

# WHO and EIB strengthen efforts to combat COVID-19 and build resilient health systems to face future pandemics

- WHO and the European Investment Bank enhance cooperation to support countries in addressing the health impact of COVID-19
- The first phase will address urgent needs and strengthen primary health care in ten African countries
- Enhanced WHO-EIB partnership will scale up financing to assure the chain of essential supplies, including personal protective equipment, diagnostics and clinical management
- New initiative will accelerate investment in health preparedness and primary health care with a focus on health work force, infrastructure, and water, sanitation and hygiene
- The initiative involves measures to address the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance

The World Health Organization and the European Investment Bank will boost cooperation to strengthen public health, supply of essential equipment, training and hygiene investment in countries most vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new partnership between the United Nations health agency and the world's largest international public bank, announced at WHO headquarters in Geneva earlier today, will help increase resilience to reduce the health and social impact of future health emergencies.

"Combining the public health experience of the World Health Organization and the financial expertise of the European Investment Bank will contribute to a more effective response to COVID-19 and other pressing health challenges," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General.

"WHO looks forward to strengthening cooperation with the EIB to improve access to essential supplies including medical equipment and training, and deliver better water, sanitation and hygiene where most needed. New initiatives to improve primary health care in Africa and support the EU Malaria Fund hint at the potential impact of our new partnership," Dr Tedros concluded.

"The world is facing unprecedented health, social and economic shocks from COVID-19. The European Investment Bank is pleased to join forces with the World Health Organization as a key part of Team Europe's efforts to address the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The EU Bank's new partnership with the WHO will help communities most at risk by scaling up local medical and public health efforts and better protect people around the world from future pandemics. This new cooperation will enable us to combat malaria,

address anti-microbial resistance and enhance public health in Africa more effectively.” said Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank.

### **Improving local public health efforts to tackle coronavirus**

The WHO and the EIB will increase cooperation to help governments in low- and middle-income countries to finance and secure access to essential medical supplies and protective equipment through central procurement.

### **Building resilient health systems in vulnerable countries across Africa**

The WHO and the EIB will reinforce cooperation to support immediate COVID-19 needs and jointly develop targeted financing to enhance health investment and build resilient health systems and primary health care to address public health emergencies as well as accelerate progress towards Universal Health Coverage.

The partnership will benefit from the EIB’s planned 1.4 billion EUR response to address the health, social and economic impact of COVID-19 in Africa.

This will address immediate needs in the health sector and provide both technical assistance and support for medium-term investment in specialist health infrastructure.

The collaboration envisages rapid identification and fast-track approval of financing for health care, medical equipment and supplies.

The first phase of the collaboration will see public health investment in ten African countries.

### **Long-term collaboration to overcome market failures in global health**

The agreement signed today establishes a close collaboration to overcome market failure and stimulate investments in global health, accelerating progress towards Universal Health Coverage. Increased cooperation between the WHO and the EIB will strengthen the resilience of national public health systems and enhance preparedness of vulnerable countries against future pandemics, thanks to investments in primary care infrastructure, health workers and improved water, sanitation and hygiene.

Future cooperation will strengthen the EIB’s 5.2 billion EUR global response to COVID-19 outside the European Union.

### **Scaling up investment to tackle antimicrobial resistance**

The two organisations will also cooperate in an initiative to address investment barriers hindering development of new antimicrobial treatment and related diagnostics. Antimicrobial resistance is amongst the most significant global health threats.

The WHO and the EIB are working on a new financing initiative to support development of novel antimicrobials and address the estimated 1 billion EUR needed to provide medium-term solutions to antimicrobial resistance. Other

crucial partners have been invited to join this discussion.

### **Improving the effectiveness of malaria treatment**

Under the new agreement the EIB and WHO will support development of the EU Malaria Fund, a new 250 million EUR public-private initiative intended to address market failures holding back more effective malaria treatment.

### **Strengthening EIB support for healthcare, life science and COVID-19 investment**

In recent years the European Investment Bank has provided more than 2 billion EUR annually for health care and life science investment.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EIB is currently assessing over 20 projects in the field of vaccine development, diagnostic and treatment, leading to potential investments in the 700 million EUR range. The EIB will also take part in the EU's rolling pledging effort for the coronavirus global response that is taking place on May 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Background information**

The **World Health Organization** provides global leadership in public health within the United Nations system. Founded in 1948, WHO works with 194 Member States, across six regions and from more than 150 offices, to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable. Our goal for 2019-2023 is to ensure that a billion more people have universal health coverage, to protect a billion more people from health emergencies, and provide a further billion people with better health and wellbeing.

[WHO's information site on the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

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## **ESMA publishes annual bond transparency calculations, systematic internalisers calculations and new bond liquidity data**

The European Securities and Markets Authority, the EU's securities markets regulator, has today made available, under the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II) and Regulation (MiFIR):

- the annual transparency calculations of the large in scale (LIS) and size specific to the instruments (SSTI) thresholds for bonds;

- systematic internaliser calculations for equity, equity-like instruments and bonds; and
- new data for bonds subject to the pre- and post-trade requirements of MiFID II and MiFIR.

### **Annual transparency calculations of the large in scale (LIS) and size specific to the instruments (SSTI) thresholds for bonds**

ESMA has published the results of the annual transparency calculations of the large in scale (LIS) and size specific to the instruments (SSTI) thresholds for bonds.

The results are published on a per bond-type basis in excel format in the [Annual transparency calculations for non-equity instruments register](#). The results on a per ISIN basis will be published through the Financial Instruments Transparency System (FITRS) in the XML files ([link available here](#)) and through the Register web interface ([link available here](#)) starting on 30 April 2020.

ESMA will publish until 31 May 2020 two records with this type of calculation for each ISIN (the one applicable until that date, and the one applicable starting on 1 June). To avoid any misinterpretation of the results, users of the calculations are kindly invited to review the [FIRDS Transparency System downloading instructions document](#) in particular paragraph 28.

As [communicated](#) on 9 April 2020, the annual transparency calculations for the other non-equity instruments have been postponed.

### **Next steps**

The transparency requirements based on the results of the annual calculations of the large in scale (LIS) and size specific to the instruments (SSTI) thresholds for bonds shall apply from 1 June 2020 until 31 May 2021. From 1 June 2021, the results of the next annual calculations of the LIS and SSTI thresholds for bonds, to be published by 30 April 2021, will become applicable.

### **Systematic internaliser calculations for equity, equity-like instruments and bonds**

ESMA has published [data for the systematic internaliser calculations for equity, equity-like instruments and bonds](#) under the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID II) and Regulation (MiFIR).

ESMA has published the total number of trades and total volume over the period October 2019-March 2020 for the purpose of the systematic internaliser (SI) calculations for 24,940 equity and equity-like instruments and for 316,894 bonds.

The results are published only for instruments for which trading venues submitted data for at least 95% of all trading days over the 6-month

observation period. The data publications also incorporate OTC trading to the extent it has been reported to ESMA. The publication includes data also for instruments which are no longer available for trading on EU trading venues at the end of December.

The publication of the data for the SI calculations for derivatives and other instruments has been delayed until August 2020, as [announced](#) on 9 April. The SI-assessment for those asset classes does not need to be performed until September 2020.

### **New bond liquidity data available**

ESMA has started today to make available the latest quarterly liquidity assessment for bonds available for trading on EU trading venues. For this period, there are currently 745 liquid bonds subject to MiFID II transparency requirements.

ESMA's liquidity assessment for bonds is based on a quarterly assessment of quantitative liquidity criteria, which include the daily average trading activity (trades and notional amount) and percentage of days traded per quarter. ESMA updates the bond market liquidity assessments quarterly. However, additional data and corrections submitted to ESMA may result in further updates within each quarter, published in ESMA's [Financial Instruments Transparency System \(FITRS\)](#), which shall be applicable the day following publication.

The scope of assessed bonds decreased for this publication as a result of a change in reporting practice from a trading venue in the United Kingdom. This change does not affect the quality of the calculations on the bonds that are published

The full list of assessed bonds will be available through FITRS in the XML files with publication date from 30 April 2020 ([link available here](#)) and through the Register web interface ([link available here](#)).

As communicated on [27 September 2018](#), ESMA is also publishing two [completeness indicators](#) related to bond liquidity data.

### **Next steps**

The transparency requirements for bonds deemed liquid today will apply from 16 May 2020 to 15 August 2020.

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## **[Press release – MEPs debate EEAS](#)**

# report on disinformation activities related to COVID-19



"This afternoon, the Foreign Affairs Committee held an important debate with EU High Representative and Vice President of the European Commission Josep Borrell on the latest report by the European External Action Service on disinformation activities related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The report reveals many troubling facts, for instance the significant number of coordinated disinformation campaigns by the Russian and Chinese governments to spread false health information in and around Europe, and conspiracy theories and claims that only authoritarian political systems – not democracies – are best suited to deal with the current crisis.

MEPs raised questions about the editing of this text, as there were media reports that the choice of words and the very content had allegedly been altered following requests from the Chinese government. I am pleased that Mr Borrell agreed to discuss this today with the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee.

Just recently, the European Parliament emphasised that one thing is clear: the EU must stay free of undue political and economic influence from the outside. Democracy is not an empty word. I am convinced that an open debate about the actions being taken by European leaders is an asset, not an obstacle, as it helps us to make the right decisions. At the same time, there is no doubt that the EU must become better at strategically communicating all of its actions, in Europe and abroad, while continuing to fight external disinformation, fake news and cyberattacks.

In the [Parliament's latest resolution](#) of 17 April on the COVID-19 pandemic, we urged the European Commission to counter aggressive Russian and Chinese propaganda efforts that are exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic to undermine the EU and sow mistrust in the local population towards the European Union. To

counter negative narratives, it is particularly important to communicate about the EU's financial, technical and medical support in response to the pandemic, both between EU countries and to our other partner, among them China. Most acts of solidarity, by organisations, professionals or individuals, take place far away from the gaze of cameras and reporters. But it would also be unfair to all the health workers, volunteers helping fellow citizens and people organising the transport of crucial equipment to let the lies about a lack of European solidarity spread without effectively challenging them."

### **The importance of an independent diplomatic service**

In the debate with Vice President Borrell on Thursday, many MEPs stressed their support for the European External Action Service (EEAS) and its work on disinformation. However, they also voiced their concerns about recent media reports alleging that the latest special report by the EEAS on disinformation surrounding COVID-19, and the references to the state-backed actors pushing it, had been watered down following pressure from Chinese authorities. The EU High Representative rebuked those claims, underlining that the two compared documents are, in fact, different publications – one internal for experts and one for the broader public – and not two versions of the same publication.

MEPs quizzed EU High Representative Borrell on details about the editing process, Chinese pressure and how the EEAS had reacted to this pressure. They also asked how the EU can step up its efforts to strategically communicate about its concrete work, fight disinformation more effectively and also ensure enough funding for the EU's Strategic Communication Task Force

Some members stressed their deep concern over the media allegations, highlighting that the EEAS must clarify what kind of approaches were made by outside parties regarding the work on the latest report. Others said that the media reports appear to be "vastly overblown", pointing out that most of the critical issues remain intact in the text – such as the clear description of extensive Chinese and Russian disinformation attempts surrounding the origins of COVID-19 and the EU's attempts to combat them.

*You can watch the interventions and all answers from High Representative Borrell again by clicking on the hyperlink below*

<https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/news-footage>

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**[Press release – Asylum and Migration Pact: MEPs push for legal and safe](#)**

## avenues



In a letter to Commission Vice-President Margaritis Schinas and Commissioner Ylva Johansson sent by Juan [Fernando López Aguilar \(S&D, ES\)](#), Chair of the Civil Liberties Committee, on behalf of the committee, MEPs call for a balanced approach covering all pillars of the EU policy on asylum and migration, also addressing safe and legal migration.

They insist that the Common European Asylum System needs to be complemented by a European Union Resettlement Framework and humanitarian corridors, but stress that safe and legal migration is much broader. Providing legal and safe routes for labour-related migration is key to reducing irregular migration as well as the risks undertaken by persons trying to reach Europe, MEPs underline.

Offering third-country nationals wishing to work in the European Union a lawful path to do so could complement partnerships with third countries already in place and help fill gaps in the labour market, whilst ensuring third-country nationals who are filling these gaps are treated equally and not exploited, the letter notes.

### **Ambitious framework for legal migration needed**

MEPs complain that, despite legal migration being one of the priorities of the European Agenda for Migration announced in 2015, the only legislative proposal in this field in the last legislature was a [revision of the Blue Card Directive](#), a proposal that has been blocked by the Council since the end of 2017.

The Civil Liberties Committee is currently working on an [own-initiative report on New Avenues for Legal Labour Migration](#) and hopes that the European Commission is equally ambitious. Among the options on the table, MEPs point to developing sectoral labour migration, but also long-term residence, intra-EU mobility or family reunification rights. “We are looking forward to seeing



the Commission move the European framework for legal migration forward”, including by initiating legislative proposals, they say.

MEPs are convinced that all member states could profit from a more harmonised approach to labour migration at European level. In their view, the European Union could contribute to improving third-country nationals’ access to the European labour market, addressing skills demands, making member states more attractive to third-country workers, and improving working conditions and integration of third-country nationals. They stress that the hosting communities would benefit from this on several levels.

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## [Jeppe Tranholm-Mikkelsen appointed Secretary-General of the Council for second term](#)



Jeppe Tranholm-Mikkelsen, Secretary-General of the Council

The Council today appointed Mr Jeppe Tranholm-Mikkelsen for a second term as the Secretary-General of the Council. The appointment decision was taken by the Council by a written procedure which was launched by Coreper on 29 April. This decision was adopted following consultations and the video conference of the European Council members on 23 April 2020.

The new five-year term of Mr Tranholm-Mikkelsen will run from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2025.

Mr Tranholm-Mikkelsen has been the Council’s Secretary-General since 1 July 2015. Before taking up his office, he was the Danish Permanent Representative to the European Union from 2010 to 2015.

### **Role of the Secretary-General**

The Treaties provide that the General Secretariat of the Council assists both the European Council and the Council and that it is placed under the responsibility of a Secretary-General appointed by the Council.

### **CV of Jeppe Tranholm-Mikkelsen**

**Born:** 30 October 1962

**Nationality:** Danish

**Civil status:** married to Birgitte Karnøe Frederiksen, two children

**Career**

**Since 2015**

Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

**2010**

Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the EU

**2007**

Danish Ambassador to China, also accredited to Mongolia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea

**2003**

Ambassador, Deputy Permanent Representative of Denmark to the EU

**2001**

Chief Adviser (EU Policy), Danish Prime Minister's Office

**2001**

Head of Department (General EU Policy), Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**1998**

Senior Adviser (EU Policy), Danish Prime Minister's Office

**1995**

Secretary of Embassy, Permanent Representation of Denmark to the EU

**1992**

Head of Section, Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

**Education****1992**

Cand. Scient. Pol., University of Aarhus

**1990**

MSc (International Relations), London School of Economics

**Languages**

English, German, French. Some Spanish, Dutch and Chinese.