

**John Dalli**

Member of the European Commission, responsible for Health and Consumer Policy

**Commissioner Dalli delivers speech at the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe: A Partnership for Joint Health Action in Europe and Beyond**

*Check Against Delivery  
Seul le texte prononcé fait foi  
Es gilt das gesprochene Wort*

John DALLI, European Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, attends the 62<sup>nd</sup> Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe

**St Julian's, Malta, 10 September 2012**

**62<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR EUROPE**

**MONDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2012**

**SPEECH DELIVERED AT 14:30HRS**

**HILTON HOTEL - MALTA**

**SPEECH**

**THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE WHO REGIONAL  
OFFICE FOR EUROPE: A PARTNERSHIP FOR JOINT HEALTH  
ACTION IN EUROPE AND BEYOND**

Your Royal Highness, Excellencies,

Madam Director General, Madam Regional Director,

Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to be with you today here in Malta to address this session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe.

Our clear purpose in this forum is to work together to improve the health of the people of Europe, and beyond.

So let me start by saying a few words about the solid partnership between the WHO Regional Office and the European Commission.

The European Union and the WHO share the same values and the same principles for action on health.

Both organisations are made up of Member States joining forces in the knowledge that together we are stronger and more effective. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

In addition, since the 27 EU Member States have common policies, legislation and financial tools it is vital at the WHO Europe level that we work together.

At operational level, the European Commission and the WHO Europe Office have different mandates and different tools at hand. We do, however, share a commitment to working together in a complementary manner to serve their Member States and citizens.

We have a long-standing relationship of co-operation and support; and a solid track record of European Commission funding for projects undertaken by the WHO Regional Office.

Two years ago in Moscow, Dr Jakab and I made a Joint Declaration on a "shared vision for joint health action", committing our respective organisations to further strengthening the co-operation between us.

This initiative recognises and reflects the importance of working together in the area of public health to successfully address the challenges that lie ahead of us.

Take globalisation, for example. More and more people, goods and services move across borders, which increases the risks of spreading communicable diseases.

Or – the ageing population. The demand for health services is likely to grow, and spending on healthcare in Europe is expected to rise sharply in the years ahead.

This is why I believe Europe needs to move away from reactive healthcare systems towards proactive health systems.

We need to provide a greater focus on prevention and on treating lifestyle-related and chronic diseases that affect older people.

To rise to this challenge, we need to find innovative ways to deliver high quality healthcare, while keeping down costs and enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of health systems.

Our Joint Declaration marked a move away from a project-based approach towards a more strategic approach in six key areas: health security, health innovation, health systems, health inequalities, health information; and co-operation between EU Delegations and WHO offices in third countries.

The Declaration fosters, for example, common actions to address non-communicable diseases.

It also includes, as you will hear later, the aim of developing a single health information system for Europe.

Building on existing co-operation, we can expand shared data collection, analyse health issues together and disseminate the knowledge we need to shape our policies.

For each of the six areas, we have put together joint roadmaps, with specific objectives and priorities for our co-operation – in the European Region and beyond.

For example, under our roadmap on health security, we are working on a range of key issues including emergency preparedness, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, anti-microbial resistance and vaccines. In carrying out this work, we very much rely on the expertise of our EU agency, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

Senior officials from the WHO and the Commission meet regularly to review progress on the road maps and adjust priorities as necessary. Such progress is reported upon publicly on our respective websites.

Finally, I am pleased to see recognition of our solid co-operation reflected in the Health 2020 strategy, which you will be discussing tomorrow.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Over the past two years, we have moved firmly from vision to action.

I strongly believe that our partnership can and will make a difference in bringing about health gains to millions of people in all countries across Europe.

I wish you all an enjoyable and productive conference.

**End**