
Published at: 05-05-2009

Source: [Portal Europe](#)



During today's debate on the EU's approach to protect its citizens against the swine flu, ALDE-spokesperson Jules Maaten expressed his deepest regret at the way the Council is dealing with this health threat. He is surprised that the EU Health ministers have not been able to agree on a European approach to tackle this imminent pandemic.

"While the swine flu is spreading over the world and the WHO warns of a pandemic, EU health ministers could not even agree on a common approach on travel bans or a European "drug bank" of flu remedies and vaccines. While European citizens want the Council to wake up and take action, it merely decided to postpone the necessary decisions. It has put back its sombrero and gone back to sleep", said Jules Maaten (Netherlands, VVD).

In case of emergency there is no time for extensive consultation to convince Member States to implement the necessary measures. European Liberals and Democrats believe the European Commission must have an emergency plan that allows it to coordinate and implement necessary measures. "The Commission should play the role of crisis manager and have the power to take action within 24 hours. It must be allowed to conduct disinfection programmes and enforce quarantine for flights from affected areas, or even impose travel restrictions. It is ineffective for some Member States to take action if others don't. Because of the cross-border nature of this threat coordinated European action is needed", concluded Jules Maaten.