

COVID-19 EU update

European Commission:

- On 28 October 2020, the Commission issued a COVID-19 resurgence preparedness and response fact sheet, [here](#).
- On 28 October 2020, the Commission launches additional steps to reinforce preparedness and COVID-19 measures across the EU. The aim of these measures is to better understand the spread of the virus and the effectiveness of national responses thus far. The next key focal areas include:
 - improvement of the flow of information to allow for informed decision-making,
 - establishment of more effective and targeted rapid testing,
 - full use of contact-tracing and warning apps,
 - effective vaccination,
 - effective communication to citizens,
 - maintenance of access to essential supplies,
 - facilitation of safe travel
 - extension of green lanes.

Further information can be found [here](#).

European Parliament:

- On 27 October 2020, the Civil Liberties Committee approved a draft resolution that takes stock of the state of European values in the context of national measures taken to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. MEPs concluded that national emergency measures pose a “risk of abuse of power” and stressed that any measure affecting democracy, the rule of law, and fundamental rights must be necessary, proportional and time-limited. They call on governments to consider terminating their “state of emergency” or at least to clearly define the delegation of powers to their executives, and to ensure that appropriate parliamentary and judicial checks and balances are in place. More info [here](#).

Council:

- On 30 October 2020 [EU health ministers](#) exchanged views on the role of the EU in strengthening the World Health Organization (WHO) and were informed about the [Council recommendation](#) on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ministers stressed that strengthening WHO is a priority to achieve greater efficiency and ensure better operational capabilities. Ministers highlighted the importance to strengthen the role of the WHO in providing normative guidance, strengthen preparedness, to revise the current alert system and to better implement the International Health Regulations. They also called for further support for the so called 'One Health' approach to achieve better public health outcomes. Moreover, ECDC updated ministers on the current situation, please find a presentation [here](#).

European Council:

- On 29 October 2020 [EU leaders discussed](#) the need to strengthen the collective effort to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. They agreed that testing and tracing are key to limiting the spread of the virus and will help better control the situation. They exchanged views on how to advance a common approach to the mutual recognition, deployment and use of rapid tests. They work on the basis of the Commission's recommendation on testing strategies presented on 28 October 2020.

EMA:

- International regulators discussed real-world evidence on COVID-19 therapeutics and vaccines: at their workshop on 13 October, members of the International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities discussed their experiences supporting and assessing real-world evidence to facilitate regulatory decision-making on COVID-19 treatments and vaccines. They discussed the progress made in building international patient cohorts, pregnancy research, and vaccines surveillance and vigilance during the pandemic. Workshop participants also shared their lessons learnt from ongoing COVID-19 observational studies based on real-world data in various countries and regions around the world. Studies derived from such data can provide information that is critical to understanding the benefits and risks of medicines in real-life use by patients and healthcare professionals. More information about the meeting's outcomes can be found on the [EMA website](#) and on the [ICMRA website](#).

ECDC:

- ECDC published new [maps](#) in support of the Council Recommendation on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The third update clearly shows a rapid spread of the virus among European countries as almost all of them are currently pictured in red, meaning their 14-day notification rate is higher than 150 cases per 100 000.
- ECDC provides an overview of the key aspects related to the initial phases following the introduction of one or more COVID-19 vaccines. According to the Centre, the [key components for a successful national and EU-level COVID-19 vaccine deployment](#) include: a robust COVID-19 disease surveillance system, post-marketing studies on effectiveness and impact, robust and timely vaccination coverage data, vaccine delivery infrastructure and supply chain management and communication plans, among others. Moreover, given the anticipated initial shortage, countries will need to identify priority groups for vaccination.

WHO/WHO Europe:

- The WHO has published an [article and related press material](#) looking at the issues of herd immunity and lockdowns in relation to COVID-19.
- [Enhancement to COVID-19 mobile app rolled out across WHO European Region](#): The WHO-Europe together with and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Europe and Central Asia Regional Office (ECARO) are updating their HealthBuddy+ app which offers evidence-based information and fact checking on COVID-19 related news. A chatbot and rumour reporting service are among the tools it offers to improve the quality of information available to citizens and consequently their safety.
- WHO is also [actively training infodemic managers](#).

Other source/webinars:

- Affordable Medicines Europe, EAHP, EPHA, GIRP and PGEU are organising a webinar series on 'Zooming in on Solutions', kicking off with a webinar on 'Zooming in on managing shortages at community pharmacies' on 10 November at 16.00 Brussels time. Registration can be made [here](#).
- The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies is organising a webinar series on lessons drawn from country experiences based on the COVID-19 Health System Response Monitor (HSRM). The webinars will take place every Tuesday until 8 December. Please find more information [here](#).