

11 June 2020

Consultation open to collect clinicians' views to prepare for a possible COVID-19 second wave

The European Commission invites all interested healthcare professionals to take part in the [Survey](#) to give their feedback on the measures that could be taken by the Commission to reinforce the EU response and to better prepare the healthcare systems for the second wave of Covid-19 pandemics or any future pandemics. The Survey, available until 20 June, is following a webinar organized on 11 June by DG SANTE called "Second Wave of COVID-19: Preparatory actions - Consultation with Clinicians", in the context of the "COVID-19 Clinical Management Support System".

After the first Covid-19 pandemic wave is starting to decline in Europe and while Member States are progressively lifting containment measures, it is time for lessons learned to improve our level of preparedness and response for a possible future wave of Covid-19 and in general for future pandemics. Through a dialogue with the national authorities of the Member States and relevant stakeholders the Commission is launching a consultation exercise to identify the critical issues which could be improved in terms of European coordination for a more coordinated and efficient action. Clinicians who have been in the frontline are warmly invited to provide their feedbacks by filling in the above questionnaire.

The webinar held on 11 June was introduced by Anne Bucher, Director General of DG SANTE, and followed by a short presentation of Martin Seychell, Deputy Director General who explained how the crisis has highlighted the weaknesses of our current coordination at European level. Andrzej Rys, Director of Health systems, medical products and innovation gave the floor to two experts from the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine, Prof. Maurizio Cecconi, President Elected and Prof. Jozef Kesecioglu, President, who shared their experience in the frontline of Intensive Care Units during the Covid-19 emergency.

They highlighted the importance of focusing on containment measures at community and hospital levels, to reduce the congestion of intensive care units (ICU). They pointed out some of the critical issues like the shortage of medicines, including of basic current drugs that were lacking during the crisis and would have helped reduce the worsening of patients' conditions and their consequent transfer to intensive care units. They mentioned the shortage of some critical materials and equipment, the number of beds in ICU, and the training and preparation of healthcare professionals that is paramount. They suggest that short training could be arranged at European level to provide healthcare professionals who are not intensive care experts to at least acquire minimum skills to be more prepared in case of a new pandemic.

Martin Seychell, Deputy Director General at DG SANTE, explained how the crisis has highlighted the weaknesses of our current coordination at European level. This includes the absence of standards in the reporting of preparedness measures by the Member States, which until now occurs only every 3 years; the current timing framework for instance development of new vaccines, now set for during an entire decade; shortages in critical equipment with the difficulty by the industry to respond in a



timely manner, and our dependency from third countries, especially for drugs or raw materials. He also reminded several actions that the Commission has put in place during the crisis, like the setting-up of joint procurements and common stocks of critical materials, the organization of cross border exchanges of health professionals or transfer of patients for the hospitals and countries more in need. He invited to increase resilience of health systems by looking at those countries where the crisis seemed to be more under control.

Participants shared some of their experiences, provided suggestions and raised some important points that need a European answer. A further feedback is expected from the on-line consultation through the [Survey](#) open to all healthcare professionals in Europe.