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## **COVID-19 Coronavirus: EU Commission, common strategy presented. Free vaccines. Priority to: healthcare workers, chronically sick, elderly**

Today's document by the EU Commission on the COVID-19 vaccine distribution and deployment strategy suggests making the vaccine available free of charge as well as providing priority access to healthcare workers and carers, persons over 60 years of age, persons with chronic conditions or co-morbidities, essential workers or workers unable to physically distance, and to vulnerable social groups. Although we cannot predict "when" a vaccine will be available, it will certainly be "safe and effective", Vice-President Margaritis Schinas and Commissioner Stella Kyriakides insisted. Indeed, besides the necessary clinical trials, the European Medicines Agency will conduct an "independent assessment" of the "vaccine safety, quality and efficacy". Despite pressure to "develop a vaccine in record time", "safety remains our top priority", Kyriakides said. Our agreements with pharmaceutical companies will ensure that all countries have simultaneous access to the vaccine, based on their population, but obviously doses will be limited during the initial stages of deployment. Today's initiative "is just one piece of the overall Covid European response puzzle", Schinas said in her opening remarks at the press conference, "a remarkable strand of work that has been undertaken", consisting of approximately 800 specific measures by sector since the beginning of the pandemic.

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