

COVID-19 EU update

European Commission:

- On 20 October 2020, the Commission's Expert Panel on Effective Ways of Investing in Health published its [opinion](#) on the organisation of resilient health and social care following the COVID-19 pandemic.
- On 19 October 2020, the EU interoperability gateway, set up by the Commission, went live. The first wave of national apps are now linked through this service: Germany's Corona-Warn-App, Ireland's COVID tracker, and Italy's immuni. In total, 20 apps based on decentralised systems can be interoperable through the gateway service. The list of joint controllers available [here](#).
- [Commission Work Programme 2021: A Union of vitality in a world of fragility](#): The Commission's plans for policy action next year focus on the management of and recovery from the pandemic as well as future preparedness, including the strengthening of a European Health Union. There is also emphasis on the digital transformation. Some of the key policies relevant to CPME will be:
 - strengthening capacities to identify and deal with serious cross-border health threats;
 - strengthening the roles of existing agencies, e.g. EMA and ECDC;
 - creating a new agency for biomedical advanced research and development;
 - launching a new pharmaceutical strategy i.a. on the supply chain and safety, affordability and quality of medicines;
 - launching a European health data space;
 - legislation covering the safety, liability, fundamental rights and data aspects of artificial intelligence;
 - a Data Act to set the right conditions for better control and conditions for data sharing;
 - a new European digital identity
 - promoting rules-based multilateralism, by i.a. taking the lead on the WHO reform;
 - promoting skills building, in particular digital skills.

European Parliament:

- On 22 October 2020, the [EU Parliament discussed the outcome of last week's EU summit](#) with European Council President Michel, Commission Vice-President Šefčovič and EU Brexit chief negotiator Barnier. Charles Michel and Maroš Šefčovič updated MEPs on decisions taken to improve coordination at EU level to combat the second wave of the pandemic. Referring to [EP President Sassoli's statement](#), they criticised EU leaders for dragging their feet on climate protection and on the EU long-term budget, which must reflect the urgent need for common investment in education, research, health, digital and green transition without putting an undue burden on future generations.

Council:

- On 23 October 2020, The Council today adopted conclusions calling on the Commission to swiftly draw up a pandemic and other major crisis contingency plan for the European freight transport sector. Such a plan should include EU-level coordination measures and clear guidelines. More info [here](#).
- On 22 October 2020, [the Council updated the list of countries for which travel restrictions](#) should be lifted, which means that as from 22 October member states should gradually lift the travel restrictions at the external borders for residents of the following third countries:
 - Australia
 - Japan

- New Zealand
 - Rwanda
 - Singapore
 - South Korea
 - Thailand
 - Uruguay
 - China, subject to confirmation of reciprocity
- On 21 October 2020, EU member states' ambassadors [agreed](#) on the mandate to start negotiations with the European Parliament on the EU4Health programme (2021-2027). In accordance with the results of the European Council meeting of 17-21 July 2020, the budget proposed in the Council mandate of EUR 1.9 billion is four times the size of the budget of the current programme for 2014-2020, however the Commission proposal was for EUR 9.4 billion
 - On 21 October 2020, the Council published the latest think-tank research on COVID-19 and the recovery fund. Please see [here](#).

ECDC:

- ECDC provides [the first update](#) on the guidance on the COVID-19 infection prevention and control measures for primary care, including general practitioner practices, dental clinics and pharmacy settings. The technical document includes training and staffing and workplace considerations discussing the recommended procedures before the patient arrival, during the visit, patient follow-up and information and after the patient leaves.
- ECDC [updated its maps](#) developed in support of the Council Recommendation on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The newly published maps show that the situation in the EU in regard to the Coronavirus infections has worsened, and the numbers spiked up in several parts of Europe last week.
- ECDC developed [a new guidance](#) for discharge and ending of isolation of people with COVID-19. The current document reflects the information available at the time of publication and may change if more information on the incubation period of SARS-CoV-2 infection and viral shedding becomes available.

WHO/WHO-Europe:

- Governments from across the [WHO European Region have donated and pledged over US\\$ 749 million \(€630.7 million\)](#) to help fund the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic around the world through the COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (SPRP). More than 50% of global funds pledged and received to date have come from governments within the WHO European Region as well as from the European Union (EU).
- [26th polio IHR Emergency Committee](#): WHO reports a high incidence of global Wild poliovirus (WPV1) with the risk of international spread being at highest level since 2014. The immunisation programme has suffered setbacks due to the pandemic.

OECD:

- [Counting on Each Other: How can we fight the spread of COVID-19 when half of deaths worldwide go unrecorded?](#): this blog entry discusses the importance of robust data collection overall, highlighting i.a. that “Countries with weaker death registration systems also consistently report fewer deaths from COVID-19”.

Other source/webinars:

- [The Lombardy region of Italy launches the first investigative COVID-19 commission](#): The Lancet reports on a political investigative commission set up to examine the handling of the pandemic in the region first affected in Europe.
- [Playlist #healsy20 Resilient Health Systems](#): On 1 October 2020, the National Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians (KBV) held a digital congress on resilient health systems as part of Germany's Presidency of the EU Council. The event's presentations and panel debates are now available as a playlist online or at <https://www.kbv.de/html/healsy20-eu.php>.
- [Eurostat: Almost 170 000 additional deaths in the EU - A peak in late March - early April In 2020](#). Among the 26 EU Member States for which data are available, there were 168 000 more deaths during weeks 10-26 (March – June) than the average number of deaths during the same period over the four years 2016 to 2019. These data include all deaths, irrespective of their causes, but can be useful for assessing the direct and indirect effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the European population.
- The EU Health Policy Platform will host the webinar on Covid-19 health response package on 29 October 2020 at 15.00 CET, Brussels time. The Webinar will be attended by the Vice-President Margaritis Schinas and the Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides. Please see the invitation and registration [here](#).