

European Union member states increase their pledge of Covid-19 vaccines to Syria

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As part of continuous European Union efforts to protect the Syrian population from the COVID-19 pandemic, Spain has donated, through COVAX and in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and UNICEF, 381.600 vaccines to the WHO in Syria. Spain's initiative builds on previous European-wide pledges to share millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccines with the world and specifically with low and middle-income countries in 2022. The vaccines will be administered by the WHO and will benefit Syrians across the country.

The EU Chargé d'affaires a.i. to Syria, Dan Stoenescu, stated, "As part of our #TeamEurope humanitarian pledge to the Syrian people, EU supports the vaccination efforts in Syria, where immunisation against Covid-19 is lower than in other countries. The European Union is working hard with COVAX, WHO, UNICEF and other partners, to accelerate the delivery of doses worldwide, including in Syria. Our aim is to ensure that most of Syria's population is vaccinated by the end of this year."

The Spanish Chargée d'affaires a.i, Mariana Figueroa said, "The donation of this batch of 381,600 single-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccines to Syria is in line with the Spanish "Vaccines for all Initiative" which aims to ensure a fair, equitable and universal access to vaccines against Covid-19. The vaccines will soon be distributed through the COVAX multilateral response mechanism, with logistical support from WHO/UNICEF, as a sign of our solidarity with the Syrian people to help them to overcome the effects of the pandemic".

Spain has been playing a very active role promoting Global Health considering that no one is safe until everyone on the planet is safe. Therefore, Spain has committed 50 million vaccines to date and, with this delivery, the total number of vaccines donated to the Southern Neighbourhood of the EU has reached more than 7 million doses.

"Vaccine supply to Syria has been slow, while we aimed to vaccinate 20% of the population by end of December 2021, the available vaccines by then were only enough to cover 13% of the population. I welcome the significant donation of COVID-19 vaccines and grateful to the Government of Spain for supporting WHO's efforts to protect vulnerable people in Syria and across the globe. Vaccine donations and continued contributions of EU member states demonstrate partnership, solidarity and multilateralism in addressing the health needs of millions bringing us close to curbing the ongoing pandemic," said Akjemal Magtymova, Head of Office and WHO Representative in Syria.

“I would like to thank the Government of Spain for its timely support. This dose donation will be essential in enhancing the number of people vaccinated against COVID-19, particularly the health workers so they can continue providing essential care for Syrian children and their families. UNICEF remains steadfast in its commitment to support the delivery of the vaccines safely, through the management of cold chain systems, as well as the promotion of safety and uptake of the vaccines,” said UNICEF Syria Representative, Bo Viktor Nylund.

The EU is providing humanitarian support to the World Health Organisation in Syria to help the health system deal with the ongoing pandemic and reach the target of 70% people vaccinated by mid-2022. EU humanitarian funding allows for the procurement of PCR test kits and an increased number of vaccination teams. EU humanitarian partners across Syria also ensure aid operations can proceed in safe conditions, with all precautionary measures, and that those affected by the pandemic can access assistance and services. Humanitarian aid is essential at a time when vulnerable Syrians and caregivers are not only threatened by COVID-19, but also by the consequences of continued conflict, economic decline and harsh winter conditions.

The European Union’s action against COVID-19 does not stop at its borders. In fact, it is the biggest donor of COVID-19 vaccines in the world. EU Member States donated over 350 million doses to countries around the globe. In addition, EU Member States have delivered over 53 million doses directly, including 31 million through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM).

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