

## COVID-19 EU update

### **European Commission:**

- On 27 August, the Commission reached and already formally signed a first agreement with the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca to purchase a potential vaccine against COVID-19 on behalf of the EU Member States. Through the contract, all Member States will be able to purchase 300 million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, with an option for further 100 million doses, to be distributed on a population-based pro-rata basis. The announcement of the deal was followed by a controversy over exemptions from liability claims the European pharmaceutical industry's vaccines lobby is pushing for to protect its members from lawsuits in case of any problems with new coronavirus vaccines. In the context of the AstraZeneca deal, the Commission explained that it was making provision for Member States to indemnify the manufacturer for liabilities incurred under certain conditions while adding the contract would fully respect the Product Liability Directive.
- On 24 August, the Commission concluded exploratory talks with Moderna to purchase a potential vaccine against COVID-19. Moderna is the fifth company with which the Commission has concluded talks, following Sanofi-GSK on 31 July, Johnson & Johnson on 13 August, CureVac on 18 August, in addition to the signature of an agreement with AstraZeneca.
- On 24 August, the Commission presented proposals to the Council for decisions to grant financial support of €81.4 billion to 15 Member States under the [SURE instrument](#) (BE, BG, CY, CZ, ES, GR, HR, IT, LT, LV, MT, PL, RO, SI, SK). SURE is a crucial element of the EU's comprehensive strategy to protect citizens and mitigate the severely negative socio-economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.
- On 21 August, the Commission decided to register a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) entitled 'Right to Cure'. The organisers of the ECI call on the Union 'to put public health before private profit and make anti-pandemic vaccines and treatments a global public good, freely accessible to everyone'. Should the ECI receive 1 million statements of support within 1 year from at least 7 different Member States, the Commission will have to react within 6 months. Please find more [here](#).
- [Statement by EU Commissioner for Trade Phil Hogan](#): Phil Hogan has resigned from his post following a controversy regarding his compliance with Irish COVID-19 regulations. The Irish government may now suggest candidates to succeed him, the final nomination is subject to approval by the European Parliament. The new Irish Commissioner may be given the same post (EU trade policy) or the Commission president may choose to reshuffle the college of Commissioners.

### **European Parliament:**

- The Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) sets the limit on how much money the EU can spend over a period of seven years. The MFF 2021-2027, reinforced by Next Generation EU, will also be the main instrument for implementing the recovery package to tackle the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The size of the **MFF** - €1 074.3 billion - will allow the EU to fulfill its long-term objectives and preserve the full capacity of the recovery plan. **Next Generation EU** will provide the Union with the necessary means to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the agreement the Commission will be able to borrow up to €750 billion on the markets. These funds may be used for back-to-back loans and for expenditure channelled through the MFF programmes. Capital raised on the financial markets will be repaid by 2058. Additional info [here](#).

The first negotiation round on the MFF 2021-2027 opened on 27 August 2020 in Brussels between the European Parliament, representatives of the German presidency of the Council of the EU and the European Commission. The discussions will continue over the next weeks and a final vote from the Parliament is expected by the end of October.

**ECDC:**

- ECDC released a short [instructional video](#) on how to wear a single use face mask. In six steps it explains how to put a mask properly and hygienically on and how to remove and dispose it.

**WHO/WHO-Europe:**

- [Public health surveillance for COVID-19: interim guidance](#): this guide for the implementation of surveillance for COVID-19 and the reporting requirements for WHO covers case definitions, definitions for death due to COVID-19, or recommendations for laboratory testing. It also describes how to set up the data collection and sharing for reporting to WHO.
- [1st WHO Infodemiology Conference](#): WHO has published material discussed during its conference on the infodemic, which is described as “an overabundance of information – some accurate and some not – occurring during an epidemic.” Presentations and graphics discussed during the event are now available.