



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Public health  
**Health Security**

Luxembourg, 22 September 2021

**Health Security Committee**  
**Audio meeting on the outbreak of COVID-19**  
**Draft Summary Report**

**Chair:** Stefan Schreck, European Commission, DG SANTE C ADV01

**Audio participants:** AT, BE, CZ, DE, EE, EL, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, MT, NL, PL, PT, SE, SI, SK, IS, LI, NO, CH, SM, AD, XK, MD, DG SANTE, SG, COUNCIL, EMA, ECDC, WHO

**Agenda points for today:**

1. Draft COVID-19 surveillance guidance – presentation by ECDC
2. European vaccination portal – presentation by ECDC
3. AOB - Influenza A (H1N2)v – intervention by FR
4. AOB - Up-date on ECDC risk assessment of Nipah virus outbreak in Kerala, India
5. AOB – EWRS user acceptance test (UAT)
6. AOB - EWRS daily reporting suspension

**Key Messages**

**1. Draft COVID-19 surveillance guidance – presentation by ECDC**

In the HSC meeting of 18 August 2021, the Commission presented current discussions in Member States on surveillance indicators for COVID-19 with the objective to better monitor disease epidemiology of COVID-19. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) is working on improving the surveillance indicators and presented a short update on its work in this area.

ECDC encounters several **challenges** related to testing indicators (different testing policies and use of tests among the Member States), monitoring of variants of concern (representativeness of sequenced specimens), and changing epidemics (higher incidence in younger age groups, decrease in severe cases). ECDC prepared several **proposals** to enhance primary, secondary, tertiary care surveillance and complementary surveillance systems in new surveillance guidance. It will include incidence by severity, in order to better guide public health measures and to understand their impact. After consultation of EU Member States (integrated political crisis response - IPCR) and the World Health Organization (WHO), the publication of the ECDC surveillance guidance is expected to be published in early October. The HSC took note of the planned publication.

**IE** asked if other Member States are continuing to test vaccinated people with mild symptoms. **IE** also asked if there is a case definition for COVID-19 surveillance now with the flu season coming up. **ECDC** mentioned that if countries are considering moving sentinel surveillance, it has to be with a higher coverage of the influenza sentinel screening. Too few sentinels are tested for meeting the objectives of the COVID-19 surveillance. There is need for higher coverage, but also higher testing rates. Regarding

case definition, ECDC responded that the draft guidance proposes to use the case definition for [acute respiratory infection](#) (ARI).

IT asked if a definition for symptomatic patients will become available. ECDC responded that the draft guidance proposes to use the case definition for [acute respiratory infection](#) (ARI) - sudden onset of symptoms AND at least one of the following four respiratory symptoms: cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, coryza AND a clinician's judgement that the illness is due to an infection.

## **2. European vaccination portal – presentation by ECDC**

This presentation complemented the previous discussions in the HSC (and its Communicators' Network) on boosting vaccine confidence, by informing the HSC about the European Vaccination Information Portal (EVIP). ECDC, in partnership with the European Commission, DG SANTE and the European Medicines Agency (EMA), has developed the [European Vaccination information Portal](#). The Portal was established in response to **Council Recommendation on strengthened cooperation against vaccine-preventable diseases** (adopted in December 2018). The portal was launched in April 2020 and is available in all EU languages. The main purpose of this website is to provide accurate, objective, up-to-date evidence on vaccines and vaccination in general. It also provides an overview of the mechanisms in place in the European Union (EU) to ensure that available vaccines are conform to high standards of safety and effectiveness. Main topics cover benefits of vaccination, approval of vaccines in the EU, monitoring vaccine safety, vaccine effectiveness, how vaccines work, but also covers factsheets on HPV, influenza, measles, pertussis and Rubella. It includes a [specific section](#) on COVID-19 vaccines.

## **3. AOB - Influenza A (H1N2)v – intervention by France**

FR provided a short overview on an influenza **A(H1N2)v** outbreak where human infection occurred. On 3 September, the Institut Pasteur, Paris reported a human case of infection by an influenza virus A(H1N2)v of swine origin. The patient fully recovered. Direct exposure to pigs is the most probable source of infection in this case, even though human-to-human transmission cannot be excluded at this stage. A(H1N2)v, clade 1C.2.4, has recently emerged and very rapidly spread through Western France, data lacks on its adaptation to human. National guidelines in case of suspicion of swine flu include systematic testing for influenza in case of acute respiratory illness, and a person being negative for SARS-CoV-2 and was exposed to swine.

## **4. Up-date on ECDC risk assessment of Nipah virus outbreak in Kerala, India**

ECDC reported on a case of Nipah virus (NiV) infection in India, also reported in the [week 37 issue of the Communicable Disease Threat Report](#). A WHO International Health Regulation (IHR) was posted on 21 September with further details on the case. The likelihood of exposure and infection by NiV for EU/EEA citizens travelling or residing in Kozhikode district is currently very low. The single case deceased and no other close contacts have been found to be positive, despite extensive testing; symptomatic individuals are in isolation. EU/EEA travellers in India should not handle domestic or wild animals and avoid contact with their excreta, as well as avoid the consumption of raw fruits and raw fruit products potentially contaminated with the virus. Introduction of the virus into the EU/EEA is via infected travellers is currently very unlikely to occur considering very low likelihood in the affected area and the low number of travellers arriving from India due to the COVID-19 restrictions. Should a case be imported, nonetheless, the likelihood of further transmission the virus within the EU/EEA is considered to be very low. Infection prevention and control measures applied due to the COVID-19 pandemic could further reduce the likelihood of nosocomial transmission.

**5. AOB – EWRS user acceptance test (UAT)**

The Commission updated the HSC about the plans for the Early Warning and Response System (EWRS) User Acceptance Test (UAT) to be held between 17-24 September, with a view to test certain new functionalities, aiming to improve the functioning of the EWRS. In addition, the Commission informed that the second meeting of the Joint controllers on the EWRS – electronic Passenger Locator Form (ePLF) will be held on 19 October 2021.

**6. AOB - EWRS daily reporting suspension**

The Commission informed the HSC that the **COVID-19 daily posting as comments on the COVID-19 notifications** is replaced from 21 September 2021 by the **TESSy weekly reporting** as requested by all countries. This will remove the generation of notifications and SMS messages related to the daily reporting.