

EU working on joint purchase of monkeypox vaccines

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The EU is working on centralising purchases of vaccines and treatments for monkeypox, with details to be agreed in the "coming days," the European Commission told AFP on Thursday.

The push, through the commission's Health Emergency and Preparedness Authority (HERA), comes as the EU's disease agency said the number of [monkeypox](#) cases in humans worldwide in the current spread had reached 219.

Former EU member Britain has the highest number of cases, at 71, followed by EU countries Spain, with 51, and Portugal, with 37.

The commission's spokesman for [health issues](#), Stefan De Keersmaecker, told AFP that "HERA is indeed working with the member states and with manufacturers to procure vaccines and therapeutics for monkeypox".

The EU's 27 countries have agreed that HERA will procure the jabs on their behalf "as soon as possible," he said, adding: "Exact procedures will be determined with member states over the coming days."

He said "we can however not comment on any figures".

While the EU already took on a centralised role as coordinator and pre-purchaser of billions of doses of COVID vaccines for its member states, De Keersmaecker said the monkeypox situation was different.

The monkeypox vaccination roll-out "will be limited to very specific cases as the transmissibility of and risk from the virus is not comparable to COVID," he said.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) said in an update on Thursday that although the number of cases has risen fivefold since a week ago, the risk of contagion remains "very low".

Endemic in several west and central African nations, monkeypox cases have now been detected in nearly 20 other countries around the world,

including the United States, Australia, the United Arab Emirates and 11 EU countries.

While many of the cases have been linked to men having sex with men, experts said there was no evidence it was a sexually transmitted disease. Rather, it seems to be transmitted by close contact with an infected person who has blisters on their skin.

Symptoms are similar to smallpox but much less severe, and most people recover within three or four weeks.

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