



Health Security Committee/Comité de sécurité sanitaire

29-30 juin 2017

Allocution à l'occasion de la réception co-organisée par le ministère de la Santé au MUDAM (29 juin à 17h)

Dear Director,

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to Luxembourg and welcome to this beautiful place!

One year ago, I had the pleasure to welcome you in Esch-Belval, a place where research, knowledge, education and innovation meet.

This time, we gather in a place where today's art and architecture meet the remains of the history of Luxembourg.

When walking through this museum, built by the internationally acclaimed architect Ieoh Ming Pei, the visitor is confronted with images, impressions and concerns that mark today's society.

And in this respect, we can draw a parallel with the work of the Health Security Committee. Because the Committee itself is also very much active on issues that are of concern to today's society, within Europe and beyond its borders.

This is very clearly reflected by the agenda of the plenary meeting that is taking place today and tomorrow in the Château of Senningen.

I congratulate you for this very ambitious agenda and for the topics chosen. It is important that the European Union addresses the topics that generate fears among



our citizens and that it elaborates those actions that are necessary to efficiently fight against the threats in a sustainable way.

Please allow me to pick up on certain of your discussion topics:

Being prepared and able to respond timely to **terrorist attacks** is more than ever a priority for all countries. Even a country like Luxembourg which has so far been spared by these traumatic events must gear up its capacities and vigilance!

A lot of progress has been achieved on **joint procurement**. I have been informed that since the last HSC, the procurement procedure for heptavalent Botulinum Anti-Toxin (BAT) was successfully concluded. Four Member States (including Luxembourg) have participated. The work on the procurement of pandemic Influenza Vaccines has the highest number of participating countries and has progressed significantly since the last HSC. I hope that the procedures will be launched in the second half of 2017.

Another important topic is **vaccination**: Member States need to make more to improve the vaccination coverage. Less than 2 weeks ago the Italian and French ministers announced that they will make certain vaccinations for children mandatory. This is a step in the right direction. In Luxembourg, the free access to vaccination for new borns and children has proven to be very efficient. The vaccination coverage of children lies at 95%.

Preparedness is also a recurrent agenda item of the Committee. The Ebola outbreak showed us how important it is to continuously work on improving preparedness – even after a pandemic, so as to be ready for the next one. This point has been underlined by the Council Conclusions which have been adopted in 2015 during the Luxembourg Presidency and I would like to explicitly thank the Committee for filling this text with life!

No less important is the continuous work of the Committee on **current alerts** like **measles** or **cholera**. Even if those threats might appear to be less important, they constitute a real threat to health security and we must remain vigilant!

Last but not least, **antimicrobial resistance**. This topic should remain high at our political agendas! I would like to seize the opportunity to thank the Commission



and ECDC for their support over the last months, which will help my services to put into place an efficient national AMR plan.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

As a health minister, I am particularly thankful for your work because it provides us decision-makers with the guidance we need to take the right action on matters which are central to the interest of our healthcare systems.

They are also essential for our citizens:

For their health

...their security

...and their wellbeing!

Luxembourg is honoured to host the Health Security Committee!

With this, I wish you an enjoyable get-together and a fruitful continuation of your discussions tomorrow.

Thank you!