

COVID-19: EP mission assesses work of EMA and BioNTech

On 20-21 September, a delegation of the special committee on COVID-19 pandemic (COVI) visited the European Medicines Agency in the Netherlands and the headquarters of BioNTech in Germany.

On Tuesday, members travelled to Amsterdam, the Netherlands, to exchange with the [European Medicines Agency](#) (EMA) Director, Emer Cooke, and experts on the agency's role in development, evaluation, approval and monitoring of COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics.

On Wednesday, the delegation learned about mRNA technology and its potential, in the [BioNTech](#) laboratories in Mainz, Germany, where the development of the [Comirnaty](#) COVID-19 vaccine took place.

Following the visit, COVI Chair Kathleen Van Brempt said:

"EMA's work was essential to get vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics at speed. The COVI committee now wants to learn how the agency's work can be supported better for future health crisis. During meetings with the EMA staff, Members discussed the EMA's challenges and lessons learned from the pandemic in particular related to the evaluation and monitoring of COVID-19 vaccines and therapeutics, ECDC and EMA collaborative studies, communicating to the public and tackling misinformation.

At the BioNTech SE laboratories, we discussed the potential of mRNA technologies, the most important production bottlenecks, the adaptation of vaccines to variants and questions of vaccine and technology sharing.

In particular, the meeting with EMA and BioNTech allowed the delegation to meet with staff and scientists working behind the scenes all of which are experts in their field and are carrying out impressive work. We will continue these discussions with with other CEOs of pharmaceutical companies including Mr. Albert Bourla, the CEO of Pfizer on the 10th October in committee."

Background

The delegation, led by COVI Chair [Kathleen Van Brempt](#) (S&D, BE), was composed of: [Deirdre Clune](#) (EPP, IE), [Pernille Weiss](#) (EPP, DK), [Stelios Kypouropoulos](#) (EPP, EL), [Karsten Lucke](#) (S&D, DE), [Véronique Trillet-Lenoir](#) (Renew, FR), [Tilly Metz](#) (Greens/EFA, LU), [Sylvia Limmer](#)

(ID, DE) and [Margarita de la Pisa Carrión](#) (ECR, ES).

In March 2022, the European Parliament established a new “[Special committee on the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons learned and recommendations for the future](#)” (COVI). The committee’s work focuses on four areas: health, democracy and fundamental rights, social and economic impact, as well as global aspects related to the pandemic.

Further information

[European Parliament: The EU's response to the coronavirus](#)

[EP Multimedia Centre: COVI](#)

[EP Multimedia Centre: EU's response to COVID-19](#)

[Special Committee on the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons learned and recommendations for the future](#)

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