

EN

E-006534/2020

Answer given by Mr Várhelyi  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(22.2.2021)

The EU remains the key partner for the Western Balkans in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic; timely vaccination is essential in ending the crisis and starting a socio-economic recovery. To this end, the Commission is looking at all the options and tools at its disposal.

In this regard, the EU supports the COVAX Facility as the primary source of vaccines for the Western Balkans. All the partners in the Western Balkans have joined it. Kosovo\* qualifies to receive doses covering 20% of its population free of charge or at a nominal price. The remaining partners are paying for their allocations, and have ordered quantities corresponding to 20% of their respective populations. The timing of the first deliveries under the Facility is still to be confirmed.

In parallel, in order to ensure that the delivery of the stock of vaccines for the priority groups in the Western Balkans reaches them as soon as possible, the Commission is in discussions with the EU Member States on possible donation or re-sale to the Western Balkans of a limited number of doses purchased under advance purchase agreements negotiated at EU level.

The Commission is ready to provide financial, logistical and administrative assistance to facilitate access to the vaccines. On 28 December 2020, the Commission adopted a package of EUR 70 million under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance<sup>1</sup> (IPA II) to help fund the cost of the vaccines. The Western Balkans partners assess their total priority group needs at slightly over 7.5 million doses.

---

\* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244(1999) and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/overview\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/instruments/overview_en)