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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Council

Subject: Presidency conferences
- *Information from the Presidency*

Delegations will find in Annex an information note from the Presidency on the above mentioned subject to be raised under “Any other business” at the meeting of the EPSCO Council (Health) on 9 December 2022.

Conferences organised by the Czech Presidency

(in the policy fields covered by the Health part of the EPSCO Council)

The priority themes of the Czech Presidency conferences were carefully selected based on the expertise available and priorities at national level, as well as on the topics that resonate across the EU Member States and have significant support from the European Commission.

Expert Conference on Oncology: Modern Cancer Control: Saving Lives through Smart Solutions, 13 – 14 July 2022, Brno

The Czech Republic utilised its Presidency to further support joint efforts to reduce the suffering caused by cancer and to discuss the implementation of leading European policies in the fight against cancer.

The founding premise of the expert conference was that early detection, affordable treatment and a patient-centred approach to clinical decision-making in oncology make the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan a life-saving instrument.

The conference programme focused on the following interlinked EU flagship initiatives:

- Comprehensive Cancer Infrastructures
- The future of cancer registries and the European Health Data Space
- Improving early detection of cancer and screening schemes in the EU

The conference brought together around 100 experts from all EU Member States, including delegates from national oncology and statistical organisations, as well as senior representatives of the European Commission, the World Health Organization and leading European initiatives on cancer prevention and control, and – last but not least – representatives of European patient organisations.

The outcome of the conference was a call to action document whose main aim is to help find ways to move forward in the identified interlinked EU flagship initiatives, accelerate their progress and overcome obstacles.

The call to action was supported by a majority of EU health ministers during the informal meeting of health ministers that was held in September in Prague.

Further information and materials are available on the conference website: [Modern Cancer Control: Saving Lives through Smart Solutions – Ministerstvo zdravotnictví \(mzcr.cz\)](https://mzcr.cz)

Expert Conference on Rare Diseases: Towards a New European Policy Framework: Building the Future Together for Rare Diseases, 25 – 26 October 2022, Prague

The expert conference on rare diseases consisted of a series of technical and ministerial sessions on proposals for a renewed strategy for rare diseases, following discussions under the Slovenian and French Presidencies. In the spirit of continuity, stakeholders in the rare disease community were particularly keen to continue discussions on rare diseases and focus on how the Czech Presidency could take further steps towards a coordinated strategy for rare diseases that better addresses current unmet needs by setting meaningful goals for patients, families and society integrated at the international, national, and even regional levels.

During the conference it was emphasised that strengthened cooperation and coordination of Member States could be outlined in a European Action Plan for Rare Diseases that would address remaining gaps by combining and supplementing current legislative actions (e.g. planned revisions of the regulations on orphan medicinal products and on medicinal products for paediatric use, and the adoption of the Pharmaceutical Strategy), non-legislative policy actions and new Commission initiatives such as the European Health Data Space and the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.

The themes of the sessions were:

- A new goal-based and coordinated strategy for rare diseases
- Early diagnosis for rare diseases
- Revision of the orphan drug and paediatric drug regulations
- Instruments for improving access to rare disease treatments
- Holistic healthcare pathways – integrating ERN into European healthcare and social systems

A European Action Plan for Rare Diseases would provide a roadmap for all European countries to work towards common measurable goals that respond directly to current unmet needs and ensure that inequalities are not exacerbated by a person's country of residence.

For patients for whose disease there is no dedicated treatment on the market, non-pharmaceutical care (both clinical and social) becomes central to their survival and quality of life. Facilitating rapid access to this care, no matter where the patient lives in Europe, is essential to a comprehensive strategy on rare diseases.

Further information and materials are available on the conference website: [Towards a New European Policy Framework: Building the future together for rare diseases – Ministerstvo zdravotnictví \(mzcr.cz\)](https://www.mzcr.cz/en/towards-a-new-european-policy-framework-building-the-future-together-for-rare-diseases)

Expert Conference on Vaccination: Building Public Trust as a Pathway to Vaccine Acceptance, 21 -22 November 2022, Prague

The Czech Presidency was eager to reflect on the current growing challenges regarding immunisation. Although vaccines are one of the greatest medical tools, people's willingness to receive safe, effective, recommended and affordable vaccines has wavered over the last few decades and the increasing lack of trust in vaccines poses a serious threat to public health.

Building on the 2018 Council Recommendation on strengthened cooperation against vaccine-preventable diseases and the important lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Czech Presidency wanted to highlight these challenges.

The conference provided a space for discussion among Member States and relevant representatives from the European Commission and EU agencies, the World Health Organization, European healthcare professional and patient organisations and industry, and other relevant experts.

The thematic blocks were as follows:

- Building vaccine acceptance through communication
- The role of primary care in communication
- EU expert forum on tackling vaccine hesitancy
- The future of vaccination: accessibility and development of innovative vaccines
- Vaccination in the digital age

The conference primarily focused on sharing views through panel discussions in each block and parallel sessions. The objective was for these discussions to be in-depth and to truly address the main challenges facing vaccination. The proposal in the draft Council Conclusions on vaccination as one of the most important tools for preventing disease and improving public health to set up an expert forum on tackling vaccine hesitancy received strong support during the parallel session. Following the approval of the draft Council Conclusions, the forum could become operational in 2023 within the Commission expert group on public health, which will replace the Steering Group on Health Promotion, Disease Prevention and Management of Non-Communicable Diseases.

Further information and materials are available on the Conference website: [Building public trust as a pathway to vaccine acceptance – Ministerstvo zdravotnictví \(mzcr.cz\)](#)