



Brussels, 28 January 2021

Statement by Workers' Group President, Oliver Röpke, on the Astra Zeneca incident

Rapid deployment of COVID-19 vaccines to all and in particular vulnerable people is crucial to saving lives and preventing health services from being completely overwhelmed, as well as minimizing the immense economic damage caused by lockdowns. However, unfortunately, although the vaccination process is underway, there is likely to be a rapid increase in infections in the short term.

The Workers' Group at the EESC witnessed a harsh and deplorable incident between the European Commission and the pharmaceutical company Astra Zeneca, because of the attitude of the company and in particular its CEO.

It is essential, in the general interest, that we create full transparency on the matter. "There is an urgent need to put public health at the centre of the debate, in Europe, the UK and around the world", said Oliver Röpke, President of the EESC Workers' group.

It would be unforgivable for a pharmaceutical company to fall back on its monopoly position on a vaccine to put pressure on the EU commission and question the public health of populations in the various member states of the European Union. All the more so since citizens have contributed through their significant efforts to support the development of this vaccine, through the taxes paid.