

COVID-19 EU update

European Commission:

- On 12 November, the European Union [announced](#) it will contribute an additional €100 million in grant funding to support the COVAX Facility to secure access to the future COVID-19 vaccine in low and middle-income countries. The funds will complement the €400 million in guarantees the EU already committed for COVAX, making the Union one of the leading donors.
- On 11 November, the Commission launched its first plans for a [European Health Union](#). Please find a briefing attached to the email or at [CPME Info 135-2020](#).

Council:

- On 11 November at the virtual High-Level Conference "Digital Health 2020 - EU on the Move", the Commission and Germany's Presidency of the Council of the EU [announced](#) their intention to work closely together on a secure and patient-oriented use of health data for Europe, and EU-wide collaboration in this area, through a European Health Data Space for better healthcare, better research and better health policy making. The CPME President spoke at the conference.

EMA:

- The [International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities \(ICMRA\)](#) and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) work together to ensure patients access to safe and effective medicines against COVID-19 as early. In their [joint statement](#), international medicines regulators and WHO reiterate that therapeutics and vaccines against COVID-19 can only be rapidly approved if applications are supported by robust and sound scientific evidence that allows medicine regulators to conclude on a positive benefit-risk balance for these products. ICMRA and WHO also pledge to take concrete actions to ensure equitable access to safe, effective and quality-assured medicines for the treatment or prevention of COVID-19 around the world.

ECDC:

- ECDC publishes an [early assessment](#) of the risk to human health posed by SARS-CoV-2 mink related variants. The overall risk is determined by a combination of the probability of an event occurring and its consequences for individuals or the population. It has been established that human-to-mink and mink-to-human transmission can occur. Since then, infections in mink have been reported in Denmark, Italy, Spain, Sweden and the United States. On 5 November 2020, Denmark reported 214 human COVID-19 cases infected with SARS-CoV-2 virus variants related to mink, as well as infected mink at more than 200 mink farms. Denmark has implemented robust response measures to control the outbreaks in mink and decrease the spill-over between the human and the animal reservoir. Investigations and studies are ongoing to clarify the extent of these possible implications.
- ECDC provides [guidance](#) for public health authorities on the ventilation of indoor spaces in the context of COVID-19. The report notes if well-maintained and adapted, heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems may have a complementary role in decreasing potential airborne transmission of SARS-CoV-2. This new version includes updated references on the evidence of transmission in closed spaces and new recommendations based on them.
- ECDC updates [maps](#) in support of the Council Recommendation on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

WHO/WHO Europe:

- [New WHO dashboard quantifies and visualizes European countries' COVID-19 measures.](#) WHO/Europe has launched its Public Health and Social Measures (PHSM) Severity Index to provide

standardized data on the ways in which countries in the WHO European Region have sought to slow or stop community spread of COVID-19. This tool systematically captures and analyses individual governmental PHSM responses to COVID-19 in the 53 countries of the Region.

- Since the onset of COVID-19, [Romania and the Republic of Moldova have been working together](#) to find ways to protect the health of their citizens. The cooperation which already existed between the health authorities and health systems of the two countries intensified as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. In early spring, with WHO assistance, Romania sent medical supplies and equipment to support the medical system of its neighbour.

COVID-19 and Human Rights:

- UN human rights experts today criticised countries that are trying to monopolise any future vaccine against COVID-19, saying the only way to fight the pandemic is to make affordable vaccines available to everyone in the world. “There is no room for nationalism in fighting this pandemic,” they said in a [statement on universal access to vaccines](#). “This pandemic, with its global scale and enormous human cost, with no clear end in sight, requires a concerted, human-rights based and courageous response from all States.”

Webinars/Other Reports:

- The European Commission and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) are organising on Thursday 19 November from 14.00 to 15.15, Paris time, the launch of Health at a Glance: Europe 2020. The release of this joint OECD-EC publication will kick off the third cycle (2020-2022) of the State of Health in the EU initiative. This webinar will focus on the question raised in the first thematic chapter of the publication: How resilient have European health systems been to the COVID-19 crisis? Please register [here](#).