



Brussels, 6 June, 2011

‘Action on childhood vaccination welcome’

Today’s agreement by EU Health Ministers to boost cooperation in the fight against infectious childhood diseases has been welcomed by the [European Vaccine Manufacturers \(EVM\)](#).

[The Council conclusions](#) are an important step in charting a way forward on childhood immunisation in Europe, said Patrick Florent, EVM President:

“I welcome the Council’s conclusions on childhood immunisation and the efforts of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the EU. Action on childhood vaccination cannot come soon enough – a fact reinforced by **recent outbreaks of measles** across Europe and our collective failure to meet the target of eradicating measles by 2010.”

EVM believes that this is an area where the **EU can have a major impact on public health** by raising standards and exchanging best practices among Member States. It is encouraging to see Ministers note that, **vaccination is the most effective way of preventing infectious diseases**, where vaccination exists.

As reflected at the expert conference hosted by the Hungarian Presidency on 3 and 4 March 2011, there is still much to do. Better quality data and more effective communication strategies are required, along with stronger European efforts to increase vaccine coverage in the general and under-vaccinated populations.

Smarter communication strategies are needed to target the general public particularly those who are sceptical about vaccinations. This means developing objective, easily accessible, evidence-based information on vaccines tailored to these key target audiences.

EVM is also pleased to see the attention that Ministers have given to addressing the difficulties faced by **families who migrate within Europe** while their children have not yet completed the vaccination schedule.

“Viruses have no respect for borders. We must step up cross-border cooperation if we are to collectively defeat infectious diseases. We are fighting a common enemy, but we can only prevail if we use existing ‘tools’ more effectively,” Mr Florent said.

For further information:

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EVM member companies are major suppliers of vaccines worldwide, producing the majority of vaccine doses in Europe. EVM members are: Abbott Biologicals, AstraZeneca, Baxter, Crucell, GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals, MSD, Novartis Vaccines, Pfizer, sanofi pasteur and sanofi pasteur MSD. EVM is a specialized group within the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA).

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