Coronavirus: latest updates from the EEAS

We Stand Together against COVID-19

In Europe and in the world, all minds are focused on actions to tackle the outbreak of COVID-19 and mitigate the effects of the crisis. The European Union works on all fronts to support these efforts. We take this opportunity to thank all those who are working tirelessly to contain the pandemic and care for those in need, anywhere in the world.

Latest updates:

European Commission website on common European response to the outbreak of COVID-19

Situation of COVID-19 cases reported within the EU/EEA and the UK (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control)

Situations of COVID-19 cases worldwide (European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control)

Coronavirus: News and Useful Information
Messages from HR/VP Josep Borrell

Message by HRVP Josep Borrell Fontelles following the EU Leaders’ video conference on #COVID19

The European Union is doing everything it can to tackle the #coronavirus crisis and its consequences. It is now that we have to demonstrate what European and global solidarity really means. These unprecedented events call for unprecedented international action.

The Coronavirus pandemic and the new world it is creating

COVID-19 will reshape our world. We don’t yet know when the crisis will end. But we can be sure that by the time it does, our world will look very different. How different will depend on the choices we make today.

Video message by HR/VP Josep Borrell on Coronavirus outbreak

Watch my video message on the outbreak and the EU’s response, including our efforts to coordinate the repatriation of thousands of European stranded abroad.
Consular support & EU actions

Coronavirus: Ideas for weekend and holistay activities

Weekends inside... Easter ‘holidays’ round the corner... Unfortunately, due to the current circumstances many of us had to cancel our planned holidays and activities, to avoid the risks of getting and spreading the virus, and flatten the curve. Call it a ‘staycation’, call it a ‘holistay’, what’s important is to try and make the utmost of your time at home. Amongst others, the EU platform ‘Creative Europe At Home’ offers some suggestions to occupy your days and stay entertained online.

Serbia: Laboratories with EU Equipment Testing for COVID-19

Serbia will be able to test more samples on COVID-19 than before thanks to a system of reference laboratories equipped by the European Union, so epidemiologists in Serbia will be able to control the spread of this dangerous disease more quickly.
Getting European tourists back home from the Philippines

More than 5,000 tourists were present in the country at the moment of the Coronavirus outbreak.

Education: Key to COVID19 Prevention in South Sudan

The European Union has teamed up with the Government of South Sudan, UNICEF, Mott MacDonald, Charlie Goldsmith Associates and Equity Bank to provide information on the risk of COVID-19 and its prevention to school personnel across South Sudan.

Safe return from the Seychelles for all European tourists in need of repatriation

Following the establishment of travel restrictions, international airlines serving the route Europe - Seychelles suspended numerous flights. This has left many European citizens stranded.
Good stories on consular support for EU citizens stranded abroad

High Representative/Vice President Josep Borrell, supported by the EEAS, the Commission and EU Delegations around the world, is leading the work to strengthen coordination among Member States to help EU citizens who are currently stranded outside the EU.

Albania - an example of European solidarity against the coronavirus

On 28 March 2020, Albania sent 30 doctors and nurses to Italy to support its heavily hit neighbour in fighting the coronavirus.

EU action against Coronavirus

Follow updates on the latest coordinated measures to contain the virus and its economic impact inside and outside EU borders.
**EU nationals return safely home from The Gambia**

Lead by the EU delegation in Banjul, an intensive European consular cooperation has taken place in Gambia to help repatriate EU citizens back home.

**EU tourists stranded in the Maldives and Sri Lanka - an example of good cooperation among authorities**

Thousands of European tourists have managed to safely go back home from the Maldives and Sri Lanka, thanks to joint work of the European Union and its member states.

**EU RESPONSE TO COVID-19 IN GEORGIA**

**COVID-19: The EU stands together with Georgia**

In these challenging times, the EU remains Georgia’s strongest partner. This page contains a list of support we are mobilising which is updated regularly. We take this
opportunity to thank all those who are working tirelessly to contain the pandemic and care for those in need, anywhere in the world.

Temporary Restriction on Non-Essential Travel to the EU

16/03/2020: EU Leaders agreed to temporary restriction of non-essential travel from third countries into the EU area for 30 days. Any possible prolongation of this period should be assessed depending on further developments. The temporary travel restriction foresees exemptions for nationals of all EU Member States and Schengen Associated States (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland; whilst UK nationals are still to be treated in the same way as EU citizens until end 2020), for the purposes of returning to their homes. Exceptions are also foreseen for travellers with an essential function or need.

For more information:

- Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council and the Council
- Guidance on the implementation of the temporary restriction on non-essential travel to the EU, on the facilitation of transit arrangements for the repatriation of EU citizens, and on the effects on visa policy
- Updated information on the EU Ministries of Foreign Affairs websites by country

#UnitedInDistance - Stories of solidarity in the time of Coronavirus

During these trying times we give tribute to the many good souls with a big heart, in Europe and across the globe, who are doing their part to help other people and keep the spirits up! These people deserve all the recognition in the world, no matter how big or small their gestures are, because every little deed and act of solidarity is priceless in
times of crisis. These citizens – in Europe and beyond – are the best ambassadors of those values that are at the core of the European Union. With our campaign #UnitedInDistance we are showing only a few examples of this generosity, because we know that there are many people out there who are going out of their way to help others to get through this difficult period, and we salute them too.

**Greece #UnitedInDistance: Research&Development**

This team from the PrivaSI Lab in the University of the Aegean, in Greece, joined forces (and expertise) to help those helping. The researchers are part of the University's Cultural Technology and Communication Department and, in cooperation with HELLAS COVID 3D Supplies, they are contributing with 3D printed masks to equip health workers, acting in the forefront of the current crisis. HELLAS COVID 3D Supplies is a group officially accredited by the Ministry of Health to undertake the printing of any 3D equipment needed during this period.

**Malta #UnitedInDistance: Health Sector**

Jessica is one of Malta's best table-tennis players. Despite her success, Jessica is a very modest girl with a warm smile and a big heart.

When she is not playing table-tennis, she dedicates her life to caring for elderly and sick priests with multiple comorbidities at Dar Tal-Kleru (Clergy Home).

Since the Coronavirus outbreak Jessica dropped everything to go and stay at the home, to ensure 24/7 protection for the residents.
Uzbekistan #UnitedInDistance: Grocery Delivery

Botir Arifdjanov: “After the announcement of quarantine, we witnessed a huge influx of requests of more than 5 times to our website. Of course, we were preparing ourselves for increase, but that much we could not foresee.

The last restriction on transport turned out to be another challenge for us. Pickers in several markets simply disappeared; some due to a lack of the ability to drive to work and some simply did not want to risk.

Portugal #UnitedInDistance: Civil society

Filipe Ribeiro is 23 and he is a student in Porto. Together with other students living in town, he’s pursuing his studies and helping the local community along the way. Impac’tu is a students’ volunteer association, born with the purpose of assisting families and people in need: from legal advice to social support, they offer their knowledge and their solidarity throughout the year.

Like many other associations, Impac’tu had its regular activities suspended due to the COVID 19 health crisis. But that didn’t stop these volunteers from offering their help.
Spain #UnitedInDistance: Police

Yesterday Hugo turned 6, but he couldn’t celebrate his birthday with his parents. Mum & Dad are medical staff at the Gregorio Marañón Hospital in Madrid, frontline battlefield of the Coronavirus outbreak.

France #UnitedInDistance: Digital sector

Jean-Christophe created the digital platform "onvoussoutient.fr" because he was looking for a way to help others while, like everyone else, being confined for two weeks in France: "I told myself that the best way to help was to connect people who need assistance with those who can help them."

"On vous soutient" is a way of collectively disseminating the initiatives set up by shopkeepers, associations and citizens throughout France, so that those seeking help can find the information they are looking for in one place.
Malta #UnitedInDistance: Food Sector

The food sector in Malta has been incredibly generous in these trying times. Amongst others, restaurants that shut down during this period, prepared meals for Health Carers at Mater Dei Hospital before closing their doors. Medical staff are continuously provided with goodies, from lunches, pizzas, cupcakes, to Figolli (typical Easter sweets) and even energy bars to keep them going! A ‘victory kitchen’ concept was also launched to provide food for families in need.

Belgium #UnitedInDistance: Health Sector

Augustijn was doing his internship in neurosurgery in Maria Middelares Hospital in Ghent at the time of the coronavirus outbreak. Only essential medical staff were allowed to perform urgent operations, but he could help at the emergency room. “I’m not doing what was planned for my internship but I’m doing what a doctor is supposed to do. This is what being a doctor is all about”. His next assignment is Gynaecology and his help is required at the maternity delivery room. “I’m very happy. New life keeps coming. Life cannot go on hold!”

Fighting disinformation on the coronavirus
Fighting disinformation

Misinformation and disinformation in the health space are thriving, including on COVID-19. It is important that you rely only on authoritative sources to get updated information on the COVID-19 outbreak.

EEAS Special Report Update: Short assessment of narratives and disinformation around the Covid-19 pandemic

Disinformation and misinformation around COVID-19 continue to proliferate around the world, with potentially harmful consequences for public health and effective crisis communication. In the EU and elsewhere, coordinated disinformation messaging seeks to frame vulnerable minorities as the cause of the pandemic and to fuel distrust in the ability of democratic institutions to deliver effective responses. Some state and state-backed actors seek to exploit the public health crisis to advance geopolitical interests, often by directly challenging the credibility of the European Union and its partners.

Press releases

Declaration by the High Representative Josep Borrell on behalf of the EU on the UN Secretary General’s appeal for an immediate global ceasefire
The European Union strongly supports the appeal by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres for an immediate global ceasefire in light of the global coronavirus pandemic.

**Video conference of foreign affairs ministers - 3 April 2020**

"We are facing an info-demic with dangerous impact on public health. We’ll continue to tackle disinformation, and coordinate and intensify our efforts with the Member States and with social media platforms" - Josep Borrell, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

**Coronavirus: Commission waives customs duties and VAT on the import of medical equipment from non-EU countries**

The Commission has today decided to approve requests from Member States and the UK to 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. This will make it easier financially to get the medical equipment that doctors, nurses and patients desperately need.

**Josep Borrell : « Cette crise pose une question existentielle pour l’Europe »**

Le Haut représentant pour la politique étrangère et de sécurité de l’Union européenne souligne dans une tribune au « Monde » les trois défis du Covid-19, sanitaire, économique, géopolitique au projet européen

**State aid: Commission approves €200 million Danish loan in support of the Travel Guarantee Fund for travel cancellations due to coronavirus outbreak**

The European Commission has found a Danish State loan facility of up to DKK 1.5 billion (approx. €200 million) in support of the Travel Guarantee Fund (“Rejsegarantifonden”) to be in line with EU State aid rules. The loan was approved under the State aid Temporary Framework to support the economy in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak adopted by the Commission on 19 March 2020.

**European Union Emergency Support Instrument for the healthcare sector - questions and answers**

The Commission wants to directly support the healthcare systems of EU Member States in their fights against the coronavirus pandemic through measures that can best be taken at EU level. For this purpose and based on the solidarity principle, the Commission will complement in a fast, flexible and direct way the ongoing efforts at national level.
**Questions and answers: Commission proposes SURE, a new temporary instrument worth up to €100 billion to help protect jobs and people in work**

The new instrument for temporary Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE) is designed to help protect jobs and workers affected by the coronavirus pandemic. It will provide financial assistance, in the form of loans granted on favourable terms from the EU to Member States, of up to €100 billion in total.

**Questions and answers on the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus: New actions to mobilise essential investments and resources**

The first package of measures of the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative concentrated on the immediate mobilisation of structural funds, to allow for a prompt response to the crisis. In this regard, a number of very important changes have been introduced that extend the scope of support of the Funds, provide immediate liquidity and give flexibility in programme amendments.

**Venezuela: Statement by Spokesperson on the US proposal and the situation in the context of the coronavirus pandemic**

We have followed with great attention the words of Secretary of State Pompeo. The United States have announced proposals on the way forward to find a way out of the crisis in Venezuela. We will study very carefully these proposals and we will assess them in the coming days.

As repeatedly underlined, the European Union will support all steps leading to a genuine political process towards a peaceful and democratic resolution of the crisis, based on credible and transparent elections. The EU is committed to actively contribute to this objective.

**COVID-19 - Council adopts measures for immediate release of funds**

The EU is taking swift action to make available money to help tackle the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**The EU stands by Ukraine in the face of the coronavirus pandemic and mobilises substantial support**

The coronavirus pandemic is an unprecedented, global crisis, a severe public health emergency for citizens, societies and economies. EU Member States and many partner countries, including Ukraine, have been severely affected by the current pandemic.
**Four Priorities for a Global Pandemic Strategy**

The world initially met the COVID-19 crisis in an uncoordinated fashion, with too many countries ignoring the warning signs and going it alone. It is now clear that the only way out of it is together. - Op-ed by HR/VP Josep Borrell

**COVID-19: EU adopts slot waiver to help airlines**

The EU will suspend until 24 October 2020 the airport slot requirements which oblige airlines to use at least 80% of their take-off and landing slots in order to keep them the following year. The waiver adopted by the Council today is designed to help air carriers cope with the drastic drop in air traffic caused by the Coronavirus crisis.

**United States: High Representative Josep Borrell discusses the response to the Coronavirus and pressing foreign policy issues with Secretary of State Pompeo**

EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, Josep Borrell, spoke with the US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, on Friday. They discussed the coronavirus pandemic, and HR/VP Borrell underlined the importance of cooperation and international solidarity. In light of the global dimension of the challenge, and building on the solidity of the transatlantic partnership, the EU and the US have the capacity to contribute significantly to international efforts to tackle the pandemic.

**Statement from Commission President von der Leyen on proposals to fight the economic effects of the coronavirus crisis**

The European Council tasked the Eurogroup to come up with proposals within the next weeks. The Commission will participate in these discussions and stands ready to assist, if supported by the Eurogroup. This is required since the fiscal space for new instruments is limited as we are in the last year of the MFF.

**Coronavirus: Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell following the EU Leaders' video conference**

*Check against delivery!*

Yesterday, I participated at the European Council meeting. It was a long and intense discussion among European leaders, after which we passed a very clear message: that the European Union and its Member States will do everything they can, everything necessary to overcome the coronavirus crisis.

We will do it together, in solidarity and for the benefit and protection of our citizens.
Video conference of cohesion policy ministers, 27 March 2020

The main topic of the video conference was the exchange of views between the EU ministers and representatives of the Member States on the new package of specific Cohesion Policy measures the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative (CRII) as an integral part of the European Coordinated Response to mitigate the economic consequences of coronavirus outbreak.

Coronavirus: Commission boosts budget for repatriation flights and rescEU stockpile

Today, the European Commission has proposed to make €75 million from the EU budget available to help Member States repatriate EU nationals and to increase the budget of the RescEU medical stockpile.

EU and 15 World Trade Organization members establish contingency appeal arrangement for trade disputes

The EU and 15 other members of the WTO today decided on an arrangement that will allow them to bring appeals and solve trade disputes among them despite the current paralysis of the WTO Appellate Body.

Yemen: Statement by the Spokesperson on the calls for ceasefire

The Government of Yemen, supported by the Saudi-led Coalition, has echoed the call of the UN Secretary General for a ceasefire in Yemen in order to fight the current coronavirus pandemic.

Similarly, the movement Ansar Allah has announced a series of decisions, including the release of members of the Baha'i community, and signalled willingness to engage in de-escalation and to negotiate a comprehensive political agreement.

Joint statement of the members of the European Council, 26 March 2020

Following the informal video conference on 26 March 2020, the members of the European Council adopted a statement on the EU actions in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, EU enlargement, the earthquake in Croatia and the situation at the EU's external borders.

Speech by President von der Leyen at the European Parliament Plenary on the European coordinated response to the COVID-19 outbreak
I would firstly like to thank all those of you who have made this extraordinary session possible under such exceptional circumstances. It is hard to believe quite how much the world has changed since we last met. In the blink of an eye, a virus which emerged on the other side of the world has become a deadly pandemic with tragic consequences for us here in Europe too.

**G7: High Representative Borrell participates in the G7 Foreign Ministers' videoconference**

High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell participated in a G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting that took place via video-teleconference call on Wednesday, 25 March.

**Letter of Eurogroup President Mario Centeno to the President of the European Council following the Eurogroup of 24 March 2020**

The 17 March videoconference of the Members of the European Council endorsed the 16 March statement of the Eurogroup and invited the Eurogroup to continuously and closely monitor economic and financial developments and to adopt without delay a coordinated policy response to the rapidly evolving situation. To this end, I convened a videoconference of the Eurogroup and Ministers of non-euro-area Member States on 24 March. I am writing to you to share my personal conclusions.

**Video conference of Foreign Affairs Ministers: Remarks by the High Representative Josep Borrell at the press conference**

Video conference of Foreign Affairs Ministers: Remarks by the High Representative Josep Borrell at the press conference

**COVID-19: Council takes steps to ensure institutional continuity**

The Council is taking measures to ensure the continuity of its work in the current exceptional circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Today it agreed on a temporary derogation to its Rules of Procedure to make it easier to take decisions by written procedure.

**Serbia: phone call between High Representative Borrell and President Vučić**

High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell held a conference call with President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić on Friday. The High Representative informed President Vučić about the latest developments in the European Union regarding the coronavirus and stressed that in these difficult times, good cooperation and solidarity is needed.
COVID-19: EU-ASEAN Ministerial videoconference targets enhanced cooperation to tackle the pandemic

The European Union (EU) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) convened a ministerial-level video conference on Friday, 20 March 2020 to discuss the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). The video conference was co-chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, Josep Borrell, and European Commissioner for Crisis Management, Janez Lenarčič, and Singapore’s Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vivian Balakrishnan and Senior Minister of State for Health and Transport Dr Lam Pin Min.

COVID-19 - Council gives go-ahead to support from EU budget

Today, EU ambassadors agreed the Council's position on two legislative proposals which will free up funds to tackle the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak. Given the urgency of the situation, both proposals were approved without amendments.

Conclusions by the President of the European Council following the video conference with members of the European Council on COVID-19

Today 17 March, Members of the European Council held a videoconference on COVID 19 in order to follow up on previous conclusions of 10 March 2020 together with the ECB President, the President of the Eurogroup and the High Representative.

Statement on COVID-19 economic policy response

Following up on the videoconference on 10 March 2020 between European Council Members, as well as the ECB President, the Eurogroup President and the High Representative, the Eurogroup held an in-depth discussion today, together with non-Euro Area Members, on how to respond to the extraordinary human and economic crisis caused by the Corona virus.

Coronavirus: Commission offers financing to innovative vaccines company CureVac

Today, the Commission offered up to €80 million of financial support to CureVac, a highly innovative vaccine developer from Tübingen, Germany, to scale up development and production of a vaccine against the Coronavirus in Europe.

COVID-19 Travel Advisory from the Ministry of Health, Trinidad and
Tobago

The Ministry of Health, Trinidad and Tobago advises on travel restrictions to the country in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Statement by Presidents Charles Michel and Ursula von der Leyen on US travel ban related to COVID-19

EU invests €3.5 million [5.65 billion MMK] in biosecurity in South-East Asia

The European Union launched a €3.5 million [5.65 billion MMK] regional project to support increased biosecurity in Southeast Asia. The project will help governments to better respond to highly communicable diseases or global biological events, such as pandemics.

Conclusions by the President of the European Council following the video conference on COVID-19

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Coronavirus crisis: “Commission will use all the tools at its disposal to make sure the European economy weathers the storm”

EU News 52/2020

Commission's response team to coordinate work on halting COVID-19 outbreak

EU News 46/2020

COVID-19: EU working on all fronts, €232 million for global efforts to tackle outbreak

COVID-19: European Commission helps send protective equipment to China and coordinates repatriation efforts

COVID-19 outbreak: Commission supports repatriation of EU citizens from cruise ship in Japan
Cooperation is key to counter the COVID-19 outbreak: the Council adopts conclusions

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Useful links

- EU Coronavirus response website (European Commission)
- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control - EDCD
- EEAS website on consular crisis management
- Commission website on consular protection for EU citizens abroad
- Council's website on consular protection
- African Union, Africa CDC Outbreak update
- WHO World Health Organization
- COVID-19 (Council)
- Engage.eu: information around Coronavirus for ASEAN countries

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