

**Question for written answer E-002169/2020
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Call for clarification from the Commission on the resignation of the director of the European Research Council, aggrieved by the lack of response to Coronavirus

The Financial Times and some Italian newspapers have reported the news that Professor Mauro Ferrari apparently resigned as President of the European Research Council (ERC) on the grounds that he was extremely disappointed by the European response to COVID-19.

Professor Ferrari allegedly complained about the complete absence of coordination of healthcare policies among Member States and the recurrent opposition to financial support initiatives.

Professor Ferrari had proposed setting up a special ERC programme to combat COVID-19; however, the idea he presented to the Commission was rejected. The ERC, set up in 2007 to fund European scientists, has a budget of around EUR 2 billion a year.

In the light of the above:

1. Can the Commission shed light on this affair?
2. Can it explain in detail the reasons why Professor Ferrari's proposal was not accepted?
3. Can it describe its plan to counter the spread of Coronavirus?