

External audit 2020: conformity with the highest standards

March 26, 2020 [About the EUIPO](#)

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The EUIPO has successfully passed the external audit of its six certified management systems.

This year's external audit concluded with the renewal of the EUIPO's environmental certification (EMAS). The auditors also confirmed that the EUIPO's processes remain in full alignment with international standards in the field of quality (ISO 9001), information security (ISO 27001), complaints management (ISO 10002), occupational health and safety (OHSAS 18001) and universal accessibility (UNE 170001).

The auditors praised the EUIPO for its drive towards continuous improvement. The maturity of the management systems implemented at the Office as well as the robustness of its processes were also mentioned, among other noteworthy efforts.

The auditors underlined the consultation with stakeholders that was launched to develop the SP2025, highlighting in particular the EUIPO's customer-focused approach. In addition, the auditors drew special attention to the Office's continuous development in the field of information security and new technologies, its outstanding environmental performance and the effectiveness of its health and safety and accessibility measures considering the extraordinarily accident rate

Overall, no non-conformities were identified and a few observations and opportunities for improvement were indicated. The EUIPO took note of these findings and will start working to address them soon.

This successful outcome is without doubt the result of the invaluable work of all EUIPO staff.

For more information about the Office's certified management systems, please visit the [EUIPO's quality page](#).

Background – Q&A on extraordinary remote participation procedure



Parliament's bureau has agreed to allow an alternative voting procedure for the plenary session on 26 March 2020. Parliament has put in place measures for Members to vote in the plenary session from a distance.

Based on public health grounds, this temporary voting procedure is valid until 31 July, unless extended by a bureau decision.

Press release – President Sassoli press conference on European Council

meeting, plenary and COVID-19



16.30

EP press room – Anna Politkovskaya

Journalists are invited to follow the press conference via webstreaming:

https://multimedia.europarl.europa.eu/en/press-conference-by-david-sassoli-ep-president_20200326-1630-SPECIAL-PRESSER_vd

Questions to the President can be submitted in Italian, English and French from 15:00 via email to: Europarl-press@europarl.europa.eu

OR

via **WhatsApp** message to Delphine Colard (Tel. + 32 498 984485)

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

Article – Coronavirus: Parliament to vote on €37 billion crisis response



The measure, proposed by the European Commission, is a key element in the [EU response to the pandemic](#) and has been fast-tracked through Parliament.

Where does the money come from?

The proposal concerns European structural and investment funds that support the development of regions, the fishing industry and social policy measures, such as retraining laid-off workers.

Every year member states receive money from these funds as pre-financing for projects. If some of the pre-financing remains unused, it has to be returned to the EU budget the following year.

EU countries are due to return almost €8 billion in unused pre-financing for 2019, so the European Commission is proposing that they keep that money and use it for new projects mitigating the effects of the coronavirus crisis.

Part of the money for projects comes from member states and the rest is co-financed with EU funds. The share of the costs covered by the EU budget varies: if a project concerns a less developed region, the EU contribution reaches 85% of the total amount.

The money member states are allowed to keep will allow them to cover their

share in projects for a much larger amount, with the rest of the funds coming from the EU budget.

The Commission calculates that the €8 billion could be supplemented by about €29 billion in EU co-financing. That would make a total of €37 billion that could be deployed in investments across the EU.

The €8 billion will have to be returned at the closure of the programmes under the 2014-2020 budget, which might be around 2025.

Parliament takes urgent action

The Commission proposal was published on 13 March. It has to be approved by Parliament and Council and was fast tracked through Parliament's regional development committee. The urgency procedure allows for a plenary vote without a report or with an oral report by the responsible committee.

French GUE/NGL member [Younous Omarjee](#), the chair of Parliament's regional development committee, said [upon receipt of the proposal](#) on 17 March: "We must respond as urgently as possible, by channelling all means available under the cohesion policy, to mitigate the catastrophic situation caused by the coronavirus epidemic. Any delay would result in more lives being lost and additional difficulties for European regions, companies and citizens."

During the plenary session MEPs will also vote on other measures to tackle the coronavirus crisis, including a proposal to allow member states to request [support from the EU Solidarity Fund in case of public health crises](#).

[Letter by Eurogroup President Centeno to President Michel following the Eurogroup of 24 March 2020](#)

The 17 March videoconference of the Members of the European Council endorsed the 16 March statement of the Eurogroup and invited the Eurogroup to continuously and closely monitor economic and financial developments and to adopt without delay a coordinated policy response to the rapidly evolving situation. To this end, I convened a videoconference of the Eurogroup and Ministers of non-euro-area Member States on 24 March. I am writing to you to share my personal conclusions.

Economic developments are confirming that COVID-19 and the urgent containment measures are having a far-reaching impact on the supply and demand sides of the economy. Accordingly, we agreed on the imperative to implement and scale up our agreed actions to support our citizens and businesses. This strategy includes further discretionary stimulus and coordinated action, designed, as

appropriate, to be timely, temporary and targeted. The concrete steps we have already taken following the Eurogroup videoconference of 16 March are encouraging signs of the capacity of Member States to rise to the challenge in a co-ordinated manner. The aggregate amount of Member States' discretionary fiscal measures increased twofold to close to 2% of Euro Area GDP, while liquidity support schemes for firms and workers have been scaled up to more than 13% of Euro Area GDP, up from 10%. This is a clear increase in our fiscal response.

This aggregate fiscal response is supported at the European level. To provide for the required flexibility for our public finances, the Commission activated the general escape clause and Ministers welcomed this on 23 March. This will give national budgets leeway to support the health sector and civil protection, to implement the agreed discretionary elements of our fiscal strategy and to allow automatic stabilisers to fully operate.

In addition to the fiscal response, the decisions taken by the ECB last week have provided a strong element of reassurance and we have welcomed them unanimously. Heightened vigilance remains important and we stand ready to continue to respond in a co-ordinated manner.

We also welcome that the Commission has issued a specific temporary State-aid framework to expedite public support to companies to mitigate the economic impact of the crisis, while ensuring the necessary level playing field in the Single Market.

Discussions have now progressed to making additional resources available at the European level to complement our national measures, enhance cooperation and demonstrate common purpose and solidarity. Accelerated legislative work is now underway to make the Corona Response Investment Initiative operational. This initiative will make it possible to mobilise €37 billion to support Member States' urgent initiatives.

In addition to taking stock of the important progress made in the implementation of instruments announced in previous meetings, we also made significant progress on additional forms of support that could be made available. In particular, we broadly agreed that the significant resources of the ESM should contribute to our coordinated response and I can report there is a readiness to use the ESM, as needed, in a manner consistent with the external, symmetric nature of the COVID-19 shock. There was broad support to make a Pandemic Crisis Support safeguard available, within the provisions of the ESM Treaty, building on the framework of the existing Enhanced Conditions Credit Line (ECCL).

We are in broad agreement that Pandemic Crisis Support is a relevant safeguard for any ESM Member affected by the symmetric pandemic shock and that it would be available to all, with appropriate standardised terms, on the basis of an up-front assessment by the institutions. Given the current health emergency, there was broad support for making the applicable terms and conditions, consistent with the particular nature of the shared challenge our societies are facing. If the credit line is drawn, ESM support would be used specifically for the costs of responding to the Corona outbreak including

health costs and incurred economic costs. In the longer-term, Members should focus on ensuring a sustainable path. There is also broad agreement that significant resources should be allocated to Pandemic Crisis Support and the ESM could set around 2% of Member State GDP as a benchmark, which could be adjusted depending on the development of the pandemic. I proposed that we deliver without delay and develop the necessary technical specifications before the end of next week.

Making Pandemic Crisis Support available from the ESM would be an important and timely first step based on existing instruments. The Eurogroup will continue to work on appropriate solutions to address the crisis we are facing and prepare the economic recovery, including through the ESM and the EIB.

We also look forward to further proposals from the Commission, based on EU budget resources, potentially including the creation of new instruments, and possibly supplemented by Member States.

Let me finish by stressing that the Eurogroup will continue its work on the COVID-19 response and stands ready to follow up to any mandate given by Leaders.