

Contents

I. Summary 1

II. European Union 6

III. France..... 7

IV. Italy..... 8

V. Germany 9

VI. Spain10

VII. United Kingdom.....11

I. SUMMARY

EUROPEAN UNION



Number of cases: 1,675,022 (including the UK)

Number of deaths: 181,626

- On 22 July, the European Council agreed its [position](#) on an instrument to support the implementation of reforms for a sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, which will be used in negotiations with the European Parliament.
- On 22 July, EU ambassadors [endorsed](#) the Council's position on REACT-EU, as well as on a series of amendments to long-term legislative proposals. The resources will be made available in 2021 and 2022. EU ambassadors also [endorsed](#) the Council's updated position taking into account the amendments of the structural funds for 2021 – 2027.
- In a meeting on 23 July, the European Parliament expressed its willingness to enter into constructive negotiations with the EU Council to improve its proposal on the recovery plan and multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027, following the Council's [conclusions](#) issued on 21 July. It is likely that this proposal is not the final form of the European budget.

- Based on the results from the [RECOVERY](#) study, [the European Medicines Agency \(EMA\)](#) has discovered that dexamethasone is effective in treating COVID-19 patients receiving invasive ventilation and/or oxygen.
- On 24 July, [the Council of the European Union adopted](#) a set of [recommendations](#) to revive passengers' confidence by aiming to limit infections during cross-border passenger transport.
- The European Commission is currently creating a special task force which will be operating to support the implementation of the [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#). The taskforce is planned to be operational from 16 August.

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

FRANCE



Number of cases: 180,528

Number of deaths: 30,192 (*including retirement homes*)

- The COVID-19 infection rate across France remains high, but Prime Minister Jean Castex says that the situation is under control, and that there will be no general reconfinement.
- Sporadic reconfinement measures have been implemented, including in the Morbihan region, where beaches are now closed from 9pm to 7am following the discovery of a 19-strong new cluster of infections.
- With 15–44-year olds being less precautionous vis- -vis public health measures, the health minister has suggested bars and cafes in the Ile-de-France region, one of the regions where the virus is most active, may be closed.
- Travellers coming from 16 countries with high COVID-19 incidences are now required to prove that they are not carrying the virus or they will have to self-isolate for fourteen days.

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

GERMANY



Number of cases: 205,609

Number of deaths: 9,118

- At a conference on 24 July, the health ministers of the German federal states decided to offer free and voluntary COVID-19 tests for returning travellers at German airports. Travellers from high-risk areas with a negative test result are exempt from the 14-day quarantine rule. Tests are free of charge for every returnee who gets tested within 72 hours upon arrival.
- Health Minister Jens Spahn is currently reviewing the option to introduce a legal obligation for returning travellers to get tested for Covid-19.
- The health ministers also agreed to reintroduce disembarkation forms for travellers to keep track of their contact details. Occasional random controls in border regions to inform returnees from high-risk areas about the mandatory quarantine rules.
- After technical difficulties on Android smartphones, many iOS smartphone users now also report complications with the Corona Warning App.

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

ITALY



Number of cases: 246,118

Number of deaths: 35,107

- Italy has seen a slight increase in infections in several regions, with new cases imported from other regions and from abroad. Authorities underline, however, that there are no signs of care services being overwhelmed and that the epidemic remains contained on the whole.
- Italian authorities expressed satisfaction with early results from the Oxford COVID-19 vaccine, which Italian companies are helping to develop. The first phase of the trial has “induced a strong immune and antibody response” in the testing that involved over 1,000

adults. The head of Irbm, the Italian company, stated that millions of doses could be produced by the end of the year if the next phase of trials goes well.

- The Italian Parliament has approved a bill proposed by the Italian government for 18 March to become the Italian national day of remembrance for the victims of COVID-19.
- The San Matteo Hospital in Pavia and Diasorin, a pharmaceutical company, have been placed under investigation in a probe into anti-COVID-19 serum tests. The allegations concern the awarding of antibody test contracts, which, according to prosecutors, may have led to Diasorin receiving favorable treatment when awarded a contract.
- Under the deal reached by the EU leaders during the European Council on 17-21 July, Italy, which was the first country in Europe to be hit by the COVID-19, will receive €209 billion, amounting to the biggest share of the bloc's dedicated €750-billion coronavirus recovery package. Italy will receive €81.4 billion in grants and €127.4 billion in loans.
- On 28 July, there will be an initial meeting to discuss the recovery plan to be sent to the European Union by mid-October.

For more information, please get in touch with **Daniela Lemme, Associate Director Italy** at d.lemme@rpp-group.com

SPAIN



Number of cases: 272,421 (PCR-based test)

Number of deaths: 28,432

- The United Kingdom has set a [compulsory](#) quarantine for tourists returning from Spain, which has sparked criticism from tourism-dependent regions such as the Balearic and Canary Islands.
- President Pedro Sánchez has called the 21st Conference of Presidents, gathering representatives from the government and the regions. Although the Conference has been meeting online during the health crisis, the next meeting will take place in person in la Rioja on 31 July.

- During the next extraordinary plenary session in the Congress on 29 July, President Sánchez will set out the outcome of the latest European Council meeting, in which the EU Recovery Fund was negotiated amongst Member states.

For more information, please get in touch with **Kit Greenop, Director RPP Spain** at k.greenop@rpp-group.com

UNITED KINGDOM



Number of cases: 299,426

Number of deaths: 45,752

- The Government has re-imposed quarantine measures on all arrivals from Spain. The suddenness of the move, announced on Saturday (25 July) and implemented on Sunday, has drawn criticism from holidaymakers, travel companies and Opposition politicians.
- Having only lifted quarantine measures on arrivals from Spain on Thursday (23 July), Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has faced strong criticism for reversing the decision on Saturday.
- Lockdown easing in several large towns including Luton has been paused amid rising local infections. Focussed testing has been directed at smaller-scale outbreaks, including one in a caravan park in Shropshire.
- From today (27 July), indoor entertainment and cultural venues in Wales may reopen. Face coverings on public transport are now mandatory in Wales, while the UK Government last week imposed similar measures for all those in enclosed public spaces in England.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson today unveiled a plan to combat obesity, recognised as one of the highest risk co-morbidities with COVID-19.
- A network of COVID-19-testing walk-in centres will be set up across England by the end of October, in anticipation of a rise in infections over the winter.
- The Government has purchased a factory for £16 million to scale up UK vaccine production capacity.

For more information, please get in touch with **Martyna Giedrojć, Associate Director UK** at m.giedrojcc@rpp-group.com

II. EUROPEAN UNION

- On 22 July, the European Council agreed its [position](#) on an instrument to support the implementation of reforms for a sustainable recovery from the COVID-19 crisis. On the basis of this partial negotiating mandate, the Presidency will start negotiations with the Parliament. It is noted that this position does not cover the budgetary aspects of the draft regulation at this stage.
- On 22 July, EU ambassadors, meeting within the Committee of Permanent Representatives, [endorsed](#) the Council's partial position on REACT-EU, as well as on a series of amendments to long-term legislative proposals. This will serve as a bridge from the emergency COVID-19 response to the next phase of repairing the economy in the long term. REACT-EU will support health services and SMEs; the preservation of jobs and job creation, particularly for people in vulnerable situations; and access to social services. The resources will be made available in 2021 and 2022.
- EU ambassadors also [endorsed](#) the Council's updated partial position, taking into account the amendments of the structural funds for 2021 – 2027.
- The European Parliament met on 23 July to discuss the European Council's [conclusions](#) on the recovery plan and multiannual financial framework for 2021-2027. A resolution by the EPP, S&D, Renew Europe, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL groups was approved. The Parliament expressed willingness to enter constructive negotiations with the EU Council to improve the proposal. It is likely, therefore, that this proposal will not be the final form of the European budget.
- The European Parliament criticised the deal for reducing the EU's climate ambitions. They also criticised the decision-making process for the management of the Eurobonds, as well as the fact that a large budget was agreed to be allocated to Member States without specific conditions attached.
- [The European Medicines agency \(EMA\)](#) is analysing results from the [RECOVERY](#) study which tested the impact of dexamethasone in treating COVID-19 patients in hospital. The findings show that, as compared to usual care, administering dexamethasone resulted in a reduction in the mortality rate of 35 percent in patients receiving invasive ventilation, and 20 percent in patients receiving oxygen without invasive ventilation. However, for patients not treated with oxygen therapy, the death rate was not influenced by dexamethasone.
- On 24 July, [the Council of the European Union adopted](#) several [recommendations](#) to revive passengers' and workers' confidence by aiming to limit the risk of infection during cross-border passenger transport. The recommendation should be applied across all public transport services and include, among others, physical distancing or the use of a face mask; increased use of digital

ticketing and digital ticket inspections; high standards of fresh air circulation; and high standards of cleanliness.

- The Council also reminded the Commission and all Member States to maintain adequate coordination on the application of transport guidelines and recommendations on COVID-19 at the national- and EU-level.
- From 16 August onwards, a special task force from the European Commission will be operating to support the implementation of the [Recovery and Resilience Facility](#), the budgetary instrument of the European Recovery Plan. The taskforce will be led by Deputy Secretary General, Céline Gauer (France), and will report to President Ursula von der Leyen. The new [organisation chart for the General Secretariat](#) demonstrates that the task force will consist of two directorates each, including three units that will communicate with Member States on aspects such as climate, single market and finance.

III. FRANCE

- Prime Minister Jean Castex acknowledged that the number of COVID-19 cases are rapidly increasing in France, but that hospitalisations are under control. The prime minister has stressed, "above all", he wants to avoid a general reconfinement. According to him, prevention and barrier gestures are essential to fight off the virus until a vaccine is found.
- However, Professor Eric Caumes, head of the infectious diseases department at the Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital, said that with a transmission rate of 1.3, the situation in France is "worrying", and that "we're no longer in control of the epidemic".
- A cluster of 19 COVID-19 positive cases was detected in Quiberon (Morhiban) on 24 July. To avoid gatherings, the city announced the closure of all parks and beaches from 9pm to 7am, starting on Sunday (26 July). Most of the transmission cases observed amongst young people in the city were made possible by them meeting on the beach at night.
- Moreover, the French Health Minister Olivier Véran called on 15-44-year olds to be more vigilant with social distancing. Véran said that, during massive screening campaigns, patients testing positive have been younger than during the previous wave.
- The rate of asymptomatic patients is extremely high. This is particularly the case in the Ile-de-France region, where young people have been infected without a specific cause being identified. Véran has asked the prefect of the region to ban gatherings of more than ten people while the virus is widely circulating, and Véran indicated bars and cafes may be closed.
- The extension of compensation rights of intermittent entertainment workers until the end of August 2021 has been approved by an order from the Ministry of Labour.

- Jean Castex announced that travellers coming to France from 16 countries with high COVID-19 incidences will be required to have a test certifying that they are not carrying the virus in order to board airplanes. Otherwise, they will be tested upon arrival at the airport. If they are positive, they will be placed in a fourteen-day quarantine. These 16 countries comprise: The United States, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Panama, South Africa, Kuwait, Qatar, Israel, Brazil, Peru, Serbia, Algeria, Turkey, Madagascar, India and Oman.

IV. ITALY

- [According to Italian authorities](#), intensive screening in the last weeks has led to an increase in cases throughout the country. As expected, Italy has seen a slight increase since the previous weeks in some regions, with new cases imported from other regions and from abroad. Authorities underline, however, that there are no signs of care services being overwhelmed and that the infection, on the whole, remains contained.
- [Italian authorities expressed](#) satisfaction with the early results from the Oxford COVID-19 vaccine, which is being developed with the involvement of Italian companies. The first phase of the trial indicated the vaccine “induced a strong immune and antibody response” in testing involving over 1,000 adults. The [head of Irbm, the Italian company, stated that](#) millions of doses could be produced by the end of the year if the next phase of clinical trials goes well. The Italian Health Minister Roberto Speranza said that “more time and patience is needed” but that the first results are encouraging.
- The vaccine’s viral vector is made by a company in Pomezia, outside of Rome, and will be placed in phials at Anagni, in the region of Lazio. Speranza added that, together with France and the Netherlands, Italy is leading a group promoting trials and spearheading investments into scientific research to expedite the fight against the virus.
- The [Italian Parliament has approved](#) a bill proposed by the Italian government for 18 March to become the Italian national day of remembrance for the victims of COVID-19. The bill was approved unanimously by the Italian Parliament. The Health Minister Speranza said that it is important to preserve and renew the memory of all people that have died because of the epidemic. On 18 March, a minute of silence will have to be observed in all public and private places. 18 March was chosen because it was the day when the highest number of victims was recorded at national level. Authorities will be able to organize relevant public demonstrations, ceremonies, or meetings.
- The San Matteo Hospital in Pavia and Diasorin, a pharmaceutical company, [have been placed under investigation](#) in a probe into anti-COVID-19 serum tests. The allegations concern the awarding of antibody test contracts, which, according to prosecutors, may have led to Diasorin

[receiving favorable treatment](#) when awarded a contract. The company's chief executive, as well as senior officials of the hospital, have been placed under investigation. The probe comes after complaints from a rival company.

- Under the [deal reached by the EU leaders during the European Council](#) on 17-21 July, Italy, which was the first country in Europe to be hit by the COVID-19, will receive €209 billion, amounting to the largest share of the bloc's dedicated €750-billion coronavirus recovery package. Italy will receive €81.4 billion in grants and €127.4 billion in loans.
- Negotiations were challenging, with disagreement between the so-called "frugal" countries of northern Europe, led by the Netherlands, and the potential major beneficiaries of southern Europe, including Italy. Following the conclusions of the summit, the Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte stated "we are satisfied with the approval of an ambitious relaunch plan, which will allow us to confront the crisis with strength and effectiveness." However, he also warned that "now we must hurry. We must use this money for investments, for structural reforms." On 28 July, there will be an initial meeting to discuss the recovery plan to be sent to the European Union by mid-October.

V. GERMANY

- At a conference on 24 July, the health ministers of the German states decided to offer free and voluntary COVID-19 tests for returning travellers at German airports. Returnees from high risk areas will be informed about the voluntary testing option on arrival. Travellers with a negative test result are exempt from the 14-day quarantine rule, while those who refrain from getting tested must stay in quarantine for two weeks. Travellers from non-risk areas will not get tested at the airport but are encouraged to take a test at other testing locations. Tests are free of charge for every returnee who gets tested within 72 hours upon arrival.
- On July 25, Health Minister Jens Spahn announced that the Ministry of Health is currently reviewing the option to introduce a legal obligation for returning travellers to get tested for Covid-19. Mandatory COVID-19 tests were already discussed during the conference of the health ministers but were rejected due to legal concerns.
- Apart from launching free COVID-19 tests at German airports, the health ministers agreed to reintroduce disembarkation forms for travellers to keep track of their contact details. Furthermore, it was decided to conduct occasional random controls in border regions to inform returnees from high-risk areas about the mandatory quarantine rules.
- The Robert Koch Institute (RKI) is concerned about the increasing numbers of new COVID-19 infections in Germany. They assess the current development as "alarming", given that the increase of roughly 800 new cases per day significantly exceeds the average number of around 500 new

cases per day that Germany reported in the weeks before. The RKI urges everyone to adhere to the rules on social distancing, proper hygiene, and mask-wearing.

- After technical difficulties on Android smartphones, many iOS smartphone users now also report complications with the Corona Warning App. The German Foundation for Patient Protection, as well as representatives from the Liberal Party (FDP), the Social Democrats (SPD) and the Greens (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen), demand an explanation from Health Minister Jens Spahn. The Ministry of Health confirmed technical constraints through background updates on iOS smartphones.

VI. SPAIN

- In light of increasing COVID-19 cases in several Spanish regions, the United Kingdom has imposed a [compulsory](#) quarantine for tourists returning from Spain. The measure is likely to impinge on the number of tourists travelling from the UK; tourism-dependent regions such as the Balearic and the Canary Islands have therefore asked the government to establish special conditions and a potential quarantine-free zone.
- President Pedro Sánchez has called a meeting of the [Conference of Presidents](#) on 31 July in the region of La Rioja. The Conference of Presidents was created in 2004 and is formed by representatives from the central and regional governments. It represents the most important body of multilateral cooperation between the State, the 17 autonomous communities and the two autonomous regions of Ceuta y Melilla.
- Despite being created in 2004, only 21 meetings have been held so far, 14 of which have taken place remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. Although President Sánchez has used the Conference as a platform to coordinate with regional governments, he aims at having yearly meetings as soon as the epidemiological situation settles.
- On 29 July, in a plenary [session](#) in the Spanish Congress, President Sánchez will inform Congress about the agreement reached during the latest Special European Council, which took place from 17 to 21 July in Brussels.
- During the meeting, details about the EU Recovery Fund – Next Generation EU – were negotiated. From the EUR 750 billion Recovery Fund and the EUR 1,074.3 billion new Multiannual Financial Framework, Spain will receive EUR 140 billion, of which EUR 72.7 billion will be allocated as direct aids.

VII. UNITED KINGDOM

- In a drastic move away from the progressive implementation of ‘air bridges’ with countries to facilitate tourism, the Government on Saturday (25 July) indicated quarantine measures on all arrivals from Spain will be re-imposed. The Government has indicated such measures would be reintroduced if exempt countries demonstrated concerning infection rates, and the move follows reports of several local outbreaks in Spain. The blanket imposition of a quarantine, rather than a focus on the Spanish regions hit by the outbreaks, and the suddenness of the move, have drawn criticism; having only added Spain to the ‘green’ list of approved destinations on Thursday (23 July), Scottish First Minister Nicola Sturgeon is under fire for reversing the decision along with the UK Government.
- Seeking to justify the measures, ministers have noted that, if such outbreaks had occurred in England, testing would have been ramped up to contain the virus. Ministers have pointed to an outbreak of over 20 infections in a caravan park in Shropshire, where a testing site was quickly set up. Lockdown easing in several large towns including Luton has been paused amid rising infections, though new, stringent lockdown measures are unlikely.
- Such local lockdown measures will enable the broader reopening of society, and the Welsh Government is pressing ahead with wider reopening this week. From today (27 July), indoor entertainment venues such as cinemas will be able to reopen, as well as cultural venues such as museums. To spur the housing sector, indoor viewings are now permitted.
- Stricter public health measures will be implemented from today to support businesses in reopening – from today, face coverings on public transport, including taxis, will be mandatory in Wales, while the UK Government last week made the donning of face coverings mandatory in enclosed public spaces including supermarkets and transport hubs. Fines of £100 will be imposed for any breaches.
- After reports of throngs of people on UK beaches not observing social distancing guidelines, an app has been developed to give real-time information on which areas of several popular British beaches are crowded. The app, BCP Beach Check, uses a traffic light system to show congestion levels, and may prove instrumental in enabling safe domestic holidaymaking, which is set to be popular this summer amid extant quarantine measures.
- Following his own battle with COVID-19, Prime Minister Boris Johnson today unveiled a plan to combat obesity, recognised as one of the highest risk co-morbidities with COVID-19. Nearly eight percent of critically ill COVID-19 patients have been morbidly obese, compared with 2.9 percent of the population, and Johnson has described the plan as important in “protect[ing] ourselves against coronavirus.” Key measures include discount deals on unhealthy food being banned, and a ban on

junk food adverts before 21:00. Plans to socially prescribe activities such as swimming have been hit by the majority of public swimming pools remaining closed.

- In further longer-term public health measures, a network of COVID-19-testing walk-in centres will be set up across England. Several hundred walk-in centres will be up and running by the end of October and in time for winter, supplementing existing drive-through centres, postal testing services, and mobile testing units. The Government has also announced details of the winter flu vaccination programme – 30 million people will be vaccinated this winter, and the vaccine will be freely available for people aged 50 to 64 later in the year. Schoolchildren up to 11 years old will also receive a free vaccine, as well as all vulnerable groups who have had to shield through COVID-19.
- To scale up COVID-19 vaccine manufacture, government ministers have purchased a factory which usually makes vaccines for salmon and seabream. The £16 million deal will retool the factory to produce doses of COVID-19 vaccines and other gene therapies once efficacious interventions have been identified, as part of a £100 million push to scale up UK vaccine production capacity.