



Statement by President von der Leyen on the marketing authorisation of the BioNTech-Pfizer vaccine against COVID-19

Brussels, 21 December 2020

Good evening.

Today we add an important chapter in our fight against COVID-19. We took the decision to make available for European citizens the first COVID-19 vaccine. We granted conditional marketing authorisation to the vaccine produced by BioNTech and Pfizer.

The European Medicines Agency assessed this vaccine thoroughly. And it concluded that it is safe and effective against COVID-19. Based on this scientific assessment, we proceeded to authorise it for the European Union market.

As we have promised, this vaccine will be available for all EU countries, at the same time, on the same conditions. The first batches of this vaccine will be shipped from Pfizer's manufacturing site here in Belgium within the next days.

I have always said, during this pandemic, that we are in this together. So vaccination can start at the same time, during the European Union vaccination days, on 27, 28 and 29 December. This is a very good way to end this difficult year, and to finally start turning the page on COVID-19.

This is our first vaccine. More will be approved soon, if they prove to be safe and effective. EMA will issue its opinion on the second vaccine, that of Moderna, on 6 January.

And while we deliver vaccines for Europeans, we also help secure them for the rest of the world. Team Europe is the largest contributor to the COVAX Facility, with over EUR 800 million for procuring vaccines for the low- and middle-income countries.

Finally, allow me to say how proud I am that the first COVID-19 vaccine available in Europe is a true product of European innovation. BioNTech has received more than EUR 9 million of EU research funding over the past decade, to develop these really ground-breaking technologies. And it secured a EUR 100 million loan from the European Investment Bank, that is backed by the European Union, in June. This helped expand its manufacturing capacities and supply the vaccine quickly worldwide. And this is a true European success story.

Thank you so much.

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