

Minister for Health welcomes the EU Commission plan on new COVID-19 measures and calls for greater collaboration in the fight against COVID-19

From [Department of Health](#)

Published at 30 October 2020

Last updated 30 October 2020

Minister for Health Stephen Donnelly has welcomed the EU Commission plan on COVID-19 and has called on EU Member States to increase cooperation in the fight against the pandemic.

Speaking this morning at a meeting of the EU's Health Ministers, Minister Donnelly discussed the importance of improving information sharing in critical areas with his counterparts across Europe.

Following the meeting, Minister Donnelly said:

"Since the start of the pandemic EU health Ministers have worked together. Given the sobering presentation from the ECDC at today's meeting, further EU co-operation is needed now more than ever. There are experts examining every aspect of COVID-19 in every country across Europe, and that collective knowledge is hugely important to us during this pandemic. Today I asked my fellow EU Health Ministers to ensure that we work together to share this knowledge. This will build on the information exchange already occurring in the EU's Health Security Committee."

He added:

"This information will cover a range of issues that we are all dealing with throughout the EU. This includes the effectiveness of measures in stopping the trans-border importation of the disease, the success rates of policy responses in suppressing the virus, the rates and types of testing being deployed, as well as information exchange on the validation of rapid testing technologies."

During the meeting, EU Health Ministers were given a stark update from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) on the rise of COVID-19 through Europe at this time. This 14-day incident rate for the EU/EEA and UK has increased from 249.8 per 100,000 population (14 days to October 18th) to 360.2 last week (14 days to October 25th). The rate has been increasing for 98 days.

EU Health Ministers also discussed the role of the EU in strengthening the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Minister Donnelly reaffirmed Ireland's support for the WHO, which is playing a central leadership role in coordinating the global fight against COVID-19. He referenced Ireland's four-fold increase in funding to the WHO this year and endorsed the EU's approach to strengthening of the organisation. Minister Donnelly also added that a strengthened European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) will play a crucial role in future outbreaks and that Ireland welcomes any and all steps to explore greater cooperation between ECDC and the WHO.