

EU to get 20 mn extra vaccine doses to fight Omicron

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EU members will get an additional 20 million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine in the first three months of 2022 to fight the fast-spreading Omicron variant, the European Commission said on Sunday.

The announcement comes as Europe braces for a new COVID-19 wave, driven by the highly mutated and transmissible Omicron variant and fanned by socialising over the Christmas holidays.

Many countries are ramping up their vaccination drives and reimposing [travel restrictions](#) and other curbs to try to put a break on infections weeks after the variant was first detected in South Africa.

Member states will get an additional five million doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech jab in January, five million in February and 10 million in March, the Commission said in a statement.

"These doses come on top of the already scheduled 195 million doses from Pfizer-BioNTech, bringing the total number of deliveries in the first quarter to 215 million."

Full vaccination and boosters are "now even more urgent than ever" given the "expected rapid increase in infections due to the Omicron variant".

The EU is due to receive 650 million doses of Pfizer-BioNTech jabs in total in 2022.

Omicron is expected to become the dominant strain by mid January in the EU, where 67 percent of the population is fully vaccinated.

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