

# Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative

On 13 March 2020, the European Commission adopted a legislative proposal to amend the regulations on the European structural and investment funds, to enable Member States to promote investments in healthcare systems and other sectors of the economy. This proposal aims to help Member States to address the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic. The proposal is due to be voted during the extraordinary plenary session being held on 26 March to enable the adoption of this and two other specific measures.

## Background

Since the start of the coronavirus outbreak, the Commission has put forward a range of measures to assist EU citizens and mitigate the socio-economic impact of this crisis in the European Union. One of the [legislative proposals](#) concerns the [Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative](#) (CRII), mobilising the EU budget to complement Member States' efforts, ensuring a total of €37 billion for investment.

## European Commission proposal

The Commission [proposes](#) to amend three regulations: the [Common Provisions Regulation](#), and those on the [European Regional Development Fund](#) (ERDF) and the [European Maritime and Fisheries Fund](#) (EMFF). The aim is to mobilise available cohesion policy funds and redirect them towards the financing of the most urgent needs: healthcare expenditure, support to SMEs and short-term work measures.

The Commission proposes that coronavirus-related expenditure, made eligible as of 1 February 2020, should cover three priority areas, reinforcing crisis-response capacities:

- Coronavirus-related health expenditure within a Member State, for instance, hospital equipment, ventilators and masks;
- Support to SMEs' working capital;
- Support to national short-term employment schemes.

The EU Member States received advance pre-financing payments in 2019. With the modification under the proposal, the unused pre-financing (€8 billion) will not be called back by the Commission and Member States will be able to use this amount to address the coronavirus crisis, in the form of national co-financing that they would normally have had to provide themselves. The proposal, resulting in the frontloading of payments, would thus enable immediate promotion of investments under the structural funds through this existing liquidity of €8 billion. This amount, supplemented with €29 billion of structural funding across the EU, would bring the total investment up to €37 billion.

The Commission proposes to adapt, where necessary, the [national operational programmes](#) at a later stage, and invites the Member States to use the possibilities to speed up the declaration of expenditure provided for under Article 67 of the Common Provisions Regulation.

## European Parliament position

Under the current unprecedented circumstances, Parliament will treat this proposal under urgent procedure, with the REGI committee referring it without a report or amendments to be voted directly by plenary ([Rule 163](#) of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament). The [Regional Development Committee](#) (REGI) highlighted the importance of speeding up the legislative process so that funds can be channelled as soon as possible. The Member States' ambassadors in Coreper [approved](#) the proposal without amendment on 18 March. Parliament is [expected](#) to vote on the proposal, by e-mail exceptionally, during the 26 March plenary session.

First reading without committee report (Rule 163): [2020/0043COD](#); Committee responsible: REGI.

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PE 649.346 – March 2020



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