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6 May 2010, Amsterdam

Dear Sir/Madam,

HAI Europe support for an EU inquiry into the handling of the A/H1N1 Influenza pandemic

Following the public declaration of an A/H1N1 Influenza pandemic in 2009, and the subsequent handling of the outbreak, important concerns have been raised about the management and decision-making surrounding this 'pandemic'. As a civil society organisation committed to citizen-centred public health policies, Health Action International (HAI) Europe supports the call for an EU inquiry into the handling of A/H1N1 outbreak. In particular, we call for further transparency on the rationale behind decisions to engage in large-scale procurement of patented medicines and vaccines for a crisis that never arrived.

The World Health Organization's official declaration of a pandemic, issued shortly after an amendment to the definition of pandemic, triggered a hasty response from governments, which resulted in the unfortunate diversion of already limited public health spending on medicines and vaccines. An inquiry by a European Parliamentary committee would help to shed light on how and why these decisions were made within Europe.

We hope that such an enquiry would also address the role of the pharmaceutical industry during this outbreak, to establish whether commercial interests had any influence on decision-making within EU Member States. Given the significant public resources involved, it is vital that European citizens have the opportunity to scrutinise the decisions made on their behalf. HAI Europe extends our support to the formation of a parliamentary committee to examine how the Influenza A/H1N1 pandemic was handled by the European Union and Member States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Teresa Alves', with a horizontal line underneath.

Teresa Alves
HAI Europe Coordinator