

Press release

Minister for Health meets EU Partners in Luxembourg to discuss strengthening the Pharmaceutical Ecosystem in Europe

From [Department of Health \(/en/organisation/department-of-health/\)](/en/organisation/department-of-health/)

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Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly today represented Ireland at a meeting of EU Health Ministers in Luxembourg. This formal meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO) Council is held under the Swedish Presidency of the Council of the European Union (January to June 2023). Ministers are exchanging views on strengthening the pharmaceutical ecosystem in support of competitiveness and equitable access to medicines.

Minister Donnelly said:

"Patients and health systems in the EU need access to new, innovative treatments, as well as older, off-patent products, generics, and biosimilars. We must design a sustainable system that facilitates access throughout the EU, taking into account Member States' varying market size and ability to pay."

Minister Donnelly continued:

"Ireland supports the use of targeted incentives which play an important role in a needs-driven pharmaceutical approach model. Such incentives must address unmet need, including in relation to AMR. The implications of any incentive on health systems must be carefully assessed, and the effectiveness of any medicine evaluated by comparative trials."

Minister Donnelly added:

"We need a strong pharmaceutical industry, for the benefit of both the EU economy and its patients. Ensuring predictability and consistency for innovators and generic manufacturers is fundamental to their continued operation, and the EU system must strive to provide this."

"We need to support the competitiveness of the EU pharma ecosystem, while achieving and maintaining the critical balance between access and innovation."

Ministers also adopted a Council Recommendation on stepping up EU actions to combat antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in a One Health approach, and agreed a general approach to the Regulation on fees and charges payable to the European Medicines Agency (EMA). They took note of progress reports on the Regulation on a European Health Data Space and the Regulation on the standards of quality and safety for substances of human origin intended for human application.

Other items covered included updates from the Commission and the Presidency and on Negotiations for an international Pandemic Agreement and amendments to the International Health Regulations (2005), and information from the Commission on mental health. Minister Donnelly is also holding a number of bilateral meetings.

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