



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 30 April 2009

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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

from : General Secretariat of the Council
to: Delegations

Subject: EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY,
HEALTH AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS COUNCIL ON 30 APRIL 2009
INFLUENZA A/H1N1 INFECTION
- Exchange of views
- Adoption of Council Conclusions

The Council conclusions annexed hereto were adopted at the Extraordinary meeting of Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council on 30 April 2009.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS ON INFLUENZA A/H1N1 INFECTION

With regard to the international outbreak of human cases of influenza A/H1N1 infection, the growing international concern and on the basis of updated information provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO), Member States, the Commission, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the Health Security Committee (HSC), the Council of the European Union takes note of the evolving epidemiological situation, welcomes the effective European Union (EU) and international response to the threat of a possible but still uncertain pandemic outbreak and calls for continued co-operation at the EU and international level. In this context, the EU and its Member States should continue to act in a strong and decisive manner to face this threat.

Therefore, the Council of the European Union:

1. RECOGNISES that human outbreaks like the one caused by the influenza virus A/H1N1 are a potential global threat, in particular because of increasingly frequent international travel in a globalised world;
2. RECALLS that the EU has prepared for health emergencies adopting and implementing preparedness and response plans since 2005 and recalls the Council Conclusions of 16 December 2008¹ which called upon strengthening the coordination and cooperation in the field of health security, in particular as regards public health emergencies of international concern within the EU;

¹ 16825/08 (Presse 358)

3. WELCOMES the rapid action taken by the Member States in the framework of the WHO's International Health Regulations (IHR) and through coordination within the HSC, the Early Warning and Response System for Communicable Diseases and the Committee of the Network for the Epidemiological Surveillance and Control of Communicable Diseases in accordance with Decision No 2119/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 September 1998 setting up a network for epidemiological surveillance and control of communicable diseases in the Community² in order to protect our citizens;
4. RECOGNISES that effectiveness of national measures will be further enhanced by ongoing co-ordination measures being taken by the Commission and the Member States with the assistance of the ECDC, in cooperation with the WHO;
5. RECOGNISES that preparation for and response to health risks in the EU is a Member State competence and that measures can be supported and enhanced by further cooperation and sharing of information through the WHO and existing EU structures. It also ACKNOWLEDGES the importance of taking into account the intersectoral dimension;
6. WELCOMES the work already underway in the WHO, the ECDC and the HSC, in particular, on the guidelines on a common case definition, on a common case management and on information to travellers and WELCOMES the ECDC work on technical guidance regarding the prophylaxis and treatment of infected persons and their contacts as well as on the protection of involved health professionals taking into account the advice of European and international expert work;
7. NOTES that the cases confirmed of A/H1N1 infection are caused by a virus which is a combination of elements of animal and human origin, and is related to human to human transmission. There is currently no scientific evidence of any link between this disease and the consumption of pork meat or products;

² OJ L 268/1 of 3.10.1998

8. EXPRESSES its solidarity with the most affected countries and DECLARES its readiness to examine together with the Commission and in cooperation with the authorities of these third countries, the possible ways and means to provide assistance in the fight against this outbreak.
9. URGES Member States to act together, under guidance of the WHO and in cooperation and in liaison with the Commission on the following lines:
 - a) all necessary appropriate measures should be taken for public health protection in accordance with WHO recommendations issued on the basis of the IHR, taking into account the ongoing work of the HSC, the advice of the ECDC and the WHO along with national plans and guidelines; INVITES the Member States to take all appropriate measures, if necessary also as regards travel, to ensure the most efficient protection to citizens, based on consultations at European level, taking into account the evolution of this situation;
 - b) in the field of monitoring and surveillance, to continuously share information on the evolution of the A/H1N1 virus within their territory through existing European and international structures, in accordance with IHR;
 - c) in the field of diagnosis and treatment, to apply the common case definition for identification of the human cases of A/H1N1 influenza new strain developed by the WHO and adopted by the European Commission in accordance with Decision 2119/98/EC, and to elaborate common case management guidelines, as well as to share diagnosis capacity as necessary and to make optimal use of anti-virals;
 - d) in the field of communication, to work together including through the HSC in providing accurate, timely and consistent information and guidance to citizens with regard to the A/H1N1 influenza situation. All existing public information channels should be used as appropriate;

- e) in the field of research and development, to closely cooperate together, and with the pharmaceutical industry, in facilitating the development of a pilot vaccine covering the A/H1N1 virus in the shortest possible delay, and, within the existing structures, in particular the HSC, consider the most efficient purchase, management and deployment of this vaccine and to continue further work as regards appropriate extension of the shelf life of existing stockpiles;

10. CALLS UPON the Commission:

- a) to continue to facilitate information sharing and cooperation between the Member States, in particular on risk evaluation, risk management and medical countermeasures to the A/H1N1 virus within the EU, namely through coordination within the HSC; the Early Warning and Response System for Communicable Diseases and the Committee of the Network for the Epidemiological Surveillance and Control of Communicable Diseases, and with third countries and international organisations, in particular the WHO;
- b) promote the funding of measures for cooperation between the Member States on preparing for and responding to a health threat under the existing Community programmes and activities.

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