

Opening remarks by President Charles Michel at the Global Response Pledging Event against Coronavirus

I would like to join Ursula (von der Leyen) in thanking you warmly for your participation today.

Only a shared spirit of global solidarity and responsibility will defeat the COVID-19 crisis.

This common spirit is our best defence against a virus that has devastated lives and communities in every corner of the globe.

People are fighting the virus on every continent.

Different countries have responded with different measures. But we all have one thing in common.

Only the development, production and deployment of vaccines and treatments will relegate the virus to the archives of history.

Without these, we can demand the hardest sacrifices from our citizens, or design the most ambitious recovery plans, the threat will always be there.

These vaccines, treatments and therapies will be crucial for Europe. But even more critical for our most vulnerable partners with fragile health systems, such as Africa. They must be at the heart of our solidarity.

The picture is not all bleak. Across history, human beings have displayed a surprising capacity to innovate and bounce back from disaster.

Over the next months, great minds in laboratories across the world will join forces to defeat the virus. They are doing so as we speak.

But victory will take more than great minds. It will take focus. It will take strong international cooperation on vaccines every step of the way. It will also take a firm commitment to multilateral institutions.

And it will take resources – 7,5 billion euros – just to kick-start our efforts.

It may seem like a lot. But the cost of inaction would be far greater. Both in lives and resources.

The scope of our response must match the scope of the crisis.

Today, we have a clear goal: to accelerate the development, manufacture and delivery of vaccines, tests and treatments to everyone, everywhere, at an affordable price.

These are dark days. But they are also days that reveal our humanity. We are confident humanity will step up and shine.

This pledging summit is a confident step in that direction.