



Welcome to the NAT bulletin!

This is already the third edition of the NAT bulletin in the COVID19 crisis. We want to inform NAT members and our partners about the ongoing activities in the CoR and at EU level. We would be more than happy to receive your feedback and suggestions.

With some countries such as France and Belgium prolonging the lockdown measures due to COVID 19 into the month of May, even the biggest sceptics might come to realise the seriousness of the situation. The health crisis is expanding into all aspects of our lives, and despite all hopes for a V-shaped recovery, our society needs to stay focused on the main goal: to end the health emergency and protect all citizens. These are no times for gaining political dividends, but unfortunately, misinformation and fake news do not stop even at the cost of human lives. However, where there is a crisis there are also opportunities. This is the time for all countries of the European Union to show solidarity and build the future of the Union based on common values.

In this edition, we will try to offer some insight in the policy developments at EU level. Please, continue to use our e-mail address nat@cor.europa.eu to share your comments and ideas. And most importantly, stay safe!

Ulrika Landergren (SE/RE), NAT Commission Chair

European Roadmap to Phase-Out the Containment Measures

EU Member States ministers for health met in Brussels on Wednesday 15 April to take stock of the current situation regarding #COVID19 and exchange views on the de-escalation of measures in an effort to find a best coordinated approach for moving forward. The Commissioner for Health Stella Kyriakides and the Vice-President for Promoting the European Way of Life Margaritis Schinas took part in the meeting.

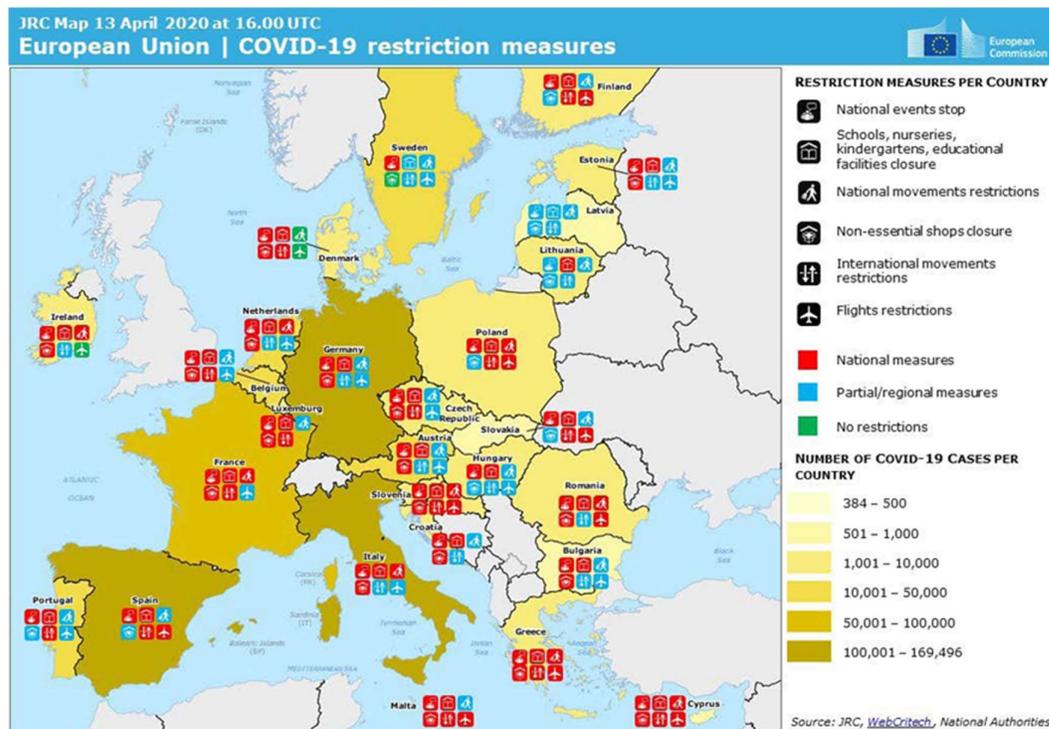
The Commission and the Council presented jointly their [European Roadmap towards lifting COVID-19 containment measures](#) and call on the Member States to apply the following criteria to assess whether the time has come to begin to relax the confinement

- Disease progression – is there a sustained reduction in the number of new infections, hospitalisations and patients in intensive care?
- Health system capacity – can healthcare systems cope with any future increases if measures are relaxed?
- Monitoring – does a country have “large-scale testing” programmes to detect and monitor the spread of the virus?

The Commission's President, Ursula Von der Leyen, urged countries to talk to each other and Brussels before lifting measures to avoid unintended consequences, such as a surge in the number of cross-

border shoppers if restrictions are lifted on one side of the border and not another. The Guidelines warn that "a lack of coordination in lifting restrictive measures risks having negative effects for all member states and creating political friction".

If the health situation stabilises across the continent, the Commission will present a separate guideline on restoring transportation links ahead of summer holidays.



Link to the PRESS RELEASE: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_652

LINK TO ROADMAP: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/communication_-_a_european_roadmap_to_lifting_coronavirus_containment_measures_0.pdf

Europe Most Affected Continent: over 1 Million Confirmed Cases

More than half of the total confirmed cases of coronavirus so far have been in Europe, according to a tally kept by the French new agency AFP. The data, collected by AFP from national authorities and information from the World Health Organization (WHO), probably reflect only a fraction of the actual number of infections. Many countries are testing only the most serious cases.

According to the AFP, Europe had at 8.30am on Wednesday 15 April at least **1,003,284 cases**, including **84,465 deaths**, making it the worst hit continent. Globally, 1,991,019 COVID-19 infections and 125,955 deaths have been registered.

As a reminder: at our last meeting in Brussels on 5 March, we had a briefing with the data for that day: six weeks ago, there were **3 351 cases** and **85 deaths**.

Medical Teams from Romania and Norway Deployed to Italy

A team of European doctors and nurses from Romania and Norway, deployed via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, has arrived in Italy to help their Italian colleagues in the fight against the coronavirus. Both President Ursula von der Leyen and Commissioner Janez Lenarčič, responsible for Crisis Management, have commended and expressed gratitude towards these nurses and doctors showing true solidarity in action and lending their help where it is needed the most.

At the same time, Austria has also offered over 3,000 litres of disinfectant to Italy via the Mechanism and will be coordinated and co-financed by the Commission.

Link to PRESS RELEASE: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_613

EU crisis management – the key powers lie in the hands of Member States

In an interview given to POLITICO (published on 4 April), Janez Lenarčič, Commissioner responsible for crisis management, admitted that if the Europeans want more European response in emergencies, such as the current coronavirus crisis, they will have to hand over some power.

EU leaders have declared that the EU needs to revamp its crisis management system; however, currently the EU does not have those powers. “Health, civil protection, border management ... these areas are all the competence of the member states. The Commission can only encourage or discourage. We can ask, we can beg, we can persuade, but the Commission cannot take direct measures. It’s a matter of competences,” said Lenarčič. This, needless to say, would be a complicated exercise, and one that the Member States might not be willing to undertake.

Link to PRESS RELEASE: <https://www.politico.eu/article/commissioner-janez-lenaric-big-changes-needed-to-revamp-eu-crisis-system-coronavirus-pandemic-response/>

COVID-19 Vaccine: Not So Soon

The European Union’s medicine regulator estimates it could take one year before a coronavirus vaccine is available for widespread use.

“The European Medicines Agency estimates that it might take a year before a vaccine against Covid-19 is ready for approval and available in sufficient quantities to enable widespread and safe use,” reported the EU executive in a strategy paper published on Wednesday 15 April.

So far, the Commission has published a **€10 million** call in January and has secured an additional **€37.5 million** for research on COVID-19 vaccine development, treatment and diagnostics. The **€47.5 million** went to 17 projects involving 136 research teams from across the EU and beyond.

Furthermore, [up to €45 million in Horizon 2020 funding](#) will support additional research through the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI), a public-private partnership between the Commission and the pharmaceutical industry.

Finally, on 17 March, a German biotechnology company CureVac received a **€80m loan** from the European Commission to quickly scale up the production of its candidate Covid-19 vaccine.

Link to PRESS RELEASES: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_386,
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/mex_20_379

Food Waste

The Coronavirus is unfortunately threatening to undermine EU efforts to halve food waste by 2030, one of the goals of the upcoming Farm to Fork strategy. Lately, a lot of edible food has been thrown away due to the closure of restaurants, bars and hotels as well as disruptions in supply chains.

Citizens across the EU have been stockpiling food with longer shelf lives. Nevertheless, a lot of food bought is not being eaten.

In addition, due to labour shortage, first spring vegetables and fruits risk to be left rotting in fields. Farmers are relying heavily on seasonal workers to help harvest crops. Due to travel restrictions, the sector is now facing a big decline of workers ready to come to work on fields. Some Member States called in unemployed or volunteers to help while the European Commission published guidelines for Member State to facilitate the transport of seasonal workers

Link to PRESS RELEASE: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_545

Food Aid

While food is being wasted, food banks and charities - which are providing help to our most vulnerable citizens - are working under increasingly difficult circumstances, lacking not only sufficient funding, but also protective equipment while also being confronted with shortage of volunteers.

Sadly, according to a survey, "over 80% of European Food Banks are experiencing an increase in demand for emergency food assistance, resulting from an increase in the total number of people in need of food aid".

Meanwhile, the European Commission proposes to amend the Regulation on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) in order to respond to the challenges faced by public authorities and partner organisations in the implementation of the FEAD during the COVID-19 outbreak. More in particular, the use of electronic vouchers to reduce the risk of contamination will be introduced, as well as the possibility of buying protective equipment for those delivering the aid.

Link to PRESS RELEASE:

<https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=1089&newsId=9638&furtherNews=yes>

Food Banks Survey: https://lp.eurofoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Report_survey_FEBA_COVID19_FINAL.pdf?utm_source=POLITICO.EU&utm_campaign=8c6226057e-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_16_04_59&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_10959edeb5-8c6226057e-188983337