Rare diseases: European action

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The Council held a first exchange of views on the proposal for a Council Recommendation on a European action in the field of rare diseases.

All the delegations that took the floor congratulated the Commission on this initiative. Several Ministers mentioned their national action plans and asked that the resources and structures provided be taken into account when the Recommendation is adopted. The Ministers agreed that the particular nature of rare diseases made this an area in which Europe could bring substantial added value.

Recall that the European Union initiated a policy in this area with the adoption in 1999 of the Regulation on orphan medicinal products. In tandem with its Communication "Rare Diseases: Europe's challenges" (COM(2008)0679), which sets out an overall Community strategy, the Commission proposes that, in the Recommendation, the Council should adopt a common approach to combating rare diseases that is based on existing best practice.