I. SUMMARY

EUROPEAN UNION

Number of cases: 1,154,757 (including the UK)
Number of deaths: 135,226

- On 27 April the Health Security Committee (HSC) had a meeting on the outbreak of COVID-19 and discussed the ECDC’s 30 days projections and investigational therapeutics.

- The EMA announced on 30 April that its Human Medicines Committee (CHMP) began assessing the use of remdesivir against COVID-19, on a rolling basis.

- On 1 May Members of the European Parliament sent a letter calling the European Commission and Council to strengthen and re-design our current health systems to improve preparedness and resilience, in the face of the gaps emphasised by the current pandemic.

- On 3 May a joined op-ed was published announcing the launch of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator, a platform to accelerate research, development, access, and distribution of diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines.
• On 4 May the Commission and other partners launch an online pledging conference for the global funding of innovations to fight COVID-19 with aim of raising EUR 7.5 billion. Funding raised will mainly be allocated to recognised global health organisations.

• The European Commission’s Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network has been working to fight COVID-19 related misinformation and consumer scams, and conducted a sweep on 29 April.

• On 4 May the Coordination Group for Mutual Recognition and Decentralised Procedure – Veterinary (CMDv) published guidance on adaptations to the regulatory framework for companies that develop, manufacture, and distribute veterinary medicines in the context of COVID-19.

• On 1 April, Member of the European Parliament István Ujhelyi (Hungary, S&D), sent a letter to the European Commission and Council asking for the strengthening of the EU healthcare systems and the EU's competences in health.

• On 4 May the EMA, the European Commission, and the Coordination Group for Mutual Recognition and Decentralised Procedure – Veterinary (CMDv) published guidance for companies involved in veterinary medicines in the context of COVID-19.

For more information, please get in touch with Charline Quillérou, Associate Director EU at c.quillerou@rpp-group.com

FRANCE

Number of cases: 131,287
Number of deaths: 24,895 (including retirement homes)

• The end of confinement measures will take place on 11 May as per the decision by the French President.

• The Health Minister, Olivier Véran, announced on 2 May that the end of confinement could be postponed if the pandemic rises in the next days, or if violations of confinement measures increase.

• The Prime Minister will announce on 7 May if the exit strategy is effectively triggered on 11 May.
- On 3 May, 316 mayors from the Paris area called solemnly to the President to postpone reopening of schools (planned on 11 May) for red areas. Areas classified as red are the most affected ones. The classification of regions is presented every evening by the Health Ministry.

- On 2 May, the government tabled a law proposal to extend the sanitary state of emergency until 24 July, which would enable the government to adopt every necessary measure without any vote from the Parliament. This law proposal is examined in the Senate on 4 May.

- The government announced on 3 May that France will not impose quarantine for people coming from the European Union, the Schengen zone or the United Kingdom.

For more information, please get in touch with Salomé Chelli-Enriquez, Director RPP France at s.chelli-enriquez@rpp-group.com

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**GERMANY**

**Number of cases:** 165,664  
**Number of deaths:** 6,886

- On 30 April the federal and regional governments decided to lift additional restrictive measures in Germany. They agreed to re-open zoos, galleries, historic sites and museums in the beginning of May under certain conditions; also, services in churches can take place. The regions will also decide, when playgrounds for children can be opened again; however, overcrowded places should be avoided. The existing contact restrictions are extended until at least 10 May. On 6 May, the federal and regional governments will analyse the impacts of measures taken in the last weeks.

- On 30 April Federal Minister of Employment Hubertus Heil as well as Federal Minister of Economic Affairs Peter Altmaier confirmed that in April, the unemployment rate increased by 0.7% and has now reached 5.8% in total. This is an increase of 0.9% compared to April 2019. Both ministers introduced a four-step strategy that shall re-activate the German economy. The strategy includes (1) the further development of existing state aid, (2) further immediate measures, (3) a needs-based economic stimulus package as well as a (4) long-term "fitness programme".

For more information, please get in touch with Franziska Schoeps, Associate Director Germany at f.schoeps@rpp-group.com
### ITALY

**Number of cases:** 210,717  
**Number of deaths:** 28,884

- The Italian Civil Protection department has said that it expects to have left the peak of the pandemic, with the largest drop in active cases since the beginning of the pandemic.

- In Italy, the main phase of the lifting of containment measures (‘phase 2’) started on 4 May. Manufacturing companies, constructions sites and wholesalers are allowed to open. Most other businesses will have to wait until 18 May or 1 June.

- The Minister of Health, Roberto Speranza, signed on 30 April the ministerial decree defining the criteria for health risk monitoring activities of the evolution of the epidemiological situation.

- Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte is increasingly criticized by the opposition. The far-right League and Brothers of Italy parties accused the government of imposing significant emergency measures limiting the rights of Italians without having involved the Italian parliament.

- The Italian government has also decreed that data and apps will be used to facilitate the tracing of persons who may come in contact with COVID-19 infected persons. However, people that do not decide to use the app will not suffer limits on their movements or rights. Health authorities have encouraged Italians to use the app as a key tool to prevent the rate of contagion.

For more information, please get in touch with **Daniela Lemme, Associate Director Italy** at d.lemme@rpp-group.com
SPAIN

Number of cases: 248,301
Number of deaths: 25,428

- Spain initiates today (4 May) its first phase (phase 0) of the exit strategy. Restrictions of movement are gradually being lifted and small establishments can reopen by appointment. Face masks are now compulsory to wear in transports, although home office is still the recommended working option.

- As a follow-up of the exit strategy, regions have been tasked by the Ministry of Health to put forward their proposals of plans to implement the 4 phases and justify the transition of phases accordingly. Phasing-out containment measures in place will indeed be an asymmetric and decentralised process within the national territory, although the Ministry of Health is responsible for validating or rejecting proposals.

- The government has launched an EUR 16 billion fund for all regions as part of a social and economic reconstruction plan to mitigate the negative impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

- Despite the reduction of rate of new infections from 35% to 0.5% (compared to total number of confirmed cases) in the past 50 days, the government sees a fourth extension of the state of emergency until 24 May necessary. The extension will be tabled and discussed in the Congress on 6 May. Some level of rejection from the opposition is expected.

For more information, please get in touch with Kit Greenop, Director RPP Spain at k.greenop@rpp-group.com

UNITED KINGDOM

Number of cases: 186,599
Number of deaths: 28,446

- NHS Chief Executive Simon Stevens detailed the second phase of the NHS’s response to COVID-19, indicating that community health centres, primary care services and mental health will be priorities as demand for COVID-19 aftercare outweighs direct COVID-19
treatment. Stevens has urged local hospital systems to ‘lock in’ new flexibility in remote working and treatment segmentation developed in response to COVID-19 to allow certain hospitals to remain focussed on non-COVID-19 treatment pathways.

- Health Secretary Matt Hancock will this afternoon (4 May) unveil the specifics of the Government’s more community-oriented programme to ‘test, track and trace’ COVID-19. Mass daily testing, which reached 122,347 on 30 April, will form the bedrock of the Government’s imminent contact tracing programme. A new army of 18,000 contact tracers will work in conjunction with a new NHS contact-tracing app, which is being trialled on the Isle of Wight from today.

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson will detail the Government’s exit strategy this week. Results due this week from its mass home testing programme launched last week will provide data to determine when and how to end the lockdown. Early indications suggest some people will be allowed to return to work in two weeks’ time, with stringent sanitation standards in place. Primary school students will likely return to formal education on 1 June, though the oldest school cohorts will likely have to wait until the next school year.

- Scientists at University Hospital Southampton lead the development of a COVID-19 treatment, administering interferon beta, which the human body naturally produces in response to viral infection, to combat COVID-19. COVID-19 suppresses the body’s production of interferon beta, meaning immune systems are less responsive to the virus.

For more information, please get in touch with Martyna Giedrojc, Associate Director UK at m.giedrojc@rpp-group.com
II. EUROPEAN UNION

- On 27 April the Health Security Committee (HSC) had a meeting on the outbreak of COVID-19. This meeting included discussions on the European Centre for Disease Control (ECDC) 30-day projections, where it was noted that further coordination is needed for more accurate modelling. The side effects of chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine was also mentioned. Discussion also touched upon ECDC’s 30 days projections and investigational therapeutics.

- On 30 April the EMA announced that its Human Medicines Committee (CHMP) began assessing the use of remdesivir against COVID-19, on a rolling basis. Therefore, the assessment of this medicine will be ongoing, as data becomes available. This is one of the Agency’s regulatory tools to speed up the evaluation of a promising investigational treatment during a public health emergency.

- On 3 May, a joint op-ed was published, co-authored by Italian President Giuseppe Conte, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Federal Chancellor Angela Merkel, President of the European Council Charles Michel, Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen.
  - This op-ed announced the launch of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator. This is a global cooperation platform, that aims to accelerate research, development, access, and distribution of diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines.

- On 4 April, the Commission and other partners launch an online pledging conference aiming to raise an initial 7.5 billion euros for the global funding of innovations to fight COVID-19. Funding raised will mainly be allocated to recognised global health organisations. The conference counted with participation of several major stakeholders, who support this global initiative and emphasise the need for solidarity, global collaboration, and to ensure access to treatment by all.

- On 1 April, Member of the European Parliament István Ujhelyi (Hungary, S&D), sent a letter to the European Commission and Council, co-signed by several other Members of the European Parliament. This letter mainly asks to strengthen and re-design our current health systems to improve preparedness and resilience, in the face of the gaps emphasised by the current pandemic.

- The European Commission’s Consumer Protection Cooperation (CPC) Network has been working to fight COVID-19 related misinformation and consumer scams. CPC authorities have carried out a Sweep, which refers to an online investigation exercise. On 29 April a document explaining its process was published, as well as a list of detailed replies from the different platforms.

- On 4 May the European Medicines Agency (EMA), the European Commission, and the Coordination Group for Mutual Recognition and Decentralised Procedure – Veterinary (CMDv) published
guidance on adaptations to the regulatory framework for companies that develop, manufacture, and distribute veterinary medicines in the context of COVID-19. This guidance takes the shape of a Q&A document, which was also endorsed by the EU executive Steering group on Shortages of Medicines Caused by Major Events.

III. FRANCE

- Confinement measures in France will officially end on 11 May, however, this could be postponed if the pandemic rises in the next days, or if violations of confinement measures increase. The Prime Minister will announce on 7 May if the exit strategy is effectively triggered on 11 May.

- The exit strategy was presented by Prime Minister Édouard Philippe on 28 April to the National Assembly, which adopted the plan on the same day. The exit plan will be progressive and different in the various French regions, which will be classified into three categories: red, orange and green. On 11 May, schools and shops will reopen. Bars and restaurants will however remain closed. Citizens will have to wear reusable masks from 11 May, which will be mandatory in schools, shops and public transports.

- The first coloured map of regions was launched on 30 April by the government. It is updated every evening, although the final version will be ready on 7 May. Special measures for red, orange, and green areas will also be announced on the same day. Red regions will have a stricter end of confinement measures than orange and green.

- A strict sanitary protocol has been established for schools to follow from 11 May, but many teachers, mayors and politicians call for a postponement of this reopening. On 3 May, 316 mayors from the Paris area (classified in red), called solemnly to the President to postpone reopening of schools for red areas.

- On 2 May, the government announced that he has tabled a law proposal to extend the sanitary state of emergency until 24 July, which enables the government to adopt every necessary measure, without any vote from the Parliament. This law proposal which will authorize a delegation of authority from the Parliament to the government has to be adopted by the Parliament. It is examined by the Senate on 4 May and by the National Assembly on 5 May.

- The government announced on 3 May that France will not impose quarantine for people coming from the European Union, the Schengen zone or the United Kingdom. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs will present an official strategy in the following days on this point.
IV. ITALY

- The Italian Civil Protection department has said that it expects to have left the peak of the pandemic, with the largest drop in active cases since the beginning of the pandemic.

- In Italy, the main phase of the lifting of containment measures (‘phase 2’) started on 4 May. Manufacturing companies, constructions sites and wholesalers are allowed to open. Most other businesses will have to wait until 18 May or 1 June.

- The Minister of Health, Roberto Speranza, signed on 30 April the ministerial decree defining the criteria for health risk monitoring activities (announced in Annex 10 of the Decree of the President of the Council of Ministers of 26 April 2020) of the evolution of the epidemiological situation.

- The lifting of the lockdown measures as of 4 May, "can only take place if close monitoring of the virus transmission trend on the national territory is ensured", the decree states. In order to classify the health risk associated with the transition from phase 1 to phase 2, a number of indicators with threshold and alert values have been identified. These indicators will be monitored at national, regional and local level. These include:
  - process indicators on monitoring capacity;
  - indicators on the capacity for diagnostic assessment, investigation and management of contacts;
  - result indicators relating to transmission stability and the maintenance of health services.

The thresholds defined in the indicators aim to keep a stable number of new cases of SarsCoV2 infection (i.e. a limited increase in time and space), including in hospitals, nursing homes, and to prevent overloading of health services, while the identified alert values will be used to decide on possible revisions of the measures taken.

- Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte is increasingly criticized by the opposition. The far-right League and Brothers of Italy parties accused the government of imposing significant emergency measures limiting the rights of Italians without having involved the Italian parliament.

- The Italian government has also decreed that data and apps will be used to facilitate the tracing of persons who may come in contact with COVID-19 infected persons. However, people that do not decide to use the app will not suffer limits on their movements or rights. Health authorities have encouraged Italians to use the app as a key tool to prevent the rate of contagion.
V. GERMANY

- On 30 April, the federal and regional governments decided to lift additional restrictive measures in Germany. They agreed to re-open zoos, galleries, historic sites and museums in the beginning of May under certain conditions; also, services in churches can take place. The regions will also decide, when playgrounds for children can be opened again; however, overcrowded places should be avoided. The existing contact restrictions are extended until at least 10 May. On 6 May, the federal and regional governments will analyse the impacts of measures taken in the last weeks and discuss, if additional restrictions can be lifted, for instance regarding schools, gastronomy or tourist sites.

- On 30 April, the Federal Government announced to financially support cultural institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Cultural institutions and cultural projects supported by the Federal Government shall be able to pay cancellation fees of up to 60% and a maximum amount of EUR 2500. Moreover, the re-opening of cultural institutions and the establishment of hygienic and precautionary measures will be supported with EUR 10 million.

- The Federal Government stated on 30 April that students who lost their job due to the COVID-19 pandemic are now eligible to apply for grants offered by the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW). This applies both for those who have already receive loans until March 2021 as well as new applicants. Since foreign students are particularly affected, respective grants will be opened from July 2020 until March 2021.

- On 30 April, Federal Minister of Employment Hubertus Heil as well as Federal Minister of Economic Affairs Peter Altmaier confirmed to take any measures needed to support the German economy. In April, the unemployment rate increased by 0.7% and now reaches 5.8% in total. This is an increase of 0.9% compared to April 2019. Both ministers introduced a four-step strategy that shall re-activate the German economy. The strategy includes (1) the further development of existing state aid, (2) further immediate measures, (3) a needs-based economic stimulus package as well as a (4) long-term “fitness programme” that shall ensure the maintaining of framework conditions that ensure the economic stability.

VI. SPAIN

- As of today, 4 May, Spain initiates the phase 0 “Preparation for de-escalation” of its exit strategy, after 50 days of strict lockdown. According to the government, the rate of new infections compared to the total number of infections has been reduced from 35% to 0.5% by 2 May. This first phase (0) is expected to last a minimum of 2 weeks across the national territory. Some restrictions have
been lifted to go outdoors for a walk or practice individual exercise within the same municipality. Likewise, small establishments such as libraries and beauty salons are allowed to reopen and receive customers by appointment only, and bars and restaurants can offer take away meals. While home office is the preferred option of working, those who need to commute to their work place must wear a face mask, as stated in the legal order published by the Ministry of Health. The latter has distributed 6 million face masks for commuters, as well as 7 million to the Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces (FEMP), and another 1.5 million to NGOs.

- The exit plan foresees a gradual, asymmetrical, and joint process amongst regions. The Ministry of Health has established a co-governance with the autonomous communities to decide whether an area is eligible to move to the following phase. Regions have been tasked by a legal order to put forward de-escalation proposals for each phase, based on containment measures included in the decree establishing the state of emergency and its extensions. The Ministry will review the proposals after they have been submitted by 6 May for the first phase, and a week before their expected approval for the other 3 phases. The order includes a recommendation to keep the same number of health professionals available.

- Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has confirmed he will table a fourth extension of the state of emergency to the Congress from 11 May - when the current extension expires - up until 24 May.

- The government has launched a EUR 16 billion social and economic reconstruction plan for the regions. The fund is non-refundable meaning that all regions will receive it regardless of the impact of COVID-19 to their territory for the sake of equality. Further details will be included in a decree, but it is expected that EUR 10 billion will be allocated to health expenditure, EUR 1 billion to social expenditure and EUR 5 billion to the region’s own resources affected by the crisis.

VII. UNITED KINGDOM

- The number of deaths occurring in hospitals each day continues to fall as the COVID-19 battle shifts to care homes, prisons and other community hives of infection. Critically, the number of patients in hospital with COVID-19 across UK regions has been steadily falling since mid-April; the number of COVID-19 hospital patients in London, for example, peaked on 8 April, and the temporary field hospital opened in east London on 3 April has treated only 51 patients in its first three weeks. Reduced COVID-19 strain on hospitals, coupled with sustained pressure on the Government to increase non-COVID-19-related hospital admissions after falls to due COVID-19 fears, has led NHS Chief Executive Simon Stevens to detail the second phase of the NHS’s response to COVID-19. Stevens has indicated that community health centres, primary care services and mental health will be priorities as demand for COVID-19 aftercare outweighs direct
COVID-19 treatment. NHS systems have been urged to step up non-COVID-19 urgent services and to explore the resumption of at least some routine non-urgent elective care. Key to this resumption will be the increased segmentation and separation of different streams of services; Stevens has urged local systems to ‘lock in’ new flexibility in remote working and treatment segmentation to allow certain theatres and hospitals to remain focussed on non-COVID-19 treatment pathways.

- The specific plan for a more community-oriented programme to ‘test, track and trace’ COVID-19 to combat the virus will be unveiled by Health Secretary Matt Hancock this afternoon (4 May). The Government emphatically surpassed Hancock’s self-imposed target of 100,000 tests per day by the end of April, scaling up testing by an additional 41,000 on Thursday to reach 122,347 on the 30 April deadline. Critics point to the inclusion of the 27,000 test kits sent out to people’s homes and the 12,000 sent to satellite testing centres, none of which had been processed, to suggest the figures were artificially inflated to meet the deadline, and testing conspicuously fell to 78,000 per day over the weekend. Such unprocessed tests will nonetheless form the bedrock of the Government’s imminent contact tracing programme; mass testing across homes, community centres, diagnostic centres and hospitals will underpin the efforts of the Government’s new army of 18,000 contact tracers. The tracers, set to begin tracing work within weeks, will work in conjunction with a new NHS contact-tracing app. A major trial of the app, which works using telephone Bluetooth signals and requires people to download the app for maximum effectiveness, will be launched on the Isle of Wight today. The island serves as an ideal, closed-off testing site as it is only connected to the mainland by a ferry. The app’s ability to track movement of people with COVID-19, and the proportion of the 140,000 residents that download the app, will be key areas of concern.

- A broader return to normalcy hinges on Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s detailing of the Government’s exit strategy this week. The Government awaits results from an ‘infection poll’ of 20,000 people to assess how many people in the UK have COVID-19, and results from its mass testing programme launched last week, and subsequent data, will indicate the all-important ‘R’ number – the current rate of infection. Minimising the R figure is the keystone in the Government’s assessment of whether to ease lockdown measures; irrespective of the data, however, Johnson will likely only ease lockdown measures in very limited settings over the coming weeks. Early indications suggest some people will be allowed to return to work, with stringent sanitation standards in place, and people returning to work will be required to socially distance on public transport, meaning that transport will reach a maximum of 15 percent capacity while measures last. The turn of June has been earmarked as a date for primary school cohorts to return to school, if
the R rate allows; older age groups will have to wait weeks longer, and 16-18 year olds will likely have to wait until the next school year for the resumption of formal education.

- Hopes of a comprehensive end to lockdown measures remain pinned on the development of a vaccine or highly effective treatments for COVID-19. Johnson is set to confirm the UK’s pledge of £338mn for vaccine research, testing and treatment, and has indicated the UK will collaborate internationally and engage in the EU’s new COVID-19 vaccine plan laid out on Friday (1 May). Scientists at the University Hospital Southampton lead the development of one such new drug to treat COVID-19 patients. The treatment administers a protein called interferon beta, which our bodies naturally produce in response to a viral infection, to combat COVID-19. Research has indicated that COVID-19 suppresses the body’s production of interferon beta, meaning immune systems are less responsive to the virus. If successful, the treatment is expected to be rolled out in hospitals at the beginning of June.