

## **EVM comments on the Commission non-paper on “Partnerships for health in Europe”**

The European Vaccine Manufacturers Association (EVM) welcomes the Commission non-paper on “Partnerships for health in Europe” and Commissioner David Byrne’s paper entitled “Enabling Good health for all – A reflection process for a new EU Health Strategy”, as a first step to develop and implement an effective European Health strategy.

EVM comments are the following:

- EVM would like to draw the Commission’s attention to the need to continue to stress the important role of prevention through immunization against the traditional infectious diseases. Vaccines are one of the most cost-effective healthcare interventions. Vaccines routinely administered undoubtedly enhance the overall health of the population by protecting against a wide range of diseases that affect all ages and so they contribute to effective utilisation of healthcare resources. In addition, the immunization of individuals protects those who are not vaccinated (through “herd immunity”), which reinforces primary healthcare services. **The risk to EU countries of under-utilisation of currently licensed vaccines should not be underestimated.**
- In the non-paper, aging is mentioned as an important health challenge for the EU. There has also been a considerable increase in the size of this risk group within the population. Immunisation, e.g. against influenza, can enhance the health of the elderly by protecting them and decreasing the health burden of yearly influenza epidemics.
- Increased population mobility, travel, and trade allow for unprecedented dynamics of communicable diseases, whether these are novel infections, such as HIV/AIDS, or hitherto controlled diseases, such as diphtheria in Eastern Europe.
- There is enormous potential to improve disease prevention through the development of novel breakthrough vaccines, such as new types of therapeutic vaccines currently under development that can tackle some forms of cancer, as well as vaccines against AIDS or new vaccines against re-emerging diseases like tuberculosis.
- Given that the new Constitution reinforces the EU health mandate regarding communicable diseases, EVM members believe that the non-paper on “Partnerships for health in Europe” should clearly refer to ***immunization as a key tool in a European Public health strategy***. Vaccines are only effective on a population basis if used comprehensively within the target population and across national borders. Good rates of vaccine coverage benefit all because the spread of infection declines. **Setting precise vaccine coverage objectives should be encouraged by the Commission, in coordination with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and Member States.**
- EVM supports the initiatives highlighted in the non-paper on health threats. EVM agrees that the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) would play a key role

in collecting epidemiological data that will be the basis for rational strategy development and for informed decision-making on health. It is important that vaccine-preventable diseases be highlighted in the surveillance programs of the Centre. ***The ECDC should not only be engaged*** in the surveillance, alert and response capability against health threats but also ***in the systematic surveillance, monitoring and demonstration of the impact of immunisation practices.***