

# Press release – Sassoli: Von der Leyen is right – governments must not act unilaterally. We need stronger EU coordination



“Following Sunday’s appeal by the President of the European Commission, member state governments must stop limiting supplies of medical equipment within the EU and stop taking unilateral action to prevent free movement. This battle is Europe-wide and must be fought with strong coordination between governments and EU institutions.

“The challenges presented by the rapid spread of COVID-19, show that cooperation and solidarity are needed now more than ever. No effort will be spared to protect people’s health and help those in need. We need to ensure adequate production and supply of medical equipment, so it is available wherever it is needed in the EU. This virus does not respect any border, attempts to fight it alone will fail.

“Ensuring our internal market continues to function and its rules are respected is of vital importance. We need to ensure that supplies and products can get where they are needed. Solidarity, mutual trust, and sincere cooperation should guide our actions to fight against this pandemic.

“Reinforcing controls at external borders of the EU, in line with our rules and international obligations, can help ensure that the Schengen system works effectively. However, the reintroduction of internal border controls, when not based on the advice or data from health authorities, causes more harm than good. It imposes major economic costs on the EU as a whole and prevents goods arriving where they are needed. We need to ensure the proper functioning of the Schengen area.

“In this moment, we all need to build mutual trust, cooperation and solidarity. These principles are at the heart of the European project and are needed now more than ever.”