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OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING

3751st Council meeting

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs

Health issues

Brussels, 13 February 2020

President

Vili Beroš
Minister for Health of Croatia

P R E S S

CONTENTS¹

ITEMS DEBATED

HEALTH..... 3

COVID-19 – exchange of views..... 3

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

none

¹ • Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
• Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
• Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

ITEMS DEBATED

HEALTH

COVID-19 – exchange of views

Health ministers exchanged views to take stock of the implications of the outbreak of human cases of COVID-19. The Director of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), Andrea Ammon, and the Executive Director of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Emergencies Programme, Mike Ryan, also participated in the discussion via video link. The European Commission was represented by Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella Kyriakides, and Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarčič.

Ministers held the debate on the basis of a presidency steering note ([Discussion paper](#)), containing the following questions:

- How can cooperation between member states be strengthened in cases where an aligned approach to preventive and preparatory measures is necessary to protect public health? How do you see the role of the Commission in terms of providing support to member states?
- Bearing in mind that disease outbreak and other severe events in third countries can affect the European market for pharmaceuticals and medical equipment, what steps should be jointly undertaken in order to ensure a sustainable supply for the internal market? Which would be the most appropriate tools for achieving this goal?

Ministers agreed that the response of the EU to the COVID-19 outbreak was effective and stressed the importance of cooperation at both EU and international level. Many delegations supported the idea of joint procurement for the provision of medicines and protective equipment. The European Commission expressed readiness to assist joint procurement initiatives and indicated that at this stage there were no shortages of medicines or protective equipment in the EU. Ministers also agreed on the need to assist efforts to develop vaccines, to help non-EU countries with vulnerable health systems to tackle the COVID-19 outbreak, and to intensify information-sharing.

Council conclusions on COVID-19

Ministers adopted conclusions on COVID-19 ([Council conclusions on COVID-19](#)), welcoming the effective EU response to the threat of a possible pandemic outbreak and calling for increased cooperation at both EU and international level.

The conclusions urge member states to take the necessary measures to provide information and guidance to persons who are at increased risk of carrying COVID-19, to enhance cooperation and to continuously share information on the evolution of the virus within their territories. The Commission is called upon to assist the cooperation among member states, to examine ways to facilitate the access of member states to personal protective equipment and to evaluate the consequences of global health threats for the availability of medicines within the EU.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

none
