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WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE

4 JUNE– 10 JUNE 2022

EUROPEAN UNION AND UNITED STATES SIGNED COOPERATION ARRANGEMENT ON PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE TO PUBLIC HEALTH THREATS

During the Global COVID-19 Summit, the EU Commission and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services signed an agreement to foster cooperation on a broad range of topics and jointly tackle health threats.

As part of the arrangement, both sides will work together on epidemic and supply chain information, research and innovation, and the production of medical countermeasures, including vaccines and therapeutics. Through facilitating information, knowledge, and data sharing, the arrangement will reduce duplication and ensure strong synergies in the preparedness and response efforts. According to the explanation presented in the joint press release, strengthened cooperation will concern, among others, reviewing threat assessments, sharing data, supporting procurement activities, but also tackling disinformation on Health threats. The Commission and the U.S will also provide support for the third countries to ensure their preparedness.

The Joint EU-US initiatives in this field kickstarted in September 2021, when the U.S.-EU Agenda for Beating the Global Pandemic was officially announced. It also complements the COVID-19 Manufacturing and Supply Chain Taskforce, launched together with the announcement of the aforementioned Global Agenda.

Source: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_3203

10 MEMBER STATES CALL FOR ENHANCED FLEXIBILITY IN VACCINE CONTRACTS

In a letter to the European Commission, a coalition of 10 EU countries from the Eastern part of the bloc asked for an amendment to the advance purchase deals made with coronavirus vaccine producers, as the current quantities exceed countries' needs.

Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia – are the 10 Eastern EU countries that have asked the European Commission to enhance flexibility in their vaccine contracts, as supplies of already purchased doses highly overtake the current demand.

The co-signatories expect the Commission to present a formal position on the issue on 16 June, during the upcoming EU Health Council. To address the issue, Member States' representatives call for a reduction in the quantities sold and terminate the advance purchase agreements if the epidemiological situation implicates that there is no need for new jobs. Additionally, the letter calls for the introduction of a “mechanism where HERA Authority [the EU's health emergency preparedness body] repurchases member states' vaccines to cover unmet global needs in a more coordinated manner and to create a joint stockpile that Europe might need for the emergency crisis.”

Source: <https://www.politico.eu/article/eastern-europe-coronavirus-vaccine-commission/>

EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY ADOPTS THE FIRST LIST OF CRITICAL MEDICINES FOR COVID-19

On 7 June, the EMA Medicines Shortages Steering Group (MSSG) published the list of essential medicines for the public health emergency linked to coronavirus. All of 14 medicines and therapeutics approved for COVID-19 will be monitored in terms of their supply and demand to mitigate the impact of shortages.

The list comprises all the authorised vaccines and medicines in the EU to prevent or treat COVID-19. It will be regularly updated to reflect the dynamics of the epidemiological situation, which may influence the risk of shortages of concrete medicines or following the authorisation of new pharmaceuticals. To allow the MSSG to coordinate actions at the EU level, the marketing authorisation holders (MAHs) have to regularly provide EMA with updates on actual or potential shortages and accessible stocks, as well as with the forecast of supply and demand.

The Medicines Agency has already explained that it is going to liaise with particular MAHs, as well as respective national authorities, to inform them about all the procedures, timelines and measures to gather the required information.

Source: <https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/news/ema-adopts-first-list-critical-medicines-covid-19>

The list of critical medicines: https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/other/list-critical-medicines-covid-19-public-health-emergency-phe-under-regulation-eu-2022/123_en.pdf

Thank you for your attention!

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