

EN

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Answer given by Ms Kyriakides
on behalf of the European Commission
(30.4.2021)

The Commission Communication¹ of 19 January 2021 calls on Member States to accelerate the rollout of vaccination across the EU: by March 2021, at least 80% of people over the age of 80, and 80% of health and social care professionals in every Member State should be vaccinated. Moreover, by the end of summer 2021, countries should have vaccinated at least 70% of the entire adult population. This is needed to put the EU on track for herd immunity, helping to protect those who cannot be vaccinated and providing a bulwark against the spread of the virus.

While each Member State vaccinates in line with its own strategy, vaccination efforts in Europe should stay largely synchronised. In this context, ECDC has launched a COVID-19 vaccine tracker² that provides the latest data on the number of vaccine doses distributed across the EU and the number of individuals receiving their first and second vaccine dose.

In March 2020, the Commission and the Council activated the general escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact. The Commission Communication of 3 March 2021³ states that the future decision on the deactivation of the clause or its continued activation be taken following an overall assessment of the state of the economy based on quantitative criteria. The level of economic activity in the EU/euro area compared to pre-crisis levels (end-2019) would be the key quantitative criterion. The Commission will assess the deactivation or continued application of the general escape clause as part of its spring European Semester package. If the Commission is of the view that economic outlook warrants a deactivation of the clause, it will call on the Council to give its agreement. The process of deactivation would be analogous to the initial activation of the clause.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0035&from=EN>

² <https://qap.ecdc.europa.eu/public/extensions/COVID-19/vaccine-tracker.html#uptake-tab>

³ https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/economy-finance/1_en_act_part1_v9.pdf