

COVID-19 EU update

European Commission:

- The marathon for donations of vaccines and therapies for the global fight against the coronavirus launched by the European Commission on 4 May will be continued with a new campaign via the international organisation ["Global Citizen"](#). Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will host the final of the campaign ["Global Goal: Unite for our Future"](#), a worldwide donation summit, on 27 June. So far, commitments of 9.8 billion euros have already been made in the context of the fundraising marathon.
- The European Commission has published "questions and answers" to the [coronavirus global response](#), the proposed [InvestEU programme](#) and the [rescEU and Humanitarian Aid](#) under the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).
- On 4 June 2020, the European Commission has announced a pledge of €300 million to Gavi, the [Vaccine Alliance](#), for the period 2021–2025, which will help immunise 300 million children around the world and finance vaccine stockpiles to shield against outbreaks of infectious diseases. The actions of Vaccine Alliance are instrumental in reaching the objectives of the Coronavirus Global Response.

European Parliament:

- The European Parliament has released [practical advice for safe travel](#) including 10 Commission recommendations.
- On 14 May 2020, Bernd Lange, Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on International Trade (INTA) [wrote a letter](#) to Phil Hogan (Commissioner for Trade, European Commission) on the "commercial aspects of intellectual property rights for medical products in the context of COVID-19." Lange's letter to Commissioner Hogan raised several questions concerning trade rules, compulsory licensing, data exclusivity, and trade secrets in the COVID-19 response. On 26 May 2020, Commissioner Hogan provided a [response](#). The response leaves the door open to revisiting the EU's decision to opt-out of Article 31bis of the WTO TRIPS Agreement as an importer. This is significant because there has been a debate on whether or not WTO members that initially opted-out as importing members can ever change their minds.

Council:

- On 28 May, the [Health Security Committee](#) (informal advisory group of Member States' health ministries on health security) discussed testing strategies, the EU vaccination plan for COVID-19, the de-escalation measures adopted by certain EU countries and advises on a common position on travel restrictions from high risk countries during the process of de-escalation of confinement and control measures, see [summary report - 22nd Health Security Committee on COVID-19 outbreak](#).
- On 29 May, [research ministers](#) exchanged views on the role of research and innovation in making societies resilient to health crisis. The ministers broadly stressed the need for enhanced coordination of research activities and the need for data and knowledge sharing.

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control:

- On 28 May, ECDC published a technical report ["Methodology for estimating point prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 infection by pooled RT-PCR testing"](#) which provides guidance to EU/EEA MS and the UK for estimating the prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 infected cases through a cross sectional study design based on pooled sampling for RT-PCR testing on a random population sample.

- On 29 May, ECDC has published a poster [“COVID-19 – Plan your journey”](#) which summarises the air travel experience for passengers following the outbreak of COVID-19.
- On 4 June, ECDC has published a technical report, [“Conducting in-action and after-action reviews of public health response to COVID-19”](#) which supports the implementation of after-action reviews and in-action reviews focused on the public health response to COVID-19.

European Medicines Agency:

- EMA reminded healthcare professionals to closely monitor patients with COVID-19 who are receiving chloroquine or hydroxychloroquine. [Several observational studies](#) in COVID-19 have reported that chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine are associated with an increased risk of heart problems, a well-known side effect of such treatments, including cardiac arrhythmias and cardiac arrest.
- The International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities published a [report](#) summarizing its global regulatory workshop on COVID-19 observational studies and the use of real-world data. The report provides an overview of global regulators’ priority areas for cooperation in the areas of pregnancy research, building international clinical cohorts, and preparing for vaccine safety and effectiveness monitoring.
- EMA’s Executive Director sent an [open letter](#) to researchers from the Institute for Quality and Efficiency in Health Care in response to [their call](#) for EMA to make the clinical data submitted as part of COVID-19-related evaluation procedures publicly available rapidly. Mr Rasi stresses that the Agency is currently discussing how to enhance the level of transparency for COVID-19 procedures, including the possibility of rapidly publishing clinical data for these products. However, he notes that the Agency’s the move from London to Amsterdam had a huge impact on staffing and other services and he can’t yet commit to reinstate all activities related to clinical data publishing for medicines evaluated by the Agency. He concludes that further information on the concrete proposals to increase transparency of COVID19 related activities will be communicated once agreed within EMA and the EU Regulatory Network.
- EMA updated patients’ and healthcare professionals’ organisations about its COVID-19-related activities at a joint virtual meeting with the Patients’ and Consumers’ and the Healthcare Professionals’ Working Party on Tuesday, 2 June 2020. CPME presented at the meeting the Working Parties’ input to the HMA/EMA Concept Paper on Best Practices to Prevent Shortages of Medicines. A [recording of the meeting](#) is available.

WHO/WHO-Europe:

- [Cross country analyses](#) by WHO-EU Observatory on how comparable COVID-19 mortality is conclude that: “In summary, national definitions of COVID-19 death fall broadly into two groups: diagnosis-based (confirmed and probable, in line with the WHO definition) and test-based. This may result in a substantial lack of comparability of COVID-19 related mortality across countries.”
- WHO has published a [case report form](#) for suspected cases of multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS) in children and adolescents temporally related to COVID-19.
- Under the leadership of the R&D Blueprint team, [120 candidate vaccines](#) have been mapped. The next step would be the prioritization of the vaccines that will go from early to later development. In this context, [specific criteria](#) that vaccine scientists, product developers, manufacturers, regulators and funding agencies can use for prioritization.
- WHO has published guidelines on [“Preventing and managing the COVID-19 pandemic across long-term care services in the WHO European Region”](#) as part of strengthening the health system response to COVID-19 technical working guidance; since over 40% of total confirmed COVID-19

deaths occur in [long-term care facilities](#) and reducing the spread of coronavirus in these facilities is important. Part of this set of documents is also the [technical guidance for community pharmacists](#), which are [key players in COVID-19 response](#) and must stay up-to-date on guidance.

- WHO has published technical tool, a “[Surveillance protocol for SARS-CoV-2 infection among health workers](#)”, which countries can use to better understand the characteristics and exposure risks of health workers infected with COVID-19.
- WHO has published a guidance document on the [clinical management of COVID-19](#) for clinicians caring for COVID-19 patients during all phases of their disease.
- WHO has published a guidance document on [ethical considerations to guide the use of digital proximity tracking technologies for COVID-19 contact tracing](#) for policy makers and other stakeholders to consider the ethical and appropriate use of digital proximity tracking technologies for COVID-19.
- WHO has published “[Maintaining essential health services: operational guidance for the COVID-19 context](#)”, a document which provides practical actions that countries can take at different levels to maintain access to health services in the pandemic context.
- WHO has published guidance on [basic psychosocial skills](#).
- WHO has published a [rapid assessment of service delivery for noncommunicable diseases during the COVID-19 pandemic](#) together with [stories from the field](#) – a new WHO survey showed that 81% of responding countries rehabilitation care has been completely or partially disrupted, and in 47% of responding countries palliative care has been completely or partially disrupted.

OECD:

- [Treatments and a vaccine for COVID-19: The need for coordinating policies on R&D, manufacturing and access](#): This briefing illustrates the status quo of research for a vaccine and identifies three key factors to ensure a future vaccination programme fulfils the expectations of universal health coverage: 1) ‘pull factors’ to ensure research is accelerated and completed, even if the severity of the pandemic is decreasing; 2) incentives to create production capacities in expectation of a successful research outcomes; and 3) appropriate policies to manage intellectual property, procurement, volume and affordability.

Data Protection and COVID-19:

- While the coordination of cross-border interoperable COVID-19 contact tracing apps is a competence of the European Commission, their development is a national competence. This [briefing](#) by the European Parliament summarises the current efforts towards, functionalities of and technical decisions on the development of national COVID-19 apps, with a focus on the ongoing centralised vs. decentralised approach and the interoperability of different apps across Europe.
- Tracing App in Latvia: <https://apturicovid.lv/#en>
- Italy released its official tracing app built on the framework developed by Apple and Google to track infections. Four regions -- Liguria, Abruzzo, Marche and Puglia -- will start piloting [Immuni](#) (Italian for "immune") on June 8. The app will later be made available in the rest of the country.
- Belgian Data Protection Authority publishes [Opinions on](#) Draft Laws for the Creation of a Database and for the Use of Contact Tracing Apps for COVID-19 Tracking.
- The Global Privacy Assembly (“GPA”), a forum for data protection and privacy authorities, has [established](#) a COVID-19 Taskforce to advise on best practices, provide insight and drive practical responses regarding privacy issues raised by the pandemic.

Human Rights and COVID-19:

- The European Union's Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) published an update to its report about the [Coronavirus pandemic in the EU: fundamental rights implications](#) looking at measures Member States are using to address the pandemic. It highlights rights-respectful approaches that Member States can learn from and underlines the need to carefully and regularly assess the impact on people's fundamental rights. The report looks at i) users' data, their privacy, data protection and other rights, ii) states of emergency, iii) daily life impacts; and iv) vulnerable groups. The report covers measures in place from 21 March until 30 April 2020. It also includes findings from FRA's Fundamental Rights Survey on people's awareness of privacy settings on their mobile phones.
- The [UK's Equalities and Human Rights Commission](#) will launch an inquiry into the impact of coronavirus on ethnic minorities in view of evidence that the death toll from COVID-19 and impact of the pandemic has been disproportionately high.
- The [United Nations Network on Migration](#) is concerned by reports of states in many regions using forced return of migrants as a measure in response to COVID-19. The Network calls on states to suspend forced returns during the pandemic, in order to protect the health of migrants and communities, and uphold the human rights of all migrants, regardless of status. Successfully tackling the pandemic cannot be achieved without upholding human rights.

Reports from other sources/COVID-19 Webinars:

- The International Organisation of Migration (IOM) has developed an open-access [Migration Health Evidence Portal for COVID-19](#) to serve as a repository of research publications and high-yield evidence briefs on COVID-19 and its intersection with migration, health, and human mobility.
- On 18 June, the Reference Site Collaborative Network will organise a webinar that will feature 2 talks about [COVID-19](#): "Vulnerable (elderly with comorbidities) populations and Covid-19 Pandemic Innovative, ICT supported services for their home-based triage, follow up and comprehensive care" and "The modelling of COVID19 spread suggests mechanisms of infection, therapeutic outcomes and novel opportunities". For registration, contact go.rscn@outlook.com.
- On 23 June, the European Hospital and Healthcare Federation (HOPE) and the Platform for Continuous Improvement of Quality of Care and Patient Safety will organise a webinar about MedEye, the medication verification suite that scans, detects, and verifies medication at the bedside. Registration possible [here](#).