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European Council Summit: quote from Philippe Lamberts MEP

Tomorrow, EU leaders will meet virtually for an EU Council Summit, to discuss among other things, the Covid-19 pandemic and vaccine roll out, and transatlantic relations with US President Joe Biden, who will join for part of the meeting. This summit is the first time EU leader sit together after China announced sanctions against several MEPs, including our colleague **Reinhard Bütikofer**, the Human Rights Subcommittee, and national MPs, including Belgian Green Samuel Cogolati.

Ahead of the European Council summit, **Philippe Lamberts MEP**, President of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament, comments:

"On the proposed Covid-certificate, we share the wish of our societies to find again the freedom to move and consider that another holiday season lost would deal a severe blow not just to the economies of the countries concerned but also to the cohesion of the monetary union. In that perspective, a harmonised Covid-certificate will constitute a potentially useful tool, provided it fulfills crucial conditions. First, it must be based on scientific evidence, in particular that vaccination significantly reduces the contamination potential of the individual; otherwise, the only thing that the certificate would do is create a false sense of safety. Second, that certificates will not lead to discrimination or create a two-tier society that pits vaccinated and unvaccinated people against each other; proof of vaccination must be treated as equal to a current negative test or detectable antibodies. Third, watertight guarantees must be given in order to protect privacy: While it is justifiable that public authorities can control the validity of a certificate, there is absolutely no justification for them to access let alone store data about its usage. These data are personal medical data that are and should remain the ownership of every individual. Finally, if put in use, the certificate scope and duration should be restricted to travel during the pandemic.

"More importantly, the real challenge for the EU and its Member States will be to significantly increase testing capacities and massively expand the production of vaccines. We must avoid any vaccine nationalism and conflicts with our partners, such as the UK, over the inability of a manufacture to fulfil their contractual promises. The best way to deal with any potential delays in supply is for the EU, UK and vaccine manufactures like Astra Zeneca to sit together at the highest level and find a solution.

"Finally on China, we stand with our colleague and friend Reinhard Bütikofer and all those targeted by the Chinese Communist Party for standing up for democratic values. The heads of state and governments should strongly condemn the attacks against our colleagues and fellow citizens by the Chinese government. EU leaders should use their time on Thursday with President Biden to discuss a joint EU-US approach to

China that respects human rights and democracy. It is obvious that there can be no question of even taking into consideration the ratification of the EU-China Investment Agreement until the Chinese Communist Party lifts the sanctions."

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