

European Union (EU)

In November 2001, the European Commission commenced a conference on influenza pandemic planning. The Conference identified the key areas for European Member States to focus on regarding pandemic preparedness. The work completed at this Conference resulted in the development of the EU Community Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Plan. The Plan delineates the role of the Commission and Member States regarding pandemic preparedness planning and defines the actions that will take place at pre-determined phases. It also explains the WHO stages of an influenza pandemic and describes the action plan developed by WHO. On November 28, 2005, the Commission adopted a communication on influenza pandemic preparedness, which incorporated new recommendations published by the WHO and recognized the authority of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) for influenza pandemic preparedness. The Commission continues to coordinate its efforts with the WHO and the ECDC.

The Commission reports that National Pandemic Preparedness Plans are being drafted or are currently in place in all Member States. One of the main issues Members must continue to address is the use and availability of vaccines. The Commission emphasizes that vaccine availability and access to anti-viral drugs is determined at national levels and access is not coordinated at the EU. Nonetheless, the Commission continues to work with the Health Security Committee and the European Vaccine Manufacturers to ensure vaccines will be expeditiously made available to EU Members if a pandemic was to occur.