

Foreword

Since the last edition was published in September, there have been two events of interest to all dentists and to those involved in public health in particular. The first was the Summit on Oral Health in Europe, which was held at the European Parliament in Brussels on 5 September 2012. The second was a workshop, organised by the European Association of Dental Public Health (EADPH) and held in Prague on 2 and 3 November. A report of this workshop appears elsewhere in this edition of *Oral Health and Dental Management*.

The Summit was organised by the Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe (PBOHE) and was hosted by Ms Karin Kadenbach, the member of the European Parliament for Lower Austria. The PBOHE's founder members are the Association for Dental Education in Europe (ADEE), the Council of European Chief Dental Officers (CECDO), the European Association of Dental Public Health (ADPH), GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare, and the Wrigley Oral Healthcare Program. Its Secretariat is provided by Hill and Knowlton Strategies and is based in Brussels.

Its aims are to bring European organisations together to:

- Promote oral health and prevention of oral diseases as one of the fundamental actions for staying healthy.
- Address oral healthcare inequalities and the major oral health challenges of children and adolescents, of the increasingly elderly population, and of populations with special needs.
- Develop the knowledge base and strengthen the evidence-based case for action within the European Union (EU) on oral health.
- Bring oral health into all EU health policies.
- Provide sound advice and recommendations to the European Institutions for action with regard to EU oral health policy developments.

During the last 12 months the PBOHE has met a number of representatives from a variety of European organisations, including senior officials of the European Commission. It has also commissioned a report on *The State of Oral Health in Europe* [1], which was launched at the Summit.

In her opening address at the Summit, Ms Kadenbach reported that there was good and bad

news on oral health in the EU. The good was that in many Member States, since 1980, there had been a very considerable improvement in the prevention of dental caries in children and a substantial reduction in the number of elderly people with no teeth. However, it was apparent that:

- Traditional curative dental care is a significant economic burden for many industrialised countries. The current EU spending on all aspects of oral care and treatment was estimated to be €79 billion and if the trends continue, this figure could be €93 billion by 2020.
- Demographic change represents a formidable challenge for oral health, because decreasing loss of teeth within the elderly population is expected to increase treatment needs significantly in the coming years.
- There are rising inequalities across Member States in terms of access to appropriate oral care, as low-income populations most in need of oral care face higher hurdles compared to high-income groups.

Ms Kadenbach explained that the report outlines a number of successful initiatives that can help reduce the social and individual burden of oral diseases through a number of measures such as: community-based prevention initiatives, reduction of socio-economic and environmental risk factors for chronic diseases, the promotion of routine oral hygiene practices and oral health awareness, and the provision of better access to oral health care. Applying these models and sharing good practices across the EU can play a vital role in improving the oral health of Europeans. The report has many key policy recommendations to try to achieve the goal of better oral health for all EU citizens.

A series of speakers then addressed the range of oral health problems that Europe faces and the need to integrate oral health policy into general health policy.

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Editor-in-Chief

Reference

1. Platform for Better Oral Health in Europe. *The State of Oral Health in Europe*. Brussels: PBOHE; 2012. Accessed (2012 Nov 12) via: www.oralhealthplatform.eu