



Amsterdam, 22-10-2016

Dear members of the EAHL,

In this letter you will find an update on EAHL related activities.

As you may recall, one of the Association's instruments to achieve the objective of encouraging and facilitating co-operation in the field of health law is the creation of EAHL sponsored research networks (= so-called interest groups). The first EAHL sponsored interest group - on biobanks - was created in Paris, 23 September 2016, at the occasion of the EUCALEX joint workshop meeting on stem-cell banking. Main aims of the Interest Group include exchange of information about bio-banking law and ethical guidelines, and the establishment of collaborations between its members in order to contribute to ongoing developments of interest for patients and professionals at EU and national regulatory levels. The Group will present the results of its work at the 2017 EAHL Conference. More details, including possibilities to join the interest group, will soon appear on the EAHL website. From 26- 27 September 2016 the Conference "Health Care in Europe, a Safe Heaven? Standard of care from a multidisciplinary perspective" was held at University of Innsbruck, with EAHL Board Member Verena Stuhlinger as co- organizer. With subjects such as 'Choosing Wisely: Challenges in Modern Medicine' and 'Decisions and Health' the conference addressed some of the challenges European Health Law presently is facing. Last but not least, on 13-14 October 2016 the Nordic Biomedical Law Conference took place. Subjects covered were "Law and Medicine", "The rights of patients and health-care providers", and "Regulation of healthcare services". Results of research were also presented. Judging by the PHD presentations during the conference, in the Nordic countries health law is flourishing.

The EAHL Board expects many phd students will attend the special phd-event preceding the forthcoming 6<sup>th</sup> EAHL conference (Bergen, Norway, 28-29 September 2017).

The theme of the conference - healthcare entitlements and the distribution of health care in Europe – is challenging, especially where nowadays many European health systems are faced with sustainability questions, changing environments, and increased patients expectations. In a sense, the theme ties up with the European Commissions' recent proposal for a third European Pillar of Social Rights, which includes health- and long-term care.

New approaches and technologies to be successful not only must be cost-effective and affordable, but also require increased focus on, respect for and protection of individual rights of the patient. This the more so where health becomes increasingly viewed upon as a market opportunity. Upholding equity in access to good quality services, avoiding a social divide and promoting patients' rights requires an appropriate (European) answer. The EAHL 2017 conference theme encompasses this broad perspective of patients' rights.

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President of the EAHL