

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

7 March 2012, 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. Since then, WHO and the Commission have formulated operational working arrangements between their offices at global, regional and country levels. In this framework, Senior Officials of the two organisations' meet annually to discuss health and joint cooperation issues.

On 7 March 2012, the Commission hosted the 9th annual Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) in Brussels. It was co-chaired by European Commission Director General for Health and Consumers Paola Testori Coggi and WHO Regional Director for Europe Zsuzsanna Jakab, acting on behalf of WHO Global Policy Group.

On the Commission side, the SOM was attended by the Directorates-General Health and Consumers, Development Cooperation, Research, Humanitarian Aid, Climate, the Joint Research Centre, Education and Culture, and Information Society. The European External Action Service (including the EU Delegation to the United Nations in Geneva) also participated as did the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

On the WHO side the participants included WHO Regional Director for Europe, Zsuzsanna Jakab, senior management from WHO Geneva Headquarters, the WHO Regional Office for Europe, for Africa, for Eastern Mediterranean and for South-East Asian Regions, and the WHO office in Brussels

The principal purpose of the SOM was, at global and regional levels, to review progress on the wide range of topics where cooperation has been ongoing over the last year, to look at new challenges and to plan for further cooperation during 2012. Six broad categories were used to frame the discussions - health security, innovation and health, health systems strengthening, health inequalities, health information and e-health. Discussions also focussed on how EU Delegations and WHO offices might work together more effectively and exchange information on the health situation.

The SOM of 2011 had initiated the process of working on the collaboration between the two organisations in these areas, both at European and global levels and had adopted a series of roadmaps at European level. The 2012 SOM allowed an assessment of progress on these roadmaps and review as appropriate.

In addition, officials of the two organizations agreed to develop standard operating procedures to facilitate communications during times of crisis.

Officials acknowledged the good progress achieved in the past year in strengthening exchanges and cooperation and identified opportunities for making their collaboration more concrete and ensuring greater synergies and complementarities.

**Annex:**

Roadmaps for cooperation between the European Commission and WHO Regional Office for Europe

Agreed outcomes for cooperation between the European Commission and WHO at the global level.