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DG HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

DG COMMUNICATIONS NETWORKS, CONTENT AND TECHNOLOGY

eHealth-units

14TH EHEALTH NETWORK 13 NOVEMBER 2018, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

COVER NOTE BY EHEALTH NETWORK SECRETARIAT

Agenda point 1c: EU action on immunization and information

Issue at stake

This point has been added to the agenda of the eHealth Network at the suggestion of the Member State co-chair, who wishes to provide an opportunity for the Network to be briefed on ongoing EU initiatives in the area of immunization and discuss potential synergies between such initiatives and the Network's work.

On 26 April this year, the European Commission published a proposal for a Council Recommendation on strengthened cooperation against vaccine preventable diseases (COM(2018) 244), as well as a Commission Communication on the same topic. The proposed Recommendation calls for joint action to increase vaccination coverage across the EU and to ensure that all EU citizens have access to vaccination, bridging inequalities and gaps in immunisation and addressing vaccine hesitancy. It is expected to be adopted by the Council by the end of this year. Amongst other aspects, the Recommendation envisages the development of a *European Vaccine Information Sharing System (EVIS)*, with a view to examining the feasibility of establishing guidelines for a *core EU vaccination schedule* and a *web-portal* with reliable updated information on the benefits and safety of vaccines.

The Recommendation also welcomes the Commission's intention to examine the feasibility of developing a common *vaccination card/passport* that would be compatible with electronic immunisation information systems and recognised for use across borders. It is worth noting in this respect that the Commission (responsible unit: SANTE C3) is currently preparing a project to examine the feasibility of and options for a common EU citizens' vaccination card/passport.

In addition, the ongoing Joint Action on vaccination, which kicked off on 4 September, will contribute to implementing some of the actions under the proposed Recommendation. In particular, the Joint Action will assess the interoperability and opportunities of standardisation of European e-immunisation information systems (e-IISs).

The eHealth Network should be briefed on the above ongoing initiatives and potential synergies should be identified. Methods to ensure effective communication between the eHN and the other bodies working on immunization actions (the Joint Action; ECDC) should also be discussed.

Summary

Many of the ongoing and future initiatives on immunization within the EU may have impact for the work being carried out by the eHealth Network. It will therefore be important to ensure that these actions (in particular work related to implementation of the Council Recommendation, such as the future project on feasibility and options for a common EU citizens' vaccination card/passport; work on the Joint Action related to the interoperability of e-IISs) take this into account and are capable of finding synergies with the eHN's work. This is particularly true given that the eHN has already made considerable progress in areas that may be of relevance for these actions: for example, the data on vaccination that has already been included in the eHDSI Patient Summaries could be of use and should be taken into account when considering the development of the proposed EU vaccination card/passport.

Ensuring mutual complementarity in such respects will boost efforts on both sides and contribute to preventing duplication of work. It will also contribute to developing more synergy and setting common priorities across EU actions on immunisation.

In this respect, the Network is asked to consider the following questions:

1. Should a permanent mechanism be set in place to ensure regular and effective communication and information exchange between the eHN and other bodies involved in immunization initiatives (such as the Joint Action on Vaccination; ECDC etc.)? If so, what form should this take?
2. In the event that a common EU vaccination card/passport is to be developed in the future, should it be linked to the information exchanged under the eHDSI?

Format of procedure in the eHealth Network meeting

The Commission co-chair opens the topic and gives the floor to the representative of the SANTE unit responsible for vaccination policy (C3) who will give a short outline of the work on implementation of the Council Recommendation (in particular the project to assess the feasibility and options for a common EU citizens' vaccination card/passport). Representatives of the Joint Action on vaccination will also briefly present their work on interoperability of European e-immunisation information systems and ECDC representatives will speak about their recent work in the area of immunisation.

The floor will then be given to the Member State co-chair, who will elaborate shortly on the need to investigate possible synergies between the initiatives and the Network's work and launch the discussion amongst eHealth Network members. Their comments on the presentations given and replies to the questions under the two headings above will then be sought.

It is proposed that the eHealth Network meeting takes note of the information presented, as well as the views expressed by members in relation to the questions posed.