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NOTE

From: Presidency
To: Permanent Representatives Committee/Council
Subject: Revision of the EU Global Health Strategy

Delegations will find attached a Presidency background note to serve as a basis for the exchange of views on the revision of the EU Global Health Strategy, at the EPSCO (Health) Council meeting scheduled for 14 June 2022.

Revision of the EU Global Health Strategy

Global health issues have been central to the message of the EU institutions and the Member States on the international stage in recent months.

The EU has demonstrated responsiveness and solidarity through **Team Europe** to actively **contribute to the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic**. The EU is thus the world's leading exporter and donor of vaccines and has provided significant funding for the ACT-A initiative and its COVAX vaccine pillar. It has also committed to increasing the production capacities of developing countries, both through the ACT-A health systems connector and the Team Europe MAV + initiative.

From the start of the health crisis, **the EU has championed a strong multilateral response and supported the WHO's leading role in coordinating the response to health emergencies**. It adopted Council conclusions on strengthening the role of the WHO¹, co-organised the Global Health Summit² with the Italian Presidency of the G20 and supported the G20 Rome Declaration³. The EU has also played a leading role in reflections on reforms to strengthen the multilateral health architecture supporting the WHO. In addition, the Council Decision of 3 March 2022 allows the EU to participate directly in the ongoing negotiations at the WHO for an international agreement on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response and the EU is actively involved in the work to amend the International Health Regulations (IHR, 2005). The EU and European partners in the G7 and G20 also spoke with one voice in these fora to reinforce the multilateral response to the health crisis.

¹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/11/06/strengthening-the-world-health-organization-the-eu-is-ready-to-take-the-leading-role/> (06/11/2020)

² Global Health Summit of 21 May 2021

³ [G20 Rome Leaders' Declaration](#) (01/11/2021)

Currently **the European Union and its Member States are the main donors to international initiatives to structure solidarity efforts** in favour of low- and middle-income countries such as programmes funded by the WHO and multilateral funds such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, Gavi or Unitaïd, and the ACT-A initiative. The EU's central role in global health also includes **establishing enhanced health cooperation with its partner countries, in particular by rolling out the NDICI-Global Europe instrument**. Further examples are the EU-African Union Summit of 17-18 February 2022, which strengthened EU-African cooperation on the health sovereignty of the continent, and the second global COVID-19 summit launched by the United States on 12 May 2022, where the US and the EU reiterated their commitment of September 2021 to implementing their joint Agenda to defeat the pandemic⁴.

Building on its experience and the mechanisms put in place during the COVID-19 crisis in particular, **the EU has demonstrated its capacity to provide a strong, solidarity-based and coordinated humanitarian and health response to Ukraine**, the displaced people and the countries most affected. Russia's unjustified military aggression against Ukraine as well as its attacks on health facilities have had a severe impact on Ukrainian and European health systems, owing in particular to the rapid and massive influx of refugees to neighbouring countries. However, beyond the urgency and just as for the COVID-19 crisis, the challenges of managing the impact of the war will continue in the medium to long term, highlighting once again the need to construct a solid EU global health strategy.

⁴ Statement by President von der Leyen and President Biden on the occasion of the second Global COVID-19 Summit
(https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_22_3050)

These successive crises have therefore demonstrated the relevance of working at European level to address the many global health challenges. The Strategic Compass⁵, adopted on 21 March 2022 to strengthen the European security and defence policy, had already highlighted the need for the EU to prepare for *‘global health crises [which] can also impose considerable strains on societies and economies, with far-reaching geopolitical implications’*. The EU’s comprehensive action on global health goes beyond health security.

Many public health initiatives in support of health promotion and the prevention of non-communicable diseases have been launched on the international scene as a result of EU action, both before and during this crisis. Team Europe initiatives (including those focusing on One Health approaches to crisis prevention) will all contribute to global health, as will the forthcoming European joint actions supported by the EU4Health programme.

The last strategy on the EU’s role in global health dates back to 2010. It is based on a Commission communication⁶ and Council conclusions⁷ but preceded the **profound changes** that have taken place since then such as the adoption of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Paris climate agreement, the COVID-19 pandemic and the return of war on the European continent, as well as the emergence of new zoonoses (such as monkeypox). Structuring a multilateral response to health crises around the ACT-A initiative and discussions on the reform of the financing of the international health architecture have been important steps in this direction.

⁵ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/03/21/a-strategic-compass-for-a-stronger-eu-security-and-defence-in-the-next-decade/> (21/3/2022)

⁶ [Commission communication on the EU Role in Global Health](#) (31/03/2010)

⁷ [Council Conclusions on the EU role in Global Health](#) (10/05/2010)

In addition to the efforts already made, it is essential to renew and strengthen the EU Global Health Strategy to take account of these significant developments, as was argued at the Joint Conference of Foreign Ministers and Health Ministers held in Lyon on 9 February 2022. On 19 May 2022 at the G7 Health Ministers' meeting, Commissioners Stella Kyriakides and Jutta Urpilainen officially announced **the start of work on the revision of the EU Global Health Strategy**.

The work started must now continue and materialise in support of a strong European Health Union and of the partnerships and networks that the Council committed itself to promoting in its conclusions adopted in December 2021, including with regional institutions such as the African Union and Africa CDC.

Discussions at the informal meeting of health ministers in Grenoble (10 February 2022) highlighted the interdependent and intersectoral nature of health, requiring the integration of key sectors (such as security, trade, technology and the environment), building on the actions already undertaken. Against a backdrop of increased interdependence between human, animal and environmental interfaces and the climate and digital transitions, the **One Health approach** and the concept of **Health in All Policies** (HiAP) will be at the heart of this revised strategy. At international level, the EU can build on specific initiatives such as the One Health High Level Expert Panel proposed by France and Germany and launched by the WHO, OIE, FAO and UNEP, and PREZODE (Preventing Zoonotic Disease Emergence).

It is up to the EU to consolidate a European vision of global health challenges and to better reflect its values and objectives so that the EU's place in international fora is commensurate with its contribution to global health.

The Presidency proposes the following questions to guide the debate:

Q1: Which priorities should be included in the new EU Global Health Strategy?

Q2: How can we strengthen our coordination and influence on global health?