

Basic information for the press release

(waiting period until the 4th of November 2005, 17:00 h)

Letter of intent for cross-border cooperation in healthcare in the Baltic Sea Region signed

4th November 2005, Viborg (Denmark)

Today representatives from eight Baltic Sea countries signed a letter of intent in Viborg, Denmark, to strengthen the cooperation between the Baltic Sea Regions in the healthcare sector. Its main objectives are to safeguard the effectiveness and acceptance of cross-border medical care, to make "electronic health" (eHealth) a meaningful clinical tool, to optimise cross-border care by eHealth especially for cross-border commuters, and to attract further partners from other European countries to join the initiative.

Representatives from Denmark, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, and Sweden signed the letter of intent, for example Bent Hansen, Amtsborgmester of Viborg, 1st Vice Chairman of Danish Regions and Chairman of the Danish Healthcare Committee signed the letter and Ms Gitta Trauernicht, Minister of Social and Health Affairs, for the German land of Schleswig-Holstein.

The initiative is based on the ongoing EU-project „eHealth for Regions“. This cross border co-operation has the objective to create integrated structures for the enhancement of personal healthcare in the Baltic Sea Region. The letter of intent will ensure the long-term continuity of activities and the network after the end of the project period in May 2007.

17 institutions from 7 Baltic Sea countries are already working together on the improvement of the cross border health care system since June 2004. In particular the use of already existing possibilities of eHealth in these countries is taken centre stage. So called pilots for the mobility of tourists and border crossers should be achieved. The highest priority of the intended co-operation is to provide patient care at low-cost and to improve the quality of healthcare services. The access to healthcare and its quality in rural and urban areas should be ensured by the help of eHealth-technologies.

The lead partner of the project is the German health insurance company AOK Schleswig-Holstein. The project has a total volume of 3.27 million Euro, is co-financed with 1.7 million Euro by the European Union within the framework of the INTERREG III B programme, and has a duration of 36 months (June 2004 to May 2007).

More detailed information on the project development, partners, events as well as a project brochure can be found on the project homepage www.ehealthforregions.net.

The press is invited to follow the signing of the agreement at the 4th of November 2005 at 16:30 p.m., directly afterwards will be a press conference.

Location: Golf Hotel Viborg, Randersvej 2, 8800 Viborg, Denmark