

Cc:

December 2020

(MSF), (UNICEF), (Red Cross Europe), (Stemm
von der Strooss).

Participants: approximately 100 persons among which representatives from OECD, Maastricht University, EuroHealthNet, Lux Innovation, Asti, Gobierno Canarias, Salzburg Government, CPME, WHO, Regione Veneto, Sciensano, Medecins du monde, EURORDIS and the Nobody Left Outside (NLO) Initiative and colleagues from other Commission services (e.g. ECHO)

Commissioner Kyriakides emphasised social impacts of COVID-19, exposing the most vulnerable. She thanked all those working in the clinical, NGO and civil society sectors, supporting vulnerable people during the crisis. She gave an overview of ongoing activities and initiatives of the COM surrounding COVID-19 and acknowledged that the COM has been called upon to act on more specific measures for vulnerable groups.

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MSF [REDACTED] informed of challenges faced by their sector, particularly operating with logistic and export restrictions. MSF acknowledged receipt of funding from COM. Initial challenges in IT included medical teams gaining entry into the country. MSF produced two reports on long-term care facilities, identifying structural lack of resources, health security and protection. Pillars of support include preparedness & contingency plans (e.g.; pre-established purchase channels for PPE), regulatory frameworks to protect elder people, psychosocial support and collecting, systemizing and publishing data. Specifically for migrants and refugees, MSF has continuously advocated against allegedly discriminatory / disproportionate mass quarantine in Greece, the absolute lack of health response and the forced closure of the MSF COVID clinic, and in the central Mediterranean area the closure of ports for NGOs vessels as well as the off-shore quarantine of migrants. Migrants and refugees must be included in national and global response plans to COVID-19 and social recovery plans. There is also a need to improve inclusion and collaboration with NGOs and other social networks.

Chair underlined that as part of the 'European Health Union', audits of national preparedness have been proposed and participants were encouraged to liaise with their contacts in the EP and nationally to support this proposal.

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Chair closed the meeting, proposing a continued dialogue between the COM and civil society actors, focusing on vulnerable groups during the course of the current pandemic. This should involve international organisations with the aim to identify existing gaps and how these could be addressed over the next months. Infection control interventions, specific to vulnerable people need to be strengthened and maintained, and vulnerable groups remain a challenge for upcoming vaccination programmes. Conclusions of the proposed dialogue could be discussed with Member states authorities via the HSC or other fora.

A flash report will be posted on the Health Policy Platform.

END.

[prepared by