



Brussels, 28 November 2022

## **Meeting of the Civil Society Forum**

### **Summary Report**

Chair: Pierre Delsaux, Head of the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) and Bartłomiej Kurcz, Acting Head of Unit of HERA 01.

#### **1. Welcome**

The chair opened the meeting of the Civil Society Forum, welcoming participants. This was the first in person meeting of the forum; it was held in a hybrid format.

#### **2. Review and Update on HERA's 2022 activities**

HERA provided a review on its past and an update on ongoing activities in the year 2022. Next to the success in ensuring equitable access for all EU citizens to COVID vaccines, HERA has been significantly involved in the Commission's assistance to Ukraine since the first day of the Russian invasion. On the monkeypox virus HERA has been purchasing over 330.000 monkeypox vaccines for all EU Member States and managed to secure therapeutics via an emergency procurement funded by HERA and channeled by rescEU.

On HERA's preparedness efforts HERA informed the participants of the completed threat-prioritization exercise and presented the three high-impact cross-border health threats categories found. HERA has started developing its own intelligence-gathering IT-platform as well as a European stockpiling strategy on medical countermeasures.

On the adoption of legal acts, HERA highlights the Council's adoption of the *Regulation on Serious cross-border health threats* and the *Emergency Framework Regulation*.

#### **3. 2023 Annual Work Plan**

HERA provided an overview of the main priorities out forward for 2023, including the five 'flagship' initiatives. It was reminded that the Work Plan included more actions and tasks to be

performed by HERA, one of them being to explore possibilities to share data with international partners.

The presentation was followed up by an extensive discussion.

Many of the members stressed the importance of a close cooperation between HERA and other agencies and services, in particular ECDC and EMA. To avoid any duplications, HERA is preparing Memoranda of Understanding with the respective agencies.

On the IT platform for intelligence gathering, threat assessment, mapping medical countermeasures and management system for stockpiling, the members requested more details on the indicative planning and on access of countries without such an IT-tool.

With regard to HERA INVEST it was clarified that HERA is not going to duplicate work with other funding initiatives, in particular with regard to CEPI. HERA will work closely with stakeholders and the EIB to ensure the success of HERA INVEST.

On interaction with civil society, the need for rapid and uniform communication within the Union was emphasized.

Furthermore, HERA was asked to clarify the notion of ‘equitable access’ to medical countermeasures.

Also, it was requested to draw attention to increasing shortages of medical personnel within the Member States’ health care systems, however bearing in mind the Member States’ competencies and HERA’s tailored mandate.

#### **4. State of Preparedness report**

HERA presented the State of Preparedness Report published on 30 November 2022. The report comprises the lessons learned from the COVID crisis, the identification and prioritization of health-threats as well as the ways forward, including HERA’s five flagship initiatives. The 2022 Report particularly focusses on the field of medical countermeasures. Future reports on the state of preparedness are intended to set a different focus each year.

#### **5. Civil Society Forum – next steps – discussion**

HERA emphasized its great interest in the forum’s experience and ideas regarding HERA’s future actions in the field of training and skills. The participants were invited to share their ideas in this field. On the training initiative, many members expressed their support, in particular with regard to healthcare professionals.

Also, several members stressed the importance of the communication and promoting health literacy, in particular of the vulnerable groups of the society and not limited to the EU. A

consensus was reached that the communication and training actions should be closely linked and their synergies should be explored, keeping in mind HERA's limited mandate.

Furthermore, the members were invited to bring forward subjects, in the meeting or in writing afterwards, they would like to discuss in the upcoming meetings.

A large number of members proposed potential topics to be addressed by the forum in future meetings. The members requested a more medium-term indicative planning to enhance the effectiveness of the forum.

HERA proposed to facilitate the exchange between the members by creating a platform for stakeholders to exchange views and documents. An indicative planning for the year 2023 will follow.