Croatian Presidency of the
Council of the European Union

Brussels, 12 May 2020

Follow-up Summary to the Informal high-level video-conference of Ministers of Health

Organised and held by the Presidency from Zagreb

On 12 May 2020 the Croatian Presidency organised an Informal high-level video-conference of Ministers of Health replacing the Informal Meeting of Health Ministers scheduled to take place on 29th and 30th April in Zagreb and cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The meeting gathered ministers and high-level representatives from EU Member Sates and EFTA countries, the Commissioner for health and food safety, Stella Kyriakides, as well as the Executive Director of the European Medicines Agency, Professor Guido Rasi.

Ministers exchanged views on the recurring subject of reliable and continuous access to medicines in Europe, against the background that the COVID-19 pandemic has worsened, and highlighted, the problem with supply shortages of important medicines.

Furthermore, the video-conference provided an opportunity to give an initial input, in an informal way, on the new Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe that the Commission is currently developing.

The discussion provided important insights on how to improve supply security on the European market for pharmaceuticals. A significant number of delegations also pointed to links to the Industrial Strategy for Europe[1] presented on 10 March and the announced EU Recovery Plan.

The participants also exchanged views on approaches to communication between national authorities and stakeholders in the pharmaceuticals sector.

The Presidency concluded the meeting by emphasizing that the current circumstances illustrate the importance of the work started in 2016 with the adoption of the *Conclusions on strengthening the balance in the Pharmaceutical Systems in the EU and its Member States*[2]. This meeting was one important further step in that work and the beginning of the reinforced joint work that will enable to improve the functioning of the European market for medicines in order to better cope with the challenges in the contemporary world.

1 COM (2020) 102 final
2 OJ C 269, 23.7.2016, p. 31.