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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Council

Subject: **Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council
session on 7 December 2018**
Outcome of the Informal meeting of Health Ministers (Vienna,
10-11 September)
- Information from the Presidency

Delegations will find in the Annex a note from the Presidency on the above-mentioned subject to be raised under "Any Other Business" at the session of the Council (EPSCO) on 7 December 2018.

Outcome of the Informal Meeting of Health Ministers (Vienna, 10-11 September 2018)

On **10 and 11 September 2018** the Informal Meeting of Health Ministers took place in Vienna.

The first meeting day centred on **regulatory and policy-related challenges in securing supply of centrally authorised medicinal products**. Contributions were provided by the responsible ministers of the Member States and of the EFTA countries. The European Commission was represented by Vytenis Andriukaitis (Commissioner for Health and Food Safety). In addition, representatives of WHO Europe and Guido Rasi (Executive Director of the European Medicines Agency) participated.

Four fields of action were looked at from different perspectives: optimising the exchange of information, strengthening of patient benefit, the European-wide availability of newly authorised medicinal products and finally the approval of orphan medicinal products (used to treat rare diseases). The discussion focused on potential measures to ensure the long-term and sustainable supply of European patients with medicines. The importance of patient benefit was always at the centre of considerations. There was consensus that all citizens in the European Union should have equal access to innovative therapies.

The second meeting day was dedicated to the topic **‘Investment in Digital Health’**. Contributions were provided by the responsible ministers of the Member States and of the EFTA countries. The European Commission was represented by Vytenis Andriukaitis (Commissioner for Health and Food Safety) and Roberto Viola (Director-General for Communications Networks, Content and Technologies). Representatives of WHO Europe and from a scientific institution (the Medical School in Hannover, Germany) also participated.

The discussion pointed to the problem that – even though there are some successful examples of use of patient-related digital health data – in practice, the full potential of using such data is not exploited. Outpatient and hospital healthcare facilities have a particularly important role to play in this regard. The important role of public funding for creating digital health solutions benefitting the whole society was underlined. The discussion highlighted that Europe-wide unified standards and formats should be established to create interoperable digital infrastructures at national and European level. Among Member States' representatives there was broad consensus on the necessity to further develop digital infrastructures in Europe and to overcome existing barriers to exploiting digitalisation in healthcare to its full potential. Furthermore there was broad agreement that public financing instruments should be used to establish digital infrastructures.
