

EU Global Health Council Conclusions presented at WHA

At the World Health Assembly the European Commission and the Spanish Presidency presented the Council Conclusions on Global Health that were agreed to on May 10th by the EU member states.

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/114352.pdf

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The Conclusions, which are an official EU position on behalf of the member states, are very relevant to discussions taking place this week at the World Health Assembly, especially regarding the discussion on the Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Public Health, Innovation and Intellectual Property and the discussion on counterfeits, IMPACT and IP enforcement. However the EU does not seem to have entirely absorbed the significance and implications of these conclusions for their policy in these discussions when we hear their positions at the WHA this week.

The Conclusions stress the need for policy coherence, including on trade and health.

Some elements of the conclusions relating to the discussions on access & innovation:

15. In line with the commitments made on policy coherence for development (PCD) and in the framework of the PCD Work Programme, the Council calls on the Commission and the Member States to address the major aspects that influence global health in the five priority areas of trade and financing, migration, security, food security and climate change.

16. In this regard the EU should :

a. support third countries, in particular LDCs, in the effective implementation of flexibilities for the protection of public health provided for in TRIPs agreements, in order to promote access to medicines for all, and ensure that EU bilateral trade agreements are fully supportive of this objective;

18. As regards to research and evidence based dialogue and action, the Council calls on the EU and its Member States to promote effective and fair financing of research that benefits the health of all. Towards that aim the EU will ensure that innovations and interventions produce products and services that are accessible and affordable.

This should be achieved by the EU and its Member States through:

a. working towards a global framework for research and development that addresses the priority health needs of developing countries and prioritises pertinent research actions to tackle global health challenges in accordance with the WHO Global Research Strategy.

b. increasing research capacities in public health and health systems in partner countries and strengthening cooperation between the EU and partner countries in this respect.

c. exploring models that dissociate the cost of Research and Development and the prices of medicines in relation to the Global Strategy and Plan of Action on Public Health, innovation and intellectual property, including the opportunities for EU technology transfer to developing countries.

d. ensuring that EU public investments in health research secure access to the knowledge and tools generated as a global public good and help generate socially essential medical products at affordable prices, to be used through rational use.

e. strengthening and balancing the complete health research process of innovation, implementation, access, monitoring and evaluation. International cooperation, common platforms of knowledge sharing and exchange of good practices are essential in this field.