



Informal Meeting of Health Ministers Session guide and agenda



Informal Meeting of Health Ministers – Session guide and agenda

Further to the recent letter from Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Health, concerning arrangements for the Informal Meeting of Health Ministers, this note gives further information on the structure of the discussions during the meeting. Outlined below are a preamble and specific questions for each individual session and a full agenda (subject to change). As has worked well in previous meetings, at the start of each session there will be a small number of presentations from individual Member States and other participants. In each of these sessions, we are particularly interested in exploring how action at EU level can contribute to reconnecting Europe with the citizen: we have also prepared some discussion questions, to help structure specific interventions that Ministers may wish to make.

The information is set out as follows:

- Annex A **Session One – EU Pandemic Preparedness**
- Annex B **Session Two – Values and common principles in health systems**
- Annex C **Session Three – Patient Mobility – Rights and Expectations**
- Annex D **Current draft agenda**

Copies of presentations will be available at the informal meeting itself, along with background information. Ministerial discussion will focus on the outlined presentations and will be structured by the questions in each annex. It is not envisaged that specific background papers will be provided for each session topic

If you have any further queries about the subjects for discussion please contact Nick Boyd (nick.boyd@dh.gsi.gov.uk), Jonathan Mogford (jonathan.mogford@dh.gsi.gov.uk) or Matthew Hamilton (matthew.hamilton@dh.gsi.gov.uk).

**UK Presidency
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Annex A

First session – EU Pandemic Preparedness

The question of pandemic flu is highly relevant for both citizens in the EU and the wider world. We are all aware of the heightened risk of a flu pandemic and the need for the EU to be properly prepared in the face of this threat. Throughout the EU, citizens will expect high levels of preparedness from their national authorities; in today's inter-connected world, they will be aware of different approaches to managing the risks from a pandemic, and will need reassurance about this.

The session will begin by providing Ministers with a technical update on the current status of scientific predictions on the size, scale and likelihood of a human pandemic outbreak. The main focus of the session will be on EU pandemic preparedness and in particular on the requirements at an EU, national and international level to ensure effective reaction should a pandemic occur. A technical update from WHO will be followed by a presentation from the European Commission on pandemic preparedness across the EU.

Ministers will be invited to ask questions about the presentations and to consider in particular how we need to work together in terms of risk communication with our citizens, and the actions we are taking to respond to any risks.

Format of Presentations and Discussions:

Technical Update by Dr Margaret Chan, Assistant Director General for Communicable Disease, WHO on the current WHO assessment of threat, the preparations WHO is making in terms of surveillance, prevention, and response, and where WHO has particular concerns about the global state of readiness.

Presentation by Commissioner Kyprianou on EU Pandemic Preparedness

- Update on EU preparedness for potential pandemic
- Overview of pandemic flu preparations
- Report of smallpox exercise (19/20 October) and plans for flu exercise in November

Questions from health ministers to Commissioner Kyprianou and Dr Margaret Chan

Zsuzsanna Jakab, Director of the ECDC, will also be present to participate in discussions and comment on the role and work of the Centre in these early stages after its establishment



Summary of discussion from Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Health, including references to forthcoming Presidency activity on pandemic preparedness.

End of Session.



Annex B

Second Session – Values and common principles in health systems

It is increasingly accepted that, although there is much diversity in health systems throughout the EU, there is also much that unites us across the Member States and across the political spectrum in Europe. In particular, this is true of the fundamentals that underpin our healthcare systems. Universality, equity, solidarity are overarching values and principles of our health systems. Work is ongoing, through the Social Protection Committee, to see how we ensure accessibility, quality, and sustainability within that framework. We all face the challenges of ageing, technology, consumer expectations. A fundamental question is how are we managing within our own systems to meet those challenges while maintaining our overarching values and principles? In parallel, there are wider debates underway about the future of Europe, focusing in particular on how the EU can both meet the challenge of economic development in a globalised world and maintain its commitment to high levels of social protection: this will be a focus of the informal meeting of Heads of Government the week after the informal meeting of Health Ministers.

In this session we hope to identify whether it would be suitable – against the background of these developments – for Member States to consider drawing up a statement of these values and common principles, what the focus of such a statement might be and how our discussions could be taken forward within the EU groups and institutions. If so, this might be a task that Ministers can mandate to the Council Working Group on Public Health at Senior Level, to report back to a future Health Council.

The session will start with ‘scene setting’ presentations from specific Member States including on the wider role for health in the Social Europe discussion and a view on what some of our common values and principles might be. These presentations will then be followed by a table round discussion, which will be structured by the questions of ministers as outlined below. Ministers should look, where possible, to address all of the points they wish to make in one single intervention within the session.

Format of Presentations and Discussions:

*Presentation by **Xavier Bertrand, Minister of Health for France** on the importance of health to the citizen in the Social Europe agenda*

*Presentation by **Ylva Johansson, Minister of Health for Sweden** on possible common values and principles that Member States share in their healthcare systems*



*Presentation by **Andrej Bručan Minister of Health for Slovenia** on the balance within a Member State between individual and collective responsibility for healthcare*

Full ministerial discussion guided by the following questions:

How are we, as health ministers, managing within our own systems to meet those challenges while maintaining our overarching values and principles?

For example in terms of patient empowerment, access, balance between individual and collective responsibilities.

What role do we think the EU should play in supporting us to do that?

What could we, as health ministers, do to set out to the citizen Europe's shared commitment to high levels of social protection in the health field?

Concluding summary from Patricia Hewitt, Secretary of State for Health



Annex C

Third session – Patient Mobility – Rights and Expectations

Patient mobility is another issue which has a real impact for the EU citizen. Co-operation has existed for decades between our health systems, ensuring that workers, tourists and people who have retired to other Member States get the care they need; this is tangible evidence of real EU added value to the citizen. However there is an increasing need for clarification of patients' entitlements.

In this session we will look to set out the impact of patient mobility for both the healthcare system and the patient as well as identifying specific areas where there is a lack of clarity for the patient in terms of their entitlement. Ministers will wish to consider how it can be made clearer to patients what their rights and entitlements are in moving around the EU, and any risks that they need to be aware of.

Format of presentations and discussions:

Presentation by John Bowis MEP on 'What the patient wants'. This will draw on his recent report to the European Parliament. A copy of John Bowis' report on patient mobility will be circulated prior to the Informal.

Lead respondents (specific Member States have been approached) to give their own Member State perspective on the opportunities and challenges of patient mobility.

Response from Commissioner Kyprianou to presentation and lead respondents' remarks, including an update on relevant work of the Commission's High Level Group on Health Services and Medical Care.

Full Ministerial discussion guided by the following questions:

What impact has EU patient mobility had on patient expectations in your Member State? What opportunities and challenges has this posed?

Is it clear to patients what entitlements they have regarding patient mobility in the EU?

What could be done to set out more clearly patients' rights, responsibilities and expectations when seeking health care services in another EU Member State?

Patrice Hewitt, Secretary of State for Health, to close the session and make concluding summary remarks on the meeting



Annex D

DRAFT PROGRAMME FOR INFORMAL MEETING OF HEALTH MINISTERS – THE GROVE HOTEL, HERTFORDSHIRE.

THURSDAY 20 OCTOBER

- AM Arrival of Ministers and officials
- Transfer by car to The Grove Hotel, Hertfordshire
- Check in
- 13.00 Lunch-
Hot Buffet in the Amber Lounge
- 14.30 First Working Session – EU Pandemic Preparedness**
Amber Room
- 16.30 Interval
- 16.50 **Second Working Session – Values and common principles
in EU healthcare systems (presentations)**
Amber Room
- 18.00 End of Second Working Session
- 19.00 Pre-Dinner Drinks
Amber Lounge
- 19.30 Pre-Dinner Entertainment
Amber Lounge
- 20.00 Dinner (invitations to be provided by delegate liaison officer)

Friday 21 October

- 9.30 **Second Working Session – Values and common principles
in EU healthcare systems (continues)**
Amber Room
- 11.00 Interval
- 11.05 Family Photo
(Location to be confirmed on day)
- 11.30 **Third Working Session – EU Patient Mobility**



	Amber Room
13.00	End of Working Session
13.00	Lunch Glass House Restaurant
PM	Press Conference
PM	Ministers and Officials depart