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'A' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Council
Subject:	Draft REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on a framework for the issuance, verification and acceptance of interoperable COVID-19 vaccination, test and recovery certificates (<i>EU Digital COVID Certificate</i>) to third-country nationals legally staying or residing in the territories of Member States during the COVID-19 pandemic (first reading) - Adoption of the legislative act = Statement

Statement by the Commission

The Commission agrees that affordable and accessible COVID-19 vaccines and tests for SARS-CoV-2 infection are crucial in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Taking into account that not the entire population will have been vaccinated when Regulations ... and ... of the European Parliament and of the Council enter into force, access to affordable and widely available testing possibilities is important to facilitate free movement and mobility in Europe.

To support Member States' testing capacities, the Commission has already mobilised funds under the Emergency Support Instrument to purchase rapid antigen tests and has launched a joint procurement for over half a billion rapid antigen tests. The International Federation of Red Cross is also supporting Member States to increase testing capacity, using funding from the Emergency Support Instrument.

To further support the availability of affordable tests, in particular for persons who cross borders daily or frequently to go to work or school, visit close relatives, seek medical care, or to take care of loved ones, the Commission commits to mobilise additional funds of EUR 100 million under the Emergency Support Instrument for the purchase of tests for SARS-CoV-2 infection that qualify for the issuance of a test certificate pursuant to Regulation If necessary, additional funding above EUR 100 million could be mobilised, subject to approval by the budgetary authority.