ORGANISATION OF A CONFERENCE ON THE PREVENTION OF TYPE 2 DIABETES DURING THE AUSTRIAN PRESIDENCY

COMMISSIONED BY THE FEDERAL MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND WOMEN
Organisation of a Conference on the Prevention of Type 2 Diabetes during the Austrian Presidency

Final report

Project Team:  
Sabine Haas  
Pauline Hauper  
Theresia Unger

Coordination:  
Theresia Unger

Language Editing:  
Daniela Beuren (phoenix Vienna)

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Index of Contents

1 Introduction ........................................................................................................................................5

2 Cooperation with principals and partners .................................................................6
   2.1 BMGF ........................................................................................................................................6
   2.2 EC .............................................................................................................................................6
   2.3 Partners .....................................................................................................................................6

3 Organisation of the conference ...................................................................................8
   3.1 PCO ...........................................................................................................................................8
   3.2 Invitation and participation of experts .......................................................................................8
   3.3 Conference design ....................................................................................................................9

4 Outcomes of the conference .........................................................................................12
   4.1 Participation ........................................................................................................................... 12
   4.2 Recommendations .................................................................................................................12
   4.3 Follow-up by the Austrian presidency .................................................................................... 13

5 Dissemination .................................................................................................................. 16

6 Assessment of the experiences and results .................................................................. 17
Index of Abbreviations

BMGF Austrian Federal Ministry of Health and Women
(Bundesministerium für Gesundheit und Frauen)
EASD European Association for the Study of Diabetes
EC European Commission
EP European Parliament
EPSCO Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council
EU European Union
FEND Federation of European Nurses in Diabetes
IDF International Diabetes Federation
ÖBIG Austrian Health Institute
(Österreichisches Bundesinstitut für Gesundheitswesen)
ÖDG Austrian Diabetes Association
(Österreichische Diabetes-Gesellschaft)
PCD Primary Care Diabetes
PCO Professional Congress Organiser
WG Working Group
WGKK Vienna District Health Insurance Fund
(Wiener Gebietskrankenkasse)
WHO World Health Organization
1 Introduction

Type 2 diabetes was chosen as one of the priorities of the Austrian presidency (January – June 2006) in the field of health. To prepare the content for the discussion in the Informal Meeting of Health Ministers, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health and Women (BMGF) decided to organise a conference in February 2006 in Vienna and to invite experts from all over Europe to join in an exchange of expertise. The implementation of this project was carried out by the Austrian Health Institute (ÖBIG) together with international organisations renowned in this field – the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD), the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Europe, the Federation of European Nurses in Diabetes (FEND) and Primary Care Diabetes (PCD) Europe – as well as the Austrian Diabetes Association (ÖDG) and the Vienna District Health Insurance Fund (WGKK). The European Commission (EC), Health and Consumer Protection Directorate-General, provided financial support within the framework of the “Programme of Community action in the field of public health (2003-2008)”. 

Several reports have already been published on this project:

- First progress report in August 2005 (for BMGF)
- Second progress report in October 2005 (for BMGF)
- Midterm report in December 2005 (for EC and BMGF)
- Conference report in March 2006 (for EC, BMGF and all conference participants)

The progress reports and the midterm report focus on the organisational dimension of the process.

The conference report contains the recommendations drawn up at the conference as well as all available original documents used at the conference. The content of this report was agreed upon with all partners and speakers at the conference and can thus be regarded as a broad consensus of renowned experts concerning the prevention of Type 2 diabetes. The experts' recommendations compiled in this report were used for the preparation of the Informal Conference of Health Ministers in April 2006 and the summary of these recommendations was integrated as an annex in the draft conclusions for the formal Council (EPSCO) in June 2006.

As the content-related dimension and the results of the project are described in detail in the conference report, the following report provides a follow-up of the midterm report with regard to organisational matters as well as a summary of the discussion on diabetes in the Informal Conference of Health Ministers and an evaluation of the implementation process based on an internal assessment of the experiences and on feedback by partners.
2 Cooperation with principals and partners

2.1 BMGF

In April 2005 ÖBIG was commissioned by the BMGF to organise this project. A close cooperation was established from the beginning. Several representatives of the BMGF participated in regular meetings with ÖBIG (Dr. Peter Brosch, Mag. Christoph Hörhan, Dr. Brigitte Magistris, Mag. Florian Pressl, Hon.-Prof. Dr. Robert Schlögel, Mag. Claudia Sedlmeier). All major decisions concerning the conference organisation and design were agreed upon together. Hon.-Prof. Schlögel was present at all coordination meetings with the partners (see also 2.3). The conference was opened and closed by the Federal Minister for Health and Women, Maria Rauch-Kallat, and Hon.-Prof. Schlögel chaired both plenary sessions.

2.2 EC

The EC decided to co-fund the project "Diabetes conference" submitted by ÖBIG on 7 July 2005. A contract was signed in October 2005 covering the period 7 July 2005 to 7 August 2006 for the implementation of the project (see also midterm report). The EC was informed and consulted regarding the organisation and design of the conference throughout the process. The minutes of the coordination meetings and other relevant information were sent regularly to the EC, and EC representatives were invited to the coordination meetings.

Several EC representatives were also invited to the conference by ÖBIG and the BMGF as speakers: Commissioner Markos Kyprianou and GD Robert Madelin as speakers in the plenary sessions and Michael Hübel/Wilfried Kamphausen as chairs in working group 3 "Early prevention of Type 2 diabetes". Due to other obligations of the Commissioner, Mr Hübel represented him at the conference (welcome address) and participated for the EC in a round table discussion during the second plenary. Wilfried Kamphausen acted as chair in the working group on early prevention of Type 2 diabetes.

2.3 Partners

The conference was organised by ÖBIG in close cooperation with the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EASD) as associate partner and the International Diabetes Federation (IDF) Europe, the Federation of European Nurses in Diabetes (FEND), the Primary Care Diabetes (PCD) Europe, the ÖDG (Austrian Diabetes Association) and the Vienna District Health Insurance Fund (WGKK) as collaborating partners. A short description of all the institutions involved can be found in the conference report.
Three coordination meetings were organised in Vienna as a basis for close cooperation between the partners and to ensure that important decisions concerning the organisation of the conference were discussed and agreed upon within the core group:

First coordination meeting

The first meeting on 27 June 2005 in Vienna had the purpose of getting to know each other, agreeing upon the overall strategies and time schedule and discussing the conference design in general (see mid-term report).

Second coordination meeting

The second meeting was held on 2 November 2005. The main functions of this meeting were the selection of speakers and the development of guidelines for the cooperation within the working groups (see midterm report).

Third coordination meeting

The third meeting was held on 13 January 2006 (9:30 a.m.–16:00 p.m.). An update on the main developments and especially the preparation of the conference was provided to the participants by ÖBIG. All open details regarding the conference in February were clarified. The main topics were the discussion of the available position papers of the four working groups and the decision on the procedure concerning the media and dissemination work. In addition, a draft for the press release announcing the conference was discussed in detail and finalised.

The following persons participated in this meeting (in alphabetical order): Eva-Maria Baumer (WGKK - Rapporteur WG 2), Anne-Marie Felton (FEND - Chair WG 4), Louise Fox (Burson Marsteller), Sabine Haas (ÖBIG), Michael Hall (IDF Europe - Chair WG 2), Eugene Hughes (PCD Europe - Rapporteur WG 2), Doris Langeder (ARGE Diabetes - Chair WG 4), Michael Roden (ÖDG, WGKK, EASD - Chair WG 1), Robert Schloegel (BMGF - Chair in Plenary 1 and 2) and Theresia Unger (ÖBIG). Viktor Jorgens (EASD) and Monika Gruasser (EASD) were represented by Michael Roden who had been elected as the official EASD speaker for this project by the EASD board.
3 Organisation of the conference

The conference was organised in close cooperation with the partners (see 3) and with the support of a PCO (see 4.1). It was scheduled for 15–16 February 2006 at the ball room of the Federal Ministry of Health and Women (plenary sessions) and at the Hotel Hilton (working groups) where most of the conference participants were accommodated.

3.1 PCO

A Professional Congress Organiser (PCO) was sub-contracted in order to support the organisation of the conference (registration, hotel reservations, reservation and decoration of conference venue, technical equipment, catering etc.). In July a briefing for the PCO was drafted and sent out by ÖBIG in a restricted call for tenders to five PCOs as requested by the EC. On the basis of a cost-efficiency analysis of the received offers the agency Evotion (owner: Klaus Ranger) was selected at a meeting on 30 August by ÖBIG and the BMGF. All the documentation on this procedure was sent to the EC after the negotiation meeting on 8 September 2005.

In the following period a very close cooperation was established between ÖBIG and Evotion. Jointly a website http://www.diabetesconference.at was created which included an invitation letter of the Federal Minister for Health and Women, the conference programme, information on accommodation, on the partners as well as online registration. The website was constantly updated throughout the preparation (media information, position papers etc.) as well as the follow-up (conference report, webcast etc.) of the conference.

The conference venues and the accommodation for the conference participants were selected. Concerning the catering a non-profit enterprise was chosen which predominately employs people with physical, sensory or learning disabilities as well as long-term unemployed persons, and offers biological food produced under fair-trade conditions.

During the conference, the following other tasks were implemented by the ÖBIG together with Evotion: registration and "helping hands" at the conference, signposting and decoration of the conference venues, technical equipment, social event on the first evening of the conference, photo documentation, recording of the plenary sessions and the working groups.

3.2 Invitation and participation of experts

Regarding the invitation to the conference it was decided with the BMGF that the selection of experts should be channelled through the health ministries. The Federal Minister for Health and Women, Maria Rauch-Kallat, sent out an official letter to her colleagues in the other EU
member states and candidate countries asking them to nominate four experts per country. In line with the conference design and the agreement reached amongst the partners, the letter suggested that different professional groups should be included in the national delegation:

- representatives of the national authority in charge of diabetes
- renowned physicians in the field of diabetes
- renowned representatives of other medical professions (nurses, educators, nutritionists, etc.) in the field of diabetes
- representatives of the national diabetes association(s)

Recall e-mails had to be sent out in November, December and January since not all countries responded within the proposed deadline. Finally, all countries provided a nomination list and about 110 experts from 29 countries (not including the speakers of the conference) were invited. Concerning the Austrian representatives about 30 experts were selected out of the group of people who were involved in the development of the Austrian Diabetes Plan. Additionally, the members of the boards of the partner organisations were invited to the conference (see also 6.1). The speakers were chosen together with the partners - in total 27 experts gave presentations, chaired a session or acted as rapporteur at the conference.

For the officially nominated national delegates and the speakers, board and lodging were provided at the conference. Travel expenses were refunded to the speakers and to national delegates not working for the national administration.

### 3.3 Conference design

The main objective of the conference was to develop recommendations in four focal areas

1. Prevention of cardiovascular disease in diabetes
2. Disease Management - reducing diabetic complications
3. Early prevention of Type 2 diabetes
4. Social, societal and gender aspects of Type 2 diabetes,

To be presented at the Informal Meeting of Health Ministers and at the EPSCO and as basis for the discussion on diabetes in these forums. The four topics were chosen together with the BMGF and the partners and represent key areas in the prevention of diabetes and its sequelae.

The conference started with a plenary session consisting of welcome addresses and presentations of the current diabetes-related situation in Austria and Europe and an epidemiological overview:
Welcome address by Maria Rauch-Kallat, Federal Minister for Health and Women

Welcome address by Markos Kyprianou, EU Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection (presented by Michael Hübel, Head of Unit “Health Determinants”)

Presentation of the ÖBIG survey “Diabetes mellitus - a challenge for health policy” by Dr. Michaela Moritz, General Manager of ÖBIG

Presentation of the Austrian Diabetes Plan by Prim. Dr. Michael Roden (Past President of ÖDG)

Presentation of epidemiological data on diabetes by Professor Ulf Smith (Vice-President of EASD)

After this session the conference participants were invited to join one of four parallel working groups on the four topics mentioned above.

In each working group a keynote speaker presented a position paper which had been distributed to the participants of the working group in advance:

- Working group 1: Professor Lars Rydén
- Working group 2: Dr. Peter Schwarz
- Working group 3: Professor Jacqueline Dekker
- Working group 4: Dr. Anne Dornhorst

The discussion in the working groups was moderated by two chairpersons and documented by two rapporteurs in each group:

- Working group 1:
  - Chairpersons: Professor Michael Roden and Professor Ulf Smith
  - Rapporteurs: Professor Peter Kopelman and Professor Jan Skrha

- Working group 2:
  - Chairpersons: Dr. Michael Hall and Professor Monika Lechleitner
  - Rapporteurs: Eva-Maria Baumer and Dr. Eugene Hughes

- Working group 3:
  - Chairpersons: Wilfried Kamphausen and Professor Jaakko Tuomilehto
  - Rapporteurs: Professor Anita Rieder and Sari Rodriguez

- Working group 4:
  - Chairpersons: Anne-Marie Felton and Dr. Doris Langeder
  - Rapporteurs: Sarah Hills and Dr. Tony O’Sullivan

Between 20 and 60 experts participated in each working group. Recommendations were brought forward by consensus and were presented by one of the rapporteurs in the second plenary session. The recommendations of the working groups are summarised in chapter 6.2.
The second plenary session consisted of:

- presentations by the rapporteurs of the four working groups,
- speeches by the representatives of EP, EC and WHO:
  - John Bowis (EP)
  - Jill Farrington (WHO)
  - Michael Hübel (EC)
- closing speech by the Federal Minister for Health and Women, Maria Rauch-Kallat.

The speakers of the EP, the EC and the WHO were asked to describe their own activities in the field of diabetes prevention and to summarise the results of the working groups from their points of view as well as provide an estimate of how the results of the working groups will influence their work.

The Federal Minister for Health and Women, Maria Rauch-Kallat, thanked the experts for all their work and suggested that their recommendations be put forward to the Informal Meeting of Health Ministers and to the EPSCO as the “Vienna Declaration”. The Minister further announced that she will propose that the written declaration on diabetes mellitus, which has been submitted to the EP, ought to be supported and signed by all member states.

The two plenary sessions were chaired by Dr. Gojka Roglic from the Department of Chronic Diseases and Health Promotion at the WHO in Geneva, Switzerland, and by Hon.-Prof. Dr. Robert Schlögel from the BMGF.

The complete conference programme as well as the speeches and presentations given at the conference and the recommendations drawn upon by the experts can be found in the conference report.
4 Outcomes of the conference

4.1 Participation

More than 180 experts from 34 countries including all EU member states and candidate countries as well as Switzerland, Russia, Ukraine, Israel and the USA followed the invitation to Vienna. In addition to the officially nominated national delegations, board members of the partner organisations, experts who had drawn up the Austrian diabetes plan, representatives of the BMGF, the EC, the EP and the WHO as well as journalists participated in the conference. A focus of the invitation policy was to have a good professional mix as described in 4.2. A list of all experts can be found in the conference report.

4.2 Recommendations

Each of the working groups agreed upon a set of recommendations. They were further edited by ÖBIG in the follow-up of the conference and the final documents were agreed upon with the speakers of the working groups. The full text of the recommendations can be found in the conference report. The following summary highlights the most relevant recommendations with a wider scope:

1. It is important to differentiate between different types of prevention of diabetes and its complications according to the target groups and the objectives of the intervention:
   - Prevention of Type 2 diabetes at general population level, focusing on the promotion of healthy lifestyles and on the creation of environments that make healthy choices easy and socially preferable
   - Identification of individuals at high risk of developing Type 2 diabetes and implementation of evidence-based measures in order to prevent or delay the onset of diabetes
   - Early detection of as yet undiagnosed Type 2 diabetes in order to ensure timely, professional care and self-care to control and to reduce/prevent complications
   - Provision of comprehensive, high quality, multidisciplinary, multifactorial and multisectoral diabetes care programmes in order to reduce/prevent complications in persons with diagnosed Type 2 diabetes and ensure good quality of life, equal opportunities and access to care for people with diabetes.

With regard to reducing diabetes morbidity and mortality these aspects are equally important and need to be addressed simultaneously and systematically.

2. Socio-economically disadvantaged groups, persons with lower education and minority groups, including women in their reproductive years, need particular attention, acknowledging the fact that they are more often affected by Type 2 diabetes and with regard to bridging inequalities in health.
3. The combined impact of diabetes and its complications on the individual patient, health services and the economy needs to be recognised and addressed. The EU and the member states need to raise public and professional awareness of the negative effects of Type 2 diabetes. Targeted and systematic awareness programmes need to be developed.

4. There is a need for an EU strategy including an EU Council Recommendation on diabetes prevention, early detection and management and a permanent EU forum for the exchange and dissemination of best practice by networking.

5. In order to have a sound basis for policy planning and evaluation, the occurrence of Type 2 diabetes and its risk factors as well as the immediate and long term outcomes of improved programmes of care need to be systematically monitored and reported both in the member states and at EU level using a valid methodology and comparative data.

6. Standards of prevention and care need to be developed at EU level, to be reflected by national guidelines. Patient care needs to be monitored according to these guidelines.

7. The timely implementation of the national diabetes plans should be a priority. These plans should include prevention and early detection programmes. Special focus should be given to lifestyle interventions since they have shown to be effective and, if broadly implemented, can have a health impact on future generations.

8. There is a need to develop new techniques for client centred education and empowerment as well as for appropriate training of health care professionals. The effectiveness of educational programmes should be subjected to research.

9. Effective diabetes prevention requires multidisciplinary cooperation. The collaboration between general practitioners, diabetologists, diabetes specialist nurses, nutrition experts, exercise experts and other health care providers needs to be improved.

10. There is also a need for multisectoral cooperation as the creation of healthy environments requires action in different policy fields. Both at national and at EU level, relevant policies outside the health sector should be systematically assessed for their health consequences, with a particular view to their consequences for preventive efforts.

11. Additional research on diabetes is required both in the member states and at EU level. The EU and the member states should facilitate and support research in basic, clinical and social sciences and humanities on all aspects of prevention of diabetes and its complications with increased funding. The results of EU funded research should be made easily accessible to the public, relevant health professionals and the national authorities of the member states.

4.3 Follow-up by the Austrian presidency

The conference report including all recommendations was provided to the conference participants on or before 31 March 2006 as several experts - especially the delegates from the national administrations - were involved in the preparation of the Informal Meeting of Health Ministers on 25–26 April 2006 in Vienna and required the summarised information as
soon as possible. The recommendations were also used by the BMGF for preparatory consultations with the other EU member states.

Informal Meeting of Health Ministers

The conference report provided the basis for the in-depth discussion between the Health Ministers on diabetes that took place on 25 April focusing on steps to be taken at EU as well as at national level. The Austrian Federal Minister for Health and Women, Maria Rauch-Kallat, presented an overview of the current situation and summarised the discussion as follows:

1. Prevention is the key as Type 2 diabetes to a high degree is a preventable disease.
2. Early detection has to be a focus. National plans, which unfortunately do not exist in all member states, have to be established urgently and should include prevention and early detection.
3. Disease Management Programmes have to be implemented, integrating all relevant professions.
4. Research has to be enforced.
5. Underprivileged groups and women have to be specially addressed in all measures.

Furthermore the Minister stated that a common strategy is necessary and that the establishment of a continuous EU Forum for exchange of best practice should be considered.

Commissioner Kyprianou said that the conclusions of the conference would be considered in the EU strategy. He further mentioned that the EC knew that currently not all member states had action plans and that he would welcome progress in this regard. Current EC activities like the EU Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health and the Green Paper "Promoting healthy diets and physical activity: a European dimension for the prevention of overweight, obesity and chronic diseases" were presented. The Commissioner also announced that he would discuss the topic with his colleagues, as diabetes has many aspects which do not only affect health policy. 40 million Euro will be at disposal for diabetes research within the framework programme and, according to the Commissioner, there are also some funding opportunities within the public health programme. The Commissioner said that monitoring of the development of the disease was crucial and that guidelines on diabetes prevention and management could be developed together with the member states. Currently the EC develops an electronic health portal for patient information and he will also discuss the topic of patient information in the pharma forum. The Commissioner concluded that diabetes would continue to be a priority on the EU agenda.

The WHO representative Catherine Le Gales-Camus announced that the WHO strategy on non-communicable diseases would be presented in September 2006. In May there will be a meeting on marketing and children and in October a high-level conference on obesity will take place in Istanbul.
The following members of the Informal Meeting of Health Ministers participated in the subsequent discussion: Germany, Italy, Cyprus, Finland, Sweden, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Portugal, Croatia, Malta, Turkey, Greece, Lithuania, France, Spain, the Czech Republic and the EP. Answering the questions posed by the Austrian presidency they described their current and intended activities in this field and measures to be taken at EU level. All supported the conclusions of the Minister, the recommendations laid down in the conference report and the activities of the EC. The following aspects were mentioned in several statements:

- Research has to be a focus. It is important to systematise the research already done and to have evaluation studies.
- Exchange of models of best practice is important.
- A European diabetes register should be established (for Type 1 and 2 diabetes).
- A European network of centres of excellence should be established.
- Direct patient information should be developed at EU level.
- Focus should be put on children: no direct marketing towards children, free healthy lunch at schools.
- Close involvement of self help groups is necessary.
- Involvement of food industry and agriculture policy is crucial.
- The EP representative invited the member states to develop national diabetes plans and to support the EU strategy as described in the EP Declaration.

In general the recommendations in the conference report were described as an excellent starting point for the conclusions of the EPSCO.

**Formal Council of Health Ministers**

At the EPSCO diabetes was dealt with on the second day (2 June 2006) under item 16 “Promotion of Healthy Lifestyles and Prevention of Type 2 Diabetes”. The Council was invited to adopt conclusions on this topic which incorporate the views expressed at the Informal Meeting of Health Ministers and refer to the results of the Conference on Prevention of Type 2 Diabetes. The conclusions reflect the view of a majority of member states that EU health policy should focus on preventive measures and leave the management of certain diseases in the responsibility of the member states. Therefore proposals like the establishment of a permanent EU forum for the exchange of best practice or a European diabetes register were not reflected in the conclusions. On the other hand it was possible to bring diabetes again high up on the agenda of EU health policy and the summary of the experts’ recommendations is incorporated in the annex of the draft conclusions. The conclusions are included in the annex.
5 Dissemination

In order to draw public attention to the importance of diabetes prevention and to ensure a wide dissemination of the conference results, a variety of activities was carried out:

Presentation at the European Health Forum Gastein: The plans of the Austrian presidency concerning the priority “diabetes” were presented at the 8th European Health Forum Gastein on 6 October 2005 by ÖBIG. There was a very positive feedback to these activities in the following discussion.

Media work: The BMGF incorporated information on the conference in its regular media work starting in January 2006. A specific press release prepared by ÖBIG announcing the conference was published in the beginning of February 2006. Another press release was sent out shortly before the conference. On the second day of the conference ÖBIG drafted a press information sheet containing the main results of the conference. The day following the conference (17 February 2006) a press conference was organised by the BMGF with the participation of Federal Minister Maria Rauch-Kallat and representatives of the partner organisations. The key results of the conference and the so-called “Vienna Declaration” were presented at this event.

Webcast: A webcast of the conference was provided by EASD. The webcast is available on the Internet at the website http://www.eu-diabetesconference-vienna.org/. It covers all plenary sessions as well as the keynote speeches of two working groups: Prevention of cardiovascular disease in diabetes (WG 1) and Early prevention of Type 2 diabetes (WG 3).

Publication of conference contributions on the Internet: A specific website http://www.diabetesconference.at/ was set up for the conference in 2005. It is directly linked to the general ÖBIG website and the content of the conference website will be transferred to the ÖBIG website when it will be shut down in July 2006. All conference contributions are available there. Some of the partner organisations have also published information on the conference on their websites.

Publication of an IDF newsletter: A special IDF newsletter providing an update for the member associations on the developments in diabetes in the EU following the Austrian initiative will be published after the Austrian presidency.

Summary in “Diabetologia”: A summary of the results of the conference will be published in the Diabetologia in the September 2006 issue. The delay (it was planned to be published between February and April 2006) results in the preference of the editors to include the final results of EPSCO in the report. In addition, the EASD advised to wait until the September issue since it receives a lot more attention than the summer issues.

Publication of a conference report: The conference report was provided to all participants at the conference and to the project partners and a stock of 100 copies was sent to the EC. The remaining copies of the overall stock of 1 000 reports are available for interested parties via the publishing service of the BMGF.

Publication of a final report: The final report will be provided to the EC and the BMGF as well as the project partners. It will be presented at the ÖBIG website and can be ordered there.
6 Assessment of the experiences and results

The evaluation of the project was carried out on the one hand through ÖBIG’s internal assessment of the experiences and the outcome and on the other hand through an assessment by the project partners that was collected via a feedback questionnaire in May 2006.

It can be concluded that the project was successfully implemented and the objectives and results concerning the conference were achieved:

• There was a lot of interest in the conference. The choice of topic was welcomed by the experts in the public health field and many of them were ready to participate in the conference. This resulted in a higher number of participants than initially planned. In line with the conference design, the participants covered a variety of professional fields and competencies as well as all EU member states and candidate countries. Altogether, the conference achieved its aim to create an opportunity for networking and exchange amongst professionals from various fields as well as countries.

• The project managed to come up with concrete results. The design of the conference – with the main focus on well-prepared working groups – ensured that recommendations were available at the end of the conference that could serve as an input for the follow-up at political level. There were very positive reactions from the participants on the outcome of the conference, and the recommendations – drawn up in the working groups and presented in the final plenary session – were widely accepted.

• The BMGF took care of the follow-up at EU level by including a discussion on the topic in general and the results of the conference more specifically in the agenda of the Informal Meeting of Health Ministers as well as the EPSCO. It is planned that council conclusions will be adapted to ensure further activities on the topic and the sustainability of the results of the conference. Thus, the project managed to draw increased political attention to the topic of diabetes at EU level and thus to meet one of the main objectives of the project.

• The cooperation with renowned institutions and experts in the diabetes field proved to be very useful for the planning and implementation of the conference. The coordination meetings allowed to consult on and discuss all relevant topics in the group and to achieve consensus regarding the important elements of the organisation of the conference. The support of the project partners helped to involve key experts as lecturers, keynote speakers, chairs and rapporteurs in the conference.

• The results of the conference have been and will be widely distributed via the websites (including the web cast), the conference report and further publications (esp. the summary in Diabetologia). While the conference managed to be present and widely known in professional circles, the general media coverage was less extensive than had been hoped. One reason for this might be, that – at least in Austria – the topic of “avian flu” was very present in the media exactly at the time of the conference – probably decreasing the attention to the latter. Nonetheless the clipping map currently consists of
80 contributions in various national and international media and will be finalised and provided to the BMGF and the EC until July 2006.

The assessment of the partners was very much in line with ÖBIG’s internal assessment and conclusions. In general, the feedback of the partners was very positive. Out of three options to choose from (“very satisfied”, “satisfied”, “not satisfied”), most of the items in the questionnaire received the highest rating (“very satisfied”) in all responses. In more detail, the results of the assessment amongst the partners was the following:

**Preparation of the conference:** Almost all aspects of the preparation of the conference (overall satisfaction, cooperation of the partners, coordination meetings, preparation of the programme) received the highest score. The only exception was the preparation of PR activities which was just satisfactory (instead of very satisfactory) for one participant – but with a comment explaining that this was less due to the actual activities than to the disappointing result (see below).

**Implementation of the conference:** The projects partners were also very satisfied with the various aspects of the implementation of the conference - overall satisfaction, design of the conference, plenary sessions, working groups, number of participants, diversity of participants. It was commented, that “the participants/experts were very satisfied and the report was excellent”.

**Results and outcome of the conference:** Finally, also the results and outcome of the conference received a very positive assessment from the project partners. This referred especially to the overall satisfaction, networking/exchange of experience, recommendations drawn up by conference, conference report (potential) and policy impact. While some of the partners responded that they were less satisfied with the media coverage, they also acknowledged that this was mainly outside the control of the organisers.

In addition, the project partners were invited to provide recommendations for the organisation of similar projects (conferences) as well as further comments. Several replies gave the recommendation that the project could and should serve as a model for best practice regarding the organisation of conferences and that the procedures should be taken into account for further projects. In addition, as stressed in a further comment it is essential that “the powerful recommendations which emerged from the conference can gain sufficient political support in the EU for appropriate action on Type 2 diabetes to be developed across all 25 EU member states.”
Annex 1
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