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## **COVID-19 Coronavirus: 240 MPs write to 27 EU leaders. Vaccines for all, lift monopolies to facilitate sharing of intellectual property and know-how**

“New strains of COVID-19 prove that we will not defeat the virus until we defeat it everywhere. We are in the midst of one of the gravest public health emergencies in the world in recent history. Over 2.6 million lives have already been lost worldwide. The global economy stands to lose trillions of dollars if the vaccination rate doesn’t rapidly increase worldwide”. Thus begins an appeal signed to date by 240 members of the European Parliament and national Parliaments ahead of the European Council meeting on 25-26 March. The appeal by political representatives is addressed to the 27 EU Heads of State and Government, who will once again discuss the health crisis and vaccination campaign: “National healthcare systems are often at or beyond capacity, entire economies are on their knees, and millions of livelihoods are at stake. One year after the adoption of the first lockdown measures in Europe, it is clear that we must urgently and exponentially increase manufacturing and availability of vaccines, tests, medicines and protective materials”. The appeal, whose first signatory is Finnish MEP Alviina Alametsä, goes on to say: “That requires wider sharing of proprietary technology and know-how, data and resources, especially with low- and middle-income countries. We stand with the Director-General of the World Health Organization, over 100 national governments, hundreds of civil society organizations, and trade unions, and join them in urging the European Commission and EU member states to discuss at the highest levels and support the temporary waiver of certain obligations under the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). The waiver proposed by South Africa and India would facilitate the sharing of all intellectual property and know-how. It will lift IP monopolies, remove legal uncertainty, and provide the freedom to operate to enable collaboration to increase and speed up the availability, accessibility and affordability of COVID-19 vaccines, tests, and treatments globally”.

Valentina Bombelli