

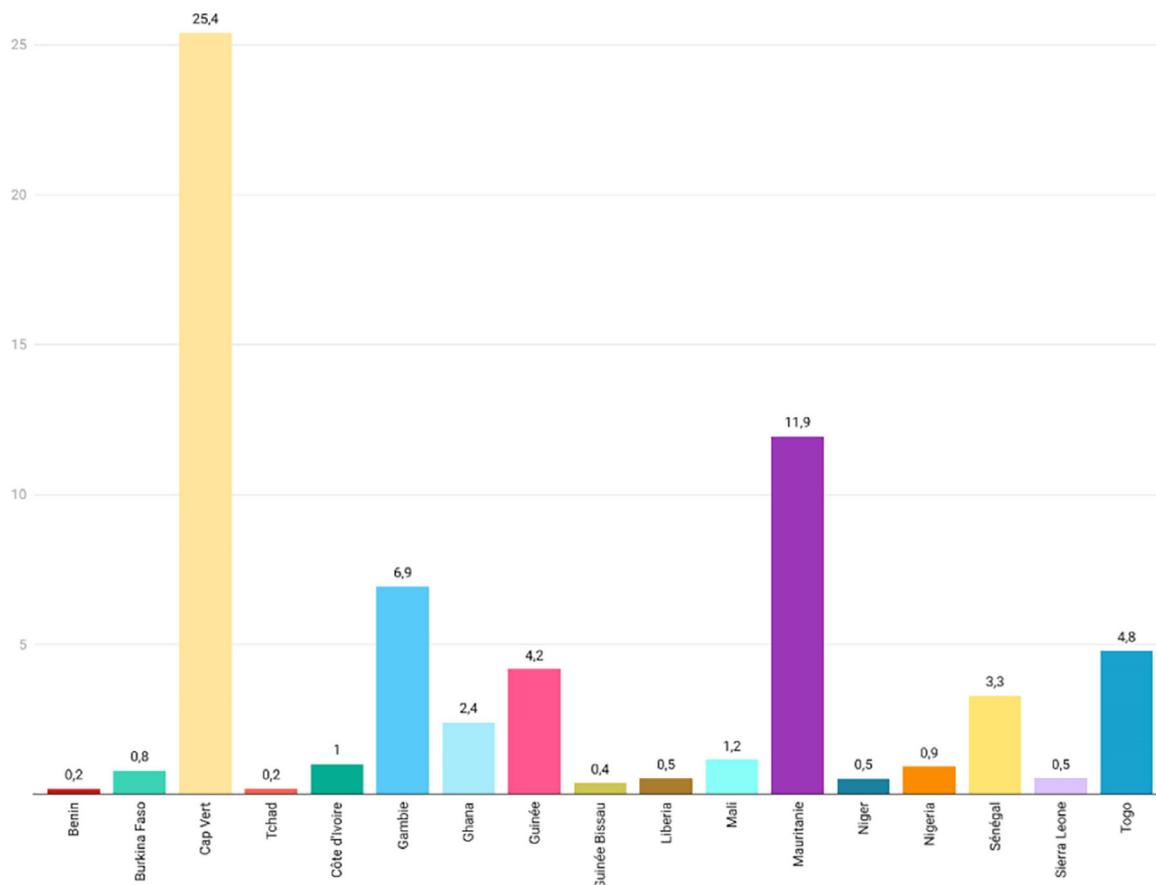
# VACCINATION COVERAGE AND PERCEIVED CONSTRAINTS TO MOBILITY: AFRICA OSTRACISED?

**O**nly **1.7%** of the West African population is now fully vaccinated, excluding Cabo Verde, which is 25% vaccinated. The causes of this delay are numerous, as is the perception of their consequences.

In the spring of 2020, the most developed countries pre-ordered massive amounts of Covid-19 vaccine doses, creating a de facto shortage effect that is still being felt today. Africa in general, and West Africa in particular, seemed relatively unaffected by the epidemic at the time. More recent waves — notably linked to the spread of the delta variant — have mitigated this perception, but the African continent remains officially unaffected compared to most regions of the world.

In any case, Africa is the continent with the lowest vaccination coverage and **is currently experiencing a significant delay in its supply of vaccine doses**. This can be explained by the shortage effect mentioned above, by governments' lack of financial resources, but also by delays in delivery of the COVAX initiative. Seventy-one percent of the COVAX vaccine supply for West Africa relied on the Serum Institute of India (SII) laboratory, however it was forced to give priority to the distribution of its vaccine to the Indian population that was hit hard by the Delta variant of the virus<sup>1</sup>.

Percentage of people fully vaccinated over total population



Note: Updated on 3 October 2021

Source: Our World in Data (2021)

© 2021. Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lesechos.fr/monde/asia-pacifique/vaccins-linde-donne-la-priorite-a-ses-besoins-au-detriment-des-exportations-1299887>

While vaccination against Covid-19 is a requirement for entry into many countries, including the European Union, there is a perception of vaccine “apartheid” against a West African population that is under-vaccinated or vaccinated with unlicensed vaccines. What is the reality?

Data available through the COVAX initiative and other bilateral donations tend to deconstruct this perception. **To date, 69% of the doses available in West African countries come from donations. Ninety-one percent of these doses are from vaccines licensed in two-thirds of European countries.**

#### Range of vaccines provided in West Africa, approved by the European Medicines Agency



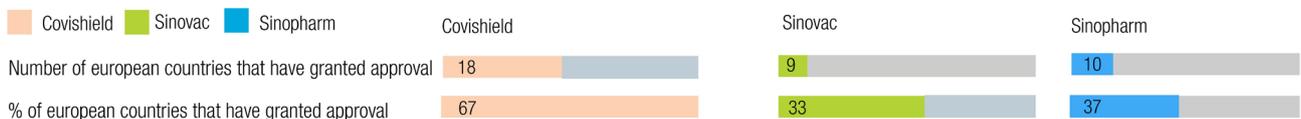
Note: Updated on 1 October 2021

Source: Johns Hopkins University (2021)

© 2021. Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD)

Although the European Medicines Agency (EMA) has licensed only four vaccines (Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Moderna, and Jansen), **each member state can decide to recognise the efficacy of a vaccine provided that another European state is already using it on its territory.** The remaining 9% are Sinopharm vaccines, supplied through the COVAX initiative and bilateral Chinese donations, and are recognised in one-third of European countries.

#### Number and percentage of European countries that have granted approval on other vaccines



Note: Updated on 1 October 2021

Source: Johns Hopkins University (2021)

© 2021. Sahel and West Africa Club Secretariat (SWAC/OECD)

In other words, vaccinated West African residents do not seem to be penalised; at least not more than nationals from a large number of other countries in the world.

However, the impacts of under-vaccination will be felt for a long time. If it does not catch up, Africa could become fertile ground for the development of new variants potentially resistant to vaccines. It is far from certain that European tourists, even if vaccinated, will return massively to Morocco, Tunisia or Senegal. It is also feared that Covid-19 will enter the European migration debate. The current tensions between France and the Maghreb countries are partly based on the refusal of illegal immigrants to undergo a PCR test before being deported to their countries of origin, which require this test for any entry on their territory. In addition, some populist media are already linking African immigration to health threats.

Recent announcements, particularly from the United States and Europe, give hope that vaccine deliveries to Africa will take off, albeit late. However, it will be necessary to overcome existing constraints, including weak health and logistics infrastructures to deliver doses to the most remote areas, as well as the significant reluctance of people to be vaccinated, partly due to the phenomena of misinformation<sup>2</sup>, but also simply because of their lesser exposure to the pandemic. **The fact remains that the rate of administration of available doses in the region’s countries is only 43%.**

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/1115198/societe/comment-les-fake-news-complicent-la-lutte-contre-le-covid-19/>