

EU sees 'moderate to high' risk of more virus clusters

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EU health officials foresee a "moderate to high" risk of more new coronavirus clusters of the type happening in northern Italy, they said in a statement after a meeting Monday.

The warning, by the bloc's Health Security Committee, echoed one by the World Health Organization which said countries around the planet should prepare for a "potential pandemic".

Separately, the European Commission said it did not see a basis at this time for [border controls](#) to be reimposed in the Schengen zone.

The EU Health Security Committee said a meeting Monday heard the latest on the situation in Italy, which has over 200 cases of infection and five deaths.

Italy's representative noted that France was urging its residents returning from the virus-hit northern region of Italy to stay home for two weeks in self-imposed quarantine. Italy was also to update the committee later on the situation in its [ski resorts](#).

A risk assessment by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control noted that "the virus causing COVID-19 can transmit rapidly" and that the cluster in Italy did not have a clear direct source from a recent visitor to China, which has the biggest hotspot.

It added that "there are significant uncertainties regarding transmissibility and under-detection, particularly among mild or asymptomatic cases".

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