
EU Parliament: rising infections, response to COVID-19 and strengthening of Health Union on the agenda

The COVID-19 pandemic is back on the EP agenda. The European Parliament, which is meeting in a hybrid format for its plenary (22-25 November) in Strasbourg, has put on its agenda a debate with the Commission on how to coordinate Member States' measures more effectively, in light of rising COVID-19 cases across the EU. This evening starting at 18:00, MEPs will "debate recent developments and next EU steps in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic", a statement from Parliament reads. "Topics likely to be addressed include the current worsening of the epidemiological situation, low vaccination rates linked to vaccine hesitancy in several EU countries, the impact of the EU digital COVID certificate, how to coordinate national measures more effectively as well as solidarity among Member States". On Wednesday afternoon at 15:00, MEPs will also hold a separate debate on "The EU's Role in Combatting the COVID-19 Pandemic: How to Vaccinate the World". In the meantime, "work is ongoing to strengthen the EU Health Union following lessons learned from the pandemic: reinforcing the mandates of the European Medicines Agency and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, addressing cross-border threats to health and creating a future-proof EU pharmaceutical policy". MEPs "recently obtained better support for the EU4Health programme in the 2022 EU budget, with an additional €51 million to build up a strong Health Union and to make national health systems more resilient".

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