Coronavirus: the Commission approves third contract to ensure access to a potential vaccine

Brussels, 8 October 2020

Today, the European Commission approved a third contract with a pharmaceutical company, Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, one of the Janssen Pharmaceutical Companies of Johnson & Johnson.

Once the vaccine has proven to be safe and effective against COVID-19, the contract allows Member States to purchase vaccines for 200 million people. They will also have the possibility to purchase vaccines for an additional 200 million people.

Member States may also decide to donate the vaccine to lower and middle income countries or to re-direct it to other European countries.

The Commission has already signed a contract with AstraZeneca and with Sanofi-GSK and it concluded successful exploratory talks with CureVac, BioNTech-Pfizer and Moderna.

President of the European Commission, Ursula **von der Leyen**, said: *"As the coronavirus continues to spread worryingly across Europe, it is crucial to find a vaccine, and fast. I'm glad that we have been able to find an agreement with Johnson & Johnson to purchase vaccines for 200 million people. This will be our third contract with a pharmaceutical company. Our aim is to provide EU citizens with safe and effective vaccines as soon as they are found."*

Stella **Kyriakides**, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said: *"Ensuring a safe and effective vaccine is at the core of our European Vaccine Strategy. Today we have secured our third vaccine agreement, expanding our portfolio of vaccine candidates and therefore our chances to find an efficient remedy against the virus. More agreements will follow, and we remain determined in our search for a successful and safe vaccine to combat this deadly pandemic."*

The Janssen COVID-19 vaccine candidate leverages the AdVac® technology platform, which was also used to develop and manufacture Janssen's recently approved Ebola vaccine and the Zika, RSV, and HIV vaccine candidates. The vaccine candidate is already in phase III of clinical trials.

The Commission's decision to support this vaccine is based on a sound scientific assessment, the technology used, the company's experience in vaccine development and its production capacity to supply the whole of the EU.

Background

The European Commission presented on 17 June a European strategy to accelerate the development, manufacturing and deployment of effective and safe vaccines against COVID-19. In return for the right to buy a specified number of vaccine doses in a given timeframe, the Commission finances part of the upfront costs faced by vaccines producers in the form of **Advance Purchase Agreements**. Funding provided is considered as a down-payment on the vaccines that will actually be purchased by Member States.

Since the high cost and high failure rate make investing in a COVID-19 vaccine a high-risk decision for vaccine developers, these agreement will therefore allow investments to be made that otherwise would simply probably not happen.

The European Commission is also committed to ensuring that everyone who needs a vaccine gets it, anywhere in the world and not only at home. No one will be safe until everyone is safe. This is why it has raised almost €16 billion since 4 May 2020 under the Coronavirus Global Response, the global action for universal access to tests, treatments and vaccines against coronavirus and for the global recovery and has confirmed its interest to participate in the COVAX Facility for equitable access to affordable COVID-19 vaccines everywhere. As part of a Team Europe effort, the Commission announced is contributing with €400 million in guarantees to support COVAX and its objectives in the context of the Coronavirus Global Response.

More Information

EU Vaccines Strategy

EU Coronavirus Response

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