

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

DATE: 13/07/2020

HOURS: 16h-18h00

| AGENDA | DISCUSSION | DECISION/TO DO |
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| 1. Approval agenda and report | | |
| 1.1. Report Previous meeting (<i>approval</i>) | The requested amendments will be integrated into the report of Thursday 9 th of July. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report approved (with amendments made) |
| 1.2. Agenda (<i>approval</i>) | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agenda approved |
| 1.3. RMG Dashboard (<i>information</i>) | | |
| 2. Situation overview (information) | | |
| 2.1. Epidemiological overview (<i>information/discussion</i>) TBC | <p>1) Since one week there has been an increase in COVID-19 cases. The trend occurs mainly in Antwerp and Brussels among the active population, especially young persons (20-59 years old). The number of hospital admissions has remained stable, indicating that the measures to protect vulnerable patients are working. The situation needs to be closely monitored to avoid an increase of the incidence rate. This to prevent outbreaks and to ensure that (parts of) Belgium will not be marked as an orange/red area in other EU member states. A communication strategy will be set up (see point 7) wherein the Belgian citizens are reminded of their responsibility in the course of the COVID-19 crisis and the huge importance of continuing to take other preventive measures.</p> <p>2) Strategic consideration should be given to the testing strategy and capacity during the autumn, also in view of the large number of ILI (influenza like illness) patients that need to be tested. The RAG will meet to discuss this subject and draw up an advice.</p> | <p>1) The RMG agrees that the increase in COVID-19 infections in Brussels, Ghent and Antwerp should be closely monitored.</p> <p>2) A risk assessment will be performed concerning the testing strategy during the coming influenza season and Sciensano will address a communication in response to the Lancet article.</p> |

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| | <p>The importance of applying the preventive measures is stressed once again, besides stimulating the sense of citizenship and social responsibility. Testing alone will not bring universal happiness or testing alone won't contain coronavirus.</p> | |
| <p>3. Prevention</p> | | |
| <p>3.1 Information for travelers (<i>information/discussion – Annelies Wouters</i>)</p> | | <p>The point 'information for travelers' will be placed on the agenda of the RMG-meeting of Thursday 16th of July 2020.</p> |
| <p>4. Surveillance and detection</p> | | |
| <p>4.1. Document on signal detection processes (<i>information/discussion/approval – Sciensano</i>)</p> | <p>Sciensano gave an update on the document on signal detection processes. Several aspects as the definition of a signal, a treat, the level of managing (local or at higher level), threshold for interactions with the provinces, e.a. were mentioned. During the last week, the document was discussed and adapted in various bodies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NCCN with the governors • Federal department of Public Health and the communities • IKW • IMC • Core <p>At the NCCN meeting of 13th of July 2020 it was agreed that the document would be further discussed and validated in COFECO. At the RMG meeting on Thursday 16th of July 2020, the RMG will prepare a position paper based on Sciensano's advice on the criteria that define under which circumstances a comprehensive forum should meet to further assess a certain epidemiological threat situation that could evolve in a local lockdown of a neighbourhood, quarter, city, e.a.</p> | <p>The RMG takes note of the update on the signal detection processes, which will be further discussed on the next RMG (July 16th 18h). Sciensano will prepare criteria that define under which circumstances a comprehensive forum should meet to further assess a certain epidemiological threat situation. Thereafter the RMG will discuss these criteria and formulate recommendations to COFECO.</p> |

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| <p>4.2. Regulations for foreign seasonal workers, meat industry, fruit picking</p> | <p>In response to the Joint Declaration of the social partners of the Joint Horticultural Committee, the situation of foreign seasonal workers (especially fruit picking, workers in the meat industry f.e. from Romania and Bulgaria) was discussed. The RMG also discussed already the risks in the meat industry.</p> <p>Two questions were raised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the foreign seasonal workers coming from an orange/red zone be monitored? • Will the foreign seasonal workers coming from an orange/red zone be tested; financial aspects; are agreements with employer in place? <p>The RMG agrees that the current testing strategy is applicable and that the occupational health and safety services, employers/companies are responsible for taking and financing measures in the companies. The communities will enquire whether there are additional needs in these specific sectors next to the generic guidelines and measures.</p> | <p>The RMG agrees that the occupational health services are responsible for taking measures in the companies. However, the federated entities will enquire whether there are specific needs in the meat industry, fruit picking agriculture and industries in addition to the generic measures.</p> |
| <p>4.3. Update multidisciplinary working group on cluster outbreak management <i>(information/discussion – Sciensano)</i></p> | | |
| <p>5. Health care</p> | | |
| <p>6. Stocks and shortages</p> | | |
| <p>7. Communication</p> | | <p>The RMG agrees to reiterate preventive measures in the official governmental communication, stressing the following areas of interest:</p> |

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| | | <p>-to stay at home immediately and this starting from the very beginning of symptoms</p> <p>-not to travel abroad in case of symptoms and/or when awaiting the test result.</p> <p>-to stay at home in case of being a high risk contact or if one has been in contact with a high risk contact</p> |
| 8. International | | |
| 9. Date next meeting / agenda (approval) | | The next RMG-meeting will take place Thursday the 16 th of July 18H. |
| 10. AOB | | |
| 10.1. Quid red zones EU? | <p>Two questions regarding the red zones in other EU member states were raised by the president based on the fact that on July 8th the Conciliation Committee issued a formal travel ban to these zones:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If a person travels to a red zone despite an existing travel ban (so not if you already abroad), is it acceptable that he/she still receives compensation from his/her employer/health insurance when he/she returns and needs to be quarantined? 2. Concerning the red zones: Is it logical that persons who are considered high risk contacts and therefore should be quarantined, can fly back to Belgium and expose the other passengers at a certain risk? Should they not be quarantined in the foreign country where they stay? Or at least be tested? <p>Attention should also be paid to coherence with measures in neighbor countries.</p> | The RMG takes note of the OCC's decision, i.e. that it is recommended to be tested (and quarantined) when returning from an orange zone. In addition, the RMG supports the implementation of this decision into practice, whereby increased vigilance is recommended by CELEVAL. The RMG agrees that increased vigilance should be applied to persons performing cross-border work in a current high-risk country (e.g. Luxemburg). |

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| | <p>Next to this there was a discussion on the orange zone. The OCC press release states that persons returning from an orange zone are advised to be tested and go into quarantine. However, CELEVAL suggests 'increased vigilance', as this is more practical. For example, according to the decision of the OCC, people working across the border with Luxembourg have to go into quarantine every day. CELEVAL has already communicated this advice to the OCC secretariat.</p> <p>The list of countries is evaluated at least once a week.</p> <p><i>N.B: On July 13th it was not yet clear if the CELEVAL advice would be followed.</i></p> | |
| 10.2. Diplomats | Diplomats who return from a red zone are also subject to the quarantine measures except for the practice of the reason of their essential displacement. | The RMG takes note of the quarantine measures for diplomats traveling and working in Belgium. |
| 10.3. Current actuality of the COVID-19 epidemic situation in the Grand-East region | <p>The NFP informs the RMG concerning a meeting last week with the communities and the responsible French Health Authorities at the borders.</p> <p>France requested if information regarding the incidence level and the positivity ratio in Belgian border regions could be made available as this exchange is already the case with Germany. Furthermore, the importance of bilateral exchange at regional Belgian-French level and also through the EWRS system was stressed.</p> | <p>The RMG agrees that Belgium and France will exchange data concerning cross border Covid-19 cases and their contacts through their existing bilateral relations and via EWRS.</p> <p>The RMG agrees that the request from France can be met and that the information regarding the incidence level and the positivity ratio in border regions will be made available.</p> |
| 10.4. Obligation to wear masks | The president proposes that a medical certificate should be provided to persons who are not capable to wear a mask for | The RMG takes note that masks are mandatory except if wearing a mask is not possible for medical reasons; The RMG |

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| | medical reasons in order to be able to prove the reason for the exception to the compulsory measure. | agrees that this can be proven through a medical certificate. However, certain places where special precautions must be taken, such as nursing homes and care institutions, may not be entered without a mask and without additional measures. |
| 10.5. Update oxygen issues | A working group has been set up by the FAMPH (FAGG/AFMPS). The involvement of the communities in this working group will be checked and ensured. First meeting apparently planned for July 17 th . | |
| 10.6. Agenda items veterinarian epidemiologists, minks, domestic animals ,preventive measures, app contact tracing, new virus in China (Sophie Quoilin) | | Postponed and to be planned |

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