

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

DATE: 10/09/2020

HOURS: 16h00-18h00

AGENDA	DISCUSSION	DECISION/TO DO
1. Approval agenda and report		
1.1. Report Previous meeting (<i>approval</i>)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report approved
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 - Sciensano</i>)	<p>Sciensano discussed the recent corona figures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of incidences increases slightly at the national level. The reproduction rate for Belgium based on the number of new infections has again risen to 1. More tests are currently being taken (sometimes more than 30,000 tests/day) compared to the previous period. A positive sign is that the positivity ratio remains stable. On August 31th there was a peak in the number of returning travelers. Although the national cumulative incidence over the last 14 days is >50/100,000, alert level 2 remains in force. At provincial level, there are some differences between the individual provinces. The situation in Walloon Brabant has worsened, with an increase of the cumulative incidence from 49/100.000 → 61/100.000, the cases in the province of Luxembourg have decreased. 	<p>The RMG validates the RAG report concerning the epidemiological situation at the local level.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some municipalities show worse figures, so the local crisis cell is strongly recommended to meet there (e.g. municipalities in the Brussels region, Antwerp, Vilvoorde, Braine Le Comte, Tubize and Quiévrain.) <p>The analysis of the RAG will be validated by the RMG and the NCCN will communicate the analysis to the local authorities concerned. The local authorities take measures (e.g. changing the colour code regarding schools) in cooperation with the Minister of Education.</p>	
<p>2.2 Study of excess mortality summer (information – Sciensano)</p>	<p>Sciensano discussed the study of excess mortality during august 2020.</p> <p>Key points of the presentation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A chronological overview shows that the heat wave of August 2020 had a relatively big impact compared to previous heat waves (e.g. July 2019). The study examined the period 05/08 – 20/08 (16 days) and shows a total number of 1480 deaths in excess (+35,2%), of which 747 with the age of >85y, 608 with the age of 65-84y, and 104 with the age of <64y. The high impact is due to a combination of the duration (8 consecutive days), high temperatures (9 consecutive nights with T>19°C), and very high ozone concentrations. During the period 05/08 – 20/08 there were 128 Covid-19 deaths (8.6% of the deaths in excess). So Covid-19 did not have a major impact on the excess mortality. 57% of the people who died because of Covid-19 lived in a residential care center. <p>Points of discussion:</p>	<p>The RMG takes note of the study of excess mortality august 2020 by Sciensano.</p> <p>The RMG expresses its concern about the severe unexpected excess mortality due to heat wave, despite the measures taken. The RMG asks the working group on ozone & heat to make a more detailed analysis of the causes and to consider improvements of the policy for next summer.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is interesting to investigate the extent to which there is a link between the excess mortality and the residential care centers. • On the other hand, the excess mortality caused by the heat wave may have been much higher if the respective mortality wouldn't have already been affected by Covid-19. • The acting president of the RGM asked if there are some lessons to be learned and if the ozone & heat plan should be adapted based on these figures? • The RMG agrees that the study of Sciensano should be transmitted to the working group on ozone and heat (NEHAP) in order to be better prepared for the following heat waves. 	
<p>3. Prevention</p>		
<p>3.1. Duration quarantine (information)</p>	<p>The Preparatory of the IMC/CIM requested the RMG to investigate the duration of the quarantine.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aim is to define the current situation concerning the quarantine policy (AS IS), and then to examine which kind of approach on quarantine we should take (TO BE). • First, the RAG will draft an advice on the duration of quarantine, next the RMG will discuss and come to an agreement, and finally the IMC will discuss this further. The social translation must be clarified by Celeval afterwards. <p>1. AS IS: an analysis of the current situation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is the current policy regarding quarantine? - What are the current exceptions? - What is the communication like? - The international context 	<p>The RMG takes note of the proposed procedure to analyze the duration of quarantine.</p> <p>The RMG agrees to stick to the original timing in order to achieve a comprehensive result.</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The decision making process <p>The acting president of the RMG finds it remarkable that there is little data available on compliance with the quarantine measures. Christiaan Decoster said that other countries share the same issue.</p> <p>2. TO BE:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The new quarantine policy based on scientific advice by the RAG, - What are the exceptions, what criteria will be used? - The communication, focused on motivating people to comply with the rules and measures. <p>The RMG agrees to stick to the original timing in order to achieve a comprehensive result.</p>	
<p>4. Surveillance and detection</p>		
<p>4.1. Testing strategy (information, discussion – federal entity)</p>	<p>Sciensano discussed the RAG advice concerning the testing strategy.</p> <p>Following steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedure for saliva samples: coordination by UZA • Procedure for pooling: coordination by NRC • Sciensano will draft a list of labs capable of pooling, and a list of labs capable of multiplex tests • More research needs to be done (fex. saliva for children, nasal samples) • Update of the testing strategy is expected by the end of September 	<p>The RMG takes note of the RAG advice on the testing strategy.</p> <p>The RMG stresses the importance of a clear communication strategy regarding the revised testing strategy. Next meeting the proposal will be reviewed.</p>

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	<p>Points of discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposal that the pharmacists can also take samples, which is not legally possible at this moment. Christiaan Decoster will examine the current legal situation on this matter. • It would be regrettable to allow companies and organizations to ask people for a negative test, there is a risk that every company/organization will demand this. Testing without indication is not allowed currently as this could compromise the testing capacity. Furthermore, a negative test can give a false sentiment of safety and undermines other measures like social distancing etc. • The cabinet of Minister De Backer asked why the advice provides little information on the antigen tests. This is because those tests were only recently introduced in the US, and are not yet being used here. • Testing in residential care homes should always be based on risk analysis. • The federated entities pointed out that the procedure of the RAG and the local crisis unit encroaches on their competences. This point needs to be clarified with respect to the competences of the regional hygiene inspectorates. 	
<p>4.2. Test capacity (<i>information – the federated entities</i>)</p>	<p>The CIM has asked to provide an analysis of sample collection capacity and staff availability by 15/09 (Flanders has already stated that 15/09 is not feasible, for the rest, the timing is maintained)</p> <p>As of now the test capacity is of 20-30,000 and the aim for December would be to reach the 56,000.</p>	<p>The RMG takes note of the deadline to provide information concerning the test capacity to the IMC/CIM.</p>

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<p>4.3. Brussels Airport -procedure sitrep, quarantine (<i>information - Flanders, Wallonia</i>)</p>	<p>The RMG would have liked to know what is the state of testing at Zaventem/Charleroi/Bierzet airports.</p> <p>In Flanders, Zaventem is currently working on a procedure, in consultation with Gino Claes. As of mid-next week, there will be testing capacity for departing passengers. If positive: sent home (transit will have to search for accommodation for quarantine. Hotels or rehabilitation centers are optional, but at the expense of the traveler). Fedpol can arrange a temporary VISA for persons in transit without a Schengen visa.</p> <p>Next week, AVIQ will organize a bilateral meeting with the health services of Bierzet and Charleroi. They will report back to the RMG correspondingly.</p>	<p>Flanders and the Walloon Region will provide an update on the procedure concerning the airports of Zaventem, Bierzet and Charleroi after their meeting with the sanitary services of those airports planned next week.</p>
<p>5. Health care</p>		
<p>5.1. Mapping staff capacities in elderly care homes (<i>information, discussion – federal entity</i>)</p>	<p>No progress has been made on the question.</p>	<p>No further action will be taken on this matter.</p>
<p>6. Stocks and shortages</p>		
<p>6.1. State of play strategic stock (<i>information – Federated Entities</i>)</p>	<p>In invitation to participate in a new public procurement has been distributed among the RMG. RMG reminds the federated entities that it is an invitation, not an obligation. It is up to each authority to consider whether they should provide strategic stocks for a range of organizations. Note that both Flanders and Wallonia expressed an interest in purchase.</p> <p>Last week, RMG members were invited to provide an overview of their strategic stocks. State of play</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WAL has transmitted the objective of the 3 months stock 	<p>The RMG members provide a status update on the available strategic stock (PPE), Brussels will ask Iriscare..</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> VL has transmitted the data BXL will ask Iriscare to have more information on the matter 	
7. Communication		
8. International		
9. Date next meeting / agenda (approval)		The next RMG-meeting will take place on Thursday, September 17th at 16h.
10. AOB		
10.1. Validation inter-federal Strategic Plan Covid-19	Several comments from the RMG members have been integrated and the document will be adapted at Monday's Preparatory of the IMC/CIM to be validated by the ministers on Wednesday. Wallonia, Brussels and Flanders informed during the meeting that they also have more fundamental comments on the text.	The point will be on the agenda at the Preparatory of the IMC/CIM.
10.2. Writing session inter-federal Operational Plan Covid-19	The writing session happened on Tuesday. The Operational Plan will be brought on the table at Monday's Preparatory of the IMC/CIM (cfr.: issue of governance – will we be moving forward with an inter-federal team?). The aim is to clarify a process for the next steps.	idem
10.3. Stabbing at wedding party Breda		Flanders will assess the contact tracing concerning the positive case of the wedding party in Breda.

List of participants

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