

# Health & Consumer Voice

October 2011

## Headline News

Commissioner Dalli delivers first EU statement at UN General Assembly \_\_\_\_ 1

## Top Stories

EU Food Safety Day: Commissioner Dalli on food waste \_\_\_\_ 2

Ex-smokers celebrate EU's Unstoppable campaign \_\_\_\_ 3

EU remains committed to finding alternatives to animal testing \_\_\_\_ 4

More years, better lives: Addressing the ageing population \_\_\_\_ 4

Worried about flu? Get vaccinated \_\_\_\_ 4

## In brief

Commissioner Dalli in Washington \_\_\_\_ 2

Fighting antimicrobial resistance \_\_\_\_ 2

1st Appeal Committee used for *Asulam* 3

## EU Presidency

Agreement on economic governance package - Wrocław \_\_\_\_ 4

21st Economic Forum - Krynica \_\_\_\_ 4

Conference on childhood asthma & allergy - Warsaw \_\_\_\_ 4

Follow us on Twitter!



[http://twitter.com/#!/EU\\_Consumer](http://twitter.com/#!/EU_Consumer)

## Commissioner Dalli delivers first EU statement at UN General Assembly



Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, John Dalli, delivers the EU statement at the UN's high level meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases (Source: UN Press Service)

On 19-20 September, government officials and top health experts met at the General Assembly of the United Nations' (UN GA) high-level meeting on Non-Communicable Diseases in New York. This was the second time in history of UN GA that health was addressed after the meeting on AIDS in 2001. The EU was represented by Commissioner for Health and Consumer Policy, John Dalli, and by Director-General for Health and Consumers, Paola Testori-Coggi.

certain respiratory diseases – are the leading cause of mortality in the world, being responsible for 86% of deaths in the EU each year and 63% of deaths worldwide. The political declaration adopted at the UN meeting is an important step towards a co-ordinated global response to address the problem.

*NCDs' heavy impact on people's health, as well on economic development, requires efficient co-ordinated action at global level.*

*John Dalli*

In what was the first opportunity of the kind, Commissioner Dalli delivered the EU statement on behalf of the EU Member States at the UN GA.

"NCDs" - short for non-infectious but chronic diseases such as cancers, diabetes, cardiovascular and

"NCDs" heavy impact on people's health, as well on economic development, requires efficient co-



## In brief



### John Dalli in Washington

After the UN meeting on NCDs in New York, Commissioner Dalli travelled to Washington to hold a number of bilateral meetings with counterparts and other top-level officials. During his stay in the US capital, Commissioner met with, among others, Ambassador Ron Kirk (United States Trade Representative), Secretary Kathleen Sebelius (US Department of Health and Human Services) and Secretary Tom Vilsack (US Department of Agriculture).

Discussions focussed on common challenges, such as food safety, GMOs, eHealth and antimicrobial resistance, as well as dealing with obesity following the UN GA.

### Fighting antimicrobial resistance

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) published a new strategy for 2011-2015 aimed at combating the threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR). This resistance may arise from antimicrobial use in animals.

Antimicrobials – including antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals and antiparasitics – are used to control infectious diseases in humans and animals, with many of the same medicines used for both. Over time, the bacteria they are used to treat become resistant to the medicine resulting in a progressive loss of effectiveness. This is referred to as antimicrobial resistance. In the EU alone, the additional burden posed by AMR every year is in the range of 2.5 million hospital days and 25 000 deaths.

To read the strategy, visit the EMA website:

[http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en\\_GB/document\\_library/Other/2011/01/WC500100649.pdf](http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Other/2011/01/WC500100649.pdf)

ordinated action at global level", said Commissioner Dalli. "This worrying trend can be reversed through action on the risk factors influencing these diseases - such as smoking, poor diet and insufficient physical activity (...) The EU is determined to take forward the declaration in partnership with the global community".

Commissioner Dalli will outline his vision of the link between the Com-

mission's work on alcohol related harm, diet and physical activity at the upcoming meetings of the European Alcohol and Health Forum (October) and the Platform for Action on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (November).

To learn more about the UN's High-level meeting on NCDs and read the political declaration, see:

<http://www.un.org/en/ga/president/66/Issues/NCD/ncdindex.shtml>

### 2011 global deaths by risk factor

• Tobacco use:	6 million
• Insufficient physical activity:	3.2 million
• Harmful use of alcohol:	2.3 million
• Unhealthy diet:	1.7 million

Source: World Health Organisation: Global status report on noncommunicable diseases 2010

## EU Food Safety Day: Commissioner Dalli on food waste



In the framework of the EU 2020 Resource Efficiency Flagship programme, the Commission is looking at how to minimise food waste and improve food packaging without compromising food safety.

In this context, Commissioner John Dalli celebrated the EU's Food Safety Day (15 September) by visiting the Brussels Food Bank. With annual food waste in Europe currently estimated at 89 million tonnes – about 179 kg per capita – and expected to rise to 126 million tonnes by 2020, much of this could be avoided simply through better management.

Highlighting the cost of waste, Commissioner Dalli underlined it was the responsibility of all actors along the food chain to address

### Food for thought: food waste in numbers:

- **89 million tonnes:** annual food waste in the EU
- **565 euros:** is the cost of food waste per household per year
- **60%:** of EU household food waste could be avoided
- **33%:** of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted globally each year

the problem. "We need to mobilise people to reduce the amount of food waste they generate," he said. "This means customers planning shopping better, retailers managing stocks better and restaurants allowing customers to take leftovers home. Wasting so much food is unacceptable from an environmental, economic and ethical point of view."

*John Dalli*

*We need to mobilise people to reduce the amount of food waste they generate.*

For more info on the EU's policy on food safety and food security, visit the Health & Consumers' website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/food/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/food/index_en.htm)



# Ex-smokers celebrate EU's Unstoppable campaign



"Unstoppable" by Rankin

Yesterday, it was Madonna, Colin Firth and the Queen. Today, these are twenty-seven inspirational ex-smokers who look at us from the covers of European newspapers. Thanks to the world renowned photographer, Rankin, who joined the European Commission's (EC) cause, they have become the ambassadors of the EU's "Ex-smokers are Unstoppable" campaign. The ambassadors were selected from thousands of applications on "Unstoppables" national Facebook pages for a photo-shoot with Rankin in London.

Tobacco is the single largest cause of preventable death in the EU. Every year, 650 000 people in the EU die from smoking related diseases. That is why the European Commission launched in June 2011 a three year campaign "Ex-smokers are Unstoppable," targeted at the EU's 25-34 year olds. Its aim is to show young people how much their lives could positively benefit by giving up smoking.

"Young people today hear a lot of negative messages; in the current circumstances, it was important

to have a positive message about how you can make your life better, happier, and most importantly healthier, with your own will power and accompanying help in a modern dynamic way" – says Despina Spanou, Principal Adviser for Communication.

Half a million Europeans have so far shown their support for the campaign through its social media pages and more than 40 000 have signed up to iCoach, the online companion to help you quit. iCoach is free to access, available in all EU languages and helps both ex-smokers who wish to stay smoke-free and smokers who wish to conquer their addiction.

Commissioner John Dalli, himself an ex-smoker, is delighted with the campaign's success so far. With the launch of its second phase, "we are taking one more step towards helping young people to quit smoking for good and feel better," he said.

Ex-smokers are Unstoppable contains all the tools, advice and motivation to quit. Visit your national Unstoppable page:

[www.exsmokers.eu](http://www.exsmokers.eu)

## In brief



First Appeal Committee used for *Asulam*



The European Commission proposed not to include *Asulam* – an herbicide used in agriculture – in the EU pesticides register.

*Asulam* was the subject of the first Appeal Committee procedure under new comitology rules introduced in February 2011. Under these new rules, the Commission may still adopt its proposal in cases of 'no opinion', in other words where Member States have failed to either approve or reject the Commission proposal by qualified majority of their votes.

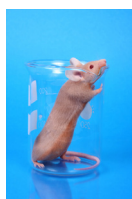
A formal opinion on *Asulam* is necessary for two reasons: requirement for approval or non-approval of this substance by 31 December 2011 due to Commission Regulations 33/2008 and 1107/2009; technical reasons related to the consumer risk assessment.

As an Appeal Committee failed to reach an agreement in favour or against the non-inclusion, the Commission will now proceed with the adoption of the draft implementing act, in other words the non-inclusion of *Asulam* in the pesticides register.

For more on the EU's decision making procedures:

[http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/decision-making/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/decision-making/index_en.htm)

## EU remains committed to finding alternatives to animal testing



The EU remains committed to finding alternative approaches to animal testing for cosmetics according to the latest report on the Development, Validation and Legal Acceptance of Alternative Methods to Animal Tests.

Following its publication on 13 September, Commissioner Dalli stressed that, "in the last 20 years over 200 million euros has been dedicated to research in this area in the EU alone. Research and development has not only reduced the number of animals used in testing, it has also brought important results in terms of better science and consumer safety".

Validated alternatives are now available for the identification of corrosive substances, skin and severe eye irritants, skin phototoxicity and skin penetration and to assess genotoxicity. However, research into alternatives testing methods for the more complex effects on health will not be completed before the marketing ban comes into force in March 2013.

The Commission is now assessing the impacts of the full marketing ban. It will decide whether to make a proposal on it by the end of 2011.

For the full report see:

[http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/docs/annual\\_reports\\_animal\\_testing\\_13092011\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/consumers/docs/annual_reports_animal_testing_13092011_en.pdf)

## More years, better lives: Addressing the ageing population

For the first time, the EU Member States will work together to fund strategic research on ageing. The Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) will look at the challenges of demographic change.



Bringing together scientists, social scientists and representatives from industry, policy making and user organisations, the JPI will look at how to retain people in the labour market, help older people remain active and how to make future care systems sustainable.

So far 13 EU countries have signed up but according to the Commission's recent communication "More years, better lives – the potential and challenges of demographic change" all EU Member States should participate.

Given the scale of the challenge, they should develop a common vision for co-ordinated research into ageing and demographic change, it says.

For more information, see:

<http://www.jp-demographic.eu>

## Worried about flu? Get vaccinated

And finally, you might still be waiting for summer to arrive but winter is just around the corner which for some means 'flu' season. 'Flu' is a highly contagious, viral disease which can cause serious illness. You can be

protected against it through the use of safe and effective vaccines..

Find out more by visiting:

[http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/europe\\_for\\_patients/flu\\_vaccination/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/europe_for_patients/flu_vaccination/index_en.htm)

## EU Presidency



### Agreement on economic governance package - Wrocław

Intensive work on the six legal acts improving economic governance in the EU was concluded on 16 September when EU Finance Ministers reached an agreement.



### 21st Economic Forum - Krynica

Over 1700 economists and politicians, including Commissioner Dalli, attended the 21st annual Economic Forum on 8 September. Competition, co-operation and solidarity were amongst the topics discussed in a series of debates and round table discussions.



### Conference on childhood asthma & allergy - Warsaw

Prevention and control of childhood asthma and allergies was on the agenda when experts met on 21 September. The results of the conference, which examined early detection, prevention and monitoring of non-inflammatory respiratory disease in children, will be published at the ministerial conference on 7-8 November.



For full details of the Polish Presidency's activities, visit:

[www.pl2011.eu](http://www.pl2011.eu)



The views expressed in Health & Consumer Voice do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the European Commission.  
© European Union, 2011. Reproduction of articles (excluding photographs) is authorised, except for commercial purposes, provided that the source is mentioned.  
Edited by DG SANCO.

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health\\_consumer/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/health_consumer/index_en.htm)  
Email: [sanco-newsletter@ec.europa.eu](mailto:sanco-newsletter@ec.europa.eu)