



REGERINGSKANSLIET

Promemoria

2009-11-20

Ministry of Health and Social
Affairs
Sweden

**PAC6 2009: Agenda Item 5, Information by the Partner
Countries and Organizations**

Madam Chair,

Sweden, in our capacity of representative of the Swedish EU Presidency, would like to draw attention to a few issues of interest for the Partnership.

One of the top priorities of the Swedish EU Presidency, is the **Baltic Sea Region Strategy**. We are now very satisfied that the European Council has adopted the strategy and that the Council has adopted conclusions, which are presented in the document submitted by Sweden (PAC 6/5/Info 1). This strategy is an integrated framework to address common challenges and opportunities in our region.

At this point it should be noted that the European Council, when deciding that an EU Strategy should be developed, it also agreed that the Northern Dimension should provide the basis for the external aspects of the Strategy. Consistent with this our Partnership has provided input, which has been followed up by the Commission.

Now we are pleased that the CSR has agreed that the Partnership should take the Lead Partner role for the Health priority sub-area of the Strategy. The Strategy recognizes the fact that the NDPHS includes both EU member states and non-EU states, and is a partnership of equals.

We hope that all Partners will actively contribute in this work.

Secondly, the Swedish EU Presidency held the Second Senior Officials Meeting of the Renewed **Northern Dimension** on 12 November. The NDPHS Chair reported on the activities of the Partnership. The Senior Officials welcomed the recommendations of the Strategy Working Group. They looked forward to a renewed political commitment at the PACand called on the governing bodies of the Partnership to intensify

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their efforts to reach an agreement on the legal capacity of the Secretariat.

I would also like to mention that the family of Northern Dimension Partnerships is growing. Two more Partnerships are under establishment: the Northern Dimension Partnership on Transport and Logistics and the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture.

Finally, in the beginning of next week the **Council on Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs (EPSCO)** will take place. The priority issues within the remit of my Ministry are to reach an agreement on patients' rights in cross-border healthcare, and to adopt a recommendation on smokefree environments and to adopt conclusions on innovative incentives for effective antibiotics, on alcohol and health, healthy and dignified ageing, and on eHealth. The meeting will also deal with influenza-related issues, among other things the new A(H1N1) influenza. So far, we are satisfied with the progress during our Presidency.

Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Swedish Chair

While having the floor, Madam Chair, I would also like to speak on behalf of another Partner, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, BEAC. Sweden last September took over the Chairmanship from Russia. The overarching focus area will be an *eco-efficient economy* which aims at addressing the challenges of economic growth, climate change and sustainable use of natural resources and energy in an integrated way.

Furthermore, the Chairmanship will seek co-operation with the Northern Dimension, not least as regards the co-operation on health and related social issues. Special attention will be given to the follow-up of the Kirkenes Declaration from 2003 in which the Prime Ministers urged the health and social authorities to gain full control of the spread of tuberculosis in the Barents Region within 10 years. Co-operation and co-ordination with the Partnership and its expertise will be necessary for the success of these efforts. We have already been in contact with the relevant Expert Groups, and we appreciate the readiness of the Prison Health Expert Group to take a leading role for developing a programme which will be useful for the whole Partnership.

Finally, the Chairmanship wants to safeguard the successful work already done to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and we also consider it important to implement the programme on Children and Youth at Risk.

Thank you, Madam Chair

PAC6 2009: Agenda Item 6.2, Future direction of the
Ministry of Health and Social
Affairs
Sweden

NDPHS

- We support the Work Plan and appreciate the fact that it so clearly aims at implementing the new strategy for the Partnership.
- With reference to action line 6 of the Work Plan Sweden will try to live up to the Partnership's basic principle that all Partners should to take part and contribute to the co-operation in accordance with their own resources and possibilities in the best possible way.
- Sweden will continue to be the Lead Partner of the Primary Health Care Expert Group – or a successor to this expert group, depending on the future decisions on the organisation of the Expert Groups. It is in the first hand goal 5 of our new strategy that we are thinking of, but also other goals where expertise in primary health care is needed. In this context I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate the members of the Primary Health Care Expert Group for their innovative and forward looking initiative in order to securing funding for the co-operation, and this will result in important progress in the field of primary health care and the reduction of inequalities in access to qualified primary healthcare.

- More such initiatives need to be made for the development and implementation of the co-operation in the Partnership in the future, as was pointed out by the Strategy Working Group.
- Furthermore, Sweden offers the Lead for the implementation of goal 4, concerning the mitigation of antibiotics resistance, for the coming two years as a minimum. Antibiotics resistance is one of the greatest health threats in Europe. The problem is very complex and it is caused by many activities in different areas of activity. The NDPHS can contribute to the mitigation of antibiotics resistance by policy formulation and strengthening co-ordination of activities aimed at counteracting the increasing resistance to antimicrobial agents, for example by strengthening the networks of professionals that already exist today, establishing new ones and by support to the organization of training and exchange of experience for relevant professional groups in the Northern Dimension Area.
- Finally, Madam Chair, Sweden would also like to contribute as regards the prevention of harm caused by alcohol and drugs. We are now discussing how this could be done, but we still need some more time in order to come forward with proposals.

Thank you, Madam Chair