

UPDATED NEWS

European Response to COVID-19 Outbreak

Briefing Note, as of 20th April 2020

European Commission Measures

The European Commission is [coordinating a common European response to the outbreak of COVID-19](#). They are taking resolute action to reinforce Europe's public health sectors and mitigate the socio-economic impact in the European Union. They are mobilising all means at their disposal to help our Member States coordinate their national responses and are providing objective information about the spread of the virus and effective efforts to contain it. To date, **measures** include:

- [Ensure supply of personal protective equipment in the EU](#), by creating [rescEU stockpile of medical equipment \(€380 million\)](#) & [regulating the ability of Member States to export such equipment outside of the EU](#) as well as [harmonized standards for medical devices](#).
- Allowing [Member States to have full flexibility in Stability and Growth rules](#), meaning national governments do not have to limit themselves to current public debt rules to allow them to **spend what they need to in order to deal with COVID-19 outbreak**. Furthermore, the Commission temporarily [waive customs duties and VAT on the import of medical devices, and protective equipment, from third countries](#) in order to help in the fight against coronavirus.
- Allow Member States to further aid the economic and social of COVID-19 outbreak, by adopting [Temporary Framework on State Aid](#).
- **Re-directing €37 billion** of unspent EU Structural Funds to national, regional & local communities fighting COVID-19 through [Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus](#), including [European Commission writing to each Member State](#) to recommend targeted support to community-based social care provision (with ESF) (amongst other measures)
- Allowing [EU Solidarity Fund and Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus to be used for Public Health Emergencies](#), and redirecting all [Cohesion Policy funds](#) to fight the emergency
- Financial assistance to help protect jobs and workers affected by the coronavirus pandemic through the [Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency \(SURE\)](#). Moreover, special financial support exists for [Eastern countries](#) and [Western Balkans](#).
- European Commission re-directing [€47.5 million to research actions](#) on Coronavirus and more
- Guidelines for [border management measures](#) to protect health and ensure the availability of goods and essential services, to [ensure the free movement of critical workers](#), and to [facilitate cross-border treatment of patients and deployment of medical staff](#).

The EU is also working on coordinating actions, expertise and know-how to avoid uncoordinated/contradictory responses. This includes the creation of [an advisory panel on COVID-19](#)

to anticipate events and draft guidelines and regular contact between different Member State ministries, including employment and social affairs ministers.

EASPD Measures

[Visit our page dedicated to the COVID-19 outbreak.](#)

For specific actions:

- Joint Letter to the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, to [highlight the main challenges](#) affecting care providers due to COVID-19 Outbreak, as well as to request [supportive measures](#) for the sector.
 - **We welcome that many of our suggested measures are included in the EU response.**
 - **Dialogue is ongoing between the EASPD and the EU institutions.**
- EASPD is also organising regular webinars to help inform about adequate responses to COVID-19 outbreak, with the upcoming webinar on 25th March on “Staffing Continuity in Crucial Care Services”.
- EASPD has created an [online support group for social service providers](#) to facilitate the exchange of promising practices and experiences. Worth a visit to learn more about practical steps taken by service providers across Europe.