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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council

Subject: European Union Global Health strategy
- *Exchange of views*

Delegations will find in Annex a background note from the Presidency to steer the exchange of views on the European Union Global Health Strategy at the EPSCO Council (Health) on 14 March 2023.

European Union Global Health Strategy

On 30 November 2022, the Commission adopted a **Communication on a new EU Global Health Strategy – Better Health for All in a Changing World**¹ (hereafter referred to as the Strategy).

The Strategy recognises global health as an essential pillar of EU external policy and, as such, identifies it as a critical geopolitical area. The main message of the communication is that the EU intends to reassert its responsibility and strengthen its leadership in order to achieve the highest possible standards of health based on fundamental values, including solidarity, equity and the respect of human rights.

The communication replaces the previous Global Health Strategy published in 2010. A new approach to tackling current and future global health challenges is necessary in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic and other health threats such as antimicrobial resistance, the evolving geopolitical situation and the health and humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Ukraine. It is also necessary in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

The Strategy represents the external dimension of the European Health Union, which protects the wellbeing of Europeans and the resilience of their health systems. It is also a key component of the Global Gateway, which builds partnerships of equals with partner countries based on joint responsibility and co-ownership. The Strategy also stresses the importance of a “health in all policies” approach to promote health across relevant sectors. The new Strategy identifies three priorities: deliver better health and well-being of people across the life course; strengthening health systems and advance universal health coverage; and prevent and combat health threats, including pandemics, applying a One-Health approach.

¹ 15585/22

The Strategy has 20 guiding principles detailing the needs and measures needed in specific areas. These include tackling the root causes of ill health, promoting digitalisation, boosting research, addressing workforce imbalances, addressing more effectively the issue of antimicrobial resistance, enhancing EU finance for global health, assessing progress and ensuring accountability. The EU4Health 2023 work plan contains activities supporting the Strategy's implementation.

The issue of Global Health has already been on the agenda of Health ministers on a number of occasions, such as during the **EPSCO (Health) Council** in June 2022. On that occasion, Ministers stressed the importance of strengthening health systems, preparing for and responding to health crises and promoting the One Health approach. Ministers also emphasised the need to strengthen the EU's influence on health on the international scene and to promote coordination between relevant EU actors.

The Strategy represents a widening of the focus on saving lives and reducing the spread of diseases to cover, too, the promotion of health and well-being. The Strategy further constitutes a new approach to mobilising the relevant policy areas and instruments available to Team Europe. In addition, it offers opportunities to develop the EU's cooperation with global, regional and bilateral partners around the world through partnerships based on equal footing, co-ownership, mutual interest and strategic priorities. The discussion at the EPSCO (Health) Council on 14 March 2023 provides Health Ministers with the opportunity to exchange views on the Commission's communication. The Presidency believes it is important to hear the opinions of all Member States when it comes to finding synergies between health initiatives at the EU level, such as the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, the Pharmaceutical Strategy and the planned European Health Data Space, and activities at the global level. The Presidency believes that it is important to exchange views on how the Strategy can best be implemented.

In the light of the above, Ministers are invited address the following questions during the debate:

Q1 : Which synergies can you see between EU initiatives in the area of public health and at a global level? Do you see a need to strengthen these synergies? If yes, how could these be strengthened?

Q2 : What aspects, tools and actions would be important for the implementation of the EU Global Health Strategy?