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I. SUMMARY

EUROPEAN UNION



Number of cases: 1,112,667 (including the UK)

Number of deaths: 129,150

- The publication of the Official Journal of the European Union of 24 April included two relevant regulations of the European Parliament and of the Council, addressing expenditure eligibilities on national level and the use of the European Structural and Investment Fund.
- Several guiding documents have also been published. On 28 April, the European Commission [published](#) a [guidance](#) on the management of clinical trials during the COVID-19 pandemic, in collaboration with the European Medicines Agency ([EMA](#)) and the Head of Medicines Agencies (HMA). These measures will be used exclusively during the coronavirus pandemic.
- Also on 28 April, the European Commission [adopted](#) a banking package, accompanied by a [Q&A](#), which aims to facilitate bank lending to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and support the economy.
- The Medical Device Coordination Group (MDCG) published [regulatory requirements](#) for ventilators and related accessories on 24 April. On 28 April, the International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities (ICMRA) released a [statement](#) on COVID-19 calling for

clinical trials, support for low- and middle-income countries, and collaboration with the industry to address medicine shortages.

- EU ministers of [interior](#) and [energy](#) met on 28 April in two separate videoconferences to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and measures taken. It was emphasised that the European Green Deal will be key to sustainably recovering the EU economy.

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FRANCE



Number of cases: 128,442

Number of deaths: 24,087 (*including retirement homes*)

- The end of confinement measures will take place on 11 May as per the decision by the French President.
- The Prime Minister, Edouard Philippe, presented the official exit strategy to the National Assembly on 28 April, which was then adopted. The three major points of the strategy are to protect, test, and isolate.
- The exit strategy plans on reopening schools and shops on 11 May. Bars, restaurants and universities will remain closed. Wearing masks will be mandatory in schools, shops and public transports. Travelling more than 100 kilometres from home will be forbidden.
- The GDP decreased by 5.8% in Q1 2020, according to an estimate made by the National Institute of Statistics (Insee), the most considerable decrease since 1949.
- The Minister for Economic Affairs, Bruno Le Maire, announced on 29 April a decrease on allowed foreign investments on French strategic companies.

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GERMANY



Number of cases: 161,539

Number of deaths: 6,467

- In a press conference on 29 April, Federal Minister of Economic Affairs, Peter Altmeier, introduced the economic forecast for the upcoming year. Due to the COVID-19 he expects a severe recession. Exports are expected to shrink by 11.6%. Same applies for the German Gross Domestic Product (GDP) that is likely to decrease by 6.3%. With respect to 2021, the GDP is currently expected to recover with an increase of 5.2%.
- The German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs extended its travel restriction until 14 June. Moreover, Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs Heiko Maas stated that restrictions on European and International travels are likely to be expected throughout the summer.
- Head of Chancellory, Helge Braun, explained in an interview with German television channel n-tv, that he expects the social restrictions to remain at least until 10 May.
- On 30 April, the Federal Employment Agency announced that currently, there are 10.1 million people in short labour. As such, the number of people that are unemployed increased by 308,000 compared to last month.
- On 29 April, Jens Spahn gave a press conference on the introduction of the Second Law for the protection of the population in the event of an epidemic situation of national importance. Moreover, he announced that Germany aims to procure 4,5 million doses of influenza vaccine. This shall be done in preparation for the next influenza season in 2020/2021.

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ITALY



Number of cases: 203,591

Number of deaths: 27,682

- Several Presidents of the Regions governed by the (center) right criticised the measures adopted by the Government with the last decree illustrated by PM Conte on 26 April. They

ask for more flexibility to be able to reopen the activities in advance compared to the date set by the Government. Some Regions, like Veneto and Calabria defied the instructions of the Government and decided to lift some restrictions ahead of the government's schedule.

- The Minister of Regional Affairs and Autonomies Francesco Boccia said that different lifting measures among the Regions will be possible as from 18 May, according to the principle 'more infections equal less openings and vice-versa'
- The Italian Minister of Health Roberto Speranza has unveiled a government free phone number for those in need of psychological support.

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SPAIN



Number of cases: 213,435

Number of deaths: 24,543

- The government launched its exit plan, the Plan for the Transition to a New Normal, which foresees 4 phases and a minimum period of 2 weeks for each phase. The strategy does not include a set timeline as it is subject to change depending on the epidemiological evolution of the virus. As expected, containment measures will be gradually lifted at different speeds. As such, unity measures will be provinces and islands, although some territories have already expressed their wish to use other measures such as health unities.
- Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez is considering tabling a fourth extension to the state of emergency, although it might not find approval from the opposition in the Congress.
- A non-permanent parliamentary Committee for social and economic reconstruction has been created to discuss measures to mitigate the crisis, namely strengthening the healthcare system. The Committee will gather 46 members of parliament according to the distribution of seats in the Congress.
- The Spanish Agency for Medicines and Health Products (Aemps) made public a database including all ongoing observational studies of medicines to tackle Covid-19 in Spain.

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UNITED KINGDOM



Number of cases: 165,221

Number of deaths: 26,097

- The Government has expanded its testing effort and the eligibility criteria for testing to mitigate spiralling care home deaths. The expanded diagnostics effort, now including home testing of 100,000 people, has allowed the Government to extend testing to all asymptomatic NHS and social care staff and care home residents. Further, anyone who is symptomatic and over the age of 65, as well as symptomatic members of their families, and symptomatic individuals unable to work from home are now able to get tested.
- Testing remains a key pillar of the UK effort to combat COVID-19 and ease lockdown measures, and Prime Minister Boris Johnson will chair a Cabinet meeting to assess challenges going forward. The Welsh and Scottish first ministers have already outlined consultations to ease measures from 7 May, and Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford has indicated Wales will pursue phased lockdown-easing, which may begin before 7 May.
- NHS England is increasingly segmenting treatment pathways to allow normal care plans to resume. Tens of COVID-19-free, specialist treatment centres such as cancer hubs have been set up, though some industry groups such as the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) have indicated they do not have capacity for the resumption of services. The RCM has indicated that closures of midwifery-led units increased to 29 percent in April, up from 22 percent in March, and four in ten homebirth services have been suspended.
- The Government has extended visas of overseas frontline health and care workers including midwives by one year to combat staff shortages preventing the resumption of normal care plans.

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II. EUROPEAN UNION

- On 28 April, the International Coalition of Medicines Regulatory Authorities (ICMRA) released a [statement](#) on COVID-19. In this statement it pledges its collective support to counter the pandemic and highlights the actions it has been taking, such as its recommendations, commitments, and the main takeaways of its three meetings to date.
- On 28 April the European Commission [adopted](#) a banking package, accompanied by a [Q&A](#), which aims to facilitate bank lending to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and support the economy. This package is [based](#) on a three-part approach to encourage banks to make use of the flexibility within EU frameworks, providing further capital relief for banks, and encouraging development of best practices from the financial sector.
- On 28 April, the European Commission [published](#) a [guidance](#) on the management of clinical trials during the COVID-19 pandemic, in collaboration with the European Medicines Agency ([EMA](#)) and the Head of Medicines Agencies (HMA). This aims to mitigate disruptions to clinical trials in the EU. This update to the previously published guidance on clinical trial management includes further flexibility and clarification on distribution of medicines to trial participants, remote verification of source data (SVDV), and notifying authorities. These measures will be used exclusively during the coronavirus pandemic.
- The Medical Device Coordination Group (MDCG), which is chaired by the European Commission and is composed of representatives of all Member States, published [regulatory requirements](#) for ventilators and related accessories on 24 April. It provides options for supporting production and/or placing on the market of ventilators in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.
- The publication of the Official Journal of the European Union of 24 April included two relevant regulations of the European Parliament and of the Council:
 - [Regulation](#) amending specific measures for addressing the outbreak of COVID-19. This amendment includes new articles on eligibility of expenditure for operations supported during their suspension as a result of the pandemic.
 - [Regulation](#) introducing specific measures to provide exceptional flexibility for the use of the European Structural and Investment (ESI) Funds in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. This amendment includes a chapter on exceptional measures for the use of the ESI Funds in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

- EU ministers of energy met on 28 April to [discuss](#) the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the energy sector. The European Commission provided an update on the national energy and climate plans (NECPs) and long-term renovation strategies. The discussion emphasised that the European Green Deal will be key to sustainably recovering the EU economy.
- EU ministers of interior held a [meeting](#) on 28 April to discuss the response to COVID-19 in the area of home affairs. This included issues with transit corridors for continuity of the single market, procurement of medicines, food, and medical equipment, as well as migration.

III. FRANCE

- French President Emmanuel Macron announced that confinement measures are extended until 11 May.
- The precise exit strategy was presented by Prime Minister Édouard Philippe on 28 April to the National Assembly. The National Assembly adopted the plan on the same day. The major announcements were the followings:
 - The three main points of the strategy are: protect, test, and isolate.
 - The exit plan will be progressive and different in the various French regions. Regions will be classified into two categories: red and green considering the number of new infected people, the availability of hospital beds and the availability of tests. Red areas will have to exit the confinement slower than green areas. The classification will be introduced on 7 May.
 - On 11 May, schools and shops will reopen. High schools will reopen one week later, on 18 May.
 - Bars, restaurants as well as beaches will remain closed too.
 - Travel of more than 100 kilometres from home will be forbidden, except in family emergency cases.
 - Citizens will have to wear reusable mask on 11 May. It will be mandatory in schools, shops and on public transport. Citizens can buy masks in pharmacies or obtain some from the local townhall which will distribute masks to people-in-need.
 - At the end of May, the government will announce a strategy concerning the phase 2 of the exit plan, addressing among other things the reopening of restaurants and bars in June.
 - Concerning the tracker mobile application developed by the Government, Edouard Philippe announced that a separate vote will be scheduled concerning this issue, when the application will be officially launched.

- On 23 April, the Parliament adopted the EUR 110 billion special budget presented by the government to finance the special measures during the coronavirus crisis which entered into force on 27 April.
- The GDP decreased by 5.8% in Q1 2020, according to an estimate made by the National Institute of Statistics (Insee) published on 30 April. This is the most considerable decrease since 1949.
- The Minister for Economic Affairs, Bruno Le Maire, announced on 29 April a decrease on allowed foreign investments in French companies of strategic importance. Foreign investments were authorized to up to 25% ownership of the company's assets before, this has been lowered to 10%, in order to prevent strategic companies being financed by foreign states. This measure concerns mainly biotechnology companies and Chinese investments.

IV. ITALY

- The head of the Italian civil protection agency, Silvio Brusaferro, underlined in a press conference on April 27 that the current figures show the success of the containment measures, and that authorities should remain cautious in gradually opening up. He also said that one of the aims now is to increase the amount of swabs and tests outside of hospitals and also for people with few symptoms. Italy is currently doing 60.000 tests a day.
- As announced by the Prime Minister Conte on 26 April, the lockdown measures are expected to be gradually lifted as from 4 May. However, some Italian regions have expressed the need to open-up quicker. The region of Veneto – under the leadership of the far-right Lega – have defied Rome on Monday 27 April by already easing lockdown measures. The region has decided to lift restrictions on takeaways, pizzerias, visiting cemeteries and some shops – one week ahead of the government's schedule. People would also be able to travel around the region or carry out maintenance work. An even more extreme case is the Calabria Region, where the President of the Region Santelli (Forza Italia) allowed as from 30 April the reopening of bar and restaurants if they provide services with outdoor tables.
- In a videoconference, the Minister of Regional Affairs and Autonomies Francesco Boccia confirmed the possibility of differences among the Regions from 18 May, according to the principle 'more infections equal less openings and vice-versa'.
- This proposal was not enough for the (center) right Presidents of the Regions. In a letter addressed to President of the Republic Mattarella, the (center) right Presidents of ten Regions (Lombardy, Piedmont, Liguria, Friuli Venezia Giulia, Abruzzo, Molise, Basilicata, Calabria, Sicily and Sardinia), as well as the president of the autonomous province of Trento, asked for more autonomy and

flexibility to be able to ease the measures provided by the last decree of the Prime minister in the phase 2.

- They have also criticised the decision of the Government on 20 April to postpone the regional elections originally planned in Spring for 6 Regions (Veneto, Campania, Liguria, Tuscany, Apulia, Marche) – due to COVID-19 – to a date between 15 September and 15 December 2020.

V. GERMANY

- In a press conference on 29 April, Federal Minister of Economic Affairs, Peter Altmeier, introduced the economic forecast for the upcoming year. Due to the COVID-19 he expects a severe recession. Exports are expected to shrink by 11.6%. The German Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is likely to decrease by 6.3%. With respect to 2021, the GDP is expected to recover with an increase of 5.2%. Consequently, a full recovery to the level of German economy before the pandemic is anticipated for 2022 earliest. Hence, Mr. Altmeier once again outlined the German Federal Government's commitment to extensively protect the German economy. A protective shield with a liquidity volume of EUR 1 billion has already been put in place.
- On 30 April, the Federal Employment Agency announced that currently there are 10.1 million people in short-labour. As such, the number of people that are unemployed has increased by 308,000 compared to last month.
- On 29 April, Jens Spahn gave a press conference on the introduction of the Second Law for the protection of the population in the event of an epidemic situation of national importance. Moreover, he announced that Germany aims to procure 4,5 million doses of influenza vaccine. This shall be done in preparation for the next influenza season of 2020/2021. Hereby, negative synergies and a simultaneous increase in Influenza and COVID-19 cases are aimed to be prevented.
- The German Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs extended travel restrictions until 14 June. Moreover, Federal Minister of Foreign Affairs Heiko Maas stated that restrictions on European and International travels are likely to be prolonged throughout the summer.
- Head of Chancellory, Helge Braun, explained in an interview with German television channel n-tv, that he expects the social restrictions to remain at least until 10 May. Although German Chancellor Angela Merkel will discuss the further proceedings on COVID-19 with the heads of the federal states today, a next comprehensive consultation on precautionary measures will be held on 6 May.
- The Federal Office for the protection of the population amended its application "NINA". Launched in 2015, NINA aimed to warn citizens in cases of hazardous substances or large-scale fires. The app now provides information and updates on the COVID-19 pandemic.

- On 16 March, the German Federal Government decided to postpone all elective surgeries planned in order to ensure the supply with medical capacities needed to cope with the current COVID-19 pandemic. On 29 April, the leading associations of surgeons, namely the German Association for Surgery, the German Association for Anaesthesiology & Intensive Care Medicine, the Professional Association of German Surgeons as well as Professional Association of German Anaesthetists, published a [joint position paper](#) in which a guide to restart elective surgery is outlined. Hence, the Associations expect regional divergencies regarding the time at which elective surgeries are to be resumed.

VI. SPAIN

- An exit strategy for Covid-19 was put forward by the government on 29 April. The [Plan for the Transition to a New Normal](#) sets 4 phases to gradually lift containment measures under the following conditions:
 - Each phase will last for at least 2 weeks (virus incubation period), starting on 4 May until 30 June if the epidemiological curve follows the expected trend.
 - The de-escalation will be asymmetrical with different paces amongst territories. The unity of reference will be the provinces and the islands. Some of the latter will skip phase 0 and start with phase 1 considering their reduced Covid-19 cases and their dependence on tourism (Formentera in the Balearic Islands and La Graciosa, El Hierro, la Gomera in the Canary Islands).
 - Moving to the next phase will depend on 4 criteria: capacity of the healthcare system, the epidemiological situation, protection measures in public spaces, and data on mobility and socioeconomic conditions.
 - Travelling to another province will only be possible after phase 3, with justified exceptions.

The 4 phases are as follows:

- Phase 0: Preparation for de-escalation: e.g. individual sports, opening of small establishments under capacity restrictions;
- Phase 1: Partial start of some activities: e.g. social contact in small groups, opening of markets, bars and restaurants, cultural centres and places of worship under capacity restrictions;
- Phase 2: Establishments to open with restricted capacity: e.g. social contact in groups of non-vulnerable individuals, travels to secondary residences within the same province, opening of some education centres although schools will only open in September;

- Phase 3: Flexibility for general mobility: e.g. restart of all activities with security measures;
- Phase 4: New normal with hygiene and physical distancing conditions.
- While Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez announced he will most likely table a fourth extension to the state of emergency, up until 24 May, the opposition might not approve it in the Congress. However, there is now more room for discussion amongst political forces within the recently created [non-permanent parliamentary Committee for social and economic reconstruction](#). The Committee will be tasked to discuss inter alia the strengthening of the healthcare system in light of the coronavirus crisis, and will gather 46 members of parliament. The Spanish Agency for Medicines and Health Products (Aemps) has made public a [database](#) including all ongoing observational studies for medicines against Covid-19 in Spain. The studies are undertaken either by one or several centres such as hospitals, but also scientific groups such as the Spanish Oncology Genito Urinary Group (SOGUG).

VII. UNITED KINGDOM

- The official UK death toll rose by 3,811 to pass 26,000 yesterday as the Government started including deaths occurring in care homes and the wider community. The official figure still only accounts for deaths of people confirmed to have COVID-19, and critics argue only the number of ‘excess deaths’, compared with past averages for this time of year, reflects the true scale of deaths. Hospital deaths have steadily decreased over the last couple of weeks but the number of deaths occurring in care homes has hit 2,000 a week.
- The Government has expanded its testing effort and the eligibility criteria for testing to mitigate spiralling care home deaths. The expanded and more flexible diagnostics effort, comprising home and hospital tests, mobile testing sites, drive-through testing sites and diagnostic mega-labs, has allowed the Government to extend testing to all asymptomatic NHS and social care staff and care home residents. Further, anyone who is symptomatic and over the age of 65, as well as symptomatic members of their families, and symptomatic individuals unable to work from home are now able to get tested. Testing remains a core pillar of the Government’s effort to combat COVID-19 and track the virus, and the Government has launched a new programme of home testing 100,000 people to track the progress of the infection across England.
- Increased testing will generate new insight into the spread of the virus and facilitate the easing of lockdown measures across the country. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who earlier this week returned to the government helm after several weeks in hospital and recovery, will today (30 April) stage his first Cabinet meeting and assess the challenges in combating COVID-19. There will be no official news of an exit strategy until a review on 7 May, though the Welsh and Scottish first

ministers have already outlined consultations to ease measures from 7 May. Welsh First Minister Mark Drakeford has indicated three phases of lockdown easing, from ‘careful and controlled’ relaxation through to the resumption of normal service, and has suggested this may come before 7 May if the Government’s ‘test, trace, isolate’ programme lowers the number of infections.

- A key government task across the UK is to persuade people to return to primary and secondary care services as government guidelines and COVID-19 fears have led to precipitous declines in the number of primary care referrals and emergency department attendances. To facilitate people’s return to treatment, NHS England is increasingly segmenting treatment pathways by creating tens of COVID-19-free, specialist treatment centres such as cancer hubs across the country. Virus-free cancer hubs have been set up in 21 areas of England to carry out urgent surgery that might otherwise be too dangerous to carry out in hospitals. Industry groups including the Royal College of Midwives (RCM) have indicated maternity services do not have the capacity to meet the Government’s plan for restarting discrete areas of the NHS. The RCM has indicated that closures of midwifery-led units have increased to 29 percent in April, up from 22 percent in March, and four in ten homebirth services have been suspended. This comes despite more than 7,000 nurses and midwives having offered to come out of retirement in early April to cover staff shortages.
- In light of sustained pressure from industry groups to address staff shortages, the Government has extended the visas for overseas frontline health and care workers. All frontline workers, including midwives and radiographers, with visas due to expire before 1 October 2020 will be granted an automatic one-year extension. The move is expected to benefit 3,000 frontline workers and their families. Pressure remains on the Government to remove immigration health surcharge fees paid by foreign NHS workers; Home Secretary Priti Patel has acknowledged it should be scrapped in light of their service in the pandemic fight.