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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Presidency conferences <i>- Information from the Presidency</i>

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 21 June 2024.

A Europe that cares, prepares and protects - Strengthening the EU Health Union

Overview of the main events organised by the Belgian health authorities in the context of the Presidency of the Council of the EU

Belgium focused on three major themes during its Presidency to further strengthen the European Health Union: care, preparedness and protection. Throughout the different events, several policy proposals were discussed, stimulating the reflection on the future European health agenda.

Main Health Events

February 8th & 9th 2024: Joint Meeting Chief Medical Officers & Working Party on Public Health at High Level

The joint meeting of the Chief Medical Officers and the EU Working Party on Public Health at High-Level allowed to discuss issues of common interest, notably health emergency preparedness and crisis governance.

March 26th & 27th 2024: High-level Conference on the Future EU Health Union

Belgium's Federal Public Service Public Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment (FPS Health) organised a High-level Conference on the Future EU Health Union. Under the slogan 'A Europe that cares, prepares and protects', the aim of the two-day conference was to reflect on the future EU health agenda. More than 300 participants, including the European Commissioner for health, ministers, state secretaries, delegations from Member States and EU institutions, stakeholders and academics attended this conference, attesting major interest for the topics on the agenda. Issues discussed spanned from health workforce issues and prevention from disease to medicine supplies and preparedness for crisis. One thing became clear: the current and upcoming challenges in health policy are important and shared by many EU member states and stakeholders.

April 17th & 18th 2024: High-level Conference on Healthcare needs as drivers for healthcare policy and innovation

Belgium's Federal Agency for Medicines and Health Products (FAMHP), the National Institute for Health and Disability Insurance (NIHDI) and the Health Care Knowledge Centre (KCE) organised a high-level conference on health-related needs as drivers for healthcare policy and innovation.

The aim of the conference was to address the functioning of the research and innovation ecosystem and to set steps towards more needs-driven decision-making, both at the EU and member state level.

Experts reflected on the achievements within the field of health-related needs, while also considering the challenges for the future. One of the main takeaways was the need to set up an adequately financed, independent research infrastructure at the EU level. This could support research on unmet needs across various health conditions and generate an evidence database.

April 18th 2024: Joint Meeting HMA – NCAPR – HTA HAG

The joint meeting of the Heads of Medicines Agencies (HMA), National Competent Authorities on Pricing and Reimbursement (NCAPR), and Heads of HTA Agencies (HTA HAG) covered pivotal topics such as the repurposing of medicines and addressing unmet medical needs. Collaborative strategies for joint procurement and negotiations were explored, with a particular emphasis on combating Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and enhancing access to cutting-edge medical devices and diagnostics.

April 24th 2024: Launch of the Critical Medicines Alliance

The European Commission's Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA), working with the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU, launched the Critical Medicines Alliance at the margins of the meeting of health ministers, as part of the actions to build a strong European Health Union.

The Alliance brings together national authorities, industry, healthcare organisations, civil society representatives, the Commission and EU agencies to identify the best measures to address and avoid shortages of critical medicines.

May 8th 2024: High level Conference on Antimicrobial resistance

From May 6th to May 8th 2024, Belgium's Federal Public Service Public Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment (FPS Health), together with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the research institution Sciensano, organised a series of meetings on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), including the High-level day on May 8th.

The Conference offered a comprehensive framework to address the critical issues surrounding healthcare-associated infections (HAIs) and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). It aimed to foster collaboration and state of the art knowledge sharing among experts in the field, as well as to provide actionable insights to policymakers to combat AMR.

Other Health Events organized by the Belgian Presidency

January 30th & 31st 2024: Conference on mental health and work

The conference brought together European experts and decision-makers in Brussels around the topic of mental health and work. The aim was to tackle the issue as a continuum and in all its complexity. A first focus was put on primary prevention and the establishment of healthy workplaces by implementing upstream measures to prevent workers from being exposed to psychosocial risks at work. But also secondary and tertiary prevention were addressed, i.e., keeping people at work by detecting and dealing with the first signs of illbeing in workers and helping them return to work after sick leave.

March 20th 2024: Informal Team Europe-Africa ministerial event on health in development

Together with the European Commission, the African Union (AU) and the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Belgium organised a high-level event focused on strengthening the foundation of shared ambitions of the EU and AU in global health. Following the commitments made at the 2022 EU-AU Summit, and the successful Team Europe mission to Addis in February 2024, this high-level meeting served as a crucial step in solidifying the partnership on global health. Building upon the shared goals established at the Summit, the event launched four key Team Europe initiatives focused on health and human development.

April 23rd 2024: Health Equity and Health System Strengthening

Together with Enabel, the Belgian Development Agency, and Be-cause health, the Belgian Platform for Global Health, the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU organised this expert conference dedicated to bolstering health systems and achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC), focusing on the crucial roles of health financing, social participation and civil society.

April 25th 2024: Scientific symposium: Sharing experiences and perspectives on Nutri-Score and other front-of-pack nutrition labelling systems

This scientific symposium brought together high-level experts, policymakers, stakeholders, and researchers from all over Europe to explore diverse perspectives on Nutri-Score and other voluntary front-of-pack nutrition labelling systems already introduced in some EU countries. The importance of nutritional labeling to get consumers more involved and encourage them to make balanced food choices was highlighted.

May 2nd & 3rd 2024: Integrating Care, Strengthening Communities: The Data Connection

This conference served as a platform for European and international experts, thought leaders, and practitioners to explore innovative strategies and collaborative approaches for advancing integrated care and empowering communities. The event addressed the critical aspect of data connectivity in achieving comprehensive healthcare solutions. During this conference, a multitude of critical topics at the forefront of integrated care and community strengthening were addressed.

May 14th & 15th 2024: Europe united against old and new pandemics

Coordinated by the Flemish Department for Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI), in collaboration with the Research Department of the Public Service of Wallonia, the Flemish Department for Care and the Federal Public Service on Public Health, and co-financed by DG RTD of the European Commission, the conference provided an overview of lessons learnt from the COVID pandemic and options to be globally prepared for future health threats in a forward-looking scene.

May 28th & 29th 2024: The convergence of technologies enabling R&I for the healthcare of the future

Coordinated by the Flemish Department for Economy, Science and Innovation (EWI), in collaboration with the Research Department of the Public Service of Wallonia, the Flemish Department for Care and Sciensano, and co-financed by DG RTD of the European Commission, the conference delved into compelling topics and technologies, and the potential of the different European partnerships and infrastructures. The conference gave more insights into the potential of technologies and innovative approaches for better wellbeing and health.
