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# **WEEKLY EU HEALTHCARE NEWS UPDATE**

**18 FEBRUARY 2023 – 24 FEBRUARY 2023**

# CROATIA, FRANCE AND POLAND JOINED THE EU'S STRATEGIC RESERVES FOR CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL AND RADIOLOGICAL EMERGENCIES

Croatia, France, and Poland have joined other Member States in the European Union's Strategic Reserves for chemical, biological, and radiological (CBR) threats. The EU established the Strategic Reserves as part of its Civil Protection Mechanism, which aims to improve the EU's response to emergencies and disasters, including CBR incidents.

The Strategic Reserves comprise a range of equipment and materials that can be deployed in the event of a CBR threat. These include personal protective equipment, decontamination units, and medical supplies. The Reserves also include specialized teams trained in responding to CBR incidents.

The addition of Croatia, France, and Poland to the Strategic Reserves will increase the EU's capacity to respond to CBR threats, as well as strengthen its overall Civil Protection Mechanism. The EU now has 20 Member States contributing to the Reserves.

Along with the Strategic Reserves, the EU has taken various measures to improve its preparedness for CBR threats, including developing guidelines and procedures for response and investing in research and innovation in the field. The EU also works closely with international organizations and partners to enhance global preparedness and response to CBR incidents.

Source: [https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/news-stories/news/croatia-france-and-poland-join-eus-strategic-reserves-chemical-biological-and-radiological-2023-02-20\\_en](https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/news-stories/news/croatia-france-and-poland-join-eus-strategic-reserves-chemical-biological-and-radiological-2023-02-20_en)

# WHO'S INCOMING CHIEF SCIENTIST CALLS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF VACCINES FOR ALL ANIMAL INFLUENZA STRAINS

**On Monday (February 20), Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, the incoming Chief Scientist of the World Health Organization (WHO), stated that there is a need to develop vaccines for all animal influenza strains as an insurance policy in case of an outbreak in humans, to prevent future pandemics.**

Currently, only a few animal influenza strains have vaccines developed, including those in poultry and pigs. Dr. Swaminathan emphasized that viruses can jump from animals to humans, as seen in the case of COVID-19, and the lack of vaccines for all animal influenza strains poses a risk of new pandemics.

Dr. Swaminathan's comments come as the world continues to grapple with the COVID-19 pandemic. She also called for increased investment in research and development to create new vaccines and therapies, citing the need for more effective treatments for COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

Dr. Swaminathan will begin her tenure as the Chief Scientist of the WHO on March 1, 2023. Her role will involve providing scientific advice on issues related to global health, including pandemic preparedness and response, as well as overseeing the organization's research and development activities.

Source: <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/develop-vaccines-all-animal-influenza-strain-says-incoming-who-chief-scientist-2023-02-20/>

# GLOBAL MATERNAL MORTALITY RATES SURGE IN 2020

**The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant disruptions in healthcare systems globally, and the impact of the pandemic on maternal health has been severe, according to a new report by the World Health Organization, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Bank Group, and the United Nations Children's Fund.**

The report states that maternal mortality rates increased in most parts of the world during the pandemic, with low- and middle-income countries being the most affected. The report estimates that 1.1 million maternal deaths occurred in 2020, an increase from the estimated 980,000 deaths in 2019.

The increase in maternal deaths is attributed to disruptions in maternal health services caused by the diversion of resources to combat COVID-19 and restrictions on movement, which affected access to care. According to the report, disruptions in maternal health services were highest in the Asia-Pacific region, followed by the Middle East and North Africa, and then Latin America and the Caribbean.

The report urges countries to prioritize maternal and child health services in their pandemic response plans, including ensuring that healthcare workers have access to personal protective equipment, increasing investment in telemedicine and other digital health solutions, and providing financial support to families to ensure they can access essential services.

Source: <https://www.who.int/news/item/23-02-2023-a-woman-dies-every-two-minutes-due-to-pregnancy-or-childbirth--un-agencies>

# Thank you for your attention!

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