Press release | 08.03.2011

Swine flu

EP highlights disproportionate response to swine flu; calls for more transparent evaluations

The European Parliament today adopted a report by Green MEP **Michèle Rivasi** on the H1N1 influenza (swine flu) outbreak and response in 2009-10. Commenting on the adoption of her report, Michèle Rivasi said:

"The EP has today thrown a spotlight on the disproportionate response to the swine flu outbreak in Europe. Member states spent € billions on vaccines, which were authorised in a rush despite the moderate nature of the virus (1). Health budgets are notoriously overstretched, and there are far more important health issues to tackle than giving subsidies to big pharmaceutical firms.

"MEPs have today called for a revision of the EU's health response mechanisms. Preparedness plans should become sufficiently autonomous and flexible to be adapted as swiftly as possible to the actual risks. The evaluation of medicines needs to be fully transparent, and all declarations of interest should be published to allow for public scrutiny of possible conflicts of interests.

"The EU blindly followed the WHO in its response to the swine flu outbreak and this clearly needs to change. The EP has called for meaningful EU risk evaluation and for giving the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control adequate means to carry out all its tasks, not least to assess the severity of infection risk.

"Finally, parliament highlighted the need for independent research on vaccines and antiviral medications, an improvement of the accelerated authorisation procedure so that clinical trials are carried out before a pandemic occurs, and full liability of manufacturers for their products.

"The European Commission and relevant agencies should now swiftly move to implement the action points adopted by the EP to rebuild trust in the EU institutions and to be prepared for a real pandemic.

(1) While swine flu did result in tragic deaths, the mortality rate was low compared to common seasonal influenza.

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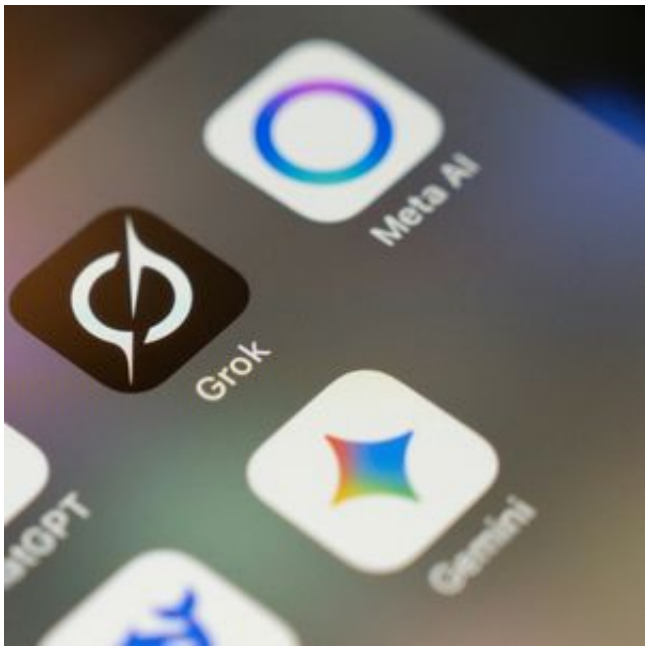


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Responsible MEPs



Michèle Rivasi

Member

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