

## **COVID-19 EU update**

### **European Commission:**

- On 18 February, the EU Health Security Committee [agreed on a common list of COVID-19 rapid antigen tests](#) which member states will mutually recognize results. Furthermore, a common standardised set of data to be included in COVID-19 test result certificates has been agreed upon. The full document is available [here](#).
- On 17 February, the Commission announced [actions to prepare Europe for the increased threat of COVID-19 Variants](#). The new European bio-defense preparedness plan against COVID-19 variants called HERA incubator will work with researchers, biotech companies, manufacturers and public authorities in the EU and globally to detect new variants, provide incentives to develop new and adapted vaccines, accelerate the approval process for the vaccines and ensure the scaling up of manufacturing capacities. 150 million Euros will be provided for research and data exchange on COVID-19 variants.
- On 17 February, the Commission [approved a second contract with Moderna to ensure up to an additional 300 million doses of vaccines](#). This translates into 150 million doses in 2021 and an option to purchase an additional 150 million doses in 2022 on the behalf of all EU member states.

### **EMA:**

- EMA received an [application](#) for conditional marketing authorisation of COVID-19 vaccine Janssen: EMA's human medicines committee (CHMP) will assess the vaccine under an accelerated timetable and could issue an opinion by the middle of March 2021, provided the company's data on the vaccine's efficacy, safety and quality are sufficiently comprehensive and robust. This is the fourth conditional marketing authorisation application for a COVID-19 vaccine since the start of the current pandemic. It comes after EMA's evaluation of vaccines from BioNTech/Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca.
- EMA published a [paediatric investigation plan](#) for COVID-19 vaccine Janssen, developed by Janssen-Cilag International N.V.
- EMA published the European [public assessment report](#) for COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca.

### **ECDC**

- The new version of the ECDC [Vaccine Tracker](#) is now available as a separate dashboard. It provides information on the national uptake of the first and second doses of COVID-19 vaccines by age and other target groups, as well as by vaccine products, for all EU/EEA countries. Information is provided as maps, graphs and charts and can be exported as data. In addition to the latest data available in the Vaccine Tracker, the [weekly COVID-19 vaccines roll-out overview](#) report provides key figures and additional data as of the previous week.
- ECDC published a [report](#) that presents evidence about the current status of Behavioural Insights research being conducted in the ten Member States that responded to an ECDC survey. The focus is on identifying experiences, challenges, and key lessons learned in translating the findings from BI research into effective strategies for pandemic response, and for optimising risk communication activities. The work has been undertaken in the context of concern about sub-optimal compliance in some Member States to the non-pharmaceutical measures that are in place to reduce the spread of the SARS-CoV-2, and also with regards to the need to support the implementation of national COVID-19 vaccination programmes.

- ECDC has [mapped](#) the detection and characterisation capability and capacity for SARS-CoV-2 variants across the EU/EEA. The findings point out that in most Member States, the sequencing capacity for identification of SARS-CoV-2 variants is below the recommendation set by the European Commission to sequence 5-10% of SARS-CoV-2 positive specimens.
- ECDC provides a first [update](#) on effectiveness of using face masks in the community in reducing transmission of COVID-19. The report recommends that although the evidence for the use of medical face masks in the community to prevent COVID-19 is limited, face masks should be considered as a non-pharmaceutical intervention in combination with other measures as part of efforts to control the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ECDC updates its [risk assessment](#) on SARS-CoV-2 focusing on increased circulation of variants of concern and vaccine rollout.

**OECD:**

- [Vaccines, Hesitancy and Public Health Communications: The hurdles ahead](#): This blog analyses recent data on vaccine hesitancy and includes a link to the recording of the OECD Forum Virtual Event 'Communicating on Public Health and Vaccines in a Climate of Misinformation' which took place in November.