

EU to discuss joint Covid response to China arrivals on Jan 4: Sweden

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EU countries will meet next week to discuss a joint response to travellers from China amid concern over the country's explosion of Covid cases, incoming EU presidency holder Sweden announced

Saturday.

"Sweden is seeking a common policy for the entire EU when it comes to the introduction of possible entry restrictions", the Swedish government said in a statement.

Stockholm, which takes over the rotating EU presidency on January 1, said it had called a meeting of the Council's crisis management mechanism IPCR for Wednesday.

"It is important that we quickly get the necessary measures in place", it said.

Beijing has abruptly ended its draconian "zero Covid" policy, resulting in an explosion of infections in the country, which has prompted several EU member states to impose Covid tests on travellers from China.

France, Italy and Spain this week imposed Covid testing requirements. Germany, while saying it saw no need to impose routine tests, is seeking a coordinated system to monitor variants across European airports.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), one of the EU's health agencies, said Thursday that systematic screening of travellers was currently "unjustified".

It cited the level of immunity in Europe and the presence on the continent of the same variants as in China.

The European branch of the International Airports Council said on Saturday that imposing restrictions for travellers from China country was "neither scientifically justified nor risk based".

The federation, which represents more than 500 airports in 55 European

countries, said the identification of possible new variants that could emerge in China could be detected with genomic sequencing of airport waste water analysis, without the need to test travellers.

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