

EN
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Answer given by Ms Kyriakides
on behalf of the European Commission
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Effective testing plays a key role in mitigating the spread of the virus, providing the key information for contact tracing as well as wider trends. It also facilitates the free movement of people and the smooth functioning of the internal market.

The Commission is directly helping Member States scale up their testing capacity via direct purchases, joint procurements and specific funding. As highlighted, the Commission is purchasing over 20 million rapid antigen tests for delivery to Member States, funded with EUR 100 million from the Emergency Support Instrument (ESI). In addition to the ESI purchase, a joint procurement with 32 countries for over half a billion rapid antigen tests has been launched. This will help the Member States and participating countries procure more of these tests on a much larger scale in the coming months. The International Federation of Red Cross is also supporting Member States to increase testing capacity, with funding from the ESI.

The Commission has also put forth the HERA Incubator¹, which will work on anticipating the threat of COVID-19 variants, outlining the Commission's plans for EU prevention, mitigation and response to the potential impact of SARS CoV-2 variants. The HERA Incubator will work on five key areas: rapid detection of new variants swift adaptation of vaccines; the European Clinical trials network – VACCELERATE; regulatory approval procedures for vaccines; and upscaling vaccine production and swift delivery.

¹ European bio-defence preparedness plan against COVID-19 variants -
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/AC_21_666