

Minutes: Steering Board meeting, 28 August 2020

1. Confidentiality

The European Commission stressed that it would like to protect those working on this file by not disclosing the names of the Joint Negotiation Team and Steering Board members and advised the Members States representatives to take the same approach, in order to avoid any type of pressure.

The European Commission also called for keeping the discussions in these groups confidential, in the context of the ongoing [REDACTED] processes.

[REDACTED] echoed the remarks above and recalled the Members States that the [REDACTED], therefore the access to documents rules of the EU Institutions needed to be complied with, alleviating thus the pressure from the Members States when requested to disclose such documents.

2. Update on the AstraZeneca contract- following steps following the signature

The European Commission stressed that on the 27th of August the contract entered into force, following the formal signature between AstraZeneca and the Commission and also informed about the next steps, namely that:

- in [REDACTED] the Commission shall deliver to AstraZeneca a final and binding written allocation of Initial Europe Doses;
- the Order Forms have to be entered into by each of the Participating Member States

The Commission indicated that the procedure for the distribution of doses would be a pragmatic one: the [REDACTED] together with representatives from [REDACTED], [REDACTED], [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] offered to lead and steer a process of :

- (i) consultation to check if Member States would like to have more or less doses than their pro rata and ;
- (ii) matching their respective preferences to the extent possible, given the overall number of doses committed.

The process would need to be fully concluded and communicated to the company within [REDACTED], starting from [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] indicated that the portfolio approach which [REDACTED] would secure better chances to have access to the successful vaccine(s) and would be important, including in the context in which future travelling conditions might require a [REDACTED]

reminded that the Commission would need to appoint an Alliance Manager, which the Commission confirmed that it would do.

stressed that Member States would need to appoint a contact person in the Order Forms .

3. Next steps regarding the contracts

expressed with the AZ contract but vaccines and that which is one of the vaccines coming early .

also informed of their intention to add to the agenda of the upcoming Informal EPSCO Council (4th of September) a point for a ministerial discussion on how to proceed with the contracts .

requested a matrix of the decision criteria) for all vaccine candidates. The Commission stressed that the elements requested would be speculative, in the context in which only one contract was signed.

Regarding the ESI funding, the Commission provided a thorough explanation on the total ESI funds available for vaccines, other COVID related commitments, and on possible financing gap.

The Commission recalled that the financing gap was due to several factors:

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In this situation, the Commission explained the options:

- readjust all the contracts as is suggesting. This option risks to jeopardize the progress on the ongoing procedures: new invites might have to be relaunched ;
- provide upfront payment to from ESI budget,

- the [REDACTED] follow up on the prior commitment [REDACTED].

The Commission made it clear [REDACTED], that it was happy with the process so far and that it could finish the portfolio [REDACTED].

The Commission sought clarity from the Steering Board if the ongoing work on the various contracts should be put on hold [REDACTED].

[REDACTED] supported by [REDACTED] asked for the next steps, including the budget, to be discussed at Ministerial level.

However, [REDACTED] MSs [REDACTED] supported the Commission to continue work on the agreed portfolio.

[REDACTED] expressed determination to stand by the commitment [REDACTED] and stressed that another possible option would be to invite all Member States to do so in a Ministerial discussion. [REDACTED] also encouraged the continuation of the discussions with the companies, pending talks in the Council.

The Commission took note of the support of the MS to continue work on the current portfolio and [REDACTED].

4. Update on discussion with other companies

Novavax

[REDACTED] informed on the ongoing discussions. A [REDACTED] was sent in the course of the week. Discussions would continue the following week.

Valneva

The discussions are advancing. A new offer is awaited from the company.

[REDACTED]

The company was requested to provide more details.

5. COVAX

The Commission informed on its readiness to join the COVAX Facility with funding, but also with capacity, expertise, doses of vaccines, scientific data, and meaningful participation in its governance structure.

In this context, the Commission announced that it would make a contribution of [REDACTED] to the COVAX Facility and its goals.

The contribution was aimed to support currently needed investment in manufacturing and the initial contribution of the EU would be counted towards doses of future vaccines for low and middle income countries.

The Commission pleaded in favour of a coordinated EU (EC + Member State) approach towards participation in and support to COVAX. It was important that Member States join COVAX [REDACTED]. Member States who want to top up the COVAX funding were invited to do so.

All Member States taking the floor were in favour of a coordinated approach ([REDACTED] pending prior check with national authorities, [REDACTED] Member States asked the Commission [REDACTED].

6. AOB

An extraordinary Steering Board meeting would be convened (Wednesday) ahead of the Ministerial discussion.