

Minutes: Steering Board Meeting, 21 August 2020

1. Update on AstraZeneca contract

The European Commission (EC) reminded the Member States (MS) that the five-day deadline to opt-out expired on Friday-21 August 2020, except for [REDACTED] whose deadline expired on Monday-24 August- due to a National holiday.

The European Commission stressed that no opt-out requests have been received so far.

As a matter of principle, the European Commission reassured that, in case some Member States decide to opt-out, the doses becoming available would not be imposed on to the other Member States, which will not be required to take more than their current pro rata. Instead, the other MS (or the EEA) would have the possibility/option to take over the doses that become free.

If no Member State wishes to take the doses or in case of many opt-outs, the European Commission drew the attention to the fact that the contract might need to be renegotiated, in order to decrease the number of doses to which the EU may commit. In this case, Member States need to be aware that other conditions, including [REDACTED] may change as well.

The European Commission underlined, also as a principle, that the aim of this process is to build a portfolio, reminding the intensive ongoing parallel processes with six companies (AstraZeneca, SANOFI, J&J, CureVac , Moderna and BioNTech- hopefully next week). This portfolio represents an insurance strategy as a) the successful vaccine is not known in advance and b) no successful vaccine, on its own, can provide sufficient quantities (especially at the beginning). Its underlying idea is one of solidarity, offering thus to all the possibility to potentially have the right vaccine.

Some Member States explicitly supported this approach. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Q&A on AZ contract

The objective of the Q&A session was to give MS an opportunity to ask any remaining questions on the AZ contract. Clarifications provided at the meeting are noted below.

Communication channels on an eventual opt-out

In case of an opt-out, Member States (a person that has the authority to bind the Government) should send a registered letter to the Commission and a scan of this letter to the EC vaccines mailbox.

Pro rata allocation

The pro rata allocation is the default distribution key for the doses. Member States will not be required to take more doses than their pro rata allocation. It was also clarified that the “opt in/out” was a matter of agreeing or not to take part in the Agreement with the company and was not about the number of doses.

[REDACTED]

Member States will need to [REDACTED] the national hub and delivery within their territory to vaccination places. [REDACTED] Member States will [REDACTED] [REDACTED] from the hub to the final destination.

The European Commission encouraged Member States to cooperate regarding the practicalities in distribution and transport.

Cross references

Optional/additional doses

Member States will have to express interest in the optional / additional doses and in case of interest exceeding the available supply of doses, a pro-rata allocation will apply.

As the term suggests it, this is an option and was added to the contract in order to [REDACTED]
[REDACTED].

Order form – deadline for submission

The Order Forms have to be entered into by each of the Participating Member States [REDACTED]

So the timing for submission of the order form is [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] will be slightly different from one contract to the other, [REDACTED]

Effective date

The date of the signature of the Contract.

Other issues

Member States asked:

- if it would be possible to designate a different hub for each delivery. The EC is not in a position to reply, as this would depend on the company.
- if the number of doses could be disclosed publicly. The Commission confirmed this.

2. Update on the contracts in the [REDACTED]

SANOFI

The Member States were informed that the offer from Sanofi was received, a first meeting with [REDACTED] took place and the work on the draft APA was in progress.

Johnson& Johnson

The deadline for submitting [REDACTED] expires on 23 August.

[REDACTED] was submitted from J&J by the time of the meeting.

CureVac

The European Commission sent on Thursday 20 August an invitation to CureVac to submit a [REDACTED] by 30th August.

BioNTech/Pfizer

The European Commission recalled the [REDACTED]

The Commission and Member States [REDACTED] BioNTech could also be in [REDACTED] process soon.

3. Update on discussions with Moderna

The Commission underlined that the talks were [REDACTED] constructive and informed that sufficient progress has been reached on the key points of discussions. This allowed the Commission to move to the [REDACTED]. The plan was to send the invitation [REDACTED] on Monday 24 August.

The Commission would also communicate on the progress in the exploratory talks publicly.

The discussions have been focused on [REDACTED] with the [REDACTED] Member States to [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Member States welcomed the elements presented, especially since the development of the vaccine is already in phase III of clinical trials, making it one of the front-runners for the time being.

AOB

1. COVAX

The European Commission expressed commitment to the success of the COVAX facility, as firm supporter to an inclusive international approach to vaccines and indicated EU should have a meaningful participation, including in the COVAX governance structure.

The Commission stands ready to lend the financial support needed as well as the expertise in the development of the COVAX.

[REDACTED] asked for a dedicated meeting on COVAX, as the deadline for the Members States to react to the invitation of joining the facility was on the 31 of August. The COVAX secretariat informed that it would send more information by the end of the week.

Participants agreed that it was important to keep a good flow of communication with MS representatives [REDACTED] of the Steering Board together with [REDACTED] would organise an outreach [REDACTED] to ensure awareness of the implementation of the EU vaccines strategy.

The Member States called for an EU consolidated approach and not 27 individual commitments.

The Commission fully supported this and also argued in favour of a coordinated EU (EC + Member State) approach towards participation in and support to COVAX.

2. An update on the joint procurement of vaccination supplies was provided in writing following questions raised during the meeting.