



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Public health, country knowledge, crisis management
Crisis management and preparedness in health

Luxembourg, 02 March 2020

Health Security Committee

Summary

Outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

Chair: Wolfgang Philipp, SANTE C3

Audio participants: AT; BE; BG; CY; DE; DK; ES; FR; HR; HU; IE; IT; LU; LV; MT; NL; NO; PT; SE; DG SANTE, DG HR MS, DG RTD, DG DEVCO, DG ECHO; Cabinet. Council; EEAS, EMA, EASA, ECDC, WHO Euro, UK participant attending the agenda point of the meeting

Key Conclusions

1. Situation Update: DG SANTE provided an update on the epidemiological situation in the EU/EEA, the UK, Monaco, San Marino and Switzerland. SANTE noted also the following ongoing activities by the Commission: discussions with WHO Euro on neighbouring countries and work with DG NEAR on assessing needs and potential support; close and continued liaison with Commission and Member States on their needs and Commission support; development of medical capacities under DG ECHO's rescEU mechanism which will be further explored with Civil Protection and Health Security Committee counterparts this week; continued monitoring of supply chain of medical countermeasures including personal protective equipment, treatments and equipment; upcoming guidance on business continuity planning; and further risk communication materials for Member States and the Communicators Network convened for tomorrow. DG SANTE also updated the Health Security Committee of the Commission's announcement this morning, by President Von der Leyen, of the European coronavirus response team and the new Commission webpage.
2. ECDC Risk Assessment: The ECDC presented the updated risk assessment, explaining that it responds to the following questions and that the reasoning and rationale can be found in the risk assessment, available on ECDC's website.
 - a. What is the risk, as of 2 March 2020, associated with COVID-19 infection for people in the EU/EEA and UK?
 - b. What is the risk associated with COVID-19 for people from the EU/EEA and the UK resident/travelling in areas with no cases or limited localised transmission?
 - c. What is the risk associated with COVID-19 for people from the EU/EEA and the UK resident/travelling in areas with community transmission?
 - d. What is the risk of the occurrence of clusters similar to the ones in Italy, associated with COVID-19 in other countries in the EU/EEA and the UK in the coming weeks?

- e. What is the risk of widespread and sustained transmission in the EU in the coming weeks?
- f. What is the risk for healthcare systems capacity in the EU/EEA and the UK in the coming weeks?

ECDC also highlighted that the assessment is structured around response measures, which are aligned to different scenarios of transmission progression, with all information also available in the assessment online. A list of preparedness measures are also included, outside of the scenarios, as ECDC considers this should be activated whatever the scenario a country may find themselves. ECDC noted that their main message is that all countries should activate their pandemic preparedness plans and proceed with their implementation as well as coordination by a multisectoral crisis committee. ECDC noted that they have modified their case definition, by aligning with WHO and removing their previous list of countries with presumed community transmission. WHO also highlighted that WHO risk levels have been raised to very high, the highest level of WHO but they maintain no travel or trade recommendations. ECDC noted that the WHO-ECDC team to support Italy is still ongoing and will look into further options and measures once this has concluded.

3. Preparedness and Response Measures: Measures regarding suspension of mass gatherings was discussed, highlighting that it should be done on a case by case scenario, informed by risk assessments of that specific event in that specific area, which can be supported by public health authorities guidance. Countries discussed travel advice being issued, with certain noting that non-essential or not to travel advice had been issued for affected areas and others noting no change. France highlighted that today they are updating travel advice outside of France and that they will share the link on travel advice with the HSC. France noted that there are no changes to incoming passengers to France, bar the implemented procedures already in place for those arriving from affected areas.
4. Availability of countermeasures – PPE, antivirals and investigational treatments: DG SANTE noted the Joint Procurement for personal protective equipment (eye, body, hand and respiratory protection), now with 20 Member States and the Commission. SANTE noted that this is dependent of course on market availabilities, with supply restrictions and increased demand. Prior to the signing of the contract, tenders from companies will be reviewed and evaluated. EMA provided a short update on the status of antivirals and vaccines. For antivirals, there are a number of trials ongoing in Asia with results expected for end of March/early April. There is also ongoing work in terms of treatment protocols, covering all spectrums of the disease. Manufacturers of antivirals are assessing possibility of increasing production capacity, in line with results from trials. Regarding vaccines, this will take much more time than the antivirals to be ready.
5. Follow-up: The Commission will follow up with the Health Security Committee in terms of quantitative feedback from Member States regarding surge health care capacities, such as laboratory testing and hospital bed capacities to assess needs. A further audio meeting will be organised to follow up on the discussion. SANTE reminded Member States to inform on the review/activation of national preparedness plans.