Coronavirus: Commission launches data sharing platform for researchers

Brussels, 20 April 2020

Today, the European Commission together with several partners launched a European COVID-19 Data Platform to enable the rapid collection and sharing of available research data. The platform, part of the ERAvsCorona Action Plan, marks another milestone in the EU's efforts to support researchers in Europe and around the world in the fight against the coronavirus outbreak.

Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth, said: “Launching the European COVID-19 Data Platform is an important concrete measure for stronger cooperation in fighting the coronavirus. Building on our dedicated support for open science and open access over the years, now is the time to step up our efforts and stand united with our researchers. Through our joint efforts, we will better understand, diagnose and eventually overpower the pandemic.”

The new platform will provide an open, trusted, and scalable European and global environment where researchers can store and share datasets, such as DNA sequences, protein structures, data from pre-clinical research and clinical trials, as well as epidemiological data. It is the result of a joint effort by the European Commission, the European Bioinformatics Institute of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory (EMBL-EBI), the Elixir infrastructure and the COMPARE project, as well as the EU Member States and other partners.

Rapid open sharing of data greatly accelerates research and discovery, allowing for an effective response to the coronavirus emergency. The European COVID-19 Data Platform is in line with the principles established in the Statement on Data Sharing in Public Health Emergency and accentuates the Commission's commitment to open research data and Open Science, which aims at making science more efficient, reliable, and responsive to societal challenges. In this context, the platform is also a priority pilot, aimed at realising the objectives of the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC), and builds upon established networks between EMBL-EBI and national public health data infrastructures.

ERAvsCorona Action Plan

On 7 April 2020, research and innovation Ministers from all 27 EU Member States supported 10 priority actions of the ERAvsCorona Action Plan. Building on the overall objectives and the tools of the European Research Area (ERA), the Action Plan covers short-term actions based on close coordination, cooperation, data sharing and joint funding efforts between the Commission and the Member States. It is centred around the key principles of the European Research Area, which will now be used to achieve towards their maximum effect to help researchers and EU Member States succeed in their fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

In addition to the European COVID-19 Data Platform launched today, the other actions focus on coordinating of funding, extending large EU-wide clinical trials, increasing support to innovative companies and supporting a pan-European Hackathon in the end of April to mobilise European innovators and the civil society. The joint plan listing priority actions will be regularly updated in a co-creative manner between the Commission services and national governments in the coming months.

Background

The EU is taking strong action to fight the pandemic. The Commission is also committing hundreds of millions of euros in research and innovation measures to develop vaccines, new treatments, diagnostic tests and medical systems to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

Building on long-term investments made before the coronavirus outbreak (through FP7 & Horizon 2020), including on surveillance and preparedness, the EU has rapidly mobilised €48.2 million for 18 shortlisted research projects that are now working on rapid point-of-care diagnostic tests, new treatments, new vaccines as well as on epidemiology and modelling to improve preparedness and response to outbreaks. The projects involve 151 research teams from around the world.

In addition, the EU has mobilised public and private funding of up to €90 million through the Innovative Medicines Initiative, and offered up to €80 million of financial support to the innovative company CureVac to scale up development and production of a vaccine against the coronavirus.

Moreover, a recent European Innovation Council Accelerator call of €164 million has attracted a
A significant number of start-ups and SMEs with innovations that could also help tackle the pandemic. At the same time over 50 ongoing or completed European Research Council projects are contributing to the response to the coronavirus pandemic by providing insights from several different scientific fields (virology, epidemiology, immunology, public health, medical devices, social behaviour, crisis management).

To strengthen global cooperation, the EU is coordinating international initiatives under the Global Research Collaboration for Infectious Diseases Preparedness (GloPID-R), which brings together 29 funding bodies from 5 continents and the WHO. It is also contributing €20 million to the Coalition of Epidemic Preparedness Innovation (CEPI). Finally, the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) is funding three calls of up to €28 million from Horizon 2020 to support research on the coronavirus and strengthen research capacities in sub-Saharan Africa.

More Information*

European COVID-19 Data Platform
ERAvsCorona Action Plan
EUvsVirus Hackathon website
Coronavirus Research and Innovation initiatives
Press release: Coronavirus: EU global response to fight the pandemic
COVID response Seal of Excellence

* Updated on 21/04/2020 15:45

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