

[Living, working and COVID-19: tell us how COVID-19 is impacting your life](#)



Take Eurofound's 10 min anonymous COVID-19 Survey and help shape the response to the crisis.

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak is having a profound impact, with far-reaching implications for the way we live and work in Europe and beyond. In an effort to capture the most immediate changes in people's quality of life and work during this pandemic, Eurofound has launched [a ten-minute online survey Living, working and COVID-19](#). Help shape the response to the crisis!

[Article – Rebuilding Europe after Covid-19: MEPs call for decisive action](#)



In a discussion with Charles Michel, President of the European Council, and Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, MEPs said that solidarity and ambitious new solutions were needed to overcome the coronavirus outbreak and the resulting economic challenges.

Parliament President David Sassoli said in his opening remarks: "We want to exit this crisis stronger, more robust, in a better position to tackle the challenges of tomorrow... It will be of the utmost importance to coordinate the gradual relaxation of the lockdown as well as the path to exit and recovery... to avoid any backtracking or any devastating return to crisis."

Most MEPs welcomed the plans announced by Von der Leyen to ensure massive investment with the aim of creating a more resilient, green and digital economy. Von der Leyen highlighted the crucial role of the EU long-term budget, describing it as "the mothership of our recovery" and spoke of the need for a new Marshall Plan, in reference to the programme that helped rebuild European countries' economies after the Second World War.

Michel also urged joint action at EU level, saying: "Sometimes it takes a crisis to bring people together."

On behalf of the EPP group, Esteban González Pons (Spain) underlined Parliament's role: "While the plague is going on, the Parliament cannot close... The Parliament is essential in times of a pandemic. It is an extraordinary time for governments and Parliament is the hospital of democracy." He pointed out mistakes in the initial response to the crisis: "We could have acted earlier, we could have acted more decisively, we could have actually acted together", but added: "The European Union is the great hope that millions of Spaniards are looking to".

Many of those speaking in Parliament's plenary chamber or through a remote connection, underlined how critical the moment was. "The decisions we take now will determine Europe's future: whether Europe will emerge stronger or whether citizens will lose their faith in the European project," said S&D member Iratxe García Pérez (Spain). "The more decisive our action now, the less dramatic the economic and wider impact of this crisis will be tomorrow and the sooner we will be able to return to normal life."

"These difficult times are a test for everybody," said Renew Europe member Dacian Cioloş (Romania), calling for solidarity and cooperation in dealing with the health crisis. He said that Europe needed a Marshall Plan, a digital strategy and the Green Deal as well as "ambition to implement its strategy".

ID member Marco Campomenosi (Italy) spoke of the frustration of people left to their own devices and wanting to get back to work. He noted that even before the crisis the EU had experienced years of low growth and argued that EU rules should be changed to boost the economy and ensure more self-sufficiency.

"We see that globalisation and wanting more and more are not always the answer, but come at the expense of resilience and capacity to deal with shocks," said Greens/EFA member Philippe Lamberts (Belgium). He called for a rethink of how society was organised and a "new way of living, producing, moving, travelling".

"We have to say loud and clear that Europe was completely unprepared in the coordination role that it had to play" in the crisis, said ECR member Raffaele Fitto (Italy). He called for measures to support hard-hit sectors such as tourism, transport and agriculture, as well as the removal of red tape and an overhaul of the EU budget.

GUE/NGL member Manon Aubry (France) blamed austerity measures implemented over the past decade for the reduction of health care capacity across Europe, and criticised the focus on containing public debt that restricts governments' ability to deal with crises. "It is time to do away with taboos; it is the only way to deal with this pandemic today and with the climate issues tomorrow."

Find out what [measures the EU has already taken](#) to combat the pandemic.

Press release – President Sassoli press conference on EP decisions to respond to COVID-19 crisis



The briefing will take place in the Anna Politkovskaya pressroom and via Skype.

Parliament will be using an interactive virtual press environment (with interpretation) based on Skype TX, in conjunction with the traditional EbS and web-streaming services.

If you wish to ask a question:

- **You will need a SKYPE account.**
- **Connect to VOXBOXEP and write your name and media organisation in the chat box**

Please use headphones and microphone for better sound quality.

The system will be managed by Parliament's media services and you will be placed in a queue (virtual waiting room) before being invited to ask your question(s).

In case of troubles connecting, you can contact: +32 22834220.

N.B. You should only connect through Skype if you wish to ask a question. After asking a question / listening to the reply (and any follow-up), you should then disconnect from Skype so that the next journalist in line can be connected to the press briefing room.

Follow the press conference LIVE on [EP MMC](#) or [EbS+](#)

REMINDER: working conditions in Parliament for journalists in light of Coronavirus

In an effort to reduce the spread of the COVID-19 virus, Parliament is reducing the need for physical meetings on its premises, without compromising its role of democratic scrutiny nor its ability to approve the necessary legislative measures to combat the virus and support the public, consumers, businesses and emergency services.

Those parliamentary activities still taking place (including this week's plenary session) will be web-streamed and can be followed by the media without requiring your physical presence on EP premises.

You are therefore advised not to come in person unless absolutely necessary. If you do, you are requested to respect the standard recommended guidelines on social distancing and hygiene. Please refrain from coming to EP premises if you present any symptoms of a respiratory infection, if you have knowingly been in contact with an infected person in the last 14 days or if you have been to regions with very high transmission rates.

For updated guidance see:

<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/geographical-distribution-2019-ncov-cases>

https://www.rki.de/DE/Content/InfAZ/N/Neuartiges_Coronavirus/Risikogebiete.html

Statement of EU ministers of finance on continuing bank lending and on maintaining a well-functioning insurance sector amid the COVID-19 pandemic

It is crucial that banks continue financing households and corporates, including SMEs experiencing temporary difficulties amid the COVID-19 pandemic. To this end, making full use of the flexibility provided for in the prudential and accounting framework, is essential at a time when sufficient financing to cover financial pressures is vital for the economy.

We welcome the recent statements by the European Commission, the European Central Bank, the Single Resolution Board, the European Banking Authority and the European Securities Markets Authority on the application of regulatory

and accounting requirements for financial institutions in the current exceptional circumstances.

We stress the importance that all authorities continue to take an ambitious and coordinated approach when further specifying how to make best use of the available flexibility to ensure that the various initiatives announced by Member States and financial institutions are taken into account and that there is a level playing field amongst Member States.

In light of the recommendations from supervisory authorities, we urge all banks that have not already decided to do so to refrain from making distributions during this period and to use the freed capital and available profits to extend credit or other urgent financing needs arising from the ongoing crisis to their customers in a way that helps to ensure preserving economic activity. We call on the banking sector to support households and corporates affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, with the aim of ensuring business continuity.

In addition, we welcome the recent statements and recommendation by the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA) on the identification of a number of tools allowing for flexibility within the current Solvency II framework for insurance undertakings. We urge insurance companies to follow up on EIOPA's statements to take timely and comprehensive measures to preserve their capital position, including the temporary suspension of all discretionary distributions, and to continue to act in the best interests of consumers.

Finally, we welcome supervisory flexibility expressed by European supervisory authorities regarding deadlines of supervisory reporting and public disclosure.

We will continue to closely monitor the evolution of the situation and to coordinate between European and national measures. Where necessary, we stand ready to take further actions, including legislative measures if appropriate, to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

[Visit the meeting page](#)

[EUTM Mali: New EU Mission Force Commander appointed](#)

Today, **Brigadier General František Ridzák** was appointed as new **EU mission force commander** for the European Union military mission, which contributes to the training of the Malian Armed Forces (**EUTM Mali**). His mandate will start on **12 June 2020**.

Brigadier General Ridzák, a Czech national, will succeed Brigadier General João Pedro Rato Boga de Oliveira Ribeiro. He is currently director of the Communication and Information Systems agency of the Czech Armed Forces and previously held senior positions within the Czech army.

The decision on Brigadier General Ridzák's appointment was adopted by the Council's Political and Security Committee.

EUTM Mali is part of the **EU's integrated approach** to security and development in the Sahel. The mission was established in **2013**, at the request of the Malian Government, to help strengthen the capabilities of the Malian Armed Forces, in order to enable, under legitimate civilian authority, the restoration of the country's territorial integrity. To this effect, EUTM Mali contributes to improving the operational capacity of the Malian Armed Forces through the provision of military advice, training, education and mentoring and additionally supports the operationalisation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force. With the new fifth mandate, this support will be extended also to some specific needs of the armies of the G5 Sahel countries. The tasks carried out by the mission are agreed with Mali's legitimate authorities and do not include combat operations.

The headquarters of the mission are located in Bamako, Mali.