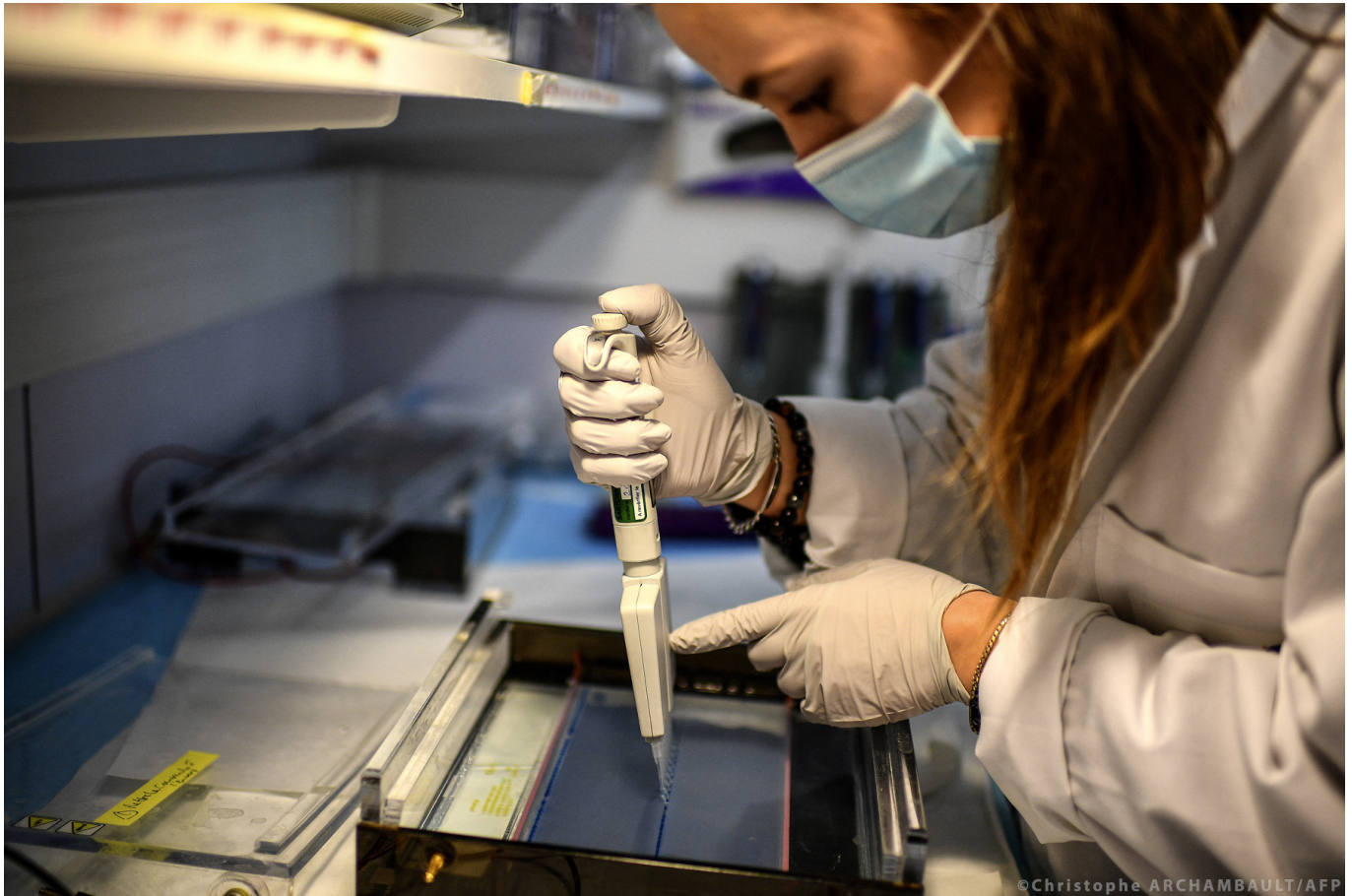


Article – Covid-19 variants: state of play and impact on vaccination in the EU



Quicker approval of vaccines

Dr Marco Cavaleri, chair of the European Medicines Agency's Covid-19 emergency task force, said the agency is closely monitoring studies on the vaccines' effectiveness on new Covid-19 variants.

He said the approval process for vaccines adjusted for new variants would be faster: "Manufacturers don't have to re-submit an entire file from scratch, but it will be approved as a variation on the doses that led to the initial approval of the vaccine. This will save a lot of time and will make things more straightforward and flexible."

The need for a globally coordinated response

Katherine O'Brien, vaccines and biologicals director at the World Health Organization, stressed the need for a globally-coordinated response to ensure the proper surveillance and evaluation of variants, measuring their potential impact on vaccines, modifications to vaccine composition and vaccine access and allocation.

She also highlighted the importance of messaging to maintain public confidence and the high risk of misinformation about the efficacy of existing vaccines.

An EU plan to foster partnerships between all stakeholders

The European Commission has reacted to the new coronavirus variants with its [Hera incubator](#) preparedness plan, which was presented to the environment and public health committee on Monday. The aim is to coordinate researchers, industry, regulators and public authorities to ensure the fast development, approval and sufficient production of vaccines for new variants.