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WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE

22 OCTOBER – 28 OCTOBER 2022

NEW BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A STRONGER EU HEALTH RESPONSE

On 24 October, the Council adopted the final building blocks of the European Health Union. These are the Regulation on Serious cross-border health threats, the Regulation on the extended mandate of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), as well as the Emergency Framework Regulation to provide extra competencies to the European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA).

As Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety explained that “the central pillars of our European Health Union are now in place”. Thanks to this, the EU will be able to use new tools to address various crises more productively. Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, Margaritis Schinas, added that together with financial support via the EU4Health Programme and the Recovery and Resilience Facility it will be easier to ensure more resilient health systems across the EU.

The European Health Union package is a relevant element of the Commission's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and future public health emergencies. In addition to the abovementioned three Regulations, the Regulation on the extended mandate of the European Medicines Agency (EMA) is already in the implementation phase since 1 March 2022.

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_22_6363

A LAW ON THE EMERGENCY FRAMEWORK REGARDING MEDICAL COUNTERMEASURES

EU ministers adopted a new EU law that facilitates the timely purchase of and access to medicines, vaccines, and raw materials. Moreover, it activates emergency funding and enables the monitoring of production facilities in case of a health crisis.

As Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health of Czechia, Vlastimil Válek, stated that Europe has already witnessed supply chain disruptions as a result of crises. Therefore, in this context rapid access to medicines, vaccines, and other medical products is key.

If any health emergency appears, the Commission will be tasked to prepare a list of crisis-relevant medical countermeasures and raw materials, as well as monitor their supply and demand. With the support of the European Medicines Agency, the Commission will set up a system to monitor relevant information regarding the supply and demand of the relevant medical countermeasures and raw materials within and outside the Union.

As for the purchases of countermeasures and raw materials, the EU member states may mandate the Commission to act as a central purchasing body on their behalf.

Source: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/10/24/council-adopts-law-on-the-emergency-framework-regarding-medical-countermeasures/>

THE LANCET COUNTDOWN ON HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE

The Lancet Countdown on health and climate change is an international, multidisciplinary cooperation, which monitors the evolving health profile of climate change and thus provides an independent evaluation of the delivery of commitments made by governments worldwide under the Paris Agreement.

The Europe report of the Global Lancet Countdown on health and climate change was published on 26 October. In line with the authors, “Europe is challenged with unprecedented crises that are detrimental to human health...”. These crises include the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, environmental problems, as well as growing inequalities.

In line with the report estimates, the EU has contributed 17% of global cumulative greenhouse gas emissions from 1950–2012. From a health perspective, climate change is often mentioned as part of a “one health approach”, also present in the upcoming Global Health Strategy. This means that an integrated approach should be adopted to secure the health of people, animals, and the overall environment.

Source: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/health-consumers/news/climate-action-biggest-public-health-opportunity-of-the-century-says-report/>

Thank you for your attention!

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