

Coronavirus pandemic in the EU – Fundamental Rights implications

National vaccine deployment

France

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1 National vaccine deployment – planning and overview of priority groups

1.1.1 Title and hyperlink to the national vaccine deployment plan/strategy

Specific groups identified in the national vaccine deployment plan	Date of plan 03/12/2020 First national vaccination deployment plan France's Covid-19 vaccination campaign takes place in a 3-stage process and creates several groups of people according to their priority level for the vaccine. The exact timeframe was not specified at the opening date of the campaign. 'COVID-19 Vaccination strategy (<i>Covid-19 : la stratégie de vaccination</i>)' The Covid-19 vaccine strategy is regularly updated. Each time the campaign is expanded to new categories of the population. ' <i>Vaccination contre le Covid-19 : quel calendrier ?</i> ' / ' <i>Covid-19 vaccination: what timetable?</i> '	Date of new/revised plan 15/04/2021 The Prime Minister announced the opening of slots dedicated to priority professionals over 55 in vaccination centres. 'Vaccines (<i>Vaccins</i>)'
<i>older persons</i>	<p>YES</p> <p>Elderly people accommodated in specialised establishments (1) <i>Since 27/12/2020</i></p> <p>Residents aged 60+ in migrant worker hostels (1) <i>Since 27/12/2020</i></p> <p>People aged 75+ living at home (2)</p>	No change

	<p><i>Since 18/01/2021</i></p> <p>People aged 70-74 living at home (2)</p> <p><i>Since 27/03/2021</i></p> <p>People aged 55+ (3)</p> <p><i>Since 12/04/2021</i></p> <p>People under the age of 55 (4)</p> <p><i>From mid-June 2021</i></p>	
<i>persons with underlying health problems</i>	<p>YES</p> <p>People with <u>rare health problems</u> (2)</p> <p><i>Since 18/01/2021</i></p> <p>People aged 50+ with co-morbidities (2)</p> <p><i>Since 25/02/2021</i></p>	No change
<i>persons with disabilities</i>	<p>YES</p> <p>Disabled people accommodated in specialised establishments (1)</p> <p><i>Since 27/12/2020</i></p> <p>Adults with Down's syndrome (trisomy 21) (2)</p> <p><i>Since 18/01/2021</i></p>	No change
<i>key workers</i>	YES	

	<p>Staff who work in accommodation facilities for dependent elderly people (EHPAD), long-term care units (USLD), when they are at risk of developing a severe form of Covid-19 (1)</p> <p><i>Since 27/12/2020</i></p>	<p>Teachers over 55 introduced as a new group for prioritisation</p> <p><i>Since 17 April 2021</i></p> <p>Police officers, gendarmes, prison officers and customs officers in the surveillance branch over 55 introduced as new groups for prioritisation</p> <p><i>Since 17 April 2021</i></p>
	<p>Health workers, firefighters and home helpers aged 50+ and / or with co-morbidities (2)</p> <p><i>Since 04/01/2021</i></p>	
	<p>Health workers, firefighters and home helpers regardless their age (2)</p> <p><i>Since 06/02/2021</i></p>	
<i>persons belonging to ethnic/national minorities</i>	NO	NO
<i>persons experiencing homelessness</i>	NO	NO
<i>persons with drug addiction dependencies</i>	NO	NO
<i>persons with low literacy levels</i>	NO	NO
<i>persons deprived of their liberty</i>	NO	NO
<i>persons without residence or with insecure legal status (such as refugees, asylum</i>	NO	NO

<i>seekers, and undocumented migrants)</i>		
<u>OTHER</u>	<p>YES</p> <p>Pregnant women from the second trimester of pregnancy (2)</p> <p><i>Since 08/04/2021</i></p>	No change

1.1.2 Overview of priority groups for COVID-19 vaccination as defined in the national vaccine deployment plan

a) Reasons behind changes with regard to priority groups

The vaccination schedule changes along with the delivery of vaccine doses in the country.¹ On 23 March 2021, the President of the Republic announced that 'targeted vaccination campaigns' would be put in place from the end of April: "From the mid/end of April, we will have more and more vaccines arriving, this will allow us to consider having targeted campaigns for professions that are exposed, to which we ask for efforts", he said, adding that "teachers [would] legitimately be part of it".² The following day, the Minister of the Interior announced to the media that police officers and gendarmes will be among the professions who are particularly at risk which will benefit from a priority vaccination campaign. The criteria used to determine the priority professions are

¹ France, Government (*Gouvernement*), 'Covid-19 vaccine delivery data' (*Données relatives aux livraisons de vaccins contre la COVID-19*), available at: www.data.gouv.fr/fr/datasets/donnees-relatives-aux-livraisons-de-vaccins-contre-la-covid-19/

² France, BfmTV, 'Mid-April or end of April: Emmanuel Macron sets a possible timescale for the vaccination of teachers' (*Mi-avril ou fin avril: Emmanuel Macron fixe un horizon possible pour la vaccination des enseignants*), 23 March 2021, available at: www.bfmtv.com/sante/mi-avril-ou-fin-avril-emmanuel-macron-fixe-un-horizon-possible-pour-la-vaccination-des-enseignants_AV-202103230198.html

being exposed to social contacts at work, such as the public or colleagues as well as their presence on the site during the first lockdown.³

b) Overall approach behind the definition of priority groups

Being free and not compulsory, vaccination is considered an essential part in the fight against the Covid-19 epidemic in France. The vaccination strategy is following the recommendations of the High Authority for Health (*Haute Autorité de santé* - HAS), an independent public scientific authority and legal entity.⁴ It aims to vaccinate people who are the most fragile and at risk and to protect caregivers and the healthcare system.⁵ The vaccination campaign takes place in a 3-stage process and creates several groups of people according to their priority level for the vaccine. It defines as a priority those people who are most vulnerable to the virus – due to age and / or comorbidities – and most likely to develop severe forms of the disease.⁶

³ France, BfmTV, 'Gerald Darmanin announces that law enforcement officers will be vaccinated at the end of April' (*Gérald Darmanin annonce que les forces de l'ordre pourront se faire vacciner fin avril*), 24 March 2021, available at: www.bfmtv.com/politique/gerald-darmanin-annonce-que-les-forces-de-l-ordre-pourront-se-faire-vacciner-fin-avril_AN-202103240107.html

⁴ France, High Authority for Health (*Haute Autorité de santé*), 'Vaccination strategy against Sars-Cov-2' (*Stratégie de vaccination contre le Sars-Cov-2*), 27 November 2020, available at: www.has-sante.fr/upload/docs/application/pdf/2020-11/strategie_de_vaccination_contre_le_sars-cov-2_2020-11-30_10-40-59_242.pdf

⁵ France, Government (*Gouvernement*), 'Vaccines' (*Vaccins*), 29 April 2021, available at: www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus/vaccins

⁶ France, Legal and administrative information department, 'Vaccination against Covid-19: what schedule?' (*Vaccination contre le Covid-19 : quel calendrier ?*), 2 April 2021, available at: www.service-public.fr/particuliers/actualites/A14557

2 Vaccination rollout – communication, targeted outreach, registration, and administration of vaccinations

2.1 Channels, means and measures to inform people about the national vaccination plan

To promote information relating to the national vaccination plan against Covid-19 and raise vaccination awareness, the Government launched a public information campaign developed through several general channels, such as speeches to the press,⁷ the Government's official website⁸ available also in English,⁹ the website of Ministry of Health,¹⁰ as well as statements on social networks.¹¹

This campaign also includes some specific online tools. Thereby, all recommendations and opinions of the High Authority for Health (*Haute Autorité de santé* - HAS) on the vaccination strategy are available on its website,¹² while

⁷ France, Legal and administrative information department, 'Statement by Mr. Jean Castex, Prime Minister, on the first plans of the vaccine strategy against Covid-19 adopted by France, in Paris on 3 December 2020' (*Déclaration de M. Jean Castex, Premier ministre, sur les premiers axes de la stratégie vaccinale contre le Covid-19 adoptée par la France, à Paris le 3 décembre 2020*), 4 December 2020, available at: www.vie-publique.fr/discours/277561-jean-castex-03122020-strategie-vaccin-anti-covid-en-france; France, Government (*Gouvernement*), 'Vaccination strategy: statement by Mr. Jean Castex, Prime Minister, to the National Assembly' (*Stratégie vaccinale : déclaration de M. Jean Castex, Premier ministre, à l'Assemblée nationale*), 16 December 2020, available at: www.gouvernement.fr/partage/11971-strategie-vaccinale-declaration-de-m-jean-castex-premier-ministre-a-l-assemblee-nationale-le

⁸ France, Government (*Gouvernement*), 'Vaccines' (*Vaccins*), 29 April 2021, available at: www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus/vaccins

⁹ France, Government (*Gouvernement*), 'Covid-19 Information', 1 April 2021, available at: www.gouvernement.fr/en/coronavirus-covid-19

¹⁰ France, Ministry of Solidarity and Health (*Ministère des solidarités et de la santé*), 'The vaccination strategy and the list of priority groups' (*La stratégie vaccinale et la liste des publics prioritaires*), 4 December 2020, available at: <https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/grands-dossiers/vaccin-covid-19/publics-prioritaires-vaccin-covid-19>

¹¹ France, President of the Republic, 'We have a new weapon against the virus: the vaccine. Hold together, again' (*Nous avons une nouvelle arme contre le virus : le vaccin. Tenir ensemble, encore*), 27 December 2020, available at: www.elysee.fr/emmanuel-macron/2020/12/27/nous-avons-une-nouvelle-arme-contre-le-virus-le-vaccin-tenir-ensemble-encore

¹² France, High Authority for Health (*Haute Autorité de santé*), 'Vaccination in the context of Covid-19' (*Vaccination dans le cadre de la Covid-19*), available at: www.has-sante.fr/jcms/p_3178533/fr/vaccination-dans-le-cadre-de-la-covid-19

the institutional reference site on vaccination, Vaccination-info-service.fr, provides information on the vaccination against Covid-19.¹³

In addition, the Public Health Agency (*Santé publique France*), a public administrative establishment under the supervision of the Ministry of Health, has designed tools adapted to vulnerable people and in particular those living in shared accommodation or in precarious housing. These practical information sheets consider the needs of people who are the most distanced from the health system. They are very accessible, colourful, and take into account the ability of people to appropriate the information to take care of their health. They discuss the interest of vaccination against Covid-19 and provide practical information on the procedures and steps to follow to be vaccinated, ranging from care, making an appointment to the importance of double injections to be protected.¹⁴ They are translated into several languages: Albanian, English, Arabic, Bambara, Bengali, Berber, Bulgarian, Chinese, Dari, Spanish, Georgian, Urdu, Pashto, Portuguese, Romani, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Somali, Soninke, Tamil, Turkish, Wolof. These tools are downloadable from the Public Health Agency website¹⁵ and from Vaccination-info-service.fr.

Furthermore, information relative to the national vaccination plan is available in various formats to ensure accessibility for people with disabilities. Documents in simplified French which are easy to read and understand, and are particularly suitable for people with communication or comprehension difficulties, are available on the website of Secretary of State responsible for people with disabilities,¹⁶ while

¹³ France, National Public Health Agency, 'COVID-19', 10 February 2021, available at: <https://vaccination-info-service.fr/Les-maladies-et-leurs-vaccins/COVID-19>

¹⁴ France, National Public Health Agency, 'Vaccination against COVID-19: reference information accessible to all people' (*Vaccination contre la COVID-19 : une information de référence et accessible pour tous les publics*), 10 February 2021, available at: www.santepubliquefrance.fr/presse/2021/vaccination-contre-la-covid-19-une-information-de-referance-et-accessible-pour-tous-les-publics

¹⁵ France, National Public Health Agency, 'Coronavirus', 29 April 2021, available at: www.santepubliquefrance.fr/l-info-accessible-a-tous/coronavirus#block-316710

¹⁶ France, Secretary of State responsible for people with disabilities (*Secrétariat d'Etat chargé des personnes handicapées*), 'Covid-19: Vaccination' (*Covid-19 : La vaccination*), 15 January 2021, available at: <https://handicap.gouv.fr/grands-dossiers/coronavirus/article/covid-19-la-vaccination>; France, Government (*Gouvernement*), 'Info Coronavirus Covid-19 – FALC', 1st April 2021, available at: www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus/francais-simplifie-falc

videos in easy read and sign language are broadcast on online sites, especially on YouTube.¹⁷

2.2 What are the (pre-) registration channels for vaccination put in place?

a) What registration channels for vaccination are in place?

Vaccination can only be done by appointment. The main registration channels for vaccination in place are:

- on the website: sante.fr;
- by phone: 0 800 009 110 (7 days a week from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.).¹⁸

In order to ensure accessibility of appointment scheduling for all, in particular people who are deaf and hard of hearing, every vaccination centre must have contracted with an online reservation service to allow each targeted person to have easy access to an appointment. For this reason, three service providers have been selected at national level (Doctolib, Keldoc and Maia) to offer an online reservation service. The freedom is then left to each vaccination centre to choose the platform that suits it best. For the visually impaired or blind, a phone call service is available.¹⁹

b) Are any alternatives to digital access to vaccine registration in place?

According to the Government's website, the registration for vaccination against the Covid-19 infection can also be done:

- from the attending physician;
- at the workplace;

¹⁷ France, Secretary of State responsible for people with disabilities (*Secrétariat d'Etat chargé des personnes handicapées*), 'The Covid-19 vaccine - Easy to read and understand version' (*Le vaccin contre la Covid 19 - Version facile à lire et à comprendre*), 23 February 2021, available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax7cTSK3Xos

¹⁸ France, Government (*Gouvernement*), 'Vaccines' (*Vaccins*), 29 April 2021, available at: www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus/vaccins

¹⁹ France, Ministry of Solidarity and Health (*Ministère des solidarités et de la santé*), 'Frequently Asked Questions: People with Disabilities' (*Foire aux questions : Personnes en situation de handicap*), 1 February 2021, available at: <https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/grands-dossiers/vaccin-covid-19/je-suis-un-particulier/article/foire-aux-questions-personnes-en-situation-de-handicap>

- at the place of care.²⁰

Information related to registration channels for vaccination is available in Albanian, English, Arabic, Bambara, Bengali, Berber, Bulgarian, Chinese, Dari, Spanish, Georgian, Urdu, Pashto, Portuguese, Romani, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Somali, Soninke, Tamil, Turkish, Wolof, in easy read,²¹ and in sign language.²²

2.3 How are the vaccinations administered?

a) Where are the vaccinations administered?

According to information given by the President of the Republic in his speech of 31 March 2021, 1,700 vaccination centres have opened and are administering vaccines to all those aged over 70. 250,000 health professionals are mobilised to administer the vaccine. To increase the pace of vaccination, mega-vaccination centres are being set up. They are distinguished by their increased vaccine capacity (around 1,000 to 2,000 injections per day).²³

Vaccination locations depend on the person's situation.²⁴

- People aged 70 and over who live at home can get vaccinated:
 - by their attending physician;
 - at their place of care;
 - in a pharmacy;

²⁰ France, Government (*Gouvernement*), 'Vaccines' (*Vaccins*), 29 April 2021, available at: www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus/vaccins

²¹ France, National Public Health Agency, 'Coronavirus', 29 April 2021, available at: www.santepubliquefrance.fr/l-info-accessible-a-tous/coronavirus#block-316710

²² France, Secretary of State responsible for people with disabilities (*Secrétariat d'Etat chargé des personnes handicapées*), 'The Covid-19 vaccine - Easy to read and understand version' (*Le vaccin contre la Covid 19 - Version facile à lire et à comprendre*), 23 February 2021, available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax7cTSK3Xos

²³ France, Government (*Gouvernement*), 'Vaccines' (*Vaccins*), 29 April 2021, available at: www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus/vaccins

²⁴ France, Health Insurance, 'Vaccination against Covid-19: all you need to know about the strategy, schedule and vaccines' (*Vaccination contre la Covid-19 : tout savoir sur la stratégie, le calendrier et les vaccins*), 15 January 2021, available at: www.ameli.fr/assure/actualites/vaccination-contre-la-covid-19-tout-savoir-sur-la-strategie-le-calendrier-et-les-vaccins

- at home by a nurse or in a nursing practice;
- or in a vaccination centre.
 - People aged 70 and over who live in institutions for the elderly can be vaccinated:
 - in their establishment;
 - at their place of care;
 - by their attending physician;
 - in a nursing practice;
 - or in pharmacies.
 - People aged 55 to 69 inclusive who suffer from a very high risk disease of severe form of Covid-19 can be vaccinated:
 - by their attending physician;
 - by the occupational physician (for employees);
 - at their place of care;
 - at home by a nurse or in a nursing practice;
 - in a pharmacy;
 - or in a vaccination centre with a medical prescription (issued by the attending physician).
 - People aged 55 to 69 inclusive with a comorbidity can be vaccinated:
 - by their attending physician;
 - by the occupational physician (for employees);
 - at their place of care;
 - at home by a nurse or in a nursing practice;
 - or in pharmacies.
 - People aged 50 to 54 inclusive who suffer from a very high-risk pathology of a severe form of Covid-19 can be vaccinated:
 - in a vaccination centre with a medical prescription (issued by the attending physician);
 - or at their place of care.
 - People aged 50 to 54 inclusive with comorbidity can be vaccinated:
 - at a vaccination centre with a medical prescription (issued by the attending physician).
 - People aged 18 to 49 inclusive who suffer from a very high-risk pathology of a severe form of Covid-19 can be vaccinated:

- in a vaccination centre with a medical prescription (issued by the attending physician);
- or at their place of care.
 - People aged 16 to 50 with cystic fibrosis can be vaccinated:
- at a vaccination centre with a medical prescription.
 - Pregnant women from the second trimester of pregnancy can be vaccinated:
- at a vaccination centre.²⁵

b) How is information about the vaccine and any potential side effects provided?

Vaccination-info-service.fr is the reference site accessible to all and provides factual, practical and scientific information on vaccines and their possible side effects. It attempts to answer as many questions as possible through different sections, such as 'Who should be vaccinated and why?', 'Effectiveness and impact', 'main contraindications'.²⁶

Healthcare professionals are the preferred people to speak to their patients to answer the questions that they may ask. Therefore, they provide complete and fair information on vaccination, its expected benefits and its risks of side effects.²⁷ In order to provide them with the best possible support, the National Public Health Agency has provided them with new documents. The leaflet from the 'Benchmarks for your practice', dedicated to the Covid-19 vaccination, is intended to answer questions that healthcare professionals may ask themselves and those of their patients. It deals with both general aspects of Covid-19 vaccination but also more

²⁵ France, Health Insurance, 'Vaccination against Covid-19: all you need to know about the strategy, schedule and vaccines' (*Vaccination contre la Covid-19 : tout savoir sur la stratégie, le calendrier et les vaccins*), 15 January 2021, available at: www.ameli.fr/assure/actualites/vaccination-contre-la-covid-19-tout-savoir-sur-la-strategie-le-calendrier-et-les-vaccins

²⁶ France, National Public Health Agency, 'Vaccination against COVID-19: reference information accessible to all people' (*Vaccination contre la COVID-19 : une information de référence et accessible pour tous les publics*), 10 February 2021, available at: www.santepubliquefrance.fr/presse/2021/vaccination-contre-la-covid-19-une-information-de-referance-et-accessible-pour-tous-les-publics

²⁷ France, Health Insurance, 'Vaccination against Covid-19: all you need to know about the strategy, schedule and vaccines' (*Vaccination contre la Covid-19 : tout savoir sur la stratégie, le calendrier et les vaccins*), 15 January 2021, available at: www.ameli.fr/assure/actualites/vaccination-contre-la-covid-19-tout-savoir-sur-la-strategie-le-calendrier-et-les-vaccins

practical issues. Distributed to healthcare professionals, it can also be downloaded from the Agency's website.²⁸

Moreover, the National Agency for the Safety of Medicines and Health Products (ANSM), which is a public establishment, issues regular updates on Covid-19 vaccine monitoring and indicates the reported side effects of each vaccine.²⁹

c) Are there any circumstances where fees are applicable for receiving the vaccine?

Vaccination is free. The vaccines are purchased by the National Public Health Agency which ensures their availability free of charge.³⁰ A decree issued on 31 December 2020 provides for the full coverage of pre-vaccination and vaccination consultation fees, as well as vaccine injection costs. Non-insured persons benefit from an advance fee waiver,³¹ regardless their nationality or residence status.³²

Relative information is available in Albanian, English, Arabic, Bambara, Bengali, Berber, Bulgarian, Chinese, Dari, Spanish, Georgian, Urdu, Pashto, Portuguese,

²⁸ France, National Public Health Agency, 'Covid-19 vaccination - Benchmarks for your practice' (*Vaccination COVID-19 - Repères pour votre pratique*), 5 March 2021, available at: www.santepubliquefrance.fr/determinants-de-sante/vaccination/documents/depliant-flyer/vaccination-covid-19-reperes-pour-votre-pratique

²⁹ France, National Agency for the Safety of Medicines and Health Products (*Agence nationale de sécurité du médicament et des produits de santé*), 'Update on Covid-19 vaccine monitoring - Period from 04/09/2021 to 04/15/2021' (*Point de situation sur la surveillance des vaccins contre la COVID-19 - Période du 09/04/2021 au 15/04/2021*), 23 April 2021, available at: <https://ansm.sante.fr/actualites/point-de-situation-sur-la-surveillance-des-vaccins-contre-la-covid-19-periode-du-09-04-2021-au-15-04-2021>

³⁰ France, Legal and administrative information department, 'Vaccination against Covid-19: what schedule?' (*Vaccination contre le Covid-19 : quel calendrier ?*), 2 April 2021, available at: www.service-public.fr/particuliers/actualites/A14557

³¹ France, Decree No. 2020-1833 amending Decree No. 2020-73 of 31 January 2020 adopting adapted conditions for the benefit of cash benefits for people exposed to the coronavirus (*Décret n° 2020-1833 modifiant le décret n° 2020-73 du 31 janvier 2020 portant adoption de conditions adaptées pour le bénéfice des prestations en espèces pour les personnes exposées au coronavirus*), 31 December 2020, available at: www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000042845695?r=J7AzC9Qbr5

³² France, Libération, 'Covid-19: how is the vaccination of foreigners carried out in France?' (*Covid-19 : comment se déroule la vaccination des étrangers en France ?*), 28 January 2021, available at: www.liberation.fr/checknews/2021/01/28/covid-19-comment-se-deroule-la-vaccination-des-etrangers-en-france_1818586/

Romani, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Somali, Soninke, Tamil, Turkish, Wolof, in easy read,³³ and in sign language.³⁴

3 Challenges and promising practices

3.1 Challenges

a) Unequal access to vaccination in rural areas

It has been reported to the media that, although a priority, many elderly people living in rural areas were having difficulty to reach official Covid-19 vaccination centres for various reasons.³⁵

"In rural areas, many elderly people are lonely. They are not always lucky enough to have family support to help them" summed up a member of the Association of Rural Mayors of France in a press interview of 21 February 2021. For example, this association obtained the opening of a rural vaccination centre in Quillan, in the Aude department, 'to serve the upper part of the valley, where the inhabitants are often elderly. But the slots are going very quickly, the calendar is full until 26 March', according to the same source. 'Open other vaccination centres?', 'A village hall to vaccinate, that can be found, but still we need staff. Our areas lack doctors', the same source recalled.³⁶

³³ France, Secretary of State responsible for people with disabilities (*Secrétariat d'Etat chargé des personnes handicapées*), 'Covid-19: Vaccination' (*Covid-19 : La vaccination*), 15 January 2021, available at: <https://handicap.gouv.fr/grands-dossiers/coronavirus/article/covid-19-la-vaccination>

³⁴ France, Secretary of State responsible for people with disabilities (*Secrétariat d'Etat chargé des personnes handicapées*), 'The Covid-19 vaccine - Easy to read and understand version' (*Le vaccin contre la Covid 19 - Version facile à lire et à comprendre*), 23 February 2021, available at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=ax7cTSK3Xos

³⁵ France, FranceInfo, 'Vaccine against Covid-19: elected officials from rural areas who take matters into their own hands' (*Vaccin contre le Covid-19 : ces élus des zones rurales qui prennent les choses en main*), 27 April 2021, available at: www.francetvinfo.fr/sante/maladie/coronavirus/vaccin/vaccin-contre-le-covid-19-ces-elus-des-zones-rurales-qui-prennent-les-choses-en-main_4601613.html

³⁶ France, La Croix, 'Vaccines against Covid-19, inequalities to be tackled' (*Vaccins contre le Covid-19, des inégalités à combler*), 21 February 2021, available at: www.la-croix.com/Sciences-et-ethique/Vaccins-contre-Covid-19-inegalites-combler-2021-02-21-1201141846

Another example can be found in Varzy, a village of 1,500 inhabitants in the Nièvre department, where around 120 people are over 75 years old, making them priority 'targets' for the vaccination campaign. 'The nearest centre is 16 km away, but you have to make an appointment on the Doctolib platform, which not everyone knows or can do', explained the mayor of the village to the media. 'Some went 50 km away, to Nevers, where the vaccination centre makes appointments by phone. But people who cannot travel or do not have a computer have no way of getting vaccinated', emphasised the elected representative, who is advocating for the establishment of a mobile vaccination unit in his municipality.³⁷

b) Inequalities to vaccine registration due to the digital divide

In its opinion issued on 19 January, the Covid-19 Control and Liaison Committee (CCL-Covid-19), which is responsible for associating civil society and Parliament in operations to combat the spread of the epidemic through contact tracing, as well as the deployment of information systems provided for this purpose,³⁸ drew attention to the impact of digital technology on vaccination, and in particular the inequalities in access to the vaccine. It noted that inequalities of access are accentuated by the digital 'divide'. As the whole of France is not fully developed in terms of technology, the Covid-19 Control and Liaison Committee had proposed to include a solution for people who do not have a telephone or internet access.³⁹

Several media sources have reported since the start of the vaccination campaign that this was the case of the vaccination centres in Seine-Saint-Denis.⁴⁰ In one of

³⁷ France, La Croix, 'Vaccines against Covid-19, inequalities to be tackled' (*Vaccins contre le Covid-19, des inégalités à combler*), 21 February 2021, available at: www.la-croix.com/Sciences-et-ethique/Vaccins-contre-Covid-19-inegalites-combler-2021-02-21-1201141846

³⁸ France, Ministry of Solidarity and Health (*Ministère des solidarités et de la santé*), 'The Covid-19 Control and Liaison Committee' (*Le comité de contrôle et de liaison Covid-19 (CCL-COVID)*), 3 September 2020, available at: <https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/soins-et-maladies/maladies/maladies-infectieuses/coronavirus/etat-des-lieux-et-actualites/article/le-comite-de-contrôle-et-de-liaison-covid-19-ccl-covid>

³⁹ France, Ministry of Solidarity and Health (*Ministère des solidarités et de la santé*) 'Points to watch - "Information systems and vaccination campaign"' (*Points de vigilance « Systèmes d'informations et campagne de vaccination »*), 19 January 2021, available at: https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/points_de_vigilance_du_19_janvier_2021.pdf

⁴⁰ France, Digital Society Lab, 'Initiatives to promote access to vaccinations for people affected by the digital divide' (*Des initiatives pour favoriser l'accès à la vaccination des publics éloignés du numérique*), 8 March 2021, available at: <https://labo.societenumerique.gouv.fr/2021/03/08/des-initiatives-pour-favoriser-lacces-a-la-vaccination-des-publics-eloignes-du-numerique/>; France, Libération, 'Did the vaccination in Seine-Saint-Denis come at the expense of the inhabitants of the department?' (*La vaccination en Seine-Saint-Denis s'est-elle faite au détriment des habitants du département?*), 15 April 2021, available at: www.liberation.fr/checknews/la-vaccination-en-seine-

them for example 80% of patients vaccinated did not come from this area. People from other places in Ile-de-France who had access to the internet took an appointment at this centre because it was the only place they could find a slot.⁴¹

c) Concerns over access to vaccination of homeless people

People without a fixed abode are not included among the priority groups for the first phase of the vaccination campaign in France. The General Directorate for Health confirmed to the media that this is relying on the schedule defined by the High Authority for Health (Haute Autorité de santé - HAS), according to which 'the main criteria in establishing the calendar are those of age and co-morbidities. Thus, any vulnerable person meeting these criteria is already the subject of a vaccination priority'. In other words, the sole criterion of high vulnerability does suffice to justify vaccination.⁴²

This vaccination schedule raised concerns with several actors from a human rights perspective. Two main arguments have been advanced in favour of vaccinating homeless people as a priority, related to their health condition and their living conditions.⁴³ First, because 'these are people whose state of health is generally deplorable', noted the head of the mission for France at 'Médecins sans Frontières' (MSF) to the press. 'There are a lot of chronic diseases, addiction problems, conditions like tuberculosis etc.', she explained. These are all factors that put homeless people at a high risk of developing 'extremely severe forms of Covid-19', concluded the President of MSF.⁴⁴ Secondly, because social distancing and

[saint-denis-sest-elle-faite-au-detriment-des-habitants-du-departement-20210415_QHCYNE3PNRANVNBVMQJZJG4/](https://www.saint-denis-sest-elle-faite-au-detriment-des-habitants-du-departement-20210415_QHCYNE3PNRANVNBVMQJZJG4/)

⁴¹ France, FranceInfo, 'Covid-19: inequalities in access to vaccines are accentuated by the digital divide' (*Covid-19 : les inégalités d'accès au vaccin sont accentuées par la fracture numérique*), 15 February 2021, available at : www.francetvinfo.fr/sante/maladie/coronavirus/vaccin/covid-19-les-inegalites-d-acces-au-vaccin-sont-accentuees-par-la-fracture-numerique_4298253.html

⁴² France, Le Parisien, 'Covid-19: are the homeless the forgotten people of the vaccination programme?' (*Covid-19 : les sans-abri sont-ils les oubliés de la vaccination ?*), 26 January 2021, available at: www.leparisien.fr/societe/covid-19-les-sans-abri-sont-ils-les-oublies-de-la-vaccination-26-01-2021-8421354.php

⁴³ France, Le Parisien, 'Covid-19: are the homeless the forgotten people of the vaccination programme?' (*Covid-19 : les sans-abri sont-ils les oubliés de la vaccination ?*), 26 January 2021, available at: www.leparisien.fr/societe/covid-19-les-sans-abri-sont-ils-les-oublies-de-la-vaccination-26-01-2021-8421354.php

⁴⁴ France, FranceTV, 'Vaccination of homeless people: "The coronavirus reveals dramatic inequalities"' (*Vaccination des SDF : " Le coronavirus est un révélateur d'inégalités dramatiques"*), 22 February 2021, available at: www.allodocteurs.fr/maladies/maladies-infectieuses-et-tropicales/coronavirus/vaccination-des-sdf-le-coronavirus-est-un-revelateur-dinegalites-

handwashing/sanitising are difficult to apply in accommodation centres and these people are more likely to be infected. 'We have a lot of collective accommodation centres, with several people per room, where the contamination rates are very high. Few spaces allow people to be isolated. And so, the people who live there are the first to be affected', explained the director of the Federation of Solidarity Actors to the media.⁴⁵

3.2 Promising practices

a) Tailored vaccination services for people facing difficulties in accessing vaccination services

People who cannot travel alone, in particular people with disabilities, can use an ambulance or a light-duty vehicle (LSV) to go to the nearest vaccination centre. The transport is possible on medical prescriptions and is fully covered by Health Insurance. Costs are waived in advance.⁴⁶

In addition, several initiatives have been taken at the local level. For example, since 15 February, the primary health insurance fund (CPAM), an organisation exercising a public service mission, has opened a vaccination centre in Bobigny specially dedicated to people who are distanced from healthcare systems. The target groups are directly contacted by the CPAM, Department of Seine-Saint-Denis, to make an appointment. The Seine-Saint-Denis Departmental Council has also set up a vaccine awareness bus. Since 1 March, vaccinations have therefore

[dramatiques_30770.html](#); France, Europe1, 'Covid-19: for the homeless, vaccination is still difficult to access' (*Covid-19 : pour les sans-abris, la vaccination reste encore difficile d'accès*), 15 April 2021, available at: www.europe1.fr/societe/covid-19-pour-les-sans-abris-la-vaccination-reste-encore-difficile-daccès-4038768

⁴⁵ France, FranceInter, 'The Janssen vaccine, the solution for the most vulnerable populations?' (*Le vaccin Janssen, la solution pour les populations les plus précaires ?*), 21st April 2021, available at: www.franceinter.fr/le-vaccin-janssen-la-solution-pour-les-populations-les-plus-precaires

⁴⁶ France, Ministry of Solidarity and Health (*Ministère des solidarités et de la santé*), 'Frequently Asked Questions: People with Disabilities' (*Foire aux questions : Personnes en situation de handicap*), 1st February 2021, available at: <https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/grands-dossiers/vaccin-covid-19/je-suis-un-particulier/article/foire-aux-questions-personnes-en-situation-de-handicap>

also been carried out on board this bus, but only for people over 75 years of age in independent residences and CCAS, by appointment.⁴⁷

b) Alternatives to digital access to vaccine registration in place

A telephone reservation system has been set up to reach people who cannot make an appointment on the internet. In addition, since 31 March 2021, an SMS and phone call campaign has been carried out by Health Insurance among people over the age of 75 who have not yet been able to get vaccinated and who wish to do so.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ France, Digital Society Lab, 'Initiatives to promote access to vaccination for people affected by the digital divide' (*Des initiatives pour favoriser l'accès à la vaccination des publics éloignés du numérique*), 8 March 2021, available at: <https://labo.societenumerique.gouv.fr/2021/03/08/des-initiatives-pour-favoriser-lacces-a-la-vaccination-des-publics-eloignes-du-numerique/>

⁴⁸ France, Government (*Gouvernement*), 'Vaccines' (*Vaccins*), 29 April 2021, available at: www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus/vaccins