**COVID-19 EU update**

**European Commission:**

- The European Commission has invited all interested healthcare professionals to take part in the Survey ''Second Wave of COVID-19: Preparatory actions'' to give their feedback on the measures that could be taken by the Commission to reinforce the EU response and to better prepare the healthcare systems for the second wave of Covid-19 pandemics or any future pandemics. [The Survey](#) is available until 20 June.

- Using satellites from the EU's Copernicus Earth observation programme, artificial intelligence and data analysis of environmental parameters, the impact of the corona crisis and post-pandemic recovery can be monitored. The European Commission, in cooperation with the European Space Agency ESA, has developed the [Rapid Action Coronavirus Earth observation tool](#).

- On 25 May, Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides told Health Ministers that coronavirus immunity certificates are not reliable. Member States should focus on prevention measures such as maintaining physical distancing, developing "robust" testing strategies and ensuring sufficient healthcare capacity, especially member States that are tourist destinations. *"I urge you all to monitor the situation as you ease restrictions and keep other member states informed of any epidemiological developments,"* said the health Commissioner. She encouraged countries to share their data with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), as it was lacking national data to create an interactive map detailing the level of coronavirus transmission inside EU countries – see further information [here](#).

- In the fight against coronavirus, the [EU grants €314 million to innovative companies](#). Via the [European Innovation Council Accelerator Pilot](#), the European Commission has awarded 36 companies with nearly €166 million to work on pioneering projects and over €148 million to another 36 companies to contribute to [the recovery plan for Europe](#).

- The Commission Vice-President Jourova, referring to [disinformation during COVID-19](#), announced that there will be a teaser with a Communication on disinformation in the COVID-19 context, and by the end of the year together with the Digital Services Act and the European Democracy Action Plan, some regulatory ideas on how to advance the debate about disinformation and online responsibility will be gathered.

- On 10 June, the European Commission and the High Representative proposed ways to [step up the fight against coronavirus disinformation](#) through a [Joint Communication](#). The communication indicates the immediate response and concrete actions that can be set in motion to counter the massive wave of false or misleading information, including attempts by foreign actors to influence EU citizens and debates.

- During [their 23rd meeting, the Health Security Committee](#) discussed travel restrictions for external borders, i.e. possible criteria for lifting border measures for third countries, a draft framework to monitor COVID-19 in the EU/EEA countries and the UK (prepared by ECDC), the exit strategies in place in some EU countries, and the medical evacuation of COVID-19 infected health care and humanitarian aid workers.

- DG SANTE's [Expert Panel on Effective Ways of Investing in Health (EXPH)](#) has been asked to prepare a study on [a new framework for the organisation of health and social care following the COVID-19 pandemic](#). The Expert Panel is asked to look into indicators to asses quality of services from primary to tertiary care, how to create resilience in healthcare systems, guidance to reach vulnerable communities, and criteria to stress test systems' capacity to deal with emergencies. The report is due to be published in November. Work on the mandate on [Public Procurement in healthcare systems](#) is also continuing.

- The European Commission has launched [Re-open EU](), a web platform that contains essential information for a safe relaunch of free movement and tourism across Europe. The platform will provide real-time information on borders, travel restrictions, public health and safety measures such as physical distancing or the use of facemasks, as well as other practical information for travellers. Re-open EU is available in the 24 official EU languages.
- The European Commission [supports an international initiative to facilitate trade in healthcare products](). A future international agreement would facilitate trade in healthcare products and contribute to stronger global preparedness for future health crisis by: abolishing tariffs on pharmaceutical and medical goods; establishing a scheme of global cooperation in times of health crisis, covering issues such as import and export restrictions, customs and transit, public procurement and transparency; improving the current WTO rules applicable to trade in essential goods.
- On 15 June, an [EU Humanitarian Air Bridge flight]() departed from Maastricht to Kabul. The flight, part of the EU's global coronavirus response delivered 100 tons of life-saving materials to supply EU-funded humanitarian partners. The EU is also providing a new aid package of €39 million to boost coronavirus response as well as to help victims of war, forced displacement and natural disasters in Afghanistan.
- On 15 June, the European Commission published [guidance on food safety management systems for food retail activities, including food donation](). In the context of the increased demand for food donation linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, this new guidance provides timely support for all actors involved.
- On 17 June, the European Commission has presented the [European strategy]() to accelerate the development, manufacturing and deployment of [coronavirus vaccines](). The strategy has objectives as ensuring the quality, safety and efficacy of vaccines; securing swift access to vaccines for Member States and their populations while leading the global solidarity effort; ensuring equitable access to an affordable vaccine as early as possible. The European Commission has also made available a factsheet on the [coronavirus vaccine strategy]().

**European Parliament:**
- The European Parliament has published an article about the new [EU programme EU4Health](), aiming to strengthen Europe's health systems to respond better to future major cross-border crises. The article describes the priorities of the programme, how it is building on the One Health approach and how it will strengthen national systems by funding different initiatives.
- The European Parliament has published a briefing about [States of emergency in response to the coronavirus crisis: Situation in certain Member States](). The document provides a comparative overview of Member States' institutional responses to the coronavirus crisis.

**Council:**
- On 5 June 2020, home affairs ministers met and discussed the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the field of [internal border controls and the free movement of persons](). Most Member States will have lifted the controls at their internal borders and the related travel restrictions by 15 June, with others are due to follow by the end of the month. Ministers agreed that any remaining restrictions will be based on objective health-related criteria, non-discriminatory and proportionate. Ministers also discussed how long the EU travel restrictions regarding the entry of third-country nationals should be maintained and what criteria and measures could be applied once the restrictions start to be lifted.

- On 5 June 2020, at the telecommunications ministers meeting, an [update on the development of contact tracing and warning apps](#) in the context of COVID-19 as work continues to make these apps interoperable across borders.
- On 8 June 2020, the Council approved the ["Team Europe" package](#), launched on 8 April 2020 to support EU partner countries in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences. The amount of 36 billion euro, which also includes contributions from the European Commission, EU member states, the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development have been mobilised and will be used to address the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The focus of the financial resources will be reinforcing health systems, facilitating socio-economic recovery, ensuring the flow of goods, and investing in research on treatments and vaccines.
- On 9 June 2020, the Council adopted the [conclusions shaping Europe's digital future](#) including connectivity, digital value chains and eHealth to the data economy, artificial intelligence and digital platforms. The conclusions highlight the impact of the digital transformation on fighting the pandemic, and its critical role in the post-COVID-19 recovery.
- On 9 June 2020, employment and social affairs ministers discussed how to make national employment and social policies more robust and labour markets more resilient in order to [overcome the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic](#): flexible working arrangements and innovative technologies, upskilling/reskilling to respond to the shifts of work caused by COVID-19, protection and promotion of gender equality, especially in relation to vulnerable groups.


**European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control:**
- ECDC has released new [guidance on infection prevention and control to healthcare providers](#) in order to prevent COVID-19 infection. The technical report includes general guidance as well as particular recommendations for general practitioners, dental offices and pharmacies. UEMO was consulted on the draft technical report and [advised](#) to recommend the use of FFP grade face masks for contacts with patients suspected of being infected with coronavirus, as well as surgical face masks for other patient contacts. There is also an [infographic](#).
- ECDC has published a technical report, ["Options for the decontamination and reuse of respirators in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic"](#) which provides an overview of the evidence on the available methods for decontaminating respirators or FPP, in case of shortages.
- ECDC declared that it will collaborate/participate with consortia in [projects funded through Horizon 2020 call for Pan-European COVID-19 cohorts](#).
- ECDC has published a technical report, ["Mobile applications in support of contact tracing for COVID-19"](#), a document that aims to facilitate the dialogue between public health authorities and app developers to ensure that the epidemiological and operational considerations are considered. There is also a video.
- ECDC has published a technical report [on infection prevention and control of COVID-19 in migrant and refugee reception and detention centres in the EU/EEA and the UK](#). The report provides scientific advice on public health principles and considerations for infection and prevention control of COVID-19 in migrant and refugee reception and detention centres. There is also a [fact sheet.](#)
- ECDC has published a technical report in which it offers a [monitoring and evaluation framework for COVID-19 response activities in the EU/EEA and the UK](#). The purpose of this framework is to offer support to countries in their efforts to monitor the implementation and effects of COVID-19 response activities.

- ECDC has published a technical report about [considerations relating to passenger locator data, entry and exit screening and health declarations in the context of COVID-19 in the EU/EEA and the UK](#). In this report, the views on the passenger locator data required and the appropriate use of entry and exit screening procedures at points of entry, including health declaration forms are shared.
- ECDC has released [an updated version of the Rapid Risk Assessment on COVID-19 in the EU/EEA and the UK.](#)

**European Medicines Agency:**
- EMA formally began [evaluating remdesivir](#) for a conditional marketing authorisation. The EMA's human medicines committee will assess this application. The assessment of the benefits and risks of remdesivir is being performed under a reduced timeline and an opinion could be issued within weeks, depending on the robustness of the data submitted and whether further information is required to support the evaluation.
- EMA reiterated its [advice to patients and healthcare professionals](#) that angiotensin converting enzyme (ACE) inhibitors and angiotensin receptor blockers (ARBs, or sartan medicines) can continue to be used during the pandemic. This follows a review of recently published studies that showed no link between the use of these medicines and a higher risk of infection or worsening of COVID-19.
- EMA published a [visual guide on its fast-track procedures](#) for COVID-19 treatments and vaccines.
- EMA provided an [update](#) on the measures EU authorities are putting in place to support the continued availability of medicines during the pandemic. Among others, the steering group agreed that EMA would set up an ad hoc working group to improve the forecasting of future medicines demand in the EU, in preparation for a potential second wave of infections.
- EMA extended its [medical literature monitoring](#) service to cover authorised active substances that could help treat COVID-19. EMA's service aims to reduce duplication of effort and multiple reporting of suspected adverse events for active substances that have many marketing authorisation holders.
- [Regulators discussed COVID-19 clinical trials](#): regulators shared concerns about the discontinuation of clinical trials globally and the growing number of underpowered studies that might not generate the robust data required for regulatory decision-making. They reiterated that the research community should pool resources into large, well-designed, randomised clinical trials to determine which investigational or repurposed medicines would be safe and effective for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19. In addition, participants in the high-level meeting discussed the use of COVID-19 clinical trial master protocols around the world to accelerate the development and approval of potential treatments and vaccines against COVID-19.
- EMA published [guidance on remote good-clinical-practice (GCP) inspections](#) during the pandemic. This is the first in a series of guidance documents on remote inspections for the verification of compliance with EU and international standards during the pandemic.

**WHO/WHO-Europe:**
- WHO has published [interim guidance](#) on considerations, opportunities and challenges of integrating digital tools into contact tracing methods.
- WHO has published an updated interim guidance on ["Key planning recommendations for mass gatherings in the context of COVID-19"](#), which provides advice to host governments, health

- authorities and event organizers on containing COVID-19 risks associated with a mass gathering, and on mitigating the likelihood of strain on health services.
- To strengthen regional coordination for the COVID-19 response and mitigate the impact of the pandemic the WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Central European Initiative established a joint task force, which will serve as a strategic platform for updating member states, exchanging information, and sharing experiences, best practices and training.
- WHO offers real-time training for the coronavirus disease outbreak. The COVID-19 channel provides learning resources for health professionals, decision-makers and the public for the outbreak of coronavirus disease.
- WHO has released a technical note, "Medical certification, ICD mortality coding, and reporting mortality associated with COVID-19" describing medical certification and classification of deaths related to COVID-19 to identify all deaths due to this disease in all countries.
- WHO has published 14 new community and risk engagement posters on parenting during the pandemic. Some of the topics that these posters cover include: learning through play, keeping calm and managing stress, keeping children safe online, family budgeting in times of financial stress, and talking about COVID-19.
- An updated guidance on the use of masks is available. The guidance provides updated advice on who should wear a mask, when it should be worn and of what it should be made. Q&A regarding Masks and COVID-19 are also available on WHO's website.
- On 12 June 2020, WHO Information Network for Epidemics and the Behavioural Insights Initiative at WHO have organised a webinar, COVID-19 - social and behavioural insights on the use of face masks. The webinar provided a snapshot of how different efforts can provide different types of social and behavioural insights on face mask use in the context of COVID19.
- In the light of the impact that COVID-19 has on people who already struggle to access health services, WHO has developed guidance on maintaining essential services.
- WHO advices that the benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any potential risks of transmission of COVID-19, see also WHO Q&A on breastfeeding and COVID-19.
- WHO welcomes the initial clinical trial results from the United Kingdom (UK) that show dexamethasone can be lifesaving for patients who are critically ill with COVID-19. For patients on ventilators, the treatment was shown to reduce mortality by about one third, and for patients requiring only oxygen, mortality was cut by about one fifth, according to preliminary findings. The drug is part of the Recovery trial, which is testing existing treatments like azithromycin, tocilizumab, lopinavir-ritonavir to see if they also work for coronavirus.


**Data Protection and COVID-19:**
- Access Partnership published a report on Global Contact Tracing – A Comparative Global Study. The report provides an overview of how tech-enabled countries have approached the use of digital contact tracing to fight COVID-19, and how this tool may affect privacy policy worldwide.
- On 16 June, Member States, with the support of the Commission, agreed on a set of technical specifications to ensure a safe exchange of information between national contact tracing apps based on a decentralised architecture – the eHealth Network Guidelines to the EU Member States and the European Commission on interoperability specifications for cross-border transmission chains between approved apps - Basic interoperability elements between COVID+ Keys driven solutions V1.0 and Detailed interoperability elements between COVID+ Keys driven solutions V1.0. To support further streamlining of the system, the Commission will set up a gateway service, an interface, to efficiently receive and pass on relevant information from national contact tracing apps

and servers. This will minimise the amount of data exchanged and thus reduce users' data consumption.

- Germany has launched its exposure notification app.
- On 17 June, the European Data Protection Board EDPB adopted a statement on the interoperability of contact tracing applications, building on the EDPB Guidelines 04/2020 on the use of location data and contact tracing tools in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak. The statement offers a more in-depth analysis of key aspects, including transparency, legal basis, controllership, data subject rights, data retention and minimisation, information security and data accuracy in the context of creating an interoperable network of applications, that need to be considered on top of those highlighted in the EDPB Guidelines 04/2020. The EDPB emphasises that the sharing of data about individuals that have been diagnosed or tested positively with such interoperable applications should only be triggered by a voluntary action of the user. Giving data subjects information and control will increase their trust in the solutions and their potential uptake. The goal of interoperability should not be used as an argument to extend the collection of personal data beyond what is necessary. The EDPB also adopted a statement on the processing of personal data in the context of reopening the Schengen borders following the COVID-19 outbreak. In the statement, the EDPB urges the Member States to take a common European approach when deciding which processing of personal data is necessary in this context.

**Human Rights and COVID-19:**
- The UN Network on Migration has launched a Policy Brief advocating for enhanced access to services for migrants in the context of COVID-19 preparedness, prevention, and response, building on the commitments States undertook in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.  It also provides practical guidance for States and other stakeholders on an improved common understanding of safe and inclusive access to services for migrants.
- On 23 June, a joint webinar of the UN Human Rights Regional Office for Europe and the International Labour Organisation on "Building back better: strengthening social protection in the EU". International experts will explore promising practices and challenges for social protection systems in the EU, and how to ensure the meaningful participation of rights-holders in the development and implementation of EU recovery plans in the wake of COVID-19. The programme available here and link for registration here.
- UN Human Rights European Regional Office and European Commission Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development Joint Webinar on "Building Back Better: how to place human rights at the heart of the COVID-19 response in the global South?", 24 June, 2-3:30 pm, Skype for Business. Speakers will discuss how human rights-based analysis and responses can help beat the pandemic. Click here for registration, the contact person is Marie-Dominique Parent, UN Human Rights Regional Office for Europe, mparent@ohchr.org

**Reports from other sources/COVID-19 Webinars:**
- UEMO has published a series of statements: In 'Covid as an Occupational disease', UEMO welcomes the classification SARS-CoV-2 a 'high risk level' in the Biological Agents Directive 2000/54/EC, and calls on Member States to adapt national law accordingly. In the 'UEMO Statement on COVID 19', UEMO highlights the impact of the pandemic and the policy challenges to be addressed, in particular the provision of PPE. The statement also highlights the role of general practitioners/family physicians during the pandemic, and calls i.a. for the recognition of COVID-19 as an occupational disease, the need for safe working conditions, and compensation for the financial impact of the pandemic.

- [European Solidarity Tracker](): the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) has compiled an overview of acts of cooperation and solidarity between EU Member States during the pandemic, including political statements, but also concrete measures such as provision of protective equipment or medical supplies, exchanges of patients or rules facilitating the cross-border movement of workers and other citizens.
- The International Civil Aviation Organization's Recovery Task Force has published '[Take-off: Guidance for Air Travel through the COVID-19 Public Health Crisis']() with a set of measures aimed at reducing health risks to air travellers, aviation workers, and the general public.
- According to [a study]() by Kimberly A. Prather, Chia C. Wang, Robert T. Schooley, a large proportion of the spread of COVID-19 appears to be occurring through airborne transmission of aerosols produced by asymptomatic individuals during breathing and speaking. No masking maximizes exposure, whereas universal masking results in the least exposure.
- The UN Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities has published ["How COVID-19 is changing the world: a statistical perspective"]() in which the economic, social, regional impact of COVID-19 is described.
- [COVID-19 Knowledge Hub]() - a public platform for access to the best resources available to support your engagement in responding to this pandemic, curated by GOARN Partners including UN agencies, International and national NGOs, academic institutions and consortiums.
- On 22 June, the Health Policy Platform together with Health First Europe and the European Health Management Alliance will host a webinar on "Nurses' training and core competences: From digital skills to continuity of care & leadership skills". This webinar is open to the public, no registration required. Find here the [link]() for participation.
- European Public Health Associations presents [video reports]() which shine light on the vital work of Europe's public health community, and the sector's role in maintaining and improving public health through the pandemic and into the future. The video reports present insights from public health experts.
- The European Social Observatory has released an opinion paper, ["Another European rescue of the Member States? EU public health policy for COVID-19"]().
- The Royal Society of Medicine (RSM) organises a series of COVID-19 webinars titled **"*For health professionals, by health professionals*"**. It explores the different topics and challenges that healthcare workers, leaders and the public are facing, and how they are responding. Developed to support and unite all healthcare workers on the frontlines with senior decision makers leading the response in this critical fight against COVID-19, as we navigate the challenges presented by the pandemic. Past episodes can be found [here]() and the list of upcoming webinars [here]().