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European Commission and WHO/Europe boost cooperation for health

Contracts for seven new joint projects were signed today in Brussels by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Consumer Protection (DG SANCO) and the World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe (WHO/Europe).

The jointly funded projects will be implemented by WHO/Europe over a period of three years. They cover European health policy priorities on environment and health, injuries, equity in health, health security, health services, alcohol and emergency medical services. The overall budget of the package is €4,232,963. The European Union's Public Health Programme will cover 60% of the cost.

The two organizations increase their cooperation in areas of European public health around common interests and challenges. They also identify potential for policy improvements through joint action. This cooperation on concrete issues also benefits national health policy makers, because the 27 EU Member States are also members of the European Region of WHO. Partnership between these two international public health actors, which is smoothly coordinated at political, technical and operational levels, means that all EU Member States' public health policies can be better supported.

"The cooperation between WHO/Europe and DG SANCO generates a range of benefits for both organizations and for EU citizens" said Dr Andrzej Rys, Director for Public Health at DG SANCO. "The new joint public health projects will contribute to important policy improvements in key areas relevant for EU and global health."

"We work both with the Commission and with countries to bring higher health gains for EU citizens, and the future work of WHO/Europe is closely linked to the development of public health policies in the EU", stated Dr Nata Menabde, WHO's Deputy Regional Director for Europe. "At the same time, this work benefits a larger Europe. Most of the 53 Member States of the WHO European Region are interested in EU health policies and processes. Beyond its health mandate, WHO/Europe is also a natural ally of the Commission in bringing such EU-generated knowledge and experience to the non-EU Member States."

Dr Menabde and Dr Rys recalled that member countries are the key drivers and funders of health policy in both the EU and the WHO. They emphasized the benefits of collaboration, which enables the two partners to create added value for one another and avoid duplication of effort.

Concrete examples were cited of policy areas addressed by the new projects, where both the European Commission and WHO/ Europe have recently adopted ambitious policy documents. These include, among others, injury prevention, alcohol-related harm and health security. A wide range of recommendations in those documents should now be implemented by national policy makers. The projects agreed today will help countries pull this work together into one coherent package. Thus, increasing international knowledge, guidance and support will be brought to

countries in a more systematic and efficient manner by implementing EU and WHO recommendations at national and subnational level.

For further information see attached backgrounder, setting out details and contacts for each of the seven projects.

For more information please contact:

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