

High-Level Videoconference
Public Health implications in Europe of the ongoing disease outbreak
caused by the novel coronavirus 2019-nCoV
Friday, 7 February 2020 at 11:00

On 31 December 2019, a cluster of pneumonia cases was reported in Wuhan in the Hubei Province in China. On 9 January 2020, the Chinese Centre for Disease Control reported a novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) as the causative agent of this outbreak.

On 28 January 2020, the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU decided to activate the first level of the Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR) - information sharing. IPCR is the EU framework for coordination of cross-sectoral crises at the highest political level. It involves the Presidency, the Commission, the EEAS, relevant agencies, the Cabinet of the President of the European Council, experts from Member States and from relevant international organisations. The information sharing in the ICPR takes place via a dedicated web-platform that includes the ISAA-reports, situation maps and stakeholder contributions.

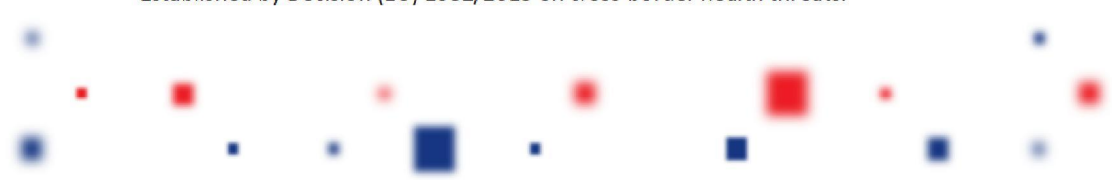
On 30 January 2020, WHO declared the Coronavirus outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). It advised all countries to be prepared for containment, including active surveillance, early detection, isolation and case management, contact tracing and prevention of onward spread.

In the EU, the Health Security Committee¹ in liaison with the Commission coordinates the risk and crisis communication and responses of the Member States to serious cross-border threats to health. As of 5 February 2020, six meetings of HSC have been convened.

The Presidency has decided to organise a High-level videoconference, at which it will provide information about the state of play together with representatives of the Commission and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. The Presidency intends to focus discussions on a number of issues of importance from a public health perspective:

- Experiences gained and challenges discovered in connection with the activation of national systems for handling public health emergencies;
- Experiences gained from measures relevant to public health taken at EU level and possible gaps in those measures;

¹ Established by Decision (EU) 1082/2013 on cross-border health threats.



- National situations regarding the availability of protective equipment and the difficulties in increasing the stock of such equipment rapidly;
- Possible additional short-term difficulties caused by the 2019-*nCoV* outbreak for access to medicines in EU;

In order to structure the discussion, Member States will be invited to respond to the following questions:

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS:

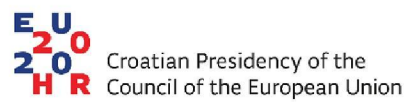
- 1) Have you already activated your national public health emergency systems? Which actions were most challenging to implement? Would you have any suggestions to improve further cooperation and preparedness for public health emergencies at EU level?
- 2) What is the current situation of supply of emergency protective equipment (EPE)? How would this change if the number of cases in your country increased? What information can you give about the availability of emergency protective equipment and the possibilities to increase the stock?
- 3) In your view, if the public health emergency persists in China, could it have an impact on the access to medicines in EU?

NB:

Since the conference format is a little unusual, please state at the beginning of your intervention which questions you will cover in your answer.

It is for technical reasons not possible to provide interpretation the way it is done in regular meetings of the Council and its preparatory bodies. Participants might therefore wish to be accompanied by an interpreter who would interpret her/his interventions into a language easily understandable for the other participants.





The Presidency intends to provide information on the ongoing outbreak of the novel corona virus 2019-nCoV at the Working Party on Public Health at Senior Level at its meeting on 11 February. Should participants consider that a specific issue should be addressed there, please signal it during your intervention.

