

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](#)

[EEAS Special Report: Short Assessment of narratives and disinformation around the COVID-19/Coronavirus Pandemic](#)

Disinformation, myths and misinformation continue to proliferate around the world, with potentially harmful consequences for public security, health and effective crisis communications.

[Press release: Commission proposes €3 billion macro-financial assistance package to support ten neighbouring countries](#)

The Commission has adopted a proposal for a €3 billion macro-financial assistance (MFA) package to ten enlargement and neighbourhood partners to help them to limit the economic fallout of the coronavirus pandemic. The proposal provides for the MFA funds to be distributed as follows: the **Republic of Albania** (€180 million), **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (€250 million), **Georgia** (€150 million), the Hashemite Kingdom of **Jordan** (€200 million), **Kosovo** (€100 million), the **Republic of Moldova** (€100 million), **Montenegro** (€60 million), the Republic of **North Macedonia** (€160 million), the Republic of **Tunisia** (€600 million) and **Ukraine** (€1.2 billion).

[Press release: Coronavirus: Commission launches data sharing platform for researchers](#)

On 21 April, the European Commission together with several partners launched a [European COVID-19 Data Platform](#) to enable the rapid collection and sharing of available research data. The platform is part of the [ERAvsCorona Action Plan](#)

[Press release: Coronavirus: Commission announces exceptional measures to support the agri-food sector](#)

The Commission is taking swift action and proposes additional exceptional measures to further support most affected **agricultural** and **food** markets.

[Press release: Coronavirus: EU guidance for a safe return to the workplace](#)

How to ensure the health and safety of workers when they come back to the workplace? This important question is on the minds of many employers as EU countries plan or execute a progressive return to work after coronavirus. In response, the **European Agency for Safety and Health at Work** (EU-OSHA) has issued today guidance on coming back to work.

[Press release: Coronavirus Global Response: EU launches pledging effort](#)

The European Union is joining forces with global partners to kick-start a pledging effort – the [Coronavirus Global Response](#) – starting on 4 May 2020, with the aim of **reaching €7.5 billion**. The World Health Organization (WHO) and global health organisations have launched a joint call for action to develop fast and equitable access to safe, quality, effective and affordable diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines against coronavirus.

- [Q & A](#)
- [President of the Commission's statement](#)

[Press release: Western Balkans' leaders meeting: EU reinforces support to address COVID-19 crisis and outlines proposal for post-pandemic recovery](#)

On 29 April, the European Commission announced over **€3.3 billion** of EU financial support mobilised jointly with the European Investment Bank to the benefit of the Western Balkans' citizens.

[Calendar](#)

Next appointments regarding EU Institutions' response

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B) The European Parliament

Press release: EU aid: the impact of coronavirus in Africa could be devastating

Coronavirus in Africa could be devastating, which is why Europe's response should go beyond our borders, said development committee chair Tomas Tobé.

Press release: Sassoli: We can't relaunch economies unless we act together

Europe's economies can only be relaunched by member states acting together, Parliament President David Sassoli warned EU leaders. Speaking at the start of an EU Summit on 23 April on the EU response to the Covid-19 outbreak, Sassoli said: "This is a time for unity".

Press release: COVID-19: MEPs call for a strong EU action to help developing countries

Development Committee discussed EU measures to combat COVID-19 in developing countries, with International Partnerships Commissioner Urpilainen and Crisis Management Commissioner Lenarčič.

Policy brief: Coronavirus and the world of work

The coronavirus pandemic and the measures taken to curb its spread have had far-reaching and lasting consequences in different sectors of the economy, in the form of job and income losses or significantly modified working conditions. This briefing gives an overview of the host of problems confronting workers and employers due to the pandemic and its consequences, and presents possible solutions that can be applied at different levels.

Press release: MEPs call for concrete details and novel tools to address the economic crisis

Opening the discussion held within the [Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee](#), Committee Chair Irene Tinagli (S&D, IT) underlined that although the measures agreed by the European Council were to be welcomed, more was needed, including fresh funds. "At stake is more than solidarity", Ms Tinagli said, explaining that "the divergences that risk being created could lead to unprecedented pressure for the European Union".

C) The Council of the EU

Press release: EU energy ministers agree that the energy sector should play a central role in the recovery plan

Ministers acknowledged that the European energy system is resilient and that currently there is no risk of disruption in energy supply systems, especially for those most in need. They stressed the importance of the tools for ensuring the stability of the security of supply.

Joint Declaration of the members of the European Council with the Member States of the G5 Sahel

On 28 April, the President of the European Council and the President of the G5 Sahel co-chaired a video conference with all the Heads of State of the G5 Sahel, the President of the European Commission and the High Representative of the EU, in the presence of the **Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations** and the **President of the African Union Commission**.

Press release: COVID-19: Council adopts measures to help the most deprived EU citizens

The Council adopted new rules intended to minimise the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on the most deprived EU citizens. The amendments to the regulation on the fund for aid to the most deprived (**FEAD**) will make it easier for member states, partner organisations and other parties involved to access the fund and protect their staff involved in distributing the aid. Around 13 million EU citizens benefit from the fund each year. The new rules are expected to enter into force by the end of the week.

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D) The European Investment Bank

Press release: EIB and five national promotional institutions to cooperate in the fight against Covid-19

Given the enormous challenge posed by Covid-19, European governments and institutions must mobilise resources at unprecedented levels and deploy them effectively. European solidarity, built over many years of collaboration, is instrumental to executing an effective response. With that aim, the chief executives of national development banks from France (**CDC-BPI**), Germany (**KfW**), Italy (**CDP**), Poland (**BGK**) and Spain (**ICO**), together with the president of the European Investment Bank, have discussed responses to the economic consequences of the Covid-19 crisis.

Press release: EIB Group establishes EUR 25 billion guarantee fund to deploy new investments in response to COVID-19

The EIB Group is set to play a key role in the fight against the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. Following a recommendation by the Eurogroup on 9 April, the Board of Directors of the European Investment Bank (EIB), on 16 April, backed the creation of a €25 billion European COVID-19 guarantee fund. The fund will enable the EIB Group to scale up its support for European companies up to an additional €200 billion – with a focus on SMEs.

Press release: EIB backs €5 billion investment to mitigate economic impact of coronavirus and support medical technology

On 23 April, the European Investment Bank approved €5 billion of new financing for businesses hit by the economic shock and for medical technology. The financing is part of the EIB's quick response to the coronavirus crisis and its economic

E) The European Economic and Social Committee

Declaration: Protecting minorities in these difficult times: the situation of the Roma community

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and its study group on the inclusion of the Roma join the call of Members from EU institutions as well as civil society organisations to raise concern over the worsening situation of marginalized communities, amongst them the Roma, during this difficult and uncertain period.

F) Think Tanks

Euractiv

Opinion: The next EU budget must repair and transform the European economy

The current Commission proposals of the EU budget are very small regarding its size and not equipped to provide the real catalyser for the recovery and transformation that the Union needs in these unprecedented times. The Commission should come up with a revised MFF proposal, as asked by the Parliament.

News: EU to discuss Africa debt relief

EU countries will discuss a request for debt relief from five Sahel countries as part of efforts to help them cope with coronavirus, European Council chief Charles Michel said Tuesday (28 April).

News: Timmermans: Farm to fork strategy delayed by couple of weeks, not months

European Commission vice-president Frans Timmermans assured MEPs that the new EU Food policy and biodiversity strategy might be delayed by several weeks but no longer, after the launch was pushed back until 29 April.

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POLITICO

Opinion: Coronavirus throws global climate diplomacy into disarray

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres called on efforts to exit from the economic catastrophe of the pandemic to be tightly tied to the long-term push to avoid the dire consequences of climate change.

Calling coronavirus “the biggest test the world has faced since the Second World War,” Guterres added: “We must act decisively to protect our planet from both the coronavirus and the existential threat of climate disruption.”

Opinion: The next pandemic: Rising inequality

As Europe begins to emerge from the first wave of the pandemic — and absorbs the shock of a Continental death toll that has exceeded 100,000 — the fire-fighting stage of the crisis appears to be coming to an end.

CEPS (Center for European Policy Studies)

Policy Contribution: Why the EU should take the global lead in cancelling Africa’s debt

If the EU wants to live up to its recent ‘partnership of equals’ commitment to Africa, it should take the lead and urge the international community to cancel a part of Africa’s bilateral, multilateral and private debt as it faces the Covid-19 crisis. This will not only help Africa deal with the health and economic emergency caused by the pandemic, but also redress the historical power imbalance between the two continents.

Friends of Europe

Insight: International cooperation: nothing will be like before, but let's start building the ‘after’

The status quo is no more. After COVID-19, nothing will be like before – not in Italy, not in Europe and not for international cooperation. This situation calls for a much different response than what we’ve grown accustomed to. It is precisely during such times – when a new, unprecedented situation arises – that unconventional solutions must be crafted. The general consensus is that the way civil society organisations (CSOs) have traditionally operated will have to change, starting from the elaboration of projects.

Insight: Why Europe needs a strong industrial strategy

The COVID-19 crisis has re-emphasised the strategic importance of the healthcare sector for Europe’s future. Since the outbreak, industry has come together to commit resources, expertise and people to the fight against this pandemic. The health industry is working around the clock to find new vaccines, diagnostics and treatments.

ETTG (European Think Tanks Group)

Publication: EU humanitarian aid: Caught between nexus and independence

The European Union is facing increasingly complex and protracted crises, massive humanitarian consequences of conflicts, climate change, and exacerbated humanitarian needs as a result of COVID-19.

Blog: Can COVID-19 create momentum for sustainable and resilient food systems?

COVID-19 can be a turning point towards building more resilient and sustainable societies. At this moment, global and national economies have come to an abrupt standstill. Suddenly, economic growth is not sacred anymore. To protect the weakest members of our societies, we are willing to make enormous sacrifices. Reconciling other values with economic growth is also needed if we want to meet the sustainable development goals on achieving zero hunger and greater environmental sustainability.

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[Blog: What the Covid-19 economic crisis could change to the development finance agenda](#)

For the second time over the last ten years, low-income economies are confronted with the challenge of overcoming a macro crisis they did not spark and for which they have disproportionately poor capacity to cope with compared to high-income countries. In this context, development finance institutions (DFIs) have an important role to play, both during the crisis and for the recovery.

[Blog: Time for a European Climate and Sustainable Development Bank](#)

The United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development stands at a crossroads. While Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have progressively entered the political discourse and agendas of numerous states, without long-term financial investments, building a more just and sustainable future will remain little more than a rhetorical embellishment.

[Blog: Covid 19 – why gender matters](#)

Public headlines on the Covid-19 pandemic have highlighted common imperatives: immediately, the capacity of health provision and addressing economic impacts. Secondly, concerns about political leadership, education, food security and the practicalities of social distancing, to name just a few.

For those working on gender, however, the gendered issues surface only briefly. The inevitable rise of domestic violence (PDF) under lockdown and the need for governments to provide safe shelter for women and children is a priority.

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