

Contents

I. Summary 1
II. European Union..... 2
III. Italy 7
IV. France 7
V. Germany 8
VI. Spain 9
VII. United Kingdom..... 10

I. SUMMARY

EUROPEAN UNION



Number of cases: 852,174 (including the UK)

Number of deaths: 85,926

- Discussions at an EU level are turning towards de-scaling of confinement measures and coordination of action among the Member States, while nonetheless considering for the different stages seen in each country.
On 15 April Europe the European Commission and the European Council published has Joint European Roadmap to phase-out the containment measures to the coronavirus outbreak.
As part of this Roadmap, the European Commission also published guidelines on coronavirus testing methodologies, as well as a factsheet on what the EU is doing regarding testing kits for COVID-19.
President von der Leyen released a statement on the EU response to COVID-19, and announced that an online pledging conference will take place on 4 May to support funding for vaccine development.

- On 14 April a [Council Regulation](#) activating the emergency support under Regulation (EU) 2016/369 was published. The aim of this legislation is to allow for the flexibility needed to ensure a prolonged coordinated response under unforeseen circumstances, such as the COVID - 19 crisis. This includes the provision of medical supplies and medication, recovery measures, and relevant medical research.
- On 14 April, the European Parliament's Committee on Internal Market and Consumer Protection [held a meeting](#) discussing – among others – coronavirus-related scams, use of telecom data to fight the pandemic as well as medical imports.

For more information, please get in touch with **Charline Quillérou, Associate Director EU** at c.quillerou@rpp-group.com

FRANCE



Number of cases: 106,206

Number of deaths: 17,616 (*including retirement homes*)

- For the first time since the beginning of the pandemic, the number of hospitalized people decreased in France on 15 April, with 31,800 hospitalizations instead of 32,313 the day before.
- The end of confinement measures will take place 11 May as per the decision by the French President announced on 13 April. However, this date may be postponed if confinement measures are not strictly respected until this date.
- The French Navy announced on 15 April that 688 sailors were infected by the Covid-19, on the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier. Some twenty sailors are hospitalized.
- Prime Minister Edouard Philippe announced on 15 April that an exceptional financial bonus of EUR 1,500 will be distributed to frontline health workers who were directly in contact with infected patients.
- According to the Minister of Labour, Muriel Pénicaud, almost 50% of the French companies are affected by partial unemployment. She announced on 16 April that 9 million employees are now concerned from 700,000 companies.

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GERMANY



Number of cases: 134,753

Number of deaths: 3,804

- On 15 April, the German Federal Government as well as the Federal States agreed upon several measures to gradually open the economy.
- Beginning from next week, shops with a sales area of up to 800 square metres as well as car and bicycle shops and bookstores regardless of their size can be re-opened. Furthermore, schools and universities are gradually opened beginning from 4 May and final examinations will take place. In kindergartens and schools, emergency care is being expanded for additional occupational groups.
- Special protective measures are established for nursing homes, institutions for the elderly and disabled persons. The wearing of mouth and nose protection is not mandatory in public places, but strongly recommended.
- On the other hand, the opening of restaurants, bars, pubs and hotels remains prohibited. The same applies to the opening of service businesses, where physical proximity is essential. One exception is hairdressers, who can already open on 4 May under strict hygiene conditions. The regular use of day nurseries remains prohibited. Major events are prohibited until 31 August. The meeting of religious groups will also remain prohibited, as will private travel and visits.

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ITALY



Number of cases: 165,155

Number of deaths: 21,645

- The lock down will be extended until 3 May. However, the government decided to allow the re-opening of some activities, such as bookshops, stationery stores and children's clothes shops. Regions however are allowed to derogate from these measures.
- Several scientific experts have developed guidelines suggesting the best way to face the weeks and months to come while safely managing the transition from pandemic to endemic.
- The Government is working on the so-called phase 2, consisting in a partial loosening of the restrictive measures currently in force, that should start as from 4 May
- Several senators of the 5Stars Movement (M5S) addressed a note to the Ministry of Health indicating some measures that should be adopted to tackle the phase 2.
- The University policlinic of Pavia (Lombardy region) is continuing its studies with the collection of blood plasma from recovered COVID-19 patients (convalescent plasma) for the treatment of ill patients.

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SPAIN



Number of cases: 182,816

Number of deaths: 19,130

- The government underwent its first scrutiny session on 15 April since the outbreak of the coronavirus crisis and start of the state of emergency. Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez praised the efforts Spaniards are making under the lockdown. A task force led by Vice-

president Teresa Ribera is now analysing how and when to phase-out containment measures in place.

- The government is calling political groups to join forces and set a National Pact as a cross-party agreement on economic and social measures after the crisis. According to a recent official poll, almost 90% of surveyed believe political forces, including the opposition, should be helping the government to face the crisis.
- The Health Institute Carlos III, a governmental body, is funding research projects on COVID-19 with a total current amount of EUR 5 million. The projects aim inter alia at improving the quality of life of patients, health professionals and researchers.

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UNITED KINGDOM



Number of cases: 98,476

Number of deaths: 12,868

- First Secretary Dominic Raab continues to deputise for Boris Johnson, who is recovering in his private residence on Downing Street after three nights in intensive care last week.
- Raab is expected to extend lockdown measures for three weeks from today. Northern Ireland First Minister Arlene Foster yesterday (15 April) confirmed a devolved lockdown extension to 9 May as Northern Ireland battles the ‘first wave’ of the virus.
- Health Minister Nadine Dorries has suggested some social distancing measures will need to be in place until a vaccine is developed and distributed. Chancellor Rishi Sunak is pushing for a lockdown extension with a view to easing restrictions by sector over the coming months to mitigate the scale of the economic downturn.
- Opposition leader Keir Starmer has indicated his support for an extension but has pushed the government to publish its exit strategy ahead of Parliament’s return from Easter recess on 21 April. A hybrid parliamentary model of virtual and limited participation is expected, and ministerial statements, questions and ‘scrutiny’ sessions will likely be prioritised.

- Fresh from criticism over the prevalence of COVID-19 and the thousands of unreported deaths in care homes, Health Secretary Matt Hancock unveiled a plan to deliver personal protective equipment (PPE) to care homes and a testing plan for anyone returning from hospital to a care home. The move builds on his national PPE manufacture and distribution plan, which initially focussed on delivering PPE to clinical settings.

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II. EUROPEAN UNION

- The [Joint European Roadmap](#) to phase-out the containment measures to the coronavirus outbreak was [published](#) on 15 April by the European Commission and the European Council. This Roadmap includes guidelines for Member States to develop and maintain sufficient capacities, resilience of healthcare systems, increase testing capacities and reporting, and promote vaccine and treatment development. It also formulates specific recommendations on how to reopen borders and the economies.
- As part of the abovementioned Joint European Roadmap, the European Commission also published [guidelines](#) on in-vitro coronavirus diagnostic tests on 15 April, to support Member States with a common framework for using and evaluating different testing methodologies. The aim of the Commission is to promote a common EU approach to testing strategies.
- On 15 April the European Commission published a [factsheet](#) on what the EU is doing regarding testing kits for COVID-19. This factsheet emphasises the importance of coordination of European authorities and Member States to facilitate diagnosis for control and to guide further measures development.
- On 15 April President von der Leyen released a [statement](#) on the EU response to COVID-19. She outlined the three most important pre-conditions to allow for the lifting of restrictive measures: 1) sound epidemiological data on decreasing infection numbers, 2) sufficient health system capacities, 3) sufficient surveillance and monitoring system in place.
- The Eurogroup concluded that 'the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) will play a central role in the EU economic recovery'. In order to support vaccine development, it was also announced that an online pledging conference will take place on 4 May.
- On 15 April an informal [videoconference](#) of EU Health ministers was organised by the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU. This conference aimed to coordinate the approach in moving

forward, particularly referring to the EU's response to COVID-19 and to the exchange views on de-escalation of measures. This de-escalation will depend on the specific situation of each Member State.

- On 14 April a [Council Regulation](#) activating the emergency support under Regulation (EU) 2016/369, and amending its provisions taking into account the COVID - 19 outbreak was published. This includes the provision of medical supplies and medication, recovery measures, and relevant medical research. This refers to activation of finance expenditure necessary to address the pandemic between 1 February 2020 to 31 January 2022.

III. ITALY

- The Government is working on the so-called phase 2, consisting of a partial loosening of the restrictive measures currently in force, that should start as of 4 May. Several discussions at national and regional level will take place in the coming days to decide the best ways to tackle the future phase.
- Several senators of the 5Stars Movement (M5S) in the health and Hygiene Commission in the Senate [suggested](#) to the Minister of Health some measures that should be adopted to tackle the Phase 2. Among them, the M5S call for an extensive use of swabs testing, especially in sensitive areas such as hospitals and nursing homes as well as the use of serological tests. These will be functional to identify the immunized people and asymptomatic carriers of the virus to allow their reintegration into productive activities.
- The University policlinic of Pavia (Lombardy region) is continuing their studies with the collection of blood plasma from recovered COVID-19 patients (convalescent plasma) for the treatment of ill patients. People who recovered or tested positive but never experienced symptoms may develop antibodies that can help to neutralise the virus. The treatment is still in the experimental phase – but there is hope is [to have a blood test ready to check for antibodies in the plasma by the end of April](#). The first donors will be selected by the end of the month as well. Once the antibody test is approved, Italy will also open its blood banks to donations from people with COVID-19 antibodies.

IV. FRANCE

- French President Emmanuel Macron announced that confinement measures are extended until 11 May.
 - The question of exit strategy was also addressed by the President.

- Elderly people and vulnerable people will stay at home after the date of 11 May.
- Schools, nurseries will reopen from 11 May, but universities will remain closed until September.
- The Scientific Council's President, Jean-François Delfraisy explained on 15 April that 18 million of French citizens will remain in quarantine after 11 May because of their age or health conditions. He also stated that the date of 11 May can be postponed if confinement measures are not strictly respected.
- For the first time since the beginning of the pandemic, the number of hospitalized people decreased on 15 April, with 31,800 hospitalizations instead of 32,313 compared to the day before, according to Jérôme Salomon, health director general.
- The number of patients in critical condition in hospitals have been decreasing since the past 7 days, suggesting the flattening of the pandemic curve. On 15 April alone, a decline of 263 patients in critical condition was recorded.
- The French Navy announced on 15 April that 688 sailors were infected by the Covid-19 on the Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier. This represents almost one third of the total number of sailors present on the ship. Some twenty sailors are hospitalized.
- Prime Minister Edouard Philippe announced on 15 April that an exceptional financial bonus of EUR 1,500 will be distributed to frontline health workers who were directly in contact with infected patients. The other health workers will receive a bonus of EUR 500.
- Health Minister Olivier Véran announced on 15 April that every health worker will be paid twice for their overtime hours. He also announced a bonus of between EUR 1,000 and EUR 2,000 for every worker in retirement homes.
- The Minister of Labour, Muriel Pénicaud, announced on 16 April that 9 million employees from 700,000 companies are concerned by the partial unemployment plan. This corresponds to almost 50% of the French companies.
 - The partial unemployment plan enables a given company to reduce its activities, or even stop it during a given time period. This plan was created to avoid massive dismissals. The employees will be paid by the government (70% of their normal salary) during the time of the plan.

V. GERMANY

- On 15 April, the German Federal Government as well as the Federal States agreed on certain measures to gradually open up the German economy and society. Beginning from next week, shops with a sales area of up to 800 square metres as well as car and bicycle shops and bookstores

regardless of their size can be re-opened. Furthermore, schools and universities are gradually opened beginning from 4 May, therefore, final examinations will take place. In kindergartens and schools, emergency care is being expanded for additional occupational groups. Special protective measures are established for nursing homes, institutions for the elderly and disabled persons. The wearing of mouth and nose protection is not mandatory in public places, but strongly recommended.

- On the other hand, the opening of restaurants, bars, pubs and hotels remains prohibited. The same applies to the opening of service businesses, where physical proximity is essential. One exception is hairdressers, who already open on 4 May under strict hygiene conditions. The regular use of day nurseries remains prohibited. Major events are prohibited until 31 August. The meeting of religious groups will also remain prohibited, as will private travel and visits.
- During the press conference in which Chancellor Angela Merkel announced these measures, Ms. Merkel named the current positive developments of COVID-19 infection rates as a fragile success, she called the general public to continue to comply with the restrictive measures currently implemented.

VI. SPAIN

- After a month of lockdown and state of emergency in Spain [the first accountability session to the government](#) during the crisis took place in the Congress on 15 April. Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez stated that since the state of emergency was first decreed daily contagion cases have decreased from 35% to 3% thanks to the confinement measures and the increase of diagnostic tests carried out. The crisis however is not over and a third extension of the state of emergency until 10 May appears likely. In this regard, Teresa Ribera, Vice-president for a Green Transition, is coordinating the task force responsible for designing the transition towards a softer lockdown. The task force includes key ministries such as the Ministry of Health, Foreign Affairs and Social Services and experts from the Scientific Committee who have been giving advice to the government on the management of the crisis.
- During the plenary session, amid criticism from the opposition on the government's management of the crisis, Mr Sánchez called for a greater unity amongst regional and local authorities, social agents and all parliamentary forces. He insisted on putting the general interest first to launch a [social and economic reconstruction plan](#) to mitigate the negative impact of the coronavirus crisis. He wants to create a political unity in a similar manner that was done under 'Pactos de la Moncloa', signed in 1977, ensuring Spain's democratic transition. The aim of a national pact would be to unite political forces for a successful recovery in Spain after the coronavirus crisis. The Prime Minister has started talks with political representatives on the matter. According to the [latest pool](#) from the

Centre for Sociological Investigations (CIS), 87.8% of surveyed individuals believe all political forces should be helping the government to face the crisis.

- The Health Institute Carlos III (ISCIII), through the COVID-19 Fund, is currently funding [15 research projects](#) with EUR 5 million to increase knowledge about the virus, seek short-term solutions to improve the quality of life of patients, health professionals and researchers. For instance, one of the projects tackles medicine repositioning and is based on supercomputing. The call has so far received over 1,300 applications.

VII. UNITED KINGDOM

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson continues to recover in his private residence on Downing Street and is expected to do so for several weeks after spending three nights in intensive care last week. First Secretary of State Dominic Raab continues to deputise in his stead and is expected to lead the government decision to extend lockdown measures for three weeks. Opposition leader Keir Starmer has indicated Labour support for an extension to lockdown measure, while Northern Ireland First Minister Arlene Foster yesterday (15 April) confirmed a devolved lockdown extension to 9 May as Northern Ireland battles the ‘first wave’ of the virus. Junior Health Minister Nadine Dorries has indicated that the only conclusive ‘exit’ from lockdown is through a vaccine, and until then some degree of social distancing will have to remain in place while balancing the health of the nation and of the economy. Chancellor Rishi Sunak is pushing for a lockdown extension with a view to easing restrictions by sector to mitigate the scale of the economic downturn.
- A lengthier initial extension allows Johnson to resume power and the government more time to finalise an exit strategy from lockdown measures, which Starmer has urged the government to publish by next Tuesday (21 April) to coincide with Parliament’s return and allow for proper parliamentary scrutiny of the strategy. A hybrid model of virtual and limited participation is expected, allowing a small number of MPs to be physically present in the Commons, and oral question time sessions, ministerial statements, questions and ‘scrutiny’ sessions will be prioritised. It remains to be seen whether this allows for the COVID-19 scrutiny sought by the shadow health ministers.
- Fresh from criticism over the prevalence of COVID-19 in care homes across the UK, Health Secretary Matt Hancock has committed to ensuring all care workers who need to be tested are referred to testing facilities. The plan outlines that everyone going into a care home from hospital will be tested, and testing will be extended to the first five residents of each care home that present with symptoms to ascertain whether there has been an outbreak. To mitigate the spread of COVID-19, Hancock has overhauled the personal protective equipment (PPE) delivery system to provide

direct dispatches of PPE, and the government is trialling a new telephone hotline and website for people in care homes to order PPE.

- The first of the new mechanical ventilators designed in response to the government's public plea last month will go into production this week after regulatory approval. An industry consortium will construct an initial 5,000 machines towards the government target of at least 18,000 total ventilators by late April to meet the expected peak number of cases. Other manufacturers are braced to lose out on their ventilators being commissioned after failing to meet regulatory approval.
- A hospital in Wales is trialling a new COVID-19 treatment pathway and hopes to offer the treatment as part of its trial within a month. The treatment involves extracting so-called convalescent plasma, i.e. the plasma from the blood of people who have recovered from COVID-19 and administering it to patients, in the hope that antibodies in the plasma will fight the infection. The new trial comes after the government's announcement last week of the world's largest randomised control trial of various COVID-19 treatments.