Article – 10 things the EU is doing to fight the coronavirus

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1. Slowing the spread of the virus

To help limit the transmission of the virus in Europe and beyond, the EU has closed its external borders to non-essential travel, while ensuring essential goods keep moving across the EU through the introduction of green lanes. Additional resources are foreseen for the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, which provides rapid risk assessments and epidemiological updates on the outbreak.

2. Providing medical equipment

EU-countries have speedy access to the first ever RescEU stockpile of medical equipment, such as ventilators and protective masks, under the Civil Protection Mechanism. In addition, the EU has set up a huge international tender allowing member states to make joint purchases of equipment and drugs.

3. Promoting research

The EU's Horizon 2020 research programme is funding 18 research projects and 140 teams across Europe to help find a vaccine quickly against Covid-19. The aim is to improve diagnostics, preparedness, clinical management and treatment.

4. Assuring the EU's recovery

To help the EU recover from the economic and social impact of the pandemic, the European Commission will come up with a fresh proposal for the EU's long-term budget for 2021-2027, which will include a stimulus package. The European Parliament has the final word on the proposal.

5. Repatriating EU citizens

More than 10,000 Europeans stranded around the world by the outbreak have been returned home thanks to the EU Civil Protection mechanism.

6. Boosting European solidarity

The European Parliament has backed new rules allowing member states to request financial assistance from the EU Solidarity Fund to cover health emergencies. With the newly broadened scope of the fund, up to €800 million will be made available for member states this year to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

7. Supporting the economy

The European Central Bank is providing €750 billion to relieve government debt during the crisis, as well as €120 billion in quantitative easing and €20 billion in debt purchases. In addition, MEPs voted to make €37 billion from existing EU structural funds available to EU countries to tackle the coronavirus crisis and support healthcare, businesses and workers.

8. Protecting jobs

To ensure employees can keep their job when companies run out of work due to the coronavirus crisis, the Commission has proposed the concept of state-supported short time work (SURE).

9. Safeguarding the internet

With millions of people forced to stay at home, the EU has asked Netflix, Facebook and YouTube to reduce streaming quality to avoid overloading the web. This allows everyone to use the internet, be it for work or for leisure.

10. Protecting the environment and airlines

Parliament has supported the Commission's proposal to temporarily stop empty "ghost flights". By waiving the rule that obliges airlines to operate their planned take-off and landing slots to keep them the following season, the EU is ending unnecessary emissions and helping airlines adjust to lower demand.