

## **COVID-19 EU update**

### **European Commission:**

- On 1 October, the Commission published a summary [report](#) of the Health Security Committee's meeting on the COVID-19 outbreak and the [minutes](#) of the Expert panel on care organisation following the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **European Parliament:**

- MEPs are preparing the Plenary discussion taking place next week 5-8 October 2020. Among other items, the agenda will focus on the [EU long term budget](#) and the [measures to tackle impact of COVID-19-outbreak on care homes](#). About the EU budget, MEPs will ask for a budget able to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak and support the recovery. MEPs are likely to condemn any attempt by Council to reduce the 2021 draft budget, as proposed by the Commission, particularly on key EU programmes like research and innovation, Erasmus+, the Just Transition Fund, migration and border management funds, and external action. About the impact of COVID-19 on care homes, a cross-party group of MEPs has called for a European investigation into how the COVID-19 pandemic has been managed in the long-term care sector "with all the means at our disposal, in order to have comprehensive data in front of us and to identify political and management responsibilities, so that we can change course immediately."

### **Council:**

- On 25 September 2020, the Council approved €87.4 billion of financial support to 16 member states in the form of EU loans under SURE. The support will help the member states finance the severe increase in public expenditure incurred as of 1 February 2020 as a result of the use of national short-time work schemes and similar measures, including for self-employed persons, and some health-related measures in response to the pandemic. SURE is one of the three safety nets, worth up to €540 billion, that were agreed by the Eurogroup on 9 April 2020 and subsequently endorsed by the EU leaders to protect workers, businesses and sovereigns.
- On 2 October 2020, health ministers discussed about reforming the World Health Organization. Health ministers will discuss whether the EU should coordinate and lead "in shaping" the WHO's reform agenda, especially with its COVID-19 response and the outcomes from the Independent Panel for Preparedness and Pandemic Response assessment and International Health Regulations review committee.

### **EMA:**

- A potential vaccine from AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford is subject of the European Medicines Agency's [first rolling review](#) of a coronavirus vaccine. The EMA's human medicines committee is looking at the first batch of data on the vaccine, which is from laboratory studies rather than the human trials now taking place. The Agency stressed this early data isn't enough to make an approval recommendation and evidence from human trials will be available "over the coming weeks and months," and the human medicines committee will continue the rolling review until there's enough information for a formal marketing authorization application. The EMA is using a rolling review process, rather than waiting for the full datasets needed to evaluate safety and efficacy, to speed up decisions about vaccines and medicines to fight the pandemic.
- On Tuesday, EMA informed it had finalised 30 scientific advice procedures for potential medicines to treat COVID-19, with a further 21 ongoing. It had also been in contact with the developers of 163 potential COVID-19 treatments and 39 potential COVID-19 vaccines.

- EMA has published new information on the development and evaluation of safe and effective vaccines for COVID-19. You can access EMA's website to consult key facts related to COVID-19 vaccines and find answers to questions like: [what process and methods are being used to develop and approve COVID-19 vaccines?](#); [why did development only start after the pandemic was declared?](#) or [what type and amount of data is needed for approving a safe and effective vaccine?](#), among many others.

#### **WHO/WHO-Europe:**

- [World leaders, celebrities to join WHO's Big Event for Mental Health on 10 October](#): WHO is hosting an online advocacy event to highlight the global lack of investment in mental health services, aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The event will take place on 10 October from 16:00-19:00 CEST and can be followed on WHO's [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [YouTube](#) and [TikTok](#) channels and website.
- [WHO and European Union support COVID-19 training for medical personnel in Georgia to improve health system readiness](#): The Georgian Emergency Situations Coordination and Urgent Assistance Center has provided training to 140 frontline health professionals in the context of a joint project by WHO Europe and the EU. The participants are now trainers on infection control and will reach an estimated 7000 colleagues.

#### **Human rights and COVID-19:**

- [Coronavirus pandemic in the EU – Impact on Roma and Travellers](#): The EU's Fundamental Rights Agency has published an overview on how the pandemic has affected Roma communities in 15 EU Member States, focussing in particular on education, employment, poverty, healthcare housing, and anti-Gypsyism. It concludes that the high rate of informal jobs and accommodation in these communities means that Roma often lack access to medico-social support or pandemic measures such as online education for children. This affects communities physical and mental health even beyond the existing vulnerabilities. Local capacities to address these problems are insufficient. The report recommends tailored interventions to address acute needs as well as long-term strategies that are co-created with the Roma communities to ensure future preparedness.

#### **Other Reports/Webinars:**

- [COVID-19 in Marginalised Groups – Challenges, actions and voices](#): as part of the Nobody Left Outside week, a webinar with participation i.a. of Commissioner for Health Stella Kyriakides will highlight the pandemic's impact on marginalised communities such as homeless people, LGBTI people, people who use drugs, prisoners, sex workers and undocumented migrants. The webinar will take place on 16 October at 14.00h Brussels time and registration is required. The event is hosted by European Health Forum Gastein and received sponsorship from MSD.