

COVID-19 EU Briefing 07 July 2020

Synopsis

Germany reportedly has been in discussions with the US health secretary and the US company Gilead regarding the production of remdesivir in the EU. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic has also depleted the resources of HIV medicines. In the European Parliament, the data privacy advocates in the Czech Pirate Party (Greens/EFA) have voiced criticism regarding the use of an Apple-owned system for their voting procedure.

General

Recovery

Health

- **German health minister Jens Spahn** [revealed](#) on Monday that the country has been in talks with pharma company Gilead to secure production of remdesivir in the EU.
- According to a new [WHO survey](#) conducted ahead of the International AIDS Society's biannual conference, 73 countries have warned that they are at risk of stock-outs of antiretroviral (ARV) medicines as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, another 24 countries reported having either a critically low stock of ARVs or disruptions in the supply of these medicines.
- The **European Commission** has approved two Austrian individual aid measures to support two coronavirus-relevant research and development (R&D) projects by micro biotech companies, **Apeptico** and **Panoptes**. It will support two R&D projects aiming at assessing the therapeutic potential of two medicinal products developed by Apeptico and Panoptes for the treatment of coronavirus patients.

Hospitality Sector

- MEPs from the European People's Party (EPP), socialist S&D and centrist Renew Europe groups have sent a [letter](#) to Commission's Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis asking him to take specific extraordinary measures to support Europe's hospitality sector. Among others, they request the **review of the excise duty rates** and a **reduced VAT rate in the hospitality sector**.

Banking Package

- The ECB has [published](#) an opinion on the CRR quick fix. The ECB fully supports the Commission's initiative to increase the capacity of credit institutions to lend and to absorb losses related to the COVID-19 pandemic, while still ensuring their continued resilience.

Fundamental Rights

- **Politico** reported that the European Commission will [launch](#) *Global Monitor*, a platform to monitor restrictions of fundamental rights introduced during the pandemic in 162 countries.

Institutions

Eurogroup

- **Politico** reported that finance ministers will elect their new chairman on Thursday, with Ireland's Paschal Donohue considered a leading figure in what is being [described](#) as a very competitive race.

European Parliament

- **Politico** [report](#) that there is opposition to the use of Apple's 'iVote' app in the European Parliament.
 - Over the past few weeks, Committees have used the app to allow electronic voting to take place.
 - However, Vice-President for ICT policy, MEP Marcel Kolaja (Pirate Party), has stated that the e-voting app is 'not a solution'.
 - Some MEPs, including Kolaja, say they refuse to use the app because they object to Apple's terms of service and data policy.

Member States

France

- **French President Emmanuel Macron** has [kept](#) Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire in his government, with a slight change in his title to reflect a focus on COVID-19 economic recovery.

Luxembourg

- The government of Luxembourg proposed a new coronavirus law with sanctions in case of infringement. It is planning to extend the requirement of two-metre social distancing and the wearing of masks to any gathering of more than 20 people.

Malta

- The Commission has [approved](#) a bond subscription facility of € 18.7 million by the Malta Development Bank (MDB) to support a bond issue by real estate developer Mediterranean Investment Holdings p.l.c. (MIH).

Spain

- A large-scale [study](#) conducted in Spain has found that only 5% of the population had developed antibodies against the coronavirus and that immunity against the novel coronavirus can be short-lived.