

## COVID-19 EU Briefing 17 November 2020

General

### Recovery

#### MFF

- COREPER yesterday voted on important elements on the EU Budget. The highlight of the voting session was the decision of Poland and Hungary to veto the new revisions to Own Resources.
- According to an FT journalist, an EU diplomat [described](#) the situation as a “crisis”.

#### *Key Votes:*

- MFF & Recovery plan: Two Member States [expressed](#) reservations with regard to their opposition to one element of the overall package - but not to the substance of the MFF agreement
- Conditionality mechanism: EU Ambassadors [confirmed](#) the final compromise text on the regulation on the protection of the Union budget (conditionality mechanism) with qualified majority.
- Own Resources: EU Ambassadors [could not reach](#) the necessary unanimity for initiating the written procedure due to reservations expressed by two member states.

#### *Amending budget:*

- The European Commission [sent](#) to the European Parliament and to the Council the Amending Letter No 1 to the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2021, following the recent political agreement between the European Parliament and the Council on the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027.
- It includes the changes in commitment and payment appropriations for all EU programmes.

#### *Reaction to Poland & Hungary Vote:*

- Politico reported that Budapest is widely considered to be a more problematic opponent.
- German European Affairs Minister Michael Roth questioned the opposition of Hungary and Poland, saying: “don’t understand the fear of this new rule-of-law conditionality”, adding that countries had “nothing to fear” if they adhered to the rule of law.
- Hungary criticised the European Parliament of “political blackmailing”.

#### Vaccine

Data from **US company Moderna** [shows](#) that its new COVID-19 vaccine is 94.5% effective.

- Moderna intends to submit for an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in the coming weeks and anticipates having the EUA informed by the final safety and efficacy data.
- Meanwhile, the **European Medicines Agency** [has started](#) a ‘rolling review’ of data of Moderna’s vaccine.

### *Sanofi:*

- The coronavirus vaccine being developed by Sanofi won't need to be super-cooled and a normal refrigerator will suffice, the Paris-based drugmaker's France chief Olivier Bogillot [said](#) on Sunday.
- The results of the Phase 2 tests, involving hundreds of people, will be made public in early December, he added. If those results are positive then Phase 3 trials involving thousands of people will begin, alongside mass production.

### *CureVac:*

- European Commission President von der Leyen [announced](#) that she will authorise a new contract to secure another COVID-19 vaccine with company CureVac

### *Marketing Authorisation:*

- EMA sources [have told](#) EURACTIV that The most likely scenario for COVID-19 vaccine candidates in the EU is a one-year conditional marketing authorisation (CMA). EMA agency chief Guido Rasi said he is expecting to give to go-ahead to the first COVID-19 vaccine in December and start distribution in January 2021.
- According to a [survey](#) by the pollster 40dB for EL PAÍS, 24.1% of Spaniards would get vaccinated as soon as possible, but 36.9% would wait some time before doing so. Another 20.6% would only accept the vaccine if it were strictly necessary, while 13.1% would never get vaccinated.
  - Meanwhile, in **Finland**, about 49% of Finns [say](#) they would be ready to take the COVID-19 vaccine if and when it becomes available.

### **Member States**

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

- The infection rate in Luxembourg has reduced from 1302.8 to 1264.4 (15/11 compared to 16/11).
- Slovenia (952.2 – 931.9), France (880.4 – 847.5) and Malta (379.9 – 351.5) have also recorded declines.
- However, Croatia (798 – 802.5), Lithuania (664.3 – 681.4) and Estonia (169.3 – 200.2) have recorded increases in their infection rates.
- The average amongst the EU27+1 continues to decline. It has reduce from 589 to 586.2.

### Austria

- Austria is to start mass COVID-19 testing on voluntary basis in December. Those who refuse testing will not be punished as was the case in Slovakia.

## Slovakia

- Cinemas, theatres and churches in Slovakia are allowed to stay open as of Monday provided they keep the operation at 50% capacity, while schools will remain closed for older children at least until Christmas.

## Germany

- According to a draft document [seen](#) by Reuters, Germany's federal government is considering new COVID-19 measures to halt the rise in infections, such as dramatically reducing the number of people at household gatherings and compulsory mask wearing for school students. State premiers were against introducing new rules now before the following meeting next week.

*Source: DeHavillandEU*