

For a strong and united European response to the coronavirus pandemic and its economic and social consequences

Europe and the world are experiencing a general crisis - health, economic and social - of an unknown extent and depth. It is probably the most serious since the end of the Second World War. The life, health and employment of many millions of people are at stake. Europe is today the epicentre of the pandemic caused by Covid-19.

Today, more than at any other time in its history, the European Union needs to act, with all the means and capacities at its disposal, to help all Member States to deal firmly and decisively with the health emergency and with the economic, employment and social consequences of the pandemic. It must also act to promote, once the pandemic is over, a recovery process that will enable all EU Member States to emerge from the deep economic recession that the economic slowdown is causing.

We therefore call on the EU Heads of State and Government, who will meet telematically and extraordinarily next week at the European Council summit, to adopt at that meeting an urgent crash plan to deal with the consequences of the pandemic and to promote the recovery of the economy. This contingency plan, which must be coordinated with the plans of the Member States, must be based on investments and financial aid aimed at

- Make available to national health systems all the means necessary to combat the epidemic and protect the health of all people.
- Avoid bankruptcy of companies and dismissal of workers, even if economic activity has been temporarily suspended.
- To ensure that all people living in the EU are guaranteed their basic needs for food, decent accommodation, energy, security, etc.
- To promote the revival of the European economies by strengthening the resources provided for in the plans under way, particularly those related to the Green Pact.
- To help the world's least developed countries, in particular those in Africa, by providing them with the resources they do not have to combat the pandemic.

The contingency plan requires an extraordinary mobilisation of resources not currently available to the EU. The Commission's plan, based on the remainder of the current budget, is of course very limited. The ECB has approved very valuable measures for buying up debt and injecting liquidity into the financial system. But, as its own officials say, they are not enough. It is necessary to implement strong fiscal measures such as those we are advocating. To finance these, we propose the issue of Eurobonds or any other type of mutualised European debt.

The EU cannot fail again. If it does not act with the necessary forcefulness, efficiency and solidarity in such a tragic situation, it can jeopardise its own existence. The activation of the "solidarity clause" provided for in Art. 222 of the TFEU could never be more justified. And, as we know from the balance sheet of trade in the single market, it seems clear that it is also in the material interest of the richest countries of the EU to help the financially weaker ones.

Ladies and gentlemen, Heads of State and Government of the EU, we ask you not to disappoint us again and to take all necessary measures to defeat the coronavirus pandemic and to ensure the earliest possible recovery of the economy, employment and our societies.