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# WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE

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# EU COMMISSION PRESENTS A NEW APPROACH ON CANCER DETECTION TO INCREASE THE UPTAKE OF CANCER SCREENING

**On Tuesday (20 September), health commissioner Stella Kyriakides presented a proposal for an update to the EU Council recommendation regarding cancer screening, aiming to increase detection at an early stage and include more cancer types in screening programmes.**

The new strategy, which will become a part of the EU Cancer Screening Scheme put forward under Europe's Beating Cancer Plan, is based on the latest available scientific developments and evidence. Its main goal is to support Member States in ensuring that 90% of the EU population qualifying for cervical, breast and colorectal cancer screenings are offered such opportunities by 2025. The latest Recommendation also expands population-based organised cancer screening, including prostate, lung, and, under certain circumstances, gastric cancers.

To facilitate more targeted and less invasive screening, the Recommendation envisages, among others:

- extends the target group for breast cancer screening to include women between 45 and 74 y/o (current age bracket indicates 50 to 69 y/o);
- recommends that Human Papillomavirus (HPV) testing should take place for women between 30 to 65 y/o, every 5 years or more;
- calls for triage testing for colorectal cancer in people aged 50-74 through faecal immunochemical testing to determine potential follow-up.

The proposed Recommendation introduces a new EU approach for best practices to improve cancer screening, replacing the current one, which remains in place since already 20 years and is in urgent need of updating.

Source: [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip\\_22\\_5562](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_5562)

# EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY (EMA) OFFICIAL CONTRADICTS US PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN, SAYS PANDEMIC IS „FAR FROM OVER“

**During a media briefing earlier this week, EMA's chief medical officer Steffen Thstrup referred to US President Joe Biden's controversial remark that „the pandemic is over“. In his response, Mr Thstrup argued that despite a decrease in infections and death rates, the COVID-19 pandemic is still „ongoing,“ and that a planned vaccination campaign would speed up the pace as winter approaches.**

In an interview aired on Sunday (18 September), President Biden declared the pandemic over in the US. "We're still doing a lot of work on it. But the pandemic is over," Biden claimed. However, US government officials told domestic media that regardless of Biden's comments, a change in policy was not on the table and there are no plans to lift the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency. Nevertheless, the interview was a subject of criticism and prompted EMA to publicly refer to Biden's assumption.

It is worth mentioning that a few days before, also the World Health Organization (WHO) said that the end of the pandemic is already in sight, on the condition countries properly use the tools at their disposal. Paralelly, EMA officials also urged people in Europe to take whatever COVID-19 booster is available. The EU medicines regulator endorsed several vaccines specifically targeted at the Omicron variant to control a surge in infections during autumn and winter.

Source: <https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-drugs-agency-to-biden-the-pandemic-is-not-over/>

# WORLD LEADERS PLEDGE BILLIONS IN THE FRAMEWORK OF GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS, AND MALARIA

**On Wednesday (21 September) donor conference of The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) meeting, raised a record amount of \$14.25 billion in essential new funding, even though the United Kingdom and Italy delayed their announcement on commitments.**

The Global Fund is a public-private alliance set up in 2002, which seeks \$18 billion for its next three-year funding cycle from the private sector. Governments and civil society. Even before Wednesday's meeting, it had already raised more than a third of the total goal. US President Joe Biden, who hosted the conference in New York, said the funding — the highest amount ever pledged for a multilateral health initiative — is crucial to combating the diseases.

Among the donors, the United States pledged the highest sum at \$6 billion, while the European Union announced a historic amount of €715 million. In addition, France, Germany, Japan, Canada, South Korea and the Gates Foundation also announced significant contributions. It is estimated that the Global Fund has already saved more than 50 million lives. In 2020 however, the COVID-19 pandemic caused declines in testing and treatment across all three diseases — and deaths from malaria and tuberculosis increased for the first time in many years, whereas disruptions in access to HIV testing could have contributed to a 17% decline in new diagnoses.

Source: [https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2022/september/20220921\\_PR\\_GF\\_replenishment\\_closing](https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/pressreleaseandstatementarchive/2022/september/20220921_PR_GF_replenishment_closing)

# Thank you for your attention!

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