



Delegation of the European Union



Permanent Representation of Spain

**WHO  
Executive Board  
126th Session  
(Geneva, 18 - 23 January 2010)**

**Statement by**

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**on behalf of the European Union**

**"Implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005)"**

**(agenda item 4.2)**

**Geneva, 18 January 2010**

**Check against delivery**

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**EU Statement  
"Implementation of the International Health Regulations (2005)"  
(agenda item 4.2)**

Mr Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia\* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*<sup>1</sup>, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, as well as Ukraine and Armenia align themselves with this declaration.

The EU would like to thank the Secretariat and the Director-General for the report EB126/5 on the point 4.2 of the agenda "Application of the International Health Regulations". The EU welcomes that the Secretariat follows up certain IHR-plus public health measures taken by State Parties, and encourages to disseminate information on the impacts and benefits of such measures.

The EU congratulates the Director General and the WHO for the effective use of the IHR during the current influenza A(H1N1) pandemic and for the worldwide leadership the WHO has shown. The Regulations have proved to be an adequate legal framework to manage the global response to this pandemic. The IHR Emergency Committee has provided appropriate advice to the Director-General as regards decision-making. The WHO networks have served as an effective channel for the exchange and dissemination of information. Nevertheless the EU considers that the National IHR Focal Points network needs to be further consolidated to be fully operational. In this regard, it might be beneficial to share the results of these interventions (final reports, lessons learned, etc.) with the focal points of the States Parties.

The National IHR Focal Points and the WHO Contact Points are being increasingly used for the rapid communication of public health information between the WHO and States Parties. The possibility to have direct and immediate continuous access to WHO experts has been very advantageous when responding to public health risks and emergencies.

The EU agrees with the described procedures for convening an IHR Review Committee in February 2010, and is confident that this Committee will provide technical advice to the Director-General and will propose improvements to the implementation of the Regulations. In addition, the ongoing assessment of the performance of the *decision-making algorithm of the IHR (Annex 2)* will also be helpful.

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<sup>1</sup> \* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

To further address the challenges of public health alerts and emerging diseases, the EU considers critical to continue to deepen the implementation of the Regulations in all countries. States Parties should develop the essential capacity needed for the adequate performance of disease surveillance, early warning and rapid response systems, in order to face different types of public health risks. Further efforts could be made to produce in due time appropriate WHO guidance in order to ensure full coherence between measures undertaken at national level and global level provisions. Therefore, we encourage WHO to support Member States in the strengthening of their national capabilities. We think these systems should be an integral part of the general strategies for public health surveillance in order to make them more sustainable.

Global public health emergencies require a comprehensive and promptly response. Therefore, the EU wishes to underline the importance of the efforts that the WHO is making to strengthen relations with other international and intergovernmental organizations, including EU Institutions, especially those playing an active role in the transport sector, both within the United Nations System and beyond it. In the same way, the EU supports the initiative reflected in the report regarding the establishment of a clear working framework in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and the World Organization for Animal Health, particularly in the field of laboratory networks and prevention and control of zoonosis and foodborne diseases involved in emergency preparedness.

Thank you Mr Chairman.

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