
COVID-19 Coronavirus: EU Commission, European vaccines strategy. Funding, regulatory framework, avoiding “competition” between countries

A European vaccines strategy has been unveiled with a view to “ensuring the quality, safety and efficacy of vaccines”; “securing swift access to vaccines for Member States and their populations while leading the global solidarity effort”; and to “ensuring equitable access to an affordable vaccine as early as possible”. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has today presented a scheme for joint action in the vaccine field which aims to accelerate the development and availability of safe and effective vaccines in a timeframe between 12 and 18 months, “if not earlier”. We need clinical trials and investments in the production capacity to be able to produce billions of doses. The EU strategy is thus based on two pillars: to provide funding for the development and production of vaccines; and to adapt the EU’s regulatory framework to accelerate the development, authorisation and availability of vaccines while also maintaining the standards for vaccine quality, safety and efficacy. “This is not a European challenge, but a global one”, Von der Leyen said. “The European Union will not be safe until the entire world has access to a vaccine”. The underlying spirit of the strategy is to “avoid competition between EU Member States” and to promote action in a “spirit of concrete European solidarity”. A global summit is to be held on 27 June to explore with international partners if countries would agree to pool resources for reserving future vaccines from pharmaceutical companies. Europe will also “reserve” doses for the most vulnerable countries.

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