In 2004, the European Commission (DG Sanco – Health & Consumer Protection) organised the first edition of the Open Health Forum which convened more than 300 participants from a wide range of organisations (health professionals’ organisations, public health NGOs, patient groups and services providers and funders). This Forum was set up as an annual exhibition event providing a platform for networking and exchanging ideas on the EU Health policy.

This year, DG Sanco organised the second edition of the Open Health Forum on 7th & 8th November last in Brussels. This edition addressed the issue of “Health challenges and future strategy”. Various speakers gave an overview on the main challenges faced by the EU in the field of health, and this at a time where EU financial framework until 2013 needed to be settled.

Three working sessions dealt with the following issues:

**Development of the EU Health Strategy**

This session discussed the recent Commission Health and Consumer protection strategy and the proposal for a Community Health and Consumer programme. It notably addressed the question of the appropriate role for the EU in health policy.

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Health products: Pharmaceuticals and medical technology
This session addressed how to enhance the involvement and influence of stakeholders with respect to pharmaceuticals, medical devices and products of human origin. The debate related to the questions of public health and patient safety in the field of health products, together with the issues of competitiveness and innovation.

Health services
This session focussed on the latest developments in health services. The inclusion of these services into the draft legislation on services in the internal market was looked into. The address given by Ms. Anne Van Lancker, MEP, highlighted the specific nature of health services and health systems, which, according to her, justified their exclusion from the scope of the draft Directive in order to preserve the quality of care. The questions of quality and access to health care were also debated with a particular emphasis on the patient point of view.

The afternoon plenary session was the occasion of a last exchange of views.

The whole meeting was excellent in terms of networking opportunities with other NGOs representatives as well as with EU officials. The activities of UEMS were presented in a stand in the lobby of the meeting. This was the occasion to present the latest documents adopted by UEMS Council as well as the questions of interest to European Specialists in the field of CME and quality of care.

The Executive of UEMS would like to thank the services of the European Commission for their tremendous work in organising this meeting.