**International Forum Gastein calls for applications for the 2013 European Health Award**

 **Bad Hofgastein, April 16th 2013** – In the run-up to the sixteenth annual European Health Forum Gastein conference which will take place from 2 to 4 October 2013, the International Forum Gastein has again announced the annual search for a winner of its European Health Award. The award of €10,000 Euros will be sponsored by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health and FOPI, the association of research-based pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies in Austria.

The International Forum Gastein initiated the European Health Award on the occasion of the European Health Forum Gastein´s tenth anniversary in 2007. The Award is intended to celebrate achievements in health policy initiatives of European importance that have contributed to meeting health challenges across Europe.

“The purpose of the European Health Award is to highlight and reward European cross-boarder initiatives that can contribute in a clear and significant way to improving health and treatment“, says EHFG President Professor Helmut Brand. “Today´s health problems are more multifaceted and complex than ever. Demographic change, technological advances and scarce resources are the cornerstones defining future health policy in Europe.”

The 2012 award went to the “European Health Literacy Project (HLS-EU)”. Good health literacy is vital for people to make sound health decisions during the course of their everyday lives, however until recently the European region was lacking an evidence base on health literacy. To address this issue, a consortium of nine partners led by Maastricht University coordinated the European Health Literacy survey and established the international network ‘Health Literacy Europe’ and national advisory boards on health literacy in eight countries. The survey results showed that on average 47% of those surveyed had limited health literacy, highlighting the problem as an important policy challenge facing Europe.

The 2011 award was won by “Child Safety Report Cards”, a pioneering system for monitoring and reducing injuries to children, while in 2010 the winner was the “Chronic Diseases Alliance“, a project which united ten European public and professional health organisations active in tackling the four main risk factors for chronic non-communicable diseases in order to build a common preventive approach. In 2009 the award went to the “European Practice Assessment” (EPA) project: a pan-European development for quality management in primary care that developed a set of indicators enabling physicians to improve the organisation and management of their practices and exchange knowledge and experience. In 2008 the CAWT Project, an Irish cross-border cooperation project for improving the quality of nephrological care, won the award. In 2007 the “European Alliance against Depression”, committed to supporting sufferers of depression and preventing suicides, was the first initiative to receive the prize.

**The selection criteria**

* A health policy initiative of European importance that focuses on public health or health care delivery addressing an important  threat to the health of the population
* The initiative must demonstrate a benefit to the health and health care of the population in terms of prevention, improving quality of care, access, efficiency and cost effectiveness of care.
* The initiative shall be already in the implementation phase in at least two European countries, although it does not have to be completed at the time of application.
* Expected outcomes and improvements have to be demonstrated and at least initial results must be presented and be measurable.
* The health policy initiative has to be transferable to other European countries.

Submitted projects will be evaluated by a renowned jury consisting of representatives from the fields of health care, science, politics and economics.

Applications to be considered for the award must be submitted by Friday, 31 May 2013. Information and an application form can be found at www.ehfg.org/de/healthaward.html.

Photos from the award ceremony at the EHFG 2012: www.ehfg.org/gallery/congress2012/day-1-03.10.2012/opening-plenary/

**EHFG Press Office:**
Dr Birgit Kofler
B&K Kommunikationsberatung GmbH
Phone Vienna office: +43 1 319 43 78 13
Mobile: +43 676 636 89 30
E-Mail: press@ehfg.org

Skype: bkk\_birgit.kofler