

COVID-19 EU update

European Commission:

- On 27 May, the European Commission launched the European [recovery plan](#) of €2.4 trillion to protect lives, livelihoods and jobs. Part of the recovery plan is also a new Health Programme, **EU4Health** with a budget of €9.4 billion to strengthen health security and prepare for future health crises. To have a stand-alone health programme is a longstanding CPME request.
- In the framework of the EU Health Programme, the Commission is currently offering specialised webinars on the care of specific patient groups during the COVID-19 pandemic. On 28 May, the European Commission hosted a webinar on [cancer and COVID-19](#): current and future challenges. The webinar addressed the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cancer care pathway and reflected on possible medium- and long-term actions in the context of the Europe's Beating Cancer Plan. Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella Kyriakides participated to this webinar. On 2 and 9 June 2020, the European Commission will organise other 2 webinars concerning COVID-19 and Intensive Care Medicine as well as the impact of COVID 19 for people living with a Rare Disease. The webinars are free and any registered healthcare professional in the EU, UK and EEA countries can join. Recordings of past webinars from the COVID-19 Clinical Management Support System can be accessed [here](#).

European Parliament:

- On [20 May 2020](#) during the EMPL meeting, the issue of the inclusion of SARS-CoV-2 in the list of biological agents known to infect humans was discussed. The proposed insertion was between “Severe acute respiratory syndrome-related coronavirus (SARS-virus)” and “Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-virus)” as [virus in risk category 3](#), the second most dangerous category of biological agents; the SARS and MERS viruses are examples of risk group 3 viruses. Ebola is in risk group 4.

Council:

- On 20 May tourism ministers exchanged views on the [implementation of the guidelines and recommendations issued by the European Commission on helping member states coordinate the gradual lifting of travel restrictions](#) and allow tourism businesses to reopen while respecting the necessary health precautions. The ministers expressed their support for a recovery gathered around decisions based on sound epidemiological data, non-discrimination, a gradual approach and close coordination at EU level.
- The Council has adopted [a €3 billion package in financial assistance](#) to 10 enlargement and neighbourhood partners (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Jordan, Kosovo, Moldova, Montenegro, Republic of North Macedonia, Tunisia, Ukraine). The funds will be provided in the form of loans on highly favourable terms to help them cope with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic.

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control:

- ECDC has launched a [new weekly COVID-19 surveillance report](#). The report provides an overview of the COVID-19 epidemiological situation in the EU/EEA and the UK using available data compiled from different sources.
- ECDC has published a technical report on [“Projected baselines of COVID-19 in the EU/EEA and the UK for assessing the impact of de-escalation of measures”](#). The report provides a 30-day forecast

of the expected number of COVID-19 cases, deaths and hospitalised cases under a set of assumptions.

- ECDC has published a report on [“Considerations for travel-related measures to reduce spread of COVID-19 in the EU/EEA”](#). The report outlines principles for developing more individualised guidance or operating procedures related to travel in European countries.

European Medicines Agency:

- EMA reminds of the [risks of chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine](#).
- EMA calls for high-quality observational research: [EMA encouraged collaboration between EU researchers](#) on high-quality, multi-centre observational studies of COVID-19 treatments and vaccines. A new [COVID-19 response group](#) has been set up to facilitate this collaboration. EMA calls for transparency for protocols and results, and collaboration between researchers, to ensure high-quality, powerful studies. It stresses that to generate evidence upon which decisions can be based, observational studies of real-world data must be well-designed and based on large populations.
- EMA commissions independent research to prepare for real-world monitoring of COVID-19 vaccines: [EMA signed a contract with Utrecht University](#) as coordinator of the EU Pharmacoepidemiology and Pharmacovigilance Research Network, a public-academic partnership of 22 European research centres, to conduct preparatory research into data sources and methods that can be used to monitor the safety, effectiveness and coverage of COVID-19 vaccines in clinical practice. once they are authorised in the EU. Under the ACCESS (vACCine Covid-19 monitoring readinESS) project, researchers will identify a Europe-wide network of data sources and possible adverse events requiring extra consideration.
- EMA, the European Commission and the Heads of Medicine Agencies updated their [guidance for pharmaceutical companies on adaptations to the regulatory framework](#) to clarify the exceptional change-management process in place to reduce the risk of shortages or disruption of supply of crucial medicines for COVID-19. The update also introduces further temporary flexibility on good-manufacturing- and good-distribution-practice inspections and new guidance on inspections of plasma collection centres.
- EMA, together with EU Member States and the European Commission, has published a [plan outlining principles](#) for how the European medicines regulatory network will ensure that the authorisation, maintenance and supervision of human and veterinary medicines will continue to be carried out during the ongoing pandemic. This includes procedures related to potential treatments for COVID-19 and vaccines against the virus, those related to medicines needed to treat COVID-19 and procedures to minimise shortages due to COVID-19.

WHO/WHO-Europe:

- The 73rd World Health Assembly ended with [the adoption of a resolution](#) on the COVID-19 response supported by more than 130 countries. Among recommendations on how to continue the fight COVID-19, the resolution also sets up an independent review into the WHO’s management of the pandemic.
- On 21 May, WHO and the UN Refugee Agency signed [a new agreement](#) to strengthen and advance public health services for displaced people around the world. This agreement will support the efforts to protect the over 70 million people displaced due to COVID-19.
- WHO has published a [Framework for decision-making: implementation of mass vaccination campaigns in the context of COVID-19](#). The document outlines a common framework for decision-making for the conduct of preventive and outbreak response campaigns, offers principles to consider for mass vaccination campaigns for the prevention of vaccine-preventable diseases

among susceptible populations, and details the risks and benefits of conducting vaccination campaigns to respond to vaccine-preventable diseases outbreaks.

- WHO has published a [COVID-19 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework](#) that serves countries with the key public health and essential health services and systems indicators to monitor preparedness, response, and situations during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the same context, WHO has updated a document on [Operational planning guidelines to support country preparedness and response](#) that can be used by national authorities to develop and update their COVID-19 national plans.
- WHO has issued [guidance on laboratory biosafety](#) relating to COVID-19.
- Together with global partners, WHO has launched a new technical package: [Revealing the Toll of COVID-19: A Technical Package for Rapid Mortality Surveillance and Epidemic Response](#). The package is designed for rapid mortality surveillance and epidemic response to support national governments with surveillance and response planning surrounding COVID-19.
- Via the [COVID-19 Partners Platform](#), Member States can submit requests for supplies through the COVID-19 Supply Portal, a tool that enables national authorities and all implementing partners supporting COVID-19 national plans to request critical supplies.

Reports from other sources/COVID-19 Webinars:

- On 4 June, the [Global Vaccine Summit](#) will take place virtually and WHO, GAVI, UNICEF, and Vaccine Alliance together with world leaders will join forces to help maintain immunisation programmes and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in lower-income countries. The organisers wish to mobilise at least US\$ 7.4 billion in additional resources.
- On 3 June, the European Harm Reduction Network will organise a webinar on 'Outreach work during the COVID-19 pandemic'. Registration available at this [link](#). The aim of the webinar will be to discuss the impact of the Covid-19 crisis on outreach work and how this affects the situation of people who use drugs.
- On 30 May, the European Medical Students' Association (EMSA) will organise a webinar on the realities of developing a vaccine against COVID-19, "Pandemic & Prevention - Developing a Vaccine for COVID-19". Prof. Pierre Van Damme from the European Joint Action on Vaccination (EU-JAV) will participate to the webinar. Registration available at this [link](#).
- On 26 May, CPME joined 350 organisations representing over 40 million healthcare professionals from 90 different countries in publishing a joint letter to the G20 leaders calling for a climate-friendly #HealthyRecovery. It urges world leaders to take measures such as reforming fossil fuel subsidies and fighting air pollution. The next G20 meeting is scheduled for November. Please find a website dedicated to the letter [here](#). On 2 June 2020, the European Commission is hosting a [webinar](#) on the health impact of climate change.
- On 25 May, the European Federation of the Association of Dietitians (EFAD) has organised a webinar on [nutritional rehabilitation of COVID-19 patients](#). EFAD has also published a [briefing paper on the role of dietitians in the fight against COVID-19](#).
- On 25 May, the British HIV Association, the German AIDS Society, the European AIDS Clinical Society, AIDS Study Group of the Spanish Society of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology and the Polish Scientific AIDS Society have released a [statement on risk of COVID-19 for people living with HIV](#).
- On 24 May, the World Organization of Family Doctors (WONCA) hosted a comprehensive [webinar on Patient Safety and Quality during the pandemic](#).
- On 19 May, the European Public Health Alliance and Mental Health Europe organised a webinar on ["Staff mental health protection in time of pandemic"](#).

- Pain Alliance Europe has created an online [survey about the impact of COVID-19 on people that live with chronic pain](#). On the same note, the European Pain Federation has created a [survey for healthcare professionals](#).
- The Journal of Hospital Medicine has published an article entitled '[Reducing the Risk of Diagnostic Error in the COVID-19 Era](#)', which proposes a new typology of errors in diagnosis.
- The University of Liverpool has developed a [COVID-19 drug interactions website](#).
- [Joint Statement from the European Parliament Interest Group on Equitable Access to Healthcare and the Patient Access Partnership \(PACT\): COVID-19 – Leaving no-one behind, now and in the future](#): the joint statement was co-signed by 58 MEPs and presented to Commissioner Kyriakides. It highlights the need for long-term planning for healthcare and calls for stronger EU competences for health, not excluding treaty changes. The MEP Interest Group commits to following up on these points.