COVID-19 EU Briefing 10 March 2021

General Recovery

COVID-19 Vaccine

- Reuters reported that Johnson & Johnson has told the European Union it is facing supply issues that may complicate plans to deliver 55 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine to the bloc in the second quarter of the year. The official added the company had said it was not impossible to meet the goal, but that it showed caution.

BioNTech:

- BioNTech could have the capacity to develop 3 billion doses of its COVID-19 vaccine next year, Chief Executive Ugur Sahin said in an interview published on Tuesday.
- The European Commission announced it has reached an agreement with BioNTech-Pfizer for the supply of four million more doses of COVID-19 vaccines for Member States in the next two weeks.

WTO:

- World Trade Organization members on Tuesday urged its director-general, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, to hold talks with COVID-19 vaccine developers and manufacturers to scale up production, a document signed by seven members showed.

Digital Green Certificate

- The European Commission announced that it will publish its views for a digital green certificate on 17 March.

ACEA COVID-19 Production Losses

- The European Automobile Manufacturers Association (ACEA) has published an interactive map showing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the production of motor vehicles across the EU.
- In 2020, EU-wide production losses due to COVID-19 amounted to 4,243,577 vehicles which amounts to 22.9% of total EU 2019 production.
InvestEU Adopted by EP

- The European Parliament has voted to confirm the political agreement reached on InvestEU. The programme aims to provide the EU with crucial long-term funding, crowding in private investment, in support of the recovery and helping build a greener, more digital and more resilient European economy.
- Through a €26.2 billion budget guarantee, the InvestEU programme will leverage substantial private and public funds, with the overall investment estimated to be upwards of €372 billion.
- The programme will be structured around four policy windows:
  - Sustainable Infrastructure
  - Research, Innovation and Digitisation
  - SMEs
  - Social Investment and Skills
- The Council now also needs to formally approve the agreement. The regulation is aimed to come in to force in April 2021.

Member States

Finland

- Restaurants will be closed to customers until 28 March 2021 in areas where it is necessary to stop the acceleration of the epidemic. These include the areas where the coronavirus epidemic is in acceleration or community transmission phase and Central Finland.

Belgium

- Belgium has passed the threshold of 1 million vaccines administered, health expert Sabine Stordeur of the Vaccination Task Force said on Tuesday. The next phase of the vaccination campaign, for over-65s who are not in a residential care centre, started this week.

Romania

- The government is proposing the reintroduction of some restrictions, but drastic measures will not be taken, despite a few discoveries of the UK or Brazilian variants.
Estonia

- As of the previous week, arrivals in Estonia from Croatia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway do not have to self-quarantine, though Greece has dropped off the list after its rate exceeded the ceiling in the past week, and arrivals from that country must now quarantine.
- The government has approved the latest round of coronavirus regulations, which will put the country in effective lock-down from Thursday for one month, to April 11.
- Meanwhile, it was agreed on Tuesday to request an additional 660,000 additional doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine from the EU's joint procurement scheme providing it can be delivered in the second quarter.

France

- No company in France has signed a contract with Russia to produce its Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine, a spokesman for France's industry minister said on Tuesday.
- The losses are the result of factory shutdowns during lockdowns and the fact production has not yet returned to pre-crisis levels.

Source: DeHavillandEU