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Brussels,

Dear Minister,

I would like to start by thanking you for the constructive and frank discussions last week in Council.

Following up on our exchanges on COVID-19 vaccination, I tasked the European Medicines Agency and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control to review currently available evidence and the epidemiological situation, and to issue an opinion regarding the possibility of a second booster dose. I am pleased to inform you that the European Medicines Agency and the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control will today issue a joint statement on this issue.

In its common position, based on the available scientific evidence, the Agencies have concluded that a fourth dose of mRNA vaccine as a second booster could be administered for people above 80 years of age due to the fragility of this population, the lower immune response to vaccination and the higher risk of severe COVID-19.

With regard to immunocompetent adults of 60 to 80 years of age or population groups identified as being at particular risk, while there is no indication of an imminent need for a second booster, it may be considered in situations of increasing risk of severe COVID-19 among vaccinated individuals, because of possible signals of vaccine effectiveness waning or a deteriorating epidemiological situation. Close vigilance and monitoring of such indications at national level is essential.

For immunocompetent adults below 60 years of age, the Agencies consider that there is currently no data available that would indicate a need to administer a fourth dose to this population group.

I trust that this joint statement will support the national vaccination campaigns in Member States that decide to offer second booster vaccinations to people 60 years of age and older as well as to immunocompromised individuals. Let me stress that this statement is based on currently available data and it cannot be excluded that further booster doses may be needed in

some or all age groups in anticipation of future waves, in preparation for the winter to come or in view of additional scientific evidence on waning of vaccine protection or the possible need for adapted vaccines.

It is therefore crucial that we continue to have a common, timely and closely coordinated European strategy, based on solid scientific data, so that our citizens receive clear and coherent guidance in this respect.

I would like to thank you once again for your cooperation and I count on your continued commitment to working closely together to address the challenges from the ongoing pandemic.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. Kyriakides".