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Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

Sub-Committee on Public Health and Sustainable Development

Programme

Overcoming vaccine hesitancy: strategies for parliaments and parliamentarians

Public hearing moderated by Mr Jim Gibbons, journalist

(on the KUDO platform)

Tuesday, 9 February 2021, from 2 to 4.30 pm

Vaccination is the safest and most effective method of protection against many infectious diseases, preventing 2 to 3 million deaths a year. However, vaccine hesitancy is one of the most critical issues in public health, and is particularly prevalent in Europe, in a large degree due to misinformation and disinformation about the safety of vaccines. A decrease in vaccination rates is a threat to public health, as society becomes more vulnerable, both with respect to new diseases such as Covid-19, and to diseases that have previously been under control, but may resurge as a result of reduced immunisation.

Welcome and introduction by:

2 pm

Ms Jennifer De Temmerman, Chairperson of the PACE Sub-Committee on Public Health and Sustainable Development (France, ALDE)

2.05 pm

Session 1: Vaccine hesitancy

What are the benefits of vaccination? Why are some people hesitant towards having themselves and/or their children vaccinated? What are the most efficient ways of reaching out to these people?

*Opening remarks by **Mr Vladimir Kruglyi** (Russia, NR), rapporteur for report on "Vaccine hesitancy: a major public health issue"*

Ms Lisa Menning, Team Lead (acting), Demand and Behavioural Sciences, Department of Immunization, Vaccines and Biologicals, World Health Organization

Ms Dolores Utrilla, Associate Professor of Public Law at the University of Castilla-La Mancha, Spain / Assistant Editor at EU Law Live

2.20 pm

Questions and debate



2.50 pm

Session 2: Gender-neutral HPV (human papillomavirus) vaccination

What are the benefits of human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination? Why is gender-neutral HPV vaccination beneficial? How can misinformation and undue concerns regarding the safety of HPV vaccines be overcome? How to promote a higher uptake of the vaccines?

Opening remarks by Ms Petra Bayr (Austria, SOC), Chairperson of the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights (EPF)

Mr Neil Datta, Secretary of the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual & Reproductive Rights (EPF)

Ms Janne Bigaard, *Kræftens Bekæmpelse* (Danish Cancer Society)

3.05 pm

Questions and debate

3.35 pm

Session 3: Hesitancy towards Covid-19 vaccines

Why are some people who are pro-vaccine hesitant to take a Covid-19 vaccine? How can we overcome vaccine hesitancy towards Covid-19 vaccines specifically? Are there any lessons to be learned from previous outbreaks of infectious diseases, such as Ebola?

Opening remarks by Ms Jennifer De Temmerman, rapporteur for the report on "Covid-19 vaccines: ethical, legal and practical considerations"

Mr Robert Kanwagi, World Vision programme co-ordinator for Ebola Vaccine Deployment, Acceptance and Compliance (EBODAC) and CSO Representative to the COVAX Demand working group

Ms Laurence Lwoff, Head of the Bioethics Unit of the Council of Europe

3.50 pm

Questions and debate

Concluding remarks:

4.20 pm

Mr Luís Leite Ramos, Chairperson of the PACE Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development (Portugal, EPP/CD)

Ms Petra Bayr (Austria, SOC), Chairperson of the PACE Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination

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