

COVID-19: MEPs call for massive recovery package and Coronavirus Solidarity Fund



Some MEPs participated remotely in the special plenary debate on EU response to COVID-19 in the Brussels chamber.

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MEPs want to see a massive recovery package to support the European economy after the COVID-19 crisis, including recovery bonds guaranteed by the EU budget.

- A joint European response to COVID-19 is crucial, also post-lockdown
- Economic reform should include “recovery bonds”, guaranteed by the EU budget
- Call for EU Coronavirus Solidarity Fund of at least EUR 50 billion
- MEPs deeply critical of latest political developments in Hungary and Poland

In a resolution adopted on Friday, Parliament welcomes the EU’s fiscal measures and liquidity support to address the pandemic. Beyond what is already being done, Europe needs a massive recovery and reconstruction package to be financed by an increased long-term budget (MFF), existing EU funds and financial instruments, as well as “recovery bonds” guaranteed by the EU budget, MEPs say. It should not, however, involve the mutualisation of existing debt, but focus on future investment. The European Green Deal and the digital transformation should be at its core in order to kick-start the economy, MEPs stress.

EU Coronavirus Solidarity Fund

MEPs also call for a permanent European Unemployment Reinsurance Scheme and want to establish an EU Coronavirus Solidarity Fund of at least EUR 50 billion. This fund would support the financial efforts undertaken by the healthcare sectors in all member states during the current crisis, as well as future investments in order to make healthcare systems more resilient and focused on those most in need.

Greater powers for EU to act in the case of cross-border health threats

Joint European action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic is indispensable, the resolution states. Not only must the European Union emerge stronger from this crisis, its institutions should also be empowered to act when cross-border health threats arise. This would enable them to coordinate the response at European level without delay, and direct the necessary resources to where they are most needed, be they material like face masks, respirators and medicines or financial aid.

MEPs also voice their support for increasing EU production of key products such as medicines, pharmaceutical ingredients, medical devices, equipment and materials, to be better prepared for future global shocks.

Borders must be kept open for essential goods

They insist that borders within the EU must be kept open to ensure that medicines and protective equipment, medical devices, food and essential goods can circulate. The EU’s single market is the source of “our collective prosperity” and key to the immediate and continuous response to COVID-19, MEPs stress.

Parliament also calls for the creation of a European Health Response Mechanism, to ensure a better response to any type of health or sanitary crisis in the future. Common equipment, material and medicine stocks could be quickly mobilised to save lives. MEPs also want to see additional EU funding to finance speedy research to find a vaccine.

Coordinated post-lockdown approach needed

MEPs further underline the need for a coordinated post-lockdown approach in the EU, in order to avoid a resurgence of the virus. They urge EU countries to jointly develop criteria for lifting the quarantine and other emergency measures, and ask the European Commission to launch an effective exit strategy that includes largescale testing and personal protective equipment for the largest possible number of citizens.

State of rule of law and democracy in COVID-19 Europe: Hungary, Poland

MEPs also voice strong concerns regarding steps taken by the Hungarian government to prolong the country's state of emergency indefinitely, to rule by decree without a time limit and to weaken the parliamentary emergency oversight. Furthermore, they highlight that the Polish government's decision to change the electoral code is unlawful and consider holding presidential elections in the middle of a pandemic to be totally incompatible with European values.

They call on the European Commission to urgently assess whether the emergency measures taken are in line with the EU Treaties, and to make use of all available EU tools and sanctions to address this serious and persistent breach, including budgetary ones. The Council shall put the discussions and procedures related to the ongoing Article 7 procedures against Poland and Hungary back on its agenda.

European information source to counter disinformation

Finally, the resolution stresses that disinformation about COVID-19 is a major public health problem. The EU should therefore establish a European information source to ensure that all citizens have access to accurate and verified information. MEPs also call on social media companies to proactively take the necessary measures to stop disinformation and hate speech related to the coronavirus.

The text was adopted by 395 votes in favour, 171 against with 128 abstentions.

Watch live replays from Thursday's debate

Click on the names of individual speakers to view their statements

[Opening statement President Sassoli](#)

[Ursula von der Leyen](#), President of the European Commission

[Charles Michel](#), President of the European Council

[Esteban González Pons](#) (EPP, ES)

[Iratxe García Pérez](#) (S&D, ES)

[Dacian Cioloș](#) (Renew, RO)

[Marco Campomenosi](#) (ID, IT)

[Philippe Lamberts](#) (Greens/EFA, BE)

[Raffaele Fitto](#) (ECR, IT)

[Manon Aubry](#) (GUE/NGL, FR)

[Maroš Šefčovič](#), Vice-President European Commission

Further information

[Adopted text will be available here \(17.04.2020\)](#)

[EU coordinated action to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences - Statement by EP President David Sassoli](#)

[Watch a video recording of the plenary debate with Ursula von der Leyen and Charles Michel \(16.04.2020\)](#)

[MEPs to call from strong cooperation and solidarity to overcome covid-19](#)

[Q&A on extraordinary remote participation procedure](#)

[EP Research - Novel Coronavirus Outbreak State of Play, and the EU's Public Health Response](#)

[The EU's response to the coronavirus](#)
[European Commission: Coronavirus response](#)

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