

The European Commission and EU member states continue to ignore growing calls for a patent waiver that would increase global production and availability of Covid-19 vaccines and related equipment. Recently, nearly 400 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) and of national Parliaments from across the EU signed a [joint appeal](#) expressing their unequivocal support for the measure, adding their voice to that of [175 Nobel laureates and former Heads of State and Governments](#), the [Director General of the World Health Organization](#) (WHO), [scientists](#), [trade unions](#), [NGOs](#) and the [general public](#).

In October 2020 South Africa and India submitted a [proposal](#) at the World Trade Organization (WTO) to temporarily waive certain IP rights under the Agreement of Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) until widespread vaccination is in place globally. Since then, and despite the growing support for the initiative, the discussions have not gone beyond the exchange of clarifications and additional explanations. This is due to the opposition of a handful of countries, most notably the EU and its Member States, the United States, and Japan, among others.

**Supporting the TRIPS waiver would be among the most powerful and effective available ways for governments to demonstrate their commitment to global cooperation and increase global access to vaccines.**

It is evident that there are insufficient vaccine doses because of limited manufacturing capabilities and other challenges to the supply chain. Traditional, voluntary mechanisms will not and cannot deliver the scale-up of production and technology transfer needed to respond to this challenge. Initiatives like the COVAX facility depend heavily on pledges and commitments that have yet to materialise, and in any case would be insufficient to provide the level of coverage needed to bring a timely end to the pandemic. If the situation remains unchanged, the interests and profits of the few will determine the fate of most. As the WHO Director General has said, we face the risk of a “catastrophic moral failure”.

It is not too late for the European Commission and governments to change course and finally listen to leading experts and elected representatives, **dropping the opposition to the TRIPS waiver and engaging in text-based negotiations.**