

PRESS RELEASE

BFF Banking Group releases a socio-economic comparative analysis of 9 European healthcare systems in times of COVID-19 pandemic

Milan, December 16th, 2020 – BFF Banking Group – the leading player for suppliers of the Public Administrations and National Healthcare Systems in Europe – released today the second edition of the Healthcare Report, titled ***“Challenges to European healthcare systems at a glance. A comparative analysis of 9 EU countries in times of COVID-19”***.

The Report analyses and compares 9 healthcare systems in the EU: Italy, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain. These systems are based on different funding principles, as a result of heterogeneous economic conditions and societal views on issues related to income redistribution, incidence of institutions and government in healthcare provision, frequently shaped by different historical and cultural footprints.

The Report is also enriched by a special focus on COVID-19. The pandemic has brought to the fore several problems that were only hidden until today. This section shows how the countries have managed the pandemic during the first wave and how they have approached the current one.

Thanks to data obtained from official sources and an *ad-hoc* survey administered to about 30 professionals and experts, the Report seeks to highlight common challenges and country specific issues that might be crucial in the near future.

Throughout the Group history, BFF has always promoted conferences and researches to discuss trending topics that could affect the relationship between companies and Public Administrations, to encourage a broader and constructive discussion in favor of a more efficient European healthcare environment, where different voices and points of view contribute to share the best practices and seek new solutions.

Key Highlights from the Report

Health systems around the world are striving to address the well-known challenges of ageing populations and the rise in chronic diseases, as well as growing technical possibilities and public expectations.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has affected all the European countries in a serious way,

also shows how the weak connection and the lack of an effective integration between the primary and secondary care has emerged in all its drama, with most secondary care systems around Europe collapsing, especially during the first wave. If on one hand, the recent COVID-19 experience will increase the level of complexity of the needed interventions and changes, on the other, the pandemic could provide the impetus for the long overdue changes to the way that healthcare should be received and delivered.

European healthcare systems – despite great progresses in recent years – are experiencing significant demographic and economic pressures. The elderly population is expected to increase, both in numbers and in proportion to the working age population, leading to a doubling in the ratio of elderly people to those of current working ages. At the same time, availability of new treatments is pushing up healthcare costs per patient, determining substantial new costs, with important spillovers also for the social care and the pension payment systems.

Two further top priorities in most of the countries compared into the report are disparities in the access to best medical practice – related to geographical factors – and underinvestment in long-term care.

The indebtedness of public hospitals represents a widespread condition as well. It puts on hold technological progress and requires the indebted hospitals to receive periodical transfers from the governments. On top of that, the shortage of medical staff, both doctors and nurses, seems apparently even more critical when it is associated with doctors' aging, especially in the southern countries. Low wages contribute to health professionals leaving their profession for better paid jobs in other sectors or other countries, and severe territorial inequalities cause an important imbalance in the access to healthcare and in the supply of healthcare professionals, where some regions have three times more doctors and nurses than others.

The Report also shows how – in the era of fast health technology evolution – inaction and chronic underinvestment can compromise human health, and lead to serious economic and social setbacks. On one hand, investing in health workers is part of the broader objective of strengthening health systems and social protection; on the other, there is a wide potential efficiency gain from management of conditions prior to hospital admission. Overall, these growing number of major health challenges are putting unprecedented pressures on public health systems and ask for effective changes, supported by a substantial plan of investments, clear communication and more community engagement.

The Report has been commissioned to **Farmafactoring Foundation**.

The Foundation is a private, non-profit organization whose main objective is to promote and develop research activities in the field of Public Administration and the Healthcare sector. Founded in 2004, it has carried out numerous studies, and it has also sponsored important independent projects by young researchers in the field of economics and the health system in Italy and in Europe. The Foundation usually supports and contributes to many cultural and social initiatives. For further information about Farmafactoring Foundation visit: **www.fondazionefarmafactoring.it/en**

BFF Banking Group

BFF Banking Group is the leading player specialised in the management and non-recourse factoring of trade receivables due from Public Administrations in Europe. The Group operates in Italy, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia and Spain. It is also active in Germany, The Netherlands and Ireland with on-line term deposits, serving a total of 12 Countries across Europe. BFF is listed on the Italian Stock Exchange. In 2019 it reported a consolidated Adjusted Net Profit of € 98.8 million, with a 12.0% Group CET1 ratio at the end of September 2020. **www.bffgroup.com**

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