

Statement by President Michel and President von der Leyen after the extraordinary G20 video conference on COVID-19

Today, Thursday 26 March 2020, the President of the European Council Charles Michel and the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen participated in the extraordinary G20 Leaders' videoconference called by Saudi Arabia that currently holds the G20 Presidency.

Against the backdrop that Europe currently is at the epicentre of the global COVID-19 crisis, the Presidents thanked all G20 leaders for the solidarity shown to the European Union and its Member States most affected by the crisis.

They also underlined that the European Union is committed to international cooperation in tackling this pandemic and will continue to assist vulnerable countries and communities around the world, especially in Africa.

The Presidents of the Council and the Commission stressed that unprecedented events call for unprecedented action and that fast, massive and coordinated global action is necessary on the health and economic fronts to save lives and avoid a further economic crisis.

The G20 has a pivotal role in ensuring such global coordination.

The Presidents insisted that G20 countries should coordinate their macroeconomic policies, mobilising all instruments available, to mitigate the economic downturn, support workers and companies most affected.

President Michel and President von der Leyen also stressed that in order to limit the economic impact on our economies – and to maintain our ability to manufacture and provide the necessary protective and medical equipment, it is imperative that we keep trade flows and supply chains open and avoid any new restrictions.

The EU called on G20 members to assist each other in repatriating citizens stranded abroad who wish to return home.

The European Union thanked the G20 Presidency for its focus on global coordination towards enhancing our collective pandemic preparedness and welcomed the fact that the G20 asked the WHO, working closely together with relevant organizations, to come up quickly with a global initiative on pandemic preparedness and response.

In this context, Europe stands ready to set up an international online pledging event to ensure adequate funding to develop and deploy a vaccine against COVID-19.