

April 2020

Joint Research Centre (JRC) - Newsletter

The
European
Commission's
science and
knowledge
service

JRC Newsletter - April 2020

Greetings and welcome to this latest edition of the European Commission Joint Research Centre's newsletter, which this time is dedicated to our efforts to inform [the EU's response to the coronavirus pandemic](#).

Like many of you, JRC staff are adapting to the new reality of working from home. But, since the start of the pandemic, we have been working round the clock to mobilise our expertise to help the EU understand and respond to this crisis. For example, our experts have been analysing the crisis, anticipating its impacts and helping to develop a European Roadmap towards lifting COVID-19 containment measures, among many other activities.

I would thus like to share with you in this newsletter, some concrete examples of what we are doing to help, in what I know are very difficult times for us all.

Timely and accurate testing is an essential part of managing the pandemic. Our scientists have designed a control material that will help labs avoid tests returning incorrect negative results. Samples are dispatched to testing laboratories across the EU and beyond. We have also developed criteria to harmonise testing and thereby help to improve the overall accuracy of the many testing approaches.

Managing the pandemic and working towards a roadmap for recovery requires reliable, up-to-date information. We launched a [website](#) with *inter alia* data on COVID-19 cases, fatalities and national measures. We also provide a [daily media report on the pandemic](#) and our economic experts are analysing the socio-economic impacts, such as on GDP across several sectors owing to containment measures.

There is no doubt that this crisis is putting pressure on health systems across Europe. To support the wider policy response, our experts have developed also an indicator of hospital bed capacities to identify regions that may need more support. We have also helped to develop a distribution methodology for the Emergency Response Coordination Centre, to make sure supplies can get to where they are needed most, when they are needed most.

Other examples of what we are doing include monitoring media and pushing back on misinformation, analysis of anonymised mobile phone data to inform the effectiveness of containment measures, developing a toolbox of risk mitigation measures, analysing the impact on Europe's cultural activities, plus

what behavioural science can tell us about managing the pandemic. We will be sharing more of these stories over the coming weeks, but in the meantime, you may find more information on our [dedicated webpage](#).

I am equally proud that colleagues are demonstrating EU solidarity with their local communities. Our labs in Geel and in Ispra have been donating stocks of personal protective equipment to local hospitals. We have repurposed a workshop in Ispra to produce 3D printed ventilator equipment. We are lending computers to local families in Lombardy so that children, who might otherwise not have access to a computer at home, will not miss their education during lockdown.

Finally, I would like to inform you that the Commission has now formally appointed Stephen Quest, currently Director-General of the Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union, as our new Director-General, with effect from 1 May 2020. We look forward to welcoming him and wish him all the best and every success in his new role.

Charlina Vitcheva, Director-General (acting), JRC

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News

Solidarity with Europe – JRC science to tackle the coronavirus crisis

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre has used its extensive knowledge and expertise to inform the EU's policy responses.

[More](#)

Commission issues guidelines on testing

As part of the European Roadmap towards lifting coronavirus containment measures, the Commission is presenting guidelines on coronavirus testing methodologies.

[More](#)

A new control material developed by JRC scientists to help prevent coronavirus test failures

A new control material helps to check the correct functioning of coronavirus tests and to avoid false negatives.

[More](#)

A database for detection, monitoring and analysis of coronavirus

A daily-updated JRC database provides data, maps and visuals of the evolution of the coronavirus pandemic and the measures taken in the 34 Participating States to the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, plus Switzerland.

[More](#)

The analyst tracking news on COVID-19

In times of the coronavirus, JRC analyst Jens Linge helps experts track the pandemic and push back on misinformation.

[More](#)

How insights on human behaviour can help us manage a pandemic

Behavioural economics and human psychology provide valuable insights to help tackle the coronavirus crisis.

[More](#)

Help tackle coronavirus

EUvsVirus: join the Pan-European Hackathon

This Hackathon will connect civil society, innovators, partners and investors across Europe to develop innovative solutions for coronavirus-related challenges.

EUvsVirus is a call to action to each and everyone to participate in the fight against COVID-19: demonstrate unity and share your skills for the common good across borders and generations! Let's digitally open EU-borders during this collective challenge!

[Register to take part](#) as a problem-solver, mentor or partner **by 19 April**.

The Hackathon takes place on **24-26 April**.



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Events

EU Datathon webinar: Media and Data Monitoring and COVID-19

The **EU Datathon 2020** invites participants to develop applications to help Europe achieve important goals through the use of open data. This year's competition will have a special focus on tackling the coronavirus pandemic.

This webinar will show participants how they can access and use JRC data and tools - the Europe Media Monitor, Medical Information System, Tools for Innovative Modelling, the European Crisis Management Laboratory - when developing their applications.

The [dedicated EU Datathon coronavirus webpage](#) also includes datasets, data visualisation and apps from different EU institutions and agencies to help tackle this pandemic.



Date

22/04/2020



Venue

Online

More

Upcoming events

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, many events are being postponed, cancelled or conducted remotely. For the latest information on upcoming events from the JRC, please [check the JRC Science Hub events page](#).

More

Keep up to date with the latest news

Commissioner's monthly update

Commissioner Mariya Gabriel launched the first edition of her newsletter on 2nd April, with a special focus on responding to the coronavirus outbreak.

This monthly update will have the latest news, and information on calls and collaborations, from across the Commissioner's portfolio covering Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth.

[Sign up to receive the newsletter here](#)



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Science and Policy: What's on the EU's agenda?

This monthly briefing addressed to the scientific community gives an overview on the activities of the European institutions, takes stock of the most important scientific conferences and meetings with significant policy implications and, against this background, also presents the most recent news and highlights about the JRC.

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