
EU: 70% Vaccinated by Summer



The European Commission has called member states to accelerate the roll-out of their vaccination programmes. The aim is to have vaccinated 70% of the adult population by summer 2021.

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In a new [communication](#), the Commission identifies some key actions needed to effectively manage the COVID-19 pandemic in several major areas, such as vaccination of the populations, restrictive measures, travel, contact tracing, as well as testing and genome sequencing. The document provides recommendations for member states, the Commission itself, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

Vaccination. The Commission aims to have inoculated at least 80% of people over the age of 80, and 80% of health and social care professionals in every member state by March, and 70% of the entire adult population by summer. In parallel, the authorities will work with industry on maximising vaccine manufacturing capacity, and should devise a common approach to vaccination certificates by the end of the month. Safety and efficiency of vaccines will be subject to large-scale studies across Europe, while ECDC should coordinate logistical issues among member states.

Testing and genome sequencing. These aspects are important to address the risks of new coronavirus variants. The Commission stresses the need to update testing strategies, including the use of rapid antigen tests; member states should prepare relevant strategies over the month of February. Meanwhile, genome sequencing should be applied to 5-10% of positive test results, a substantial increase from the current 1% in some countries, and the results shared at the EU level.

The communication also highlights the issues of preserving the single market and free movement, with non-essential travel strongly discouraged and travel restrictions maintained for the time being. At the same time, the Commission aims for leadership at the international level, with the creation of a Team Europe mechanism to structure the provision of vaccines in member states and partner countries, and continuing support of [COVAX](#), to which the EU has already donated €853 million.

The document stresses the importance of synchronicity in vaccination policies across the EU. “While each Member State vaccinates in line with its own strategy, it is important that vaccination efforts in Europe stay largely synchronised – for health-related and Single Market reasons alike,” according to the communication. The Commission together with ECDC is planning to monitor progress with vaccine deployment across the bloc.

Source: European Commission

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