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Answer given by Mr Breton  
on behalf of the European Commission  
(4.8.2020)

Following the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Commission adopted a number of targeted measures to support increasing production and availability of essential medical devices and personal protective equipment. This includes making applicable harmonised standards freely available, and the adoption of Commission Recommendation (EU) 2020/403 on the conformity assessment and market surveillance procedures on 13 March 2020<sup>1</sup>.

Through weekly phone calls with industry representatives, Commissioners for Health and Food Safety and for Internal Market and their services monitored problems with supply of medicines and medical and protective equipment and their key ingredients and components.

In addition, on 17 April 2020, the Council approved the Commission's proposal for a Council Regulation activating the emergency support under Council Regulation (EU) 2016/369. The Emergency Support Instrument ('ESI') will help Member States in their efforts to address the coronavirus pandemic, mitigate its immediate consequences and anticipate the needs related to the exit and recovery.

The crisis has also revealed a number of areas where Europe needs to be more resilient, for example in the area of pharmaceuticals. The issue of security of supply of pharmaceuticals, as well as medicines shortages will be addressed in the forthcoming pharmaceutical strategy.

Finally, in order to support companies whose activities are of strategic importance for the EU, the Commission has proposed a new InvestEU Programme including a strategic investment window. InvestEU will mobilise public and private investment in focus areas such as critical healthcare provision, manufacturing and stockpiling of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and medical supplies or key enabling technologies such as biomedicine or pharmaceuticals<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Commission Recommendation (EU) 2020/403 of 13 March 2020 on conformity assessment and market surveillance procedures within the context of the COVID-19 threat, *OJL 79I*, 16.3.2020, p. 1–5, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32020H0403>

<sup>2</sup> COM (2020) 403 final