Basic information

2021/2654(RSP) RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects	Procedure completed
Resolution on the accessibility and affordability of COVID testing **Subject** 4.20.01 Medicine, diseases **Legislative priorities** The EU's response to the Covid-19 pandemic	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
28/04/2021	Debate in Parliament		
29/04/2021	Decision by Parliament	T9-0162/2021	Summary
29/04/2021	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2021/2654(RSP)
Procedure type	RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects
Procedure subtype	Resolution on statement
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 136-p2
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Motion for a resolution		B9-0233/2021	27/04/2021	
Motion for a resolution		B9-0234/2021	27/04/2021	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T9-0162/2021	29/04/2021	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2021)537	07/09/2021	

Resolution on the accessibility and affordability of COVID testing

2021/2654(RSP) - 29/04/2021 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 616 votes to 29, with 45 abstentions, a resolution on the accessibility and affordability of COVID testing.

The text adopted in plenary was tabled by the EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens/EFA, ECR, The Left groups.

The resolution highlighted that effective testing is considered as a decisive tool to contain the spread of SARS-CoV-2 and its variants of concern, detect infections and limit isolation and quarantine measures, and will continue to play a key role in facilitating the free movement of people and to ensure cross-border transport and cross-border provision of services during the pandemic.

The accessibility and affordability of these tests differs greatly between the Member States, especially when it comes to the availability of free tests for the frontline workforce, including workers in the health sector, schools, universities and childcare facilities.

All Member States provide COVID-19 vaccines to their citizens and residents free of charge, but only some Member States provide free testing. Citizens and residents of the other Member States often have to pay high prices for COVID-19 tests, making this option unattainable for some and carrying the risk of creating discrimination based on socio-economic status.

To avoid inequality and discrimination between vaccinated and unvaccinated EU citizens and residents, both testing and vaccination should be free of charge according to Parliament.

At EU level, the Commission has proposed a framework for the issuance, verification and acceptance of an interoperable vaccination, testing and recovery certificate to facilitate free movement during the COVID-19 pandemic called the EU COVID-19 certificate. This certificate would facilitate the free movement of EU citizens and residents.

Parliament called on the Member States to:

- ensure universal, accessible, timely and free-of-charge testing in order to guarantee the right to free movement within the EU without discrimination on grounds of economic or financial means in the context of the EU COVID-19 certificate;

- ensure free testing, in particular for the frontline workforce, including health workers and their patients, and for schools, universities and childcare facilities;

- make it possible for health professionals and trained operators to collect testing data and report it to the relevant authorities;

- increase testing capacities across the EU, both for nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) and rapid antigen tests, especially in main transportation hubs and tourist destinations, including in remote and island regions and border regions by using mobile testing units and sharing laboratory facilities.

The Commission and Member States are called on to:

- ensure sufficient funding and to further their efforts under the European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority (HERA) incubator to develop innovative non-invasive testing for children and vulnerable groups, including for variants.

- jointly procure diagnostic test kits and sign joint contracts with medical analysis laboratory service providers to scale up COVID-19 testing capacity at EU level.

Parliament called on the Commission to:

- mobilise its resources to facilitate a financially just and anti-discriminatory implementation of the interoperable EU COVID-19 certificate;

- support the Member States by activating the Emergency Support Instrument to cover the costs of COVID-19 testing, requesting voluntary contributions from Member States, securing additional financing for advance purchase agreements and ensuring vaccines are provided for free;

- include clear information on COVID-19 testing availability and facilities in all Member States on the Re-open EU website and rapidly deploy an app helping users to find the location of their nearest COVID-19 testing facility;

- make such information easily accessible via an application programming interface, so that travel operators can easily share this information with their clients.