



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Public health, country knowledge, crisis management
Crisis management and preparedness in health

Luxembourg, 12 June 2020

Health Security Committee

Audio meeting on the outbreak of COVID-19, 12 June

Summary Report

Chair: Wolfgang Philipp, SANTE C3

Audio participants: AT, BE, BG, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, NO, CH, UK, AL, ME, RS, DG SANTE, DG ECHO, DG HOME, DG RTD, DG JRC, ECDC, EMA, WHO

Key Conclusions

1. Vaccination strategy: The Commission presented a draft blueprint for COVID-19 vaccination plan. The blueprint aims to provide a framework for orientation towards the development of national vaccination strategies, outlines steps and actions around key factors that should be considered for the preparation of vaccination plans at national level. The ECDC paper on considerations in prioritizing access to COVID-19 vaccines served as an input to the blueprint. The Health Security Committee (HSC) welcomed the document, and discussed questions on alternative approaches for vaccination and indicative timeline. As many factors are still unknown, including the availability of vaccines, it will be a continuous process to adapt timelines to the state of knowledge.

Follow up:

- *Countries to send comments in writing by 17 June; this feedback will be included in the next version and a special meeting will be called for to discuss.*
2. Commission response to COVID-19 in the area of research and innovation¹: The HSC reviewed the Commission's response on research and innovation on COVID-19. DG RTD outlined the close collaboration that takes place with DG SANTE and with Member States, including through the ERA vs Corona Action Plan with 10 priority actions for research and innovation. The actions cover a wide range of aspects of COVID-19 – with particularly strong elements on the development of vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics, including an EU-wide clinical trials network to facilitate collaboration. To help reach the objectives of the [Coronavirus Global Response](#), approximately EUR 1 billion will be mobilised under Horizon 2020 to accelerate access to COVID-19 vaccines, medicines and tests. The international pledging conference hosted by the EU and its partners on 11 May will culminate in a final Global Pledging Summit on Saturday 27 June.

¹https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/research-area/health-research-and-innovation/coronavirus-research-and-innovation_en

ECDC presented a paper on non-pharmaceutical public health research priorities to look at lessons learned from the current pandemic in terms of possible research gaps. Countries are encouraged to take these suggestions into account when research priorities are discussed at national level, they will be as well distributed to relevant Commission services working both on the current H2020 and future Horizon Europe research programmes. NO noted interest to further discuss transmission dynamics focusing on superspreading events and implementing control measures.

Follow up:

- *It is important that HSC Members are communicating with the representatives of their countries on research groups in order to contribute to these discussions and help coordinate the COVID-19 research effort.*
- *The HSC will be regularly updated on developments on R&I, and discuss areas of interest for the HSC such as on transmission dynamics at upcoming meetings.*

3. Communication on external borders: DG HOME informed on the Communication on temporary restriction on non-essential travel into the EU adopted on 11 June. Temporary restrictions are in place since 16 March, twice prolonged. The new Communication includes a general extension of the restriction to 30 June. The Communication proposes three guiding principles that are non-discrimination – residence as deciding factor, flexibility, and a common and coordinated approach. The Commission recommends that decisions must be coordinated and based on three criteria: epidemiological situation and response to COVID-19 in the third country; application of containment measures during travel; and reciprocity and travel advice. The Commission invites the Council to act and adopt a concrete, coordinated approach on the list of countries, to be up-dated regularly. The HOME affairs group will play a key role in coordination and the IPCR and Council in decision-making. Close cooperation is needed both at Member States and at EU level between public health authorities and authorities responsible for entry points into the EU. BE welcomed the Communication, and called for a stronger coordination and common criteria at EU level including a coordinated approach on entry screenings of travelers from third countries. As regard exit strategies, BE suggested to focus the discussion on the correlation of lifting measures and resurgence of outbreak.

Follow up:

- *The HSC will continue to work on this area as one of the platforms for coordination and consultation.*
 - *The Commission asked ECDC to provide risk assessment for third countries, based on the information available to ECDC on the epidemiological situation of COVID-19 and recommendations on measures to be considered by authorities at points of entry into the EU+ to reduce risk of importation of COVID-19 by travellers.*
4. Update on joint procurement: Four joint procurement procedures have been launched covering personal protective equipment, ventilators and laboratory equipment, contracts have been signed and countries can place orders. An additional fifth joint procurement on ICU medicines is in preparation, in consultation with EMA, for an extended list of medicines. The Commission is consulting with countries on any further needs for joint procurements, and will be monitoring the orders placed by member states under the contracts already signed (which have a 12-month duration) to best assess any possible follow up. As regards the procurement of investigational therapeutics, the Commission continued discussions and reached agreements with several key producers to meet requests of countries communicated to the Commission. This commitment will match immediate needs for COVID-19 patients and does not include access to the therapeutics for stockpiling.

5. AOB: NL updated the HSC on investigations ongoing and control measures in mink farms in NL, where a reverse zoonotic event occurred - coronavirus has been transmitted from humans to animals.

Follow up:

- *NL was invited to update the HSC when results from the investigation are available.*