

Press release – Sassoli: Europe is showing the power of solidarity



Following a video conference with leaders of political groups in the European Parliament, European Parliament President David Sassoli called an extraordinary plenary session for March 26 to approve measures to tackle COVID-19. It will be the first plenary session to use a distance voting system.

In a statement following the meeting, President Sassoli said:

“I want to express my warmth and solidarity to all those suffering and all those who have lost loved ones. I want to stress my admiration and support for all those who are on the front line fighting this pandemic.

“Europe is moving. Faced with this dramatic situation, with a duty to defend lives, livelihoods, and stability for all, the European Union is acting. Of course, we had to fight against national selfishness, but now it is a clear how we are going to face this emergency.

“Last night’s decision by the ECB to make 750 billion Euros available adds to Parliament’s calls, to the measures of the Commission, to those of the States, to possible additional initiatives, such as mobilizing another 500 billion from the European Stability Mechanism, the so-called bailout fund. We are talking about an intervention that, overall, is close to two trillion euros. The greatest demonstration of the power of European solidarity ever seen. Stronger even than the Marshall plan, the programme that helped us get back from the ruins of World War II.

"This money will help us limit the effects of Covid19, and will support research to identify an effective vaccine. It provides useful resources to support our economy and our model of social protection. It will protect jobs, businesses, and ensure families are not left alone in the face of these challenging times.

"At this stage it provides money needed by our medical facilities, by doctors and staff who, with great passion and generosity, are committed to saving the lives of many. The Union cannot allow anyone to remain alone. None of you will be left alone.

"The European Parliament is also doing and will continue to do its duty. I was determined that Parliament would remain open because democracy cannot be stopped by this virus, because we are the only European institution elected by citizens and we want to represent and defend them.

"For this reason, I decided to convene an extraordinary plenary session on Thursday 26 March in order to approve the emergency measures presented by the European Commission. It will be the first plenary that will use the distance voting system. In the face of this emergency we must use all the means we have available.

"It is a difficult time. We want to be close to families who have lost loved ones, to those who are sick, and to European compatriots who are experiencing a moment of great fear. We must use all our energies and appeal to everyone's responsibility. Europe will only succeed if we are united, courageous and supportive."