



Informal video conference of Health ministers 30 October 2020

Chair: Jens Spahn, German Federal Minister of Health

The half-day meeting will start at 10.00. Ministers will exchange views on **the role of the EU in strengthening the World Health Organization (WHO)**.

After the debate, the German presidency of the Council will inform health ministers about the Council recommendation on a **coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic**.

Online **press conference** with minister **Spahn** and Commissioner **Kyriakides** at the end of the meeting, +/-13.00.

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[Visit the meeting page](#)

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Video coverage in broadcast quality (MPEG4) and photo gallery on: www.eucouncil.tv

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¹ This note has been drawn up under the responsibility of the Press Office.

The role of the EU in strengthening the WHO - exchange of views

Health ministers will hold an exchange of views on the draft conclusions of the Council and the representatives of the governments of the member states on the EU role in strengthening the WHO. The aim of the conclusions is to contribute to the coordination of EU member states interventions at the resumed 73rd World Health Assembly, the decision-making body of the WHO. The conclusions build on the discussion of EU health ministers at their previous virtual meeting on 2 October. During this debate, most of the participants supported the view that the EU should play a leading and coordinating role in the future reform of the WHO to strengthen the organisation.

The EU and its member states, together with the UK, are the largest donor to WHO. The EU acknowledges the important role of the WHO in the global health system and in the fight against the current pandemic. At the same time, the EU also acknowledges that the latest pandemics have shown that the international community's expectations generally outweigh the current WHO capacities. In this context, and with the USA withdrawal from the organisation, the role of the EU will only become more important, in particular in the future efforts to reform the WHO.

In relation to this, the German presidency has invited EU health ministers to hold a debate by sharing their views on the following question:

'Based on the outcome of the discussion on 2 October 2020 and without prejudice to the ongoing evaluation, what **concrete steps can be undertaken by EU member states** to achieve the objectives formulated in the draft conclusions with a view to support and guide the process of strengthening the WHO?'

[COVID-19: public health \(background information\)](#)

Any other business:

The presidency will inform ministers about the Council recommendation on a coordinated approach to the restriction of free movement in response to the COVID-19 pandemic ([11689/1/20](#)).

[COVID-19: travel and transport \(background information\)](#)
