



Coronavirus: the Commission mobilises all of its resources to protect lives and livelihoods

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Saving lives and supporting livelihoods in these times of acute crisis is paramount. The Commission is further increasing its response by proposing to set up a €100 billion solidarity instrument to help workers keep their incomes and help businesses stay afloat, called SURE. It is also proposing to redirect all available structural funds to the response to the coronavirus.

Farmers and fishermen will also receive support, as will the most deprived. All of these measures are based on the current EU budget and will squeeze out every available euro. They show the need for a strong and flexible long-term EU budget. The Commission will work to ensure that the EU can count on such a strong budget to get back on its feet and progress on the path to recovery.

The coronavirus outbreak is testing Europe in ways that would have been unthinkable only a few weeks ago. The depth and the breadth of this crisis requires a response unprecedented in scale, speed and solidarity.

In the past weeks, the Commission has acted to provide Member States with all the flexibility they need to support financially their health care systems, their businesses and workers. It has acted to coordinate, speed up and reinforce the procurement efforts of medical equipment and has directed research funding to the development of a vaccine. It has worked tirelessly to ensure that goods and cross-border workers can continue to move across the EU, to keep hospitals functioning, factories running and shop shelves stocked. It has and continues to support the repatriation of EU citizens, their families and long-term residents to Europe from across the world.

In doing this, the Commission is acting on its conviction that the only effective solution to the crisis in Europe is one based on cooperation, flexibility and, above all, solidarity.

Today's proposals take the response to a new level.

Commenting on the proposals adopted today, President **von der Leyen** said: *"In this coronavirus crisis, only the strongest of responses will do. We must use every means at our disposal. Every available euro in the EU budget will be redirected to address it, every rule will be eased to enable the funding to flow rapidly and effectively. With a new solidarity instrument, we will mobilise €100 billion to keep people in jobs and businesses running. With this, we are joining forces with Member States to save lives and protect livelihoods. This is European solidarity."*

€100 billion to keep people in jobs and businesses running: the SURE initiative

We need to cushion the economic blow in order for the EU economy to be ready to restart when the conditions are right. To achieve this, we must keep people in employment and businesses running. All Member States have or will soon have short-time work schemes to help achieve this.

SURE is the Commission's answer to this: a new instrument that will provide up to €100 billion in loans to countries that need it to ensure that workers receive an income and businesses keep their staff. This allows people to continue to pay their rent, bills and food shopping and helps provide much needed stability to the economy.

The loans will be based on guarantees provided by Member States and will be directed to where they are most urgently needed. All Member States will be able to make use of this but it will be of particular importance to the hardest-hit.

SURE will support short-time work schemes and similar measures to help Member States protect jobs, employees and self-employed against the risk of dismissal and loss of income. Firms will be able to temporarily reduce the hours of employees or suspend work altogether, with income support provided by the State for the hours not worked. The self-employed will receive income replacement for the current emergency.

- Delivering for the most deprived – the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived

As most of Europe practices social distancing to slow the spread of the virus, it is all the more

important that those who rely on others for the most basic of needs are not cut off from help. The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived will evolve to meet the challenge: in particular, the use of electronic vouchers to reduce the risk of contamination will be introduced, as well as the possibility of buying protective equipment for those delivering the aid.

- Supporting fishermen and farmers

Europe's farming and fisheries have an essential role in providing us with the food we eat. They are hard hit by the crisis, in turn hitting our food supply chains and the local economies that the sector sustains.

As with the structural funds, the use of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund will be made more flexible. Member States will be able to provide support:

- to fishermen for the temporary cessation of fishing activities;
- to aquaculture farmers for the temporary suspension or reduction of production and provide support;
- and to producer organisations for the temporary storage of fishery and aquaculture products.

The Commission will also shortly propose a range of measures to ensure that farmers and other beneficiaries can get the support they need from the Common Agricultural Policy, for example by granting more time to introduce applications for support and more time to allow administrations to process them, increasing advances for direct payments and rural development payments, and offering additional flexibility for on-the-spot checks to minimise the need for physical contact and reduce administrative burden.

Protecting our economy and people with all available means

- Redirecting all Cohesion Policy funds to fight the emergency

All uncommitted money from the three Cohesion Policy funds – the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund - will be mobilised to address the effects of the public health crisis.

To make sure that funds can be re-directed to where they are most urgently needed, transfers between funds as well as between categories of regions and between policy objectives will be made possible. Moreover, co-financing requirements will be abandoned, as Member States are already using all their means to fight the crisis. Administration will be simplified.

- The Emergency Support Instrument

The European Union has not faced a health crisis in its history on this scale or spreading at this speed. In response, the first priority is to save lives and to meet the needs of our health care systems and professionals who are working miracles every day right across our Union.

The Commission is working hard to ensure the supply of protective gear and respiratory equipment. Despite the strong production efforts of industry, Member States still face severe shortages of protective gear and respiratory equipment in some areas. They also lack sufficient treatment facilities and would benefit from being able to move patients to areas with more resources and dispatch medical staff to hardest-hit places. Support will also be needed for mass testing, for medical research, deploying new treatments, and for producing, purchasing and distributing vaccines across the EU.

The EU is today proposing to use all available remaining funds from this year's EU budget to help to respond to the needs of European health systems.

€3 billion will be put into the Emergency Support Instrument, of which €300 million will be allocated to RescEU to support the common stockpile of equipment. The first priority would be managing the public health crisis and securing vital equipment and supplies, from ventilators to personal protective gear, from mobile medical teams to medical assistance for the most vulnerable, including those in refugee camps. The second area of focus would be on enabling the scaling up of testing efforts. The proposal would also enable the Commission to procure directly on behalf of the Member States.

More to come

As the situation continues to evolve, the Commission will come forward with more proposals and will work with the other EU institutions to move forward as quickly as possible.

For more information

[Questions and answers: Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus: New actions to mobilise essential investments and resources](#)

[Questions and answers: Commission proposes SURE, a new temporary instrument worth up to €100 billion to help protect jobs and people at work](#)

[Questions and answers: European Union Emergency Support Instrument for the healthcare sector](#)

Factsheet: [EU response to the coronavirus - latest updates](#)

Factsheet: [the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative](#)

Factsheet: [Coronavirus response: Support to the fishery and aquaculture sectors](#)

Factsheet: [Supporting Member States to help protect people in work and jobs - SURE](#)

Legal texts are available on the Commission's [coronavirus response website](#)

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Press contacts:

[Eric MAMER](#) (+32 2 299 40 73)

[Dana SPINANT](#) (+32 2 299 01 50)

[Balazs UJVARI](#) (+32 2 295 45 78)

[Vivian LOONELA](#) (+32 2 296 67 12)

[Marta WIECZOREK](#) (+32 2 295 81 97)

General public inquiries: [Europe Direct](#) by phone [00 800 67 89 10 11](#) or by [email](#)

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