

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 Global Response: EIB and Commission pledge additional €4.9 billion

The 'Global Goal: Unite for our Future' pledging summit organised by the European Commission and Global Citizen mobilised €6.15 billion in additional funding to help develop and ensure equitable access to coronavirus vaccines, tests and treatments. The money raised will also support economic recovery in the world's most fragile regions and communities. This amount includes a €4.9 billion pledge by the European Investment Bank, in partnership with the European Commission, and €485 million committed by EU Member States. This brings total pledges under the Coronavirus Global Response pledging marathon, launched by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on 4 May, to **€15.9 billion**.

- [Q & A](#)

Press release: Coronavirus: Commission unveils EU vaccines strategy

On 17 June, the European Commission presented a European strategy to accelerate the development, manufacturing and deployment of vaccines against COVID-19. An effective and safe vaccine against the virus is our best bet to achieve a permanent solution to the pandemic. Time is of the essence. Every month gained in finding such a vaccine saves lives, livelihoods and billions of euros. Today's strategy proposes a joint EU approach and builds on the mandate received from EU health ministers.

- [Factsheet](#)

Press release: Coronavirus: Using European supercomputing, EU-funded research project announces promising results for potential treatment

EU-funded consortium Exscalate4CoV has announced that an already registered generic drug used to treat osteoporosis, Raloxifene, could be an effective treatment for COVID-19 patients with mildly symptomatic infection. The consortium is using an EU-backed supercomputing platform, one of the world's most powerful, to check the potential impact of known molecules against the genomic structure of coronavirus. This is one of many examples of how the EU's research and innovation programme Horizon 2020 is bringing together the best of European researchers, pharmaceutical companies, technologies and research infrastructures to contribute to defeating the virus.

Calendar

Next appointments regarding EU Institutions' response

B) The European Parliament

Press release: ACP-EU Post-Cotonou: A Joint Parliamentary Assembly is non-negotiable

The negotiations on a new partnership agreement between the European Union and African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries are entering the final stages. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals, the new agreement should be people-focused and this requires a strengthened parliamentary dimension with the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) at its centre, say Tomas Tobé (EPP, SE), Chair of the European Parliament's Committee on Development, and the two JPA Co-Presidents Carlos Zorrinho (S&D, PT) and Faumuina Liuga (Samoa).

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[Press release: MEPs want to boost energy storage in the EU to help spur decarbonisation](#)

The Industry, Research and Energy Committee calls on the European Commission and member states to remove regulatory barriers that hamper the development of energy storage projects, such as double taxation or shortcomings in EU network codes. The Trans-European energy networks also need to be revised in order to improve eligibility criteria for those wishing to develop energy storage facilities, MEPs say.

[Press release: COVID-19: Both WHO and Europe must learn from the current pandemic, say MEPs](#)

The EP Committee responsible for public health quizzed the Director-General of the WHO on its response to COVID-19, underlining the need for global cooperation.

The Committee for Environment, Public Health and Food Safety held a debate with the Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO), Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, on the fight against COVID-19 and the global response to it, including WHO actions to prevent the spread of the disease and to develop treatments and vaccines.

C) [The Council of the EU](#)

[Press release: Response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the EU energy sector: Council adopts conclusions](#)

On 25 June, the Council adopted conclusions on the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the EU energy sector. Above all, the Council expresses its appreciation for staff in the energy sector for their dedicated and effective efforts to ensure the continuous operation of the European energy system during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Council highlights the crucial role of the energy sector in the EU's economic recovery and notes that the European economy needs to become greener, more circular and more digital while remaining competitive globally.

[Press release: Increased support for EU farmers affected by the COVID-19 crisis: Council adopts exceptional measures](#)

On 24 June, the Council adopted a regulation which allows member states, as an exceptional measure, to pay up to EUR 7000 to farmers and up to EUR 50 000 to small and medium enterprises (SME's) active in processing, marketing or development of agricultural products or cotton, except fishery products. The aim is to make use of available funds under existing rural development programmes to provide support to farmers and SME's worst-hit by the COVID-19 crisis and to address the liquidity and cash-flow problems stemming from the closures of shops, markets and restaurants.

D) [The European Investment Bank](#)

[Publication: Financing the digitalisation of small and medium-sized enterprises. The enabling role of digital innovation hubs](#)

The current COVID-19 crisis has highlighted even more the importance of digitalisation. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are at the centre of the economic crisis brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and containment measures, more now than during the 2008 financial crisis. This has clearly shown the importance and the need to accelerate the digital transformation to make businesses more resilient and agile.

[Press release: New report: Funding women entrepreneurs: How to empower growth](#)

Women are at the forefront of our fight against the coronavirus pandemic, representing 70% of the health and social sector workforce globally. As our economies are facing an unprecedented recession, a massive and coordinated response is required to avoid leaving the economy badly scarred for longer. Women could play a decisive role in the recovery as well. Considering gender equality and empowering women entrepreneurship could help to accelerate and fortify our recovery, especially given that women-led businesses tend to be more productive, faster-growing and innovative.

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E) The European Economic and Social Committee

Press release: The EESC proposes creating an extraordinary fund to support the agricultural sector in response to the COVID-19 outbreak

The COVID-19 pandemic is demonstrating the geostrategic nature of the agri-food sector and the need to maintain food self-sufficiency in the EU. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) therefore welcomes the new measure proposed by the European Commission to support farms and agri-food SMEs experiencing liquidity problems and to ensure their economic survival during this crisis. However, the EESC thinks that the European Commission should set up a special fund outside of the common agricultural policy budget to implement it.

F) Think Tanks

Euractiv

Opinion: Developing countries need grants not more debt to recover from the Covid-19 crisis

On the surface of it, proposals for the next EU budget 2021-2027 look good for the Global South as they are aimed at helping countries to address the multiple health and economic crises triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic. The amounts allocated for 'external action' (development) have been increased, with an additional €1 billion set aside for this year, and €10.5 billion to be spent by 2024. The latter comes under the external pillar of a new instrument entitled Next Generation EU aimed at financing the European recovery from Covid-19.

POLITICO

News: Von der Leyen urges leaders to agree on EU budget by 'summer break'

Speaking to German financial newspaper Handelsblatt, she said that to achieve this, two leaders' summits might have to be held next month. EU leaders will meet on July 17-18 in Brussels — at the first in-person summit since February — to hammer out an agreement on the budget and the bloc's coronavirus recovery plan.

CEPS (Center for European Policy Studies)

Study on up- and re- skilling in micro and small enterprises

Skills development is necessary to face changes in the labour market, led by important transformations such as digitalisation, ageing populations and climate change. Given the importance of micro and small enterprises for the EU economy and employment, the study provides insights into the main challenges faced by those companies, potential opportunities stemming from up-skilling and re-skilling activities as well as policy options.

Friends of Europe

Insight: The EU must think twice before triggering a global trade war

The consensus amongst media commentators around the world is that unless we all resist protectionism we'll be throwing away the key to post-corona recovery. They warn that new tariffs and other trade barriers would trample any green shoots of growth and renewed prosperity.

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Egmont Institute

Policy Brief: For multilateralism to work, there must be consensus on what it is supposed to do, and can realistically achieve. Coronavirus hits everybody: because it is a symmetric crisis, there will be no clear winners or losers. The four main global players (the United States, China, Russia, and the European Union) will all emerge internally shaken and economically weakened but will manage to recover.

ECDPM (European Center for Development Policy Management)

Paper: The integration of climate change and circular economy in foreign policies

Tackling climate change and transitioning to a circular economy is not something a single country can do on its own. It is therefore key to integrate climate change and circular economy considerations in foreign policies.

Blog: COVID-19 in Africa: Driver of conflict, or too early to tell?

COVID-19 has caused disruptions across the globe on a scale not previously imagined. This brief looks at the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis for conflict-affected areas in Africa, as well as measures taken against the pandemic, which are likely to be even more profound and far-reaching. But as the virus continues to spread, the impact of COVID-19 on ongoing conflicts is still uncertain.

Blog: Following the money: Why a COVID-19 marker might not help

The EU is putting forward the idea of a COVID-19 marker on aid data to track the unprecedented mobilisation of resources to tackle the crisis globally. Rather than such a marker, the EU should consider supporting more sustainable and technologically savvy approaches to ensure much needed transparency and accountability.

ETTG (European Think Tanks Group)

Blog: The role of Public Development Banks in supporting the post-COVID-19 crisis recovery in emerging and developing countries

There is not a 'one-size-fits-all' solution to respond and recover from the current global health emergency and economic fallout resulting from COVID-19. A combination of pragmatic solutions is needed to face the debt issue and give countries room to make the policy choices and investments that will also lay foundations to recover, putting people and nature at the heart of economic growth and development.

Blog: The China-Africa summit on COVID-19: Geopolitical and economic considerations

While the EU weeps over the slow progress in the preparation of the EU-Africa Summit in October – partly slowed down by the COVID-19 pandemic – China and African leaders held an 'Extraordinary China-Africa Summit on Solidarity Against COVID-19' last week. Thirteen African leaders took part in this virtual event, including South Africa's President and African Union Chairperson, Cyril Ramaphosa, and Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chair of the African Union Commission.

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