



5.1.2e

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Brussels,

Dear Minister,

Rapid antigen tests offer us speed, reliability and quick responses to isolate COVID cases. This is crucial to slow down the spread of the pandemic.

Testing will remain fundamental in the coming months, even as we roll out our vaccines in the EU. We need to scale up testing capacity in parallel to keeping the virus under control.

To help in these efforts, the Commission has signed a contract with Abbott and Roche to support Member States with over 20 million rapid tests financed through the Emergency Support Instrument. Shipments are in full swing, with deliveries already made in several Member States and further shipments expected soon.

In addition, a Joint Procurement for rapid antigen tests has been carried out to ensure a wider stream of rapid antigen tests with high testing performance. Contracts under this joint procurement allow countries to order more than 550 million rapid antigen tests and 1.733 reading devices, with an overall budget ceiling of just over €2.673 billion.

I am pleased to inform that you that, as a signatory of the EU Joint Procurement Framework, since 15 February you can proceed with ordering these tests. The dispatch of products after an order has been placed should take 4-5 weeks maximum.

I would invite you to use this supply line offered by our joint effort and negotiating power.

Mr Hugo DE JONGE
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Health, Welfare and Sports
Ministry for Health, Welfare and Sport
Parnassusplein 5
2511 VX Den Haag
P.O. Box 20350
2500 EJ The Hague
The Netherlands

As a second step, should you decide to place orders, I would encourage you to inform the Joint Procurement Agreement Steering Committee and the Commission about your orders, as well as the quality and quantity of supplies. Communicating proactively on the availability of these contracts at national level, so that all potentially concerned authorities at national and regional levels are fully aware, is also important.

I look forward to hearing from you about the scaling-up of testing strategies and I am confident that the joint procurement and ESI contracts will further strengthen our crisis preparedness and response capacities.

Yours sincerely,



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