



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

The Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP
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10 August 2020

Dear Lord Kinnoull,

EM 9021/20: Communication from the Commission: EU Strategy for COVID-19 vaccines

Thank you for your letter of 22 July regarding the UK decision not to join an EU COVID-19 vaccine procurement initiative.

The UK is determined to work closely with international partners, including the EU, to accelerate the global availability of a safe and effective coronavirus vaccine. We therefore had constructive and detailed conversations with the Commission to explore how the UK might participate in this initiative. As part of this, we sought information on the potential for UK experts to be invited to participate in the Steering Group or the smaller Negotiating Group under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement. The Commission suggested a mechanism to transmit information between the UK and these groups but made clear that participation in these groups would not be possible. The Commission were also clear that the UK would be bound to stop immediately our negotiations with any manufacturer with whom the EU initiated negotiations.

Our decision not to participate in this initiative was based on our assessment that these conditions would have meant the UK would have had no say in decisions concerning which manufacturers to negotiate with, or the price, volume and the delivery schedule, unlike the 27 EU Member States who all participate in the Steering Group. We would be bound to end our negotiations with individual vaccine suppliers as soon as the EU decided to start such negotiations. We share your understanding that the EU initiative is based on the allocation of vaccine to countries on the basis of population and that this would not have been a barrier to UK participation.

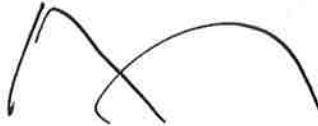
So far, the UK Government has negotiated delivery of up to 250 million vaccine doses through agreements with four separate vaccine developers. These include:

- BioNTech/Pfizer for 30 million doses, which is their first agreement signed with any government.
- Valneva for 60 million doses, with an option to acquire a further 40 million if the vaccine is proven to be safe, effective and suitable.
- Oxford/AstraZeneca who will work to supply 100 million doses of the vaccine being developed by Oxford University
- GlaxoSmithKline and Sanofi Pasteur to secure 60 million doses.

There are more agreements in the pipeline, as part of the strategy to build a portfolio of promising new vaccines to protect the UK from Covid-19. We are also supporting Imperial College to develop their vaccine candidate.

The negotiation of international relations and affairs is a reserved matter for the UK Government however, we remain committed to working collaboratively with the Devolved Administrations. UK Government officials briefed officials within the DAs and shared a draft of the Explanatory Memorandum. We remain in close contact with the DAs to ensure domestic and international vaccine efforts are closely aligned.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and curves, positioned above the printed name.

THE RT HON ALOK SHARMA MP
Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy