

Introduction

Pandemic planning in the Community: Influenza and other health threats

27 November 2001, Brussels

The European seminar on “Pandemic planning in the Community: Influenza and other health threats” will provide a platform for the consideration of pandemic threats in Europe and a forum to assess the need for better Europe-wide co-ordination to meet these challenges. In the light of past and present experience with infectious diseases, the conference will consider how lessons learnt would and should be applied in relation to pandemic threats to human health in Europe. Influenza will be examined in particular detail. The seminar will bring together health policy officials, MEPs, experts and interested third parties (scientific, patient, professional and consumer) as well as the media.

The principle goal of the event is to make an inventory of existing measures and activities which could be used in the elaboration of a European pandemic plan. The discussion should lead to a series of concrete recommendations to be conveyed to European decision-makers, patient groups, corporate interests and the media:

- Evaluate experience of tackling current pandemic threats against the background of limited preparedness in Europe for human infectious diseases
- Discuss need for an EU wide approach to pandemic planning, with a focus on pandemic influenza preparedness
- Assess possibilities of co-operation between European Commission, EU Member States, WHO, and other relevant actors (doctor, scientists, consumer and patients groups and the industry) in this field

It is suggested that this seminar will focus on pandemic preparedness in the Community. The focus on influenza will highlight the need for a pan-European pandemic plan to address this threat to public health in Europe.