



## Coronavirus: Commission mobilises €123 million for research and innovation to combat the threat of variants

Brussels, 7 April 2021

The Commission is mobilising €123 million from Horizon Europe, the new EU research and innovation programme, for urgent research into coronavirus variants. This first emergency funding under Horizon Europe adds to a range of [EU-funded research and innovation actions](#) to fight the coronavirus and contributes to the Commission's overall action to prevent, mitigate and respond to the impact of coronavirus variants, in line with the new European bio-defence preparedness plan [HERA Incubator](#).

Mariya **Gabriel**, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: "We continue to mobilise all means at our disposal to fight this pandemic and the challenges presented by coronavirus variants. We must use our combined strength to be prepared for the future, starting from the early detection of the variants to the organisation and coordination of clinical trials for new vaccines and treatments, while ensuring correct data collection and sharing at all stages."

### New calls for urgent research into coronavirus variants

The Commission launched new calls that complement earlier actions to develop treatments and vaccines by organising and conducting clinical trials to advance the development of promising therapeutics and vaccines against SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19. They will support the development of large scale, COVID-19 cohorts and networks beyond Europe's borders, forging links with [European initiatives](#), as well as reinforce the infrastructures needed to share data, expertise, research resources and expert services among researchers and research organisations.

The projects funded are expected to:

- Establish new and/or build on existing large-scale, multi-centre and regional or multinational cohorts, including beyond Europe's borders, which should rapidly advance the knowledge on SARS-CoV-2 and its emerging variants.
- Further develop promising therapeutic or vaccine candidates against SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19, having already completed preclinical development in clinical studies.
- Support research infrastructures to speed up data sharing and deliver fast research support and expertise, to confront the coronavirus variants and to be ready for future epidemics.

The successful consortia are expected to collaborate with other relevant initiatives and projects at national, regional, and international level to maximise synergies and complementarity and avoid duplication of the research efforts.

These emergency calls will tackle the short to medium-term threat and simultaneously prepare for the future. They will contribute to building the [European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority](#) (HERA), which will enable the EU to anticipate and better tackle future pandemics.

The calls will open for submissions on 13 April and the deadline for submission is 6 May 2021. The new solutions need to be available and affordable for all, in line with the principles of the [Coronavirus Global Response](#).

### Background

In February 2021, Commission President Ursula **von der Leyen** announced the start of a European bio-defence preparedness plan [HERA Incubator](#) aimed at preparing Europe for an increased threat of coronavirus variants. The HERA Incubator will bring together science, industry and public authorities, and leverage all available resources to enable Europe to respond to this challenge.

Since the beginning of the crisis, but also since much earlier, the Commission has been at the forefront of supporting research and innovation and coordinating European and global research efforts, including preparedness for pandemics. It has pledged €1.4 billion to the [Coronavirus Global Response](#), of which [€1 billion](#) comes from Horizon 2020, the previous EU research and innovation

programme.

The new special calls announced today under [Horizon Europe](#), the successor of Horizon 2020, complement these earlier actions to fight the coronavirus: support for [18 projects](#) with €48.2 million to develop diagnostics, treatments, vaccines and preparedness for epidemics; [8 projects](#) with €117 million invested on the development of diagnostics and treatments through the Innovative Medicines Initiative; [24 projects](#) with €133.4 million granted to addressing pressing needs and the socio-economic impact of the pandemic; and other measures to [support innovative ideas](#) through the [European Innovation Council](#). The calls implemented action 3 of the [ERAvsCorona](#) Action Plan, a working document resulting from dialogues between the Commission services and national institutions.

## For More Information

Horizon Europe calls:

1. [FAIR and open data sharing in support to European preparedness for COVID-19 and other infectious diseases](#)
2. [Research infrastructure services for rapid research responses to COVID-19 and other infectious disease epidemics](#)
3. [Vaccines & therapeutic clinical trials to boost COVID-19 prevention and treatment](#)
4. [Cohorts united against COVID-19 variants of concern](#)

[Press release](#): Coronavirus: preparing Europe for the increased threat of variants

[Von der Leyen announces the start of HERA Incubator to anticipate the threat of coronavirus variants](#)

[Coronavirus Global Response website](#)

[Questions and Answers](#): The Coronavirus Global Response

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[Press release](#): Coronavirus Global Response: €7.4 billion raised for universal access to vaccines

[EU coronavirus research and innovation](#)

[The Commission's Coronavirus Response](#)

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