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Answer given by Ms Kyriakides
on behalf of the European Commission
(28.10.2020)

1. In its Communication about an EU Strategy for COVID-19 vaccines of 17 June 2020¹, the Commission acknowledges that the urgent need for such vaccines is not only a European challenge, but also a global one. This is why the Commission is committed to universal, equitable and affordable access to a vaccine against COVID-19 and why the Commission - in line with the World Health Assembly resolution referred to - has taken a number of steps to promote such access. These steps include the launch of a Global Coronavirus Response², the set-up of the ACT-Accelerator³ and - most recently - our declaration of interest in view of joining the COVAX Facility⁴.

2. The notion of universal common good highlights the importance for humanity of finding a vaccine that can be employed in prevention of Covid-19, an infection that knows no borders. It is not a legal concept producing legal consequences, also in the context of intellectual property (IP) rights.

3. An effective IP system is crucial to ensure incentives for the development of innovative vaccines. As set out in the above mentioned EU Vaccines Strategy, the Commission supports voluntary pooling and licensing of IP related to COVID-19 therapeutics and vaccines, to promote equitable global access as well as a fair return on investments.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1597339415327&uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0245>

² <https://www.who.int/initiatives/act-accelerator>

³ <https://www.gavi.org/covax-facility>

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1540