

Press release – Delivering masks across borders: EU Single Market protecting citizens’ health



The chairs of Parliament’s Internal Market and Consumer Protection Committee, [Petra De Sutter](#) (Greens/EFA, BE), and Transport Committee, [Karima Delli](#) (Greens/EFA, FR), welcomed today’s rapid decision of EU Transport ministers to support green lane supply routes (giving priority to transport of essential goods such as food as well as vital medical and protective equipment), as suggested by MEPs and the Commission. The aim of the new and urgent COVID-19 measures is to protect health and keep goods and essential services available within the EU’s internal market.

“Completely closing down borders might seem like the safest way to protect our citizens, but we all depend on imports from other member states to keep our supplies uninterrupted. Guaranteeing the unobstructed transport of essential goods such as food and guaranteeing an uninterrupted supply of vital medical and protective equipment, ensures that this crisis will not turn into a catastrophe. We rely and we depend on each other when it comes to our public health”, said the Chair of the Internal Market Committee.

“Installing so-called ‘green lanes’ – especially for medical and protective equipment – is of utmost importance in the coming days and weeks”, stressed Ms de Sutter, referring to member states’ commitment on the [supply of medical](#)

[equipment](#).

Transport Committee Chair Karima Delli said that smooth border crossing and coordination between member states will be essential to overcome this crisis. “We have to find ways to keep our transport systems going and to reduce queues to save time and money. We stand ready to act together and quickly and we stand behind the drivers and the whole transport sector that is working tirelessly to keep the goods flowing during this crisis”, said the Chair.

“There is an urgent need to implement measures to end ghost flights. Airlines must be provided with guarantees on future slots. This is the only way to prevent empty flights in the EU,” she concluded.

[ESMA issues positive opinion on short selling ban by French AMF](#)

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA) has issued an [official opinion](#) agreeing to an emergency short selling prohibition, for a period of one month, by the Autorité des marchés financiers (AMF) of France on all transactions which might constitute or increase net short positions on shares admitted to trading on French trading venues (Euronext Paris, Euronext Growth Paris, Euronext Access Paris), for which the AMF is the relevant competent authority as well as to all related instruments relevant for the calculation of the net short position.

The ban applies to transactions executed both on a trading venue or over the counter. The measure applies to any natural or legal person domiciled or established within the European Union or in a third country

The measure entered into force on 18 March 2020 at 00:00 and will expire after the close of the trading session on 16 April 2020. The proposed measure may also be lifted before the deadline, taking into account market conditions.

The measure does not apply to market-making activities, trading in index-related instruments or short positions entered into to hedge positions on convertible bond or subscription rights.

ESMA considers that the proposed measure is justified by current adverse events or developments which constitute a serious threat to market confidence and financial stability in France and that it is appropriate and proportionate to address the existing threat to market confidence in the French market.

Spain – CNMV Prohibition

ESMA has also issued a positive opinion on a short selling prohibition by the Comisión Nacional del Mercado de Valores (CNMV) of Spain on all transactions which might constitute or increase net short positions on shares admitted to trading to Spanish trading venues for which the CNMV is the competent authority (BOLSA DE MADRID, S.A., BOLSA DE BARCELONA, S.A., BOLSA DE VALENCIA, S.A., BOLSA DE BILBAO, S.A. and Mercado Alternativo Bursátil, S.A.), as well as to all related instruments relevant for the calculation of the net short position.

The measure entered into force on 17 March 2020 before the opening of the trading session and to expire after the close of the trading session on 17 April 2020.

[COVID-19 – Council gives go-ahead to support from EU budget](#)

Today, EU ambassadors agreed the Council's position on two legislative proposals which will free up funds to tackle the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak. Given the urgency of the situation, both proposals were approved without amendments.

The so-called Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative will make available €37 billion of Cohesion funds to member states to address the consequences of the crisis. About €8 billion of investment liquidity will be released from unspent pre-financing in 2019 for programmes under the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund. The measure will also provide access to €29 billion of structural funding across the EU for 2020. Expenditure on crisis response will be available as of 1 February 2020.

The new measures will support SMEs to alleviate serious liquidity shortages as a result of the pandemic, as well as strengthen investment in products and services necessary to bolster the crisis response of health services. Member states will also have greater flexibility to transfer funds between programmes to help those most adversely affected.

EU ambassadors also endorsed without amendment a legislative proposal to extend the scope of the EU Solidarity Fund to cover public health emergencies. The fund was initially set up to help member states and accession countries deal with the effects of natural disasters. Including public health emergencies will enable the Union to help meet people's immediate needs during the coronavirus pandemic. The aim is to complement efforts of the countries concerned.

Next steps

The European Parliament will now need to agree its position on the new measures. Once there is an agreement, the Council is expected to adopt the measures by written procedure.

[Investigating the COVID19 impact on rights](#)

The report looks at the actions of governments and administrations, and also at the impact that the outbreak has had – particularly in its early phase – on instances of discrimination and hate speech. The research covers all EU Member States, and the results will be issued as a short FRA focus report around the Easter period.

[The Coronavirus outbreak and the EU's response](#)



□□ In response to the Coronavirus outbreak, EU institutions, member states and regional and local authorities are assessing the situation on a daily basis and issue both, immediate actions and mid-term proposals to counterbalance the effects of the crisis.

In addition to measures of containing and treating the disease, the European Commission set up a “corona response team” and tabled a number of legal proposals on 13 March, which aim at mitigating the economic impact of the crisis.

Proposals address the protection of workers and companies against income losses through, e.g. simplified state aid rules and financial assistance from the EU budget and the European Investment Fund.

Among others, the European Commission proposed a new “COVID-19 Response Investment Initiative” in the order of EUR 37 billion, which would be composed of unused and not yet allocated structural funds.

All information sources on the EU response to the Coronavirus outbreak can be found in all official EU languages [here](#).