Flu epidemic

2009/2602(RSP) - 30/04/2009

The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council held an exchange of views on the influenza A/H1N1 infection during an **extraordinary meeting**. It adopted the following **conclusions** on this issue :

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.

The Council 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. It urges the Member States to act together, under guidance of the WHO and in cooperation and in liaison with the Commission, on the **following lines**:

- **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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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, to 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.

The Commission is invited to:

- 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;

- 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.