

Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the latest developments in Somalia

The latest incidents on the Kenya-Somalia border and the recent build-up of security forces in the Gedo region have created instability and resulted in casualties and large-scale displacement of civilians. This has had a severe humanitarian impact notably on vulnerable women and children. The fighting in Galmudug at the end of February has also fuelled tensions. Overall, these situations are extremely serious. Furthermore, they divert assets and attention away from military operations against al-Shabaab in Lower and Middle Shabelle and jeopardize hard won stability in Somalia. They are also detrimental to Somalia's relationships with its neighbours and partners. Urgent steps must be taken to de-escalate.

Full cooperation is needed between the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States as well as amongst regional partners. Lasting solutions must be found to safeguard the ongoing efforts to degrade al-Shabaab, to build-up integrated Somali security forces and to create a secure and enabling environment for state building and development.

All parties involved should do everything necessary to reduce tensions, exercise restraint, respect the integrity of sovereign borders and seek peaceful resolution of differences between one another.

The European Union underlines the importance of stability and good cooperation among Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia in their common border area where they have shared interests. The engagement and outreach from the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, (IGAD) is welcomed in this regard, as well as the recent communication between the Presidents of Somalia and Kenya on 5 March. An anticipated summit between the heads of state and government of Somalia and its neighbours is urgent. It should consider incorporating steps to verify and monitor the situation on the ground as a confidence building measure.

The European Union has always been a strong supporter of Somali state building, notably in the economic and security areas. Recently this commitment was translated into a firm support to Somalia's debt relief process. The current military situation also calls for an urgent discussion on the state of implementation of agreed joint priorities in the political and security sphere.

This discussion is an important element to continue to strengthen the effective cooperation between Somalia and its international partners in the spirit of mutual accountability and partnership.

Press release – Sassoli: Positive measures from Commission. Europe united in face of common challenge of COVID-19



“Not since the end of the Second World War have we faced such a dramatic crisis. Today the European Union is taking action. We had no doubt that it would.

This situation is so serious that no European government could think of responding alone. The package of measures put forward by the European Commission today to fight COVID-19 goes in the right direction.

All European countries will receive support for their health systems. This means the supply of materials, support to hospitals, and financing research to develop a vaccine as soon as possible. The first priority is saving human lives.

The other commitment is to protect jobs, businesses and the economy. To do this: enough with austerity. Countries are authorized to spend everything that is necessary to guarantee support for employees, self-employed workers, businesses, and banks. In addition to the commitments made by member states, at least 37 billion euros is ready and available from the Union budget.

It is important to emphasize that governments will be able to use all the flexibility provided for in the Stability and Growth Pact, and that state aid will be allowed for sectors and businesses affected by the crisis.

Now the Council and Parliament must approve these first proposals. I can assure you that Parliament will do this as soon as possible.

To save our countries, we must act together in Europe. We should do more.

Today the watchword for Europe is solidarity. No one will be left alone and no one will act alone.”

To watch and download the video statement, [click here](#).

[CPVO adjusts working processes in reaction to COVID-19](#)

In consequence of the COVID-19 pandemic situation and the precautionary measures taken by governments and public authorities across the European Union, the CPVO has decided to adopt “social distancing measures” and to adjust our working processes.

The following measures will apply as of Monday 16 March 2020 and will last until further notice:

- All CPVO personnel in non-critical functions will telework and the presence of CPVO personnel in critical functions at CPVO premises will be limited to what is strictly necessary.
- All non-essential meetings with external visitors at CPVO’s premises are canceled and CPVO staff members will not participate in non-essential external meetings in March and April. In replacement of such meetings, phone and video-conferencing calls may be organised.
- The CPVO Administrative Council meeting which was meant to take place on 1st April is canceled and will be processed through written procedure.

During the last few weeks the CPVO has been monitoring carefully the situation, on the basis of the information made available by the EU institutions and the French authorities.

Today, while all efforts are made to ensure business continuity and limit disruption as much as possible, CPVO’s priority is to preserve the well-being and health safety of its personnel, clients, and institutional and industry partners.

The CPVO has set up a COVID-19 Business Continuity Team (BCP), composed of CPVO’s President and a limited number of staff members. The BCP monitors the situation and takes all decisions needed to preserve both CPVO’s business continuity and the health safety of its staff, external stakeholders and

clients. The BCP is in regular contact with all relevant public authorities at EU, national and local levels.

We will update this webpage as often as necessary to provide CPVO's clients and stakeholders with accurate and timely information which may have an impact on CPVO business activities.

[Press release – Parliament mobilised to channel EU funds to those affected by Coronavirus pandemic](#)



EP Regional Development Committee Chair, Younous Omarjee (GUE/NGL, FR) said: "Europe must show solidarity right now. Cohesion policy is intrinsically linked to solidarity and now more than ever, it must rise to the challenge, so that it is implemented as efficiently as possible. The Regional Development Committee will do its utmost to ensure that money is made available where it is most needed."

Next steps

Amending EU funding rules falls under the co-decision procedure, so both

Parliament and Council will need to adopt it. The Regional Development Committee bureau and coordinators will discuss the procedure and announce next steps to be taken as soon as possible. The committee will aim to conclude its examination of the proposal as quickly as possible.

The adoption of the amendment will allow the funding to be channelled towards affected areas and sectors.

Background

On 10 March, the European Commission announced it would bring out a “Corona Response Investment Initiative” directed at health care systems, SMEs, labour markets and other vulnerable parts of the EU member states’ economies. A legislative proposal to amend the Common Provisions Regulation, the European Regional Development Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund regulations were published on 13 March.

Commission proposed to direct EUR 37 billion under the cohesion policy to the fight against the Coronavirus crisis, by means of relinquishing this year its obligation to request the return of 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. In addition, the Commission proposed 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.

[Press release – Transport Committee pledges to stop empty flights due to COVID-19](#)



“It is in no one’s interest to fly empty aircraft and it comes at great environmental and economic cost. We need to stop this practice and make sure that the aviation industry can cope with the current extraordinary circumstances caused by the COVID-19 outbreak,” said Transport Committee Chair [Karima Delli](#) (Greens/EFA, FR).

“The ‘use it or lose it’ rule has already been temporarily suspended on a number of occasions in the past and the Parliament is committed to finding a quick solution with the Council,” added the Chair.

The slot allocation rules always concern the next corresponding season. The slots for summer 2020 were already confirmed last year. This means that there will be enough time to work and vote on this priority file.

Next steps

The Parliament is now looking into the Commission’s proposal and will announce the precise details of the next procedural steps to start legislative work together with the Council in the coming days.

Background

Under current rules (EU Airport Slots Regulation (EEC 95/93)), aircraft take-off and landing slots are allocated in the EU solely by independent coordinators for the summer or winter scheduling seasons. If an air carrier has used a series of slots for at least 80% of the time during a given season, it will retain it in the next corresponding season (this convention is referred to as ‘historical slots’, ‘grandfather rights’ or the ‘80-20

rule'). Otherwise, the slots go back into the pool for reallocation.

Consequently, slots that are under-used by air carriers are reallocated (known as the 'use it or lose it' rule).

The 'use it or lose it' rule has, however, been temporarily suspended on a number of occasions in the past, for example following the events of 11 September 2001; during the Iraq war; during the SARS epidemic in 2003 and, in 2009, in response to the economic crisis and its impact on air carriers.