



**2020/2118(INI)**

2.12.2020

# **DRAFT REPORT**

on the role of the EU's development cooperation and humanitarian assistance in addressing the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic  
(2020/2118(INI))

Committee on Development

Rapporteurs: Hiltrud Bentele, Norbert Neuser

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION.....	3
EXPLANATORY STATEMENT .....	9

## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

### **on the role of the EU's development cooperation and humanitarian assistance in addressing the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic (2020/2118(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the statement of the World Health Organization (WHO) of 30 January 2020 declaring COVID-19 a public health emergency of international concern,
- having regard to the opening remarks of the WHO Director-General at the media briefing on COVID-19 of 11 March 2020, declaring COVID-19 a pandemic,
- having regard to the United Nations (UN) report of March 2020 entitled ‘Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19’,
- having regard to the joint statement of the World Bank Group and the IMF of 25 March 2020 regarding a call to action on debt of International Development Association (IDA) countries and the communiqué of the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors of 15 April 2020 announcing a time-bound suspension of debt service payments for the poorest countries that request forbearance,
- having regard to UN General Assembly Resolution 74/270 of 2 April 2020 on global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19),
- having regard to UN General Assembly Resolution 74/274 of 20 April 2020 on international cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19,
- having regard to the joint communication of the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 8 April 2020 on the Global EU response to Covid-19 (JOIN(2020)0011),
- having regard to the international pledging conference hosted by the EU together with the WHO and other partners on 4 May 2020, which raised EUR 7.4 billion in initial funding to kick-start global research cooperation,
- having regard to the Commission proposal of 28 May 2020 for a Council regulation establishing a European Union Recovery Instrument to support the recovery in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic (COM(2020)0441), which proposed allocating up to EUR 5 billion at 2018 prices for humanitarian aid outside the Union,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 8 June 2020 on the ‘Team Europe’ global response to COVID-19,
- having regard to the proposal contained in the Council’s draft conclusions of 10 July 2020 (9415/20) to provide EUR 5 billion for humanitarian assistance via the

Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) within the framework of Next Generation EU,

- having regard to the Council’s proposal contained in the draft conclusions of 10 July 2020 (9415/20) that clear criteria and modalities for the allocation of the new Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve (SEAR) envelope be defined,
  - having regard to the Food and Agriculture Organization’s (FAO) component of the Global COVID-19 humanitarian response plan 2020, entitled ‘Addressing the impacts of COVID-19 in food crises, April-December 2020’,
  - having regard to the report of the World Food Programme (WFP) of 29 September 2020 entitled ‘WFP Global Response to COVID-19’,
  - having regard to the WFP Global Report on Food Crises 2020,
  - having regard to the WHO Global Tuberculosis Report 2020,
  - having regard to the recommendations of 5 May 2004 from the WHO consultation on zoonoses,
  - having regard to the WHO’s International Health Regulations (IHR) of 2005,
  - having regard to the New European Consensus on Development of 2017, entitled ‘our world, our dignity, our future’,
  - having regard to its resolution of 27 October 2015 on the Ebola crisis: the long-term lessons and how to strengthen health systems in developing countries to prevent future crises<sup>1</sup>,
  - having regard to its resolution of 17 April 2020 on EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences<sup>2</sup>,
  - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on Culture and Education,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Development (A9-0000/2020),
- A. whereas humanitarian aid is severely underfunded, which makes it difficult to adequately address the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in developing countries;
- B. whereas there is a disproportionately high risk of contagion for millions of refugees worldwide, who often live in densely populated refugee camps;
- C. whereas the COVID-19 pandemic has greatly exacerbated the existing debt problems of developing countries;

---

<sup>1</sup> OJ C 355, 20.10.2017, p. 2.

<sup>2</sup> Texts adopted P9\_TA(2020)0054.

- D. whereas school closures due to the pandemic have deprived vulnerable children of school feeding and nutrition services that are essential to their health;
- E. whereas improved coordination is needed of international efforts to promote an efficient and resilient humanitarian-development-peace nexus;

#### *Team Europe approach*

- 1. Welcomes the EU's global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, which demonstrates its ambition to lead and show solidarity with all partner countries; points out, however, that current funds are essentially reallocated from other budget lines and that the challenge of aid front-loading has to be tackled; calls, therefore, for substantial new funds to be mobilised to assist developing countries worldwide in fighting the direct and indirect consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic; stresses that making safe vaccines available globally in a fast and affordable manner must be one of the first steps;
- 2. Insists that the momentum gained from the common Team Europe approach in terms of joint analysis, joint programming and joint implementation must translate into a new standard for cooperation in the fields of humanitarian aid and development policy, both in law and in practice;

#### *Humanitarian aid funding*

- 3. Is deeply concerned about the underfunding of the EU humanitarian aid budget, given the additional humanitarian needs caused by the pandemic; calls for a clear distribution of the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve (SEAR) envelope, which should aim to provide balanced coverage of its obligations as follows: neither internal nor external operations may be allocated more than 60 % of the annual amount of the reserve; on 1 October of each year, at least one quarter of the annual amount for 'year n' must remain available to cover needs arising until the end of that year; as of 1 October, the remaining funds may be mobilised to cover needs arising until the end of that year;

#### *Food security*

- 4. Underlines that pastoral farming is an ecologically sound, local method of food production and is therefore part of a sustainable food system; considers it essential to support pastoralists by ensuring safe access to local markets during the pandemic in order to make sure that they are able to continue to provide protein-rich food to the local population, that their herds have access to water and grazing land and that mobile community one-health teams monitor the situation and carry out interventions in individual cases but also, where necessary, with a view to maintaining public health; calls for cash transfers and food aid for pastoralists, as well as feed aid for herds, as part of livelihood support in humanitarian aid, when this is needed;
- 5. Emphasises the need to support the actions of the FAO and the WFP aimed at mitigating hunger and loss of livelihood and building up resilient food systems, such as those to set up a global data facility for the provision of swift information on humanitarian needs, to provide food production assistance and access to food, to organise cash transfers and in-kind food distribution, to stabilise food systems, and to ensure the functioning of local food markets, value chains and systems while focusing

on smallholder farmers by implementing sanitary measures in order to prevent the transmission of COVID-19;

### ***Poverty / social protection***

6. Underlines that global extreme poverty is expected to rise dramatically in 2020 for the first time in over 20 years, with the COVID-19 pandemic compounding the forces of conflict and climate change and having a particularly hard impact on informal and migrant workers (who represent one quarter of the global workforce), the tourism sector and Latin American and Caribbean economies; highlights, against the backdrop of this extreme crisis, the importance of universal social protection; asks the Commission to work out strategies with partner countries for the economic recovery and job creation and for improving social security systems;

### ***Refugees***

7. Urges the Commission to address the specific needs of refugees, upholding the guiding principle of public health networks of leaving no-one behind and refraining from blocking front-line humanitarian workers from having direct contact with the migrants and refugees they serve; stresses the absolute need for equal access to COVID-19 treatment and other health services and safety net programmes for all affected people, regardless of nationality, migrant/refugee status, origin, sex, gender identity or any other characteristic;

### ***Strengthening the health sector***

8. Calls for the revision of proposed or existing strategies with the aim of further strengthening health systems in partner countries, in particular as regards preparedness for pandemics and the organisation and management of health systems, including the provision of universal healthcare, health monitoring and information, training of medical staff, diagnostic capacity and medicine supply;
9. Stresses the need to catch up on routine immunisation programmes as soon as possible and to provide adequate funding for initiatives such as Gavi, the vaccine Alliance, and CEPI, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations; calls on the Commission to ensure that the EU global response to the COVID-19 pandemic does not undermine EU funding for other vital health programmes, including the Minimum Initial Services Package for sexual and reproductive health and programmes targeting the health of women and pregnant women; urges all countries and the Commission to continue to provide services related to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) as well as routine immunisation services, while ensuring the safety of communities and health workers;
10. Supports the important work of the WHO and points out its central role as the leading and coordinating authority on the COVID-19 response, while recognising the need for its reform after the acute crisis has been managed;

### ***Human rights and democracy***

11. Highlights the especially severe consequences of COVID-19 lockdowns and the

collateral damage that has been suffered by women, girls and children, in particular the rise in gender-based violence, but also the exposure of women to COVID-19 due to their disproportionately high representation in the global health workforce; calls for action to counterbalance the disproportionate care burden borne by women and any potential roll-backs in safety, health, emancipation, economic independence and empowerment, and education, through specific programmes such as the spotlight initiative and by re-focusing European support; calls for meaningful participation of women in the decisions that impact their health and working lives; underlines the need to include the gender perspective in the EU's COVID-19 response, to advocate for inclusive decision-making bodies and collect sex- and age-disaggregated data for gender analysis;

12. Is concerned that, since the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, many governments have used the emergency to justify placing restrictions on democratic processes and the civil space and to oppress minorities; draws attention to the growing negative impact of COVID-19 on all human rights, democracy and the rule of law and calls, therefore, for the strengthening of aid, political dialogue and support for institution-building in all these fields, with particular attention to human rights defenders;

### ***Debt service and sound budgets***

13. Welcomes the temporary suspension of debt service payments for the poorest countries announced by the G20 and joins the call on private creditors to follow suit; underlines that the magnitude of the economic and social crisis in the developing world requires more profound and far-reaching measures and encourages the Commission to support international efforts in this regard; considers that interest saved thanks to this suspension should instead be invested in the health sector, which is often severely underfunded in developing countries;
14. Points out that the budgets of many developing countries were already out of balance before the crisis and that too little funding was allocated to crisis prevention, health systems and social protection; calls on the Commission to take new initiatives to tackle the problems of illicit financial flows, tax evasion and tax fraud in order to improve the tax bases of developing countries; calls, furthermore, for budget support to be directed towards basic services and resilience;

### ***Education***

15. Underlines the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic has led to unprecedented numbers of pupils missing out on months of schooling, constituting a major set-back to efforts in the education sector especially with regard to girls' and women's education; urges governments to use school closures only as a measure of last resort in the fight against the pandemic; presses for education to be kept as a spending priority in EU development policy and for due consideration to be given to the social function of schools; urges governments, in this context, to prioritise support for the most marginalised children and their families; recommends that EU countries share their approaches to keeping up teaching even in times of crisis and asks the EU and its Member States to exploit the potential of remote and digital learning in their international support programmes;

### ***Resilience***

16. Underlines the importance of assisting and exchanging best practice with partner countries in identifying vulnerabilities, building up prevention and crisis response mechanisms as well as protecting critical infrastructure in order better to deal with future systemic shocks of all kinds;
17. Points out that pandemics are often of zoonotic origin; underlines, therefore, the need to support education programmes regarding the dangers of hunting and trading in wild animals as well as the stricter protection of ecosystems and habitats;
18. Points out that, even in times of crisis, food production and distribution must be an absolute priority; considers that dependence on external sources of food, plants, seeds and fertilisers should be reduced, while local and diversified agricultural production should be increased, and knowledge about new, old and more resilient seeds shared;

#### ***Humanitarian-development-peace nexus***

19. Underlines that implementation of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus has to be a priority in the programming of the NDICI in fragile countries; calls on the Commission's DG ECHO and DG DEVCO to implement complementary programmes suited to local contexts and local opportunities, whenever possible, in order to mutually reinforce the different aspects of the nexus;
20. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the President of the European Council, the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the governments and parliaments of the African Union countries, the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the World Health Organization;



## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT