

Copenhagen, January 31, 2006

EUnetHTA - the first European network to assess health technology - starts work in Copenhagen

"EUnetHTA, the European Network for Health Technology Assessment, creates a win-win situation for all parties. Policy makers, clinicians, and patients will benefit from strong, evidence-based findings made available in a more cost-effective way", says Prof. Finn B. Kristensen, Head of the EUnetHTA Project Secretariat, headquartered in Denmark.

EUnetHTA will coordinate the efforts of 27 European countries including 24 Member States of the European Union in evaluating health technology in Europe and is supported by a grant from the European Commission.

"We expect EUnetHTA to become a robust resource to inform European healthcare decision makers about safe and cost-effective methods in health care, and the project is unique in the sense that it aims at an increased involvement of various stakeholders in the Member States' healthcare systems in the HTA process," says Professor Kristensen.

Most European countries have public agencies to evaluate health technologies. These bodies engage in HTA, *Health Technology Assessment*, a systematic, transparent process to summarize information on the medical, social, economic and ethical issues related to the use of a new or established health technology. HTA brings together scientific evidence to inform policy makers, clinicians, and the public on safety, effectiveness and cost of health technology.

In 2004 the European Commission and Council of Ministers targeted HTA as 'a political priority', recognising 'an urgent need for establishing a sustainable European network on HTA'. A Commission's call was answered by a group of 35 organisations throughout Europe, led by the Danish Centre for Evaluation and HTA, DACEHTA, in Copenhagen. "EUnetHTA forms a cohesive, transparent network of HTA bodies, ministries of health and research institutions to maximise the use of existing evidence and reduce overlap of effort in HTA activities in Europe", explains Professor Kristensen.

Ultimately EUnetHTA aims to identify the best medical practices to help decision makers invest in safe, effective technologies – and avoid spending scarce resources on methods that are not equally safe and effective, or even perhaps harmful.

Since different countries in Europe use largely similar methods in health care, they often spend time and money assessing the same technologies. EUnetHTA will help avoid much of this duplication through structured sharing of the scientific evidence that agencies in the network have compiled already. Greater opportunities to coordinate studies across Europe will also generate new evidence.

Initially, the EUnetHTA project is being co-financed by the European Commission and contributions from network members. The network is expected to continue sustainable operations following the 3-year project grant from the Commission.

For more information, please contact the EUnetHTA secretariat at +45 7222 7548, eunetha@sst.dk, www.eunetha.net.

Contact: Prof. Finn Børlum Kristensen
EUnetHTA Project Leader
Danish Centre for Evaluation and Health Technology
Assessment, DACEHTA
National Board of Health
Islands Brygge 67
2300 Copenhagen, Denmark
Phone +45 7222 7727

