

Bulletin #52

Statistics

Evolución COVID-19 en Europa
en el año 2020

Interviews

CARMELO RODRÍGUEZ TORREBLANCA

CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ALMERIA

AMÓS GARCÍA HUESO

General Director of Andalusians Abroad

News

COVID-19: Global Pandemic Declared

United Kingdom leaves the EU



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Europe's strength in the face of challenges

The European Documentation Centre of Almeria highlights, in the latest edition of its bulletin, the most relevant news about COVID-19 and Brexit, which are the issues that marked the future of the Union during the year 2020.

The European Green Deal was likely to become the main theme of our policy at the beginning of 2020: Europe aspired to become the first neutral continent by 2050. To this end, preparations were carried out during the first months of the year in order to present a green financing strategy, an industrial strategy and an action plan for the circular economy, among other measures. This European transformation, which also included the new 2020-2025 security strategy, is covered in our bulletin under the headline "The future of Europe". However, as early as February, the expansion of COVID-19 in Italy gave us a glimpse of a much more sinister reality, whose consequences are still unpredictable.

As President Ursula Von der Leyen claimed in a message to Spanish citizens a few weeks after the start of the lockdown in our country: "Spain is one of the hardest-hit countries by the coronavirus in the European Union. Despite the difficulties, Spanish people are showing a remarkable capacity for resilience and have demonstrated the

solidarity that characterises them".

In addition to the measures taken by European institutions in the field of health, such as the creation of a European Health Union or the specific investment in research projects on COVID-19, the European Union has also developed the NextGeneration EU programme, allocating more than 1.8 billion euros to Europe's socio-economic recovery.

The year 2020 ended with the signing of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement between the European Union and the United Kingdom on the 30th December. Thus, putting an end to a long history of disagreements that led to a serious institutional crisis in the European Union and the resignation of David Cameron and Theresa May in the United Kingdom.

Along with the usual sections in our bulletins, such as the one devoted to academic and research calls or the one devoted to recent publications, this time we include interviews with Carmelo Rodríguez Torreblanca, Rector of the University of Almeria (UAL), and Amós García Hueso, Director General of Andalusians Abroad of the Andalusian Regional Government. With the Rector of the University of Almeria we discussed, among other topics, the special link between the University of Almeria and the European commitment, the participation of researchers

and lecturers in national and European research projects, the institution's commitment to the socio-economic development of Almeria, and the first months of lockdown in our institution. Amós García's extensive political career, closely linked to the European field, reveals the impact over the last years of some of the activities financed with EU funds and led by the Diputación de Almería, as well as the measures taken by the Regional Government of Andalusia (Junta de Andalucía) to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of funds from NextGeneration EU.

Last year experiences confirm that, even in times of great adversity, solidarity and human dignity determine both our individual response and that of the European institutions. That is why the words of Konrad Adenauer in 1954 acquire full relevance nowadays: "European unity was a dream of a few people. It became a hope for many. Today it is a necessity for all of us."

Ana Fe Gil Serra

Director of the European Documentation
Center of Almeria



Carmelo Rodríguez Torreblanca (Almería, 1965), graduated in Mathematical Sciences in the University of Granada in 1988, has been a Professor at the University of Almería (UAL) in the area of Statistics and Operations Research since 2002. He has participated in twenty research projects, seven of them as main researcher. He is co-author of more than ten books, more than ninety research papers and two patents, mainly on Computational Statistics, Optimal Design of Experiments and their applications to various fields. In the field of management, before being elected as Rector of the University of Almeria in 2015, he was Director of the Department of Mathematics and Vice-Rector for Students, and later for Academic Planning and Information Technologies.

QUESTION: When you were first elected Rector in 2015, the European Documentation Centre of Almería was barely one year old. Over the last years, the Centre has developed an extensive training and dissemination work on the EU. Currently, our bilingual website (www.cde.ual.es) already has more than 300,000 users and receives daily enquiries from all five continents. Along these years, the Rectorate has been involved in numerous occasions in the development of this incipient Centre. If I may, I remember with special affection your participation in the campaign on social networks “We are Europe”, during the 2019 European elections. What conclusions do you draw as Rector from this clear commitment of the University of Almería to the European identity and education?

ANSWER. The constitution of the European Documentation Center of Almería is another example of the implication of our university within the development of the EU. We have a clear international vocation, as evidenced by the increase in academic mobility within the ERASMUS program and the growing number of European research projects in which the UAL participates. It is true that the UAL's digital commitment has allowed the educational and informative activities on the EU to have a much greater scope than over the first years. However, I would like to emphasize that the institutional support has not only been a personal commitment of the Rector, but of the university community. On the other hand, I believe that permanent



collaboration with faculties and centres of the UAL and provincial and regional institutions is the most appropriate way to make Europe present in our environment and also, to give visibility to the aspirations and needs of Almería within the European framework.

Q. The year 2020 has marked a new course for humanity. A year ago it would have seemed unthinkable for us to find ourselves right now in a race to ensure the survival of the population. However, like the rest of the European universities, the UAL was able to adapt and continue throughout the year to keep its activity thanks to the effort made by all the university community. What are the main memories you have from the last few months?

A. It is often stated that “The University has to face and adapt to the changes that occur in Society”, and without a doubt we can confirm that this has been the case in 2020, when in the month of March, all our activity was disrupted by the outbreak of the pandemic caused by COVID-19 and the consequent declaration of a “state of alarm” in our country. In record time, from Friday the 13th to Monday the 16th of March, all teaching became online, as well as administra-

tive work and meetings of collegiate and government bodies. Therefore, it was necessary to make decisions through resolutions of the Rector's office, in coordination with the rest of the Andalusian universities, with the CRUE at national level, and with the Andalusian and national government authorities responsible for health and universities. Thus, one of my memories is the endless days, weekends and holidays included, holding videoconferences and outlining resolutions and adaptations of regulations until the last minute. And another indelible memory is the strange feeling of desolation and silence, which was perceived when walking through the Campus during the lockdown, when practically only the security personnel and I were there.

Q: In addition to the international mobility of teachers and students, as a result of the international vocation you have mentioned, an increasing number of our graduates carry out their professional activity abroad. Most of them emphasise that the training received at the UAL is of an equivalent or superior quality to that of the countries in which they are living. What are the main reasons for this success?

A. It is true that most of our graduates who develop a professional activity outside Spain recognise the quality of the training received at the UAL. To begin with, we have a wonderful Campus by the sea, with all the administrative services, classrooms, library, sports facilities, departments and faculties centralised, which allow a very close attention to the students and this fact is one of our hallmarks that gives them a high degree of satisfaction. On the other hand, interacting with companies and institutions has been one of our priorities. We maintain close contact with institutions, organisations and companies, both nationally and internationally, and this enables us to constantly adapt our training activity to the current and future needs of our students regarding the demands of the socio-economic environment. I would highlight, in particular, the language training that our students receive both in subjects taught in English and in the Language Centre; and the internship agreements of the UAL with companies and institutions in Almería, which allow students to have their first contact with the labour market.

Q. The UAL has been and must continue to be one of the main driving forces for the development of the province of Almería. This commitment has been proven in the numerous initiatives of collaboration with public and private institutions. What were the main projects developed in this field during the last year?

A. Continuing with the policy of strengthening relations and collaboration with public institutions and local, regional, national and international companies, in this academic year, and despite the circumstances, almost 300 collaboration agreements have been signed, many of them for our students' internships. Our researchers also make a great effort in attracting research resources in national and European competitive calls, as well as in transfer contracts. For example, during the 2019/20 academic year that has just ended, the UAL obtained 31 new projects in national competitive calls and 9 new European projects. With those projects, the number of current national projects has been 123, granted with more than 10 million euros. The number of European projects is 36, with a total amount of 9.7 million euros, plus another 3.5 million euros obtained in 2020 from the ERDF Operational Program. Without prejudice to many other areas, the UAL is a benchmark for research and innovation in the agri-food field: It is positioned among the 3 best R & D + i institutions at national level

“The strange feeling of desolation and silence, which was perceived when walking through the Campus during the lockdown, when practically only the security personnel and I were there”

in the main call for public-private collaboration of the State Plan for I + D + i (Collaboration Challenges), being the only IPO that collaborates, -together with companies-, in 95% of the projects in Almería, standing out as the undisputed leader in the southeast of Spain. In addition, it is among the entities and platforms for strategic decision-making at the European level: it participates in the Food for Life Platforms for food and health; in BIOVEGEN on plant biotechnology; and in Bio-Based Industries, a joint European initiative in biotechnology. The positioning of the UAL in EUVRIN, the European Association of Research Centers in Horticultural Sciences, also stands out, with researchers on the steering committees of three of its working groups. In addition, the link of our researchers with the different productive sectors is remarkable: in 2020, 72 transfer contracts have been formalized (article 83) and 524 services have been rendered.

On the other hand, and in order to take another step closer to society, the construction of the building destined for the Natural Sciences Pavilion has begun. This new building, for didactic and scientific use, which is expected to be operational by June 2021, will house scientific collections and allow them to be exhibited, and will undoubtedly become a new focus of knowledge and cultural interest on the campus. In addition, we are at an advanced stage in the process of acquiring an emblematic building in Paseo de Almería, where we plan to house a university information point, a space for cultural activities and some training activities, and also a place for institutional



representation.

Q: Brexit, the effects of COVID-19 and the EU recovery plan are the major issues that have marked us as European citizens during 2020. With these three challenges, we face a new year with a much higher level of global uncertainty than in past decades. How do you face the year 2021 from the Rectorate of the University of Almeria?

Since the beginning of this academic year, as I pointed out, the University of Almeria is and will continue to be, in these times of pandemic, a university open to society. We must continue to contribute sensitively to the development of the environment and act even more as a dynamic element in the generation and transfer of knowledge and the dissemination of culture, regardless of the technology used to fulfil its basic functions of training, research and transfer. The health situation has generated new ways of working and interacting, but we will strive to continue improving teaching and research standards. One of our immediate objectives is to draw up a new strategic plan for the next five years, and these challenges will be considered.

On the other hand, I believe that the strategic objectives set by the European Commission for the forthcoming years, as well as the Recovery and Resilience Funds are a unique opportunity to develop a policy of “talent retention and attraction” and an opportunity to continue improving and growing as a university

“The UAL is a benchmark for research and innovation in the agri-food field: It is positioned among the 3 best R & D & i institutions at national level

recognised worldwide. In this sense, the University of Almeria, with the idea of creating a transnational alliance of European higher education institutions that share the same long-term vision, is at an advanced stage of promoting a European Inter-University Campus in the Agro and Life Sciences axis, without neglecting the rest of the areas of study and research. The initiative aims to strengthen the links between education, research, innovation, best practices and knowledge transfer, so that the resulting University Alliance becomes the European reference institution for higher education and research in the areas of Agro, Bio and Life Sciences. Enabling the free circulation of knowledge, facilitating double or multiple European degrees of two or even three cycles, and attracting international talent beyond Europe by promoting multilingual learning, interculturalism and inclusion are some of the objectives of the project. At the moment, the Consortium is composed of the University of Almeria (coordinator), Agricultural University of Iceland (Iceland), Agricultural University of Plovdiv (Bulgaria), Haute Ecole de la Province de Liège (Belgium), Instituto Politecnico de Coimbra (Portugal), Università degli Studi di Plovdiv (Bulgaria), Haute Ecole de la Province de Liège (Belgium), Instituto Politecnico de Coimbra

(Portugal), Università degli Studi di Modena e Reggio Emilia (Italy), Warsaw University of Life Sciences (Poland) and Institut Sup’Biotech de Paris (France). All of them of recognised prestige in the research areas that are the focus of the alliance. This is an exciting and ambitious project, which we hope will come to fruition, resulting in a definitive step towards the international recognition and prestige of the UAL ■

“The Recovery and Resilience Funds are a unique opportunity to develop a policy of “talent retention and attraction”





Amós García Hueso, Director General of Andalusians Abroad in the Ministry of the Presidency of the Andalusian Regional Government, has been a provincial deputy, regional parliamentarian and spokesperson for European Affairs. In 2018 he was appointed honorary Ambassador in Andalusia by the European foundation Finnova, in recognition of his work in dynamisation and entrepreneurship policies, employment, innovation and European Union. He was recognised as well for the dissemination of these values through the public-private participation and open innovation of the Start-up Europe Awards in Andalusia.

Q. The international sphere, especially the European one, has been part of your political career for years. You were Deputy for Employment and Economic Promotion (2011-2015) in the Provincial Council of Almería, -an area to which Europe Direct Almería was attached during that time-, and later spokesperson for the political party PP-A in the European Affairs Committee (2016-2019) in the Andalusian Parliament. Has your previous experience in the European field influenced in any way your current activity as Director General for Relations with Andalusians Abroad?

All experience counts, of course, and the experience gained both in the Provincial Council of Almería and in the Andalusian Parliament has enriched my work. It is important to know the information channels, the administrative procedures and to bear in mind that when challenges are set, there is a whole administrative machinery that must be coordinated.

The challenge of the current government is to attend and connect the Andalusian population abroad. This is essential in a world as globalised and mobile as the one we live in and where, increasingly, part of the training, specialisation and work experience is carried out abroad. Andalusia is also one of the Autonomous Regions that has one of the highest emigration rates and, therefore, the work we carry out in the Directorate General is also one of gratitude to all those who, living outside their birthplace for working or training reasons, collaborate with us in the development and recognition of Andalusia. We are also working to im-

plement a closer collaboration with the University, which will allow us to be in contact with all those who, in the future, may become part of the Andalusian population abroad.

The response to our initiatives from the Andalusian population abroad has been very positive. I believe that establishing direct channels of communication where the important advances that are taking place in our community are shared and at the same time, we can learn about their concerns and situations, generating important synergies that help us move forward and encourage us to continue working.

Q. During your period at the Provincial Council of Almería, it was published “Almería creciendo” (2011), which included all the aid from European Funds in the province during the period 2000-2009, which exceeded -as indicated in the publication- 2,000 million euros. What other initiatives and activities carried out by Europe Direct Almería do you remember from that period?

I remember a web application that was created between the Provincial Council and the University of Almería to help students search for scholarships and internships abroad. There, we presented the grants that best suited the needs of applicants through a user-friendly tool.

It was very well received.

Besides, I remember very fondly the Eu-



ropean volunteering project for enhance mobility of young people in Europe. I have not forgotten the excitement when they left and the satisfaction when they returned. Something I am very satisfied with was the implementation of the first Local Employment Pact of the Province of Almería, an action co-funded by the European Social Fund, whose objective was to facilitate job creation by bringing together the social and economic agents of the province. Representatives of trade unions (UGT, CCOO, CSIF), business entities (Asempal, AJE and Chamber of Commerce) and social agents (FAAM, Red Cross, Fundación del Secretariado Gitano...) participated.

And as projects, the Calmarr Project, through which we obtained investments

“Thanks to all those who, living outside their place of birth, collaborate with us in the development and recognition of Andalusia.”

worth one million euros from the EU to revalue tourism in the Province of Almeria, or the PILA project (Project for Work Insertion in Almeria), with which we set up some 80 Escuelas Taller throughout the province, where unemployed people with difficulties learnt a craft. Recently, on a route through the province, I stopped for breakfast in a café that was a rural accommodation, and the owner told me that she knew me because I was part of the project and I had set up this rural tourism project. I was very happy.

All these experiences have allowed me to see the proximity between the Andalusians and the European project. In particular, last year, during the first months of the pandemic, the Andalusian Regional Government sent a message of solidarity and support to all the countries that compose the European Union - we also mentioned the United Kingdom- through the video Go Europe! It is our daily experience what shows us that Andalusia and the European Union complement and enrich each other.

Q. As spokesperson for the PP-A in the Andalusian Parliament's European Affairs Committee, you participated in bilateral meetings with committees from other EU countries and in numerous occasions, you called on the Andalusian regional government to increase the European funds for the province of Almeria. More precisely, the use of these funds within the deadlines set by the EU has been one of the great challenges of the Andalusian Regional Government. How do you assess the measures carried out over the last two years?

First, there is greater commitment and efficiency, as evidenced by the high level of execution of the funds. The figure of the coordinator, which has been created, together with a total of 21 coordinators are present in each regional ministry for the monitoring and management of European funds. The objective is to reinforce coordination and guarantee the proper management of the different European funding programmes that are underway.

In addition, a management body has been created for the new Next Generation European funds, offered to member countries by the European Union, in order to help them recover from the crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The aim is to guarantee, as far as possible, both the receipt

of funds and their efficient use, as they must be in line with economic growth and job creation through initiatives that accelerate the ecological and digital transitions.

Along the first year of this new government, 72% more of funds have been executed, compared to the previous government. Thus, you should agree with me that the assessment is therefore very positive

“The aim is to guarantee, as far as possible, both the receipt of funds and their efficient use”

Q. The pandemic that we are currently suffering as a result of COVID-19 has not prevented -thanks to on-line communication- your contact with the Andalusian communities abroad. How have you dealt with this particular stage?

We had to open new channels of communication with Andalusians abroad and adapt to this new scenario. The Andalusian communities are very active and their list of events are mostly face-to-face and very participative, as it is a way of socialising. When you are away from your homeland, these activities are exciting and help to reinforce the Andalusian feeling. This is why, with the limitation of movement due to the pandemic, there was a standstill in activities which, together with the concern about the virus, caused a certain discouragement but, to a certain extent, forced us to be more creative in our activities.

From the very beginning, we set up videoconferences with



“Daily experience shows us that Andalusia and the European Union complement and enrich each other.”

the representatives of all the entities abroad, we created a platform where we offered documentaries, guided tours, museums, natural parks, books, magazines... everything about Andalusia and its history.

We also organised a series of webinars with well-known speakers entitled Andalucía hacia el mundo: Historia, Viajes y Flamenco (Andalusia towards the world: History, Trips and Flamenco), which was attended by more than a thousand people. And for young people, we organised the 1st Virtual Meeting for Young Andalusians around the World last December, with the participation of Eva González, David Bisbal, Anikilo Gamer, Cyclo and the football player Joaquín Sánchez. It was a very enriching experience, with a fantastic acceptance, which allowed us to strengthen two basic pillars nowadays: to facilitate communication and online contact with our extensive network of Andalusians abroad and, on the other hand, to involve young people, which is necessary to

ensure the future of Andalusian entities abroad and their essential updating in the use of new technologies. This has been a good starting point on which we must continue to make progress

Q. Brexit, the effects of COVID-19 and the EU's recovery plan are the big issues that have marked us as European citizens during 2020. We face, with these three challenges, a new year with a much higher level of global uncertainty than in past decades. (We will have to make great balances to combine the objective assessment of the challenges, but without forgetting our strength and sense of humour). How do you face the year 2021 from the Directorate General for Relations with Andalusians Abroad?

Always with enthusiasm, with awareness of the situation and with the corresponding responsibility.

Any difficulty must be faced with determination and hard work and, although

we are starting a year marked by uncertainty, we must have sufficient capacity to react and adapt to the circumstances, and if the circumstances change, they will be redirected in order to achieve a proper result.

In the Directorate General we have a project and a desire, and we are going to implement a deep digital transformation, where the Administration and the citizens will be connected. Therefore, increasing their participation to jointly face the great challenges of the future: more direct communication, access to all the services of the administration through a single channel (employment, entrepreneurship, housing, health, etc.), and greater participation, in parallel to the great work done by the Andalusian Regional Government in our region. This is going to set an attractive scenario for all Andalusians, wherever they are, to experience Andalusia, where, by the way, they are more than welcome ■



EU NEWS

News

Olympia



THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

The European Green Deal

EUROPE THE FIRST CLIMATE-NEUTRAL CONTINENT BY 2050

The European Commission has presented The European Green Deal – a roadmap for making the EU's economy sustainable by turning climate and environmental challenges into opportunities across all policy areas and making the transition just and inclusive for all.

ROADMAP

The European Green Deal provides a roadmap with actions to boost the efficient use of resources by moving to a clean, circular economy and stop climate change, revert biodiversity loss and cut pollution. It outlines investments needed and financing tools available, and explains how to ensure a just and inclusive transition.

WHAT DOES THE GREEN DEAL COVER?

The European Green Deal covers all sectors of the economy, notably transport, energy, agriculture, buildings, and industries such as steel, cement, ICT, textiles and chemicals.

To set into legislation the political ambition of being the world's first climate neutral continent by 2050, the Commission will present within 100 days the first 'European Climate Law'. To reach our climate and environmental ambition, the Commission will also present the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, the new Industrial Strategy and Circular Economy Action Plan, the Farm to Fork Strategy for sustainable food and proposals for pollution-free Europe. Work will immediately start for upping Europe's 2030 emissions targets, setting a realistic path to the 2050 goal.

HOW IT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED

Meeting the objectives of the European Green Deal will require significant investment. Achieving the current 2030 climate and energy targets is estimated to require €260 billion of additional annual investment, representing about 1.5% of 2018 GDP. This investment will need the mobilisation of the public and private sectors. The Commission will present in early 2020 a Sustainable Europe Investment Plan to help meet investment needs. At least 25% of the EU's long-term budget should be dedicated to climate action, and the European Investment Bank, Europe's climate bank, will provide further support. For the private sector to contribute to financing the green transition, the Commission will present a Green Financing Strategy in 2020.

Fighting climate change and environmental degradation is a common endeavour but not all regions and Member States start from the same point. A Just Transition Mechanism will support those regions that rely heavily on very carbon intensive activities. It will support the citizens most vulnerable to the transition, providing access to reskilling programmes and employment opportunities in new economic sectors.

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EU Security Union Strategy

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION SETS OUT A NEW EU SECURITY UNION STRATEGY FOR THE PERIOD 2020 TO 2025

LThe European Commission sets out a new EU Security Union Strategy for the period 2020 to 2025, focusing on priority areas where the EU can bring value to support Member States in fostering security for all those living in Europe. From combating terrorism and organised crime, to preventing and detecting hybrid threats and increasing the resilience of our critical infrastructure, to promoting cybersecurity and fostering research and innovation, the strategy lays out the tools and measures to be developed over the next 5 years to ensure security in our physical and digital environment.

A FUTURE-PROOF SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Individuals rely on key infrastructures, online and offline, to travel, work or benefit from essential public services; and attacks on such infrastructures can cause huge disruptions. Preparedness and resilience are key for quick recovery. The Commission will put forward new EU rules on the protection and resilience of critical infrastructure, physical

and digital.

TACKLING EVOLVING THREATS

Criminals increasingly exploit technological developments to their ends, with malware and data theft on the rise. The Commission will make sure that existing EU rules against cybercrime are fit for purpose and correctly implemented, and will explore measures against identity theft.

PROTECTING EUROPEANS FROM TERRORISM AND ORGANISED CRIME

Fighting terrorism starts with addressing the polarisation of society, discrimination and other factors that can reinforce people's vulnerability to radical discourse. The work on anti-radicalisation will focus on early detection, resilience building and disengagement, as well as rehabilitation and reintegration in society. In addition to fighting root causes, effective prosecution of terrorists, including foreign terrorist fighters, will be essential – to achieve this, steps are under way to strengthen border security legislation and better use of existing databases. Cooperation with

non-EU countries and international organisations will also be key in the fight against terrorism, for instance to cut off all sources of terrorism financing.

A STRONG EUROPEAN SECURITY ECOSYSTEM

Governments, law enforcement authorities, businesses, social organisations, and those living in Europe all have a common responsibility in fostering security.

The EU will help promote cooperation and information sharing, with the aim to combat crime and pursue justice. Key measures include strengthening Europol's mandate and further developing Eurojust to better link judicial and law enforcement authorities. Working with partners outside of the EU is also crucial to secure information and evidence. Cooperation with Interpol will also be reinforced.



SOTEU 2020

PRESIDENT VON DER LEYEN SETS THE COURSE FOR EUROPE

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen today pledged that the European Commission will drive a sustainable and transformational recovery that will give Europe a global platform to lead economically, environmentally and geopolitically.

THE RESPONSE TO CORONAVIRUS

The President called for lessons to be learned, saying Europe must build a stronger European health union, with a future-proof and properly funded EU4Health programme, a reinforced European Medicines Agency (EMA) and a strengthened European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC).

AN EU THAT PROTECTS

President von der Leyen stressed the importance of reinforcing Europe's social market economy and of protecting workers and businesses from external shocks. She promised to put forward a legal framework for setting minimum wages, emphasising that "minimum wages work – and it is time work paid".

The President pledged action to boost the single market, reinforce the Economic and Social Union, get the Schengen area working in full again, update the EU's industry strategy and adapt its competition framework.

EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL

The President revealed that the European Commission is proposing to increase the 2030 target for emissions reduction from 40% to at least 55%. This will put the EU on track for climate neutrality by 2050 and for meeting its Paris Agreement obligations. The Carbon Border Adjustment mechanism will help ensure others will follow Europe's lead.

EUROPE'S DIGITAL DECADE

President von der Leyen stressed that "Europe must now lead the way on digital – or it will have to follow the way of others." She called for a common plan for digital Europe with clearly defined goals for 2030, such as for connectivity, skills and digital public services. She further announced that the EU will invest 20% of NextGenerationEU's budget on digital.

A VITAL EUROPE IN A FRAGILE WORLD

The President called for the revitalisation and reform of the multilateral system, including the UN, WTO and WHO. She pledged that the European Commission will put forward a European Magnitsky act and urged Member States to embrace qualified majority voting on external relations "at least on human rights and sanctions implementation."

A VITAL EUROPE IN A FRAGILE WORLD

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RULE OF LAW

The President stressed that the Commission will before the end of September adopt its first annual Rule of Law report covering all Member States. President von der Leyen pledged to ensure that EU funds are spent with the rule of law guaranteed.



Agreement on Europe's next long-term budget and NextGenerationEU

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION HAS WELCOMED THE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND EU MEMBER STATES IN THE COUNCIL

The European Commission has welcomed the agreement between the European Parliament and EU Member States in the Council on Europe's next long-term budget and NextGenerationEU, the temporary recovery instrument.

Una vez adoptado, el paquete por un valor total de 1,8 billones de euros será el mayor jamás financiado con cargo al presupuesto de la UE. Tras la COVID-19, contribuirá a reconstruir una Europa que será más ecológica, más digital y más resiliente, y que estará mejor adaptada a los retos actuales y futuros.

President Ursula von der Leyen said: *"I welcome today's agreement on our Recovery Plan and the next Multiannual Financial Framework. We now need to move forward with finalising the agreement on the next long-term budget and NextGenerationEU by the end of the year. Help is needed for citizens and business badly hit by the coronavirus crisis. Our recovery plan will help us turn the challenge of the pandemic into an opportunity for a recovery led by the green and digital transition".*

Main elements of the compromise include:

- More than 50% of the amount will support modernisation through policies that include research and innovation, via Horizon Europe; fair climate and digital transitions, via the Just Transition Fund and the Digital Europe Programme; preparedness, recovery and resilience, via the Recovery and Resilience Facility, rescEU and a new health programme, EU4Health.
- Traditional policies such as cohesion and common agricultural policy also continue to receive significant financial support, so much necessary to ensure stability in times of crisis and their modernisation that should contribute to the recovery and the green and digital transitions.
- 30% of the EU funds will be spent to fight climate change, the highest share ever of the largest European budget ever. The package also pays a specific attention to biodiversity protection and gender equality.
- The budget will have strengthened flexibility mechanisms to guarantee it has the capacity to

address unforeseen needs. This is making it a budget fit not only for today's realities but also for tomorrow's uncertainties.

- As proposed in May 2020 and agreed by EU leaders on 21 July 2020, to finance the recovery, the EU will borrow on the markets at more favourable costs than many Member States and redistribute the amounts.
- In terms of EU budget protection, now, for the first time, the EU will have a specific mechanism to protect its budget against breaches of the rule of law as agreed on 5 November. At the same time, final beneficiaries of EU funding in the Member State concerned will not be negatively affected by this mechanism.



Agreement on the Recovery Package

“WE HAVE DONE IT: EUROPE IS STRONG, EUROPE IS ROBUST AND, ABOVE ALL, EUROPE IS UNITED” CHARLES MICHEL

EU leaders agreed a recovery package and the 2021-2027 budget that will help the EU to rebuild after the pandemic and will support investment in the green and digital transitions.

The socio-economic fallout from the COVID-19 crisis requires a joint and innovative effort at EU level in order to support the recovery and resilience of the member states' economies.

To achieve the desired result and be sustainable, the recovery effort should be linked to the traditional MFF, which has shaped EU budgetary policies since 1988 and offers a long-term perspective.

EU leaders have agreed to a comprehensive package of €1 824.3 billion which combines the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and an extraordinary recovery effort under the Next Generation EU (NGEU) instrument.

LONG-TERM EU BUDGET

The new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) will cover seven years between 2021 and 2027. The MFF, reinforced by Next Generation EU, will also be the main instrument for implementing the recovery package to tackle the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The size of the MFF – €1 074.3 billion – will allow the EU to fulfill its long-term objectives and preserve the full capacity of the recovery plan. This proposal is largely based on the proposal made by President Michel in February, which reflected two years of discussions between member states.

RECOVERY FUND

The recovery fund, through NGEU will provide the Union with the necessary means to address the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the agreement the Commission will be able to borrow up to €750 billion on the markets. These funds may be used for back-to-back loans and for expenditure channelled through the MFF programmes. Capital raised on the financial markets will be repaid by 2058.

The amounts available under NGEU will be allocated to seven individual programmes:

Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), ReactEU, Horizon Europe, InvestEU, Rural Development, Just Transition Fund and RescEU.

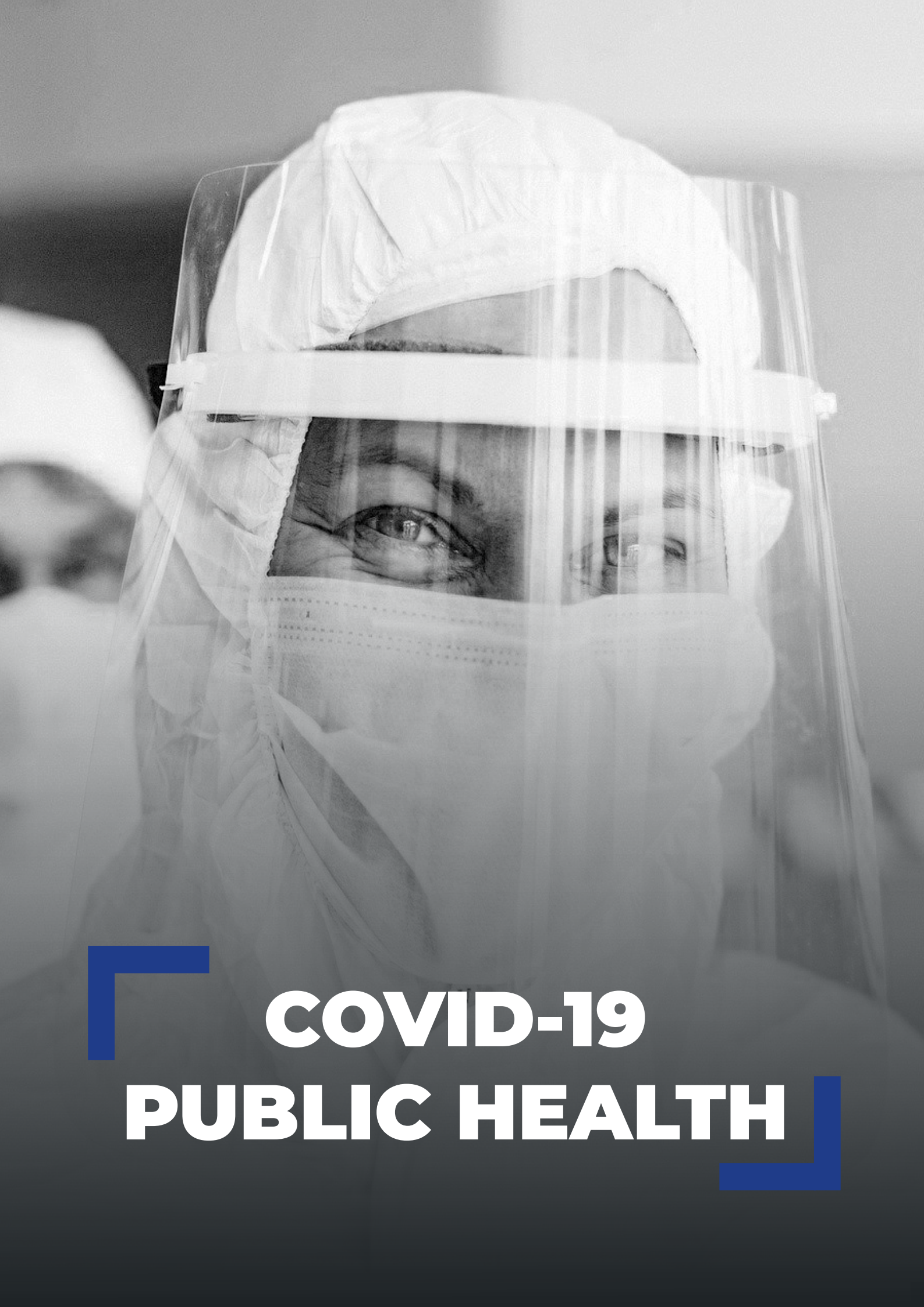
LOANS AND GRANTS

€390 billion from the package will be distributed in the form of grants to member states and €360 billion in loans.

The plan ensures the money goes to the countries and sectors most affected by the crisis: 70% under the grants of the Recovery and Resilience Facility will be committed in 2021 and 2022 and 30% will be committed in 2023.

Allocations from the RRF in 2021-2022 will be established according to the Commission's allocation criteria taking into account member states' respective living standards, size and unemployment levels. For 2023 allocations, the unemployment criterion will be replaced by the drop in GDP in 2020 and 2021.





COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH



COVID-19 coronavirus is a pandemic

THE DIRECTOR OF THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION HAS OFFICIALLY CHARACTERIZED THE CORONAVIRUS COVID-19 AS A PANDEMIC

Tedros Adhanom Gebreyesus said that thousands of people are fighting for their lives in hospitals, and that the number of deaths and cases is expected to increase even more within the next days.

“WHO has been assessing this outbreak around the clock and we are deeply concerned both by the alarming levels of spread and severity, and by the alarming levels of inaction. We have therefore made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic” said Tedros.

In the past two weeks, the number of cases of COVID-19 outside China has increased 13-fold, and the number of affected countries has tripled. There are now more than 118,000 cases in 114 countries, and 4,291 people have lost their lives.

“Pandemic is not a word to use lightly or carelessly. It is a word that, if misused, can cause unreasonable fear, or unjustified acceptance that the fight is over, leading to unnecessary suffering and death” said Tedros.

WHAT DOES THE CONSIDERATION OF A PANDEMIC CHANGE?

“Describing the situation as a pandemic does not change WHO’s assessment of the threat posed by this virus. It doesn’t change what WHO is doing, and it doesn’t change what countries should do”, added.

The leader of the World Health Organization said that we have never before seen a pandemic sparked by a coronavirus.” And we have never before seen a pandemic that

can be controlled.”

“As I said before, just looking at the number of cases and the number of countries affected does not tell the full story. Of the 118,000 cases reported globally in 114 countries, more than 90 percent of cases are in just four countries, and two of those – China and the Republic of Korea – have significantly declining epidemics. 81 countries have not reported any cases, and 57 countries have reported 10 cases or less.”

All countries have the power to change the course of this pandemic, Tedros said.

The director asked all the countries to:

- Activate and expand their emergency response mechanisms
- Communicate to their citizens about the risks and how they can protect themselves
- Find, isolate and diagnose every case, and track every single contact
- Prepare your hospitals
- Protect and train your health workers
- Take care of each other

“If countries detect, test, treat, isolate, trace, and mobilize their people in the response, those with a handful of cases can prevent those cases becoming clusters, and those clusters becoming community transmission. Even those countries with community transmission or large clusters can turn the tide on this virus.”, said.



The Government declares the coronavirus state of alert

THE GOVERNMENT MAKES USE OF THIS MECHANISM, PROVIDED FOR IN ARTICLE 116 OF THE CONSTITUTION, IN ORDER TO GUARANTEE THE PROTECTION OF CITIZENS' HEALTH

“We put people's health at the center of our priorities” said the President in his appearance before the media at the end of the Council of Ministers.

This decree, while guaranteeing the food supply and promoting social distancing measures, allows for basic necessities of life. The fulfillment of the decreed measures will be ensured by the State Security Forces and Corps, as well as by the regional and local Police, which are under the direct orders of the Minister of the Interior, and the action of the Armed Forces may also be required.

Likewise, the President has indicated that the next Council of Ministers will approve new economic and scientific support measures which will be added to those already active in the Economic Shock Plan initiated on March 10th. Specifically, they will be developed in four areas: support for workers, the self-employed, businessmen, families and vulnerable groups; flexibility of the mechanisms for the temporary adjustment of activity to avoid layoffs; support for the economic activity of companies to guarantee liquidity and, finally, support for research into the coronavirus vaccine.

In his speech, the President expressed his recognition to the health professionals, whom he considers an example of heroism for their dedication and work during these days, a recognition which he extended to the public authorities and the State Security Forces and Corps.

He also thanked researchers, the world of culture, entrepreneurs and freelancers, the media, blood donors, families and caregivers of vulnerable people, for their collaboration in their respective actions in the fight which, united, he said, we are going to win.



Commission presents guidelines for border measures

THE COMMISSION HAS PRESENTED GUIDELINES TO MEMBER STATES ON HEALTH-RELATED BORDER MANAGEMENT MEASURES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY

The aim is to protect citizens' health, ensure the right treatment of people who do have to travel, and make sure essential goods and services remain available. Commissioners Kyriakides and Johansson have presented the guidelines to EU ministers of Health and of Home Affairs at their first joint video meeting starting at 11am this morning.

PROPOSED GUIDELINES

The guidelines set out principles for an integrated approach to an effective border management to protect health while preserving the integrity of the internal market.

PROTECTING PEOPLE'S HEALTH

People identified as at risk of spreading COVID-19 should have access to appropriate health care, either in the country of arrival or in the country of departure, and this should be coordinated between the two.

It is possible to submit everyone entering the national territory to health checks without formal introduction of internal border controls. The difference between normal health checks and border controls is the possibility to deny entry to individual persons. People who are sick should not be denied entry but given access to health-care.

Member States may reintroduce internal border controls for reasons of public policy, which, in extremely critical situations, may include public health. Such border controls should be organised to prevent the emergence of large gatherings (e.g. queues), which risk increasing the spread of the virus. Member States should coordinate to carry out health screening on one side of the border only.

Member States should facilitate the crossing of frontier workers, in particular but not only those working in the health care and food sector, and other essential services (e.g. child care, elderly care, critical staff for utilities).

ENSURING THE FLOW OF ESSENTIAL GOODS AND SERVICES

Free circulation of goods is crucial to maintain availability of goods. This is particularly crucial for essential goods such as food supplies including livestock, vital medical and protective equipment and supplies. More generally, control measures should not cause serious disruption of supply chains, essential services of general interest and of national economies and the EU economy as a whole. Member States should designate priority lanes for freight transport (e.g. via 'green lanes').

In the same vein, safe movement for transport workers, including truck and train drivers, pilots and aircrew is a key factor to ensure adequate movement of goods and essential staff.

No additional certifications should be imposed on goods legally circulating within the EU single market. According to the European Food Safety Authority, there is no evidence that food is a source or a transmission source of COVID-19.

SCHENGEN AND CLOSURE OF BORDERS

The Civil Liberties committee is closely monitoring the situation and expects the Commission, the Council Presidency and the member states to protect all benefits of the Schengen area."



Now, we are either a Union or we are nothing

THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK HAS TURNED INTO A FAST-MOVING EMERGENCY, FIGURES AND MEASURES ARE CONSTANTLY CHANGING ACROSS EUROPE AND THE WORLD, AFFECTING ALL LEVELS OF SOCIETY

Not since the end of the Second World War, has the global community faced such a dramatic crisis. No government in Europe or elsewhere can possibly think to solve such a pandemic alone. All the Member States must come together, to support each other and to coordinate a concerted action. A piecemeal approach by the individual Member States is a sure recipe for disaster. If we get this wrong, we may not have another opportunity to get it right.

While our thoughts go to those who have been directly affected by the pandemic, we pay tribute to the many people, not only in the health sector, that are fighting against the COVID-19, displaying courage and an unbelievable sense of responsibility. Their efforts have to be supported and praised, while guaranteeing health and safety measures for all of them.

The EU institutions must ensure equal distribution of medical equipment in all affected Member States. The Covid-19 outbreak shows how urgent and fundamental is to

strengthen a universal and solidarity based public health system in order to guarantee access to health services to every citizen.

But solidarity has to be strengthened at all levels. EU citizens need concrete measures capable of delivering an urgent coordinated and common response to reduce the spread of the virus. Containing the virus as much as possible will prevent an overburdening of our national healthcare systems, while also buying time for the development of a vaccine and potential treatments.

We salute the first package of measures that the European Commission is putting to fight COVID-19, a first joint step in the right direction. We support the urgent procedure of unanimous approvals by the EU Council and the European Parliament in the coming days, so to allow a fast implementation.

We know from past experience monetary policy cannot do the job and national measures are not enough. Acting fast and acting together is the only effective answer to a crisis that affects us all.

This crisis calls for a change in our modus operandi: It must be an opportunity to show solidarity, coordination and action. This is a test for European unity. Now is the time to show whether we are a real Union or not.

The EESC calls for exceptional policy coordination and coherence at European level. The exceptional situation calls for exceptional measures.

EU must first guarantee all the necessary supplies to our health systems, by preserving the integrity of the Single Market, and provide proper coordination to support direct action of Member States to contain and fight against the pandemic.



Military Solidarity in action: assistance in the fight against COVID-19 in Europe

FROM THE ONSET OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC, THE ARMED FORCES OF EU MEMBER STATES HAVE PLAYED A CRITICAL ROLE IN FIGHTING THE VIRUS – ABROAD, AT HOME AND IN EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY.

The coronavirus pandemic and its consequences require mobilisation at all levels. As every European is affected either directly or indirectly by the ongoing crisis, many are on the frontlines to contain the virus and tackle its consequences.

ROLE OF THE ARMED FORCES OF EU MEMBER STATES

The military in Europe are no exception:

- they are supporting our partners abroad and
- working around the clock to support Europeans at home.

As a matter of fact, the armed forces of EU Member States are playing a critical role in supporting European citizens in their respective home countries and across EU Member States, in a spirit of European solidarity. They support national authorities, the health sector and civil protection workers, as well as internal security forces, by providing personnel, material, logistics, transportation – and more.

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE TASK FORCE

A dedicated task force was established within the European External Action Service to provide support, in particular by facilitating information exchanges. The task force created a special online platform for EU Member States to share information and best practice of military assistance to civilian authorities, inside the EU, to help the fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

MILITARY ASSISTANCE AGAINST THE CORONAVIRUS IN THE EU

In Luxembourg, the national armed forces – with the support of NATO – set up field hospital tents to be ready to boost capacities to treat COVID-19 patients if needed. 130 soldiers from the Luxembourg Armed Forces worked to pack nearly one million masks for workers so they can reopen their businesses while following safety regulations. In the Czech Republic, military personnel from the armed forces built and equipped nine testing sites and have staffed mobile collection teams throughout the country.

The Belgian Defence has also provided medical equipment, as well as – amongst other things – repatriation flights, disinfection and decontamination teams, material for the homeless to the Red Cross and local authorities, transportation of patients. In France, the French Armed Forces have deployed the so-called “Opération Résilience”, entirely aimed at supporting the population and public services in the fight against the pandemic.

But this support happens also across the borders of EU Member States. It was an aircraft of the Romanian Air Force that flew 15 Romanian physicians and nurses to Milan from Bucharest in April to support Italian colleagues in their fight against the virus. At the same time, planes and helicopters operated by the German Air Force picked up intensive care patients from France and Italy for treatment in Germany.



European Commission unveils EU vaccines strategy

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION HAS PRESENTED A EUROPEAN STRATEGY TO ACCELERATE THE DEVELOPMENT, MANUFACTURE AND DEPLOYMENT OF VACCINES AGAINST COVID-19

An effective and safe vaccine against the virus is our best bet for a permanent solution to the pandemic.

The Commission will support efforts to accelerate the development and availability of safe and effective vaccines within 12-18 months, if not sooner. This complex undertaking requires clinical trials to be conducted in parallel with investment in production capacity to produce millions, if not billions, of doses of an effective vaccine.

An important step towards joint action between Member States has already been taken with the formation of an Inclusive Vaccine Alliance by France, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands. A joint approach will be pursued in the EU's Vaccine Strategy in

the future.

The strategy has the following objectives:

1. To ensure the quality, safety and efficacy of vaccines
2. Ensure rapid access to vaccines for Member States and their populations, while leading the global solidarity effort.
3. Ensure equitable access to an affordable vaccine as soon as possible

The European Union's strategy is based on two pillars:

- Ensuring the production of vaccines in the EU and sufficient supplies for its Member States through advance purchase agreements with vaccine producers through the Emergency Support Instrument. In addition

to these agreements, additional funding and other forms of support can be provided.

- Adapt the EU regulatory framework to the current emergency and make use of existing regulatory flexibility to accelerate the development, authorisation and availability of vaccines, while maintaining standards of quality, safety and efficacy.



Countries led by women coped better with COVID-19

WOMEN WORLD LEADERS HAVE HANDLED THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC MORE EFFECTIVELY THAN THEIR MALE COUNTERPARTS.

Countries with women at the helm like German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Prime Ministers Mette Frederiksen and Sanna Marin of Denmark and Finland, respectively, have received worldwide praise for their success in handling the COVID-19 crisis. That's not to say that men did badly in these positions. The Czech Republic, Greece, Australia and Vietnam are all shining examples. However, few countries with women leaders haven't got the job done.

DATA

Researchers analysed 194 countries and found that those led by women locked down faster during COVID-19 and suffered half as many deaths on average as male heads of government. The findings were published in the e-library 'SSRN'. They assessed policy responses and ensuing total COVID-19 cases and deaths in these countries until 19 May, considered the first quarter of the pandemic. The study took into account factors like gross domestic product, total population, urban population density, the proportion of older residents, annual health expenditure per person, openness to global travel and overall level of gender equality in society. Since only 19 of the 194 countries were being led by women when the research was conducted, the authors created 'nearest neighbour' groups to compare similar countries. For example, they compared Germany (women) and the United Kingdom (men).

SPEED OF REACTION

"Our results clearly indicate that women leaders reacted more quickly and decisively in the face of potential fatalities," co-author Supriya Garikipati from the University of Liverpool commented in a news release by the same educational institution. "In almost all cases, they locked

down earlier than male leaders in similar circumstances. While this may have longer-term economic implications, it has certainly helped these countries to save lives, as evidenced by the significantly lower number of deaths in these countries."

Greater representation of women in leadership positions

Beyond their exemplary leadership roles, women are also on the front lines of the battle against the pandemic. According to a recent policy brief by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, women represent nearly 70 % of the healthcare workforce, exposing them to greater risk of infection. The study also argues for "gender equitable institutions" and "gender equality more generally rather than their women leaders that have facilitated their differentially better outcomes." The women-led countries were more egalitarian, with greater involvement of women in positions of power. "Our hope is that this article will serve as a starting point to illuminate the discussion on the influence of national leaders in explaining the differences in country COVID outcomes," the study concluded.



COVID-19 ECONOMY



Commission sets out European coordinated response to counter the economic impact of the Coronavirus

THE COMMISSION PRESENTS AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE TO MITIGATE THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK, CENTRED ON A EUROPEAN COORDINATED RESPONSE

C OVID-19 is a severe public health emergency for our citizens, societies and economies with infections in all Member States. It is also a major economic shock to the EU.

Instruments to mitigate the pandemic

The Commission will use all the instruments at its disposal to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic, in particular:

- To ensure the necessary supplies to our health systems by preserving the integrity of the Single Market and of production and distribution of value chains;
- To support people so that income and jobs are not affected disproportionately and to avoid permanent effect of this crisis;
- To support firms and ensure that the liquidity of our financial sector can continue to support the economy
- And to allow Member States to act decisively in a coordinated way, through using the full flexibility of our State Aid and Stability and Growth Pact Frameworks.

President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, said: “The Coronavirus pandemic is testing us all. This is not only an unprecedented challenge for our healthcare systems, but also a major shock for our economies. The important economic package announced today deal with the situation of today. We stand ready to do more as the situation evolves. We will do whatever is necessary to support the Europeans and the European economy.”

CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE INVESTMENT INITIATIVE

Under this new initiative, the Commission proposes to direct EUR 37 billion under Cohesion policy to the fight against the Coronavirus crisis. To this effect, the Commission proposes to relinquish this year its obligation to request Member States to refund unspent pre-financing for the structural funds. This amounts to about EUR 8 billion from the EU budget, which Member States will be able to use to supplement EUR 29 billion of structural funding across the EU. This will effectively increase the amount of investment in 2020 and help to front-load the use of the as yet unallocated EUR 40 billion of cohesion policy funding within the 2014-2020 cohesion policy programmes. The Commission calls upon the European Parliament and the Council to swiftly approve this proposal, so that it can be adopted within the next two weeks.

In addition, the Commission is proposing to extend the scope of the EU Solidarity Fund by also including a public health crisis within its scope, in view of mobilising it if needed for the hardest hit Member States. Up to EUR 800 million is available in 2020. The European Globalisation Adjustment Fund has up to EUR175 million available in to mobilise support for dismissed workers and the self-employed.



What is SURE and why is the Commission proposing it?

THE NEW INSTRUMENT FOR TEMPORARY SUPPORT TO MITIGATE UNEMPLOYMENT RISKS IN AN EMERGENCY IS DESIGNED TO HELP PROTECT JOBS AND WORKERS AFFECTED BY THE CORONAVIRUS

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. These loans will assist Member States to address sudden increases in public expenditure to preserve employment. Specifically, these loans will help Member States to cover the costs directly related to the creation or extension of national short-time work schemes, and other similar measures they have put in place for the self-employed as a response to the current coronavirus pandemic.

WHAT ARE SHORT-TIME WORK SCHEMES?

Short-time work schemes are programmes that under certain circumstances allow firms experiencing economic difficulties to temporarily reduce the hours worked by their employees, which are provided with public income support for the hours not worked. Similar schemes apply for income replacement for the self-employed.

WHY IS THE COMMISSION FOCUSING ON SUPPORTING SHORT-TIME WORK SCHEMES?

The SURE instrument is just one element of the Commission's comprehensive strategy to protect citizens and mitigate the pandemic's severely negative socio-economic consequences.

HOW MUCH FUNDING WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THE EU AS A WHOLE AND FOR INDIVIDUAL MEMBER STATES?

Up to €100 billion in total financial assistance will be available to all Member States.

There are no pre-allocated envelopes for Member States.

HOW WILL THE COMMISSION SECURE AND PROVIDE FUNDING FOR THE SURE INSTRUMENT?

Financial assistance under the SURE instrument will take the form of a loan from the EU to the Member States that request support.

To finance the loans to Member States, the Commission will borrow on financial markets. The Commission would then provide the loans to Member States on favourable conditions. Member States would, therefore, benefit from the EU's strong credit rating and low borrowing costs.



Commission announces further measures to support the agri-food sector

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ANNOUNCES A NEW SET OF MEASURES TO HELP THE AGRI-FOOD SECTOR IN THIS UNPARALLELED CRISIS, FOLLOWING THE OUTBREAK OF THE CORONAVIRUS

The Coronavirus response investment initiative plus (CRII+) proposed today by the European Commission introduces exceptional flexibility and simplification in the use of the European structural investment funds (ESIF), including the European agricultural fund for rural development (EAFRD).

CRII+ INITIATIVE

Regarding the EAFRD, the CRII+ will support farmers, rural areas and EU countries by increasing flexibility in the use of those funds, including:

- flexibility in the use of financial instruments: Farmers and other rural development beneficiaries will be able to benefit from loans or guarantees of up to €200,000 at favourable conditions, such as very low interest rates or favourable payment schedules.
- reallocation of funds: EU countries will be allowed to use money left unused under their rural development programmes (RDP), rather than sending it back into the EU budget. The money will still have to be used in the framework of the respective RDP.
- postponement for the submission of annual reports: the deadline for EU countries to submit these reports on the implementation of their RDPs is postponed, giving more time to national authorities to put it to-

gether.

- no amendments to partnership agreements required: EU countries will not have to amend their partnership agreements to modify their RDPs, lifting some administrative procedures.

The Commission, in addition, is proposing further flexibility and simplification of other common agricultural policy (CAP) instruments:

- Extension of deadline for CAP payment applications: the deadline will be extended by a month, from 15 May to 15 June 2020.
- Higher advances of payments: to increase the cash flow of farmers, the Commission will increase the advances of direct payments (from 50% to 70%) and rural development payments (from 75% to 85%). Farmers will start receiving these advances from mid-October.
- Reduction of physical on-the-spot checks and leeway for timing requirements: EU countries have to carry out checks to ensure that eligibility conditions are met.



€8 billion in finance for 100,000 small and medium-sized businesses

THIS WILL ALLOW THE EIF TO ISSUE SPECIAL GUARANTEES TO INCENTIVISE BANKS AND OTHER LENDERS TO PROVIDE LIQUIDITY TO AT LEAST 100,000 EUROPEAN SMES AND SMALL MID-CAP COMPANIES

The European Commission has unlocked €1 billion from the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) that will serve as a guarantee to the European Investment Fund (EIF), part of the European Investment Bank Group.

This will allow the EIF to issue special guarantees to incentivise banks and other lenders to provide liquidity to at least 100,000 European SMEs and small mid-cap companies hit by the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic, for an estimated available financing of €8 billion. Today's announcement fulfils the commitment in the Commission Communication of 13 March to bring immediate relief to hard-hit SMEs, with money able to flow already in April. It is part of the package of measures announced by the EIB Group on 16 March designed to rapidly mobilise support for Europe's SMEs and mid-caps.

LACK OF LIQUIDITY

One of the immediate economic consequences of the coronavirus pandemic is the sudden lack of liquidity affecting small and medium-sized businesses. These companies are typically the most affected in a crisis, and it is essential to support

them with adequate liquidity so they can survive the crisis. However, in a situation of liquidity crunch banks are not incentivised to lend SMEs money due to the sudden increase in perceived risk. That is why EU guarantees supporting these loans are necessary. As of today, the EIF is offering to the market dedicated EFSI-backed guarantees to contain the impact of the pandemic on small and medium sized enterprises and small mid-cap companies.

The €1 billion unlocked from the EFSI under the COSME Loan Guarantee Facility and the InnovFin SME Guarantee under Horizon 2020 allows the EIF to provide guarantees worth €2.2 billion to financial intermediaries, unlocking €8 billion in available financing. The guarantees will be offered through the EIF to the market, via a call for expressions of interest issued today to several hundred financial intermediaries, comprising banks and alternative lenders. Key features of these guarantees will be:

- Simplified and quicker access to the EIF guarantee
- A higher risk cover – up to 80% of potential losses on individual

loans (as opposed to the standard 50%);

- Focus on working capital loans across the EU;
- Allowing for more flexible terms, including postponement, re-scheduling or payment holidays

The new features will be accessible to new as well as existing financial intermediaries already working with EIF, who will extend special conditions to more than a hundred thousand companies benefitting from guarantees under the COSME LGF and the InnovFin SMEG programmes.

The Commission and the EIB Group will continue to work on additional measures and will use all the tools at their disposal to help contain the coronavirus pandemic and address its economic consequences.



EU emergency measures to help farmers and fishermen

FOOD PRODUCERS ARE EXPERIENCING LABOUR SHORTAGES DUE TO THE HALTING OF THE FREE MOVEMENT OF SEASONAL WORKERS, ON WHOM THEY ARE LARGELY DEPENDENT.

While delays in the cross-border transport of agricultural goods were resolved through so-called “green corridors”, which allow the movement of vehicles carrying critical goods, the aquaculture, agriculture and fisheries sectors still face serious difficulties.

The Commission has said that they can be regarded as critical workers, but it is understandable that many do not wish to leave home. Lower production could in turn have an impact on prices. In addition, the agricultural sector has lost important customers with the closure of hotels and restaurants.

SUPPORT FOR FISHERMEN AND AQUACULTURE

During the plenary session on 17 April, MEPs approved financial assistance for the fishing communities and fish farmers affected. Fisheries are facing logistical difficulties in ports, rising prices for the transport of fish products, trade restrictions with third countries, price collapses, loss of markets, concerns about crew safety and limited possibilities for crew rotation due to quarantine.

A number of emergency measures will help the sectors, including increased possibilities for state aid and the introduction of support measures through the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, which will be made more flexible.

Member States will be able to provide support:

- to fishermen for temporary cessation of fishing activities.
- to fish farmers for the temporary suspension or reduction of production.

– to producer organisations for the temporary storage of fishery and aquaculture products.

EU MEASURES

On 15th April Parliament’s Agriculture Committee welcomed the European Commission’s plans to help the agri-food sector, but called for more specific measures, including market measures such as private storage. MEPs also called for the activation of the crisis reserve to help agricultural sectors in difficulty and said that the EU’s agricultural policy would need adequate long-term budgetary support in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among the measures are the reallocation of unused agricultural funds to combat the effects of the crisis in rural areas. A more flexible and simplified European agricultural fund for rural development will allow for soft loans or guarantees to cover operational costs of up to EUR 200,000.

The Commission has also proposed reducing the number of physical checks on farms, extending the deadline for farmers to apply for direct payments and rural development payments by one month to 15 June 2020 and increasing advances on these payments from mid-October.

With regard to seasonal workers, who are crucial for planting, tending and harvesting, EU countries are encouraged to treat them as critical workers, exchange information on their needs and ensure their smooth passage across borders.



MEPs call for an action plan for the tourism sector

LA COMISIÓN EUROPEA DEBE PRESENTAR UN PLAN DE ACCIÓN PARA AYUDAR AL SECTOR TURÍSTICO A SUPERAR LA CRISIS DEL COVID-19, SEGÚN LOS MIEMBROS DE LA COMISIÓN DE TRANSPORTE Y TURISMO DEL PE

The European Commission must present an action plan to help the tourism sector overcome the COVID-19 crisis, according to members of the EP's Transport and Tourism Committee.

TOURISM: A HIGHLY AFFECTED SECTOR

In a debate with Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton, MEPs insisted that the tourism sector needs more support through specific measures, funding, strengthened coordination at EU level and a tailor-made roadmap. The demand for a specific recovery plan and strategy for the sector came from all sides of the political spectrum.

The commissioner acknowledged that tourism was the first sector affected by the coronavirus and is likely to be the one to recover later. "We must prepare a strong response," he said. "Tourism is our priority and we are trying to do as much as possible with the funds available.

Beyond providing security through short-term funding, Breton said tourism should be supported by long-term recovery plans, to be funded from the next long-term EU budget (2021-2027). The commissioner

said he was in favour of an exclusive budget line "with the necessary depth and capacity for the sector to overcome the crisis".

The commissioner also said the ultimate goal is to reform and reinvent the tourism sector and proposed holding a European tourism summit on sustainable tourism in the autumn.

TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS FOR THE SUMMER

Several MEPs called for clarity on travel and movement restrictions that could continue in the coming months, including possible bans on visiting beaches due to social distancing rules. The commissioner explained that security guarantees will be needed before restrictions are lifted. He said that work was underway to facilitate travel and hoped that everything would be clearer before the summer.

Asked about passenger rights and vouchers offered by companies when reservations are cancelled, the commissioner assured that these rights would be protected and recalled that member states can support tourism companies by providing them with liquidity, also

to meet passenger reimbursement claims.

BACKGROUND

MEPs from the Tourism Group of the Transport and Tourism Committee called on the Commission to present a rescue plan for the sector that would ensure assistance at national and European level, through national compensation schemes and financial aid instruments, and establish a crisis management mechanism for the sector.

In the resolution adopted last week on the EU response to the pandemic, MEPs stressed that the transport and tourism sectors have been severely affected and suggested developing a prevention and management mechanism for the EU tourism sector to protect workers, assist businesses and ensure passenger safety.



Support to the EU cultural sector during the COVID-19 pandemic

THE CULTURE SECTOR IS SUFFERING THE IMPACT OF SECURITY MEASURES INTRODUCED THROUGHOUT THE EU TO TACKLE THE SPREAD OF THE CORONAVIRUS

MEPs underlined the special nature of the creative sector and the difficulties faced by artists and called on the EU to provide support, in a resolution adopted on 17 April 2020.

The pandemic has affected everyone and many sectors of the economy are struggling, but the cultural sector is one of the most affected. Events across Europe have been cancelled, festivals, conferences, exhibitions have been postponed, cinemas, theatres and museums have been closed, film and television productions have been suspended, leaving artists without a livelihood.

Many Member States have introduced measures specifically aimed at helping workers in the cultural sector and Europe's culture ministers discussed support measures for the cultural and creative sector during the coronavirus crisis at a meeting on 8 April 2020.

The EU is making progress to protect jobs, but the specificity of the cultural sector makes it difficult for its workers to receive support: there are many individual artists, small businesses and charities. That is why Parliament's culture committee wants the EU to set up specific aid to help the sector overcome the crisis.

SUPPORT TO CULTURE

In a letter to Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton and Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth Mariya Gabriel, MEPs suggest

- protecting artists who may not qualify for national support schemes through the "Creative Europe" programme.
- increase the EU funds available to "Creative Europe" to ensure that they reach the sector.
- create an ad hoc financial instrument under the European Investment Fund to channel funds to the sector.

More must be done at EU level to provide personalised support to workers in the cultural sector until things get back to normal, said the Chair of Parliament's Culture Committee, German MEP Sabine Verheyen of the European People's Party.



ECOFIN: economic prospects and challenges in Covid-19 Europe

THE ECONOMY AND FINANCE MINISTERS ARE MEETING ON 19 MAY TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON THE PROGRESS MADE WITH REGARD TO THE EU'S RESPONSE MEASURES TO THE COVID-19 CRISIS

NEWS ON COVID-19 MEASURES

Update on COVID-19 measures

Regulation on Temporary Support to Mitigate the Risks of Unemployment in an Emergency (SURE)

Implementation of the business safety net through the European Investment Bank's Pan-European Guarantee Fund.

Assessment of the economic and financial situation by ECB

Anti-Money Laundering (LBC)

To further strengthen the EU's fight against money laundering and the financing of terrorism, ministers held a debate on the subject.

On 7 May, the Commission presented:

- an Action Plan for a comprehensive EU policy on the prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing,
- a revised methodology for the listing of high risk third countries with strategic weaknesses in their anti-money laundering regimes.
- Ministers discussed how to further improve the existing AML framework, in particular:
- how to best achieve a harmonised set of rules and which areas and sectors would merit being covered by a regulation;

- how to make better use of data, data analysis and data sharing;
- the possibility of setting up a new dedicated EU authority for AML and its possible competences;
- the revised methodology proposed by the Commission for the identification of high-risk third countries.

EUROPEAN SEMESTER 2020

Ministers welcomed the adoption of Council conclusions on the European Semester 2020 country reports and the implementation of the 2019 country-specific recommendations. These conclusions are part of the annual process of assessing macro-economic imbalances procedures. However, this year, they reflect the exceptional situation linked to the severe deterioration of the economic situation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The conclusions focus on structural challenges and vulnerabilities that remain relevant in this changing and uncertain economic environment, and which could prove relevant for a recovery strategy.

Economic dialogue with Western Balkans and Turkey

In the margins of the video conference of economic and finance ministers, the EU, the Western Balkans and Turkey held their annual economic policy dialogue. This year's

discussion focused on the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the region.

MEASURES TAKEN

The Council adopted SURE, a temporary scheme which can provide up to €100 billion of loans under favourable terms to member states. The instrument enables member states to request EU financial support to help finance the sudden and severe increases of national public expenditure, as from 1 February 2020, related to national short-time work schemes and similar measures, including for self-employed persons, or to some health-related measures, in particular at the work place in response to the crisis.

SURE is one of the three safety nets, worth €540 billion, for jobs and workers, businesses and member states, contained in the Eurogroup report agreed on 9 April 2020. EU leaders endorsed the report on 23 April and called for the package to be operational by 1 June 2020. The total amount of guarantees will be €25 billion.

The instrument will then be operational until 31 December 2022.



Commission disburses €17 billion under SURE to Italy, Spain and Poland

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION HAS DISBURSED A TOTAL OF €17 BILLION TO ITALY, SPAIN AND POLAND IN THE FIRST INSTALMENT OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO MEMBER STATES UNDER SURE

As part of today's operations, Italy has received €10 billion, Spain €6 billion, and Poland €1 billion. Once all SURE disbursements have been completed, Italy will receive a total of €27.4 billion, Spain €21.3 billion and Poland €11.2 billion.

This support, in the form of loans granted on favourable terms, will assist these Member States in addressing sudden increases in public expenditure to preserve employment. Specifically, they will help cover the costs directly related to the financing of national short-time work schemes, and other similar measures they have put in place as a response to the coronavirus pandemic, in particular for the self-employed.

The SURE instrument can provide up to €100 billion in financial support to all Member States. The Council has so far approved €87.9 billion in financial support under

SURE to 17 Member States, based on the Commission's proposals. The next disbursements will take place over the course of the months ahead, following the respective bond issuances.

The disbursements follow last week's inaugural social bond issuance by the Commission, marked by very strong investor interest, to finance the instrument.

President Ursula von der Leyen said:

"The first disbursements under the SURE instrument are important milestones in our push to preserve jobs and livelihoods. They clearly demonstrate Europe's solidarity with citizens in Spain, Italy and Poland affected by this unprecedented crisis. We remain committed to protecting people and jobs across Europe. SURE will play an important role in achieving this objective."



COVID-19 RESEARCH



European team of scientific experts strengthen EU coordination and medical response

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION LAUNCHED AN ADVISORY PANEL ON COVID-19 COMPOSED OF EPIDEMIOLOGISTS AND VIROLOGISTS TO FORMULATE EU GUIDELINES ON SCIENCE-BASED AND COORDINATED RISK MANAGEMENT

This panel, which was created following a mandate by EU Member States, will be chaired by the Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, and co-chaired by Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety.

Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, said:

“Together with our public health professionals, clinical practitioners, epidemiologists and virologists, we are at the forefront of the fight against the spread of COVID-19.”

The panel will provide advice to the Commission on the following:

- Formulation of response measures to be addressed to all Member States in line with the different stages of the epidemic in the EU as a whole and taking into account particular Member State contexts;
- Identification and mitigation of significant gaps, inconsistencies or inadequacies in measures taken or to be taken to contain and manage the spread of COVID-19, including in clinical management and treatment, and overcome its impact;
- Prioritisation of health care, civil protection and other resources as well as support measures to be organ-

ised or coordinated at EU level;

- Subsequently, recommendation of policy measures for addressing and mitigating long-term consequences of COVID-19.

The panel is composed of seven members from six Member States who will act in their personal capacities and independently. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) will participate as observers.

The members will deliberate at least twice a week – if not more – through videoconferencing, based on questions put forward by the Commission or on their own initiative.

The panel’s first official meeting has taken place on Wednesday 18 March. The Commission will publish the group’s agenda and documents online on the panel’s page to ensure transparent, coordinated communications around the EU’s response to tackling the spread of the epidemic.



COVID-19: research package to be better equipped in future

CRISIS-RESPONSE MEASURES SHOULD BE COMBINED WITH A LONG-TERM COMMITMENT TO EU RESEARCH PROGRAMMES, SAYS RESEARCH MEP

WORKING ON NEW MEASURES

EC proposes significant budget package to fight pandemic

EP Research MEP welcomes emergency measures

We have to invest more in research and be ready for the next crisis

Horizon Europe rapporteur Christian Ehler (EPP, DE) applauds the measures taken by Commissioner Gabriel and the pooling of almost €140 million against COVID-19. The Commission was very fast in launching a special call for expressions of interest from Horizon 2020 and involving relevant stakeholders under the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) public-private partnership.

A TEST OF OUR ABILITY TO WORK TOGETHER

Christian Ehler said that the health crisis posed by COVID-19 is focusing minds. The top priority now is to stem the spread of the virus. Behind the scenes, emergency research is working on finding a treatment and a vaccine. The virus' extraordinary rate of contagion should make us aware that our interconnected world has shrunk

considerably and that joint and coordinated action between states is the only way to deal with this crisis said. This crisis is a test of our ability to work together on an emergency situation on the one hand, and to remain faithful to our long-term objectives on the other.

COVID-19: EU AND INDUSTRY TO FUND MORE RESEARCH THROUGH INNOVATIVE MEDICINES INITIATIVE

The Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI), a public-private partnership between the European Commission and the pharmaceutical industry, has today launched a fast-track call for research proposals to develop treatments and diagnostics in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Up to €45 million of the funding will come from Horizon 2020, the EU research and innovation programme.

This call is part of the coordinated EU response to the public health threat of COVID-19 and complements the emergency research funding already mobilised recently under Horizon

2020. You can find more information about the IMI call [here](#), and the EU research actions on COVID-19 [here](#) (source : European Commission).



Coronavirus Global Response

€7.4 BILLION RAISED FOR UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO VACCINES

The Commission has registered €7.4 billion, equivalent to \$8 billion, in pledges from donors worldwide during the Coronavirus Global Response pledging event. This includes a pledge of €1.4 billion by the Commission.

This almost reaches the initial target of €7.5 billion and is a solid starting point for the worldwide pledging marathon, which begins today. The aim is to gather significant funding to ensure the collaborative development and universal deployment of diagnostics, treatments and vaccines against coronavirus.

The pledging event was co-convened by the European Union, Canada, France, Germany, Italy (also incoming G20 presidency), Japan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (also holding the G20 presidency), Norway, Spain and the United Kingdom. The initiative is a response to the call from the World Health Organization (WHO) and a group of health actors for a global collaboration for the accelerated development, production and equitable global access to new coronavirus essential health technologies.

AN ONGOING PLEDGING MARATHON

Today is an extraordinary achievement but also the start of a process to mobilise more resources. The initial target of €7.5 billion will not be enough to ensure the distribution of coronavirus health technologies worldwide, as this involves significant costs in terms of production, procurement and distribution.

To help reach the objectives of the Coronavirus Global Response, the European Commission is committing €1 billion in grants and €400 million in guarantees on loans through reprioritisation of Horizon 2020 (€1 billion), RescEU (€80 million), the Emergency Support Instrument (€150 million) and external instruments (€170 million).

A COOPERATION FRAMEWORK TO ALIGN GLOBAL EFFORTS

A universal and affordable Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT-Accelerator) was the main objective of the 24 April call to action from global health partners. For this, significant funding is needed, as well as a solid collaborative structure, with a clarity of purpose to ensure that the donated money is put to good use and to avoid fragmentation of efforts.

NEXT STEPS

The global response must also include civil society, and the global community of citizens. For that reason, the European Commission is joining forces with NGOs such as Global Citizen and other partners.

The Global Vaccines Summit that Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, will organise on 4 June will mobilise additional funding to protect the next generation with vaccines. As the world relies on Gavi's work for making vaccination available everywhere, the success of Gavi's replenishment will be crucial to the success of the Coronavirus Global Response.



Commission starts testing interoperability gateway service for national contact tracing and warning apps

COMMISSION STARTS TESTING INTEROPERABILITY GATEWAY FOR NATIONAL CONTACT TRACING AND ALERTING APPLICATIONS

To exploit fully the potential of mobile proximity contact tracing and warning apps to break the chain of coronavirus infections and save lives, the Commission is setting up an interoperability gateway service linking national apps across the EU.

An important milestone has been reached as a group of Member States starts testing the infrastructure.

The Commission has kicked off test runs between the backend servers of the official apps from the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, Italy and Latvia, and a newly established gateway server.

Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Single Market, said:

“Many Member States have implemented national contact tracing and warning applications. It is now time to make them interact with each other. Travel and personal exchange are the core of the European project and the Single Market. The gateway will facilitate this in these times of pandemic and will save lives.”

Stella Kyriakides, Commissioner for Health and Food Safety, added:

“Coronavirus tracing and warning apps working across borders can be powerful tools in our efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19. With cases on the rise again, apps can complement other measures like increased testing and manual contact tracing. If used widely enough, they can help us break the chains of transmission. We will not stop fighting on all fronts against the pandemic.”

In the fight against coronavirus, most Member States have launched a national contact tracing and warning app, or plan to do so. The setup of the interoperability gateway service by the Commission follows the agreement by Member States on technical specifications to deliver a European solution to ensure a safe exchange of information between the backends of national contact tracing and warning apps based on a decentralised architecture. This covers almost all such apps launched in the EU.

The gateway, a digital infrastructure that ensures the communication of information between national apps' backend servers, will ensure that apps will work seamlessly also cross-borders. Thus, users will only need to install one app and will still be able to report a positive infection test or receive an alert, even if they travel abroad.

The gateway will efficiently receive and pass on arbitrary identifiers between national apps to minimise the amount of data exchanged and thus reduce users' data consumption. No other information than arbitrary keys, generated by the national apps, will be handled by the gateway. The information exchanged is pseudonymised, encrypted, kept to the minimum, and only stored as long as necessary to trace back infections. It does not allow the identification of individual persons.

The gateway is developed and set up by T-Systems and SAP and will be operated from the Commission's data centre in Luxembourg. After testing, it will start to be operational in October.



Key steps for effective vaccination strategies

COMMISSION LISTS KEY STEPS FOR EFFECTIVE VACCINATION STRATEGIES AND VACCINES DEPLOYMENT

As Europe learns to live with the pandemic, the development and swift global deployment of safe and effective vaccines against COVID-19 remains an essential element in the eventual solution to the public health crisis.

In this context, the Commission is working to ensure that there will be access to safe vaccines across Europe, and encourages a coordinated approach of vaccination strategies for deployment of the vaccines. Today, ahead of the discussion of EU Leaders, the Commission is presenting the key elements to be taken into consideration by Member States for their COVID-19 vaccination strategies in order to prepare the European Union and its citizens for when a safe and effective vaccine is available, as well as priority groups to consider for vaccination first.

President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, said:

“A safe and effective vaccine is our best shot at beating coronavirus and returning to our normal lives. We have been working hard to make agreements with pharmaceutical companies and secure future doses. Now, we must ensure that once a vaccine is found, we are fully prepared to deploy it. With our Vaccination Strategy, we are helping EU countries prepare their vaccination campaigns: who should be vaccinated first, how to have a fair distribution and how to protect the most vulnerable. If we want our vaccination to be successful, we need to prepare now.”

Member States should, among others, ensure:

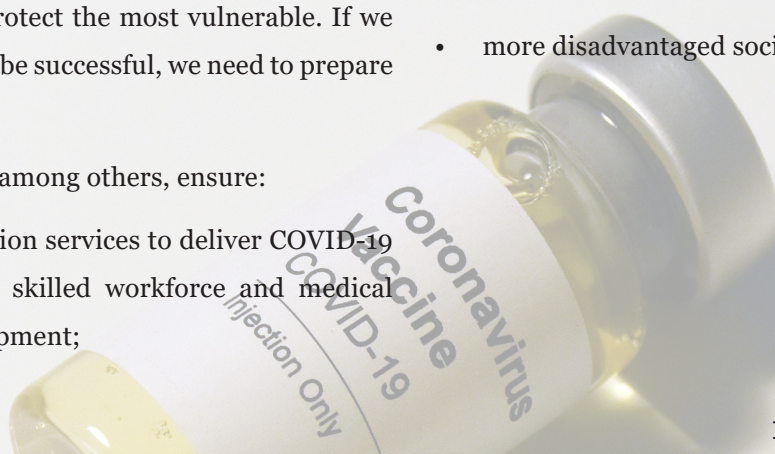
- capacity of vaccination services to deliver COVID-19 vaccines, including skilled workforce and medical and protective equipment;

- easy and affordable access to vaccines for target populations;
- deployment of vaccines with different characteristics and storage and transport needs, in particular in terms of cold chain, cooled transport and storage capacity;
- clear communication on the benefits, risks and importance of COVID-19 vaccines to build public trust.

ALL MEMBER STATES WILL HAVE ACCESS TO COVID-19 VACCINES

All Member States will have access to COVID-19 vaccines at the same time on the basis of population size. The overall number of vaccine doses will be limited during the initial stages of deployment and before production can be ramped up. The Communication therefore provides examples of unranked priority groups to be considered by countries once COVID-19 vaccines become available, including:

- healthcare and long-term care facility workers;
- persons over 60 years of age;
- persons whose state of health makes them particularly at risk;
- essential workers;
- persons who cannot socially distance;
- more disadvantaged socio-economic groups.





BREXIT

UK leaves the European Union

THE WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT WAS APPROVED BY THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON WEDNESDAY EVENING BY 621 VOTES IN FAVOUR, 49 AGAINST AND 13 ABSTENTIONS

In a debate with the Croatian State Secretary for European Affairs Nikolina Brnjac on behalf of the Presidency of the Council, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and the EU's Chief Negotiator Michel Barnier, Parliament took stock of the withdrawal process so far and the challenges ahead.

Commenting on the historic importance of the vote, most speakers on behalf of the political groups highlighted that the UK's withdrawal will not be the end of the road for the EU-UK relationship and that the ties that bind the peoples of Europe are strong and will remain in place. They also mentioned that there are lessons to be learnt from Brexit that should shape the future of the EU and thanked the UK and its MEPs for their contribution throughout the UK's membership. Many speakers warned that the negotiations on the future relationship between the EU and the UK are going to be difficult, especially taking into account the timeframe provided in the Withdrawal Agreement.

Parliament will have its say on future relationship with UK

Parliament's UK coordination group, led by Foreign Affairs Committee Chair David McAllister (EPP, DE), will liaise with the EU Task Force for Relations with the United Kingdom and coordinate with the Foreign Affairs Committee and International Trade Committee and all other competent committees. The EP will follow closely the work of the EU negotiator Michel Barnier and continue to influence the negotiations through resolutions. The final agreement will need the approval of the Parliament

as a whole.

DECLARACIÓN DEL PRESIDENTE SASSOLI

After the historic vote, President Sassoli said that: “It deeply saddens me to think that we have come to this point. Fifty years of integration cannot easily be dissolved. We will all have to work hard to build a new relationship, always focusing on the interests and protection of citizens' rights. It will not be simple. There will be difficult situations that will test our future relationship. We knew this from the start of Brexit. I am sure, however, that we will be able to overcome any differences and always find common ground”.

NEXT STEPS

To enter into force, the Withdrawal Agreement will now be put to a final vote by qualified majority in the Council.

The transition period starting on 1 February is set to expire at the end of December 2020. Any agreement on the future EU-UK relationship will have to be fully concluded before that point if it is to come into force on 1 January 2021.

The transition period can be extended once for one to two years, but the decision to do so must be taken by the EU-UK Joint Committee before 1 July.

Parliament will have to approve any future relationship agreement. If such an agreement refers to competences that the EU shares with member states, then national parliaments will also need to ratify it.



European Commission receives mandate to begin negotiations with the UK

THE COUNCIL ADOPTED YESTERDAY, 25 TH OF MARCH, A DECISION AUTHORISING THE OPENING OF NEGOTIATIONS FOR A NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UK, AND FORMALLY NOMINATING THE COMMISSION AS EU NEGOTIATOR

FUTURE PARTNERSHIP

The EU wishes to establish an ambitious, wide-ranging and balanced economic partnership with the UK. The mandate stresses that the future partnership should be underpinned by robust commitments to ensure a level playing field for open and fair competition, given the EU and the UK's geographic proximity and economic interdependence.

The EU intends to establish a free trade agreement with the UK which ensures that zero tariffs and quotas apply to trade in goods. This agreement should provide for cooperation on customs and regulatory aspects. It should also include effective management and supervision, dispute settlement and enforcement arrangements.

On fisheries, the mandate outlines that the future partnership should

uphold the existing reciprocal access to waters as well as stable quota shares. The agreement on fisheries should be established by 1 July 2020, to give time for determining fishing opportunities after the end of the transition period.

The mandate also contains provisions for future cooperation in areas such as digital trade, intellectual property, public procurement, mobility, transport, and energy.

The EU will seek to establish a comprehensive security partnership with the UK. The partnership should comprise law enforcement and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, as well as foreign policy, security and defence. The mandate foresees that the future partnership should be embedded in an overall governance framework covering all areas of cooperation.

NEXT STEPS

Formal negotiations with the United Kingdom are set to begin the week of 2 March 2020.

BACKGROUND

On 31 January 2020, the United Kingdom withdrew from the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom).

The arrangements for the withdrawal are set out in the Withdrawal Agreement, which entered into force on 1 February 2020. It provides for a transition period during which EU law continues to apply to the United Kingdom until at least 31 December 2020, unless the Joint Committee established under the Withdrawal Agreement adopts, before 1 July 2020, a single decision extending the transition period for up to 1 or 2 years.



European Commission sends letter of formal notice to the United Kingdom

THIS MARKS THE BEGINNING OF A FORMAL INFRINGEMENT PROCESS AGAINST THE UNITED KINGDOM. IT HAS ONE MONTH TO REPLY TO THE LETTER

Article 5 of the Withdrawal Agreement states that the European Union and the United Kingdom must take all appropriate measures to ensure the fulfilment of the obligations arising from the Withdrawal Agreement, and that they must refrain from any measures which could jeopardise the attainment of those objectives. Both parties are bound by the obligation to cooperate in good faith in carrying out the tasks stemming from the Withdrawal Agreement.

On 9 September 2020, the UK government tabled a Bill ('United Kingdom Internal Market Bill') that, if adopted, would flagrantly violate the Protocol on Ireland / Northern Ireland, as it would allow the UK authorities to disregard the legal effect of the Protocol's substantive provisions under the Withdrawal Agreement. Representatives of the UK government have acknowledged this violation, stating that its purpose was to allow it to depart

in a permanent way from the obligations stemming from the Protocol. The UK government has failed to withdraw the contentious parts of the Bill, despite requests by the European Union.

By doing so, the UK has breached its obligation to act in good faith, as set out in Article 5 of the Withdrawal Agreement. Furthermore, it has launched a process, which – if the Bill is adopted – would impede the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement. As a result, the Commission has launched infringement proceedings in line with the provisions of the Withdrawal Agreement.

NEXT STEPS

The UK has until the end of this month to submit its observations to the letter of formal notice. After examining these observations, or if no observations have been submitted, the Commission may, if appropriate, decide to issue a Reasoned Opinion.



Withdrawal Agreement to be fully operational on 1 January 2021

THE EU-UK JOINT COMMITTEE MET VIRTUALLY TO ENDORSE ALL FORMAL DECISIONS AND OTHER PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS RELATED TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WITHDRAWAL AGREEMENT

It follows an agreement in principle reached by the Joint Committee co-chairs – European Commission Vice-President Maroš Šefčovič and the UK Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Michael Gove – on Tuesday, 8 December 2020.

The Withdrawal Agreement, and the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland in particular, will now be implemented on 1 January 2021. This means delivering on our overarching objective to protect the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement and avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland, thereby maintaining peace, stability and prosperity, as well as preserving the integrity of the EU's Single Market.

The Joint Committee adopted five decisions today, namely:

Four decisions on the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland (a decision on the practical arrangements for Union presence in Northern Ireland, a decision on goods “not at risk”

of entering the EU's Single Market, a decision on the exemption of agricultural and fish subsidies from State aid rules, and a decision to correct some errors and omissions in Annex 2 of the Protocol);

One decision on the extension of social security coordination to EEA countries and Switzerland (as of 1 January 2021).

PROTOCOL ON IRELAND / NORTHERN IRELAND

In addition to the decisions taken today by the Joint Committee, the EU and the UK have made a series of unilateral declarations to ensure an orderly, consensual approach to the implementation of the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland, as its substantive provisions start to apply from 1 January 2021.

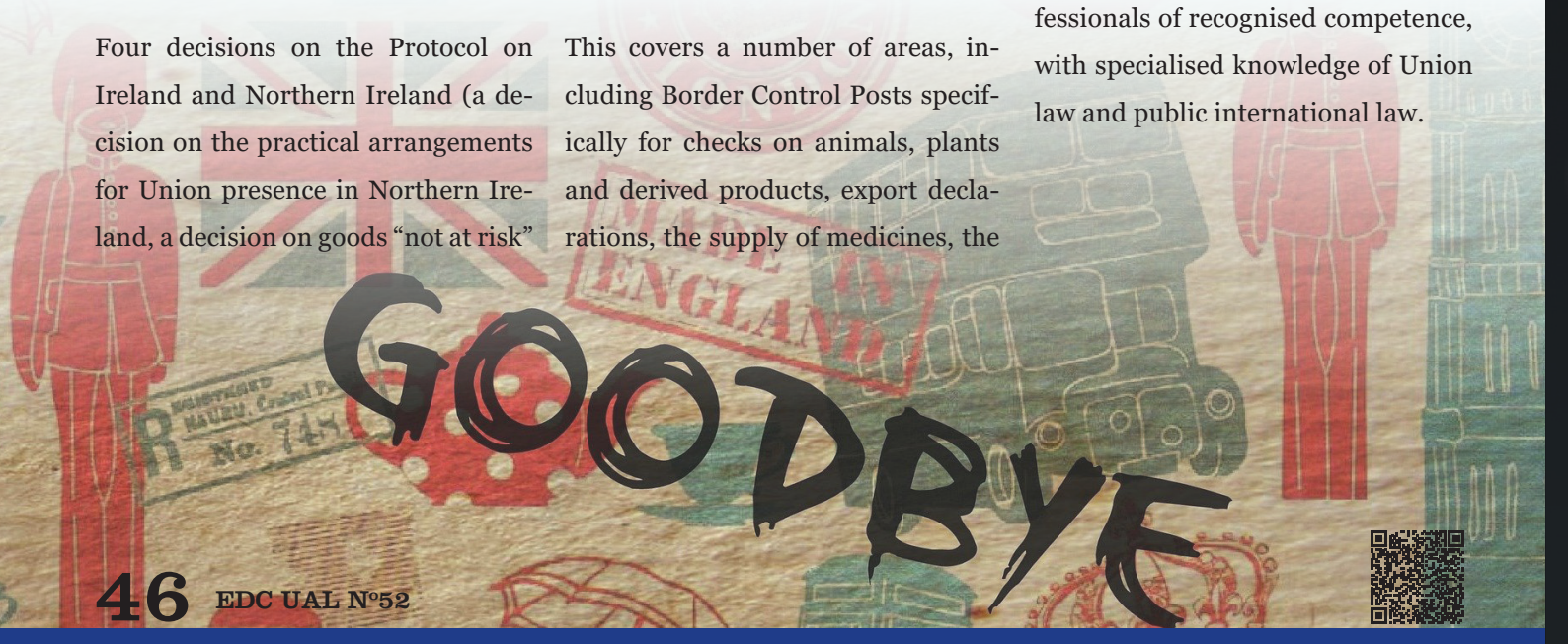
This covers a number of areas, including Border Control Posts specifically for checks on animals, plants and derived products, export declarations, the supply of medicines, the

supply of chilled meats, and other food products to supermarkets, and a clarification on the application of State aid rules under the terms of the Protocol.

ARBITRATION PANEL

The Joint Committee took note of the list of persons who will serve as members of an arbitration panel established under the Withdrawal Agreement, and confirmed its imminent adoption. The EU and the UK will each have 10 ordinary members of the arbitration panel and 5 jointly selected persons will serve as chairpersons of arbitration panels.

The list is composed of persons whose independence is beyond doubt, who possess the qualifications required for the appointment of the highest judicial office in their respective countries or who are legal professionals of recognised competence, with specialised knowledge of Union law and public international law.





Coronavirus COVID-19

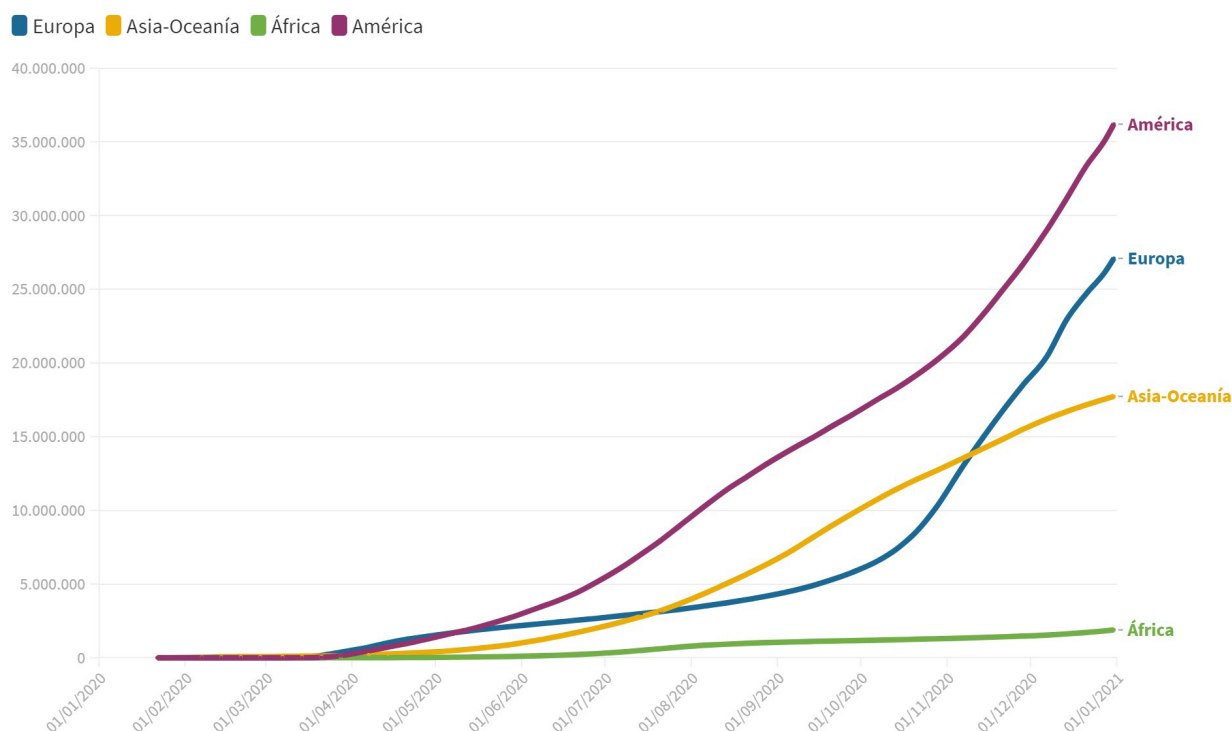
Total Confirmed

128.343

**COVID-19
STATISTICS**

COVID-19 Evolution - 2020

This document collects and analyzes data on the evolution of COVID-19, collected by Johns Hopkins University and published daily by the European Documentation Center of Almeria during the year 2020.



Evolution of COVID-19 cases during 2020 in the Americas, Europe, Asia-Oceania and Africa. Source Johns Hopkins University

On January 24, 2020 France reported the first case of COVID-19, being the first case, being the first known case of COVID-19 in the European Union and in the whole European continent. The first death from COVID-19 also occurred in France on February 25.

By the time the World Health Organization (WHO) officially declared SARS-CoV-2 a pandemic on March 11, 2020, Europe already had 24,518 people infected and a total of 958 deaths.

By the end of December 2020, Europe had a total of 27,321,466 people infected with COVID-19 and 580,699 people had died.

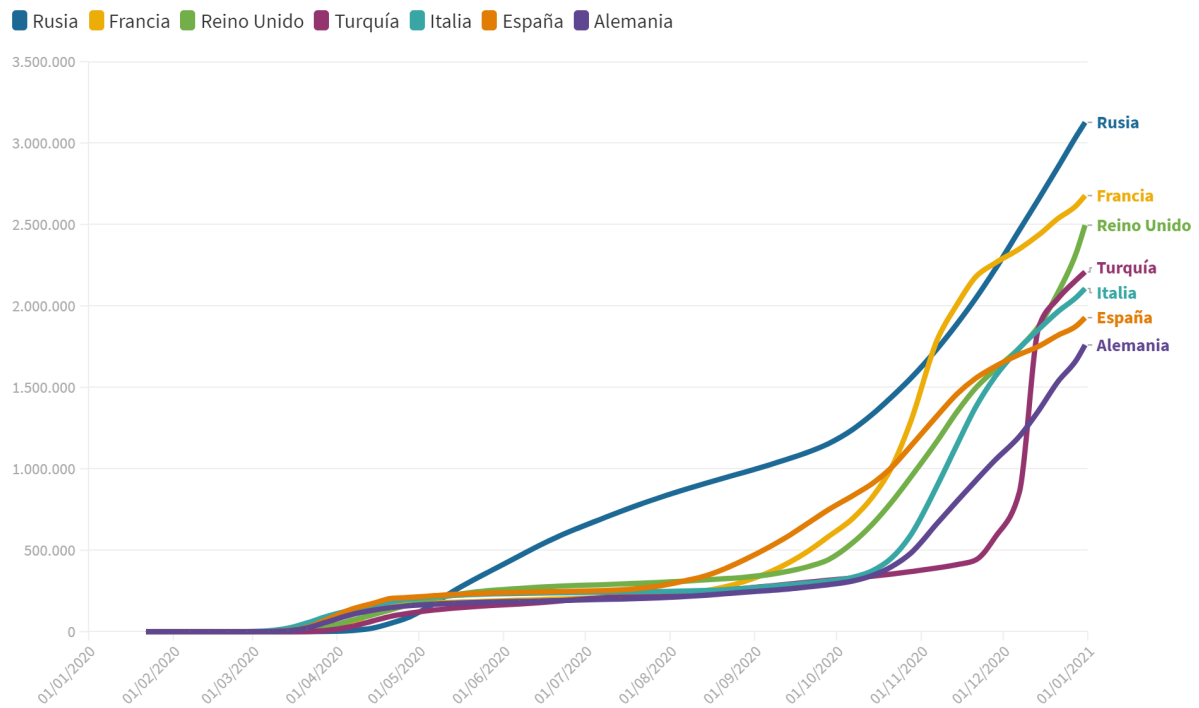
The largest increase in confirmed cases occurred at the beginning of the pandemic. In March, confirmed cases in Europe rose from 2,275 at the beginning of the month to 486,013 cases at the end of the month.

The second wave of the pandemic began during October. Cases during this month grew by 83%, from 6,032,899 confirmed cases on October 1 to 11,052,649 confirmed cases on October 31: 5,019,750 new cases confirmed in one month alone.

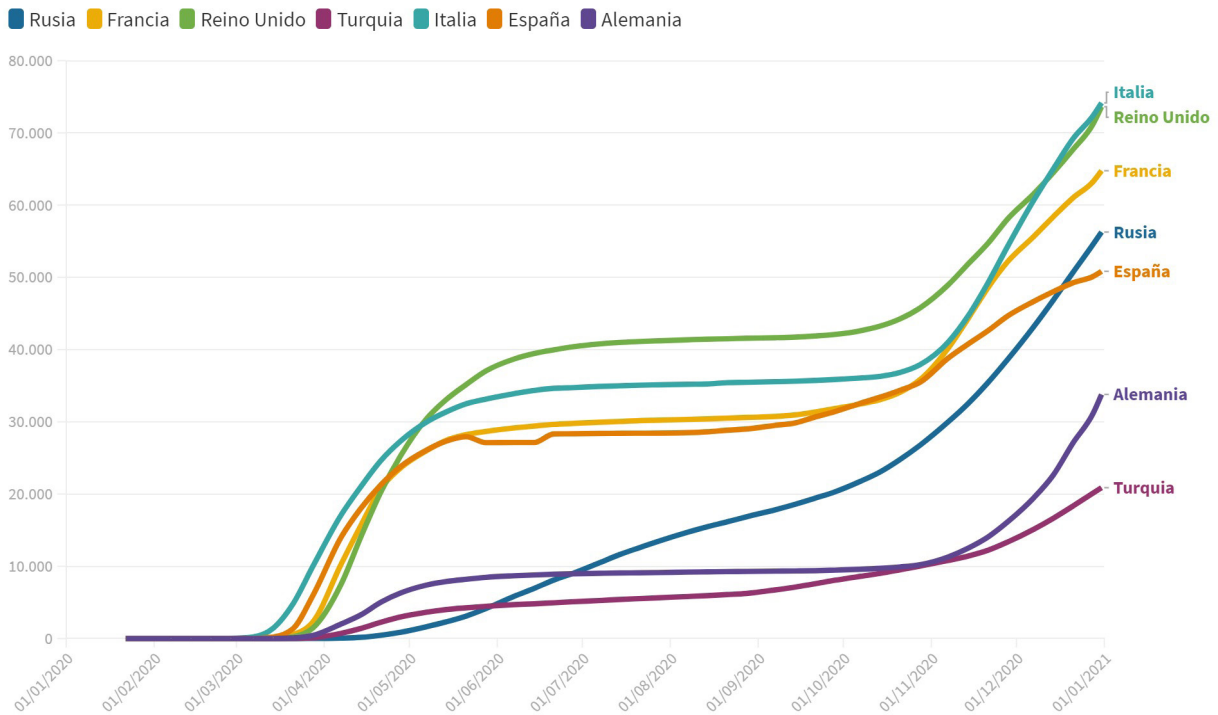
Similar to infections, the largest increase in the number of deaths caused by COVID-19 occurred in the months of March and November. In March, there were 31,384 deaths due to COVID-19.

The highest number of deaths took place during the month of October when 133,301 people died, representing an increase of 46.53% over the cumulative total up to September 30, 2020.

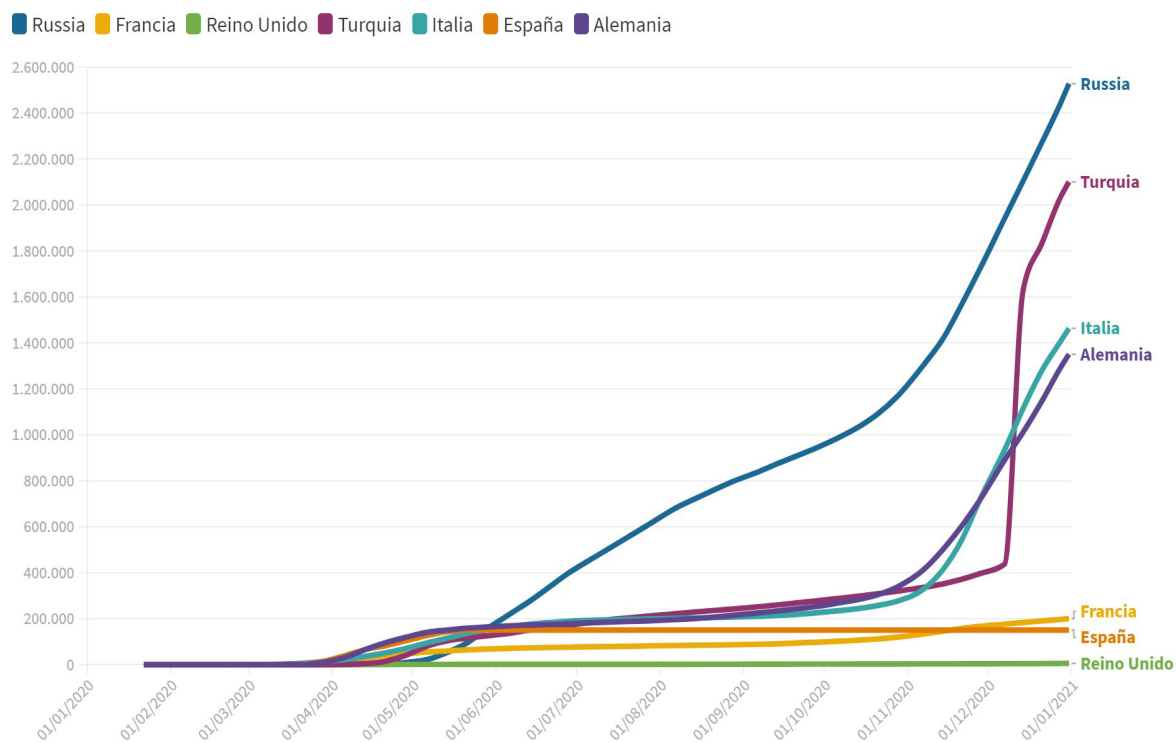
EUROPEAN COUNTRIES MOST AFFECTED BY COVID-19



Evolution of COVID-19 cases during 2020 in Italy, United Kingdom, France, Russia, Spain, Germany and Turkey. Source Johns Hopkins University



Evolution of COVID-19 deaths during 2020 in Italy, United Kingdom, France, Russia, Spain, Germany and Turkey. Source Johns Hopkins University



Evolution of people recovered from COVID-19 during 2020 in Italy, United Kingdom, France, Russia, Spain, Germany and Turkey. Source Johns Hopkins University

As of December 31, 2020, the countries with the most registered cases were Russia with 3,127,347 cases, accumulating 11.44% of all cases registered in Europe; France with 2,677,666 cases accounting for 9.8% of the European total; United Kingdom with 2,496,231 cases, 9.14% of all cases in Europe; Turkey with 2,086,652 cases accumulated 8.08% of all cases in Europe; Italy with 2,107,166 confirmed cases corresponding to 7.71% of all cases in Europe; Spain with 1,928,265 confirmed cases corresponding to 7.56% of all European cases; and Germany with 1,760,520 cases, corresponding to 6.44% of all European cases.

However, if we look at the number of inhabitants, the countries with the most cases are Andorra (with 9,460 cases per 100,000 inhabitants), Luxembourg (8,444), San Marino (7,453), Montenegro (7,446), Czech Republic (6,835) and Georgia (6,098).

The countries that had registered the fewest cases at the end of the year were Vatican City (27 cases), Monaco (875), Liechtenstein (2,136), San Marino (2,248) Iceland (5,754) and Andorra (8,049). However, if we again look at the number of infections per 100,000 population, the countries least affected by the pandemic to date are Uzbekistan (222 cases), Finland (660), Norway (965), Kazakhstan (1,105), Greece (64) and Iceland (1,766).

DEATHS DUE TO COVID-19 IN EUROPE

In terms of the lethality of the disease caused by the virus, the countries with the highest number of fatalities as of 31 December 2020 are Italy (74,159), the United Kingdom (73,622), France (64,759), Russia (56,271), Spain (50,837) and Germany (33,791).

Taking into account the number of inhabitants of each country, the countries where the virus has shown

the highest lethality are San Marino (181 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants) Belgium (174) Slovenia (130), Bosnia and Herzegovina (122), Italy (122), North Macedonia (121) and the United Kingdom (114).

The countries that have fortunately recorded a lower number of deaths are Vatican City (0 deaths), Monaco (3), Iceland (29), Liechtenstein (39) San Marino (59) and Andorra (84). If we take into consideration the number of inhabitants of each country, the countries with the fewest deaths caused by the virus are Vatican City, Uzbekistan (1.78 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants), Monaco (8.24), Norway (8.48), Iceland (8.9) and Finland (10.25).

The following is an analysis of the evolution recorded during 2020 of total cases, deaths and recovered persons in those European countries with the highest number of confirmed cases at the end of December 2020.

RUSSIA

Russia, which reported its first cases on January 31, confirmed a total of 2 cases on that day. At the end of December, Russia reported a total of 2,527,722 cases of COVID-19. The largest increases in Russia occurred at the beginning of the pandemic: March, April and May. In May, cases increased by 254%.

In terms of fatalities, Russia reported its first death from COVID-19 on March 31. This figure increased during April by 4,370%, from 24 deaths to 1,619 deaths. At the end of May Russia again experienced a significant increase of 301% and reached 4,693 deaths. At the end of December, the total number of COVID-19 deaths in Russia was 56,271.

FRANCE

France, as mentioned above, was the first country in Europe to report a COVID-19 infection in Europe. This was on January 24. At the end of December, France had 2,677,666 infected persons. The largest increases in infections occurred in March, when infections increased by 40,113%, and in October, when infections increased by 128% and 795,420 new infections were reported.

The first death occurred on February 15. By the end of the year, 64,759 people had died of COVID-19 in France. In November, the total number of deaths increased by 40%, which means that 15,761 people died of COVID-19 in that month.

UNITED KINGDOM

The United Kingdom reported its first infection on January 21, 2020. By the end of 2020, it reported a total of 2,496,231 cases of coronavirus. The largest increases in infections occurred at the beginning of the pandemic and in October, when infections increased by 119% and 552,018 new infections were reported.

The first death occurred on March 6. By the end of the year, 73,622 people had died of COVID-19. April saw the largest increase of 754% in the number of deaths. In November, 11,738 UK citizens died of COVID-19, an increase of 25%.

TURKEY

The first coronavirus infection in Turkey occurred on March 11, 2020. Turkey ended 2020 with a total of 2,208,652 COVID-19 infections. The largest increases in infections occurred in April, when the number of infections increased 6-fold to more than 120,000. In December, cases in Turkey soared. A total of 1,539,695 new infections were reported, an increase of 230% over the total number reported.

The first death occurred on March 17. By the end of the year, 20,881 people had died of COVID-19.

ITALY

Italy reported its first infection on January 31, 2020. By the end of December 2020, Italy had reported a total of 2,107,166 cases of COVID-19. The largest increases in infections occurred at the beginning of the pandemic, in March and April, and in November, when infections increased by 125% and 892,219 new infections were reported.

The first death occurred on February 21. By the end of the year, 74,159 people had died of COVID-19. As with infections, the sharpest increases in the number of deaths occurred in March, April and November. November was particularly noteworthy, when the number of deaths increased by 43% compared to the total, with 16,750 new deaths due to COVID-19.

SPAIN

The first COVID-19 infection detected in Spain occurred on February 2, 2020. Spain reported 1,928,265 cases of COVID-19 by December 31. The largest increases in infections occurred at the beginning of the pandemic, in March and April, and in September, when infections increased by 63%. In October, 407,071 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in Spain.

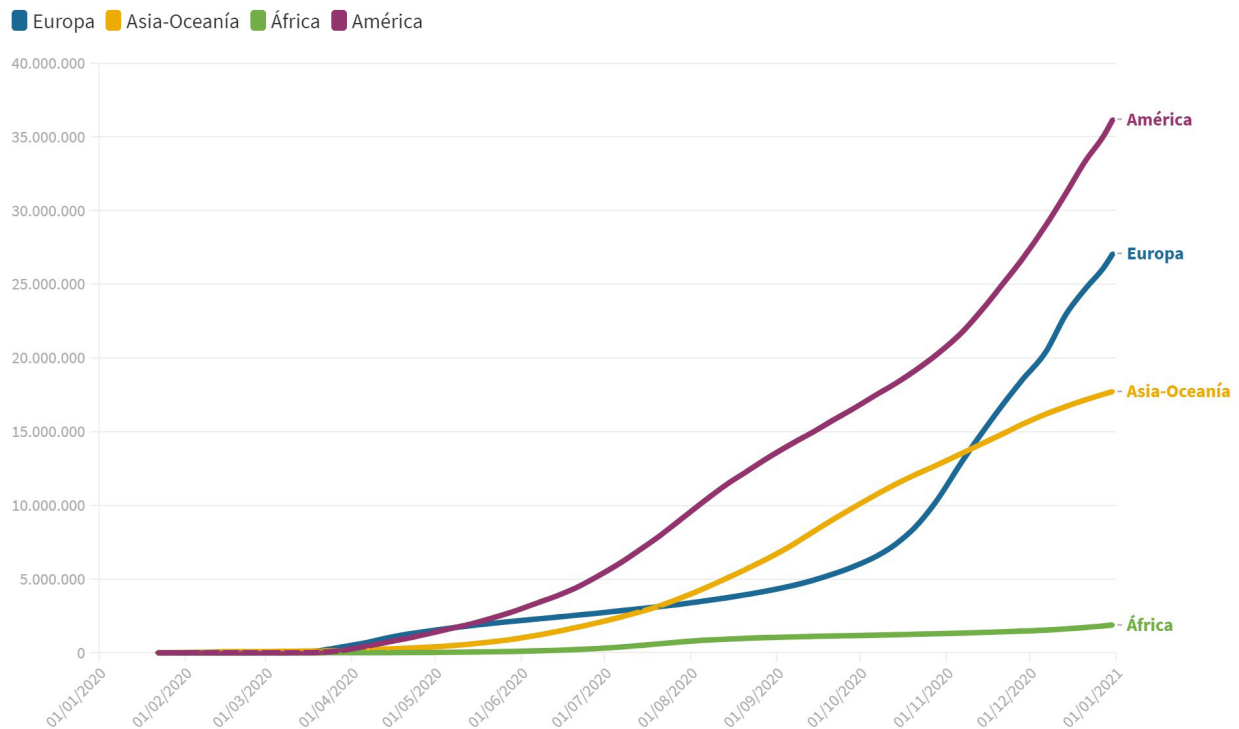
The first death in Spain occurred on March 3. By the end of the year, 50,837 people had died of COVID-19. In November, the number of deaths increased by 25% compared to the total number of deaths reported to date, which amounted to 9,191 new deaths.

GERMANY

Germany reported its first infection on January 27, 2020. By the end of 2020, Germany had reached 1,760,520 coronavirus cases. The largest increases in infections occurred in the months of March and November. In November, 525,666 new cases were reported, which meant that cases doubled that month.

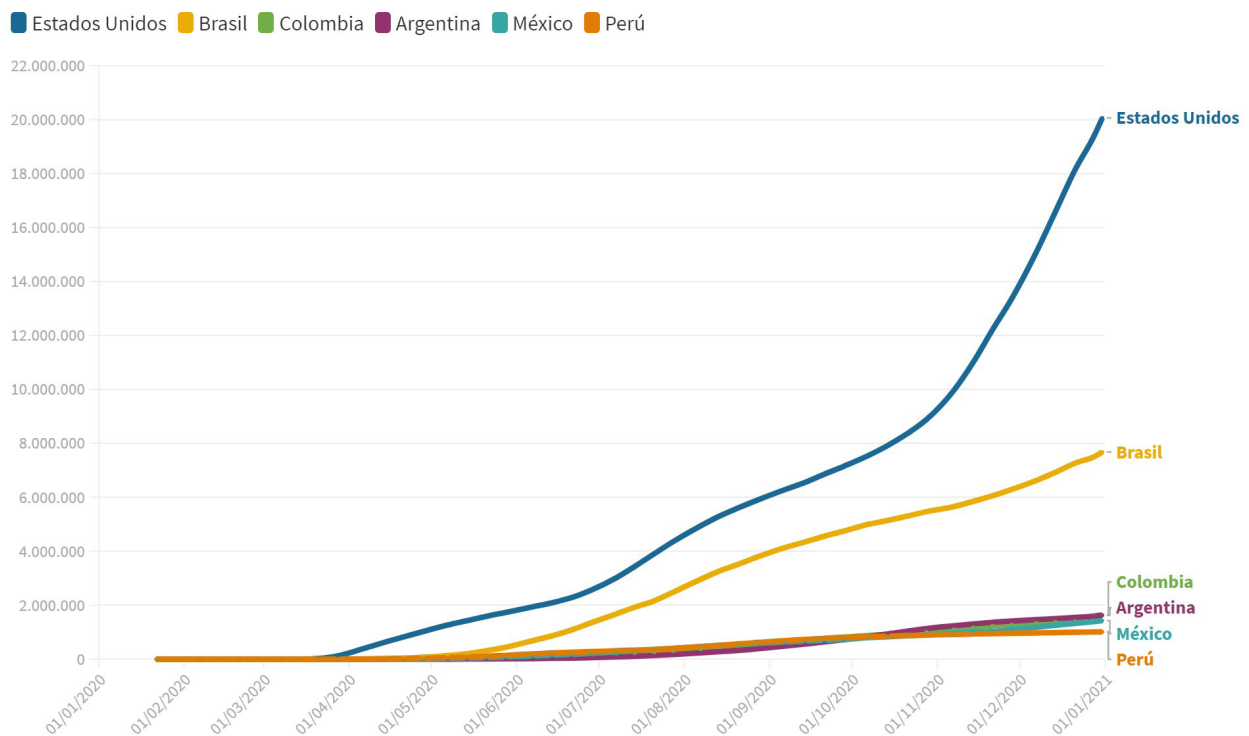
The first death occurred on March 9. By the end of the year there were 33,791 deaths from COVID-19. In December, the number of deaths increased by 96.72%, when more than 16,600 people died from COVID-19.

COVID-19. GLOBAL data in 2020



Evolution of COVID-19 cases during 2020 in the Americas, Europe, Asia-Oceania and Africa. Source Johns Hopkins University

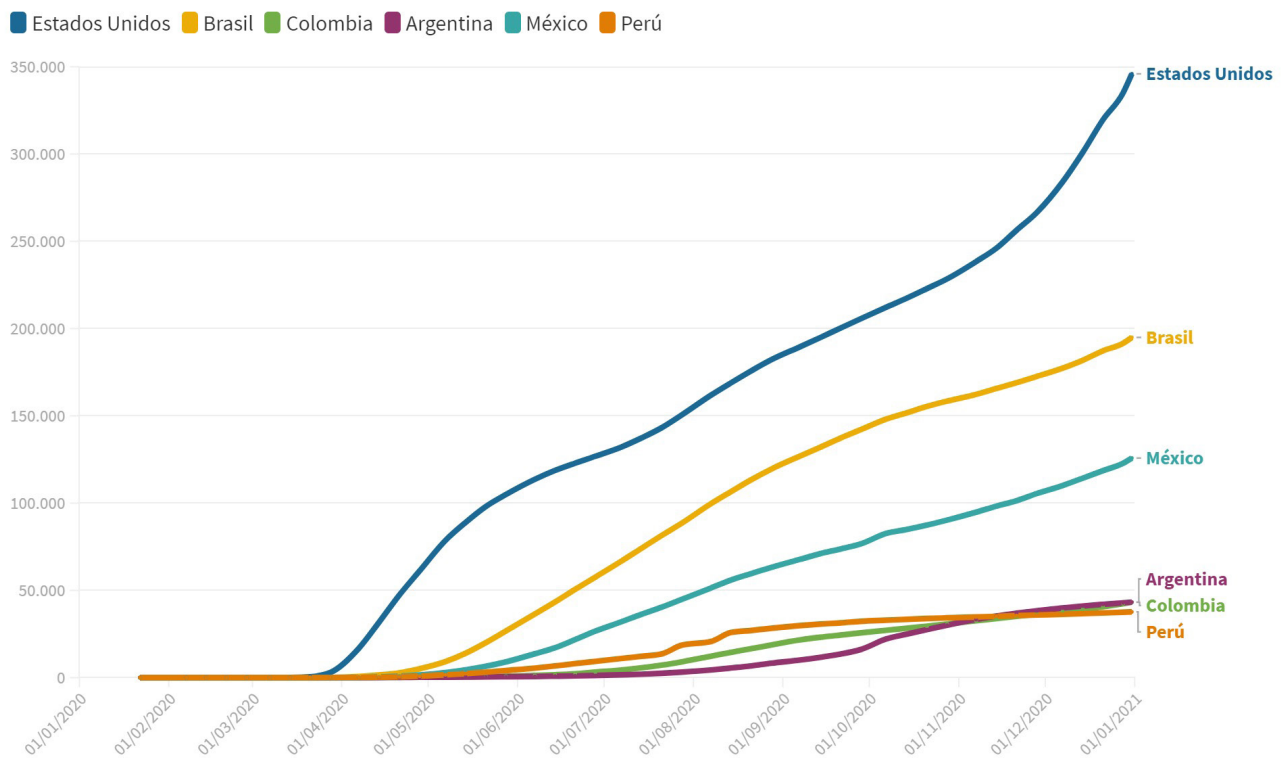
COVID-19 CASES IN THE AMERICAS



Evolution of COVID-19 cases during 2020 in the United States, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Mexico and Peru.

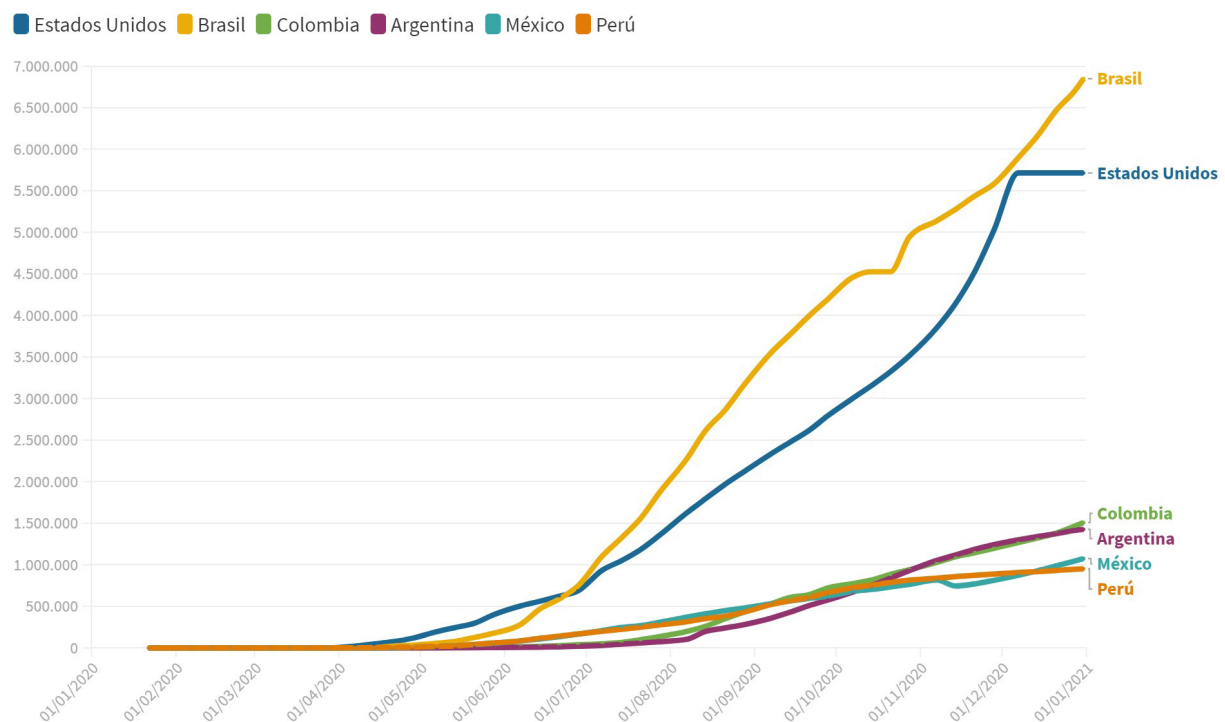
Source Johns Hopkins University

COVID-19 DEATHS IN THE AMERICAS



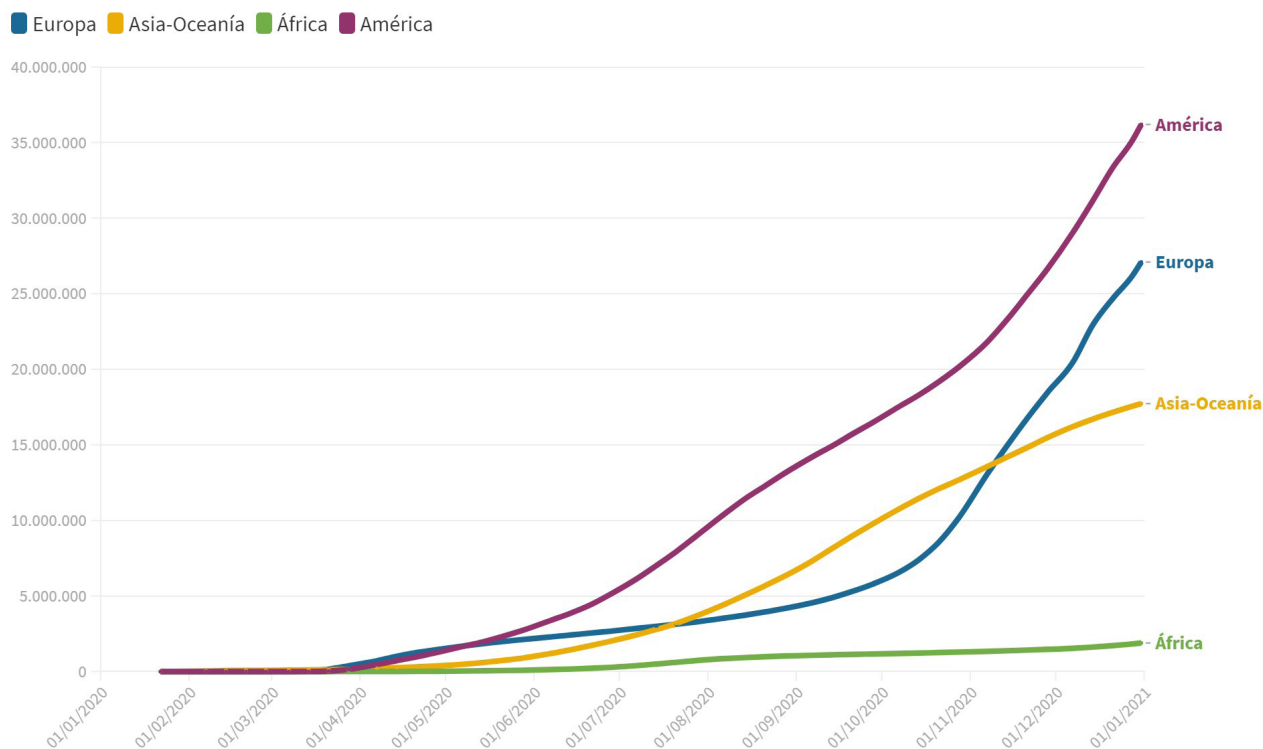
Evolution of COVID-19 deaths during 2020 in the United States, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Mexico and Peru. Source Johns Hopkins University

RECOVERED COVID-19 IN THE AMERICAS



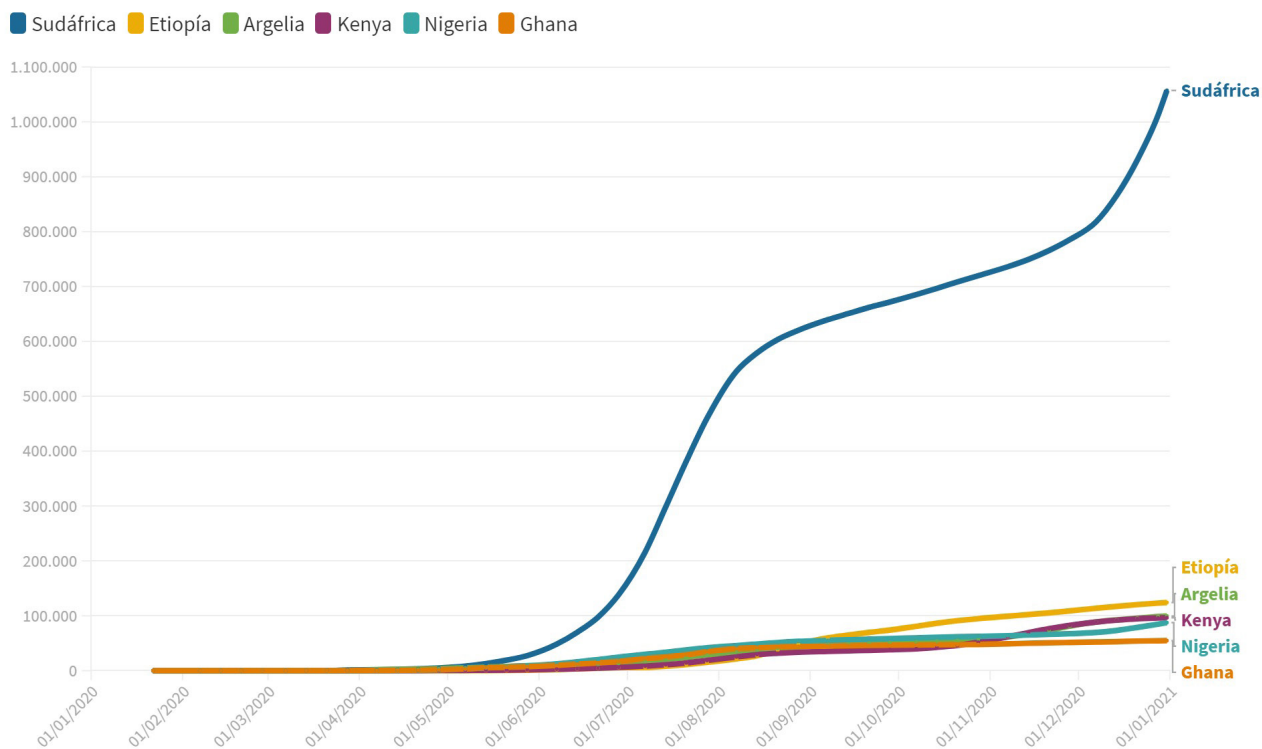
Evolution of people recovered from COVID-19 during 2020 in the United States, Brazil, Colombia, Argentina, Mexico and Peru. Source Johns Hopkins University

COVID-19 WORLD DATA



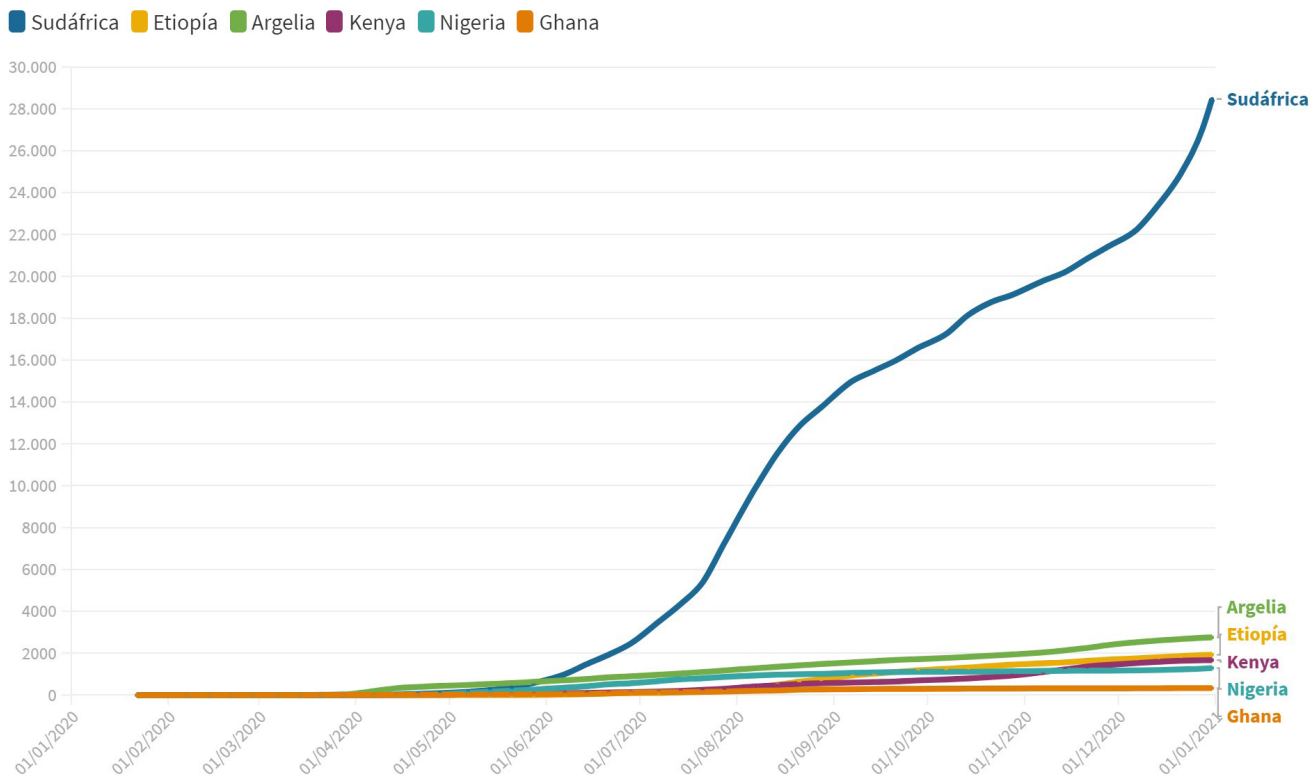
Evolution of COVID-19 cases during 2020 in the Americas, Europe, Asia-Oceania and Africa. Source Johns Hopkins University

COVID-19 CASES IN AFRICA



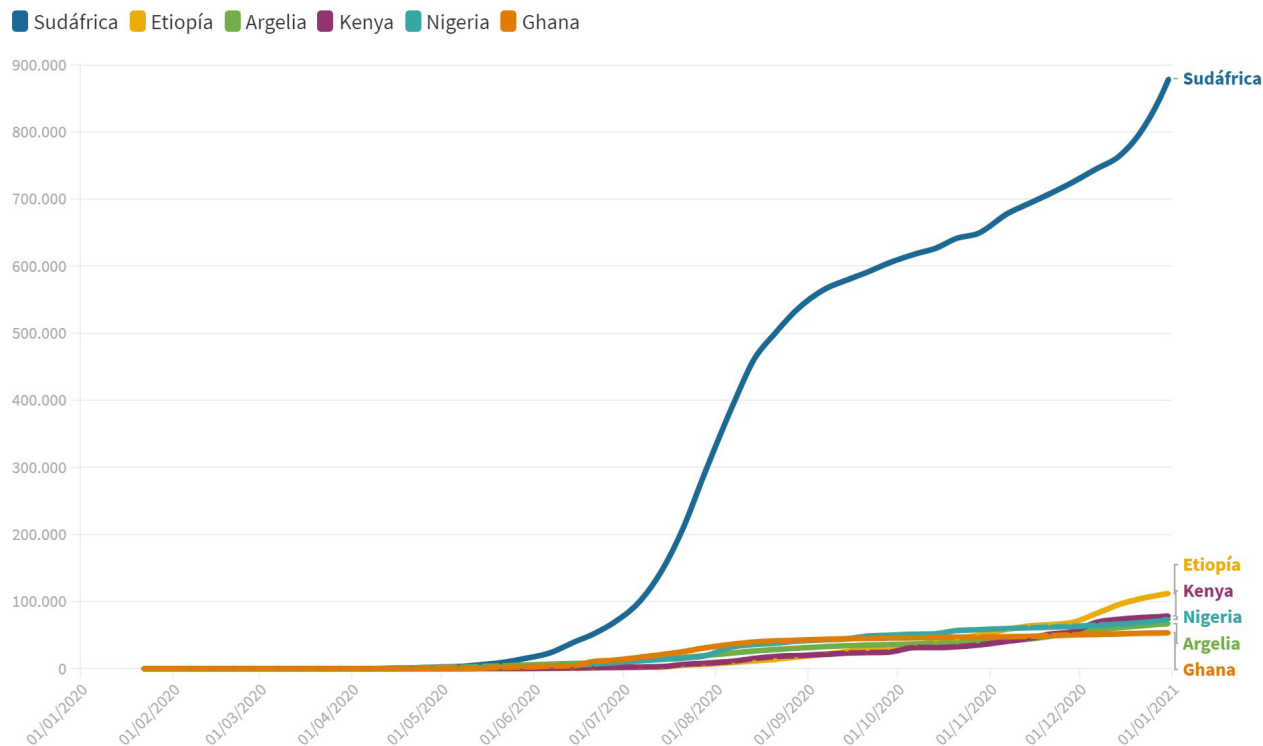
Evolution of COVID-19 cases during 2020 in South Africa, Ethiopia, Algeria, Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana. Source Johns Hopkins University

COVID-19 DEATHS IN AFRICA



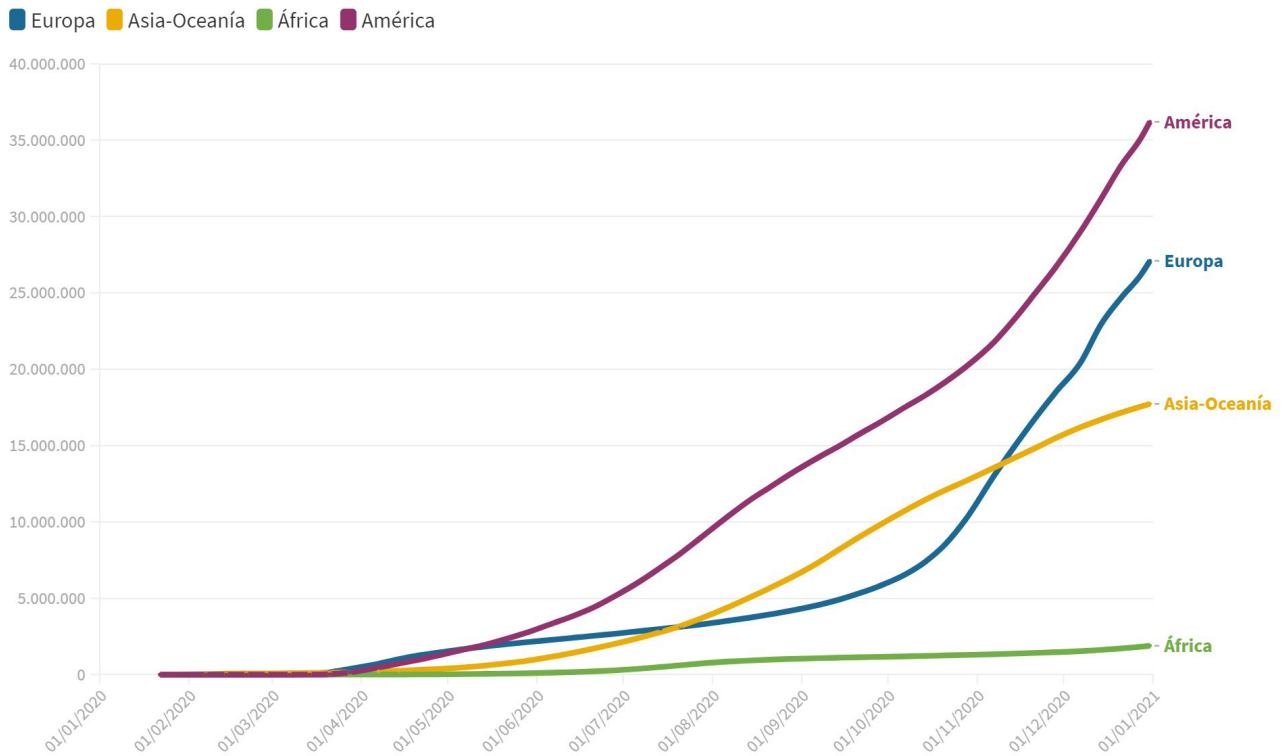
Evolution of COVID-19 deaths during 2020 in South Africa, Ethiopia, Algeria, Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana. Source Johns Hopkins University

RECOVERED COVID-19 IN AFRICA



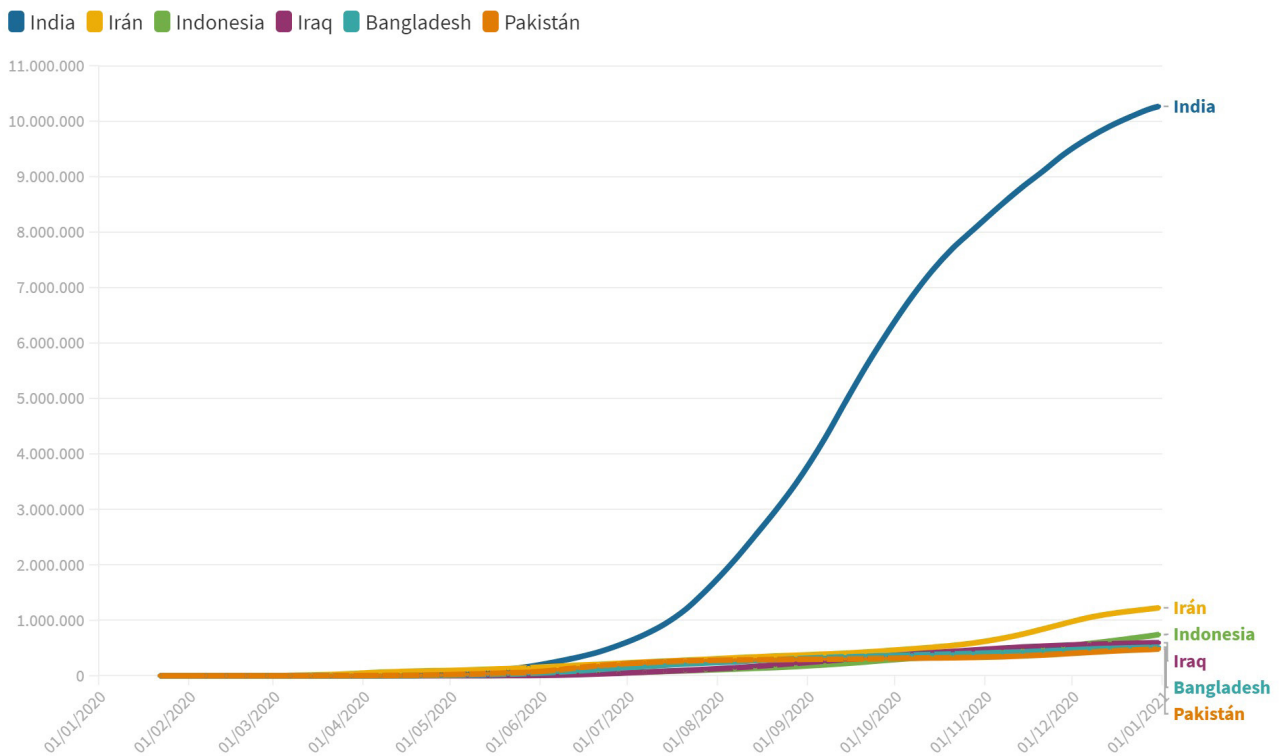
Evolution of people recovered COVID-19 during 2020 in South Africa, Ethiopia, Algeria, Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana. Source Johns Hopkins University

COVID-19 WORLD DATA



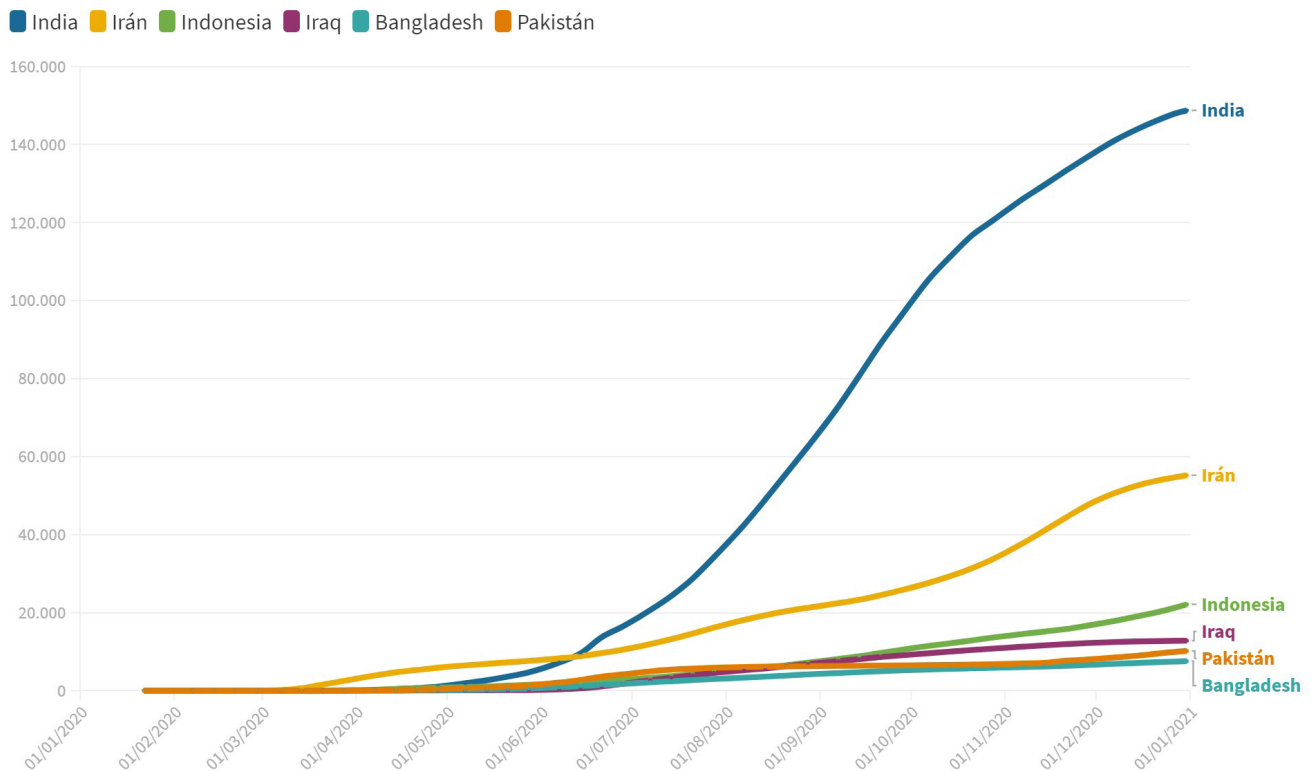
Evolution of COVID-19 cases during 2020 in the Americas, Europe, Asia-Oceania and Africa. Source Johns Hopkins University

COVID-19 CASES IN ASIA-OCEANIA



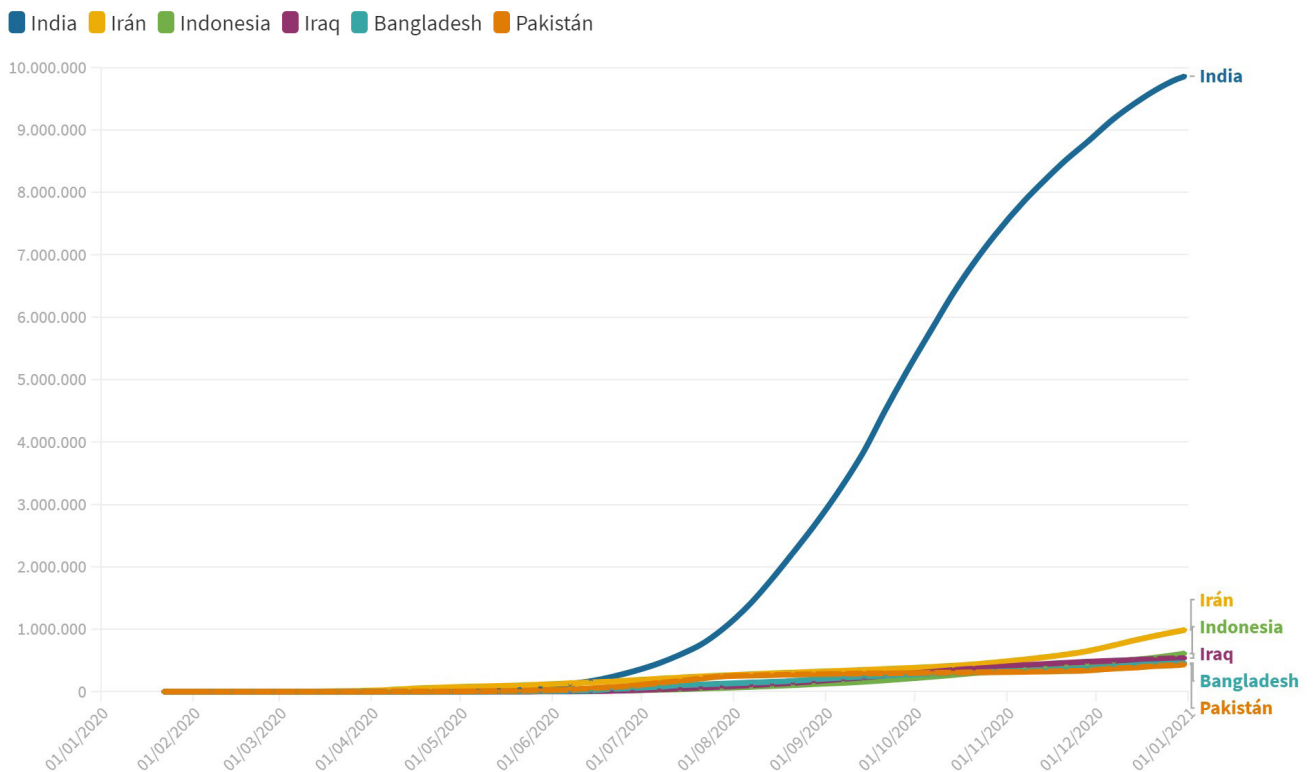
Evolution of COVID-19 cases during 2020 in India, Iran, Indonesia, Iraq, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Source Johns Hopkins University

COVID-19 DEATHS IN ASIA-OCEANIA



Evolution of COVID-19 deaths during 2020 in India, Iran, Indonesia, Iraq, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Source Johns Hopkins University

RECOVERED COVID-19 IN ASIA-OCEANIA



Evolution of people recovered from COVID-19 during 2020 in India, Iran, Indonesia, Iraq, Bangladesh and Pakistan. Source Johns Hopkins University



EU CALLS



COMPUTER ENGINEERING PROFESSOR IN SPAIN

The Higher Polytechnic School needs to incorporate a Computer Engineering Professor to its teaching staff. The Professor will be integrated into the Department of Computer Engineering.

REQUIREMENTS

Professor / Doctor in Computer Engineering, Electronic Engineering or similar.

Minimum length of doctorate 3 years.

Knowledge area: Computer Architecture and Technology or Digital Electronics.

Minimum level of English B2.

Accredited as a Contracted Doctor Professor or Private University Professor.

TASKS

Teaching: Teaching at least 36 ECTS in the areas of Digital Electronics, Computer Structure and related subjects. Student tutor.

Research: It will be valued that it can be integrated into the ARIES research lines and the doctorate program of the Higher Polytechnic School "Informatics Industrial Technologies".

ORGANISATION

University of Nebrija

RESEARCH FIELD

Computer science

MORE INFORMATION



LOCATION

Spain

DEADLINE

31 August 2021

PROFESSOR, AND HEAD OF THE SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCE IN UK

The University of Bristol is seeking to appoint an outstanding academic leader as the Head of School for Psychological Science. Sitting within the Faculty of Life Sciences the School undertakes world-class research and is committed to the highest standards of teaching and student experience.

REQUIREMENTS

You have a demonstrable commitment to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion.

You have academic standing commensurate with senior professorial status in an area related to one or more of the disciplines within the School.

You have a record of success in promoting excellent education and student experience, and in enabling colleagues to be excellent researchers and teachers.

You have proven ability to build networks and partnerships.

TASKS

As Head of School, you will occupy a key academic leadership position within the University. Reporting to the Faculty Dean, you will lead and manage the academic business of the School in relation both to strategy and operations.

ORGANISATION

Universidad de
Bristol

RESEARCH FIELD

Psicología

MORE INFORMATION



LOCALIZACIÓN

Reino Unido

PLAZO

21 de febrero de 2021

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR WITHIN ENVIRONMENTAL BUILDING PHYSICS IN NORWAY

The Faculty of Science and Technology has a vacancy as associate professor within Environmental Building physics. The position is fulltime and permanent.

REQUIREMENTS

Experiencia en investigación científica en uno o más de los siguientes campos: física de edificios, energía en edificios o clima interior.

Historial de publicación de artículos científicos en revistas internacionales de renombre y una cartera activa de proyectos de investigación.

Dominio del inglés.

TASKS

The main tasks for this position will be teaching and research within sustainable building physics. Other tasks will be:

Supervision of PhD and Master students.

Participation in the development of the study program and the department.

Administrative tasks and

Application for research founding.

ORGANISATION

Norwegian
University of Life
Sciences

RESEARCH FIELD

Environmental science

MORE INFORMATION



LOCATION

Norway

DEADLINE

28 February 2021

EUROPEAN UNION INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE TRAINEESHIPS

The OHIM organises traineeships for young university graduates and professionals to provide them with first-hand experience of the work of the European Union (EU) and the chance to participate in intellectual property administration.

The duration of the traineeship is of 12 months and 2 weeks, starting between 1 September and 15 October each year.

Trainees shall be entitled to a monthly grant. The amount of the basic grant will be published annually on the website..

REQUIREMENTS

be nationals from both EU Member States and non-Member States.

have completed the first cycle of a higher education course (undergraduate studies) and have obtained a degree or equivalent before the traineeship starts;

have a working knowledge of one of OHIM's five official languages (English, French, German, Italian and Spanish), equivalent to level B1 in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages; and preferably a good knowledge of another official EU language.

DEADLINE

31 March 2021

MORE INFORMATION



TRAINEESHIP AT THE EU COUNCIL

Each year the General Secretariat of the Council offers some 100 paid traineeships lasting 5 months. Trainees will be attached to a department and work as part of the team to which they are assigned. The tasks of the trainees include attending meetings, drafting minutes and carrying out preparatory work or research on a particular subject.

REQUIREMENTS

Nationals of one of the Member States of the European Union;

Citizens from candidate countries that have concluded EU accession negotiations;

Applicants have a thorough knowledge of one of the official languages of the EU and satisfactory knowledge of another of these languages. In practice, knowledge of at least French or English is necessary;

Candidates have completed by the deadline for the lodging of the applications at least the first cycle of a course of university studies validated by a certificate. The majority of applications currently come from candidates with qualifications in law, political science, international relations, EU studies and economics.

The General Secretariat of the Council is also looking for trainees with qualifications in other fields, such as: translation, human resources, communication, education studies, computer sciences, graphic design, multimedia, agricultural technology, biochemical engineering, health and food safety, energy management, environment, aerospace engineering.

DEADLINE

15 March 2021

MORE INFORMATION



TRAINEESHIPS AT THE ECML

The European Centre for Modern Languages (ECML) recruits trainees twice a year for a paid training period of six months.

The main role of the ECML, which is a body of the Council of Europe, is to serve in general the implementation of language policies and the promotion of innovative approaches to the learning and teaching of modern languages.

REQUIREMENTS

Your application will only be considered if you are from or live in one of our member states

Trainees should hold at least a bachelor's degree (or equivalent) and have a good command of at least one of the Council of Europe's working languages (English or French) through knowledge of both is advantageous and might make the difference in order to get selected.

Trainees must be flexible, well organised and capable of working in an international team.

TASKS

The trainees will be responsible for precise tasks in a specific field. In order to do so, four specialist areas are proposed corresponding to four different types of traineeships:

The web site specialisation

The programme and logistics specialisation

The documentation specialisation

The finances and general administration specialisation

DEADLINE

28 February 2021

MORE INFORMATION





INNOVATIVE SOLUTION THAT WILL ALLOW TRACKING ALL COMMERCIAL FREIGHT TRAINS , COVERING THE WHOLE EUROPEAN NETWORK

The main objective of the prize is to develop an innovative solution that will allow tracking all commercial freight trains, from all railway undertakings, covering the whole European network.

In particular, the single solution (interface, tools, etc.) will ensure:

A seamless tracking (possibly from path request until operation) of commercial trains across Europe in Infrastructure Managers networks and beyond, in synergy with “Telematics Applications for Freight services” (hereinafter TAF) compatible messages and existing online tools.

A service to track commercial trains across Europe, including tailor-made access to data within TAF environment Railway Undertakings (RU), Infrastructure Managers (IM), TIS (Train Information System from Rail Net Europe (RNE)), terminals, port authorities and combined transports operators, etc. adaptable to the needs of different users.

REQUIREMENTS

Eligibility and exclusion criteria: described in part 8 of the Rules for Contest.

All applications will be submitted to a jury review. The jury will evaluate each application against the award criteria. The applications that pass the threshold will be invited to demonstrate their solution.

The 2 best applications shall be invited as finalists in an event with stakeholders to demonstrate their solution and for a hearing with the jury. On the basis of the evaluation report, the Shift2Rail JU will decide on the award of the prize.

MORE INFORMATION

DEADLINE

21 September 2021



PRIZE FOR 'EUROPEAN LOW-COST SPACE LAUNCH'

The challenge is to develop a European technologically non-dependent solution for launching light satellites into Low-Earth Orbit (LEO), which will enable dedicated low-cost launches with committed schedule and orbit.

The solution needs to be innovative, implementable, affordable in development and exploitation phases, and commercially viable. Applicants are required to take a holistic approach and produce results that move beyond (but are complementary to) existing solutions.

An established service for regular launches dedicated to small satellites will contribute to achieve the following goals:

Internal market growth in the manufacturing sector of small launchers and satellites and the downstream services sector.

European leading position in export markets globally in the field of light satellites and small launchers.

Space-enabled seamless solutions for European citizens thanks to operational light satellites and small launchers.

Evaluation and award criteria and procedure

EVALUATION

The prize will be awarded, after closure of the contest, to the contestant(s) who in the opinion of the jury demonstrates a solution that best meets the following cumulative criteria:

Excellence

Technical implementation;

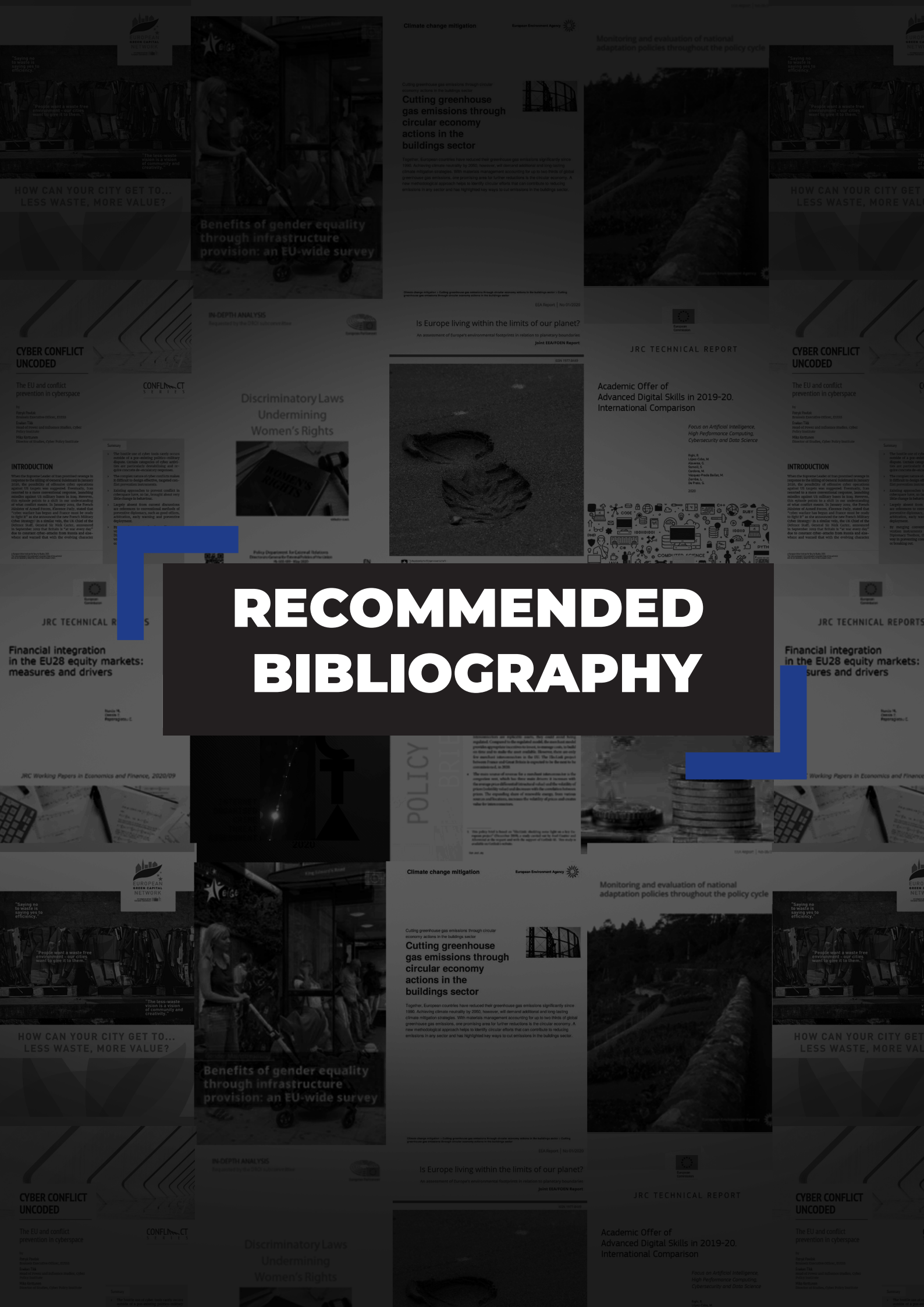
Service sustainability.

DEADLINE

21 June 2021

MORE INFORMATION







TRIBUNAL DE JUSTICIA
DE LA UNIÓN EUROPEA

Title: Case C-449/19 WEG Tevesstraße v Finanzamt Villingen-Schwenningen. Judgment of the Court of Justice (Third Chamber) of 17 December 2020

Summary: The request for a preliminary ruling concerns the interpretation of Council Directive 2006/112/EC of 28 November 2006 on the common system of value added tax (OJ 2006 L 347, p. 1), as amended by Council Directive 2009/162/EU of 22 December 2009 (OJ 2010, L 10, p. 14).

Date of publication: 17-12-2020

Author: Court of Justice of the European Union

CELEX code: 62019CJ0449

Keywords: Taxation – Pre-trial procedure – Taxation – Value added tax (VAT) – Directive 2006/112/EC – Exemption from leasing and rental of immovable property – National legislation exempting from VAT the supply of heat by a community of homeowners to owners who are part of this community



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RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY / REGULATIONS



Title: Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2020/1652 of 4 November 2020 amending Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/220 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 1217/2009 establishing a network of agricultural accounting information on the incomes and economy of agricultural holdings in the European Union

Summary: The objective of improving the position of farmers in the agri-food chain is supported by the common agricultural policy (CAP). The data collected on the participation of farmers in producer organisations will provide valuable information on the effects of the CAP. The proposed new variables should apply to all Member States from the 2023 accounting year.

Date of publication: 09-11-2020

Author: Council of the European Union

CELEX code: 32020R1652

Keywords: European Union, European Union law, EU act, regulation (EU), income, farm economy



Title: Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/73 of 26 January 2021 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) No 808/2014 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

Summary: Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 extending the duration of rural development programmes financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development ('EAFRD') until 31 December 2022 is amended and gives Member States the possibility to finance their programmes carried over from the corresponding budgetary allocation for the years 2021 and 2022.

Date of publication: 27-01-2021

Author: European Commission

CELEX code: 32021R0073

Keywords: European Union, EU Law, EU Act, Regulation (EU), European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)



Title: Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/73 of 26 January 2021 amending Implementing Regulation (EU) No 808/2014 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1305/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council on support for rural development through the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD)

Summary: Member States should evaluate the implementation of their school programme in order to verify its effectiveness with regard to the objectives of the school programme to increase children's consumption of specific agricultural products and to educate them about healthy eating habits.

Date of publication: 01-09-2020

Author: European Commission

CELEX code: 32020R1238

Keywords: European Union, European Union law, EU act, regulation (EU), Member States, school programme



RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY / ECONOMIC AFFAIRS



Title: EU annual regional and local barometer. Counting the cost of the COVID pandemic on the EU's regions, cities and villages.

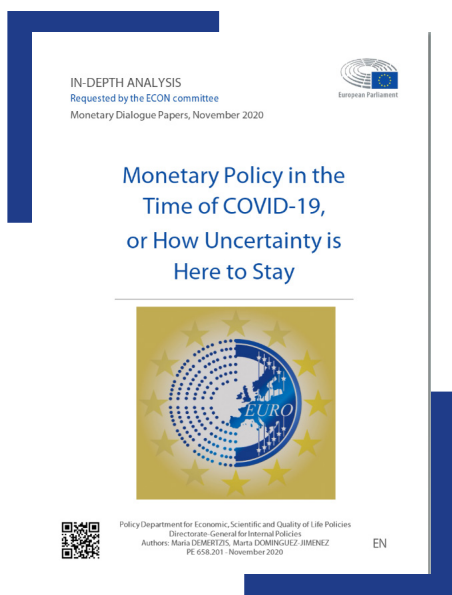
Summary: The report "EU Regional and Local Barometer" is an initiative of the European Committee of the Regions. Published in 2020 for the first time, the aim is to show the state of the regions and cities, municipalities and rural areas of the European Union every year in October.

Date of publication: 12-11-2020

Author: European Committee of the Regions

ISBN/ISSN: 978-92-895-1071-4

Keywords: Rural agglomeration, city, European Committee of the Regions, economic consequence, coronavirus disease, local entity, territorial entity, energy policy, EU regional policy, data processing, European Union



Title: Monetary policy in the time of COVID-19, or how uncertainty is here to stay

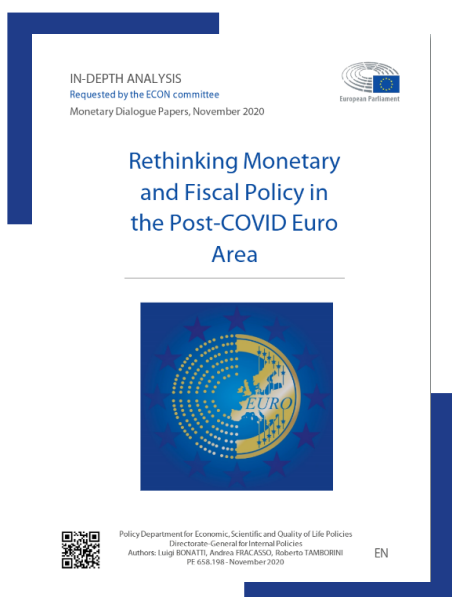
Summary: The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the uncertainty that has come to characterise the European economy. We explore how this uncertainty manifests itself in terms of the ECB's decision-making and the long-term challenges facing the ECB.

Date of publication: 19-11-2020

Author: Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union (European Parliament)

ISBN/ISSN: 978-92-846-7456-5

Keywords: European Central Bank, coronavirus disease, inflation, monetary policy, economic forecast



Title: Rethinking monetary and fiscal policy in the post-COVID euro area Monetary dialogue papers, November 2020

Summary: Following the Convention on the Law of the Sea, the ECB could face the risk of being dominated by political concerns other than price stability. Most of these risks could be reduced by a revision of the euro area governance framework, the creation of a new financial assistance mechanism and the implementation of one-off intervention to reduce the Eurosystem's exposure to euro area debt.

Date of publication: 17-11-2020

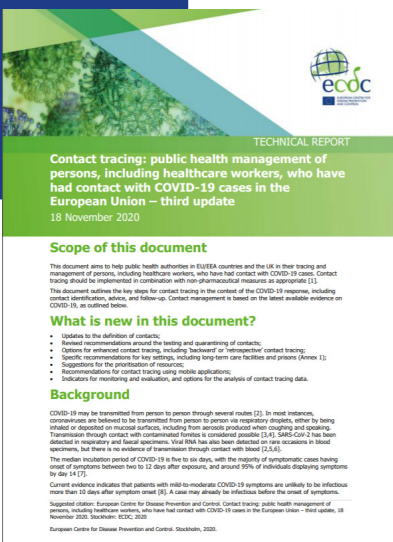
Author: Directorate-General for Internal Policies of the Union (European Parliament)

ISBN/ISSN: 978-92-846-7450-3

Keywords: Macrofinancial assistance, European Central Bank, debt, coronavirus disease, financial stability, Eurosystem, fiscal policy, monetary policy, euro area



RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY / HEALTH



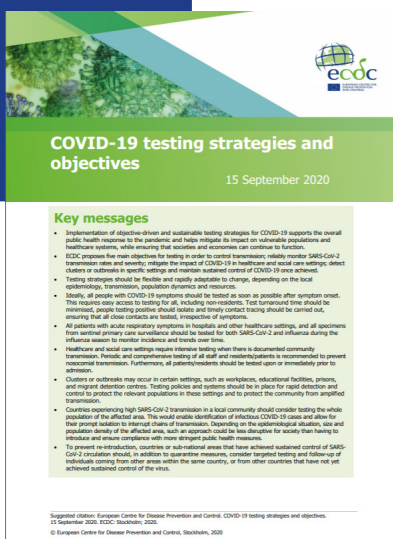
Title: Contact tracing: Public health management of persons, including healthcare workers, who have had contact with COVID-19 cases in the European Union – third update

Summary: The purpose of this document is to assist public health authorities in EU/EEA countries and the UK in locating and managing people, including health workers, who have been in contact with the cases of COVID-19.

Date of publication: 08-11-2020

Author: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

Keywords: Coronavirus, COVID-19, tracking, European Union, European Economic Area, United Kingdom



Title: COVID-19 testing strategies and objectives

Summary: The present document outlines strategies and objectives for the sustainable testing of SARS-CoV-2 in populations in order to achieve specific public health objectives in various epidemiological situations. Evidence is presented for the entire population in general, as well as specific evidence for specific individuals or populations related to particular environments, based on country experiences and the information gathered in the scientific literature.

Date of publication: 18-09-2020

Author: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

Keywords: Public Health, Coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, strategies, tests



Title: Infection prevention and control and preparedness for COVID-19 in healthcare settings – fifth update

Summary: The purpose of this document is to guide health-care centres and health service providers in the European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA) and the United Kingdom (UK) on measures for the preparation and prevention and control of infections (CPIs) for the treatment of possible and confirmed cases of COVID-19 in health care centres, including long-term care centres (LTCF).

Date of publication: 05-10-2020

Author: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

Keywords: COVID-19, coronavirus, orientation, infection prevention, control, clinical diagnosis



RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY / ENVIRONMENT

Title: Implementing the SET plan. Making the set plan fit for the EU green recovery: 2020 report

Summary: Through common agreed R & D priorities and objectives for clean energy solutions, the SET Plan plays a key role in the implementation of the European Green Pact. Aligning national R & D programmes with our common SET programme will make Europe a global leader in clean energy and energy efficiency technologies and thus contribute to the EU's growth strategy.

Date of publication: 23-11-2020

Author: Joint Research Centre (European Commission)

ISBN/ISSN: 978-92-76-25345-7

Keywords: Green economy, renewable energy, coronavirus disease, EU strategy, environmental impact, report, innovation, energy research, energy efficiency, clean technology



Title: How can your city become... 100 % renewable?

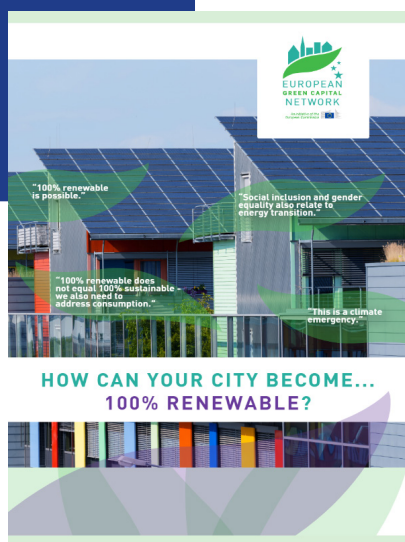
Summary: Cities are the focal point of the transition to renewable energy: They are simultaneously sites of unsustainability – energy-hungry and carbon emitters – and experimental sites for radical decarbonisation. The potential of urban areas to lead the march towards 100 % renewable energy systems is clear and recognised at all levels of government.

Date of publication: 01-12-2020

Author: Directorate-General for the Environment

ISBN/ISSN: 978-92-76-22099-2/2467-2203

Keywords: Economy, Finance, Stock Exchange, EU Member State, international finance city, sustainable development, renewable energy, energy policy, energy efficiency, urban planning, urban area, green area



Title: Destination Earth. Survey on “Digital Twins” technologies and activities, in the Green Deal area

Summary: Thanks to the growing development of digital Twins, for the first time, it is possible to visualise a digital replica of important natural and social phenomena and processes, trying to anticipate their behavior.

Date of publication: 11-11-2020

Author: Joint Research Centre (European Commission)

ISBN/ISSN: 978-92-76-25160-6/1831-9424

Keywords: Technological change, physical environment, research report, applied research, scientific research, environmental research, Earth observation, research project, digital technology



RECOMMENDED BIBLIOGRAPHY / BREXIT



Title: Global Britain, global broker. A blueprint for the UK's future international role
Summary: Chatham House, the Royal Institute of International Affairs, is a leading world political institute based in London. Our mission is to help governments and societies build a sustainable, prosperous and just world.

Date of publication: 10-01-2021

Author: Chatham House; Robin Niblett

ISBN/ISSN: 978 1 78413 440 2

Keywords: Brexit, institutions, colleagues, rivals, European Union, foreign policy



Title: Brexit, how to prepare for the end of the transitional period. Guide for companies
Summary: After the end of the transitional period, there will be significant changes in taxation and customs for companies working with the United Kingdom.

Date of publication: 24-08-2020

Author: Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union (European Commission)

ISBN/ISSN: 978-92-76-19539-9

Keywords: Trade; Economic agreement, customs, international trade, economic status, extra-EU trade, UK, restoration of customs duties, withdrawal from the EU, economic transition, international transport



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