



Brussels, 15 March 2023

Meeting of the Civil Society Forum

Minutes

Chair: Laurent Muschel, Director – Deputy Head of the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA)

1. Welcome

The chair opened the meeting of the Civil Society Forum (hereafter ‘CSF’ and ‘Forum’), introducing himself and welcoming participants. This was the first regular meeting of the Forum in 2023; it was held virtually.

The draft agenda was adopted.

The Rules of Procedure of the Advisory Forum adopted in December 2022 will apply to the CSF and are circulated together with the meeting minutes.

2. Update on HERA’s activities since November 2022

HERA informed on the following activities:

- On the One Year of HERA Conference that took place in December 2022.
- On ‘HERA Invest’, which is in its final preparatory stages, and any interested stakeholders are encouraged to contact HERA.
- On continuous management of the COVID-19 contracts with the aim to ensure they are fit for purpose for Member States’ needs.
- On donations shared by Team Europe, via COVAX and bilaterally, which amount to over 512.4m doses as of 18 January 2023.
- On a dedicated workshop with Member States, scientists and stakeholders to discuss a new generation of vaccines, including for COVID-19, in December 2022.
- On the evaluation for EU FAB, a preparatory action that will ensure the EU has in place a network of ever-warm facilities for the production of vaccines in case of a future crisis.
- On the first strategic EU stockpile for chemical, biological and radiological emergencies that has been established through HERA and the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. These reserves are created as a rescEU capacity hosted by four MS (Croatia, Finland, France and Poland) and are available to all MS. The Commission has launched another call for

proposals to extend this stockpile, adding in addition to CBRN MCM, MCM for pathogens with a pandemic potential and antimicrobial resistance.

- On ongoing work regarding the development of an intelligence gathering and threat assessment IT platform, which will include real-time monitoring and early warning to support rapid response.
- On ‘DURABLE’, a network of laboratories called with the main target to quickly characterise pathogens, funded with €25 million under the EU4Health programme for 4 years.
- On the collaboration with the DG European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) to assess the needs and to respond to the health needs expressed by Ukraine.
- On the signature of the Administrative Agreement with the WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence that aims to strengthen cooperation to prevent, prepare, detect, and rapidly respond to serious cross-border threats to health.

The update was followed by a discussion.

HERA took note on the Forum members questions and provided replies on the following topics:

- the methodology behind the list of CBRN MCM stockpiles;
- the issue of shortages, specifically on AMR, and the EC study on “bringing AMR MCM to market” that was published on 14/03/2023;
- HERA’s mandate and the need to broaden the scope on areas like the health impact of climate change;
- the response plan for future pandemics taking the experiences from Covid-19 pandemic into account.

Based on the expressed interest of the Forum, HERA will inform on the cooperation with Africa as part of its overall international cooperation, and its collaboration with industry during the next CSF meeting.

HERA encouraged the members of the Forum to continue the reflection in the areas of interest in the respective working groups, including by bringing forward joint position papers, agreed by the stakeholders involved.

3. Working groups

Following the requests from the Forum during the last meeting for more interaction and efficiency, HERA presented a new way of working together by means of three working groups:

- 1) Future of HERA,
- 2) Three identified health threats, and
- 3) Training programme and information.

HERA presented a detailed description of each of the working groups. In the aftermath, the Forum raised several questions on organisational aspects.

The working groups will comprise only CSF members. The frequency of meetings depends on the needs and willingness of the working group' participants themselves. Members are invited to collaborate without the direct involvement of HERA, but HERA will provide support depending on their needs. Moreover, the chair stressed that this is a new way of working, and that adjustments will be made when necessary.

The new way of working and the themes of the working groups were widely accepted and appreciated by the Forum. Specific organisational aspects, format of delivery and other aspects can be discussed and agreed upon in the individual working groups. For working group 2, individual sessions dedicated to one health threat will be organised to maximise efficiency.

4. Updates from Civil Society Forum – Tour de table

Members appreciated the 'One Year of HERA' Conference and the political involvement, but would like to see better and more numerous representation of Civil Society among participants and panelists. The Forum proposed to better reflect the organisation and work of the CSF during the next conference. The Forum is encouraged to share ideas via email.

Members mentioned that misinformation – under certain circumstances – could fall into the remit of HERA. The Forum was invited to raise further topics of discussion during the working group meetings.

Members raised the issue of EU funding cuts that affect several members of the CSF. HERA took note of the need for sustained funding for civil society organisations, keeping in mind its limited mandate.

The Forum expressed concerns about the impact of climate change on health, specifically respiratory diseases and that this issue is momentarily not tackled by HERA. HERA encouraged the Forum to discuss this topic as part of working group 1.

Members informed about their work on AMR. HERA will organise a dedicated presentation on the action plan on AMR at the next Civil Society meeting.

HERA took note on the points raised and welcomed further interaction in areas that fall under the HERA mandate. It is to further reflect on how some of the aspects would feed the sessions under the working groups.

5. AOB

The next meeting will be held on 30th June in hybrid format. HERA encourages in person participation for one representative per member organization and according to the rules of procedures.