EHI 2016 media release

**New EU heart study:**

**Maltese heart care fights an uphill battle against poor lifestyle**

**Major inequalities in the use of basic heart medicines between countries**

**Heart care conditions in Malta, ranking 20th among 30 measured countries, should improve, says the Euro Heart Index 2016 (EHI), published today in Brussels. The Index compares heart care in 30 European countries, with France the champion, closely followed by Norway and Sweden. Heart care improves in almost every country but the gaps across Europe threaten equity. Equal access to basic heart medication would save tens of thousands of lives.**

“In heart care, Malta shares a problematic life style pattern with many European countries” says Dr. Beatriz Cebolla, the EHI Director. But Malta stands out for a life-threatening combination of obesity in all segments of the population and (possibly for that reason) high prevalence of diabetes. There is also a lack of efficient and coordinated structure of heart care. Together these factors cause high levels of heart-related mortality. Yet we do not have the full picture as many heart care data are missing, which is strange, given that small Malta has only one major hospital. Reporting should not be that complicated." Dr. Cebolla adds.

Professor Arne Björnberg, the HCP chairman, explains the larger picture: “In heart care, there is a significant gap between European guidelines on how to treat patients, and how cardiac care is performed. The deployment of basic, inexpensive heart medicines seems haphazard, hardly reflecting the needs of Europeans. More systematic use of therapies such as statins and clopidogrel would save thousands of lives!”

“Evidently, there is a connection between high spending and good outcomes. Affluent countries can afford admitting patients into hospital care on weaker indications, which can prevent that conditions grow worse”, adds Professor Björnberg. “But a lot can be achieved also with small budgets, with the right priorities.”



**About the EHI**

The Euro Heart Index provides a ranking of cardiovascular healthcare systems in 30 countries across four key areas: Prevention, Procedures, Access to care and Outcomes, measured on 31 indicators. The Index is constructed from public statistics and independent research. The producer of the EHI is the Health Consumer Powerhouse Ltd, which has been analysing performance of European national healthcare systems in around 50 index publications since 2004. All HCP indexes take a consumer-centric position. The production of the EHI 2016 was supported by an unrestricted grant from Amgen Europe GmbH.

Full EHI report with data and methodology explained, matrix and media releases are freely available on: [www.healthpowerhouse.com/publications/euro-heart-index-2016/](http://www.healthpowerhouse.com/publications/euro-heart-index-2016/)

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