Coronavirus: a timeline of EU action

The EU is taking many measures to tackle the coronavirus pandemic and its impact. Check out our timeline for a clear picture by theme.

Find out what the EU is doing for healthcare, research, economy, employment, society, travel and transport.

HEALTHCARE
Supporting public health sectors and ensuring the availability of medical equipment

New requirements for medical devices postponed
17 April 2020
To prevent shortages or delays in getting key medical devices onto the market, Parliament agrees to postpone the application of the new Medical Devices Regulation.

Read more

Providing emergency support for health sectors
17 April 2020
The EU mobilises more than €3 billion from its budget to distribute medical supplies, coordinate transportation of equipment and patients and support the construction of mobile hospitals. In the longer term, the funds will support testing capacities and research.

Read more
Making it easier to import medical equipment
3 April 2020
In order to get medical equipment from non-EU countries more easily, customs duties and VAT on imports are temporarily waived.
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Creating a common EU reserve of medical equipment
20 March 2020
The EU is creating a strategic stockpile of ventilators, reusable masks, laboratory supplies and therapeutics ("rescEU") to help member states facing shortages.
Read more

Ramping up production capacity
20 March 2020
European harmonised standards for medical supplies (such as facemasks, protective clothing, respiratory protective devices) are made freely available to facilitate increased production.
Read more

Setting up a European expert team
17 March 2020
A panel of seven epidemiologists and virologists from different member states formulates science-based EU response guidelines and coordinates risk management measures.
Read more
Securing the availability of personal protective equipment
15 March 2020
Exports of personal protective equipment (such as masks, face shields, protective garments) to countries outside the EU must be authorised.
Read more

Buying medical equipment together
28 February 2020
EU countries join forces under the joint procurement agreement to purchase protective equipment (such as gloves, masks, overalls), ventilators and testing kits.
Read more

RESEARCH
Supporting research and innovation for effective treatments and vaccines

€90 million to research projects to tackle the Covid-19 virus
31 March 2020
Up to €90 million will be available within the framework of the Innovative Medicines Initiative, a partnership between the EU and the pharmaceutical industry, to support projects on developing treatments and diagnostics (up to €45 million from the EU budget).
Read more
€164 million for start-ups to boost innovation
20 March 2020
€164 million is allocated to the European Innovation Council (EIC) Accelerator pilot programme to support start-ups and small firms in developing technology that could help tackle the pandemic.
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€80 million to vaccine developer CureVac
16 March 2020
The EU provides up to €80 million to CureVac, an innovative vaccine developer in Germany, to support the development and production of a vaccine against the coronavirus.
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€48.25 million for 18 research projects involving 151 research teams
6 March 2020
The EU allocates €48.25 million to 18 research projects involving 151 teams under the Horizon 2020 programme to develop vaccines, new treatments, rapid diagnostic tests and improve the preparedness and response to outbreaks.
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ECONOMY
Supporting the financial sector and businesses
Maximum flexibility to channel EU structural funds
23 April 2020
New measures will allow EU countries to transfer resources between the three main cohesion funds (the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund), between the different categories of regions and between the funds’ specific priority areas.

Read more

Parliament calls for a massive recovery package
17 April 2020
In a resolution, MEPs call for a massive recovery package to support the European economy after the Covid-19 crisis, including recovery bonds guaranteed by the EU budget, and an EU Coronavirus Solidarity Fund of at least €50 billion.

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EIB support for the economy (€65 billion)
16 April 2020
The European Investment Bank creates a €25 billion guarantee fund mobilising up to €200 billion to help the European economy on top of €40 billion already mobilised.

Read more
European roadmap to phase out containment measures
15 April 2020
The European Commission and the European Council present guidance and recommendations for member states when lifting confinement measures.

Read more
Joint European Roadmap towards lifting Covid-19 containment measures

Immediate help for at least 100,000 small and medium-sized enterprises
6 April 2020
Keeping in mind the strong impact of the crisis on small and medium-sized enterprises, the EU unlocks around €8 billion in finance for European firms.

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EU structural funds for essential investments and resources (€37 billion)
27 March 2020
€37 billion from EU structural funds are made available for the Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative to support healthcare systems, small and medium-sized enterprises and labour markets.

Read more
More fiscal flexibility
23 March 2020
To allow member states to undertake exceptional spending to deal with the crisis, the EU makes its budgetary rules more flexible.

Read more

Revised state aid rules
19 March 2020
EU countries can flexibly apply state aid rules to ensure that sufficient liquidity remains available to businesses of all types and to preserve the continuity of economic activity.

Read more

ECB pandemic emergency purchase programme (€750 billion)
18 March 2020
The European Central Bank launches a temporary asset purchase programme of private and public sector securities of €750 billion, in addition to €120 billion already mobilised for the pandemic emergency.

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EMPLOYMENT AND SOCIETY
Supporting household incomes and jobs during the crisis
Keeping people in jobs and businesses alive (€100 billion)
23 April 2020
EU countries get up to €100 billion for loans on favourable terms, to allow companies to keep their employees and reduce working hours while providing income support.
Read more

Taking care of the most deprived
23 April 2020
To lower the risk of infection, delivery of food aid and basic material assistance via the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived will be possible through electronic or paper vouchers, while protective equipment for workers and volunteers provided.
Read more

Helping farmers and fishermen
23 April 2020
The EU introduces more flexibility in funding agriculture, fishing and aquaculture to help affected industries cope with the impact of Covid-19.
Read more

Financial assistance through the Solidarity Fund (€800 million)
26 March 2020
The EU Solidarity Fund’s scope is extended to cover public health emergencies, making €800 million available in 2020 for member states hit hardest by the pandemic.
Read more
Avoiding network congestion
19 March 2020

The EU asks Netflix, Facebook and YouTube to reduce streaming quality to avoid overloading the web.

Read more

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT
Restricting travel and ensuring the delivery of critical services

Putting an end to empty flights
26 March 2020

EU rules on airport slots that obliged airlines to use their planned take-off and landing slots to keep them next season are temporarily suspended.

Read more

Ensuring the continuous flow of goods and services
18 March 2020

The EU installs "green lane" border crossings to secure the supply of essential goods and vital medical and protective equipment within the single market.

Read more
Disinformation on the pandemic is spreading everywhere, making it more difficult to fight the virus. The EU provides and actively promotes reliable information and cooperates with online platforms to remove fake news and online scams.

You can also check out our summary of 10 things the EU does to tackle the Covid-19 crisis.

Restricting travel to halt the spread
17 March 2020
The EU temporarily closes its borders for non-essential travel, to contain the spread of Covid-19.

Repatriating EU citizens
Since January 2020
Tens of thousands of EU citizens are brought home from non-European countries around the world thanks to the Civil Protection Mechanism.