

COVID-19 – Sustaining EU Preparedness and Response: Looking ahead

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#HealthUnion

The future course of the COVID-19 pandemic will depend on decisions we take now. European citizens expect the EU to protect their health while keeping societies and the economy open and resilient. Collective vigilance and preparedness therefore remain essential.

Increasing uptake of COVID-19 vaccination

- Member States should **increase vaccination uptake** and the administration of boosters and fourth doses for those who are eligible. They should also increase vaccination among children.
- Member States should prepare **COVID-19 vaccination strategies** for the coming months taking into account the simultaneous circulation of seasonal influenza and incorporate COVID-19 vaccination into national vaccination programmes.



Surveillance and intelligence gathering through testing and sequencing

- Member States should switch from emergency surveillance to integrated, representative year-round **surveillance of acute respiratory illnesses**. They should use common **criteria for case identification and testing strategies**.
- Member States should prepare plans for rapid response including sufficient **testing and contact-tracing capacities** in the event of new outbreaks.
- Member States should monitor the emergence and spread of variants through **laboratory sequencing and virus characterisation** services and strategic testing linked to genomic sequencing.
- **EU4Health programme should be used to support Member States** with setting up of integrated and coordinated surveillance systems and to strengthen existing lab networks for the identification and characterisation of emerging variants, including their impacts on vaccines and therapeutics.

Public health preparedness and response measures

- Member States should ensure **national healthcare system capacity** and adequate supplies to cover potentially increasing COVID-19 and/or seasonal influenza cases.
- Member States should prepare **contingency plans to reintroduce public health measures** if needed.
- Member States should ensure the **extension of the EU Digital COVID Certificate Regulation** and requirements for travellers to present the Certificate should be lifted as soon as the situation allows.



Second generation COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and clinical trials

- Development of a coordinated **strategy for the next generation COVID-19 vaccines**.
- Launch of the tender procedure to set up the EU FAB, a **network of ever warm vaccine production facilities**.
- Identifying priorities for further **Joint Procurements for therapeutics** and strengthening integration with established national and EU processes.
- Improving national capacities in EU/EEA countries for **research and multi-country clinical trials** during a crisis.



Addressing mis- and disinformation

- **Proactive risk communication** strategies and community engagement on possible additional COVID-19 vaccine doses.
- Analysis and assessment of **foreign information manipulation and interference** via the EU's Rapid Alert System.

Global dimension: solidarity and governance

- Continued support by Team Europe for access to adequate healthcare for all and stronger health systems in partner countries and regions to detect, treat and prevent diseases, and respond to the current and future epidemics and pandemics; strengthened local pharmaceutical production through a One Health approach.
- More than € 1 billion in EU investments to strengthen health systems in Africa, including support to local manufacturing of health products.
- Continued EU support to the Western Balkans, the Eastern Partnership and African countries to strengthen health systems.
- EU leadership and support for multilateral efforts to learn lessons from the pandemic by improving global health strategies, global health architecture and international health regulations.



MEASURES TO BE TAKEN IN THE MEDIUM AND LONG TERM



Tackling wider health impacts of the pandemic, including “**long COVID**” and **mental health** through further data collection and analysis in the coming years



Increased focus on **healthcare system resilience**



Speeding up digitalisation in health through a European Health Data Space



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