

EU seeks better coordination to tackle coronavirus

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European Union nations will on Thursday discuss ways to increase cooperation in a bid to tackle the threat posed by the coronavirus which has killed over 1,100 people in China and spread to several EU member states.

The plans are included in a text drawn up in Brussels on Wednesday on the eve of a meeting of EU health ministers to discuss measures to stem

the spread of the [virus](#).

"The effectiveness of national measures taken at EU borders and points of entry to protect [public health](#)... can be further enhanced" through strengthening coordination between member states and the EU Commission, says the draft text seen by AFP.

EU member should "act together" in line with World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations, in particular "on surveillance, risk assessment, [risk management](#) and countermeasures" to the [deadly virus](#)

The draft statement stresses the importance of sharing of information "in a proportionate and appropriate manner" on "persons at increased risk of carrying the 2019-nCoV virus" while ensuring free movement within the European Union.

This would include "information to international travellers, arriving, or in transit from affected areas" and ensuring that such persons are "possible to trace", according to the draft text.

Cases of the new coronavirus have been identified in eight EU nations, with the biggest number of cases, 14, in Germany.

There have also been 11 cases in France, eight in Britain and smaller numbers of patients in Italy, Spain, Finland, Sweden and Belgium.

The EU statement also urged the dissemination of up-to-date information on the virus in order to counter the "misinformation and disinformation" which can lead to discrimination.

The outbreak of the virus, centred around the Chinese city of Wuhan, has already led to anti-Asian reactions in several countries.

One EU member state already has some reservations to the draft statement, which could be amended on Thursday, according to a European source, who remained confident that the measures would be adopted.

The EU health ministers will be joined in their discussion by the bloc's health commissioner Stella Kyriakides and the European Commissioner for Crisis Management Janez Lenarcic.

A WHO representative will also attend the session which will begin at 10 am (0900 GMT on Thursday).

More than 45,000 people have been contaminated with the virus worldwide, with the death toll standing at 1,113. according to official figures.

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