

## **European Commission's advisory panel on COVID-19**

### **Report – videoconference Friday 26/11/2021 at 18:00**

The President referred to the identification of the new variant in the South African region. It was quickly classified as a variant of concern and its mutations called for great caution. The EU responded quickly by activating its emergency brake to restrict travel from certain countries in an effort to slow down the spread of the variant.

The President stressed that the current epidemiological situation in the EU was still due to the dominant Delta variant. The appearance of a new variant of concern only underlined the urgency to increase the vaccination rate, the rollout of boosters and the introduction of public health measures.

The President confirmed the new generation of Advance Purchase Agreements include specific provisions on variants and the possible adaptation of vaccines.

The Panel confirmed the worrying mutations in this new variant. The experts stressed that time would be needed to gather and review data on its characteristics, notably on its impact on the severity of COVID-19. The importance of transparency and sharing data was underlined. The need for coordination of scientific work was mentioned as an important aspect.

The Panel stressed the importance of coordinated and clear communication including on current knowledge gaps (e.g. severity, interaction with vaccines and therapeutics, etc.). In addition, the experts agreed that a precautionary approach was appropriate.

The President concluded by recalling that vaccination, testing and public health measures work against all variants and must be reinforced.

**Participants in the videoconference:**

- European Commission: President von der Leyen, Commissioner Kyriakides, K. Vandenberghe, R. Reig Rodrigo, P. Delsaux
- Andrea Ammon (ECDC)
- Emer Cooke (EMA)
- Prof Peter Piot (London School of Tropical Medicine)
- Prof Arnaud Fontanet (Institut Pasteur)
- Dr. Miklós Szócska (Director of The Health Services Management Training Centre of the Semmelweis University)
- Prof Marion Koopmans (Erasmus MC)
- Dr. Fernando Simon (Coordination Centre for Health Alerts and Emergencies, Spain)
- Prof Kåre Mølbak (Statens Serum Institute, Copenhagen)
- Prof Lothar Wieler (Robert Koch Institute)

**Excused:**

- Prof Christian Drosten (Charité)
- Prof Maria-Rosaria Capobianchi (National Institute of Infectious Diseases, Rome)