



Welcome to the dedicated My IntraComm page on all matters relating to the novel coronavirus COVID-19. Here you will find information on the **latest developments, general advice, useful links, and Frequently Asked Questions**. If you can't find the answer you are looking for, why not use the form below to ask your question? A specially created helpdesk of colleagues from all relevant Commission services will either point you in the right direction, or take your question to the appropriate service for an official response.

In the interest of getting new information to you as soon as possible, the latest message to all staff and consolidated advice have been uploaded below without first aligning the FAQs. All outdated information in the FAQ will be aligned as soon as possible.

Latest developments

NEW 10/3

Late yesterday evening, the Italian government issued a new decree extending the quarantine zone ('red' area) to the entire country. A link will be provided as soon as the decree is uploaded to the Italian government website. Please keep checking back for further updates.

NEW 9/3

In light of the continuing spread of coronavirus, the Commission's Back to School/Back to University scheme has been suspended until 12 April 2020. Full details and instructions can be found [here](#).

NEW 8/3

Message from Commissioner Hahn to staff on the coronavirus state of play

Dear colleagues,

The latest news in Italy and more broadly the development of the coronavirus in Europe is certainly more than ever attracting our full attention. After the measures taken last night by the Italian authorities, many of you asked me how this will affect us. Therefore, I would like to give you a short overview of where we stand:

Frequently Asked Questions

- Travel and missions
- Healthcare and telemedicine
- Events and meetings
- Communications
- Working arrangements
- Others
- Hygiene

If you can't find an answer to your question, please use the "Contact us" link located below. Our team of experts will respond as soon as possible.

[Staff Contact](#)

[Contact us](#)

[Medical Service](#)

1. Importance of precautionary measures for all staff members - Most of us are already drawing consequences in our daily and professional life by taking preventive measures, such as ensuring high standards of hand hygiene, replacing missions by video-conference and no more handshaking or kissing. I encourage you to follow these measures as they help to protect all of us. I wish to recall our basic principle that staff who have symptoms should stay at home.

2. Colleagues in Italy - I understand that many colleagues working in Italy, in Ispra but also in Milan, Rome, Parma and Turin, are concerned about the practical consequences of the decision of the Italian Council. I can assure all of you that we are at your side: I am in close contact with the Italian Health Minister and all guidelines provided until now remain valid. As schools and kindergartens are closed, we will naturally continue facilitating all teleworking options with the needed flexibility in those exceptional circumstances in line with the host countries' measures. The newly designated zones are the following: region of Lombardy, the provinces of Modena, Parma, Piacenza, Reggio nell'Emilia, Rimini, Pesaro and Urbino, Novara, Verbano-Cusio-Ossola, Vercelli, Venice, Padua, Treviso, Asti, and Alessandria. Colleagues coming from these regions are invited to telework for 14 days on their return. However, the decree does not apply retroactively, and those who returned to work last week from one of these regions can come to work. You are invited to monitor your health status until 14 days after you returned. If you develop any symptoms, you should stay at home.

3. Colleagues in Belgium and Luxembourg - Also here, we are in close contact with the national authorities and they are constantly reassessing the developments and the measures taken. For the time being, measures we have taken are fully in compliance with the host countries' policies. We also continue to rely on the scientific facts provided by our agency, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. As the virus is spreading, we have a colleague in the Commission who has tested positive, but is doing well under the current circumstances. I would like to wish this colleague a quick and full recovery. Let me underline that necessary precautionary measures were already taken last week to protect the colleague and others – and I can reassure you that we will continue doing so. As we are all taking part in public life, nobody can exclude that more colleagues might be affected in the future. Therefore, I invite you all to deal with these situations with care and comprehension. You will also have heard that one European school decided to close for 2 days as a precautionary measure, waiting for the results of the test of one child. As the test was negative, activities will resume on Wednesday. Naturally, flexible working arrangements will be facilitated in such cases.

Finally, please be reassured that should there be any new development, you will be informed swiftly. Please also regularly consult the dedicated page on My IntraComm, where you will find the Medical Services' contacts as well as the Staff Contact Online.

I count on your full cooperation to tackle this extraordinary situation successfully.

Johannes Hahn

Commissioner for Budget and Administration

NEW 8/3

Advice and instructions applicable from Monday 9 March

Context

In designing and implementing the measures to be applied to all staff with regard to the Coronavirus crisis, the Commission must comply with the risk assessment and the recommendations from all relevant public health authorities (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), and competent national health authorities across EU Member States, as well as DG SANTE and the WHO).

For each place of employment, the Commission abides by the recommendations of the competent public health authorities of the host Member State, which have both the means and the competence to best follow-up the evolution of the national situation and evaluate what measures are necessary in this context. The Commission will also adapt to specific measures that may be decided locally for a specific geographical area. Reference is made in particular to the **specific rules that apply for ISPRA**.

As the situation is evolving rapidly, the Commission will continue to revisit and align its measures with the recommendations of national health authorities in the host country for each site, as well as the guidelines of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

A dedicated helpdesk has been put in place, please see the staff contact link on this page.

Brussels Medical Service

HR-MAIL-D3@ec.europa.eu,

tel: +32 2 2957761

Luxembourg Medical Service

HR-LUX-SERV-

MEDICAL@ec.europa.eu,

tel: +352 4301-32588

Ispra Medical Service

HR-ISP-MEDICAL-

SERVICE@EC.EUROPA.EU,

tel: +39 0332789965;

Useful links

- **European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: COVID-19 (novel coronavirus)**
- **European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: Situation update for EU/EEA, Switzerland and UK**
- **Coronavirus on Europa**
- **Teleworking**
- **Overview of videoconferencing**
- **Official Belgian Coronavirus website**
- **Italian Health Ministry website**
- **Italian Civil Protection website**
- **Coronavirus: Communication to Commission staff - Update 1**
- **Luxembourg: Guichet unique à l'égard du COVID-19**
- **Luxembourg: Ministère des Affaires étrangères et européennes**
- **Health Service Executive of Ireland Covid-19**

The present instructions are applicable as of Monday 9 March until the end of March, or the next update.

Recommendations to all statutory staff, seconded national experts and blue-book trainees:

In light of the latest assessments, the recommendations below apply to all statutory staff, seconded national experts and blue-book trainees:

1. Asymptomatic staff, even those with a recent travel history in regions at risk (except areas designated as quarantine zones by national authorities) must come to work. Staff are however invited to self-monitor their health status for 14 days so that at the first sign of any illness, they can immediately go home. Staff who have travelled in a quarantine area (as defined by the national authorities concerned) within the last 14 days must telework for 14 days on their return. Please note, the Italian decree of 8 March extending the quarantine zone does not apply retroactively. Those who returned to work last week from one of these regions can come to work. You are invited to monitor your health status until 14 days after you returned. If you develop any symptoms, you should stay at home.

2. Sick staff should stay at home, especially if their disease is potentially contagious. This general rule is of particular importance in the present circumstances. Staff presenting any symptoms compatible with COVID-19 must stay at home. This applies in cases where there is a sudden onset of at least one of the following symptoms: a significant cough, a fever > 38°C, or shortness of breath). Such staff members are considered to be unable to carry out their duties for health reasons, and the **usual rules on sick leave** apply. Staff with symptoms are invited to contact the nearest Medical Service by phone or by email where guidance will be provided, notably on whether and how to contact the relevant national health authorities:

Brussels Medical Service – **HR-MAIL-D3@ec.europa.eu**, tel: +32 2 2957761

Luxembourg Medical Service - **HR-LUX-SERV-MEDICAL@ec.europa.eu**, tel: +352 4301-32588

Ispra Medical Service – **HR-ISP-MEDICAL-SERVICE@EC.EUROPA.EU** and/or +39 0332789965

3. Staff with a sick child or sick family member at home with all COVID-19 related symptoms (see above) need to stay at home, even if they are themselves asymptomatic.

As the staff member is asymptomatic, sick leave does not apply. **Telework** is the principle. If there is no possibility for the staff member to telework because the nature of their duties is incompatible with such an arrangement, then special leave will be granted for the corresponding period.

4. Staff who have been in close contact with a confirmed COVID-19 patient need to contact the nearest Medical Service by phone or by email (see details in point 2 above), stay at home, and telework during the incubation period (14 days) or until further notice. They should also keep their children at home for the same period, in order to avoid the risk of further contaminations.

A 'close contact' is defined by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control as:

- A person living in the same household as a COVID-19 case;
- A person who had direct physical contact with a COVID-19 case (e.g. shaking hands);
- A person who had unprotected, direct contact with the infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case (e.g. being coughed on, touching used paper tissues with their bare hand);
- A person who had face-to-face contact with a COVID-19 case, within 2 metres for 15 minutes or more;
- A person who was in a closed environment (e.g. a classroom, meeting room, hospital waiting room, etc.) with a COVID-19 case for 15 minutes or more and at a distance of less than 2 metres;
- A person providing direct care for a COVID-19 case, or laboratory workers handling specimens from a COVID-19 case without the recommended personal protective equipment (PPE) or with a possible breach in the PPE;
- Sitting in an aircraft within two seats (in any direction) of the COVID-19 case.

5. Staff with a condition that increases the risk of adverse outcomes of COVID-19

There is no recommendation yet on how to act in cases where a staff member has a condition that increases the risk of an adverse outcome with COVID-19, as defined by the Commission's Medical Services.

The list of conditions is as follows: pregnancy (regardless of gestational week); adults over the age of 63; chronic cardiovascular disease (coronary heart disease, congestive heart failure, cardiomyopathy, stroke); chronic obstructive or restrictive lung disease, severe asthma, obstructive sleep apnoea; individuals with immunosuppressive conditions (with active malignancy, or receiving chemotherapy or long-term steroids or other immune-modifying treatment; hypertension or diabetes, when accompanied by complications (i.e. simple diabetes or hypertension, well controlled under medication, are not

included); chronic kidney or liver or hematologic or neuromuscular or autoimmune disease; infectious diseases: chronic hepatitis B, chronic hepatitis C that has not responded to treatment; people who are very obese, with a body mass index (BMI) of 40 or higher, or significantly underweight (BMI < 18.5).

If staff affected by these conditions do not feel secure at the workplace due to the context of uncertainty linked to the COVID-19 situation, they may request teleworking. This should be done through the normal workflow, informing unit HR.D6 in charge of absence management (**HR-BXL-CONGES-SPECIAUX-MED@ec.europa.eu**) of their condition, so that their line manager can be asked to grant teleworking arrangements. The Medical Service will inform their line managers that they should accept the teleworking request on medical grounds.

6. Missions:

a) All non-essential missions (within or outside the EU) should be reduced as much as possible (by cancelling, videoconference or postponing), to minimise exposure during travel and in situ. As the situation is evolving constantly, this will also reduce the need to cancel missions in the future. Travel costs already incurred and covered by a mission order will be reimbursed.

b) Essential missions: Whether a mission is essential or not is for each Director-General/Head of service to determine, by balancing the strategic and political importance of the mission with the sanitary situation of the country of mission (COVID-19 situation and health system capacity in the destination country). Essential missions can be for instance missions directly related to scientific work on the analysis and treatment of the virus, missions of political priority or urgency, missions at the invitation of public authorities, inspections, audits and controls, etc. For essential missions to China, Hong Kong, Macao, Singapore, Japan, South Korea and Iran, **guidance on health measures** is available to staff. While the guidance only refers explicitly to the first three countries, it should now be read as applying to all seven aforementioned countries.

7. Meetings:

Internal meetings or internal events with colleagues from the same place of employment may be maintained.

For meetings or events with many colleagues travelling from another country, video conferencing should be preferred. Essential regular meetings such as comitology committees or expert committees with mandatory deadlines are maintained and should be held via video conference. Non-essential meetings or events should be postponed, or held via video conference if rescheduling is not possible.

8. Visits

All visits from organised groups of external visitors are suspended (e.g. to the visitors' centre). For individual visitors (fewer than 5) who have been officially invited for a meeting by a Directorate-General, a case by case assessment will be performed to decide whether to maintain the visit or not (notably taking into account the place of origin of the visitor and his/her state of health).

Recommendations to intérimaires and service providers:

The Commission needs to align the rules concerning intérimaires and service providers with the measures above to ensure their full effectiveness.

In this context, the measures applicable to statutory staff should be taken to apply *mutatis mutandis* to intérimaires and service providers, i.e. taking into account the fact that their employer is not the Commission but a contractor of the Commission.

This means in practice that intérimaires and service providers in a situation equivalent to the ones mentioned in points 2, 3 or 4 above are not authorised to enter Commission premises. For service providers or intérimaires in 'situation 2' above (i.e. presenting any symptoms compatible with COVID-19), it is up to them to check if they are eligible for sick leave under the relevant national rules (i.e. the ones applicable between the service provider and his/her employer). If they are not, teleworking should be privileged (subject to the employer's agreement).

For teleworking arrangements (in situations 2, 3 or 4), intérimaires and service providers should contact the service to whom they deliver services and identify the possibilities to deliver their services remotely. If there is no possibility because the service is incompatible with such an arrangement, they should contact their employer.

Belgium

For staff in Belgium, or travelling to Belgium: The 'Centre de Crise Belge' has published a website collecting all information on coronavirus, and procedures to follow if you have any doubts or questions: **www.info-coronavirus.be**

A helpline (0800/14689) has been set up and an e-mail address is also available to answer any questions: **info-coronavirus@health.fgov.be**

Luxembourg

The Luxembourg hotline is 8002 8080. In order to have a **single entry page about COVID-19, the Luxembourg government has created a website**, recommending that it be consulted on a regular basis.

The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs has also **set up a website gathering additional information**.

Italy

For the latest information from the Italian government, check the official Italian coronavirus webpages:

Italian Health Ministry website (IT)

Italian Civil Protection website (EN)

Frequently Asked Questions

If you can't find an answer to your question, please use the "Contact us" link located below. Our team of experts will respond as soon as possible.

Travel and missions

Please note advice in this section will be revised soon.

Italy: Can I go on mission to Ispra?

Given that Ispra, like all of Italy that is not designated a red area, falls under the yellow area category, videoconferences should be prioritised over missions.

Italy: Where exactly are the quarantine/'red'/lock-down areas?

There is one cluster of communes in the southern part of the Region of Lombardy (Bertonico; Casalpusterlengo; Castelgerundo; Castiglione d'Adda; Codogno; Fombio; Maleo; San Fiorano; Somaglia; Terranova dei passerine. There is also one quarantined commune in the Region of Veneto (Vò Euganeo, in the Euganean Hills).

Italy: I am stuck in a quarantine area. What do I do?

Staff who find themselves in an Italian quarantine area should stay at home and telework until further notice.

Italy: Can I go on mission to the quarantine areas?

No

I was in a quarantine area for business/pleasure within the last two weeks. What should I do?

You need to:

- contact the nearest Medical Service by phone or by email:
 - Brussels Medical Service – **HR-MAIL-D3@ec.europa.eu**, tel: **+32 2 295776**
 - Luxembourg Medical Service – **HR-LUX-SERV-MEDICAL@ec.europa.eu**, tel: **+352 4301-32588**
 - Ispra Medical Service – **HR-ISP-MEDICAL-SERVICE@ec.europa.eu** and/or **+39 0332789965**

Staff Contact

Contact us

- stay at home and telework during the incubation period (14 days) or until further notice.
- keep your children at home for the same period, in order to avoid the risk of further contaminations.

Italy: What if the authorities extend the quarantine areas?

Then the quarantine rules will apply to those areas, too.

How can I follow the latest information from the Italian government?

Check the official Italian government coronavirus webpages:

- **Italian Health Ministry website** (IT)
- **Italian Civil Protection website** (EN)

Italy: Where exactly are the restricted/'yellow' areas?

According to the latest **Italian government decree**, the whole country is now a yellow area apart from the designated red areas, which remain unchanged (see above).

What restrictions are in place in Italy (yellow area)?

Broadly, restrictions on large gatherings (closing of schools, universities, outdoor and indoor markets, fairs, public events, etc). Schools and universities are closed from 5-15 March, public events are cancelled, sport events will take place behind closed doors for the next 30 days, and meetings and conventions are cancelled.

Can I go on mission to Italy (yellow area)?

Videoconferences instead of missions should be prioritised for any contact with colleagues in Italy (yellow area).

What actions should I take if I am in Italy (yellow area)?

At this stage, national instructions from the Italian authorities need to be followed in Italy (yellow area) with regard to gatherings or events (including large meetings). Colleagues with children in areas where child-care establishments are closed can request teleworking if they are unable to find an alternative solution. Follow the latest information from the Italian government at the websites above.

Given all the new emerging risk areas, what should staff coming from those areas do? From France or Germany, for example?

In an evolving situation, the Commission is constantly revisiting and aligning its measures and advice: these are based and must comply with the recommendations of national health authorities in the host country for each site, as well as the guidelines of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. Currently, asymptomatic staff, even those with a recent travel history (except in a quarantine area), must come to work.

Can I travel from Italy (yellow area) to other Commission sites, for example?

Colleagues can travel out of Italy (yellow area) in line with the measures imposed by the national authorities. Colleagues who have been to Italy (yellow area) should come back to work **unless they had any contact with an ill person infected with the novel Corona virus COVID-19, or if you develop any symptoms.**

What about Singapore, South Korea, Japan and Iran?

With regard to the recommendations for Singapore, South Korea, Japan and Iran, the same prudent measures as outlined for Italy ('yellow' areas) apply.

I planned/am planning to go back to my old school/university soon, as part of the Back to School/University initiative. Can I still go?

If the trip is due to take place between now and 12 April 2020, no. In light of the continuing spread of coronavirus, the scheme has been suspended until 12 April 2020. Full details and further instructions can be found **here**.

Events and meetings

I need to set up a videoconference with external participants from home. How can I do this?

When external participants are involved, you can use the WebEx application to organise or participate in a videoconference. Instructions on how to do this, along with an overview of all videoconferencing tools, can be found **here**.

How do we reimburse invited experts that have already bought tickets, if a meeting is cancelled?

If the Commission decides to cancel a meeting because of the coronavirus, experts who have already booked non-refundable tickets/accommodation will be reimbursed by the PMO, provided that they do not receive reimbursement

through another source (such as travel insurance). The reimbursement request must contain an explanatory derogation note signed by the responsible authorising officer in support of the meeting cancellation.

I am organising a meeting or an event internally or with external visitors. Should I cancel it?

Please note that **specific rules apply to Ispra**

For everywhere else, please observe and apply the following guidelines to determine whether to maintain, cancel or postpone a meeting or event:

1) Internal meetings or events with participants from the place of employment may be maintained.

2) Meetings or events with many participants travelling from another country (Member State and/or third country):

- As a general rule, please choose video conferencing over in-person meetings;
- Essential regular meetings such as comitology committees or expert committees with mandatory deadlines are maintained; they should preferably be held via video conference;
- Non-essential meetings or events should preferably be postponed, or held via video conference if rescheduling is not possible.

When a meeting or event with participants coming from another country is maintained, the participants coming from the following countries/areas should be invited to join via videoconference only: China, Macao, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Iran and the red and yellow zones in Italy.

If a meeting or event is maintained (and as a common rule anyway), you should apply basic protective hygiene measures as indicated on the posters distributed across Commission buildings.

The Director-General of the DG organising the meeting or event will take the ultimate decision on whether to maintain, cancel or postpone a meeting or event.

As the situation is evolving rapidly, the Commission will continue to revisit and align its measures with the recommendations of national health authorities in the host country for each site, as well as the guidelines of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

Working arrangements / flexibility

What about staff who are coughing or have a small fever and are not on sick leave? Are they encouraged to telework too or should they come to work as usual?

Responsible behaviour is our collective responsibility. Regardless of whether a new virus is circulating, if you are experiencing flu-like symptoms, you should stay at home on sick leave. **Rules on the need for a medical certificate apply**

What about staff who don't come from a red zone that have children in schools that are required to stay home due to the school/municipality policy. Can they telework?

If staff are affected by schools' precautionary measures, and their children need to stay at home, all managers across the Commission have been asked to enable teleworking possibilities. The Commission will be as flexible as possible in these circumstances.

Are there simple instructions somewhere on how to connect to our computers remotely?

Yes. Instructions can be found **here**.

I need to set up a videoconference with external participants from home. How can I do this?

When external participants are involved, you can use the WebEx application to organise or participate in a videoconference.

Instructions on how to do this, along with an overview of all videoconferencing tools, can be found here.

If I am requested to stay at home and telework can I come to the office to get my laptop?

No, you should not come to the office in any circumstances, and you are advised to stay at home. Please use your personal computer for telework if possible.

Are staff in self quarantine or actual quarantine (eg Italian 'red' areas) eligible for a sickness certificate/sick leave?

Sick leave applies to cases where a staff member is unable to carry out his/her duties by reason of illness or accident, so it is not applicable to staff members who are temporarily requested to stay at home during the incubation period, but who have no symptoms. In such cases, telework is the principle. If there is

no possibility for the staff member to telework because the nature of his/her duties is incompatible with such an arrangement, then special leave will be granted for the corresponding period.

What happens to contractors, who are not allowed to telework?

Contractors are subject to the same rules and restrictions as staff members when it comes to measures linked to the epidemic. If telework is not available for certain contractors, the legal teams in the DGs concerned will analyse the specific contracts to find ad hoc solutions, to be set up in line with the applicable contract.

Hygiene

We are told to wash our hands with soap, but there has been no soap in our toilets for a year. Can this be sorted?

Soap dispensers are replenished in the toilets by the cleaning company. For all logistic issues related to buildings, you can either call your Local Proximity Team, or 55555 for Brussels and 32220 for Luxembourg.

Why is there no disinfection gel in the buildings for our hands?

Gel is available at strategic points (receptions and large meeting rooms). Following the recommendations of DG HR, hands should be washed thoroughly with soap and water. The use of disinfection gel comes as a complement, not as a substitute.

See this video from the World Health Organisation on **how to handwash with soap and water**.

Why is there no disinfecting of door handles and lift buttons?

Such measures would be both very burdensome and inefficient, as it is materially impossible to clean handles systematically after every person opens a door or lift buttons after any person uses a lift. The appropriate measure is rather that you regularly wash hands throughout the day.

Do I need to wear a mask?

According to published recommendations by the WHO, masks are only useful to protect others if you are sick, or to protect health care workers coming into close contact with sick people. However, they are not recommended for asymptomatic people seeking to avoid being infected. Therefore:

- People with no respiratory symptoms, such as a cough, do not need to wear a mask.
- Use a mask only if you have overt respiratory symptoms (coughing or sneezing) or have suspected COVID-19 infection with mild symptoms (in order to avoid infecting others).
- Use a mask if you are caring for someone sick with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 infection (e.g. diagnosed mild cases that remain at home-isolation). A suspected COVID-19 infection is linked to travel in high risk areas with widespread community transmission, or close contact with someone who has been confirmed as a COVID-19 case.

The WHO advises rational use of medical masks to avoid unnecessary wastage of precious resources and misuse of masks.

Currently, the Commission has a limited stock of masks that are used to protect the health of our medical staff where necessary or for staff going on essential missions. Options for additional supplies are being explored.

The most effective ways to protect yourself and others against COVID-19 are to frequently clean your hands, avoid touching your face, cover your cough with the bend of your elbow or a tissue, and maintain a distance of at least 1 metre (3 feet) from people who are coughing or sneezing. For more information, see WHO advice on basic protective measures against the new coronavirus.

Healthcare and testing

I think the only way to limit the spread is testing! Shouldn't there be a testing service in every Commission building?

Testing does not limit spread – handwashing limits spread!

A common misconception is that a "negative test" excludes COVID-19 infection. This is not correct, as a negative test result in an asymptomatic individual does not exclude COVID-19. A person might still be infected but at a stage that the viral load is below the detection threshold.

This is why the recommendation from all relevant public health authorities (WHO, ECDC, and competent national health authorities across EU Member States) is that testing is strictly reserved for symptomatic patients that have been evaluated by a health care professional (i.e. their GP or a competent hospital) as "suspect cases" according to strictly defined criteria. It is this health care professional who can then make the referral of "suspect cases" for testing by the appointed national reference diagnostic centres. Additionally, the

national health authorities may decide to test specific asymptomatic individuals that they have identified as recent close contacts of a confirmed case of COVID-19.

For the moment, in Brussels, Luxembourg and Ispra, testing is performed exclusively by the national health authorities.

The Commission has issued and regularly updates guidance (on this page) for its staff on who should come back to work and who should stay at home to telework when coming back from certain high-risk regions.

I am coming back from holidays. Should I be tested? Are other people coming back from holidays tested before going back to the office?

Testing falls exclusively under the competence of the Member States. The recommendation from all relevant public health authorities (the WHO, ECDC, and competent national health authorities across EU Member States) is that testing is strictly reserved for symptomatic patients that have been evaluated by a health care professional (i.e. their GP) as 'suspect cases' according to strictly defined criteria. It is the GP who can then make the referral of 'suspect cases' for testing by the appointed national reference diagnostic centres.

Additionally, the national health authorities may decide to test specific asymptomatic individuals that they have identified as being in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19.

The Commission has issued and regularly updates guidance for its staff on who should come back to work and who should stay at home to telework when coming back from certain high-risk regions.

Communications

Why is the Commission's line on Italy different to some other Institutions?

Applying red area restrictions to the whole of Italy (yellow area) would only make sense if the host Member States do the same, which is not the case so far. Furthermore, considering that asymptomatic transmissions are limited, the approach taken by the Commission is proportionate (i.e. staff should come back to work unless they had any contact with a person infected with the COVID-19 virus, or if they develop any symptoms).

Why did I not receive the NOAH message on my mobile phone?

To receive NOAH messages, you need to register your mobile phone number in Sysper.

Others

What was done regarding the new bluebook trainees who arrived this week, particularly from northern Italy?

The new bluebook trainees were subject to the same rules/guidelines as the rest of the staff in the Commission. They were informed in advance by DG EAC so that the ones coming from the red zones do not come to the office until the end of a quarantine period (14 days).