

Oral conclusions drawn by President Charles Michel following the video conference of the members of the European Council on 21 January 2021

Sanitary situation

Leaders noted the seriousness of the situation especially in the light of the new variants. They are determined to limit the spread of the virus by adopting similar measures among the Member states. In this context, increasing our sequencing capacity is key.

Borders need to stay open to ensure the functioning of the Single market, including the flow of essential goods and services. No indiscriminate travel bans should be imposed.

However, measures restricting non-essential travel in the EU may be needed to contain the spread of the virus.

While upholding its principles, the Council may need to review its recommendations on intra-EU travel and non-essential travels into the EU in light of the risks posed by the new virus variants.

On testing, leaders welcomed the work achieved so far and the agreement on rapid antigen tests and the mutual recognition of test results.

Vaccination

Leaders want vaccination to be accelerated. In this respect, commitments on deliveries made by companies must be respected. Leaders reaffirmed that vaccines should be distributed at the same time and must be on a pro rata/population basis. Leaders reaffirmed the need to have a close follow-up of the vaccination process.

All possible means will be examined to ensure rapid supply, including early distribution to avoid delays.

Leaders agreed to work on a standardised and inter-operable form of proof of vaccination for medical purposes. Leaders will determine at a later stage in what circumstances these certificates could be used.

Leaders reaffirmed their solidarity with third countries. Effective support should be delivered as soon as possible.