

Minister Donnelly meets EU Partners to discuss current COVID-19 situation and look to the future

From [Department of Health](#)

Published on 2 December 2020

Last updated on 2 December 2020

Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, today met with his EU counterparts to take stock of the current situation with COVID-19, to reflect upon lessons learned and to consider medium-term proposals for the strengthening of health security in the EU. This all-day virtual meeting replaced the formal EPSCO Health Council meeting which is normally held in Brussels.

During the meeting, the Minister for Health asked his European colleagues to ensure that there was ongoing co-operation on all issues related to COVID-19.

Minister Donnelly said:

"Every EU country has access to knowledge and data that helps them in their battle against COVID-19. We are already working together closely on an EU level and I would like to see that co-operation enhanced and extended. I am particularly supportive of efforts to use technology to improve data sharing and co-operation in the future.

"Through the efficient and safe sharing of data and knowledge, we can improve our monitoring of cross border health threats. I also welcomed the progress being made on an EU-wide passenger locator form. Sharing this knowledge collectively will be incredibly powerful, and will help us all to limit cases of COVID-19 across Europe."

This morning, Health Ministers considered the European Commission's proposals for Building a European Health Union: Reinforcing the EU's resilience for cross-border health threats.

Minister Donnelly said:

"COVID-19 has given rise to significant challenges for all Member States and has highlighted weaknesses in our individual and collective ability to deal with health emergencies. We have to learn from this and previous pandemics to better prepare ourselves for future health crises." He added, "The Commission proposals respond to the need for improved pandemic preparedness and response at EU level. We particularly welcome the proposals to strengthen the mandates of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA)."

This afternoon Ministers exchanged views on the recently published EU Pharmaceutical Strategy. Ireland warmly welcomes the launch of the Strategy as very ambitious and broad in its scope across the lifecycle of medicines.

Minister Donnelly said:

"Now more than ever, the EU needs to ensure that it has access to safe and effective medicines, at affordable prices to safeguard the health and wellbeing of all our citizens. Our collective efforts will be key to implementing and delivering the ambitious objectives of this Strategy so that we can deliver a truly patient centred system."