

Minister Donnelly meets EU Partners to discuss the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination plans in EU Member States

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Minister for Health, Stephen Donnelly, today (Wednesday) met with his EU counterparts to take stock of the current rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination plans in each Member State and to reflect upon lessons learned since the start of the vaccination process. The EU health ministers were joined on the videoconference by representatives from the European Commission, the European Centre for Disease Prevention & Control (ECDC) and the European Medicines Agency (EMA).

Minister Donnelly said,

“Given the current epidemiological situation, it is paramount that we have access to the portfolio of vaccines that we have signed up to as part of Team Europe, once they are deemed safe and effective.” He added that, “The work done by the EMA and the Commission before Christmas to speed up the approval process for Pfizer-BioNTech was genuinely appreciated in Ireland. People are now asking whether there is anything that could be done to speed up approval for the AstraZeneca vaccine, while ensuring that all appropriate authorisation processes are completed. Indeed, in this pandemic, every day matters.”

Minister Donnelly addressed his EU partners,

“Learning from each other will be key to maximising the benefits of our vaccination programmes...including initiatives on epidemiological data sharing within Europe and by the ECDC.” The Minister also sought clarity on the Commission negotiated allocations, Options and ‘top up doses’ of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine to allow for detailed preparations to continue as Ireland’s vaccination programme ramps up.