

Invitation letter by President Charles Michel to the members of the European Council ahead of their video conference of 25 and 26 February 2021



We will meet virtually on Thursday and Friday to continue our coordination work on the COVID-19 pandemic and advance other important strands of our common agenda.

Our fight against the COVID-19 pandemic continues. It remains challenging due to the emergence of new variants and the need to strike the right balance between restrictions and the smooth flow of goods and services in the single market.

Our priority continues to be to speed up vaccinations across the EU. This means accelerating the authorisation process of vaccines, as well as their production and delivery. It will require, for instance, looking at solutions to bring manufacturers across supply chains together in order to scale-up production in the EU. It also includes ensuring that vaccine deliveries are predictable and that pharmaceutical companies comply with their commitments.

The new variants have become the dominant strains in many Member States. This implies enhancing our sequencing capacity, and preparing the groundwork for vaccine updates.

Restrictive measures on non-essential travel may still be needed to contain the spread of the virus. Nevertheless, the flow of goods and services in the single market, as well as the role played by the green lanes, remain essential.

Further afield, demonstrating solidarity with our partners, including through COVAX, is key.

Looking beyond our immediate priorities, I believe there is merit in starting to take stock of the lessons learned from our experience so far. We will therefore discuss how to build our resilience to future health threats, whatever form they may take.

Lastly, I believe that we should continue our work to define a common approach to vaccination certificates.

I propose to dedicate our working session on Thursday to all these critical issues.

The following day, we will start with Security and Defence. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg will join us at the start of the videoconference for an exchange of views on EU-NATO cooperation. We will then discuss how to

improve our collective capacity to respond to security challenges and threats. High Representative Borrell will update us on ongoing work on the Strategic Compass. I would also like us to dedicate some time to cyber-attacks and hybrid threats which pose very real challenges to our security. Last but not least, we will discuss our relations with the Southern Neighbourhood.

Our videoconference will start on Thursday 25 February at 3pm. We will be joined by the President of the European Parliament before we turn to our working session dedicated to COVID-19 and Health. On Friday 26 February we will resume at 9am for the working session on Security and Defence and the Southern Neighbourhood. I look forward to our discussion.

[Visit the meeting page](#)