

Steering Board meeting, 24 July 2020

Secure communications and handling of contracts

The Commission started the meeting with an important announcement on the confidentiality of information. In order to **transmit the contracts with the vaccine producers in a secured way**, Member States have to nominate two representatives and communicate to the Commission (EC-VACCINES@ec.europa.eu, [REDACTED]@ec.europa.eu) their contact details as follows:

- ✓ The first representative will receive the contract by a secured e-mail, therefore an **official e-mail address** is required.
- ✓ The second representative will receive [REDACTED]

It is important to emphasise that once the Commission takes the decision to go ahead with a contract providing for an obligation to purchase vaccines, Member States will have 5 working days to react. Therefore, the Commission asked the Member States to make sure that the emails and [REDACTED] are monitored regularly during this period.

If any of these details change, the information has to be communicated to the Commission well in advance.

Update on AstraZeneca contract

The Commission informed the Steering Board that [REDACTED] was sent to AstraZeneca. The company has not yet submitted the contract and the additional documents required by the Commission. The Commission was expecting the contract from AstraZeneca [REDACTED].

As soon as the Commission receives the contract, the draft version will be analysed and discussed with AstraZeneca in the light of the changes or modifications required.

In reply to a question on the state of play with AstraZeneca, the Commission reiterated that, currently, it is in the negotiation process with the vaccine producer and there is no contract signed yet.

Update on [REDACTED]: the Commission received the contract from AstraZeneca. An evaluation committee was established to analyse the tender dossier. The Commission and the Joint Negotiation Team are now involved in further discussion with the company. The outcome of the discussions will be communicated in the Steering Board meeting on [REDACTED].

Update on ongoing negotiations with vaccine producers

In order to ensure transparency on the quality of the potential vaccine candidates, the Commission proposed to organise a presentation by a number of independent experts of their assessments of on several vaccine candidates, including the three mRNA vaccines of BioNTech, Moderna and CureVac, and the vaccine candidates of AstraZeneca/Oxford, Johnson & Johnson and Sanofi. This would enable the Member States to advise their national competent authorities.

The [REDACTED] invited the Member States to nominate their independent academic experts and leaders of the scientific boards, which might provide relevant expertise on the Covid-19 vaccines platforms. The contact person for organising the independent scientific expert panel was [REDACTED]

The Member States welcomed the Commission proposal, with some emphasising the need to establish a portfolio approach to vaccines at this point, despite the fact that the complete data on the potential vaccine candidates are not available yet.

The Commission and the representatives of the Joint Negotiation Team updated the Member States on the ongoing negotiations with the other vaccine producers:

- Moderna - several meetings had taken place. Moderna had [REDACTED]. They had [REDACTED] accepted the Commission's proposal [REDACTED]. Discussions on liability were ongoing but productive: [REDACTED]. Exact schedules remained to be discussed, and [REDACTED]. Some Member States noted the issue of the [REDACTED] storage conditions for the vaccines. Moderna's product would [REDACTED] be supplied [REDACTED]. This would be a relevant factor in distribution.
 - BioNTech- the representative of the Joint Negotiation Team mentioned that [REDACTED] had taken place with BioNTech and Pfizer. Given the [REDACTED] the key discussion point remained the liability [REDACTED]. A further meeting on liability was planned for Friday, 24 July and more details will be provided at the next meeting of the Steering Board. [REDACTED]
- The co-Chair noted that at least [REDACTED] Member States had a clear interest in this vaccine candidate, which would allow an arrangement to go ahead.
- Sanofi –the remaining discussion points are the [REDACTED] and the liability: discussions continue.
 - Johnson & Johnson – the liability [REDACTED], along with the [REDACTED]

There was a discussion about how a portfolio might be constructed. The Commission noted that aim of the EU exercise was to give Member States a range of options that they could choose from, to allow for risk diversification. Where a contract contained a commitment to buy, Member States would be able to opt-out if it so chose. If the Member States opt-out within 5 working days, the purchased quantity of vaccine will be distributed based on a pro-rata for each Member State.

The [REDACTED] [REDACTED] underlined the three factors, which have to be considered when assessing a vaccine candidate: the timeline, the quality and the price of the vaccine. In addition, she mentioned that a vaccine portfolio would contribute to the risk diversification. The [REDACTED] supported such view.

The Commission gave an overview of the discussions with producers on the issue of liability, and noted that it was clear with producers that EU legislation would not be modified [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] It was, however, clear, that Member States [REDACTED] in any vaccine contract in which they participated. One of the [REDACTED] reiterated that Europe is the largest market for the vaccine producers and the liability clause has to be well clarified with the vaccine manufacturers.

The Commission circulated an Excel table to the Steering Board members, summarising the contacts with those vaccine producers with whom the Commission is not yet in formal negotiations. There was a discussion of how the EU should response to these companies. It was agreed that negotiations should begin with [REDACTED] with Valneva and [REDACTED]. Further operational information had been requested from [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] to allow a decision to be made on whether to enter negotiations or not. There were other interesting candidates where it was agreed that more scientific data would be needed before committing to negotiations: [REDACTED]. Contacts would be maintained with these companies and their progress kept under review by the Board.

For the moment, producers without capacity in the EU would not be considered as candidates, although contact would be maintained and their candidates kept under review.

It was also agreed that contacts would be made with [REDACTED] and Novavax, to discuss whether they might be suitable candidates for the EU scheme.

Tour de table on update/completion of estimated numbers of people for vaccination

The co-Chair pointed that some estimates for vaccines were missing.

For the formality of the process, the Commission invited the Member States to communicate the estimates (number [REDACTED]) by email.

The latest state of play is presented in the table below:

Member State	Number of priority group	% of groups	priority accept	Estimated number of people for vaccination
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		vaccination	
Austria			
Belgium			
Bulgaria			
Croatia			
Cyprus			
Czech Republic			
Denmark			
Estonia			
Finland			
France			
Germany			
Greece			
Hungary			
Ireland			
Italy			
Latvia			
Lithuania			
Luxembourg			
Malta			
Netherlands			
Poland			
Portugal			
Romania			
Slovakia			
Slovenia			
Spain			
Sweden			
ESTIMATED TOTAL (status of 29th July 2020)			

Update on GAVI and COVAX Facility

The Commission noted that COREPER has emphasised that the EU fully supports the international dimension on Covid-19 vaccines. Nevertheless, it is important to separate involvement in the COVAX Facility and the ACT Accelerator from the scheme to purchase vaccines for the EU citizens.

The strong support given by the EU through the upfront financing of the vaccine producers will support the COVAX Facility and the ACT Accelerator in making vaccines available and affordable globally.

The Steering Board representative confirmed the constructive discussion in COREPER and mentioned that the Commission does

[REDACTED] The Steering Board representative encouraged the Commission to continue the constructive discussions with GAVI representatives.

[REDACTED] emphasised that the COVAX Facility is important for the countries which have not secured bilateral or regional agreements.