



News from Brussels

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European Commission secures agreement with BioNTech-Pfizer on the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines

The 26th of May, the **European Commission, acting with and on behalf of EU Member States through the Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA), and vaccine developers BioNTech-Pfizer, have reached an agreement to better address Member States' assessment of evolving needs for COVID-19 vaccines.**

The amendment to the existing vaccines supply contract **takes into account the improved epidemiological situation**, while continuing to ensure access to the latest available version of the vaccine should COVID-19 variants of concern appear in the future.



The agreement has secured the following adaptations to the existing contract:

- A **reduction in the quantity of doses purchased by Member States** under the contract. Following payment of a fee, originally contracted doses will be converted into optional orders;
- An **extension in the length of time in which Member States will be able to take delivery of the vaccines** – up to 4 years from now;
- The **possibility to continue to have access to additional doses up to the original contracted volume until the end of the contract to meet needs**, should cases rise, and the epidemiological situation deteriorate;
- **Continued access to vaccines** adapted to new variants as soon as authorised by the regulators.

The amendment was reached following negotiations between the vaccine developers, Member States and the European Commission to better align to vaccine strategies and the evolving public health needs in the Member States.

The **Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella Kyriakides, warmly welcomed this agreement** as she declared: *“We have brought the pandemic under control largely through our vaccines and vaccinations. And while COVID-19 is no longer a global health emergency, it remains a threat that is likely here to stay. It is crucial therefore that we are prepared for the years to come”*

You may find more information [here](#).

European Health Union: EU steps up the fight against antimicrobial resistance

The 13th of June, the Council of the European Union adopted the European Commission's proposal to strengthen EU action against antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The latter shall help combat AMR in the fields of human, animal and environmental health, following the so-called One Health approach.

The recommendation focusses on infection prevention and control, surveillance and monitoring, innovation and availability of efficient antimicrobials, prudent use and cooperation among Member States and globally.

The 2030 targets developed in consultation with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) are the following:



- A **20% reduction of the total consumption of antibiotics** in humans;
- At least **65% of the total consumption of antibiotics in humans should be effective** (use of the right antibiotic);
- A **reduction of infections of three key antibiotic-resistant bacteria**, which will apply mainly to hospitals.

Those objectives shall **help the European Union to tackle AMR taking into account national specificities without compromising patients' health and safety**. They will also allow better monitoring of infections and consumption of antibiotics in the coming years and adjust policy making accordingly.

You may find more information [here](#).

European Commission and the World Health Organization launch a landmark digital health partnership

The 5th of June, **the European Commission and the World Health Organization (WHO) have announced the launch of a landmark digital health partnership**. In this context, the WHO will take up the European Union (EU) system of digital COVID-19 certification **to establish a global system that will help facilitate global mobility and protect citizens across the world from on-going and future health threats**. This is the first building block of the WHO Global Digital Health Certification Network (GDHCN) that will develop a wide range of digital products to deliver better health for all.



Based on the EU Global Health Strategy and WHO Member States Global Strategy on Digital Health, the initiative follows the 2nd of December 2022 agreement signed by Commissioner Kyriakides and WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus to enhance strategic cooperation on global health issues.

One of the key elements in the European Union's work against the COVID-19 pandemic has been the digital COVID certificate as in order to facilitate free movement within its borders, the EU established interoperable COVID-19 certificates ('EU Digital COVID Certificate' or 'EU DCC'). Based on open-source technologies and standards it allowed also for the connection of non-EU countries that issue certificates according to EU DCC specifications, becoming the most widely used solution around the world.

From the onset of the pandemic, WHO engaged with all WHO Regions to define overall guidelines for such certificates. **To help strengthen global health preparedness in the face of growing health threats, WHO is establishing a global digital health certification network which builds upon the solid foundations of the EU DCC framework, principles and open technologies**. With this collaboration, WHO will facilitate this process globally under its own structure with the aim to allow the world to benefit from convergence of digital certificates. This includes standard-setting and validation of digital signatures to prevent fraud. In doing so, WHO will not have access to any underlying personal data, which would continue to be the exclusive domain of governments.

In order to facilitate the uptake of the EU DCC by WHO and contribute to its operation and further development, the European Commission and WHO have agreed on a partnership in digital health that will focus on developing the WHO system with a staged approach to cover additional use cases, which may include, for example, the digitisation of the International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis.

The European Commission and WHO will work together to encourage maximum global uptake and participation. Particular attention will be paid to equitable opportunities for the participation by those most in need: low and middle-income countries.

European Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, Stella Kyriakides, praised this collaboration: *“The EU Digital COVID certificate has been an essential tool for safe travel during the COVID pandemic. It is emblematic of a European Health Union that can deliver tangible benefits for citizens. **With this landmark partnership with the WHO we are scaling up EU innovation in digital health to deliver safe mobility for all citizens across the globe.** There is no better partner than the WHO to advance the work we started in the EU and further develop global digital health solutions.”*

You may find more information [here](#).

How can research help address the challenges of safer care for all?

The 14th of November 2023, the Professional Standard Authority for Health and Social Care (PSA) of the United Kingdom will hold a conference to discuss how research can contribute to achieving the ambitions and addressing the challenges of its 2022 report safer care for all.

The day will be based on the four themes of *Safer care for all*:

- Tackling inequalities
- Regulating for new risks
- Facing up to the workforce crisis
- Accountability fear and public safety



ENC and its members are invited to submit a speaking proposal on research relating to one or more of the above mentioned themes. The latter can focus on completed, in progress, or proposed research.

In this context, the organisations interested are invited to summarise in 300 words how the researched proposed is linked to one of the four themes above, and are requested to inform PSA on the format in which the proposed research shall be presented. The proposals shall be sent to Mr. Douglas Bilton (douglas.bilton@professionalstandards.org.uk) by the 14th of August.

In addition, there is also a possibility to **attend the conference without any speaking proposal.** In order to do so, you may write to Mr. Douglas Bilton (douglas.bilton@professionalstandards.org.uk). The entrance fee is £75 and the registrations will be opened mid- September.

You may find more information about the four themes of the conference [here](#).