

European Commission's advisory panel on COVID-19

Report – videoconference Monday 20/07/2020 at 15:00

The discussion focused on the four key agenda points raised in the invitation letter:

1. **State of progress of the vaccine candidate** (the phase of development of the research/ clinical trial/ elaboration of the vaccine);
2. **Available data on the quality of the vaccine candidate** (the soundness of the basic scientific approach and technology used, including the assessment of the testing methodology);
3. **Available data on the safety of the vaccine candidate** (the evidence related to safety already generated from the development phases);
4. **Available data on the efficacy of the vaccine candidate** (the coverage of different technologies: using a number of different types of platforms/production methods¹).

The Chair introduced the current state of negotiations and asked the Panel (list available in the Annex) for their independent views on the vaccine candidates put forward by companies – especially [REDACTED] – on the basis of currently available data, any possible gaps in current quality, safety or efficacy data and their remarks on scientific issues of substance that might dissuade the EC from continuing negotiations with those companies.

The Panel started with a declaration of a potential conflict of interest. One expert declared generally that [REDACTED] but did not suggest in any way that this would affect [REDACTED] scientific analysis. This was duly noted.

The Panel underlined the importance of using the past as a key predictor of the future. Whilst [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] On the basis of past experience, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] with J&J and AstraZeneca appearing also as reasonably realistic options in the Adenovirus category. The Panel made rather less confident estimates about [REDACTED] in the mRNA category, as no mRNA vaccine has been brought to the market.

The Chair elaborated on the different candidates based on the negotiations. Sanofi [REDACTED]
[REDACTED], AstraZeneca [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] t, whilst J&J [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]. The Chair mentioned that co-financing is at the

¹ Such as nucleic-acid vaccines, viral-vector and protein-based vaccines: <https://www.who.int/whodocuments-detail/draft-landscape-of-covid-19-candidate-vaccines>.

rate [REDACTED] from the ESI fund, and in the case of obligatory purchase contracts Member States have 5 days to opt out. The decision is then binding on Member States. The question remains how to design conditions at key time intervals to monitor safety and to negotiate it. The Panel was confronted with the question of whether conditionalities were indeed explicit enough within the current process.

The Panel acknowledged that the big unknown remains the safety of those vaccines and access to full data. The Panel gave the positive example of the recently approved Ebola vaccine by J&J whose safety was assessed as very good; the same platform is now used for the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Chair pointed out that [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The storage requirements for Moderna and BioNTech were more particular, with [REDACTED]

The Panel did not highlight any scientific issue of consequence with the candidates put forward by [REDACTED] on the basis of available scientific data. All three are credible companies with good past track record in developing pharmaceutical products. The Panel commended the European Commission for its efforts to shape the development, manufacturing and distribution of a successful vaccine, whilst also leading on covering global needs. They stressed that this leadership should remain in Europe. The Chair confirmed that there are indeed big considerations to be made in how to move forward in the realm of public health after the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Chair concluded by thanking the Panel for the discussion, for their positive opinion and noting the importance of maintaining weekly meetings of this nature on other vaccine candidates.

Annex

Participants in the audioconference:

- European Commission: S. Gallina (Chair), G. Rossides, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] (Minutes)
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

Observers:

- Andrea Ammon (ECDC Director)
- [REDACTED] (EMA)

Excused:

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]