
COVID-19 Coronavirus: Kyriakides (EU Commission), “virus still circulating”. Actions to protect citizens

“The virus is still circulating. Vigilance, preparedness and coordination are indispensable to prevent generalised outbreaks”. This is according to Commissioner for Health Stella Kyriakides who presented in Brussels today a Communication from the Commission with a number of priorities for “strong and joint action” to protect Europeans, contain infections and avoid further lockdowns. Of paramount importance is to guarantee “increased testing coverage, contact tracing and surveillance by public health bodies to map clusters in order to contain the spread of outbreaks”. For this reason, the Commission has given the go-ahead to the interoperability of mobile tracing apps across European countries. It is necessary to continue to “ensure the smooth supply of personal protective equipment, medicines and medical devices” through “joint procurements and strategic EU stockpiles”. And we need to maintain “rapid access to public health surge capacities without neglecting other areas of healthcare, including through financial support for the transport of medical personnel and patients between Member States and the coordination of the deployment of emergency medical teams and equipment to requesting countries through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism”. Also, the exchange of healthcare information and the sharing of “best practices” should be timely to support vulnerable groups (the elderly and chronically ill, or people with multiple conditions, marginalised or vulnerable). Brussels also suggests reducing the burden of seasonal flu through increased vaccination coverage to avoid additional pressure on healthcare systems.

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