COVID-19 EU update

European Commission

- On 4 June, the EU submitted a proposal seeking the commitment of WTO members for a multi-lateral trade action plan to expand the production of COVID-19 vaccines and treatments to ensure universal and fair access. The EU calls on governments to limit the use of export restrictions and keep supply chains open, to strongly encourage vaccine manufacturers and developers to expand production and ensure the affordable supply of vaccines to low and middle countries, and to facilitate the use of compulsory licensing within the boundaries of the WTO Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property rights (TRIPS) agreement.

European Parliament

- Parliament calls for temporary COVID-19 vaccine patent waiver: Following a narrow vote on this specific amendment, MEPs have adopted a Resolution which calls upon the WTO TRIPS Council to launch negotiations for a temporary waiver of the WTO TRIPS Agreement on patents to improve global access to affordable medical countermeasures against COVID-19. This demand is at odds with the EU position which will be presented to the WTO TRIPS Council by the European Commission (see above). In its non-binding Resolution, the European Parliament further propose to increase the production of vaccines in Africa, support COVAX and call for the abolition of export bans on vaccines.
- MEPs voted on the provisional agreement on the Digital COVID certificate in plenary on 8 June. The Plenary passed the new EU digital COVID Certificate Regulations with 546 votes to 93. The Certificate will apply from 1 July 2021 and be in place for 12 months.

EMA

- EU regulators developed recommendations to forecast demand of medicines. EU Executive Steering Group on Shortages of Medicines Caused by Major Events (composed of EMA experts, national competent authorities and the Commission) adopted reflection paper containing recommendations to support forecasting of demand for human medicinal products across EU and on national level in exceptional situations. It presents common methodology to predict demand of medicines for use in ICUs and summarises best practices that can help develop accurate forecasting. While it includes practical recommendations and examples specific to the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the general principles are applicable to other emergencies which require to forecast demand for medicines.
- The International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities (ICMRA) and the World Health Organization (WHO) have jointly developed a statement to help healthcare professionals increase trust and confidence in COVID-19 vaccines and answer questions from patients about the development, regulatory review and safety monitoring of these vaccines.
- EMA started evaluating an application to extend the use of COVID-19 Vaccine Moderna to include people aged 12 to 17.

ECDC

- ECDC published an updated rapid risk assessment assessing SARS-CoV-2 circulation, variants of concern, non-pharmaceutical interventions and vaccine rollout in the EU/EEA.

OECD

- The hidden pandemic: OECD presents data and policy analyses on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health. There is data on anxiety and depression levels as well as a focus on
younger people. The recommendations also look at interaction of mental health and work, advising on support to persons in and out of employment.

**Other reports/webinars**
- *‘Build back better’ webinar series*: The European Observatory on Health Systems and Policies has published recordings of its recent webinar series, which so far include discussions on administering vaccines, the role of informal carers, and responses to variants of concern.
- *International roundtable on vaccination*: WMA, the Pontifical Academy for Life, and the German Medical Association are hosting a discussion on vaccine hesitancy, vaccine equity and how to balance individuals’ rights against the public interest. The webinar will take place on 1 July 2021, at 11:00 AM UTC (13:00 Brussels time), registration is available [here](#).