

## The UNIDO Brussels Office – biweekly Intelligence report on COVID-19 response by the European Union

### A) [The European Commission \(COVID-19 dedicated website\)](#)

#### [EU Coronavirus response - latest updates](#)

##### [Press release: Coronavirus: The Commission mobilises all of its resources to protect lives and livelihoods](#)

Saving lives and supporting livelihoods in these times of acute crisis is paramount. The Commission is further increasing its response by proposing to set up a €100 billion solidarity instrument to help workers keep their incomes and help businesses stay afloat, called **SURE**. It is also proposing to redirect all available structural funds to the response to the coronavirus. All of these measures are based on the current EU budget and will squeeze out every available euro. They show the need for a strong and flexible long-term EU budget. The Commission will work to ensure that the EU can count on such a strong budget to get back on its feet and progress on the path to recovery.

- €100 billion to keep people in jobs and businesses running: **the SURE initiative** ([Q&A](#)) ([FACTSHEET](#))
- Delivering for the most deprived – the **Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD)**
- **Supporting fishermen and farmers** ([FACTSHEET](#))
  - Europe's farming and fisheries have an essential role in providing us with the food we eat. They are hard hit by the crisis, in turn hitting our food supply chains and the local economies that the sector sustains. As with the structural funds, the use of the **European Maritime and Fisheries Fund** will be made more flexible.
- **Redirecting all Cohesion Policy funds to fight the emergency**
  - All uncommitted money from the three Cohesion Policy funds – the **European Regional Development Fund**, the **European Social Fund** and the **Cohesion Fund** - will be mobilised to address the effects of the public health crisis.
- **The Emergency Support Instrument** ([Q&A](#))
  - The EU is proposing to use all available remaining funds from this year's EU budget to help to respond to the needs of European health systems. €3 billion will be put into the **Emergency Support Instrument**, of which €300 million will be allocated to **RescEU** to support the common stockpile of equipment.
- **Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus** ([CRII+](#))
  - ([Q&A](#))
  - ([FACTSHEET](#))

##### [Press release: Coronavirus: EU global response to fight the pandemic](#)

- On 8 April, the European Commission and the High Representative set out plans for a robust and targeted EU response to support partner countries' efforts in tackling the coronavirus pandemic.
- **Team Europe Package:** The EU's response follows a 'Team Europe' approach, aimed at saving lives by providing quick and targeted support to its partners. It combines resources from the EU, its Member States and financial institutions, in particular the **European Investment Bank** and the **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development**.
- €502 million for **Emergency response actions**
- €2.8 billion to **support research, health and water systems**
- €12.28 billion to **address the economic and social consequences**
- General [FACTSHEET](#)
- Factsheet on [Western Balkans](#)
- Factsheet on [Eastern Partnership](#)
- Factsheet on [Southern Neighbourhood](#)
- [Questions & Answers](#)

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### [Press release: Coronavirus: Commission adopts Recommendation to support exit strategies through mobile data and apps](#)

On 8 April, the Commission [recommended](#) steps and measures to develop a common EU approach for the use of mobile applications and mobile data in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Digital tools can play an important role in the gradual lifting of containment measure, when the time will be ripe for that, if they are compliant with EU rules and well-coordinated.

### [Press release: United Nations: High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell speaks to the UN Secretary-General António Guterres](#)

High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell held a phone call with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, António Guterres, on 8 April 2020. The call focused on the severe global impact of the coronavirus pandemic and, in particular, its effect in the most vulnerable parts of the world.

The High Representative/Vice-President reiterated the European Union's support for the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire. He also expressed his support for the UN Secretary-General's COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan.

### [Press release: Coronavirus: Guidance to ensure full data protection standards of apps fighting the pandemic](#)

On 16 April, the European Commission has published [guidance](#) on the development of new apps that support the fight against coronavirus in relation to data protection.

### [Press release: Coronavirus: Commission presents guidance on implementing EU rules on asylum and return procedures and on resettlement](#)

On 16 April, the Commission adopted guidance on the implementation of relevant EU rules on asylum and return procedures and on resettlement in the context of the coronavirus pandemic, which it will present to Member States.

### [Calendar](#)

Next appointments regarding EU Institutions' response.

## **B) [The European Parliament](#)**

### [Press release: Rebuilding Europe after Covid-19: MEPs call for decisive action](#)

In a discussion with Charles Michel, President of the European Council, and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, MEPs said that solidarity and ambitious new solutions were needed to overcome the coronavirus outbreak and the resulting economic challenges.

### [Press release: COVID-19: MEPs call for solidarity with developing countries in combatting the coronavirus](#)

The African, Caribbean, Pacific Group of States and the European Union (ACP-EU) must work in solidarity to tackle the health and socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis.

In a joint statement, the Chairs of the European Parliament's Committee on Development, Tomas Tobé (EPP, SE), and of the Delegation to the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, Carlos Zorrinho (S&D, PT) express their solidarity with the families of the victims and those affected by the coronavirus.

### [Press release: 21 April: Extraordinary meeting of DEVE Committee on Covid-19](#)

The meeting, to take place remotely on 21 April, will mainly focus on the measures the EU put in place to face the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak in developing countries. MEPs will exchange views with EU Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen, and EU Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarčič.

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### C) The Council of the EU

#### Press release: Report on the comprehensive economic policy response to the COVID-19 pandemic

On 9 April, the Eurogroup met via video conference to draw up a package of response measures to present to EU leaders. The report proposes **three immediate safety nets** for workers, businesses and member states. It also prepares the ground for a **recovery fund** to relaunch the economy and ensure **EU solidarity** with the member states most affected by COVID-19.

#### Press release: Tackling COVID-19: Council adopts amended EU budget for 2020

The EU is making available almost all the remaining money from this year's budget to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council has adopted by written procedure two proposals which amend the EU budget for 2020 in order to free up funds to respond to the COVID-19 crisis

Commitments have been increased overall by €3.57 billion and amount to €172.2 billion. Payments have been increased by €1.6 billion, reaching a total of €155.2 billion.

### D) The European Investment Bank

#### Press release: EIB Group moves to scale up economic response to COVID-19 crisis

On 2 April, the Board of Directors of the European Investment Bank (EIB) discussed the creation of a €25 billion guarantee fund to enable the EIB Group to scale up its support for companies in all 27 EU Member States by an additional up to €200 billion. This comes on top of an immediate support package of up to €40 billion announced in March.

#### Press release: EIB Group contributes € 5.2 billion to EU response to Covid-19 outside European Union

On 8 April, the European Investment Bank Group announced details of a comprehensive response to the coronavirus pandemic outside the EU that will provide up to € 5.2 billion in the coming months. This financing is part of the Team Europe response and supported by guarantees from the EU budget.

### E) The European Economic and Social Committee

#### Statement: The EU's response to the COVID-19 outbreak and the need for unprecedented solidarity amongst Member States

Facing the COVID-19 crisis – one of the worst of its history – the EU must be guided by the principle of being considered a community of common destiny. Through this principle, the EESC recalls that it is possible to adopt and coordinate common and solidarity measures to counter the negative health, economic and social effects of the crisis.

### F) Think Tanks

#### Euractiv

#### Opinion: COVID19 crisis reveals a need for change in EU/Africa relations

Africa won't weather this crisis on its own. This week's global support package by the EU announced by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen provides welcome relief, but COVID-19 is a symptom of a much deeper crisis that makes it harder for economically and politically unstable countries in Africa to deal with the outbreak. The EU should seize this moment to shift its longer-term partnership with Africa accordingly.

## The UNIDO Brussels Office – biweekly Intelligence report on COVID-19 response by the European Union

### **Opinion: How to finance virus response in a sustainable way? Scale up synergies with the Green Deal**

The COVID crisis requires a rapid and large-scale fiscal response from all European Union member states to keep the economy on life support. Moreover, it will necessitate substantial investments to reignite the economy while building resilience to future pandemics and compound risks associated with climate change.

### **Opinion: How the coronavirus outbreak affects the EU's 2030 climate targets**

The COVID-19 pandemic currently hitting Europe has significantly slowed discussions on the EU Green Deal. The crisis hit soon after the EU's Climate Law proposal was presented, with plans to increase the bloc's 2030 emissions reduction target from the existing 40% to 50–55%, compared to 1990 levels.

### **News: 'Green recovery alliance' launched in European Parliament**

An informal alliance has been launched in the European Parliament on the back of calls from 12 EU environment ministers who have signed an appeal for a green recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition to the 79 MEPs from across the political spectrum, the alliance also brings together civil society groups, including 37 CEOs, 28 business associations, the European trade union confederation, 7 NGOs and 6 think tanks.

## **POLITICO**

### **Opinion: Inside the global race to prevent another depression**

Economic firefighters around the world have a problem they've never seen before: a lightning-fast economic collapse strapped to a virulent global pandemic and wild, whipsawing financial markets threatening to amplify the damage.

From Washington to Brussels to Frankfurt to Berlin and beyond, officials in advanced economies are rolling out the biggest fiscal and monetary policy bazookas they've ever imagined.

## **CEPS (Center for European Policy Studies)**

### **Policy Contribution: Protecting employment in the time of coronavirus**

This paper briefly analyses the proposal by the European Commission to establish SURE, the 'European instrument for temporary support to mitigate unemployment risks in an emergency'.

The SURE facility would borrow up to €100 billion on the financial markets, lend it to member states to finance short-time work schemes and similar measures, using guarantees from the member states themselves.

## **Friends of Europe**

### **Publication: Yesterday's aid and trade policies won't work for tomorrow's problems**

After weeks of neglect, the global spotlight is finally on Covid-19's devastating social and economic impact on the world's most vulnerable.

In some developing countries, Covid-19 risks wiping out years of hard work and an impressive steady rise in incomes. With the disruption in global supply chains, trade is slowing. Remittances are declining. Tourism is a memory. A post-crisis recovery will take time, money and effort.

### **Publication: COVID-19 means a cleaner environment - for now - so let's not drop the focus on climate change**

Common belief states that COVID-19 is having a positive effect on the environment. This is a flawed perspective. Though the sharp decrease in economic activity indeed translates into a decrease of greenhouse gas emissions, make no mistake that this is but a short-term trend.

EU leaders recently noted the importance of combining sustainable growth with economic recovery, but the time is now to put action to these words.

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### Egmont Institute

#### Publication: Take me to Your Leader! Or how the EU could emerge stronger from the Corona Crisis

Even the most dystopian science fiction novel usually is optimistic in one way: somehow humanity has always managed to create a planetary government. So when the aliens land and, true to the script, the sentence “Take me to your leader!” follows, there is someone to take them to.

The alien invasion usually comes out of the blue. In real life, however, the opposite is true. Acts of war do often come as a surprise. But today’s planetary challenges have been predicted, and remedies or precautions proposed, a long time ago.

#### Publication: Context matters – Why Africa should tailor its own measures to fight COVID-19

African governments have been faster than most of their European counterparts in imposing measures to deal with the COVID-19 outbreak despite dealing with numerous other challenges. However, context matters, and for Africa, the political and socioeconomic consequences of the lockdown measures may cause more havoc than the actual virus.

### ETTG (European Think Tanks Group)

#### Blog: Europe-Africa relations after Corona

The new Africa strategy proposal of the EU has fallen off the radar – and has perhaps even become obsolete. In the abundant list of priorities and key areas of attention for the future, there was one word missing: ‘pandemic’. Experts and policymakers are now trying to anticipate the effects of the pandemic for countries in Europe and Africa, but not yet for Africa-Europe relations. Will the two continents be able to jointly deal with the expected health, economic and political consequences?

#### Publication: How can the European Union help developing countries address the socioeconomic impacts of the coronavirus crisis?

Confronted with its most severe crisis since WWII, Europe needs to adopt a global perspective, as it cannot successfully address it in isolation. There is a moral imperative to help vulnerable people in distress and foster global solidarity to prevent catastrophic outcomes.

#### Blog: COVID-19: A Stress Test for International Development Cooperation

As the Coronavirus pandemic expands, and peak contagion remains uncertain, policy responses are gradually emerging, being implemented in a number of domains.

The crisis has several important implications, but two are currently dominating the headlines: individual health and the sustainability of national healthcare systems, and the economic fallout from the pandemic.

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