

## The EU's global response to coronavirus

The magnitude of the potential impact of the coronavirus pandemic is still unknown. But it is already clear that developed countries are being severely challenged by the crisis, and that many health-care systems around the world are under-resourced for dealing with a problem of this magnitude. The effects around the world in a wide range of linked areas – economy, political stability, security, human rights – are gradually surfacing as the pandemic spreads, and are likely to affect the global geopolitical balance. Against this backdrop, the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the Commission, Josep Borrell, have set out the EU's global response to the pandemic. Council and Commission statements on the EU's coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences are scheduled for the European Parliament's plenary session on 16-17 April 2020.

### Background

The scale of the impact of the evolving crises related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is still not knowable, but it is already evident that this [major shock](#) to economies and societies across the world will have dire global consequences now and in the future. At the same time, the crises are accelerating underlying geopolitical rifts and weaknesses, and could potentially lead to a shift in the global [balance of power](#). One symptom of the exacerbated global power struggle in the shadow of the health crisis is the combination of disinformation campaigns and heavily promoted health diplomacy, by Beijing in particular, capitalising on EU Member States' preoccupation with the crisis in their own countries, as well as Washington's [disorganised response](#), which has diverted from the leading role it traditionally plays during international crises, such as the 2014 Ebola crisis. The influence campaigns have prompted the High Representative / Vice-President of the Commission (HR/VP) to caution against the ongoing '[global battle of narratives](#)'.

### The EU boosts its global action

Against this backdrop, the EU is stepping up its global action in response to the evolving crises, focusing on the most vulnerable countries across the world. On 8 April 2020, the European Commission and the HR/VP [presented](#) plans for a strong and targeted EU response to help partner countries cope with the pandemic, as outlined in the [joint communication](#) on a global response to fight the pandemic. The collective 'Team Europe' package focuses on addressing the pressing health crisis and humanitarian needs, bolstering partner countries' health, water and sanitation systems as well as their research and preparedness capacities to deal with the pandemic, and mitigating the wider impact on societies and economies. This will help reduce the risk of destabilisation.

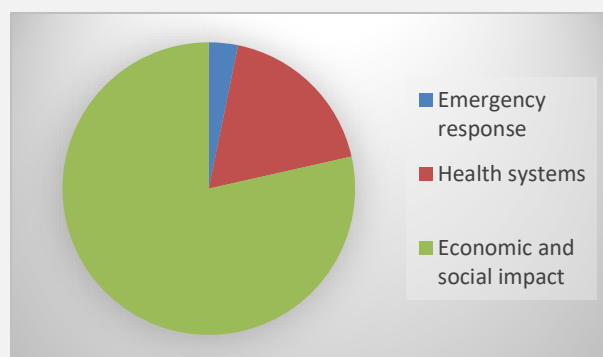
### The COVID-19 response package

Of the pledged [package](#) of €15.6 billion, €3.25 billion will go to Africa, including €2.06 billion for sub-Saharan Africa and €1.19 billion for the Northern African neighbourhood countries.

The EU is allocating in total €3.07 billion for the whole neighbourhood: €2.1 billion for the south, and €962 million for the Eastern Partnership countries. In addition, €800 million will go to the western Balkans and Turkey.

The overall package entails another €1.42 billion in guarantees for Africa and the neighbourhood from the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD).

The EU will support Asia and the Pacific with €1.22 billion. Another €291 million will go to the Africa, Caribbean and Pacific region, €918 million to support our partners in Latin America and the Caribbean, and €111 million to support Overseas Countries and Territories.



In terms of thematic division of the funds, €502 million go to supporting the short-term emergency responses; €2.9 billion to supporting research, health and water systems in partner countries and €12.3 billion to addressing the economic and social consequences.

Source: [European Commission](#).

As a global actor and the world's leading international [aid donor](#), the EU supports and promotes a coordinated multilateral response, together with the United Nations (UN), international financial institutions (IFIs), as well as the G7 and the G20. The EU's global response to the COVID-19 pandemic integrates its strategic objectives vis-à-vis environment and climate, in line with the [European Green Deal](#) and the [Digital Agenda](#).

The 'Team Europe'-approach combines resources from the EU, its Member States and financial institutions, not least the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The Commission and the [EIB](#) have already pledged more than €15.6 billion from existing programmes. The package will help the most vulnerable countries in Africa, the EU's neighbourhood, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America and the Caribbean. The first packages are already being implemented in the neighbourhood and in the western Balkans (see below). Consistent with the Union's fundamental values, core interests and [global strategy](#), the joint communication underlines the EU's continued commitment to promoting and upholding good governance, human rights, the rule of law, gender equality and non-discrimination, decent work conditions, as well as fundamental values and humanitarian principles. The communication specifically reiterates that the 'special and extraordinary measures required to contain the pandemic must not lead to backtracking on the fundamental values and principles of our open and democratic societies', and that the EU's action will be fact-based and fight any attempts of disinformation inside and outside the EU.

### The four pillars of the 'Team Europe' approach

The strategy for Europe's external response to the global coronavirus crisis rests on four pillars:

**Team Europe priorities:** (i) emergency response to the immediate health crisis and humanitarian needs; (ii) boosting health, water and sanitation systems, as well as the partner countries' research capacities to address the pandemic; and (iii) tackle the immediate socio-economic impact.

**Team Europe packages:** coordination with implementing partners – such as the EIB, the EBRD and European development finance institutions, Member States' development agencies and technical assistance providers, as well as IFIs – to create a coherent package for each country.

**Team Europe for Global Preparedness:** support for the [Global Preparedness Monitoring Board](#), which has set the global fundraising goal at €7.5 billion.

**Team Europe for global coordination and multilateralism:** as a major international aid donor, the EU will promote and lead a coordinated global response, together with the G7, the G20 and the UN. The EU and its Member States' contribution will be presented at country, regional and global level, in particular the G7, G20 and the UN-led international response, to boost the visibility of EU support to partner countries.

#### Examples of the EU's COVID-19-related support in partner countries

The EU provides over €100 million for [immediate health needs](#), mostly through the World Health Organization (WHO) and UN agencies. This covers countries most in need in Africa, Latin America and Asia. It also includes €30 million for Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine and €38 million for the western Balkans.

Examples include: Albania: 5 fully equipped ambulances, respirators, digital mobile x-rays and intensive care equipment; Bosnia and Herzegovina: 7 500 test kits and personal protective equipment (PPE); Kosovo: 30 respirators, 5 fully equipped ambulances and 400 hospital beds; Montenegro: 100 respirators, 10 mobile X-ray devices and PPE.; North Macedonia: 20 respirators, 5 000 testing sets and PPE. The EU also funded 5 flights of cargo planes to transport 280 tonnes of emergency medical supplies procured by Serbia.

Under the Facility for Refugees in Turkey, €90 million helps fund health infrastructure and equipment.

The EU has mobilised €10 million for Ethiopia's Preparedness and Response Plan to the COVID-19 outbreak to increase the number of treatment centres, labs with COVID-19 diagnostic equipment and test kits. In Nigeria, the EU contributes €50 million for the implementation of the UN Response Plan to COVID-19. In Sudan, €10 million will increase access to clean water and hygiene and boost awareness about the virus.

In Venezuela and the region, the EU is providing €9 million to the Pan-American Health Organization and the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent to help prepare the response to COVID-19.

In the Caribbean, the EU is contributing €8 million in regional support to the Caribbean Public Health Agency to cover the countries' most urgent needs regarding outbreak control operations.

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