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Subject : EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS  
COUNCIL MEETING ON 7 AND 8 JUNE 2010

**Outcomes and Conferences of the Spanish Presidency**

– *Information from the Presidency*  
(Other business item)

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Delegations will find annexed an information note from the Presidency on the above-mentioned subject.

**Outcomes and Conferences of the Spanish Presidency**

"Conference on Cardiovascular Disease"

(Madrid, 18–19 February)

"Workshop on Food Supplements"

(Madrid, 8 March)

"eHealth Ministerial Conference"

(Barcelona, 15-18 March)

"Conference on Organ Donation and Transplantation 'European Challenges in Organ Donation. Searching for Global Solutions'"

(Madrid, 23-25 March)

"Conference on Vulnerability and HIV in Europe"

(Madrid, 13 April)

"Conference of Experts and Ministerial Panel on the Monitoring of Social Determinants of Health and the Reduction of Health Inequalities"

(Madrid, 21 - 22 April)

"Informal Meeting of Health Ministers: 'Innovation in Public Health: Monitoring Social Determinants of Health and Reducing Inequalities'" (Madrid, 22-23 April)

"5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Patient Safety"

(Madrid, 3-4 June)

"Seminar on Consumer Safety"

(Mallorca, 10-11 June)

"Conference on Mental Health and Well-being in Older People"

(Madrid, 28-29 June)

***- Information note from the Presidency-***

The Spanish Presidency of the European Union has organised many events aimed at addressing the issues and achieving the objectives identified as priorities both within the Trio Programme and the Six-Month Programme in the areas of Health and Consumers. A summary of the most relevant events is set out below in chronological order.

**1. Conference on Cardiovascular Disease (Madrid, 18–19 February)**

The Spanish Presidency of the EU, together with the European Society of Cardiology, organised the conference on ‘Cardiovascular Diseases’ in Madrid, Spain on 18–19 February 2010.

The meeting brought together representatives from the Member States, the European Commission, international organisations such as IDF Europe, EHN, ESMO, ESC, as well as officers and experts in this field.

The conference was intended for all Member States. They were also encouraged to participate and send two representatives acknowledged in the political and technical fields related with the identified topics.

The aim of the meeting was to consider the impact of cardiovascular disease in Europe.

The Conference presented interesting new studies as well as discussions covering different angles. One of the sessions focused on CVD risk factors. Another session offered the opportunity to measure progress since 2002, when cardiovascular diseases were first mentioned in the European Union agenda, in a declaration from the Spanish Presidency of the European Union recognising the burden of disease and urging action from the European Commission and the Member States. A third session was about how to identify it and how can policies help to implement prevention strategies, by identifying common gaps and difficulties in the existing plans.

Once the gaps met by the different stakeholders in promoting heart health were identified, the Conference of the Spanish Presidency 2010 concluded by encouraging best practice in Europe.

A comprehensive strategy on cardiovascular diseases at EU level is needed, which shall include medical research, clinical practice, knowledge management, prevention strategies, screening plans, etc.

## **2. Workshop on Food Supplements (Madrid, 8 March)**

The Spanish Presidency of the European Union organised a ‘Workshop on Food Supplements’ in Madrid on 8 March 2010, which brought together representatives from the Member States, the European Commission, the European Food Safety Authority and the French Food Safety Agency.

The Workshop was attended by 21 representatives of the Member States and the Central, Autonomous and Local Governments.

Participants stressed the difficulties faced by the competent authorities in the field. This Workshop represented a step forward to progress on the harmonisation of the criteria for actions in the EU market, as well as on the promotion of transparency and the exchange of experiences among Member States in this field.

In addition, it was made clear that Member States acknowledge the differences in the current system, and individual efforts are being made to control these products in order to guarantee the highest level of consumer health protection and ensure the normal functioning of the internal market.

The main difficulties highlighted in the Workshop for an effective monitoring of food supplements and for the correct application of the principle of mutual recognition were the following:

- The lack of upper limit established for vitamins and minerals.
- The lack of provisions on substances other than vitamins and minerals.
- The weak frontier between food supplements, medicines and foods for special medical purposes.

The conclusions drawn from this meeting confirm the need to progress on the implementation and development of the legislation of these products along with the need to join efforts in this area and improve communication and information exchange among the competent authorities.

### **3. eHealth Ministerial Conference (Barcelona, 15-18 March)**

The High-Level Conference was attended by several EU Health Ministers and State Secretaries, as well as by the European Commissioner for the Digital Agenda, Neelie Kroes, and the Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, John Dalli.

For the first time, the High-Level Ministerial Conference coincided with the World of Health IT Conference and Exhibition. This event gathers the cutting-edge industries of the sector, both nationally and internationally.

The meeting brought together almost 150 speakers, over 2,500 delegates and 7,500 followers through social networks, as well as a hundred local, European and international exhibitors in an exhibition area of more than 10,000 square metres.

During the ‘eHealth Week’, a conference of State Secretaries took place, where it was agreed to adopt the implementation of eHealth governance in Europe. This measure involves creating a common framework for the joint development of eHealth in Europe. Since the adoption of the proposal, 25 countries and 7 (professional, industry and patient) associations have joined the project.

As proof of interest in promoting eHealth in Europe, the EU Health Ministers have signed an Institutional Statement, which includes five items:

1. A commitment to greater political coordination among the different areas in which eHealth can benefit the health of citizens.
2. A need for greater national and European synergies regarding competitiveness and research and development.
3. The importance of fully integrating eHealth in all European policies and in the development of the post-2010 European Strategy.

4. The organisation of European actions in terms of eHealth innovation and development in order to improve the technical feasibility and the legal security of digital data handling.
5. The involvement of all sectors related to eHealth development and planning.

Several experts in the field of Health Technologies from the five continents have met in Barcelona for the ‘Global People-centered eHealth Innovation Forum’, with the purpose of promoting international collaborative projects that speed up the implementation of health systems based on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), and focused on the needs of citizens.

#### **4. Conference on Organ Donation and Transplantation ‘European Challenges in Organ Donation. Searching for Global Solutions’ (Madrid, 23-25 March)**

The Madrid Conference on Organ Donation and Transplantation ‘European and Universal Challenges in Organ Donation. Searching for Global Solutions’ was held on 23 March, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> World Health Organization (WHO) Global Consultation on Organ Donation and Transplantation under the title ‘Striving to Achieve Self-Sufficiency’ was held in Madrid (Spain) on 24-25 March 2010 in the framework of the Spanish Presidency of the European Union.

The Conference was organised by the Spanish Presidency of the European Union with the support of the European Commission, and took place in the Auditorium of the Ministry of Health and Social Policy. It was attended by over 300 health care professionals.

During the Conference a comprehensive review of the current situation and the main challenges in organ donation and transplantation within the European Union was performed. The political steps taken by the European Commission in the field, particularly with regard to the preparation of the proposal for a European Directive on safety and quality aspects and the Action Plan promoting the cooperation between Member States were presented. Finally, the WHO programme related to the transplantation of cells, tissues and organs was discussed, along with the definition of the concept of self-sufficiency as a way of increasing the availability of organs for transplantation, while promoting ethical practices throughout the world.

The WHO Global Consultation, organised by the Spanish Presidency and WHO, in cooperation with The Transplantation Society, was held at the Eurostars Madrid Tower Hotel on 24-25 March. This Consultation was a closed-door session given the need to balance the representation of the different WHO regions.

WHO Global Consultation Representation

Region	Participants	No. of Countries
AFRO	6	6
AMRO	23	11
EMRO	9	8
EURO	67	31
SEARO	8	5
WPRO	17	7
WHO	10	
Total	140	68

The two days of the Consultation were devoted to discuss the concept of self-sufficiency as well as the strategies to achieve it. The Consultation was conceived in a way that a series of *aide-memories* resulted out of it, providing practical recommendations to strive self-sufficiency, which can be applicable to different health-care realities. Every participant was assigned to a working group, and the leaders of these working groups drafted the *aide-mémoires* in advance, which were eventually discussed and finished during the Consultation. Works carried out by the groups were shared with all participants during the last day, thus they could provide their views on all the issues addressed during the Consultation.

The issues discussed by the different working groups were:

- Group 1: Assessing Needs for Transplantation;
- Group 2: System Requirements for the Pursuit of Self-Sufficiency;
- Group 3: Meeting Needs Through Donation;
- Group 4: Monitoring Outcomes in the Pursuit of Self-Sufficiency;
- Group 5: Fostering Emergency Department and Intensive Care Professional Ownership of Self-Sufficiency;
- Group 6: The Role of Public Health and Society in the Pursuit of Self-Sufficiency, Group 7: Ethics of the Pursuit of Self-Sufficiency; and
- Group 8: Effectiveness in the Pursuit of Self-Sufficiency, Achievements and Opportunities.

A Booklet on this WHO Global Consultation has been produced with the following general contents:

- Resolution
- Executive Summary
- Working Groups Aide-Memoires

## **5. Conference on Vulnerability and HIV in Europe (Madrid, 13 April)**

The Conference on ‘Vulnerability and HIV in Europe’ brought together representatives from organisations and networks across the European Union. The objectives of the meeting were:

- Discuss the political and interdisciplinary dimension of inequalities, vulnerability to HIV and effective interventions and policies.
- Share experiences related to the work on groups at a higher risk of HIV infection which are being undertaken at an international level.
- Show the Spanish participation on international projects related to HIV.
- Present the conclusions of the Conference as regards vulnerability and HIV in Europe.



The Conference proved to be an important step on the path towards better EU cooperation EU and a stimulus for collaboration in programmes on health promotion and reduction of inequalities. It provided a space for discussion, sharing of experiences and knowledge on current policies and programmes aimed at reducing the factors influencing HIV vulnerability. It focused on key populations at a higher risk, such as men who have sex with men (MSM), migrants, and other vulnerable groups such as injecting drug users (IDUs), women and young people, as well as on social inclusion and early diagnosis.

An analysis of the vulnerability causes in the different groups was performed, as well as an exposition of the specific actions that are currently being undertaken both to better understand the reasons why certain groups are at a higher risk and to reduce the factors influencing HIV vulnerability and the epidemiological situation related with HIV epidemic in vulnerable groups.

The Conference was attended by more than 190 delegates from all European countries that represented civil society, health public administrations, and other international boards. Their contribution was essential to reach the conclusions of the meeting.

Some key conclusions were reached as to how future actions should be tailored because HIV/AIDS remains a public health and social challenge in Europe. The epidemic undermines the right to health and the human rights and dignity of key populations affected by HIV, such as MSM, migrant communities, IDUs, and sex workers. Conclusions can be downloaded from the following website: <http://www.msps.es/ciudadanos/enfLesiones/enfTransmisibles/sida/docs/vulnerabilidad/VulnerabilidadHIVEuropeConclusionsFinal.pdf>.

## **6. Conference of Experts and Ministerial Panel on the Monitoring of Social Determinants of Health and the Reduction of Health Inequalities (Madrid, 21 - 22 April)**

### THE CONFERENCE AND THE PANEL WERE CANCELLED DUE TO THE VOLCANIC-ASH CLOUD

The Conference and the Panel were organised by the Spanish Presidency in collaboration with the European Commission and with the technical input from the World Health Organization.

The slogan for these events was ‘Moving Forward Equity in Health’. They intended to bring together representatives from all EU Member States, candidate countries, potential candidate countries and EFTA/EEA States, Latin-American countries, European Commission, international organisations such as WHO, NGOs, civil society, as well as experts in the field. The profile of the participants profile tried to cover as many areas as possible in order to enhance cross-sectional action (e.g.: social affairs, health, employment, etc).

The Conference of Experts was planned for 21 April, and 300 experts were invited. The Ministerial Panel was expected to take place on 22 April morning. The programme was designed to bring together a wide range of international experts in the field of health inequalities and social determinants of health. Several high-level representatives were also invited to participate in the sessions, such as the Director-General of the DG SANCO, the WHO-EURO Regional Director, the European Commissioner for Health and the Health Ministers from Belgium, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and United Kingdom.

The aim of the Conference of Experts was to exchange ideas on social determinants of health and their impact on health inequalities, as well as know-how on the various methods and tools that efficiently support the monitoring of these social determinants. The Conference offered new approaches to innovation in public health, illustrating important advances in the global role of the EU through the creation of exchanges among different areas of knowledge and through the contribution to a better environment for innovation.

The Ministerial Panel was aimed at stressing the need to put the initiatives related with the monitoring of social determinants of health high on the EU agenda, and to promote opportunities to develop national policies with a specific focus on health equity, as well as to discuss the contribution of the EU in the progress to the global reduction of inequalities. At the same time, it was projected as a space to discuss the achievability, difficulties and opportunities of the experts’ conclusions.

Both events had to be cancelled due to the volcanic-ash cloud that affected Europe during that week. Nevertheless, all the presentations and the situation analysis report that were going to be presented during the Conference can be downloaded from the following website:

<http://www.msps.es/en/presidenciaUE/calendario/conferenciaExpertos/>. All the experts invited have had the opportunity to access these contents and send their inputs. With all this information and the previous work that the Spanish Presidency commissioned to relevant international experts in the field, the Spanish Ministry of Health has published the situation analysis report entitled ‘Monitoring Social Determinants of Health and Reducing Health Inequalities’.

## **7. Informal Meeting of Health Ministers: ‘Innovation in Public Health: Monitoring Social Determinants of Health and Reducing Inequalities (Madrid, 22-23 April)**

The Informal Meeting of European Union Health Ministers was an excellent opportunity to exchange experiences and lessons learned with respect to the monitoring of social determinants of health and the reduction of health inequalities.

Among the participants were Health Ministers from the EU Member States, candidate countries and EEA/EFTA States, as well as the European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, Mr John Dalli; the WHO Director-General, Dr Margaret Chan; and the WHO-EURO Regional Director, Dr Zsuzanna Jakab.

### Issues addressed:

#### A. Socially determined health inequalities

The Member States of the EU agreed to strengthen health policies addressed to the most vulnerable population in order to guarantee health and social equity. Health inequalities and children and women’s health were analysed. The Member States of the EU were urged to ensure universal access to health services.

The need to step up efforts to promote health and disease prevention was addressed, taking into account the social determinants of health in all policies of all government sectors. Monitoring social determinants of health and reducing health inequalities has been a priority on the agenda of the Spanish Presidency aimed at advancing the international and the national agendas on this issue, and Council Conclusions will be adopted in June.

Additionally, a summary report has been produced: ‘Towards Equity in Health: Monitoring Social Determinants of Health and Reducing Health Inequalities’, commissioned by the Spanish Presidency as support material.

The following questions were formulated in order to facilitate discussion among the ministers:

- How can the European Union and its Member States push the agenda on health and equity forward?
- How high is equity in health policies among the priorities of your country? How can national strategies and policies ensure equity in health?
- Is there any national experience related with intersectoral work to improve health that you would like to highlight?
- Is there any national experience (in the health sector or in another) aimed at reducing inequalities in health that you would like to highlight?

Ministers had the opportunity to provide and exchange their views. This was an essential input for the Council Conclusions in order to take into account Member States requirements and produce a wide-consensus document.

## B. Pandemic influenza

Additionally, the EU health Ministers also addressed the current situation of the pandemic influenza A/H1N1 a year after the outbreak of the virus. According to the latest data from WHO, more than 213 countries have notified confirmed cases of pandemic influenza, with approximately 17,700 deaths (340 of them in Spain). At present, the most active areas as regards the transmission of the virus are Southeast Asia, Western Africa and tropical America.

The Spanish Presidency, in collaboration with the forthcoming Belgian Presidency, the European Commission, and the countries of France, United Kingdom and Sweden, has organised a workshop on multisectoral aspects of a crisis, taking the influenza pandemic as example, whose conclusions will be presented during a Conference in July, in the framework of the Belgian Presidency within the Trio.

#### C. Other business

Finally, the Directive on the application of patients' rights in cross-border health care was discussed, and a new compromise proposal has been presented by the Spanish Presidency.

### **8. 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Patient Safety (Madrid, 3-4 June)**

The title of the Conference was 'Healthcare-Associated Infections and Antimicrobial Resistance'. The Conference was attended by representatives of the Member States and international organisations, as well as health managers and professionals, in addition to their organisations, and consumer, patient and citizen organisations, numbering about 1700 participants.

Work was focused on the following contents:

- Interventions to address AMRs and HAIs nationally and internationally with respect to the experiences of several organisations (such as CDC, ECDC, EMEA, WHO, etc.) and some European countries.
- Experiences to promote the participation of citizens in the prevention of HAIs and AMRs.
- Actions of the European Commission on health care quality and patient safety.
- Research projects of the European Commission in relation with patient safety.

The aim of the Conference was to provide professionals and patients with the opportunity to have a forum to share the best available evidence on relevant aspects related to health care, update knowledge, share experiences on the actions developed in the field of patient safety in order to facilitate a change of culture in health care organisations allowing for higher quality and safety of health care for citizens.

## **9. Seminar on Consumer Safety (Mallorca, 10-11 June)**

The purpose of this Seminar, which has been organised by the Spanish National Institute for Consumer Protection (INC), is to analyse the requirements for consumer security in a globalised environment, with a diversified offer both in distribution models and in origin.

## **10. Conference on Mental Health and Well-being in Older People (Madrid, 28-29 June)**

THE CONFERENCE WAS INITIALLY PROGRAMMED FOR 19-20 APRIL BUT HAD TO BE CANCELLED DUE TO THE VOLCANIC-ASH CLOUD. IT HAS BEEN RE-SCHEDULED FOR 28-29 JUNE.

The Conference is organised by the European Commission and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs of Spain under the auspices of the Spanish Presidency. It will be the third thematic conference of the five proposed by the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being signed in 2008.

The main objectives of the conference are:

- Highlighting the importance of promoting mental health and the prevention of mental disorders in older persons and provide carers with supporting measures;
- Facilitating the exchange of policies, good practice and research projects at EU level;
- Supporting the development of these aspects related with ageing in the implementation of the European Pact for Mental Health and Well-being;
- Providing a summary of critical points and key actions for a possible EC high-level meeting in 2011.

The Conference programme addresses these five issues:

- Promotion of good mental health in old age: well-being and active ageing.
- Prevention of mental disorders and support for the mentally ill.
- Dependency and assistance structures.
- Social dimension and vulnerable groups.
- Training and assistance for carers.