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## **European Council: EU leaders' meeting from tomorrow. Michel (President), "priority to Covid-19 vaccinations", concern about virus variants**

"Our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic continues". President Charles Michel wrote this to the members of the European Council in his invitation letter to the video conference on 25 and 26 February. The 27 Heads of State and Government will meet again to discuss the response to the pandemic and other issues, including security and defence and the "southern neighbourhood". The EU leaders will take stock of the epidemiological situation and will focus in particular on the production and distribution of vaccines and the movement of persons and goods (single market, economic issues). "Our priority continues to be to speed up vaccinations across the EU", says Michel. "This means accelerating the authorisation process of vaccines, as well as their production and delivery. It will require, for instance, looking at solutions to bring manufacturers across supply chains together in order to scale-up production". It also includes "ensuring that vaccine deliveries are predictable and that pharmaceutical companies comply with their commitments". Michel highlights a growing concern: "The new variants have become the dominant strains in many Member States. This implies enhancing our sequencing capacity, and preparing the groundwork for vaccine updates".

Valentina Bombelli