

## Meeting of the EU scientific advice platform on COVID-19

### Meeting Report

Wednesday 16/02/2022 at 16:00

#### 1. COVID-19 Epidemiological update

---

The ECDC updated on the extremely diverse situation across the EU. The overall epidemiological situation in the EU/EEA was characterised by a very high overall case notification rate that increased rapidly in January but has been decreasing or stable for one week, and an elevated but stable death rate. Case notification rates range from 537 to 10,394 /100,000 population. Overall, the pooled rate has been decreasing for 1 week. Increasing case notification trends were still observed in half of the Member States. The testing rate has an equally wide range across countries (2,076- 89,065 per 100,000 population).

Regarding indicators of severity, the case notification rate in people aged 65 and older is increasing in 20 countries, and has been increasing for six weeks. Hospital and ICU admission and occupancy are largely stable. Mortality has remained stable for 11 weeks.

As regards SARS-CoV-2 variants, Omicron has largely taken over throughout the EU, currently still consisting predominantly of the BA.1 sub-lineage. Work is ongoing to lift remaining unknowns regarding the BA.2 and to BA.3 sub-lineages.

The vaccination rollout appears to have reached a plateau. The uptake for the primary vaccination course is just below 71% and at 47% for the booster dose.

Experts shared the experience in different Member States, with several platform members indeed reporting a plateau in the vaccine uptake. They discussed the importance of ensuring a high coverage in particular among population groups above 65 years of age in which a significant proportion remains not fully vaccinated. While the epidemiological situation varies to a great extent across countries, many experts depicted an improving situation with cases reaching or having reached a peak in the current wave, and a progressive lifting of public health measures. Experts also discussed the importance of incidental COVID-19 diagnosis among persons hospitalised for other reasons, evolving and future approaches to surveillance (possibly encompassing other severe acute respiratory infections) and testing strategies in the long term, welcoming guidance by ECDC for a coordinated approach on these issues. Some representatives highlighted the low vaccination coverage among children and encouraged a more coordinated European approach on this topic. Finally, experts also touched upon the need for more and better data on the post COVID-19 condition in the light of recent studies.

Commissioner Kyriakides offered to liaise with paediatricians' federations at European level such as ESPID to discuss approaches to childhood COVID-19 vaccination in the EU. She also suggested to focus discussions at the next meeting on the transition into a new phase of the pandemic as well as preparations ahead of next autumn and winter and accompanying communication to citizens.

## **2. COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics**

---

EMA updated about ongoing activities in the field of vaccines and therapeutics.

The agency is currently reviewing evidence on the administration of boosters for adolescents with Comirnaty. The agency should also finalise its assessment of the use of Spikevax for 6-11 year old. Rolling reviews of the vaccine candidates by Valneva and Sanofi continue. EMA is also in contact with international regulators on second generation vaccines to ensure an alignment on requirements and data expected from manufacturers in view of regulatory approvals.

Regarding therapeutics, EMA updated on antivirals Molnupiravir and Paxlovid.

## **3. AOB**

---

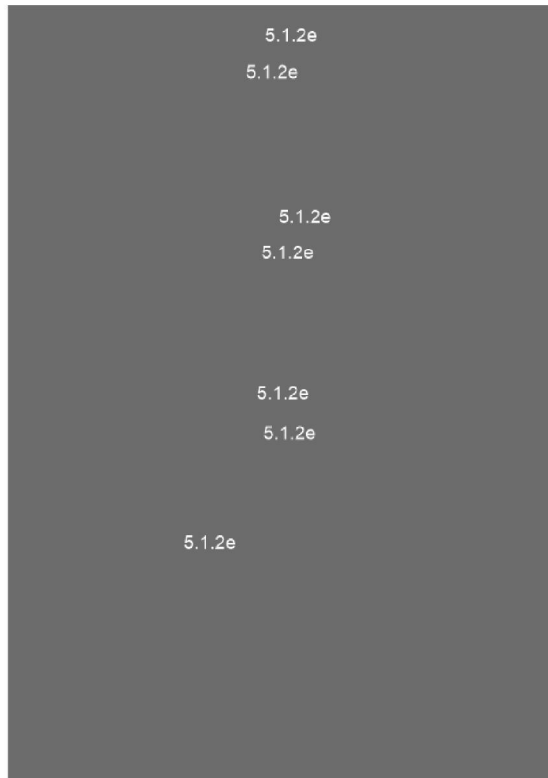
The next meeting is scheduled on 2 March at 15:45 hours.

Discussions will focus on possible preparations for next autumn and winter, in areas such as vaccination, surveillance and other public health measures.

**Participation**

---

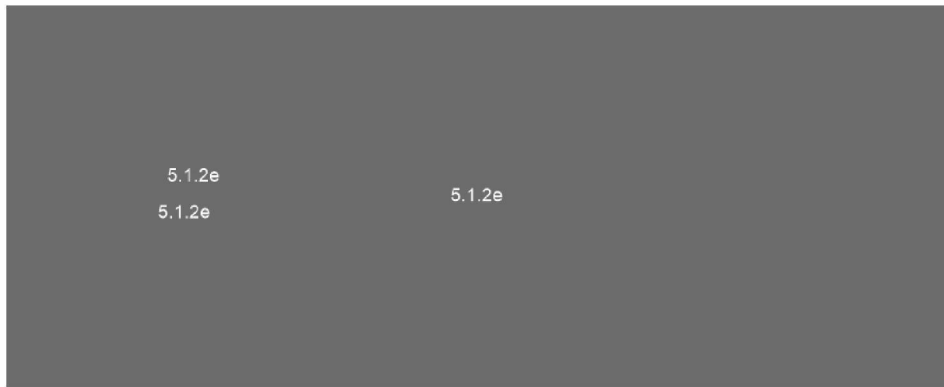
Member States participants:



European Commission:



European Commission –EU Scientific Advice Platform on COVID-19



ECDC:

41. [redacted] 5.1.2e [redacted] 5.1.2e

EMA:

42. [redacted] 5.1.2e