

**Priority question for written answer P-007003/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 138

Joanna Kopcińska (ECR)

Subject: Rapid growth of SARS-CoV-2 variant with multiple mutations observed in the UK

Over the past few weeks, the UK has faced a sharp increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in the south-eastern part of the country, spurring increased epidemiological and virological research. Analysis of data on the virus genome sequence showed that a large number of cases belonged to a single new phylogenetic cluster.

According to the ECDC Risk Assessment (Threat Assessment Brief of 20 December 2020), a preliminary analysis carried out in the UK suggests that this variant is much more infectious than the previously circulating variants in terms of the potential for an increase in the reproductive count. So far, several cases involving the new variant have been reported in Denmark and the Netherlands and, according to media reports, in Belgium.

On 20 December 2020, the Netherlands, Italy and Belgium banned all flights from the UK in order to prevent the spread of the new viral mutation.

1. Does the Commission plan to implement any special monitoring procedures through its executive agencies in the event of a marked increase in the number of cases of infection with the new variant of SARS-CoV-2 or other new variants of SARS-CoV-2 posing a potential risk in other Member States?
2. Have the Member States received appropriate instructions on the procedure for notifying and reporting possible cases of a new SARS-CoV-2 variant through the Early Warning and Response System of the European Union?