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### New European Task Force on Patient Safety

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Health First Europe together with Task Force Patron MEP Christofer Fjellner (EPP, Sweden), launched the Task Force on Patient Safety to demand more stringent recommendations for Member States with regards to the safety of patients. As part of the review of the Council Recommendations on patient safety, including the prevention and control of healthcare associated infections, the Task Force will utilise its broad participation of members – in particular patients, healthcare professionals, hospitals and industry - to formulate further recommendations for Member States following on the European Commission's review.

As the Chair of the Task Force, Health First Europe (HFE) Honorary President John Bowis stated the aim of the Task Force is to "enshrine patient safety throughout the Member States and set specific, quantitative targets for the reduction of Healthcare Associated Infections (HAIs)." He expressed that "Specific targets must be set for the reduction of HAIs to encourage Member States to take every precaution to protect the safety of citizens when they enter a healthcare setting – whether that be in hospital or home care."

The European Centre for Disease and Prevention Control (ECDC) estimates that HAIs occur in one hospitalised patient in 20, which equates to almost 4.1 million patients per year who acquire an infection while in hospital. HAIs also account for approximately 37,000 deaths per year in the European Union.

Patron of the HFE Task Force, and HFE MEP Supporter, MEP Christofer Fjellner discussed the need for further action in this realm particularly as the Member States reply to the European Commission questionnaire on the implementation of the recommendations since 2009. He declared, "There are many aspects to patient safety. Patients must be protected from adverse events while receiving care. Equally important, continued innovation in medicines and healthcare practices must be ensured. Also, to feel safe, patients must be given good and reliable information to be able to determine risks and make informed choices about their own health." The Health First Europe Task Force will publish its demands during an event in the European Parliament alongside the ongoing review of the implementation of the 2009 Council Recommendations in winter 2011/2012.

Participants in the HFE Task Force on patient safety include: International Association of Patients Organisations (IAPO); European Health Telematics Association (EHTEL); European Medical Association (EMA); European Union of Private Hospitals (UEHP); International Diabetes Federation (IDF); European Federation of Public Service Employees Union (Eurofedop); Medical Technology Group and Eucomed.

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