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Friends of Europe-Les Amis de l'Europe

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'Why health is crucial to European recovery'



Friends of Europe-Les Amis de l'Europe is a European think tank aiming at the promotion of the discussion on all kinds of matters related to EU policy. Thus the present colloquium was organised on Health and its developments today and in the future.

1) A first panel discussion was held on Health and Austerity and finding new ways to stimulate innovation

The need for innovation in healthcare was underlined, in spite of the current policies of austerity. Industries play an important part in achieving such innovation. However, as was stated by Mark Pearson, Head of the Health Division of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), industries should be stimulated not to think solely on their immediate gains but also concentrate on the long term. Maybe even more than the need for promoting the research on new medication, there is a need for a new model in which people are encouraged to live healthier, to eat healthier.

A main aspect in this new model is prevention. Investment in prevention is essential. For example, considering diabetes and its growing impact on healthcare, a prevention policy can be costs saving.

During the debate, healthcare was compared with a big tree. The sun does not reach the bottom anymore, all the light goes to the top.

2) A second theme of study was the need for Efficiency and freeing up resources

The affordability of healthcare is in danger. The need for reform shows from examples such as Greece, where people have started to turn to street clinics for their medical needs. In Spain, older people, who up till now got their medication for free, must partly pay for their drugs now.

European Parliament Member Alojz Peterle (EPP, Slovenia) made an appeal for more Europe in healthcare. However, investments in healthcare, restriction policies should be implemented wisely and not blindly.

Pascal Garel, representative from HOPE (European Hospital and Healthcare Federation) stated that the need for reform is a permanent need and is not linked with the current or any crisis.

He made an appeal for more and not less solidarity and stressed the importance of promoting first line care.

Bert Van Caelenberg took the floor as representative of Eurofedop. He regretted that no representative from the workers had been invited to take part in the panels. However, not only patients but also healthcare professionals can provide first-line information about what should be the necessary contents of reforms.

