

THE COVID19 EPIDEMIC AND THE ROLE OF THE EU IN A SANITARY COORDINATION AND PREVENTION POLICY

13 229 794 cases in the EU/EEA and the UK

325 407 deaths in the EU/EEA and UK

After some delay experienced during the spring of this year, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) has become a key role player in assessing the threat from a scientific viewpoint by present time. It produces rapid risk assessments and provides frequent epidemiological updates and technical support by issuing guidance for how to best respond to the outbreak. This guidance includes, but is not limited to, outbreak surveillance, preparedness and response planning and laboratory support. The anti-epidemic measurements of the health authorities in most member states today are based on its frequently renewed professional guidelines and recommendations.

As it well known, the final solution of the pandemic threat is the mass vaccination to reach the so-called herd immunity against SARS-CoV-2. It also needs a wide range coordination.

The EDP considers that acting at EU level is the surest, quickest and most efficient way of achieving this objective. No Member State on its own has the capacity to secure the investment in developing and producing a sufficient number of vaccines. It is only through swift and unified action by the EU and its Member States that sufficient and speedy supplies of a safe and effective vaccine can be ensured. A common strategy allows better hedging of bets, sharing of risks and pooling investments to achieve economies of scale, scope and speed.

The EU has signed contracts with AstraZeneca, Sanofi-GSK, Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, BioNTech-Pfizer and CureVac, so that member states can purchase their vaccines. Donation to lower- and middle-income countries or re-direction to other European countries is also possible. The European Commission also concluded successful exploratory talks with vaccine manufacturer Moderna.

As a conclusion, from sanitary point of view, after a relatively short period of hesitation experienced at the beginning of this year, the EDP welcomes that the EU has taken the initiative coordinating the anti-pandemic sanitary actions among Member States.