

## Report on the European Commission – World Health Organisation Senior Officials Meeting

25 March 2011, Brussels

### **Introduction**

Relations between the WHO and the European Commission are governed by an exchange of letters of 14 December 2000 which outlines the objectives, priorities, and areas of cooperation as well as the procedures, activities, and practical arrangements for its implementation (a copy is attached in annex). Since then, WHO and the Commission have formulated operational working arrangements between their offices at global, regional and country levels. In this framework, high level and senior officials of the two organisations' meet regularly to discuss health and joint cooperation issues.

On March 25, 2011, senior officials and experts from both sides met in Brussels. The 8<sup>th</sup> Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), hosted by the WHO, was co-chaired by Health and Consumers DG Paola Testori Coggi and WHO Regional Director for Europe Zsuzsanna Jakab. It was preceded by a preparatory meeting of experts the day before.

On the Commission side the SOM was attended by the Directorates-General Health and Consumers, Development Cooperation, Research, Humanitarian Aid, and Information Society. The European External Action Service also participated as did the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

On the WHO side the participants included WHO Director General Dr. Chan, the Directors of the WHO EURO, AFRO, and PAHO Regions as well as senior management and representatives of other Regions.

The meeting, while focussing on the cooperation between the WHO and the Commission, also witnessed the signing of an administrative agreement between the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

The principal purpose of the SOM was to discuss and develop how the Commission and the WHO could best collaborate in the future at global and regional levels. Six broad topics were defined as areas for cooperation: health security, health innovation, health systems strengthening, health inequalities, health information, as well as how EU Delegations and WHO offices in third countries might work together more effectively. Commissioner Dalli and the WHO Regional Director for Europe Zsuzsanna Jakab had previously identified these in a joint declaration they made in Moscow in September 2010 at the 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the WHO Regional Committee for Europe.

With respect to the WHO European Region, roadmaps that had been under discussion during the previous months were agreed for the six above areas. Copies of these are attached in annex. At the global level, and for other WHO regions, discussions were at a more preliminary stage but agreement was reached on ways forward.

In addition, officials of the two organizations exchanged views on humanitarian assistance and recent events (situation in North Africa/Middle East), ongoing processes (update on the Lisbon Treaty and its impact on health, reform of the WHO, revision of the EU development policy, changes in the global health architecture) as well as on the status of their cooperation at global, regional and country levels. They acknowledged the good progress achieved in the past years in strengthening exchanges and cooperation and identified opportunities for making their collaboration more strategic and ensuring greater synergies and complementarities.

**Annexes:**

Exchange of Letter of December 2000

Six Roadmaps agreed with the EURO Region