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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
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 30 November 2023.

High-level meetings during the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the EU

The health objective of the Spanish Presidency of the Council of the European Union has been to continue building the European Health Union by defining new health priorities aimed at:

1. Improving the protection of vulnerable people in the European Union (EU).
2. Promoting preparedness and response initiatives for new health alerts.
3. Aligning the EU health agenda with the 2030 Agenda and the One Health approach.

This health objective has been reached through two levels of action:

- **Regulatory level.** At this level, the EU Presidency Strategic Plan has been to discuss the dossiers and recommendations currently in negotiation.
- **Political level.** At this level, Spain has led 11 high-level health-related events to implement the political priorities of the Spanish Presidency and foster progress in the field of legislative dossiers.

1. Strengthening immunization across the life-span

Governing Centre: Directorate-General for Public Health (Ministry of Health)

Location: Ministry of Health - Ernest Lluch Hall (Madrid)

Date: 18th July 2023

High-level participants:

- José Manuel Miñones Conde, Minister of Health of Spain
- Margarida Tavares, Secretary of State for Health of Portugal
- Silvia Calzón, Secretary of State for Health of Spain

Abstract: The widespread introduction of COVID-19 vaccination has reflected the strengths and weaknesses of health systems and public health programmes, while shaping views on vaccination among both the population and health workers that may have differed from country to country. This meeting aimed to address some of the key issues and share experiences to improve the performance of immunisation programmes.

Conclusions: One of the main conclusions of this High Level Meeting (HLM) was the need for homogeneous and continuously updated schedules to respond adequately to current and future health threats across the EU. Issues such as vaccination beyond childhood, European public confidence in vaccines and lessons learned from the COVID-19 experience were also discussed.

2. Challenges in Cancer Care

Governing Centre: Directorate-General for Public Health (Ministry of Health)

Location: Palacio Real de Pedralbes (Barcelona)

Date: 31st August 2023

High-level participants:

- Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety (video)
- José Manuel Miñones Conde, Minister of Health of Spain
- Silvia Calzón, Secretary of State for Health of Spain

Abstract: This HLM aimed to reflect and discuss with national and international experts the current challenges and opportunities in cancer care at the European level.

Conclusions: The main conclusion of this HLM was the need to continue to promote, within the EU framework, a coordinated and equitable response to cancer, which is one of the major health needs of European citizens and therefore a strategic objective in the construction of the European Health Union. Issues such as progress in health policies for cancer control and the configuration of Comprehensive Cancer Care Centres were also raised and discussed.

3. The health sector's impact on climate change: Carbon footprint of health care facilities

Governing Centre: Directorate-General for Public Health (Ministry of Health)

Location: Reina Sofía University Hospital (Murcia)

Date: 13th and 14th September 2023

High-level participants:

- José Manuel Miñones Conde, Minister of Health of Spain

Abstract: The objective of this HLM was to understand the contribution of the health sector to greenhouse gas emissions, in order to implement a reduction plan that contributes to achieving the goal of climate neutrality, with clear benefits in terms of air quality.

Conclusions: Education, research, monitoring and awareness raising are essential to respond to the impact of climate change on the health of European citizens. The commitment of the health system and its decarbonisation to sustainable leadership in tackling climate change is essential.

4. HIV and human rights: political action to achieve zero stigma

Governing Centre: Directorate-General for Public Health (Ministry of Health)

Location: Real Alcázar de Sevilla (Seville)

Date: 15th September 2023

High-level participants:

- Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety (video)
- José Manuel Miñones Conde, Minister of Health of Spain
- Péter Takács, Secretary of State of Hungary
- Silvia Calzón, Secretary of State for Health of Spain

Abstract: The HLM was dedicated to addressing the scientific evidence supporting the need to eliminate HIV-related stigma and discrimination in order to achieve SDG 3.3 by 2030. This HLM was organised as a back-to-back meeting with the technical meeting of WHO/Euro and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), and had their unequivocal support, as well as that of UNAIDS.

Conclusions: A key aspect of an effective HIV response is ensuring the rights and dignity of people living with HIV. This includes addressing one of the major barriers to the HIV response: HIV-related stigma and discrimination. Following the meeting, Spain also applied to join the UNAIDS Global Alliance to End All Forms of HIV-Related Discrimination.

5. Personalised Digital Healthcare and the European Health Data Space

Governing Centre: Secretariat-General for Digital Health, Information and Innovation of the National Health System (Ministry of Health)

Location: Headquarters of the National Institute of Cybersecurity of Spain (León)

Date: 27, 28 and 29th September 2023

High-level participants:

- José Manuel Miñones Conde, Minister of Health of Spain (online)
- Silvia Calzón, Secretary of State for Health of Spain

Abstract: One of the effects of the proposed European Health Data Space Regulation will be the promotion of personalised medicine, through the provision of face-to-face and virtual services to patients, specifically adapted to their characteristics and health situation.

Personalised medicine will strengthen the efficiency and sustainability of the National Health System, as the use of data and its exploitation (artificial intelligence, big data) will provide professionals with new tools to assist in prevention, diagnosis and treatment.

Conclusions: The digitalisation process is emerging as a fundamental tool for providing and guaranteeing quality healthcare that is personalised, equitable and adapted to the circumstances and needs of each individual.

6. Healthy Cities: Improving health, equity and sustainability at the local level in the EU

Governing Centre: Directorate-General for Public Health (Ministry of Health)

Location: Joan Plaça Auditorium, Botanical Gardens of the University of Valencia (Valencia)

Date: 27 and 28th September 2023

High-level participants:

- José Manuel Miñones, Minister of Health of Spain

Abstract: The aim of the meeting was to share and make visible experiences of health promotion at local level. Currently, there are challenges such as the climate crisis, the environment and non-communicable diseases that have a significant impact on health and share common factors and solutions. The local level is key to address and respond to these challenges.

Conclusions: In a context in which climate change and the impact of pollution on health seem more than evident, the role of municipalities and cities is fundamental in developing actions and policies to face this reality.

7. Conference on rare diseases and European reference networks: How can we ensure European solidarity for patients?

Governing Centre: Directorate-General for the Joint Portfolio of Services of the National Health System and Pharmacy (Ministry of Health) and European Economic and Social Committee.

Location: Palacio Euskalduna (Bilbao)

Date: 11th October 2023

High-level participants:

- Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety (video)
- Sandra Gallina, Director General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), European Commission
- Oliver Röpke, President of the European Economic and Social Committee
- José Miñones Conde, Minister for Health of Spain
- Silvia Calzón, Secretary of State for Health of Spain

Abstract: The conference reviewed the current situation, focusing on some of the main challenges to be addressed by the EU policy framework on rare diseases and European Reference Networks. Both Member States and civil society would like to see progress in this area. In this sense, the conference responded to the calls for action of the Czech Presidency and the previous political priority of the Trio Presidency, as well as to calls from patient organisations, which are very active on the ground.

Conclusions: The day was structured around the question of how to ensure European solidarity for rare disease patients. This requires looking at organisational models and best practices in health and social care, strengthening European reference networks for rare diseases and addressing outstanding challenges in research.

8. High-level meeting on childhood obesity: "A global framework to reduce childhood obesity in the EU"

Governing Centre: Directorate-General for Public Health (Ministry of Health)

Location: Palma de Mallorca Auditorium (Mallorca)

Date: 16 and 17th October 2023

High-level participants:

- Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety (video)
- José Miñones Conde, José Miñones Conde, Minister for Health of Spain
- Sandra Gallina, European Director General for Health and Food Safety
- Silvia Calzón. Secretary of State for Health of Spain

Abstract: The aim of this HLM was to promote healthy lifestyles in order to reverse the increasing trend in the prevalence of obesity, especially among children, with a view to significantly reducing morbidity and mortality from chronic diseases.

Conclusions: Promoting a culture of prevention and creating an environment that encourages healthy lifestyles are key aspects of making progress in health and tackling childhood obesity. Childhood and adolescence are particularly vulnerable periods, when many of the habits that accompany people throughout their lives are formed. It is important to remember the impact of obesity on the onset of other associated diseases, such as early-onset diabetes, various types of cancer, cardiovascular disease, as well as its negative impact on mental health. Concrete measures must therefore be taken to promote health and prevent disease.

9. One Health High-level Meeting on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)

Governing Centre: Spanish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency

Location: College of Physicians (Pamplona)

Date: 19th October 2023

High-level participants:

- José Miñones Conde, Minister of Health of Spain
- Roser Domenech Amado - Director of One Health – DG SANTE, European Commission
- María Lamas - Director of the Spanish Medicines and Medical Devices Agency
- Björn Eriksson – General Director of Swedish Medical Products Agency (MPA)

Abstract: The scope, magnitude and global impact of the emerging infectious diseases we faced, most of them of zoonotic origin, are unprecedented. The need for a One Health approach to address the various challenges related to human, animal and environmental health is undeniable and a clear example of this is antimicrobial resistance.

Conclusions: We need a Europe that prioritises health and ensures a coordinated and equitable response to the health challenges facing European citizens. This HLM was a very important turning point for Europe to embrace the new global realities and the interconnectedness of human, animal and environmental health from this "One Health" perspective. Within the EU, important recommendations on antibiotics and antimicrobial resistance have been adopted, providing position and reassurance to Member States. This new framework for action requires continuity to implement the recommendations and provide Europe with a new roadmap.

10. Towards Global Convergence in Transplantation: sufficiency, transparency and oversight

Governing Centre: National Transplant Organisation

Location: Santemar Hotel (Santander)

Date: 9 and 10th November 2023

High level participants:

- Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety (video)
- José Miñones Conde, Minister of Health of Spain
- Carla Vizzotti, Minister of Health of Argentina (video)
- Marija Bubas, State Secretary for Health of Croatia (video)

Abstract: The aim of this conference was to review the current situation of donation and transplantation in health systems and to look for measures to achieve an adequate supply of organs, tissues and cells, as well as transparency and monitoring in the donation and transplantation processes.

Conclusions: Throughout this HLM, several issues have been addressed to further advance transplantation and its importance in health care. Firstly, it was recognised that transplantation should be a health priority and can be a way to contribute to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This needs to take into account the impact of transplantation on health and how transplantation strengthens health systems and increases their resilience. Second, as a health priority, innovation in the donation and clinical use of substances of human origin (SoHO) is a key issue in this area. Thirdly, it is necessary to address the ethical issues raised by transplantation and to respect the World Health Organisation's Guiding Principles on Transplantation. In this sense, it is necessary to guarantee equal access to therapies based on SoHO, to consider access to transplantation when borders are crossed, how to make the principle of economic neutrality a reality and, above all, how to prevent organ trafficking and other SoHO.

11. High-Level Meeting on Mental Health

Governing Centre: Directorate-General for Public Health (Ministry of Health)

Location: Niemeyer Centre (Avilés)

Date: 14th November 2023

High level participants:

- Stella Kyriakides, European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety (video)
- José Miñones Conde, Minister of Health of Spain
- Silvia Calzón. Secretary of State for Health of Spain

Abstract: The aim of this meeting was to facilitate the exchange of policies, good practices and projects in the field of mental health at European Union level, in order to support the development of these aspects of mental health and the implementation of the "Healthier Together" initiative. EU non-communicable diseases 2022-2027" in relation to mental health and the European Commission Communication "A comprehensive approach to mental health".

Conclusions: It is necessary to address the stigma and taboos that have traditionally surrounded mental health problems by prioritising Member States' responses in their health agendas. It is also necessary to give visibility to one of the greatest challenges facing European public health, to promote a strategic reflection on the issue and to place mental health at the heart of the Community's health agenda.