

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: Europe's moment: Repair and prepare for the next generation \(new MFF Proposal\)](#)

On 27 May, the European Commission has put forward its proposal for a new **Multiannual Financial Framework** and a major recovery plan. To ensure the recovery is sustainable, even, inclusive and fair for all Member States, the European Commission is proposing to create a new recovery instrument, **Next Generation EU**, embedded within a powerful, modern and revamped long-term EU budget.

The contribution from **Next Generation EU** of **€750 billion** as well as targeted reinforcements to the long-term EU budget for 2021-2027 will bring the total financial firepower of the **EU budget to €1.85 trillion**.

The money raised for **Next Generation EU** will be invested across **three pillars**:

- 1) **Support to Member States with investments and reforms;**
- 2) **Kick-starting the EU economy by incentivising private investments**
- 3) **Addressing the lessons of the crisis**

- [Q&A](#)
- [Factsheet](#)

[Questions and Answers: the EU budget for external action in the next Multiannual Financial Framework](#)

Together with the new European Recovery Instrument ('Next Generation EU'), the European Commission is proposing a targeted amendment to its initial proposal for the **Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)** adopted in 2018. The new proposal reinforces the EU's capacity to support partners – in particular in the **Western Balkans**, the EU's **wider Neighbourhood** and **Sub-Saharan Africa** – in their efforts to fight and recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, in cooperation with partners such as international financial institutions, the **United Nations** and the World Health Organization. The **External Action Guarantee** and the **European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus** will be the key instruments in this regard.

- [Factsheet](#)

[Press release: Update on the Coronavirus Global Response](#)

The Coronavirus Global Response has so far raised **€9.8 billion**. €2.3 billion (23.5%) were allocated to **vaccines**, €814 million to **therapeutics** (8%), and €242 million (2.5%) to **diagnostics**. Furthermore, donors decided to pay special attention to **strengthening of health systems** with €4.3 billion (45.5% of the pledges).

[Press release: Coronavirus Global Response: kick off of new campaign with support of Global Citizen](#)

On 28 May, the Commission announced the next steps in the Coronavirus Global Response, the global action for universal access to affordable coronavirus vaccination, treatment and testing. The pledging marathon that started on 4 May will now see the launch of a new campaign with the international advocacy organisation Global Citizen, "Global Goal: Unite For Our Future", that will culminate in a **Global Pledging Summit on Saturday 27 June**.

[Press release: Coronavirus Global Response: European Commission pledges €300 million to Gavi](#)

On 4 June, the European Commission is announcing a pledge of €300 million to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, for the period 2021–2025. It will help immunise 300 million children around the world and finance vaccine stockpiles to shield against outbreaks of infectious diseases.

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

[Press release: Coronavirus: EU strengthens action to tackle disinformation](#)

On 10 June, the Commission and the High Representative assessed their steps to fight disinformation around the coronavirus pandemic and proposed a way forward. The coronavirus pandemic has been accompanied by a massive wave of false or misleading information, including attempts by foreign actors to influence EU citizens and debates. The [Joint Communication](#) analyses the immediate response and proposes concrete action that can be quickly set in motion.

[Press release: New Commission report shows the importance of digital resilience in times of crisis](#)

On 11 June, the Commission released the results of the [2020 Digital Economy and Society Index](#) (DESI), which monitors Europe's overall digital performance and tracks the progress of EU countries with respect to their digital competitiveness. Finland, Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands are the leaders in overall digital performance in the EU. Malta, Ireland and Estonia are following right after. The International Digital Economy and Society Index (I-DESI) shows that the best performing EU countries are also worldwide leaders. The largest EU economies are not digital frontrunners,

[Press release: Coronavirus: EU grants €314 million to innovative companies to combat the virus and support recovery](#)

On 8 June, the Commission announced that it has awarded nearly €166 million, via the **European Innovation Council (EIC Accelerator Pilot)**, to 36 companies set to combat the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, over €148 million will be granted to another 36 companies set to contribute to the recovery plan for Europe, bringing the total investment from Horizon 2020, the EU's research and innovation programme, to €314 million in this round.

[Calendar](#)

Next appointments regarding EU Institutions' response

B) [The European Parliament](#)

[Press release: EU defines green investments to boost sustainable finance](#)

Sustainable development requires the **preservation of natural resources** and respect for human and social rights. Climate action is an important aspect, as the need to limit and mitigate the effects of climate change becomes more and more urgent. The EU is committed to gradually decreasing its greenhouse gas emissions. The European Green Deal, the EU's flagship initiative on climate action, sets a goal of zero net emissions by 2050. To achieve the goal, **the EU must invest in new technologies**. The European Commission estimates that **Europe needs about €260 billion** in extra investment every year over the next decade.

[Press release: Health threats: boosting EU readiness and crisis management](#)

New EU programme EU4Health aims to strengthen Europe's health systems to respond better to future major cross-border crises, such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

The [Covid-19 outbreak](#) has shown the need for EU countries to better cooperate and coordinate in times of crisis and to strengthen the EU's capacity to respond effectively to new cross-border health threats.

Drawing on the lessons learnt, a [new EU health programme named EU4Health](#) aims to fill the gaps revealed by the pandemic. Member states are primarily competent for health policy, but the EU can complement and support national measures and adopt legislation in specific sectors.

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

C) The Council of the EU

[Press release: Council approves EU development aid targets for 2020 in a report to the European Council](#)

On 8 June, the Council adopted conclusions on the **EU development aid targets for 2020** in the form of the tenth annual report to the European Council. The report analyses trends with regard to commitments and delivery on the EU's official development assistance (ODA). The EU's development assistance continues to play a crucial role in the overall financing available to the EU to help partner countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. In its report, the Council notes that in 2019, the EU's collective **ODA amounted to EUR 75.2 billion**, up from EUR 74.9 billion in 2018.

[Press release: Youth in external action: Council adopts conclusions](#)

In its conclusions, the Council stresses the contribution of young generations to building stronger, more legitimate, peaceful and democratic societies, in which human rights and the rule of law are respected and no one is left behind. The Council also emphasises the fact that young people are change makers and essential partners in the implementation of the European Consensus on Development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

[Press release: Towards a carbon-neutral and competitive EU waterborne transport sector – Council adopts conclusions](#)

The future of shipping and inland navigation is carbon-neutral, zero-accidents, automated and competitive, says the Council in its conclusions adopted today by written procedure. The conclusions stress the vital importance of the maritime and inland waterway sector in bringing essential goods to European citizens, as highlighted by the key role played by the sector during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council particularly commends the crucial role of seafarers, inland navigation workers and port workers in keeping the supply chains open.

[Press release: Employment and social affairs: the Council adopts conclusions on well-being at work, upskilling and reskilling and demographic challenges](#)

The conclusions on enhancing well-being at work acknowledge that well-being at work can lead to higher productivity and participation in the labour market and reduced public health expenditure. For companies, this ensures staff retention and reduced absenteeism. The conclusions call for the well-being perspective to be included in relevant policies at European and national level. Furthermore, the Council invites member states to enforce, with due regard to the competences of social partners, the EU legal framework and proceed with the implementation of the work-life balance directive.

D) The European Investment Bank

[Press release: EIB approves € 7.5 billion for COVID-19 response and investment in health, private sector, clean transport, education and energy](#)

On 11 June, the European Investment Bank approved € 7.5 billion of new financing for projects across Europe and around the world. This includes investment to improve public health, hospital and elderly care facilities and dedicated new business lending programmes to support sectors most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Press release: Financial needs in the agriculture and agri-food sectors: 24 fi-compass Country Reports published](#)

Based on the feedback of 7,600 farmers and 2,200 agri-food companies across the EU, 24 country-specific fi-compass reports present the main challenges faced by these two groups when it comes to access to finance. The reports also estimate the financing gap for agriculture in the EU between €19.8 and €46.6 billion, while for the agri-food sector the estimated gap is more than €12.8 billion. These financial needs are likely to be exacerbated by the current crisis.

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

[Press release: EIB and UNOPS sign new agreement to help governments better respond to emergencies and natural disasters](#)

UNOPS and the European Investment Bank (EIB) will work together to target challenges to sustainable development, including climate change. The partnership will work to strengthen healthcare systems and promote regional integration to generate economic growth. The EIB and UNOPS have signed a framework agreement on Thursday, 4 June 2020.

This represents the first operational agreement of this kind signed between the EIB and a UN agency.

The agreement follows a memorandum of understanding signed by EIB and UNOPS in 2016 which focused on impact investments in sustainable infrastructure.

[Video: Providing access to green power in Senegal's rural areas](#)

Promoting access to green power in Senegal's rural areas is key to strengthen the country's economy! The EIB, KfW and UE au Sénégal support Senelec in connecting 150,000 households in Sipane, an important step for lives across Africa.

E) [The European Economic and Social Committee](#)

[News: Investment Plan must live up to Green Deal's ambitions](#)

The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) urges all EU institutions and Member States to continue with a rapid and aligned solidarity-based response to the coronavirus pandemic and to adopt additional measures promoting sustainable investments with a view to the European Green Deal. Member States should swiftly agree on a Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027 in line with the Green Deal's ambitions.

[Press release: EESC proposals for post-COVID-19 recovery and reconstruction: towards a new societal model](#)

At its June plenary session, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) adopted a resolution with its proposals for the post-COVID-19 crisis reconstruction and recovery. Under the slogan 'the EU must be guided by the principle of being considered a community of common destiny', the adopted text suggests taking the opportunity presented by the crisis to build a new societal model: "We cannot simply restore what existed in the past: we need to restructure and improve it."

F) [Think Tanks](#)

[Euractiv](#)

[Special Report: The coming revolution: Europe's digital transition in a post-COVID world](#)

This special report analyses the current state of play for **Europe's digital vision of the future** in a radically transformed post-coronavirus world. It draws on the expertise of high-level politicians and policymakers, industry experts and business leaders, in order to chart the coming revolution in Europe's technological landscape.

[Opinion: The Brief – EU-Africa relations in a post-COVID world](#)

One of the last acts of the European Commission before the coronavirus pandemic hit was to publish its strategy paper on future EU-Africa relations. Such geopolitical considerations seem like a distant memory, but they are coming back to the fore. On 12 June, negotiators from the Commission and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) community confirmed that talks on a trade and political cooperation deal to **replace the twenty-year-old Cotonou Agreement were close to completion**. "We are getting closer and closer to the finishing line," said Jutta Urpilainen, the EU International Partnerships Commissioner.

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

Opinion: Biomass can contribute to sector integration in Green Deal

The European Green Deal set a dynamic tone for climate neutrality by 2050 aiming to ensure inclusive transition to a circular, resource-efficient economy that restores biodiversity and cuts pollution. However, the Covid-19 pandemic crisis which has no previous precedent compels to place these priorities on a context that allows economic recovery whilst maintaining the high aspirations for a zero-carbon, green economy. Decarbonisation of heavily polluting sectors like transport is still at early stages while primary production still relies broadly on chemical inputs and practices that cause significant losses of soil quality and nutrients.

POLITICO

News: Africa eyes the world's top trade job — but spars over its candidate

A political heavy hitter from Nigeria is shaking up the race to lead the World Trade Organization, but her immediate challenge is whether the rest of Africa will rally behind her candidacy this week.

Nigeria nominated **Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala**, a former finance minister and corruption-buster who now sits on the board of Twitter, to succeed Brazil's Roberto Azevêdo as **WTO director general in Geneva**, ideally by September.

News: EU-China summit postponed due to coronavirus concerns

The EU and China agreed to postpone a summit in Germany set for September due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Berlin government announced Wednesday. The plan was to convene EU and Chinese leaders in Leipzig on September 14 for a gathering aimed at deepening ties between the bloc and the world's second-largest economy. It was pitched as a landmark occasion to fall under Germany's six-month Council of the EU presidency, which kicks off on July 1. The aim was also to seal an investment protection agreement between Beijing and Brussels, but progress has been slow on reaching a deal.

Friends of Europe

Insight: An ambitious recovery budget, tough negotiations ahead

On 27 May the European Commission unveiled its amended proposal to the EU's Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021-2027. The overall package is impressive. Not only is it very ambitious in size, but it's also truly innovative as it foresees, for the first time in history, a massive emission of common EU debt to finance EU expenditures. From a macro-economic perspective, providing a common budgetary response to the crisis and delaying its repayment beyond 2027 makes a lot of sense.

Insight: Could COVID-19 poison the EU's relations with the Western Balkans?

The European External Action Service (EEAS) Special Report Update from 1 April 2020 identified many of the narratives and disinformation swirling around about COVID-19. Some of the recurring themes emphasised in this report include that the EU has completely failed to deal with the pandemic and is on the brink of collapse. The report also exposed narratives portraying the EU as ineffective, divided and cynical in its crisis response.

ECDPM (European Center for Development Policy Management)

Blog: EU development cooperation in sub-Saharan Africa: What did we learn?

We looked at how EU development policy and cooperation priorities towards sub-Saharan Africa have evolved between 2013 and 2018, and analysed where and how EU aid money was spent during that same period. We also reviewed the results achieved in a number of key areas – such as peace and security, private sector development and gender – and, for each of them, identified what has either enabled or inhibited EU development effectiveness.

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

Paper: Towards an EU global COVID-19 response 2.0: boosting smarter finance

The European Union (EU) has responded promptly to the unprecedented crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic – within, but also beyond its borders. The EU global response to COVID-19 includes quickly reallocating EU support to developing countries to address immediate COVID-19 challenges, amounting to some €20.8 billion. The ‘Team Europe’ approach adopted provides ample opportunities for cooperation and synergies among EU institutions, member states and their development finance institutions, as well as with international actors. These are vital first steps.

ETTG (European Think Tanks Group)

Blog: A chance to build a better future. From COVID-19 to climate action

We all have seen the pictures on the news: crystal clear water and shoals of tiny fish in Venice’s canals, falling pollution levels and wild boars roaming the streets of empty cities. Indeed, the lockdowns in response to the outbreak of COVID-19 have had immediate effects on the environment and caused a dip in global CO2 emissions. Germany may even reach its climate target for 2020 according to forecasts. However, there is no reason to be cheerful. The pandemic and its consequences may seriously set back climate action around the globe.

Blog: Towards a sustainable European food system: for a successful operationalisation of the “Farm to Fork” strategy

The European Commission published its Farm to Fork Strategy for a fair, healthy and environmentally friendly food system. The strategy sets an ambitious course for the transformation of the entire sector, in line with recent scientific findings modelling sustainable food systems. It apprehends head-on and jointly the issues of reducing consumption of animal products, loss and waste, and the use of synthetic inputs. Achieving the drafted objectives will, however, require going a step further by making this strategy the reference framework for the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), the deployment of industrial strategies in the food sector (particularly in the context of the negotiations of the post-Covid-19 crisis recovery plans) and the (re)negotiation of international trade agreements.

Blog: UN reform and the COVID-19 pandemic – what role for the UN to better serve the world?

The Covid-19 pandemic not only threatens to undo development gains and reverse progress in achieving the sustainable development goals of the 2030 Agenda. It also presents an early and serious test for the reform of the UN development system (UNDS), where major reform decisions were taken in 2018 to reposition the UNDS for improved, integrated and strategic support in line with the 2030 Agenda’s interlinked nature.

Prepared by:

Patrick J. Gilabert, Alessandro Gardino, Hugo Van de Walle

UNIDO Liaison Office in Brussels

office.brussels@unido.org – p.gilabert@unido.org