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European Representation of the German Social Insurance celebrates 25 years on the Brussels political stage

Berlin/Brussels, 05.03.2018: 25 years ago, the three branches of Germany's statutory health and long-term care insurance, pension insurance, and accident insurance established a joint European Representation in Brussels. Since then, the three branches of social insurance have been actively and successfully influencing relevant topics in Brussels. On 7 March 2018, the special 25th anniversary conference '*Bismarck meets Bytes: Digital Change and Social Security*' will take a look into the future at two important topics for Europe: adaptation of social security systems to new forms of work in an increasingly technological world of work, and the various digitalisation processes in the healthcare sector.

Globalisation, digitalisation, technological advancements and demographic change are transforming the world of work. During this transformation, it is vital to identify and counteract risks to safety and health at work early on. The German Social Insurance advocates a comprehensive culture of prevention that enables people to live a healthy, longer life and maintain their ability to work.

Thinking across borders about digitalisation

All three social security branches are actively using digital solutions, both at national and European level, to provide better advice and healthcare to insured persons and other patients. The German Social Insurance believes that digitalisation offers a cross-border opportunity to change structures and processes in a positive way. The starting point is the secure exchange of data, including data on rehabilitation and prevention measures, medical treatments or healthcare coverage. However, as part of these efforts, the German Social Insurance believes there is one crucial factor to keep in mind; namely, the data belongs to the insured person and without their consent this data must not be used.

German Social Insurance takes position on EU initiative for social protection

For 25 years, the European Representation of the German Social Insurance has monitored and influenced European initiatives. It raises awareness in the EU



institutions of the legitimate interests of people whose contributions and insurance coverage are affected by European legislation on topics such as medicinal products, medical devices or value-added tax. Although the EU has limited legislative powers in the field of social security, its initiatives can significantly affect national systems. For example, by taking a stance against planned changes to value-added tax in 2013, the German Social Insurance was able to prevent a financial burden in double-digit billions being placed on Germans who make insurance contributions.

A current example is the EU initiative on access to social protection. In January, the German Social Insurance submitted [comments](#) as part of a public consultation. It welcomed the debate initiated by the EU Commission on how to provide social protection to all EU citizens and close any potential gaps. However, it also pointed out that this is primarily the responsibility of the Member States because it is they who set out the core principles of their social security systems. Therefore, it makes sense for the Member States to exchange information and experiences, because ensuring access to social protection in a changing world of work requires quite different solutions across Europe. The German Social Insurance is of the opinion that additional EU measures are only beneficial if they preserve the financial balance of the systems.

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