

New Director General for DG SANCO March 2010

The European Commission decided to appoint Ms Paola Testori Coggi as the new Director-General of DG Health and Consumers (SANCO). The shift was the result of Robert Madelin, the current Director-General at SANCO, being appointed to replace Fabio Colasanti as Director-General of the DG for Information Society and Media who will retire on 1 April. At that, according to internal rules of the European Commission, Directors-General must change jobs every five to seven years.

Ms Testori Coggi has been Deputy Director-General in DG SANCO since August 2007. From 2000 until 2007, she was Director for the safety of the food chain, where she was responsible for the White Paper on food safety and the legislative action programme. Prior to that, she was adviser on consumer health in the Cabinet of Commissioner Emma Bonino, where she worked on the new EU policy on consumer health after the mad cow disease crisis. Paola Testori Coggi joined the European Commission in 1983 in the Directorate-General for Environment.

In Robert Madelin DG SANCO loses an experienced policy maker having been the Director-General for Health and Consumer Affairs since January 2004. He has tried to make the most of the EU's limited competence in health policy, by setting up voluntary initiatives to encourage the food and alcohol industries to promote healthier consumer behaviour. Supporters of this "soft" approach say these initiatives have led to real changes from industry, such as reformulation of foods to reduce salt and sugar, but public health campaigners on the other side claim they do not guarantee the same result as "hard" regulation. Between 1997 and 2003, he was a Director in DG Trade, for a range of international economic topics, including biotechnology, standards, intellectual property, sustainable development, governance and bilateral trade relations with Asia. Prior to this, he was Deputy Head of Cabinet to Sir Leon Brittan, European Commission Vice President responsible for trade. Robert Madelin joined the Commission in 1993 after a career in the British civil service.