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**“Patients’ rights have no borders”**

***A communication campaign on***

***cross-border healthcare kicks off in Malta and in other 13 EU Countries***

In Malta, only 34% of people are aware about their rights when going abroad for care, whilst only 24% of citizens know about the existence of National Contact Points. This information was revealed in a report published by the European Commission on 4 September 2015. The report looked on the state of play of the Cross-border Healthcare Directive and clearly showed that European citizens’ awareness about their right to choose healthcare in another EU country remains low. Indeed, just 2% of the EU citizens take advantage of its implementation, corresponding to those who can go abroad to be treated in more qualified and specialized healthcare centres.

As the Malta Health Network, we strongly believe that the impact of Directive 2011/24/EU will depend to a large degree on the knowledge of patients across the EU of their rights under the legislation and its potential benefits. Moreover, an appropriate implementation of the Directive will also help the remaining 98% of people who decide or have to stay, for personal reasons, in their own country to get treatments to benefit from better quality and safety standards as well as to be informed about their rights, also in relation to the cross-border access to healthcare and its repayment, and enhance cooperation between Member States. It is important to note that this Directive is totally different to arrangements which exist between the Maltese Health Authorities and foreign entities where Maltese citizens are referred for specialized treatments.

“To celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the European Patients’ Rights Day, we have decided to organise a widespread campaign in cooperation with some of the national civic & patient associations involved in our network”, states Mariano Votta, Director of Active Citizenship Network

A European communication campaign on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare kicks off in Malta and in other 13 EU Member States. The initiative is promoted at national level by [Malta Health Network](http://www.maltahealthnetwork.org) and at European level by [Active Citizenship Network](http://activecitizenship.net/) and will be officially presented to the EU Institutions on 3 May 2016  [at the European Parliament in Brussels](http://www.interestgroup.activecitizenship.net/114-may-3rd-2016-patients-rights-have-no-borders-as-well-as-risks.html). The event will be hosted by the [MEP David Borrelli](http://www.interestgroup.activecitizenship.net/mep-supporters.html), Co-Chair of the EFDD Group and Co-Founder of the [MEPs Interest Group “European Patients' Rights and Cross-border Healthcare”](http://www.interestgroup.activecitizenship.net/). Malta is represented on this Interest Group by MEP Dr Therese Comodini Cachia.

The information campaign on Cross-border healthcare will consist of a series of initiatives at local/national/EU level with on-the-spot and online activities to be realized from June to December 2016. During these 6 months an evaluation, from the civic point of view on the effects of the Directive 3 years after its implementation (October 2013 - October 2016) will be undertaken and results will be officially presented to the EU Commission and Parliament.

In 2017, the campaign will be reorganized in the remaining 14 countries of the European Union. The outcomes of the initiatives carried out in 2016 will help improve the campaign in the other 14 EU countries.

For 2016, at national level, the communication campaign will be coordinated by the following civic & patient associations:

* Austria: Lower Austrian Patient and Nursing Advocacy
* Bulgaria: Patients' Organizations “With You”
* Cyprus: Cyprus Alliance for Rare Disorders
* France: Inter-Association on health (CISS)
* Germany: Bürger Initiative Gesundheit e.V.
* Hungary: Hungarian Federation of People with Rare and Congenital Diseases
* Ireland: Irish Patients’ Association
* Italy: Cittadinanzattiva - Tribunal for patients’ rights
* Lithuania: Council Of Representatives Of Patients' Organizations Of Lithuania
* Malta: Malta Health Network
* Netherlands: European Patients Empowerment for Customized Solutions
* Poland: Institute for Patients’ Rights & Health Education
* Slovakia: Society of Consumer Protection
* Spain: Plataforma de Organizaciones de Pacientes

On the Occasion of Patients Rights Day the Malta Health Network is holding a seminar about Patients’ Rights. This will be held on Monday 25th April, in the Russian Chapel, Presidential Palace, Attard between 5.30-7.00pm. It is important that you book your place by sending and email to: info@maltahealthnetwork.org