

## EU action: Covid-19 vaccines and cures

**As the world struggles to contain the coronavirus pandemic, the EU is supporting efforts to develop and roll out vaccines.**



EU funding for Covid-19 research

The EU has come up with a [coordinated response](#) to help tackle the current crisis. Funding research and innovation projects to find a cure for Covid-19 is a vital part of that plan.

The EU and its member states are cooperating closely so that safe, effective and high-quality vaccines and medicines to counter the spread of Covid-19 can be put on the market as soon as possible, including accelerated regulatory procedures.

MEPs have praised EU efforts to support research and the [speedy authorisation of safe vaccines](#), but have repeatedly stressed the need for [solidarity within the EU and beyond](#), more [transparency regarding vaccine contracts](#) and the [delivery of vaccines](#). They regularly discuss issues such as the [efficacy of vaccines to new Covid variants with experts](#).

## Research and vaccines

The EU has invested heavily in research since the beginning of the outbreak: [hundreds of millions of euros](#) have been mobilised in coronavirus **research** projects through the EU's [Horizon 2020](#) programme. Grants have been made available for projects ranging from diagnostics, treatments, vaccines, epidemiology and preparedness and response to behaviour and socioeconomics, manufacturing and medical and digital technologies.

As part of its [EU Strategy on Covid-19 Vaccines](#), the European Commission has so far reached agreements with [six pharmaceutical companies](#)- AstraZeneca, Sanofi-GSK, Johnson & Johnson, BioNTech-Pfizer, CureVac and Moderna - allowing EU countries to [purchase vaccines](#) as soon as they are granted market authorisation.

Following the positive scientific recommendation by the European Medicines Agency, the European Commission has granted four conditional marketing authorisations so far to:

- BioNtech and Pfizer vaccine (21 December 2020)
- Moderna vaccine (6 January 2021)
- AstraZeneca vaccine (29 January 2021)
- Johnson & Johnson vaccine (11 March 2021)

This paved the way for EU countries to start vaccinating on 27 December 2020.

The Commission had prepared a list of key steps that member states should take to be ready to quickly distribute and deploy the vaccines, as part of [additional measures to help limit the spread of the virus](#) and save lives. They also include improving data sharing at EU level and recommendations on more effective and rapid testing strategies as well as mobilising €100 million under the [Emergency Support Instrument](#) to directly purchase rapid antigen tests and deliver them to member states.

Drawing lessons from the current crisis, on 25 November 2020, the Commission presented a new [EU pharmaceutical strategy](#) to make the EU more resilient in the future. [MEPs adopted the new EU4Health programme](#) for 2021-2027 to strengthen Europe's health systems against future crises on 9 March.

### European Medicines Agency: Evaluation and approval steps for Covid-19 vaccines

- Marketing authorisation application: vaccine developers submit the results of all testing to medicines regulatory authorities in Europe
- Experts from the European Medicines Agency carry out a scientific evaluation of vaccines
- The agency's pandemic task force enables EU countries and the Commission to take quick and coordinated regulatory action on the development, safety and monitoring of Covid-19 treatments and vaccines
- The European Commission reviews the agency's scientific opinion and grants EU-wide marketing authorisation
- National authorities decide on the introduction of approved vaccine and vaccination policies

*[Check out our timeline of EU measures against the Coronavirus in 2021](#)*

## Programmes already in place

A number of existing research and emergency funding mechanisms to deal with public health crises have also been mobilised. They include, among others, [Prepare](#), a project supporting the readiness of hospitals in Europe and enhancing their understanding of the dynamics of the outbreak, and the [European Virus Archive](#), a virtual collection of viruses that provides material to researchers to help in diagnoses.

The EU is also supporting start-ups and small firms in [developing technology](#) that could be helpful in tackling the outbreak, including [EpiShuttle](#), a project for specialised isolation units, and [m-Tap](#), air filtration technology to remove viral particles.

*Find out [what the EU is doing to help Europe get back on its feet following the devastating economic effects brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic](#)*



#### Helping researchers fight the coronavirus (March 2020)

[https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/eu-funding-for-covid-19-research\\_N01-PUB-200326-CORS\\_ev](https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/eu-funding-for-covid-19-research_N01-PUB-200326-CORS_ev)

## Find out more

[EU research and innovation in action against the coronavirus](#)

[European Commission: coronavirus research](#)

[Supporting research for treatment, diagnostics and vaccines](#)

[Check legislative progress: pharmaceutical strategy for Europe](#)

[European Medicines Agency: Covid-19 vaccines: development, evaluation, approval and monitoring](#)

[Covid-19 vaccines: MEPs question top officials on authorisation and contracts \(23 March 2020\)](#)