

Amsterdam, 13-4-2017

Dear members of the EAHL,

This letter gives you a brief update on the forthcoming 6th EAHL conference on 'health rights entitlements and the distribution of healthcare', Bergen, Norway, 28-29 September 2017 (Chair: Karl Harald Sovig).

The selection of 10 PHD scholarships for funding by the Norwegian public law foundation in remembrance of Arvid Frihagen has taken place. Their presentations on 27th September 2017 (and ensuing discussions) hold promises for an interesting event.

Likewise, the 3 keynote speakers at the conference (Birgit Toebes (NL) on 'International human rights protection and the distribution of health care'; Markus Frischut (Austria) on: 'EU regulations concerning distributions of health care', Steven Lierman (Belgium): 'Which criteria to use when prioritizing in times of scarcity?') no doubt will give rise to challenging discussions.

This holds also for the opening panel on "The Future of European Health Law in the light of the Brexit and Junckers 'five scenarios for the future of the EU'" with AnneMarie Duguet, France; Herman Nys, Belgium; Henriette Roscam Abbing, NL) .

With the General Data Protection Regulation of 2016 (entrance into force 2018) we expect that the subject of private life (data protection in health care being an essential condition) will receive ample attention at the conference. As it stands now, related special events include a workshop on 'FAIR use of health (research) data; an interest group 'to be' on 'data-sharing of research data'; an interest group on 'human biological material' (the group will provide the state of the art of its work) and - last but not least - presentations on national implementations of the GDPR by the EAHL interest group on data protection (chair: Jean Herveg (Belgium).

While nowadays much focus of health lawyers is on the EU data protection framework, the activities of the Council of Europe in this field should not be overlooked. The importance attached to 'data protection' by that Organisation is shown by the yearly global celebration of the data protection day launched on the 28th of January 2006 by the Council of Europe, the date on which the Council of Europe's Data Protection Convention (Convention no 108) was opened for signature. The Convention is the only international Treaty of its kind in this field. Presently it is undergoing a modernisation process. The new text will ensure consistency and compatibility with the EU framework.

A revision of the Council of Europe Recommendation (R(97)5 on the protection of health-related data is under discussion. The (also to be updated) Handbook on European Data Protection Law, rules and jurisprudence of the Council of Europe and the EU includes a para. (8.2.) on medical data. The right to respect if private life also is part of the Council of Europe's Human Rights and Biomedicine Convention, this year 20 years young.

An EAHL interest-group 'to be' on tobacco control as an essential public health measure is also in the picture. We will keep you informed on the issue.

A possible 're-start' of a teaching network on health law in Europe is yet another issue on the Board's 'Wish-List' for discussion during the conference. Further information on this subject will follow in due course.

The EAHL Board is looking forward to welcome you to a challenging conference.



NB: Abstract submission for the conference closes first of May 2017.