



Read-out of the videoconference between President von der Leyen and CEOs of pharmaceutical companies

Brussels, 31 January 2021

Today, President von der Leyen held a videoconference with the CEOs of the pharmaceutical companies with which the European Commission has signed Advance Purchase Agreements, in the context of our Vaccines Strategy - BioNTech/Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson, Curevac and Sanofi.

Commissioners Stella Kyriakides and Thierry Breton, the President's coronavirus special advisor Peter Piot and Moncef Slaoui, as well as the Executive Director of the European Medicines Agency, Emer Cook, also attended.

The aim of the videoconference was to launch the work on European bio-defence preparedness.

The Commission will set up an EU Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA), to deliver a more structured approach to pandemic preparedness. HERA will help anticipate threats and identify responses.

Industry will be an important partner. Work with industry will focus both on improving Europe's pandemic preparedness in the medium term and on helping address more immediate challenges linked to COVID19.

In preparation of HERA, a pilot response on European Bio-defence preparedness is being launched already. The aim is to fund design and development of vaccines and scale up manufacturing in the short and medium term, and also to target the variants of COVID19.

The pandemic highlighted that manufacturing capacities are a limiting factor. It is essential to address these challenges.

Moreover, the emergence of variants of concern raises the imminent threat of reduced efficacy of recently approved vaccines. It is crucial to prepare for the appearance of such variants.

The discussion explored requirements for very rapid development, manufacturing and regulatory approval of vaccines for COVID19 variants in the EU. It was a very constructive meeting, with numerous practical suggestions.

Further discussions will take place with the industry and other relevant sectors over the following weeks.

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