

COVID-19 EU Briefing 14 September 2020

Synopsis

The epidemiological situation in the Czech Republic has significantly worsened, as it climbs up the infection rate list to the 3rd highest in the European Union. Austria has also seen a spike in cases.

In terms of the EU's recovery, Budget Commissioner Hahn hit the headlines this weekend when he told the Financial Times that the Commission is considering the issuing of green bonds for the first time to fund the Next Generation EU Recovery Package worth €750bn.

Today also marks the start of an important week in the EU's harmonised approach to border closures and openings. Tomorrow the European Parliament will debate a more harmonised approach following a proposal from the German Presidency.

General

Recovery & Use of Green Bonds

- The **European Commission** Budget Commissioner Johannes Hahn has [told](#) the Financial Times that the Commission is considering issuing green bonds for the first time.
- The Chair of the European Parliament Environment Committee Pascal Canfin has told the FT that €200bn of the €750bn should be in the form of green bonds.

European Parliament Voting Procedures

- **Politico** reported that the European Parliament is set to extend the use of remote voting. The system has been [criticised](#) by some MEPs after the supposed lack of information being made available in the form of voting lists.

Airports & COVID-19:

- **EUROCONTROL** [highlighted](#) a study from the Airport Research Centre (ARC) which aimed to help airports understand the impact of implementing COVID-19 measures on airport performance.
- In collaboration with ACI EUROPE and other industry partners, the study assessed the impact of these measures on terminal operations, in particular passenger journey time, terminal throughput and boarding gate processing capacity.

COVID-19: Member States

France

- As the situation is deteriorating, French Prime Minister Jean Castex called on people to respect health measures including mask-wearing.
- He also announced that the duration of quarantine for anyone with coronavirus symptoms would be reduced from 14 days to 7 days.

Belgium

- The governor of the West Flemish province, Carl Decauwé, has urged EU countries to coordinate on an EU-wide travel risk assessment system.

Austria

- Austria is experiencing a second wave of infections and that is why Austrian Prime Minister Sebastian Kurz announced that wearing facemasks will become mandatory in the entire country for most public spaces, such as schools and museums.

Czech Republic

- The Czech Republic is experiencing a second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, confirmed Roman Prymula, who is currently responsible for science and medical research.
- Despite these warnings, Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš claims that the Czech Republic is still among the best countries when it comes to managing the COVID-19 health crisis.

International

- The **World Health Organization** [reported](#) a record one-day increase in global coronavirus cases on Sunday, with the total rising by 307,930 in 24 hours. The biggest increases were from India, the United States and Brazil.

Treatment

- The Commission [announced](#) that it will support with €4 million a new research project, SUPPORT-E, that will coordinate efforts to determine if COVID-19 convalescent plasma transfusion is an effective and safe treatment.

Vaccines

- British drugmaker AstraZeneca received the green light from safety watchdogs over the weekend to resume clinical trials for its COVID-19 vaccine candidate in the United Kingdom.

Infection Rate (measured by positive cases per 100,000 over 14 days)

- The Czech Republic's infection rate has dramatically increased from 75.9 to 106.2 (10/09 compared to 13/09). It is now ranked 3rd among the EU27+1 (from 6th).
- Hungary has also experienced a significant increase (45.3 – 63). Other countries to record notable rises in their rates are: Austria (55.9 – 67.9), the Netherlands (55.4 – 65.8), the United Kingdom (39.6 – 48.6), Denmark (35.7 – 43.3) and Slovenia (28.4 – 37).
- However, Luxembourg (147.4 – 94.3) and Croatia (91.7 – 86) have reduced their infection rates.
- The average rate among the EU27+1 has increased from 53.7 – 56.7.

Social and Employment Policies

The **European Parliament** has [published](#) a briefing on social and employment policies in Europe in the context of disruption caused by the COVID-19 crisis.

Source: DeHavillandEU