

Boosting the EU's capacity to anticipate and respond to health crises

- MEPs call for strengthened member states' cooperation, especially between border regions
- More transparency needed in EU procurement and purchase agreements
- Proposal part of new future-proofed EU health security framework

MEPs outline how the EU should strengthen crisis prevention, preparedness and response when addressing future serious cross-border health threats.

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (ENVI) adopted on Tuesday, with 67 votes in favour, 10 against and one abstention, a draft negotiating position for a new regulation on tackling serious cross-border health threats. The text will be voted by all MEPs during September's plenary session.

Enhanced cooperation and transparency of joint procurement

The COVID-19 crisis revealed further work at the EU level is needed to support cooperation between member states, in particular border regions, say MEPs. They call for clear procedures and increased transparency for EU joint procurement activities and related purchase agreements. Joint procurement should be used to strengthen the negotiating position of participating countries, improve the security of supply and ensure equitable access to medical products, MEPs add.

A transversal vision of health

In the approved text, MEPs call for a "One Health" multi-sectoral approach that, in order to tackle future public health threats, needs to recognise human health as connected to animal health and the environment. In addition, MEPs want to ensure that, alongside monitoring communicable diseases, the monitoring of the impact of these pathogens on non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, cancer, diabetes and mental illness, is also part of EU public health policy.

Better representation of stakeholders and involvement of Parliament

The Health Security Committee, comprising national representatives to discuss political and technical topics, should also involve relevant EU agencies, such as the European Medicines Agency and the European Centre for Disease Control and Prevention. Agencies' representatives, as well as representatives of the European Parliament, should attend committee meetings as observers, according to MEPs. Their text calls for wider consultation of public health experts, international organisations and healthcare professionals.

Quote

“With this report, we strengthen the Commission proposal, allowing the EU to better prevent and respond to any kind of future public health threats. Beyond infectious diseases, the Union is currently not protected enough against environmental, food, biological, chemical or other threats”, said Rapporteur Véronique Trillet-Lenoir (Renew, FR). “Our priority must be to guarantee health solidarity by reducing health inequalities within member states and beyond Europe.” she added.

Background

As part of [building a European Health Union](#), the Commission proposed on 11 November 2020 a new health security framework fit for future health challenges, based on [lessons learnt from combatting the coronavirus](#), which includes a [proposal for a regulation on serious cross-border threats to health](#).

Further information

[Draft report](#)

[Compromise amendments](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Legislative train](#)

[EP Research: Building up resilience to cross-border health threats: Moving towards a European health union \(April 2021\)](#)

[Profile of the rapporteur: Véronique Trillet-Lenoir \(Renew, FR\)](#)

[European Parliament's work on EU health policy](#)

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