

Approved Endorsement Message by European Health Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou for European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week 2009

“Among the key aims outlined in the EU’s ambitious Health Strategy, adopted in October 2007, are ‘to support dynamic health systems by encouraging cross-border cooperation and the creation of excellence centres; to reduce health inequities inside the Union; and to create a truly EU Health area by working on improving patients’ rights and the quality and standards in health care facilities.’

I am therefore delighted to welcome the initiatives of European Cervical Cancer Prevention Week (18-24 January 2009) to focus attention on the vital importance of national screening programmes for cervical cancer and primary prevention, including the possibilities offered by preventative alternatives against high risk human papillomavirus (HPV), to help eliminate this largely preventable disease. Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in women aged 15-44 in the European Union. Well organised cervical cancer screening programmes could reduce the incidence of cervical cancer by over 80%.

As highlighted in the recently adopted Report on the implementation of the Council Recommendation on cancer screening¹, much more still needs to be done within the area of cancer, and the Summit of national parliamentarians and MEPs at the European Parliament in Brussels on 21 January 2009 will make a valuable contribution to identifying best practice and where more support is urgently needed in Member States and neighbourhood countries.”

Androulla Vassiliou

European Commissioner for Health and Consumers

¹ Please see: http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_determinants/genetics/documents/com_2008_882.en.pdf