

Presidency summary of the video conference at deputy-level on Covid-19 vaccines

Berlin, 16 December 2020, 14:00 – 16:00 (CET)

On 16 December 2020, the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union held a video conference at deputy-level on the issue of Covid-19 vaccines. The video conference had been announced at the virtual EPSCO meeting of 2 December 2020 in order to take stock of the state of play for Covid-19 vaccines including ongoing marketing authorisation procedures at the EMA. Based on a preparatory note circulated by the Presidency prior to the meeting, Member States were invited to comment on possible obstacles to a placing on the market of authorised Covid-19 vaccines at national level, means to overcome those obstacles, and to comment on national vaccination strategies and vaccination preparedness.

Representatives of the European Commission, the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) shared details on the current state of play of the relevant marketing authorisation procedures, on preliminary results of a stress tests for vaccination preparedness of 15 December 2020 as well as on plans for a digital encoding solution for Covid-19 vaccination to allow monitoring at EU level.

Member States' comments largely focussed on the state of play of their national vaccine strategies and their respective vaccination preparedness. A large number of Member States reported that their national strategies have already been adopted in government or approved by or presented to the respective national parliament. Quite a few Member States highlighted the importance of high-quality information to the general public as well as the need for transparent communication. No Member State mentioned major obstacles to a placing on the market of an authorised Covid-19 vaccine. Questions related *inter alia* to the availability of package leaflets in other languages than English and the quantity of doses delivered to Member States following the European Commission's authorisation decision.

Based on the input by the European Commission, ECDC and EMA as well as Member States' contributions, the Presidency concluded the following:

- 1) All Member States share a great interest to get access to authorised, high quality, safe and efficacious Covid-19 vaccines as quickly as possible.
- 2) The Presidency on behalf of Member States recognises the hard work done by EMA and ECDC as well as the European Commission concerning all issues related to Covid-19 vaccines.
- 3) Based on the information provided by EMA and the European Commission, the granting of the marketing authorisation of the first Covid-19 vaccine before Christmas is highly likely.
- 4) A large majority of Member States indicated their readiness to start vaccinating immediately after a Commission decision regarding the marketing authorisation for the Pfizer/BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine.
- 5) The European Commission is asked to ensure that Pfizer/BioNTech deliver their Covid-19 vaccine to all Member States on the same date so that vaccination in Member States could start over Christmas and New Year, but likely not before 27 December, due to logistics.
- 6) Member States are invited to report major obstacles, if any, as regards vaccination preparedness to ECDC and its ongoing testing exercise as well as to European Commission.
- 7) The Presidency stands ready to organise a follow up video or telephone conference at deputy level either on 22 or 23 December 2020, should Member States so wish.
- 8) The European Commission will provide Member States with more detailed information on the envisaged monitoring system based on specific vaccine codes.