

# Press Release

## Parliamentary Assembly – Communication Unit

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## PACE to hold a second public hearing into the handling of the Swine Flu pandemic

Strasbourg, 22.03.2010 – The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) is to hold a second public hearing on the subject "The handling of the H1N1 pandemic: more transparency needed" in Paris on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March, followed by a press conference.

Participants at the hearing, organised by PACE's Committee on Social, Health and Family Affairs, include:

- **Polish Health Minister Ewa Kopacz**, who will explain her government's response to the 'flu pandemic declared by the World Health Organisation – Poland decided not to order any H1N1 vaccines
- **Professor Marc Gentilini**, an expert in infectious diseases, a member of the French National Academy of Medicine and a former President of the French Red Cross, who will assess France's response to the pandemic
- **Health researcher Dr Tom Jefferson** of the independently-funded Cochrane Collaboration who will analyse the issue of the use of scientific evidence in influenza decision-making
- **Michèle Rivasi**, a member of the Green Group in the European Parliament, who is calling for an inquiry by MEPs into the handling of the 'flu pandemic

The committee held a [first public hearing](#) in January, attended by representatives of the WHO, the pharmaceutical industry and independent health experts, following a motion by the outgoing Chair of PACE's Sub-committee on Health Wolfgang Wodarg on "faked pandemics".

It subsequently appointed Paul Flynn (United Kingdom, SOC) to prepare a report. He has already met British Minister of State for Public Health Gillian Merron as part of his inquiry, and will shortly visit the Geneva headquarters of the World Health Organisation (WHO) to put follow-up questions. The committee is due to approve his report at the end of April, for a possible plenary debate in Strasbourg in June.

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### Practical information for the media:

The hearing, which is open to the press, takes place at the Council of Europe office in Paris (55 avenue Kléber, Paris 16<sup>ème</sup>, Metro: Boissière) from 2 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> March, followed by a press conference.

Video of the hearing and press conference (with interpretation into English and French) will be posted on the Assembly's website around an hour after they conclude at the following link: [mms://coenews.coe.int/vod/100329\\_w01\\_w.wmv](http://mms://coenews.coe.int/vod/100329_w01_w.wmv)

### Accreditation:

PACE Communication Division, e-mail [pace.com@coe.int](mailto:pace.com@coe.int) or +33 3 88 41 31 93.

The Parliamentary Assembly brings together 318 members from the national parliaments of the 47 member states.

President: Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu (Turkey, EDG) – Secretary General of the Assembly: Mateo Sorinas.

Political groups: EPP/CD (Group of the European People's Party); SOC (Socialist Group); EDG (European Democrat Group); ALDE (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe); UEL (Group of the Unified European Left).