

**MAY 2009****// CED RESOLUTION****ECONOMIC CRISIS AND
EUROPEAN ORAL HEALTH**

The Council of European Dentists (CED) is the representative organisation for the dental profession in the EU, representing over 320,000 practising dentists through 33 national dental associations. The CED promotes as its guiding principles high standards of oral healthcare and effective patient-safety centred professional practice across Europe.

Meeting at their General Meeting in Prague, the members of the CED note the unprecedented scope of the current global economic crisis and call on European governments and other actors to prevent and mitigate the negative impact of the crisis on European oral health.

The CED is concerned that the economic crisis and decreasing public budgets could affect health spending and investment in health infrastructure in Europe, reducing availability and quality of care for European citizens now and in the future. Socially and economically more vulnerable groups would likely suffer more, increasing health inequalities.

Oral and dental health of Europeans is particularly susceptible to economic factors. In most European countries, dental care for the general population is financed from private sources to a greater extent than other kinds of healthcare. As disposable incomes of European citizens shrink, their ability to pay for healthcare, including dental care will decrease, even if national dental associations are giving volunteer support to economically weaker citizens. Viability of dental practices, particularly in geographically remote and less affluent regions will be threatened, further reducing availability of dental care. This could have serious consequences for oral and overall health of our populations.

The CED stresses the importance of healthy populations and the healthcare sector for the European economy. Healthy workers are necessary for a productive and efficient workforce. Healthcare is a source of jobs for often highly qualified employees and currently accounts for 10 percent of EU GDP. In addition, healthcare promotes scientific research and technological development, contributing directly to the fulfillment of Lisbon Strategy objectives.

The CED calls on European governments to sustain adequate public funding for provision of healthcare and for health infrastructure and programmes, including screening, health promotion and disease prevention. Oral health is an integral part of general health and should be fully included in these initiatives. Investments in health are crucial and will contribute to a faster post-crisis recovery, sustainable economic growth and healthy European citizens.

Adopted unanimously by the CED General Meeting on 29 May 2009.

