

EU health ministers to hold coronavirus meeting next Friday

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EU health ministers will meet next Friday "to discuss measures related to the COVID19 outbreak," a European Commission spokesman announced on Twitter.

The meeting was not previously scheduled. The last such meeting on the issue took place two weeks ago with the ministers promising to coordinate over the spreading virus.

Member states in the bloc are signing up to an initiative to jointly procure [medical equipment](#) such as masks to confront the epidemic.

As of late Friday, the new coronavirus had infected 815 people in EU members states as well as Britain, Switzerland and Norway, and caused 19 deaths, according the EU's European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control.

Most of them were in Italy, where an outbreak in the economically important north of the country has prompted a quarantine of 11 villages.

The EU acknowledges that the virus is causing [economic damage](#), but is still assessing the magnitude. Tourism and supply chains, notably those from China, have been especially impacted.

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