

**From:** Brian SYNNOTT

**Sent:** mardi 5 septembre 2006 15:16

**To:** 'letters.editor@ft.com'

**Cc:** Carola FISCHBACH-PYTTEL

**Subject:** reply to article "EU chief to help cut barriers to patients crossing borders " September 5)

## **EU debate on healthcare must start with access for all patients**

From Ms. Carola Fischbach-Pyttel.

It is with serious concern that I read your front page article "EU chief to help cut barriers to patients crossing borders" (September 5). The article carries quotes attributed to the European Commissioner for Health, Mr. Markos Kyprianou, most significantly that; "the internal market applies to health services. People can shop around". If this quote is accurate, it represents serious political overreach on the part of the Commissioner. Even the European Court of Justice, which the Commission has lazily permitted to lead on this issue, would not make such a sweeping statement. The extent to which the internal market applies to healthcare is a political debate that is yet to be conducted at the EU level - at least in any transparent way. The Commissioner diminishes his own credibility by announcing that a debate will be launched on this issue while simultaneously announcing the conclusion to that debate. Your correspondent quite accurately adds that "Opening the market could provide lucrative opportunities for private providers to lure clients". This is the real danger in assessing health care purely on market criteria. In summary, it would seem that the headline is missing one word and should read "EU chief to help cut barriers to **SOME** patients crossing borders - i.e. those who can afford it".

Yours sincerely

Carola Fischbach-Pyttel

General Secretary

European Federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)

B-1000 Brussels

Tel: +32 2 250 10 89

Tel gsm: +32 474 98 96 75

e-mail: [bsynnott@epsu.org](mailto:bsynnott@epsu.org)

website: [www.epsu.org](http://www.epsu.org)

**editors note** - EPSU represents over 3.5 million health workers throughout Europe, including doctors, nurses and ancillary staff. EPSU is the recognised EU social partner for employees in the hospital sector.