

**Question for oral answer O-000033/2020**  
**to the Council**  
Rule 136  
**Marco Campomenosi**  
on behalf of the ID Group

**Subject:** Conduct of the World Health Organisation (WHO) during the COVID-19 epidemic

The conduct of the WHO during the COVID-19 epidemic is increasingly the subject of dispute because of: its initial underestimation (e.g. of the disease's infectiousness); its ill-timed measures (e.g. declaration of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern – PHEIC – and, subsequently, of a pandemic); its contradictory guidelines (e.g. on the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)); its particular compliance with regard to the actions of the Chinese Government, in spite of the latter's responsibility in spreading the infection – even when China clumsily tried to blame others for it, namely an EU Member State: Italy.

In particular, the WHO is being criticised for having failed to promptly verify China's provision of information regarding the origin and development of the infection, contributing to growing global delays when it came to taking measures to curb it. Furthermore, it should be noted that Taiwan, with the exception of the brief interval between 2009 and 2016, is still being excluded from the WHO's work and flow of information, and that this isolation is difficult to deal with during a pandemic.

In actual fact, the WHO crisis, in terms of the organisation's effectiveness, transparency and credibility, goes back a long way. In 2010 it admitted its shortcomings in the management of H1N1 influenza, in a spirit of excessive scaremongering which led to the accumulation of unused vaccines, leading to suspicions about its opaque connections with some large pharmaceutical companies. In 2015 it admitted its shameful delays when it came to tackling the Ebola epidemic which had broken out the year before in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Moreover, there are doubts as to whether the current WHO director-general, Tedros Adhanom Gebreyesus, is fit to hold that office. As Ethiopian minister of health, he was criticised for his management of three cholera epidemics during his term of office (2005-2012); in addition, the special political and economic relationship he established with China during his time in Ethiopian governments (2005-2016) casts a dark shadow over the impartiality of his actions.

1. What measures will the Council take, where appropriate, in respect of the WHO and on behalf of the governments of the Member States, to claim damages on behalf of those Member States in the wake of the culpable shortcomings of that organisation?
2. In the Council's view, could there be a case for calling for, on behalf of the governments of the Member States, the immediate resignation of Mr Adhanom Gebreyesus?

Submitted: 27/04/2020

Lapses: 28/07/2020