



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY

Public health
Health security and Vaccination

Luxembourg
SANTE.DDG1.C.3/WP/VP (2020)5439832

Stephen Case <ask+request-8522-
3790cb71@asktheeu.org>
Email transmission only

Dear Mr Case,

We have received your request for access to documents from 5 September 2020 regarding advice on masks in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please, note that this request does not concern access to specific documents as such.

Regarding masks, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control has issued technical guidance on the use and suitability of different kinds of masks as a measure contributing to preventing the spread of COVID-19, available in all EU languages here: <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/publications-data/using-face-masks-community-reducing-covid-19-transmission>.

That document clarifies the different types and the evidence on their effectiveness in protecting the wearer of the mask from air-borne illnesses. Besides protection to the mask-wearer, the document further stresses that “[t]he use of face masks in public may serve as a means **of source control** to reduce the spread of the infection in the community by minimising the excretion of respiratory droplets from infected individuals who have not yet developed symptoms or who remain asymptomatic.”

Regarding your second question on comparisons between the rate of infection of individuals wearing masks and those not wearing masks, the document cited above from ECDC discusses the available evidence.

You can find further information on the activities of the European Commission regarding the COVID-19 response here: https://ec.europa.eu/info/live-work-travel-eu/health/coronavirus-response_en.

Yours faithfully,

Wolfgang Philipp
Head of Unit

