

Press release

Environmental, epidemiological surveillance and access to medicines

Portugal and Spain sign agreement on cooperation in the area of health

The portuguese and spanish Health Ministers signed an agreement today, july the 10th, with the aim of strengthening the collaboration in health matters.

The Minister of Health Adalberto Campos Fernandes and Dolors Montserrat Montserrat, the Minister of Health, Social Services and Equality of Spain, agreed to solidify the areas of environmental, epidemiological and entomological surveillance, as well as research, recognizing the benefits for the 60 million citizens of the Iberian Peninsula.

After the bilateral meeting in Madrid, Adalberto Campos Fernandes pointed out that "this agreement allows better quality and safety for patients. It is also a way to improve the sustainability of health systems in Portugal and Spain." Dolors Montserrat added that "Portugal and Spain are working on the control of infectious diseases, which can spread more easily when it comes to cross border countries".

In the field of **environmental surveillance**, both countries want to identify risk areas in cross-border regions but also the monitoring of environmental indicators that influence favourable habitats for vectors.

In the **entomological surveillance**, the goal is to identify common methods and data sharing, in order to detect the presence of mosquitoes and their possible infection by pathogenic agents as soon as possible. The adoption of common measures for reducing the populations of vectors in border areas is also part of the plan.

The **epidemiological surveillance** has also endorsed this agreement, enabling data sharing, organizing initiatives that include the mobility of research teams and the exchange of experiences and laboratory samples.

Pilot project for centralized purchasing

To set the beginning for drug centralized purchasing, Portugal and Spain will start a pilot project, and will facilitate the exchange of information on methods used in both countries.

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The experience - which should involve a medicine within the group of generics, biosimilars and chronic diseases - will be later evaluated.

In the declaration of intent, the countries have committed themselves with a solid cooperation, not only in the centralized negotiation of drugs, but also in the funding procedures and price fixing.

One of the first steps to take is to work on technical documents targeted to the quality and safety requirements that all products must comply for these centralized procedures. The exchange of information and experts between the two countries will also deepen the knowledge of the tools and strategies used in the field.

The minister Adalberto Campos Fernandes pointed out that this measure is not exclusively related to savings. This is a way to guarantee that developing countries will access "more drugs and more therapeutic innovation, sharing this benefit with the consumer".

Representatives of several agencies of the Ministry of Health participated in this meeting. The Infarmed was among them, through the President, Professor Maria do Céu Machado, but also the Directorate-General for Health and the Shared Services of the Ministry of Health.

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