

**Question for written answer E-000208/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Ciarán Cuffe (Verts/ALE)

Subject: Availability and reliability of rapid antigen tests

Though less reliable than PCR tests, rapid antigen tests for COVID-19 have become an important tool in our fight against the pandemic. They enable citizens to be tested quickly and can identify positive cases before people have had time to get a PCR test result. Antigen tests must be widely available in order to have the biggest impact. As we face ever-rising case numbers this spring, several EU countries¹ are reporting shortages, and rising prices², of COVID-19 antigen tests.

1. Is the Commission satisfied that there is an adequate supply of COVID-19 antigen tests in the EU? Is it planning to launch another joint procurement initiative for antigen tests in the near future to ensure their availability throughout the EU?
2. Is the Commission satisfied, based on data provided by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, that all available antigen tests on the market meet acceptable quality standards?
3. Given reports in the UK³ of faulty results due to antigen tests not being sensitive enough to detect low viral loads of the Omicron variant of COVID-19 (the dominant strain⁴ in the EU), how do the Commission and Member States plan to improve the availability and acceptability of antigen tests?

¹ <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/strong-demand-at-pharmacies-supermarkets-for-antigen-test-kits-1.4768527>

² <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/spains-government-limit-retail-price-covid-antigen-tests-2022-01-10/>

³ <https://www.politico.eu/article/british-company-pulls-rapid-covid-19-test-over-omicron-detection-concerns/>

⁴ <https://apnews.com/article/coronavirus-pandemic-business-health-europe-executive-branch-8bb518aaf1e15f6516e15f649cccd19>