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I. SUMMARY

EUROPEAN UNION



Number of cases: 1,248,033 (including the UK)

Number of deaths: 147,558

- A compilation of commentaries and reports from international think tanks titled “coronavirus: from lock-down to de-confinement, and beyond” was [published](#) by the European Parliament.
- On 7 May, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) announced an update to the [eSubmission Gateway](#) interface so that applicants can flag COVID-19 submissions for prioritisation.
- The EMA also published an [update](#) on 8 May on EU actions to support availability of medicines during the pandemic.
- A [videoconference](#) of the Eurogroup took place on 8 May. Topics discussed included pandemic crisis support, as well as the spring forecast for the economic situation in the euro area.
- A [report](#) was published on 8 May of the Health Security Committee meeting of 5 May. This meeting discussed a number of COVID-19 topics, such as the Emergency Support Instrument (ESI) and Clearing House, cross-border support in healthcare, exit strategies,

and vaccination strategy. The issue of a Kawasaki-like disease in children connected to COVID-19 was also discussed.

- Regarding humanitarian aid, on 8 May the European Commission [announced](#) that it has set up an EU Humanitarian Air Bridge, currently prioritising African countries where the pandemic has the potential to worsen existing humanitarian crises.
- On 8 May the European Commission [invited](#) Schengen Member States and Associated States to extend temporary restrictions on non-essential travel to the EU until 15 June.
- The European Commission published a [guidance](#) on 8 May on the free movement of health professionals and minimum harmonisation of training in relation to COVID-19 emergency measures.
- The European Court of Auditors published an [opinion](#) on 8 May concerning the proposal of the Parliament and Council regarding specific measures to provide exceptional flexibility for the use of the European Structural and Investments Funds in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. The CoA stresses that the proposed amended rules must be temporary only, due to the exceptional situation.
- On 8 May Commissioner Kyriakides [published](#) remarks she made at the Webinar of the EU Health Policy Platform on the impact of COVID-19 in society.
- On 11 May there was an [exchange of views](#) between the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) of the European Parliament and Mr. Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal, on the European recovery after COVID-19.
- An [exchange of views](#) between the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) of the European Parliament and Anne Bucher, Director-General of the European Commission's Directorate-General "Health and Food Safety" (SANTE), took place on 11 May. This meeting discussed the Commission's activities related to measures regarding COVID-19.
 - The ENVI Committee sent a [letter](#) on 8 May to Commissioners Johannes Hahn (Budget and Administration), Stella Kyriakides (Health and Food Safety) and Janez Lenarčič (Crisis Management) referring to the Multiannual Financial Framework and requesting the creation of a dedicated standalone health programme.

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

FRANCE



Number of cases: 139,063

Number of deaths: 26,380 (*including retirement homes*)

- Today on 11 May, France is starting its first stage of its exit strategy, which will last until 2 June. Schools and shops reopen and people can go out without any authorisation. Wearing masks is mandatory in public transportation, however, travels of more than 100 kilometres are forbidden.
- The legislative proposal to extend the sanitary state of emergency until 24 July has been adopted by the Parliament on 4 May and 5 May. However, it did not enter into force yet, as it is under review by the constitutional court which will make a decision on 11 May.
- France recorded 70 COVID-19 related deaths on 10 May, which is the lowest rate since the beginning of March. However, four local clusters of infection were discovered this weekend in Vendée, Clamart, Dordogne and Vienne. Local strategies have been implemented to limit the spread of the virus.
- The COVID-19 crisis has led to EUR 41 billion deficit for the French social security, according to the Minister for Public Action and Accounts, Gerald Darmanin.

For more information, please get in touch with **Salomé Chelli-Enriquez, Director RPP France** at s.chelli-enriquez@rpp-group.com

GERMANY



Number of cases: 171,879

Number of deaths: 7,569

- The following measures become effective on May 11: (1) the resumption of attendance classes in schools, (2) the extension of emergency childcare, (3) possibility to visit hospitals as well as nursing and retirement homes, (4) the opening of all shops independently from their size, (5) the permission of resumption of sports training in the open air.

- Due to the decentralisation of the competence to establish confinements, there are divergences in terms of restrictive measures between different the German regions. This is particularly noticeable for regions in which the infection rate increases upon 50 new infections per 100,000 inhabitants. To date, this rate was surpassed by several regions in Germany including Coesfeld (North-Rhine Westphalia), Greiz and Sonneberg (Thuringia) as well as Rosenheim (Bavaria). Authorities are expected to implement confinement measures in these regions once again.
- On Saturday, 9 May, the head of the German Public Health Institute, the Robert-Koch-Institute, Lothar Wieler confirmed that the national COVID-19 infection rate increased to 1.1. In this context, Mr. Wieler called on the general public to comply with precautionary measures such as the social distancing of 1.5 metres and the wearing of masks in shops and public transport. An infection rate of below 1% would be crucial to limit the spread of COVID-19.

For more information, please get in touch with **Franziska Schoeps, Associate Director Germany** at f.schoeps@rpp-group.com

ITALY



Number of cases: 219,070

Number of deaths: 30,560

- Italy is now the second European country, together with the UK to reach 30.000 confirmed deaths.
- The data of the first week of phase 2 are expected to be released by the end of this week. This will guide the Technical Scientific Committee to finalise the guidelines which will establish the conditions to reopen commercial activities. If the data of this first week is encouraging, some activities, like bars and restaurants, will be allowed to reopen before the original date planned on 1 June. However, scientists are cautious and it is expected that the conditions will be very strict.
- Italian authorities have published guidelines for safe travels with public transportation.
- Italian health authorities have also authorized the resumption of artificial insemination treatments, suspended in March due to COVID-19.

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SPAIN



Number of cases: 268,143

Number of deaths: 26,744

- 51% of the Spanish population is as of today under phase 1 of the exit strategy. Although almost all regions applied for a transition from phase 0 to phase 1, Madrid, and part of Castilla y León, Valencia, Castilla la Mancha, Andalusia and Catalonia got their requests rejected by the Ministry of Health for not meeting the set criteria. A second application can be submitted in a week.
- For regions in phase 1, the Ministry published an order including softer containment measures. President Pedro Sánchez announced that a fifth extension of the state of emergency will be tabled since the exit strategy needs such institutional measures to implement the strategy. The current state of emergency expires on 24 May.

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UNITED KINGDOM



Number of cases: 219,183

Number of deaths: 31,855

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson yesterday (10 May) set out broad and conditional steps for England to gradually ease some lockdown restrictions as part of a new COVID-19 alert system. From Wednesday, people will be able to take unlimited amounts of outdoor exercise, and people from different households will be able to meet outside provided they keep two metres apart. Some school years will return from 1 June at the earliest, and some shops will be allowed to reopen in the coming weeks; the exact timetable hinges on local incidences of COVID-19 infection as indicated through the alert system.
- Both Welsh and Scottish first ministers have criticised the UK government's core 'alert' message as too open-ended and have pursued a more stringent approach over the next few weeks. Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has criticised the UK government's new 'stay alert' message, indicating that the Scottish government will continue to urge people to

'stay home' and only leave the house for food, medicine, exercise and essential work. Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford also extended lockdown measures for a further three weeks from 7 May and has amended measures to permit people to exercise more than once a day.

- Johnson will elaborate on the Government's exit plan on 11 May; the broad and heavily conditional plan will run in conjunction with the Government's 'test, track, trace' programme in development. The Government has steadily increased the number of tests carried out each day, reaching 92,837 over the weekend, while a contact-tracing app being trialled on the Isle of Wight has been downloaded by nearly a third of its 180,000 population.

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II. EUROPEAN UNION

- As lock-down measures are slowly relaxed, many think tanks have started to analyse how to revive the economies without restarting the pandemic. A compilation of commentaries and reports from international think tanks titled “coronavirus: from lock-down to de-confinement, and beyond” was [published](#) by the European Parliament. These publications cover a range of topics from public health, to defense and economy.
- On 7 May the European Medicines Agency (EMA) announced that it has updated the [eSubmission Gateway](#) interface so that applicants can flag COVID-19 submissions. This will enable the prioritisation of such submissions.
- On 8 May, the EMA published an [update](#) on EU actions to support the availability of medicines during the pandemic. This was preceded by a meeting of the EU Executive Steering Group on Shortages of Medicines Caused by Major Events on 6 May. Discussions focused on medicine supply in intensive care units (ICUs) and national demands, and a collaborative project will be further discussed at the next meeting.
- A [videoconference](#) of the Eurogroup took place on 8 May. Topics discussed included pandemic crisis support, as well as the spring forecast for the economic situation in the euro area. The Eurogroup [agreed](#) on the Pandemic Crisis Support instrument of the European Stability Mechanism, which is available to EEA Member States for 2% of their respective GDP as of end-2019 to support COVID-19 related costs. The discussion on the economic [spring forecast](#) will inform the group’s efforts for recovery. It estimates that the EU economy will have fallen by more than 7% by the end of 2020, and to recover 6% by the end of 2021.
- A [report](#) was published on 8 May of the meeting of the Health Security Committee of 5 May discussing COVID-19. This meeting included an update on the Emergency Support Instrument (ESI) and Clearing House, as well as on the state of play regarding these. The meeting also discussed cross-border support in healthcare, and Member States were encouraged to use relevant mechanisms to improve this. The Committee will revert back on questions regarding cross-border transport of patients, as well as medical personnel and teams. Countries provided updates on exit strategies and the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC) presented an online tool for monitoring transmission. A dedicated meeting will be organised to further discuss the vaccination strategy. The issue of Kawasaki-like disease in children connected to COVID-19 was also discussed.
- On 8 May the European Commission [announced](#) that it has set up an EU Humanitarian Air Bridge. This is a joint effort with Member States and it focuses on repatriation and transport of humanitarian

workers and materials. The effort currently prioritises African countries where the pandemic has the potential to worsen existing humanitarian crises.

- On 8 May the European Commission has [invited](#) Schengen Member States and Associated States to extend temporary restrictions on non-essential travel to the EU until 15 June. The Joint European Roadmap on lifting containment measures stated that the lifting of travel measures should be gradual, and internal border control will take place first.
- The European Commission published a [guidance](#) on 8 May concerning the free movement of health professionals and minimum harmonisation of training in relation to COVID-19 emergency measures. The document relays guidance on how to recognise and allow work for health professionals in cross-border situations, early graduation and temporary adaptations of curricula due to the crisis, and registration of healthcare professionals qualified outside the EU/EFTA Member States.
- The European Court of Auditors published on 8 May an [opinion](#) the proposal of the Parliament and Council regarding specific measures to provide exceptional flexibility for the use of the European Structural and Investments Funds in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. They conclude that while the short-term measures are needed to support Member States, this should not substantially compromise accountability of spending in order to maintain trust of citizens in the EU institutions.
- Commissioner Kyriakides [published](#) remarks made at the Webinar of the EU Health Policy Platform on the impact of COVID-19 in society on 8 May. She calls COVID-19 “a wake-up call that we need to act upon now”. She highlights that the Commission is supporting Member States, coordinating with EU Health Ministers, working to develop a vaccine, and to control COVID-19. She also refers that this situation is particularly tough for elderly people, or people with pre-existing mental and physical conditions, with the added stress of disruption of care plans, as well as difficulties for frontline health workers. With this, she also refers to the opening of the European Mental Health Week.
- On 11 May there was an [exchange of views](#) between the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE) of the European Parliament and Mr. Frans Timmermans, Executive Vice-President for the European Green Deal, on the European recovery after COVID-19. It was emphasised that the Green Deal and digitalisation will be key to the recovery and growth of the European economy. There is also the need to strengthen resilience and independence of the European single market.
- An [exchange of views](#) between the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) of the European Parliament and Anne Bucher, Director-General of the European Commission’s Directorate-General “Health and Food Safety” (SANTE), took place on 11 May. This meeting discussed the Commission’s activities related to the development of COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. UIT also discussed clinical trials, medicine shortages, and access to medicines and

personal protective equipment. Several Members of the European Parliament raised the issue of budget allocation under the next proposal for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), which is predicted to be published in the coming month.

- The latter issue regarding the MFF is highlighted by a [letter](#) sent by the the ENVI Committee on 8 May to Commissioners Johannes Hahn (Budget and Administration), Stella Kyriakides (Health and Food Safety) and Janez Lenarčič (Crisis Management). Previously, the European Commission had decided not to create a separate health programme under the MFF. Through this letter and during discussions, ENVI members request the adaptation of the MFF to create a stand-alone Health Programme.

III. FRANCE

- The end of confinement measures on 11 May was announced by Edouard Philippe in a press conference on 7 May.
- The following will be applicable from 11 May until 2 June:
 - Schools reopen with sanitary measures, welcoming priority students. This concerns more than a million children, according to the Minister for Education, Jean-Michel Blanquer.
 - However, some regions unilaterally decided not to open schools. On 3 May, 316 mayors from the Paris area, called solemnly to the President to postpone reopening of schools for red areas. Most of them decided not to open the schools on 11 May.
 - Shops reopen, however, bars and restaurants will remain closed for now.
 - Wearing masks becomes mandatory in public transportation, and a written authorisation must be made by the employer for every employee taking public transportation. Protective masks are now sold in supermarkets and pharmacies.
 - Travels of more than 100 kilometres are forbidden.
 - The government aims to do 700,000 tests a week in order to isolate infected patients as soon as possible. However, sanitary authorities announced that only 150,000 test are currently available per week.
- The legislative proposal to extend the sanitary state of emergency until 24 July has been adopted by the Parliament on 4 May and 5 May. It enables the government to adopt every necessary measure, without any vote from the Parliament. However, it did not enter into force yet, as it is under review by the constitutional court on 11 May.

- The COVID-19 crisis led to a EUR 41 billion deficit for French social security, according to the Minister for Public Action and Accounts, Gerald Darmanin. After 18 years of strict discipline to reduce the social security's deficit, it sharply increased again due to the sanitary expenses.
- The European Discovery clinical trial did not publish yet the results of the trial. This European clinical trial aimed to test four different molecules on Covid-19 infection and aimed to include 3,200 patients across Europe. The government announced that the results will be published by the middle of May, with at least one month of delay considering the initial date of published results. Moreover, on the 3,200 patients initially planned, only 740 effectively participated to the trial, including 739 French patients which limits its scientific impact.
- France recorded 70 deaths on 10 May, which is the lowest rate since the beginning of March. However, four local infection clusters were discovered this weekend in Vendée, Clamart, Dordogne and Vienne. These clusters started in a slaughterhouse, a young workers household, a church and a school. Many French scientists see the premises of a second wave.
- The French Institute for Health and Research (Inserm) published an opinion on 10 May in which it acknowledged that a second wave can be avoided if social distancing is strictly respected, with 50% of the population at home and a reduced reopening of shops and companies.

IV. ITALY

- Italy is now the second European country, together with the UK to reach 30.000 confirmed deaths.
- The Ministry of Health is expected to provide this week some statistics on the trend of the COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the second phase of the easing of the lockdown-measures on 4 May. This will be done on weekly basis.
- The Minister of Regional Affairs and autonomies, Francesco Boccia said that this data will guide the recommendations that the Technical-Scientific Committee is drafting and will finalise in the coming days. If the data is encouraging, some commercial activities (like bars and restaurants) will be allowed to reopen as from 18 May, instead of 1 June, as originally planned. However, the conditions for reopening are expected to be very strict.
- Italian authorities have published [guidelines for safe travels with public transport](#). Authorities consider that the public transport system should be considered a situation of medium-high risk and high-risk during rush hour. Users are therefore asked to respect basic rules such as keeping social distances, using disposable gloves and wearing face masks.
- Italian authorities have adopted an emergency [decree](#) allowing the processing of data – including genetic and health data – of patients that have tested positive to COVID-19. The Ministry of Health

will cooperate with the Italian National Institute of Statistics to compile reliable and complete epidemiological studies and statistics on the development of the virus among the population. This data will be used for statistical purposes and scientific studies.

- Italian health authorities have also authorised the [resumption of artificial insemination treatments](#), suspended in March due to COVID-19. The authorities consider that the necessary conditions are today present for the resumption of treatments, with priority being given for couples with urgent profiles and treatments suspended during the pandemic.

V. GERMANY

- Beginning 11 May, the following loosening of restrictive measures come into force: (1) the resumption of attendance classes in schools before the summer holidays, (2) the extension of emergency childcare, (3) the permission for certain persons to visit hospitals as well as nursing and retirement homes, (4) the opening of all shops independently of their size, (5) the permission of resumption of exercising in open air.
- Due to the decentralisation of the competence to introduce confinement measures, divergences in terms of restrictive measures between different German regions are visible. This is particularly true for regions in which the infection rate increases upon 50 new infections per 100,000 inhabitants. To date, this rate was surpassed by several regions in Germany including Coesfeld (North-Rhine Westphalia), Greiz and Sonneberg (Thuringia) as well as Rosenheim (Bavaria). Here, authorities are expected to again implement confinements.
- On Saturday, 9 May, the Head of the German Public Health Institute, Robert-Koch-Institute, Lothar Wieler confirmed that the COVID-19 reproduction rate increased to 1.1. In this context, Mr. Wieler called on the general public to comply with precautionary measures such as the social distance of 1.5 metres and the wearing of masks in shops and public transport. A reproduction rate of below 1 would be crucial to limit the spread of COVID-19 sustainably.
- In a COVID-19 podcast, Chancellor Angela Merkel promised support of cultural organisation. By referring to the supportive programmes of self-employed individuals, the Federal Government intends to develop similar mechanisms to ensure the maintenance of the cultural environment e.g in providing grants and financial support for cultural productions that cannot be performed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

VI. SPAIN

- Several regions meeting the criteria set by the Ministry of Health (capacity of the healthcare system, epidemiological situation, protection measures in public spaces, and data on mobility and socioeconomic conditions) are now in phase 1 of the exit strategy. Even though Madrid, Valencia, Castilla y León, Castilla La Mancha, Andalusia and Catalonia applied for a transition to phase 1, the Ministry does not consider their entire territories meet the criteria. 51% of the Spanish population is therefore now on phase 1 in which containment measures are gradually being lifted, as put forward in [the legal order](#) published by the Ministry. During phase 1, establishments of up to 400 square metres can reopen with a third of their total capacity, terraces in bars and restaurants with 50% of their capacity and up to 10 customers per table, museums with 33% of their total capacity and shows can take place with less than 30 people, hotels can reopen except for common spaces, and places of worship with 33% of their capacity. Social services such as care for people with disabilities, early care, occupational and psychosocial therapies gradually resume prioritising the most vulnerable. Home care and care for elderly people not living in nursing homes will also be restored.
- President Sánchez announced his intent to table a fifth extension of the state of emergency, although his request might be rejected this time. Some political forces perceive the state of emergency as a way to monopolize power to the detriment of regional governments. The current state of emergency will expire on 24 May.

VII. UNITED KINGDOM

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson yesterday (10 May) set out broad and conditional steps for England to gradually ease some lockdown restrictions. From Wednesday (13 May), people will be able to take unlimited amount of outdoor exercise, and people from different households will be able to meet outside provided they keep two metres apart. People who cannot work from home will be encouraged to return to the workplace and plans to ramp up rail services commence on 11 May, although workers will be encouraged to avoid using public transport.
- While the Government will elaborate on broad hygiene guidance for offices later today, the onus will rest on businesses to introduce creative infectivity-reducing measures such as reduced hot-desking and staggered shifts. A few shops will be allowed to reopen; some hardware stores have reopened with shorter trading hours, and Johnson is set to identify further shops that may open in the coming weeks this afternoon.
- School years in England will return in a similarly staggered fashion; pupils aged 4-6 and 10-11 will return on 1 June at the earliest, with other years set to return later, though secondary school

students will not return before September. There is also a possibility that university students returning in September may be taught online through their first term.

- Johnson emphasised the conditional nature of restriction easing – the Government continues to seek to meet five key conditions, most importantly a sustained decrease in new infections, to further ease measures and allow the hospitality sector to resume work. Johnson earmarked July as the earliest likely time for such sectors to return.
- Johnson will also outlay the government’s strategy to ease lockdown measures across England in a three-stage plan to be outlined in the House of Commons on 11 May. Labour leader Keir Starmer has noted the necessity of the conditional nature of the Government’s exit strategy as infection rates remain unclear. He also criticised the lack of clarity and has urged the Government to at least identify realising reopening dates for businesses and sectors to work towards while lockdown measures persist.
- The Government’s new message to the public – to ‘stay alert’, rather than ‘stay home’ – has faced criticism for its ambiguity from across the devolved nations. Critics have highlighted the fact that several of the Government’s measures that have been eased, such as the daily exercise limit, have not been strictly enforceable nor followed by people across the country, and as such Johnson’s address only served as a rhetorical shift in message from ‘stay home’ to ‘stay alert’.
 - Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has stuck to the ‘stay home’ message in Scotland, describing the UK government’s new message as ‘vague and imprecise’, and requesting that the message only run in England. Sturgeon urges Scots to only leave home for food, medicine, essential work or exercise, though, like Johnson, Sturgeon has eased restrictions on outdoor exercise.
 - Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford also extended lockdown measures in Wales from Thursday (7 May); like Sturgeon, Drakeford has permitted people to exercise more than once a day, and will permit garden centres to reopen this week provided they adhere to strict social distancing measures. Drakeford indicated that stringent measures remain necessary as the infection rate in Wales remains only marginally below the infection rate of 1. Inconsistencies in measures across the devolved nations will prove difficult to police and difficult for citizens to follow and will feed nationalists while Johnson is under pressure to provide more clarity on the exit strategy.
- Johnson will address the Commons on the afternoon of 11 May in his first Commons address on COVID-19. The Government also publishes details of the three-stage plan to combat the virus and ease lockdown measures across England on the same day.

- Johnson has already announced a new COVID-19 threat alert system to be introduced across England, using a scale of one to five adjusted according to the prevalence of COVID-19 infections. A new biosecurity centre will administer the alert tool to reflect the virus threat in different parts of the country, and will likely allow the Government to move towards local alterations of restrictions in England. The new alert system will work in conjunction with the Government's 'test, track, trace' programme in development. The Government has steadily increased the number of tests carried out each day, reaching 92,837 over the weekend, while a contact-tracing app being trialled on the Isle of Wight has been downloaded by nearly a third of its 180,000 population.