

## **Wilfried Kamphausen**

I would like to say a few words, and I will be shorter in fact than I already planned to be, about how we in the Public Health Directory of the European Commission situate the Amsterdam Declaration and which broader context it fits for us. Well, in the broad field of socio-economic differences in health status and in access to health, the health of minority populations, such as migrants, is a key issue. We know that these inequalities exist, we know that migrant populations tend to be at the bottom end of the health inequality scale and we know that we have to tackle this issue. We also know that migration is a process which draws heavily on the resources of migrants including the health resources and that the integration process which is already difficult in itself is often made even more painful because of discrimination on the one hand and low income on the other hand. Against these backgrounds we think that the Amsterdam Declaration addresses one very important issue amongst the number of problems which migrants are facing, that is improving their possibilities to have access to health care in hospitals and adapting the way in which health care is delivered to their particular situation, to their particular needs. We heard before from Professor Pelikan that it is not just the disadvantaged groups who will benefit from such developments. On behalf of the Public Health Services of the European Commission let me say that we very much welcome the Amsterdam Declaration as a major step to create more visibility around the problems which migrants are facing in health care and as a platform on which future activities in this area can be built. The Declaration gives clear recommendations of further actions and divides these between different players which can contribute to the implementation. The declaration should be widely discussed and disseminated and hopefully also serve as an instrument for mainstreaming health issues of minority population into the general health policy agenda. Let me finish by linking the Amsterdam Declaration to the broader work under the commission's public health action programme. As you may know the programme includes provisions to develop strategies on social and economic health determinants in order to identify and to combat inequalities in health. In the draft annual work plan for next year there will be a priority on developing targeted public health response strategies to address vulnerable groups including access to and quality of health and social services as well as information

and empowerment activities. Within this broader framework therefore more activities aimed at addressing the health risks of minority populations can be supported.