EU Response to the Pandemic

Federation of European Academies of Medicine and Federation of Veterinarians of Europe

- COVID-19 and One Health: can we do better?

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Preparedness

• Legal framework - Decision 1082/2013/EU on serious cross border health threats.
• Early Warning and Response System (EWRS): information exchange between the Commission and Member States, EEA countries, UK*, CH*, WHO
• European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) – surveillance, risk assessment, guidance
• Health Security Committee – Member States and Commission – coordination of response
• Pandemic Preparedness Plans and Exercises
• Joint Procurement Mechanism; EU Civil Protection Mechanism
• Joint actions: “Healthy Gateways”: guidance and training on points of entry; SHARP (strengthened international health regulations and preparedness in the EU): guidance on laboratory preparedness
• Epidemic Research preparation – GLOPID-R
The Health Security Committee

• coordinates public health preparedness and response to the outbreak – 12 meetings so far on COVID-19

• discusses: epidemiological situation, risk assessment, capacities (public health and health care, laboratories, medical countermeasures), response measures and recommendations

• New: sub-network on clinical management

• EU role is to complement and support and to assist with EU policies and actions e.g. joint procurement

Member States are responsible for health policies and health actions
Initial response – COVID-19

31 December: ECDC mentions a cluster of 27 cases of pneumonia of unknown origin in Wuhan China.
9 January: Early Warning and Response System (EWRS) activated
17 January: EU Health Security Committee – Member States review outbreak of novel coronavirus.
28 January: EU Civil Protection Mechanism Activated.
30 January: WHO declares a Public Health Emergency of International Concern
• European Council – Heads of Government
• Council -2 video conferences per week of Minsters of Health since March.
• Integrated Political Crisis Response mechanism (IPCR) – Commission and MSs.
• EU Health Security Committee –weekly meetings – Commission and MSs representatives responsible for serious cross border health threats
• EU Agencies - European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control; European Medicines Agency; Frontex – weekly dialogue with MSs authorities.
Comprehensive response

- Health
- Economy
- Borders & mobility
- Research
- Fighting disinformation
- Coordinated exit strategy and recovery plan
- Tourism and transport
EU agencies

- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)
  - Daily epidemiologic updates
  - Guidance to governments, health professionals and the public
  - Mission to Member States (e.g. Italy)
- European Medicines Agency (EMA)
  - Development and approval of vaccines and treatments
- European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA)
  - Advice for airlines and their crews
- European Food Safety Authority
- European Agency for Safety and Health at Work
Infection prevention and control for COVID-19 in healthcare settings

Novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) - Discharge criteria for confirmed COVID-19 cases

Guidance for health system contingency planning during widespread transmission of SARS-CoV-2 with high impact on healthcare services

Checklist for hospitals preparing for the reception and care of coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) patients

Considerations relating to social distancing measures in response to the COVID-19 epidemic
models for use by MSs authorities

- Leaflet for pregnant women
- Leaflet for persons with chronic diseases
- Leaflet for persons with immunocompromising conditions
- Leaflet about self-isolation

Research

• €48.5 million for 18 projects by 140 research teams
  • Improving epidemiology and public health
  • Rapid point-of-care diagnostic tests
  • New treatment and vaccine development

• Innovative Medicines Initiative call - up to €45 million from EU HORIZON2020 – same amount from industry

• CureVac: up to €80 million European Investment Bank loan - launch clinical testing of a vaccine by June 2020

• 10 priority actions for coordinated research and innovation

• Portfolio of existing and previously funded EU research – eg COV Restric – unravelling species barriers of cor

• **Use of existing and previous EU funded research projects – eg COV RESTRIC** – Unravelling species barriers of coronaviruses
• Joint Action “Healthy Gateways”:
• Advice for preparedness and response to cases of COVID-19 at points of entry in the European Union
  • Advice for **aircraft operators** for preparedness and response to the outbreak of COVID-19 acute respiratory disease
  • Advice for **ship operators** for preparedness and response to the outbreak of COVID-19
  • Advice for preparedness and response to cases of COVID-19 at **ground crossings** (buses and bus stations) in the European Union
Health measures

- coordination between Member States, e.g. on de-escalation and recovery
- Emergency EU funds to support health systems
- medical supplies, - EU funding, Joint Procurement, Stockpiling
- Expert advice and risk assessment
10 million masks purchased by EU to support EU healthcare workers

First ever stockpile of medical equipment (ventilators, masks)

Sending medical teams through the EU Medical Corps

Member states have come to each other’s aid through EU Civil Protection Mechanism.
Food safety

- Questions and answers produced and published in all EU languages
- Aimed at reassuring citizens as well as guiding small operators of the food chain
- Complementing national or international recommendations, which are cross-referred to
- Prepared in consultation with Member States and the AGFC

https://ec.europa.eu/food/safety/biosafety/crisis_preparedness_en
COVID-19 and farmed and domestic animals Questions and Answers

Economic

• Keeping goods and components flowing for supermarket and factories
• Saving jobs and helping SMEs
• Cheap loans to help Member States pay workers
• Investing in the real economy
• Adapting EU funding for responding to health and economic crisis
Borders & Mobility

- Helping EU residents return home from abroad
- Green lanes for continuous flow of goods across the EU
- Temporary restriction on non-essential travel to the EU
- Support to airlines
Examples

• 500,000+ citizens brought home from outside the EU in joint actions with MS

• 50,000+ citizens brought home from outside the EU thanks to the EU civil protection mechanism

• Essential goods keep moving across the EU
Global response

• May 4 Pledging event: €7.4bn in pledges from donors worldwide.
• This includes a pledge of €1.4 billion from the Commission
Fighting disinformation

• Working with social media platforms
• Expose disinformation narratives
• Provide materials for myth-busting and fact checking
Tourism and transport: Guidelines for safe return to services

• Health criteria for restoring tourism activities safely and gradually
• Safely restoring freedom of movement and lifting internal border controls
• Making vouchers a more attractive option for consumers
Exit strategy
Guidance for Member States

- Accompanying measures to phase-out confinement
- A European approach based on common principles and criteria
Recovery Plan and budget 2021-27

• Increased financial support for investment and reforms in Member States and cohesion
• European Green Deal, digital transition and increased strategic autonomy
• Investments in crisis response tools
• Support to our neighbourhood and partners