

Deputada ao Parlamento Europeu

To the attention of:

Ms Mariya Gabriel
Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

Brussels, 07.09.2020

Dear Commissioner,

COVID-19 brought and is still bringing great distress to our economy and our daily lives, forcing us to adjust or suspend several activities. We believe that it is of the utmost importance to enable a return to normality as soon and as effectively as possible. Trust will be a key element in this process.

Several international laboratories and research centres have announced, in recent times, that they are working on innovative, easy to produce kits for frequent coronavirus testing. These tests, they say, will be ideally suited for mass production and will have a market price low enough to make them a viable option for frequent use, even on a daily basis. They can be used by anyone, even at home, providing reliable results.

If these claims prove to be accurate, the strategic importance of the kits may be immense. Not only for the health authorities, as an instrument for quickly detecting and controlling new chains of transmission, but for society in general.

With the COVID-19 vaccine possibly still several months away, it is imperative to find alternatives that will enable citizens to resume their regular activities without fearing the resurgence of this disease at a large scale and a possible return to more harsh containment measures.

In fact, these past few weeks have shown us that those fears are justifiable, as we gradually see an increase in new cases in several European countries.

A tool allowing workers to test themselves every morning before showing up in the office, schools to make sure that there are no cases amongst their staff, students or visiting parents, airlines to ensure completely safe flights, could be the difference between a nearly complete return to normality and a new confinement.

In addition, let us not forget all the sectors, from restauration and bars to sports and culture, which would greatly benefit from this.

This potential has already been recognized by the British government that has just announced that it will invest 500 million pounds (more than 560 million euros) in the development of a coronavirus test that provides results in just 20 minutes.

In the United States, Professor Michal Mina, an epidemiologist at the Harvard T.C. Chan School of Public Health, has described tests with similar purposes as something that could have an impact "akin to a vaccine" and is calling for federal approval for widespread use.

In light of this, we, members of the Portuguese Partido Social Democrata (PSD, EPP), would like to ask the Commission if it is already sponsoring research and development of such covid-19 tests, in order to evaluate their efficacy, and if not, we urge you to consider this line of action.

Thanking you in advance for your time,

Please accept our best regards,

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Paulo Rangel, MEP

Lídia Pereira, MEP

José Manuel Fernandes, MEP

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