

EN

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Answer given by Mr Schmit
on behalf of the European Commission
(20.7.2020)

1. Discussions on reinforcing crisis management, preparedness and strengthening coordination are ongoing and will feed into the review and lessons learnt process regarding the COVID-19 pandemic the Commission will be conducting. To increase crisis preparedness and management, the Commission will propose to give a stronger role for the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in coordinating preparedness and response to health crises and strengthen the EU's health regulatory framework. In addition, the new proposed EU4 Health Programme¹ aims to strengthen the capability of the Union for prevention, preparedness and response to serious cross-border threats to health, and the management of health crises.

2. The strict respect and application of the existing national provisions transposing EU rules on safety and health at work are of utmost importance. This is the case of the general obligation for employers to assess all possible risks and put in place the resulting adequate preventive and protective measures, including where required providing required personal protective equipment. The Commission can only take action against a Member State in the event of a breach of Union law. The Commission, as always, will consider every complaint received and upon assessment, will decide on the most appropriate follow-up. It is however up to the national authorities to ensure the proper enforcement of the national measures transposing the EU Health and Safety at Work Directives and to take action if necessary. As far as protective equipment is concerned, the Commission, alongside with many Member States, is taking steps to help ensure adequate supply of personal protective equipment².

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/DOC/?uri=CELEX:52020PC0405&from=EN>

² The Commission has launched joint procurement tenders for essential medical and protective equipment and has created the first ever rescEU stockpile, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_476