

Press release – COVID-19 crisis is a potential geopolitical game-changer, warn MEPs



A global pandemic needs global solutions, and the EU has to be at the centre of this response, said High Representative and Vice-President of the European Commission Josep Borrell in a plenary debate on the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis on EU foreign policy, on Thursday.

To this end, the EU has launched a [Team Europe](#) response to support its partner countries in facing the pandemic, said Mr Borrell in his [introductory speech](#). It is vital to boost sustainable and green investment in the EU's partner countries worldwide, he added. "This crisis will be a crisis of biblical consequences", warned the EU foreign affairs chief, stressing also the importance of extending the European Union's programmes for refugees.

COVID-19 crisis a "geopolitical game-changer"

The pandemic has brought about changes of tremendous dimensions and will be a potential "geopolitical game-changer", MEPs pointed out, be it due to the deterioration of democracy and fundamental freedoms in many parts of the world, increasing disinformation campaigns, cyber-attacks, or isolationism instead of multilateral cooperation.

They supported strong and coordinated measures that would clearly show solidarity to EU partners throughout the world.

Recalling the EU's ambitions to be a global player, MEPs called for unity in facing the crisis. They pointed out that in the absence of the US as a global leader, Europe should step in and take on this role.

Several MEPs called for an adequate EU response to China, saying that the

country has not acted as a reliable partner and accusing its government of human rights breaches, a state-led economy, spreading fake news and an inability to fight the pandemic transparently.

Background

Among key aspects of EU foreign policy affected by the COVID-19 crisis are relations with major powers, humanitarian aid, development and peacekeeping, as well as the fight against disinformation and cyber-attacks. The crisis has also highlighted the debate about the future of multilateralism, which is one of the primary concerns that EU foreign policy must tackle.

In its [resolution adopted on 17 April 2020](#), the European Parliament has called for an update of the EU Global Strategy in the light of the global impact of the crisis, and for more strategic EU action that would also include better strategic communication.

You can watch the recording of the full debate [here](#)