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The Year 2008



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2007 may be behind us but challenges remain in all areas of life. These include the need to continue to build our common European home. In 2008, Slovenia and, subsequently, France will assume the presidency of the European Council. In the field of health policy, the Board of the EAHM, assisted by its Subcommittee on European Affairs, will place vital issues affecting hospitals on the European agenda.

These include questions relating to cross-border cooperation between hospitals, funding for hospital services and accreditation of hospitals. A further issue arises from the different position in the EU member states regarding the role of the state in the provision of health services. In the final analysis, however, the key task from a hospital perspective is to determine critical success factors in terms of the quality of service delivery and the economic viability of hospitals. Does the profit motive or the public interest – or a combination of the two - optimise cost efficiency and quality? What should be the role of the state in the provision of medical and care services? How much privatisation and commercialisation can the inpatient care sector tolerate? What will be the future role of the so-called “third sector” – the not-for-profit healthcare providers? The EAHM and its member associations do not take an ideological position on these matters. Our organisation consists of hospital managers and chief executives from state, private and not-for-profit institutions.

This edition of *(E)Hospital* focuses on risk management in hospital, a key, multi-dimensional issue that is also a vital building block for quality management. It is, therefore, a prerequisite for achieving lasting success in every hospital. A question repeatedly asked in hospitals is which services and tasks should be organised internally and which should be outsourced. This issue is addressed in all its complexity in this edition of *(E)Hospital*.

The EAHM will hold its 22nd European Congress in 2008, this time in the beautiful Austrian city of Graz on 25 and 26 September. The focus of the agenda is the fascinating issue of leadership in and by hospitals, set against the backdrop of the wide-ranging challenges they face in the areas of patient care, human resources, politics, economics, management and ethics. This topic provides an excellent starting point for our congress and will advance our ongoing efforts to learn from one another, engage in meaningful debate and arrive at a common view of the future of our hospitals.

The country focus section provides an overview of the host country of Austria and its health system. Against the background of our most recent congresses in Dublin and Oslo and our excellent seminar in Düsseldorf, we look forward to the forthcoming EAHM congress and cordially invite our readers to attend. Come to Graz!

Note: The editorials in *(E)Hospital* are written by leading members of the EAHM. However, the contributions published here only reflect the opinion of the author and do not, in any way, represent the official position of the EAHM.

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