

## Feature Stories



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**2 December** European Affairs Working Group

 **AIM** @AIM\_Healthcare · 24 nov.

Council recognises need for greater [#transparency](#) in [#TTIP](#) negotiations and adopts conclusions on EU's [#trade](#) agenda. [bit.ly/11NBear](http://bit.ly/11NBear)

**9 December** Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Working Group

 **Chris Nas** @CNas66 · 14 nov.

Great & supportive audience today @AIM\_Healthcare meeting in Dubrovnik to discuss [#mentalhealth](#) and European Alliance on MH in All Policies.

 **AIM** @AIM\_Healthcare · 13 nov.

Croatian Health Minister Siniša Varga welcomes @AIM\_Healthcare General Assembly to Dubrovnik via videoconference.

### **AIM celebrated its XXXIIIrd Extraordinary General Assembly in Dubrovnik**

*Word of Christian Zahn, AIM President on the meetings:*

*“Dear members of the AIM General Assembly,  
We look back at a very successful trip to Dubrovnik. I hope you agree with me.  
For many of us it was not easy to get to this beautiful UNESCO city. But it was  
worth it, for many reasons. There was not much time to see the city, but the old  
town, with its cloisters, castles and city walls made me want to extend my stay.*

*We look back at very interesting and high quality meetings. Our secretariat did  
again an excellent job. The logistics were taken care of in a professional way.  
And the speakers that were invited were extremely knowledgeable and  
inspiring. I am very happy with the support we received from the Board of  
Directors and the General Assembly for our AIM Working Programme. I am  
confident about the successful implementation of our ambitious working program 2014-2017. The Presidium, together  
with all members and of course our secretariat is committed to make the coming period a great success. Thank you all  
very much for your support, and I look forward to working together with you in the months and years to come.”*



For more information on the meetings, read [AIM Special Briefing](#).

### **AIM accepted as official partner of the EU-OSHA Campaign: “Healthy Workplaces manage Stress”**

*The campaign coordinated by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work aims at preventing psychosocial risks and stress at the workplace.*

The psychosocial workplace environment has a significant effect on the health and well-being of workers. For the individual worker, the negative effects may include burnout and depression, difficulty in concentrating, problems at home, drug and alcohol abuse, and poor physical health, especially cardiovascular disease and musculoskeletal problems. At the organisation level, it can lead to poor overall business performance, increased absenteeism, presenteeism (workers turning up for work when they are sick and unable to function effectively), and increased accident and injury rates. The good news is that psychosocial risks can be prevented and managed. The Healthy Workplaces Campaign 2014-15 “Healthy Workplaces Manage Stress” was set up to in 1996 by the European Union in order to contribute to the improvement of working life in the European Union. It was officially launched on 7 April 2014 and will run up to November 2015 with the celebration of the Healthy Workplaces Summit. The main focuses of the campaign are to raise awareness of the growing problem of work-related stress and psychosocial risks; to provide and promote the use of simple, practical tools and guidance for managing psychosocial risks and stress in the workplace; and to highlight the positive effects of managing psychosocial risks and stress in the workplace, including the business case. AIM has recently been accepted as official partner of the campaign and some of its members are already actively involved in project and activities for the prevention of psychosocial risks and the improvement of workers’ environment as a whole. For more information, please visit our [Website](#).

### **AIM was represented on the 7th European Public Health Conference held in Glasgow**

*19-22.11.2014 - The EUPHA-Injury Section has organised a European seminar on effective interventions for falls prevention among older people in collaboration with the Prevention of Falls Network for Dissemination (ProFouND) and EuroSafe.*

Each year, one in three adults aged 65 and older falls, mostly at home. Falls often lead to severe injury and long-term physical disability, increased dependency and reduction in quality of life. The associated costs of treatment and the ‘cost’ to the individual’s engagement in an active and fulfilling life are considerable.

Clear evidence now exists that most falls among older people are associated with identifiable and modifiable risk factors. There is also ample evidence to show that interventions, particularly those promoting physical activity and strength and balance training, are effective and can significantly reduce the burden of the rising epidemic of fall injuries in an ageing Europe.

“Insurers are payers and players in the broad field of prevention with regard to both research promotion and prevention measures. We operate in complex environments with various socio-political, economic and structural barriers and potential facilitators to prevention. For the long-term sustainability and resilience of health systems we have to collectively engage in applicable prevention innovations such as promoted by ProFouND, EUPHA and EuroSafe. Groundbreaking cost saving innovations, easy and ready to use, are needed to stimulate the much necessary shift towards more preventive oriented health care systems,” concludes Dr. Erich Koch who represented AIM and SVLFG (Germany) at this congress. Legal mandates, organisational bodies and clear finance as well as implementation responsibilities are one of the prerequisites for such a shifting.

#### **About ProFouND**

ProFouND is an EC-funded Thematic Network. It works closely with the EIP-AHA to bring about the dissemination and implementation of customised best practice guidance and tools in falls prevention across Europe, using novel ICT solutions.

#### **About EUPHA**

The European Public Health Association (EUPHA) aims to contribute to the improvement of public health in Europe.

#### **About EuroSafe**

EuroSafe is the lead organisation for the exchange good practices in injury research and prevention in Europe through its networking programmes, publications and the series of bi-annual European Injury Conferences.

#### **About SVLFG**

The SVLFG is the comprehensive service provider in the field of agricultural social security and is solely responsible for the implementation of the agricultural accident insurance, health insurance and long-term care as well as old-age insurance for farmers in Germany.

## European Institutions

### ➤ *European Commission*

#### **The EU strengthens regional cooperation with Latin America**

19.11.2014 - *The European Union has announced its regional cooperation package (Multiannual Indicative Regional Programme) for Latin America for the period 2014-2020 with an allocation of €925 million over seven years.*

The programme includes two main components:

1. Activities at continental level: an indicative budget of €805 million will be dedicated to regional initiatives open to all the partner countries in Latin America, and will focus on a series of priority areas:
  - The security-development nexus,
  - Good governance, accountability and social equity,
  - Inclusive and sustainable growth for human development,
  - Environmental sustainability and climate change.
  - Higher education
2. Sub-regional programme for Central America: a second component, with an indicative allocation of € 120 million, will cover the following areas:
  - Regional Economic Integration
  - Security and the Rule of Law
  - Climate change and disaster management.

You can find more information by downloading the Multiannual Indicative Regional Programme for Latin America [Here](#).

## **Unlocking the Potential of the Social Economy for EU Growth: The Rome Strategy**

*17.11.2014 - The Rome Declaration based on the proceedings of the Rome Conference, (17-18 November) reminds of the necessity of strengthening the role of social enterprises in times of economic crisis.*

The Rome declaration invites the new Parliament and Commission to take concrete actions in key areas of intervention and has identified 9 priorities to promote the spread and strengthening of the Social Economy as a key driver of economic and social development in Europe.

The participants (among them AIM ) of the Working group entitled: Policy support at National and European level: regulation, State aid, fiscal incentives, and related matters, came to the conclusion that mutuals are vital player in the economic social environment of the EU internal Market and that a proper European Mutual statute would be the most pertinent solution to enable mutual societies to fully their reach potential. You can find the Rome Strategy [Here](#).

## **Social enterprises: a report presents first comparative overview**

*17.11.2014 – In a study released at the Occasion of the Rome Conference on Social Enterprises (17-18 November 2014), the European Commission outlines the main features of social enterprises in 28 EU Member States using a common definition and approach.*

The study identifies several barriers faced by social enterprises, such as poor visibility and recognition of the sector, inadequate legal frameworks limited financial resources, difficult access to markets and the lack of business support and development structures, training, and workforce development. According to the report only eight countries (Bulgaria, Greece, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Sweden, and United Kingdom) have a policy framework in place to encourage and support the development of social enterprises. Social enterprise policy is currently under development in seven countries (Ireland, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, and Romania). This study is the first step of the creation of a map of social enterprises in Europe. Stakeholders are invited to give their contribution to this mapping at this address: [online feedback form](#). [Read the executive summary](#) and the [Country reports](#).

## **Taxation: Commission presents options for simpler and more robust future VAT regime**

*30.10.2014 - The Commission published a document which sets out five options for shaping the future VAT regime.*

The aim of the reform would be to create a “definitive VAT regime”, to replace the current temporary VAT system, which has been in place in the EU. The future VAT regime should be designed to better meet the needs of businesses in the Single Market and be less susceptible to fraud. The document also gives a brief explanation of the options foreseen by the Commission which is now undertaking an in-depth assessment to determine the impact of each of the options for businesses and for Member States. On the basis of its findings, the Commission will present the possible way forward in spring 2015. Find the document [Here](#).

### **➤ Council and Presidency**

## **Insurance mediation: Council sets out its position**

*05.11.2014 - The Council of Ministers agreed on a draft directive establishing new improved rules on insurance mediation.*

The new text which recasts and repeals directive 2002/92/EC on insurance mediation is aimed at:

- extending the scope of application to all distribution channels, including proportionate requirements for those who sell insurance products on an ancillary basis
- identifying, managing and mitigating conflicts of interest
- enhancing the suitability and objectiveness of insurance advice;
- ensuring that sellers' professional qualifications match the complexity of the products they sell
- Clarifying the procedure for cross-border market entry

Negotiations with the European Parliament will now start. More information [Here](#).

## ➤ *European Parliament*

### **Medical Devices: MEPs Peter Liese and Glenis Willmott receive mandate for negotiations while the Council has difficulties in finding an agreement**

05.11.2014 - The ENVI (Environment and Health) Committee of the European Parliament gave on 5 November 2014 the negotiation mandate to two MEPs to hold the Parliament's position voted in April 2014. In its position, the Parliament asks for strict rules for the delivering of the market authorization, marketing and surveillance of medical devices. For its part, the Council is still blocking on some issues such as the reprocessing of single-use devices and the monitoring process of medical devices before and after the marketing authorization. The Italian Presidency still hopes to reach an agreement before the end of 2014.

## Health

## ➤ *National Health Policies*

### **Cardiovascular diseases: children under threat**

28.10.2014 – *The French Federation of Cardiology (FFC) published a white paper on cardiovascular health which states that heart diseases are the leading cause of infant mortality within the early months of life.*

The white paper describes the issues related to congenital heart diseases and presents effective ways to tackle them. In France, between 6.500 and 8.000 children are born every year with congenital defects. Despite the advances in treatments and surgical interventions, 85% of them will continue to suffer throughout their life. FFC highlights the necessity to better treat these illnesses thanks to an early diagnosis which can be made as early as during pregnancy through foetal ultrasounds, but also to monitor patients affected throughout their lives, particularly women of child-bearing age.

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

## ➤ *HTA*

### **HTA Network adopts its Strategy for EU cooperation on Health Technology Assessment**

30.10.2014 - *National authorities responsible for Health Technology Assessments (HTA) adopted a Strategy setting out the framework for European cooperation on HTA. This strategy was developed in cooperation with HTA European stakeholders (payers, providers, patients and industry) who participate in the HTA Network as observer. On behalf of the payers (AIM and ESIP), Irina Odnoletkova (MLOZ) has actively taken part in the discussion on the shaping of the strategy.*

This Strategy calls for:

1. A broad scope of cooperation, covering Pharmaceutical products, medical devices, and other technologies and where HTA is applied from early development to well established use;
2. Synergies and complementarity of European activities with national activities, so that work done jointly by several HTA agencies can be reused in national HTA Reports;
3. Strengthening the synergies between HTA and regulatory requirements for pharmaceutical products and medical devices;
4. Addressing European cooperation on HTA in the global context;
5. Exploring, Identifying and possibly testing sustainable models to maintain cooperation at scientific and technical level, as well as relying on a possible 3rd Joint Action on HTA.

Find out more [Here](#).

## ➤ eHealth

### **New App to identify Suicidal Tweets**

29.10.2014 - Samaritans, a North-American charity whose main goal is to reduce the risk of suicide and raise awareness on the issue, has launched a free app which would notify users if people they follow publish tweets potentially suicidal.

The application identifies public tweets containing words and phrases indicating distress and attracts followers' attention on them to give them the opportunity to take action if necessary. The App "Samaritans Radar" is aimed at "digital natives", 18-35 year olds who belong to the first generation to grow up with a computer at home and who spend on average over three hours a day on social networks.

According to the United Nations' health agency's first global report on suicide prevention published on 4 September 2014, more than 800,000 people commit suicide every year – around one person every 40 seconds. To learn more on the topic, read the [Article](#).

### **Nanoparticles: the Future of Disease Prevention**

29.11.2014 - The American company Google is working on a technology which would enable to diagnose cancers, to avoid heart attacks and Strokes and allow early detection of many diseases.

Google's ambition is to constantly monitor blood through nanoparticles which would be introduced in the blood flow of patients through the ingestion of a pill and would connect to a bracelet by a sensor. The particles' role would be to adhere to a carcinogenic cell or a fragment of DNA, to find fat plates threatening to come unstuck from the linings of blood vessels and thus potentially cause strokes or heart attacks, or even to constantly monitor chemicals in blood. Through magnetism, they would then be gathered by the bracelet which will be able to read the information.

Professor Paul Workman, executive director of the Cancer Investigation Institute in London, warned Google about the high levels of anxiety which an early diagnosis might cause, but also about the unnecessary treatments which might derive from it.

The company has recently shown more interest on the medical sector. It has already designed lenses to measure glucose levels for diabetic patients and has purchased a start-up company which designed a spoon for counteracting the shaking of patients suffering from Parkinson.

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

### **AP@home project develops Artificial Pancreas**

28.10.2014 – The AP@home project aiming at the development of a prototype artificial pancreas which started in 2010 just came to an end.

The artificial pancreas (AP) monitors glucose levels day and night and calculates how much insulin should be delivered via an infusion pump. An AP platform establishes communication between the glucose monitor and the insulin pump already available commercially and runs software algorithms developed by partners of the project. Patients can live normal lives without the constant supervision by a physician. The treatment of diabetes patients under at home conditions is thus considerably improved, diabetes care simplified, patients' quality of life improved and risks of complications reduced. The development from the prototype into a product is foreseen for the coming years.

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

## ➤ Trends in health systems

### **Only 1 out of 10 dollars of Social Investment devoted to Young People in Latin-America**

20.11.2014 - A report by the Iberoamerican Youth Organisation (OIJ) and The Economic Commission for Latin-America and the Caribbean (CEPAL) showed that only 12.2% of the 21% of regional GDP devoted to social public spending was destined to young people.

In a region where youth constitutes 75% of the population, the report's findings are all the more alarming. Most of the previously mentioned 12.2% is spent on education, followed at a considerable distance by health and social security.

The age group is thus severely disadvantaged in the planning of social inversion. The report states that the deficit in the participation of public investment in youth compared to other age groups amounts to nearly 50%.

According to the study, a better youth incorporation in the labour market would allow them to be part of society in an autonomous way and facilitate their personal and interpersonal enrichment. Investing more on them constitutes a winning bet for the future development of the region.

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

### **3rd Latin-American and Caribbean Congress on Global Health celebrated in Costa Rica**

*19-21 November 2014 – The Latin-American Alliance on Global Health and the University of Costa Rica celebrated the 3rd Congress on global health under the motto: “Global Health in the Post-2015 Development Agenda: Challenges from the Americas”.*

The event organized in Costa Rica fosters communication and exchange of experiences and knowledge between worldwide nations with the objective of strengthening or generating alliances for the investigation and action in the world agenda of Global Health and Development. Its vision: considering health as a global public wealth, a social justice issue and a universal right. The conferences focused on topics such as social determinants, integration in all policies, universal coverage, the economic crisis and its implications, environmental management, or the innovative models and strategies in health promotion.

For more information on the congress, please visit the [Website](#). (SP)

### **Study on cross-border healthcare in Europe**

*19.11.2014 – The European Observatory of Health Systems and Policies’ paper explores how European health systems are responding to increasing patient and professional mobility across the European Union.*

Some questions are addressed: How are health systems in Europe responding to patient and professional mobility, and what are the implications for access and quality of health services? Is greater coordination needed, or do calls for increasing integration reflect a political agenda for increasingly competitive markets in health care?

Recent legislative changes which clarify patient entitlements to cross-border care will have important impacts on national and EU-wide health policies. This policy summary provides a review of the current state of issues relating to cross-border health care in Europe. Download the report [Here](#).

### **Health and Environment Annual Review 2013**

*15.11.2014 - HEAL’s 2013 Annual Review showcases successes and collaborations with members and partners in different policy areas (environment and health, climate and energy, air quality and chemicals), as well as highlighting HEAL’s 10th anniversary celebrations last year.*

[You can download the full Annual Review here](#)

### **About Heal**

The Health and Environment Alliance (HEAL) is a leading European not-for-profit organisation addressing how the environment affects health in the European Union.

### **Health in the 2015 EU Draft Budgetary Plans**

*6.11.2014 – The EU’s new economic governance framework requires that the countries of the euro area submit their draft budgetary plans to the European Commission each year. In a document, the European Public Health Association (EPHA) provides a first-look analysis of the national health system reforms undertaken by Member States in this framework.*

Some interesting findings:

- Many countries are implementing health system reforms: Finland, Austria, France, Ireland or Germany
- In Malta, a new ‘child allowance’ has been introduced for low income families but only paid where good school attendance and regular health check-ups are reported.
- In the Netherlands, a number of committees have been established to ensure that budget cuts do not adversely affect access to care
- In Ireland, the market share of generics has been significantly increased.

- Both the French and the Dutch governments intend to curb health expenditure in 2015, whilst the Austrian government reports a surplus of €0.1bn in public health funds for 2014.
- Measures to increase the tax base for health insurance have been adopted in Slovenia

Find out more by downloading the report [Here](#).

#### **About EPHA**

The European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) is the European Platform bringing together public health organisations, representing health professionals, patient groups, health promotion and disease specific NGOs, academic groupings and other health associations. EPHA's mission is to protect and promote public health in Europe.

#### **EU's new Sugar Quotas to increase Diabetes Rates**

6.11.2014 – *A dramatic increase in diabetes and obesity is foreseen in the EU in consequence of the liberalization of the European sugar market planned for 2017.*

Production quotas will indeed be brought to an end and European producers will be able to sell their remaining stock at minimum price. This would increase the so far limited use of high fructose corn syrup, a syrup known to have been the cause of a genuine obesity epidemic in the US since its introduction. Cheaper and easier, the syrup containing dangerous fructose which goes directly to the blood might be used in the EU food production from 2017. The International Diabetes Federation estimates that by 2025 the number of people affected by diabetes will increase to over 380 million. For more information on the topic, read the [Article](#).

#### **Trends in health systems in the former Soviet countries**

30.10.2014 - *The European Observatory on health systems and policies released a report on the state of play of health systems in Eastern Europe.*

More than two decades after the fall of the Wall, this study reviews the progress that has been made in reforming health systems in 12 countries that emerged from the former Soviet Union and documents how far they have come in reforming the health systems they inherited from the Soviet period. It presents the challenges with regard to the financing, the organization and governance of health systems, health workforce, provision of health services and performance. In a nutshell, it sheds light on the persistent and often widening health gap between former communist countries as compared to countries of similar economic performance elsewhere. The report is available [Here](#).

#### **➤ Social Protection**

#### **More than 120 million persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in 2013**

04.11.2014 - *According to Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union, almost 1 out of every 4 persons in the EU is in at least one of the following three conditions: at-risk-of-poverty after social transfers (income poverty), severely materially deprived or living in households with very low work intensity.*

The proportion of persons at risk of poverty or social exclusion in the EU28 in 2013 (24.5%) has slightly decreased compared with 2012 (24.8%), but is higher than in 2008 (23.8%). Countries where the risk of poverty or social is the highest are Bulgaria, Romania, Greece, Latvia and Hungary. On the contrary, the lowest shares of persons being at risk of poverty or social exclusion were recorded in the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden. Find out more [Here](#).

#### **Developing countries opting for social protection over fiscal consolidation**

17.11.2014 - *An ILO report launched ahead of the meeting of Economic and Social Councils in Seoul, South Korea, points to divergent trends: while many countries are moving towards more fiscal consolidation and less social spending, several developing countries are boldly expanding social protection schemes.*

According to the ILO's "[Social protection global policy trends 2010-2015](#)", 120 countries will be reducing public expenditure in 2015. Of these, 86 are developing countries. The overall number is expected to rise to 131 countries in 2016. But while many countries are making cuts to public spending, most middle-income countries are boldly expanding their social protection systems, with immediate impacts on reducing poverty and inequalities, thereby contributing to their domestic demand-led growth strategies.



Countries like Argentina and South Africa have introduced universal child benefits in recent years. Others, like Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, China, Maldives, Namibia, Panama, South Africa, Swaziland and Timor-Leste, have achieved universal or nearly universal coverage of pensions. Many others have introduced social transfers for the unemployed, mothers, children and older persons. Find out More [Here](#).

## Events

### ➤ Events

1 December – World AIDS Day

<http://www.worldaidsday.org/>

3 December – UN: International Day of People with Disability

<http://www.idpwd.com.au/>

9 December – European Commission: Reducing harmful use of alcohol using behavioural interventions

[http://europa.eu/newsroom/calendar/events/2014/12/09\\_reducing\\_alcohol\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/newsroom/calendar/events/2014/12/09_reducing_alcohol_en.htm)

15-18 December – European Parliament: European Parliament Plenary Session

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/infos-details.html?id=10901&type=Flash>

12 December: Universal Health Coverage Day

<http://www.universalhealthcoverageday.org/en/>

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

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