read the [Full Article](#).

“Bridging Health Inequalities”: Commissioner Tonio Borg holds Speech

4 September – Commissioner Borg’s speech, held at the opening of the European Public Health Alliance’s 5th Annual Conference, reminded the audience of the urging fight against inequalities and for universal access to healthcare across Europe.

The European Commissioner for Health reflected on achievements such as the narrowing gap in life expectancy and infant mortality between Member States, but also and more importantly on the nevertheless urging need for improvement in terms of uniformity between social groups and countries. In this context, Commissioner Tonio Borg stressed the necessary implementation of the already existing projects funded by the Commission and aiming at supporting reforms within the context of Europe 2020 strategy and the European Semester. Funds such as the European Structural and Investment Fund should be furthered in order to help reduce health inequalities between regions and socio-economic groups. Commissioner Borg finally casted an eye on the future by mentioning the new EU Health Program (for 2014-2020) which aims at “complementing, supporting and adding value to the policies of the Member States to improve the health of Union citizens and reduce health inequalities”. He reminded the Commission’s intention to launch two pilot projects with the same objectives.

If you wish to read the full speech, please follow this [Link](#).

➤ **Council and Presidency**

Council of the EU: Palliative care, Ebola, Cancer and Innovative drugs

22-23 September - The European Health Ministers met 22-23 September in Milan and addressed the following issues: palliative care and pain therapy, fight against Ebola, innovative drugs and cancer prevention.

They first agreed on the creation of a European network ensuring training of professionals and exchange of information effective therapies in the field of pain. They also discussed the Ebola pandemy and the urgent need for more cooperation and humanitarian aid. Regarding, therapeutic innovation, the ministers reminded the need of further development and immediate access to innovative drugs, while paying attention to patients safety. The weight of rocketing prices of drugs on national budget was also mentioned. They highlighted the importance of increased cooperation, common strategies and exchange of information to cope with the challenges of innovative drugs. Finally, the topic of Cancer prevention was put on the table. Ministers agreed on the need for primary and secondary prevention and targeted information campaigns. In addition, prevention should be intensified through screening and vaccination programmes. Further information [Here](#).

➤ **European Parliament**

MEPs question high pricing of certain life-saving medicines

16 September - The MEPs pulled the Commission and Council attention during the plenary on the rocketing prices of medicines. They state that the pharmaceutical industry is raising the prices of new, life-saving medicines ever higher, thus threatening the equal access to treatments while increasing the burden on healthcare systems.

The Commission replied by pointing out that although negotiating medicine pricing and reimbursement costs is a matter for member states, the EU can facilitate dialogue with pharmaceutical companies and promote joint buying of medicines by member states. The challenge of increasing medicine prices is of huge concern for mutual societies and statutory health insurance which ring alarm bell: too high drug prices threaten the access to healthcare and the health and well-being of European citizens. More information [Here](#).

➤ *National Health Policies*

Nordic countries committed to tackling health inequities

9 September – The 11th Nordic Conference on Public Health held in Norway last August ended by the release of a Declaration urging the participants to foster equitable health and well-being in the Nordic region, and reduce global health inequities. The Declaration recognizes the key role of Health 2020, as the European framework and strategy to improve health and well-being. Please find the declaration [Here](#).

Social Well-being: Skills more important than Education

2 September – *Conclusions compiled in a report by the Joint Research Center's Centre for Research on Education and Lifelong Learning (CRELL) show that citizen's skills and abilities play a key role in their participation in their social and economic lives.*

Indeed, the report analysed the links between different aspects of social well-being, formal education, and skills among the working age population. The results show that “being highly proficient in literacy or numeracy seems to contribute more to positive social outcomes than having a high level of education”. The study should encourage member state to orientate their policy interventions towards the enhancement of such skills both in schools and throughout adulthood. For more information on the topic, please read the [Article](#).

➤ *E-health*

mHealth can help insure the Viability of our Health Systems

2 September – *Chronic Diseases such as diabetes have proven to be a burden for health systems around the globe. In such a context, remote monitoring with mHealth seems to have the potential to reduce healthcare costs.*

Two thirds of today's healthcare costs are caused by chronic diseases. In Europe, the costs of an illness such as diabetes (and more particularly Type 1 Diabetes Mellitus) have increased and, without complications, they amount to about 800 €/year per person. The application of mHealth to this disease can not only improve treatment overcomes and overall patient disease knowledge, but also reduce healthcare costs. Diabetes is only an example of the pathologies which can be treated with the help of technology. No doubt remains about the power of mHealth in contributing to make our systems more effective, accessible and resilient. For more information on the topic, please visit the European Commission's [Webpage](#).

➤ *Trends in health system*

World Alzheimer Day: Funding Dementia Research

21 September: *The World celebrated Alzheimer Day, an event which serves as an opportunity to reflect on the importance of research on this incurable ailment which touches two to eight percent people at a given time.*

LIPIDIET is an EU-funded project which involves the Czech Republic, Germany and Israel, amongst others, and which aims at stopping cognitive decline, Alzheimer's disease and dementia through a combination of medical therapy and nutrition. Indeed, a lipid-based diet, containing notably omega-3 fatty acid, has proven to be an effective means to slow down the progression of Alzheimer's disease and to stabilize cognitive performance in ageing. This effective and safe approach based on diet and life-style healthcare advice has already been tested and has led to an increase in memory performance. The company Danone/Nutricia plans to commercialize potential dietary products which would result from the research. For more information on the topic, please read the [Article](#).

Special Olympics: Sport to fight Discrimination

9 – 20 September – *Special Olympics are taking place in Antwerpen (Belgium) under the slogan “A great performance deserves a great audience. The event appeals for reflexion around the issue of “sport and inclusion”.* On the eve of the event, Mary Davis, Managing Director of Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia (SOEE), highlights the necessity to see sport as a tool to fight discrimination and stigmatization of people with intellectual disabilities. Indeed intellectually disabled individuals are often excluded not only from sports but also from political and social discussions around health. In order to overcome widely spread prejudices, not only do we need to change mentalities but also reach out to people with intellectual disabilities themselves by encouraging them to participate and to experience “equality, freedom and the dignifying means for empowerment” which sports offer. The Italian Presidency has already

committed itself to deal with discrimination in sport, but it is up to each one of us to accept and welcome difference. For more information, please read the [Article](#).

Personalised medicine as solution to more effective treatments

4 September - Personalised medicine is most commonly used to treat cancer by offering patients the best possible treatment by focusing on the individual genetic and biological make-up of their tumours.

If traditional treatments are ineffective, or the cancer is recurrent, patients can undergo tests to determine the specific molecular anomalies in their tumours, and how best to block their enzyme activity. Doctors can then target these anomalies, which may occur in multiple cancers, and are thus able to prescribe medication to treat several tumours simultaneously. Thanks to advances in research, personalised medicine could be made available to more patients, and scientists are optimistic about its future. The European Commission has already allocated funds to several personalised medicine programmes linked to cancer, heart disease and nervous system disorders. More information [Here](#).

Long Working Hours, a threat to Health

2 September – The European Commission is working in a review of the Working Time Directive while studies carried out around the globe clearly show that a spreading of working hours would have a negative impact on workers' health.

An impact assessment undertaken in 2010 for the European Commission showed that a decrease in working hours results in a reduction in health problems, while, on the other hand, extended labour time prevents a good work-life balance. And the list of studies reflecting the harmful consequences of long working hours does not stop there. Researchers from the University College of London found that working more than eleven hours leads to an increase in the probability of developing a heart disease by sixty-seven percent. On the other side of the Atlantic, their American counterparts revealed the link between extended working hours and tiredness and lack of concentration, an interconnection which is all the more alarming as far as healthcare is concerned as the heavy working load of nurses has proven to have an impact on patient's mortality. Nor is gender equality spared with employers being encouraged to reward long working hours.

With the extra evidence that productivity does not depend on working time, let us rethink our priorities and give our health the importance it truly deserves. For more information on the studies, read the [Article](#).

Social Security

Social Security on a path to extinction?

1 October: We celebrate the International Day of the Older Persons, an occasion to reflect on the impact of population ageing on our social security schemes.

Our population is ageing. This does not constitute a novelty for anyone, but what might be the actual threat it represents for our solidarity based social security systems. By 2020, the number of individuals aged 60 or older will reach 1 billion and amount to 22 per cent of the world's population by 2050. Although the extent of ageing very much depends on the degree of development of the region, the trend is nevertheless global. Health is improving at all stages in life, life expectancy increases and maternal and child survival improves all over the world. This demographic change will no doubt have an impact on the financing of our social security systems as we know them, backed up by the active population. Some urgent questions thus arise: will societies be capable of financing existing social programmes adequately without changing the financing model? Will these demographic changes prevent the implementation of new social security programmes? How will demographic change impact on political commitment and general public attitudes towards social solidarity? These are only some of the issues which need to be tackled if we are to safeguard our systems. For more information on the topic, please read the [Article](#).

Pension: Almost half the world's older persons lack pensions

29 September - According to a recent ILO report entitled Social protection for older persons: Key policy trends and statistics, 48% of all people over pensionable age in the world do not receive a pension.

This lack of coverage forces millions of people to keep working as long as they can – often in poorly paid, precarious conditions. Fortunately, the trend is reversing and many developing countries are expanding their pension systems since they became aware of the wide potential of investments in social protection. Enlargement of social protection has become a part of their strategy to drive economic growth. As a matter of fact, the positive impacts of social protection on both social and economic development, for example through boosting consumer spending and

promoting more inclusive economic growth, have put social protection at the forefront of the development agenda. However, this positive trend went through rough time since austerity policies adopted from 2010 onwards have led to reduced social protection for older persons. This has led to measures including cuts in health and other social services, as well as pension reforms such as raising the retirement age, reducing benefits and increasing contribution rates. More information [Here](#).

International Conference on Social Protection floors in Nigeria: Role of mutuals highlighted

19-20 September - The colloquium was organised by the Union of Francophone Social and Economic Committees and enabled the numerous participants to address the main challenges of the implementation of universal social protection floors in Africa.

The creation of universal social protection floors is an already on-going process in many Western African Countries (Burkina, Ivorian Coast). Mr Huchet, former AIM president, took part in the event and made the voice of mutual societies heard. He emphasized the crucial role of mutuals as an alternative to for-profit insurers to guarantee a solidarity based, high quality and universal health protection which can answer citizens' needs. This has already been underlined in a report published in 2013 by the IASS (International Social Security Association) entitled *Mutual benefit societies: A tool for developing social protection worldwide, particularly in the health sector* ([EN](#)). Mr Huchet took the floor to present the programme PASS (Mutualist Strategy Development Support Program) whose objective is, on the one hand, to accompany the development of the African mutual movement and, on the other hand, to develop the economic environment by creating investment opportunities, technical and financial partnerships for European and African organizations in supply of healthcare, insurance or credit services.

The programme is hosted in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, at the MUGEF-CI offices. PASS will accompany the opening of the first African Mutuality Union's (UAM) regional office and UAM's members in their development. It will officially launch its activities in January 2015. PASS has a new brand new [Website](#) and will release a monthly [Newsletter](#) to which we warmly recommend you to register. You can find further information on the colloquium [Here](#) (FR).

Time to Strengthen the Relationship between Europe and Africa

28 August - Europe has failed to consider the rise of Africa. However, the continent represents an opportunity for the future of the European Market.

Nor the American way, with neoliberal reforms and disastrous social consequences, nor the Chinese strategy, based on massive and rapid investments can satisfy the needs of Africa and Europe. It thus appears that the time for a new "Brussels consensus" has come. The consensus would be based on an action of support to the investments and to trade with Africa, as well as on a cooperation with industrial partnerships involving companies, States and Research and Development. Europe could thus not only focus on the possibility to mobilize African resources with projects which could have a direct impact on the mobilization and transformation of national savings, the development of local financial markets, the management of public finances and the transparency in the management of natural resources, but also accompany the private sector in the conquest of African markets by providing financial means. This financing could be obtained through the creation of a new Development and Investment Bank which would make up for the current limitations of the European Bank of Investment in Africa. On the other hand, 20 million euros, part of the European Fund of Development for the period 2014-2020, and 10 billion euros, provided yearly by Member States to Africa, are already available. For more detailed information, read the [Article \(FR\)](#).

Events and Publications

➤ Events

6-7 October: HEAL General Assembly

<http://www.env-health.org/news/events-57/>

6 October – SOLIDAR: Achieving validation of learning outcomes - best practices and the way forward, Brussels

<http://www.solidar.org/spip.php?page=agenda&date=2014-10-14>

7 October – Parliament: World Mental Health Day - Living with Schizophrenia: The Critical Role of Caregivers

http://www.eufami.org/images/Living_with_Schizophrenia_agenda_Brussels_policy_event_071014_Final.pdf

9 October: European Commission: Poverty conference: The Europe 2020 poverty target, Brussels

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=fr&catId=88&eventsId=994&furtherEvents=yes>

10 October - FreSsco (Free Movement and Social Security Coordination) network seminar: The articulation between Directive 24/2011/EU (RD 81/2014) and the EU Social Security Coordination Regulations, Madrid
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=fr&catId=88&eventsId=1002&furtherEvents=yes>

15 October- Towards integration of palliative care in an age-friendly EU, Brussels
<http://www.palliativecare2020.eu/>

3-5 November - Inclusive Growth Research Infrastructure Diffusion: Winter School on Intergenerational Inequalities, Brussels
<http://inclusivegrowth.be/about-ingrid>

6 November – EHFCN: Conference: "Less fraud, waste and abuse in healthcare ? Change the paradigms !", Athens
<http://www.ehfcn.org/>

7 November - AEIP: "European Conference on local investments, complementary healthcare and integrated welfare...", Venice
http://www.aeip.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=329%3Avenice-conference-2014&catid=18%3Aevents&Itemid=5&lang=fr

17-18 November - Italian presidency of the European Union: Social economy event : « Unlocking the potential of the social economy for EU growth, Rome
<http://italia2014.eu/en/news/post/unlocking-the-potential-of-the-social-economy-for-eu-growth/>

19 November – EIOPA: National Conference. Topics: pensions and solvency, Brussels
<https://eiopa.europa.eu/conferences-events/2014/eiopa-conference-2014/programme/index.html>

➤ Publications

Global AgeWatch Index 2014
<http://www.helpage.org/global-agewatch/>

Making Europe a safer, healthier and more productive place to work - The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA)
<http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/making-europe-a-safer-healthier-and-more-productive-place-to-work-pbTE0114653/?CatalogCategoryID=iEKep2lx3hEAAAEud3kBqSLq>

Investing in people - EU funding for employment and social inclusion
<http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/investing-in-people-pbKEBC14001/?CatalogCategoryID=iEKep2lx3hEAAAEud3kBqSLq>

Basic figures on the EU, Eurostat
<http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/basic-figures-on-the-eu-pbKSG14003/?CatalogCategoryID=iEKep2lx3hEAAAEud3kBqSLq>

Entrepreneurship for people with disabilities, European Commission and OCDE
<http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/entrepreneurship-for-people-with-disabilities-pbKEBE13003/?CatalogCategoryID=iEKep2lx3hEAAAEud3kBqSLq>

Convergence report 2014, European Commission
<http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/convergence-report-2014-pbKCAR14004/?CatalogCategoryID=iEKep2lx3hEAAAEud3kBqSLq>

Grégory Claeys, Zsolt Darvas and Guntram B. Wolff, “Benefits and drawbacks of European unemployment insurance”, Bruegel Policy Brief, 13 septembre 2014, 8p.
<http://www.bruegel.org/publications/publication-detail/publication/847-benefits-and-drawbacks-of-european-unemployment-insurance/>

Social protection for older persons: Key policy trends and statistics, OCDE
http://www.ilo.org/global/publications/WCMS_310211/lang--en/index.htm

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For more information on one of the topics mentioned above, please contact the AIM Secretariat.

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