Minister Donnelly meets EU Partners to discuss variants, testing, and the rollout of COVID-19 vaccination plans

From Department of Health

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Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, today met with his EU counterparts to discuss the impact of variants on Member States, national testing strategies, and the need for information sharing on the national rollout of COVID-19 vaccination plans. The EU health ministers were joined on the videoconference by representatives from the European Commission, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

Minister Donnelly said:

"We need to act now to combat the threat posed by emerging and future variants of COVID-19. It is vital to protect and maintain the effectiveness of existing and newly developed vaccines.

"We welcome the Commission’s communication on the HERA Incubator to inform action in this regard. We particularly welcome the focus on the rapid detection of variants and streamlining of vaccine authorisation processes."

Minister Donnelly reiterated Ireland’s full support for the common EU approach to the procurement of vaccines, adding:

"It is imperative that the companies deliver on the commitments made to facilitate the much-anticipated significant increase in supply throughout this quarter."

Minister Donnelly also reiterated Ireland’s support for the EU’s contribution to COVAX and underlined the EU’s leadership role regarding equitable global distribution of COVID-19 vaccines:

"This is the ethical thing to do and is in everyone’s interest, as no one will be safe until everyone is safe."