

SARS-CoV-2 in mink: recommendations to improve monitoring

[The report](#), compiled by ECDC and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) proposes options for monitoring strategies that will help to prevent and control spread of the disease.

It concludes that all mink farms should be considered at risk from SARS-CoV-2 and that monitoring should include active measures such as testing of animals and staff in addition to passive surveillance by farmers and veterinarians.

The report was requested by the European Commission following outbreaks of SARS-CoV-2 in mink farms across Europe in 2020.

As of January 2021, the virus has been detected at 400 mink farms in eight countries in the EU/EEA – 290 in Denmark, 69 in the Netherlands, 21 in Greece, 13 in Sweden, three in Spain, two in Lithuania and one each in France and Italy.

Business model sustainability and adequate product design identified as new strategic supervisory priorities for national supervisors

The European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) identified business model sustainability and adequate product design as two Union-wide strategic supervisory priorities relevant for national competent authorities (NCAs).

Following the revised EIOPA Regulation, NCAs shall take those priorities into account when drawing up their work programmes and shall notify EIOPA accordingly. EIOPA will coordinate the supervisory actions with the NCAs on specific topics with the aim to provide a structured and consistent response to the key risks the European Union and the individual insurance markets are exposed to.

NCAs will focus their supervisory activities on monitoring the impact of the prolonged low-yield environment as well as of the COVID-19 crisis on the business model sustainability and development of insurers and institutions for occupational retirement provision (IORPs).

Furthermore, the NCAs will monitor the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on products and will ensure that product and oversight governance (POG) requirements and other relevant consumer protection and conduct of business related requirements are adequately implemented to address the deficiencies which emerged in the crisis.

Gabriel Bernardino, EIOPA Chair, said: *The new powers that EIOPA got with the revised regulation represent an important part of the new supervisory convergence toolkit to address risks that require specific attention and concerted supervisory action in the European Union.*

“The selection of the analysis of business model sustainability and adequate product design in the context of the COVID-19 crisis and the prolonged low-yield environment, will ensure that risks and supervisory concerns in these two areas are addressed simultaneously by NCAs across the European Union and thereby ensuring greater protection for all policyholders and beneficiaries as well as and the orderly functioning of the insurance and occupational pensions markets.”

The supervisory priorities for 2021 draw on an assessment of the key risks and vulnerabilities in the insurance and occupational pensions sectors.

[Download the supervisory priorities](#)

[Violence and harassment across Europe much higher than official records](#)



“The great difference between official crime figures and people’s experiences of crime shed light on the true extent of crime in the EU. The findings tell us that young people, people who do not identify as heterosexual, and people with disabilities are particularly affected by crime,” says FRA Director [Michael O’Flaherty](#). “The EU has legislation to meet the rights of crime victims, as underpinned by the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. National governments need to do more to grant victims their rights and provide the support they need.”

Victims are often unaware of their rights or left voiceless. They do not report crimes because of fear of retaliation or intimidation from offenders.

FRA’s report ‘[Crime, safety and victims’ rights](#)’ should guide national policymakers as they deliver on their international commitments and the EU’s victims’ rights laws. It complements the EU Strategy on victims’ rights which aims to empower victims of crime to report it more frequently. It calls for Member States to:

- **Ensure access to justice:** Nearly one in 10 people in the EU (9 %) experienced violence within five years of the survey, ranging from 3 % to 18 % depending on the country. For harassment, it is 41 % in the EU – ranging from 15 % to 62 % nationally. Countries should provide all victims, including the most vulnerable, with appropriate information, support and protection, and enable their participation in criminal proceedings. This also applies to online settings.
- **Offer targeted support:** Close to a quarter of young people (23 % of

16-29 year-olds) and a fifth of people who identify as LGBTI (19 %), have a disability (17 %) or are from an ethnic minority (22 %) report that they were victims of physical attacks in the last five years. Countries should pay particular attention to the specific needs of various groups to better protect them from violence. They should also inform them about their rights in ways that they understand.

- **Support women better:** Over a third of physical violence against women (37 %) takes place at home, with psychological after effects for 69 % of the victims. Close to three in four sexual harassment incidents (72 %) against women are perpetrated by someone they do not know. Most of these incidents happen in public. Countries should ensure a gender-sensitive approach when it comes to legal sanctions, education and training, protection and support for victims' rights. This includes crime prevention through educating men, who are mostly the perpetrators.
- **Facilitate crime reporting:** Only a third (30 %) of victims report their physical attack and a tenth (11 %) their incident of harassment to the police. Reporting levels differ across countries, reflecting cultural differences and varying levels of trust. People who are older, have lower education levels, or struggle to make ends meet are generally less willing to engage law enforcement. Countries need to do more to encourage and make it easier for people to report crimes. This includes using other avenues, like civil society or healthcare services to capture incidents of crime, to inform victims about their rights and refer them to relevant support services.

The report captures the views of 35,000 people and their experiences of violence, harassment, burglary and consumer fraud, and the impact on victims. The results also examine people's views on safety and their willingness to act when witnessing a crime.

It is one of a series of reports looking at people's views and experiences of fundamental rights. The findings draw on responses to [FRA's Fundamental Rights Survey](#) from across all EU Member States, North Macedonia and the United Kingdom. It ran from January to October 2019.

Ipsos MORI collected the data on behalf of FRA, in cooperation with Statistics Netherlands (CBS) in the Netherlands, the *Centre des Technologies de l'Information de l'Etat* (CTIE) in Luxembourg and Statistics Austria in Austria.

For more, join FRA's online panel debate '[Crime, victims and rights: what can EU countries do to strengthen victims' rights?](#)' at 10:30 CET on 19 February 2021.

Visit the Q&A, the online data explorer in the [press pack](#) or contact: media@fra.europa.eu / Tel.: +43 1 580 30 653

Media advisory – Informal video conference of education ministers, 19 February 2021



Indicative programme

Chair: Mr. Tiago BRANDÃO RODRIGUES, Portuguese minister of education

10.00 Beginning of the video conference of education ministers

10.10 Equity in access, inclusion and success for all in education and training

– Policy debate ([public session](#))

Any other business

a) Resolution on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training towards the European Education Area and beyond (2021-2030)

– Information from the Presidency

b) Coping with COVID-19 in education and training

– Information from the Presidency

At the end of the videoconference (+/- 13.00) – press conference in [live streaming](#).

Arrangements for the press conferences

Please note that there will be no physical press conference. In order to participate and ask questions, EU accredited journalists should register using [this link](#).

Those who already registered for the previous press conferences of Education Council do not need to do it again.

Deadline for registration: Friday, 19 February 2021, 12.00

Further instructions will be sent to all registered participants shortly after the deadline.

[Videos and photos from the event.](#)

[Visit the meeting page](#)

Readout of the telephone conversation between President Charles Michel and President of Iran Hassan Rouhani



President of the European Council Charles Michel had a call with President Hassan Rouhani, President of Islamic Republic of Iran on Thursday 18 February 2021.

They discussed the socio-economic and health impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and had an exchange of views on the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA).

The President of the European Council highlighted the importance that the EU attaches to the full implementation of the JCPoA in the context of the global nuclear non-proliferation architecture. President Michel expressed concern over actions which constituted a departure from Iran's commitments under the Agreement, including the announced decision to suspend the Additional Protocol. In this context, President Michel underlined the importance of continued cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, also in light of the upcoming visit of IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi to Iran.

President Michel indicated that preserving a space for diplomacy, underpinned by positive steps, was crucial at this stage.

The EU will continue to deploy efforts to facilitate the full implementation of the JCPoA and the return of the United States of America to the Agreement. Global peace, security and economic development can only be achieved through multilateral action.

The state of bilateral relations, including human rights issues, were also discussed as well as the importance of global solidarity and international cooperation in combatting the Covid-19 pandemic.