

Cross Border Taskforce Corona
Belgium – Netherlands – North Rhine-Westphalia – Lower Saxony – Rhineland-Palatinate

62nd Meeting, 28th January 2020, 2.30 – 2.50 pm (conference call)

Minutes

Participants as listed in the attachment

(1) Opening

5.1.2e (NRW) opens the meeting and welcomes the participants.

(2) Situation reports

The Netherlands, North Rhine-Westphalia, Lower Saxony and Rhineland-Palatinate deliver reports as summarised in the attached document.

The summary of risk assessments continues to be as follows:

Assessment by	Region	Consequence
Belgium	Germany: the whole country is classified as "red" (since 11/11). https://diplomatie.belgium.be/nl/covid_tabel	The Belgian government discourages travel to areas classified as "red". For "red", quarantine and (PCR)tests are compulsory.
	Netherlands: entirely "red".	
Netherlands	Germany: Germany is classified entirely as "orange" for health reasons (since 3/11). https://www.nederlandwereldwijd.nl/landen/duitsland/reizen/reisadvies	"Orange" for health risk means: only necessary travel; no tourist trips. After a stay in Germany or Belgium, strong recommendation for quarantine at home for 10 days on return to the Netherlands plus (PCR)test.
	Belgium: entire country is "orange" for health risk reasons. https://www.nederlandwereldwijd.nl/anden/belgie/reizen/reisadvies	
Germany	Belgium – entire country is a "risk area" (since 30 Sept).	New quarantine rules since 5 th January 2021: Quarantine obligation only until negative test result
	Netherlands: entire country is a "risk area" (since October 17).	

- In general, there is a slightly positive or stagnant trend in every country, the situation along the borders is quiet. NL 5.1.2e reports that there have been riots in several cities, including in the border region, in connection with the national lockdown measures. However, the last days have been quiet again.

- 5.1.2e (NRW) reports that there are still 5 patients treated in ICU's in NRW, 4 from the Netherlands and 1 from Belgium.

(3) Matters of common interest

Mutated coronavirus

- NL 5.1.2e emphasises that sequencing has been extended (from 0.5% up to 1%). The large scale testing in the area of Rotterdam show outbreaks of the British variant in schools albeit not widespread. It is estimated that 30% of all new cases were linked to the British virus mutation last week. There are 20 cases of the South African. 5.1.2e adds that of those about 50% are connected to travel or contacts to South Africa.
- NRW 5.1.2e reports 11 cases of the British and 7 cases of the South-African virus mutation in NRW so far, with a number of additional suspected cases not yet analysed. The cases are distributed over 6 cities. Whether the South African cases are linked to travel contacts is not known.
- NRW (5.1.2e) informs that the NRW Ministry of Health has launched a study on the sequencing of positive tests. First results are expected in about three weeks. In addition, the Federal Ministry of Health issued a regulation last week which will enable laboratories in Germany to sequence up to 5 per cent of all tests.
- **Next meeting: 4th February 2021, 2.30 pm**