

European Commission in Ireland

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Top News

Coronavirus: Summary of the European Commission's response to the crisis to date

The European Commission is coordinating a common European response to the COVID-19 crisis and is supporting the Member States in tackling the pandemic. While Member States are on the frontline, the Commission has proposed an unprecedented set of measures as an enabling framework to reinforce and facilitate the efforts by the Member States to tackle the pandemic. Check our website for a summary of the key measures to date.

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Coronavirus: President von der Leyen addresses the European Parliament on the European coordinated response

In a speech to the European Parliament plenary today (Thursday), Commission President Ursula von der Leyen paid tribute to the men and women leading the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. She called for Member States to work closer together: "... the story from the last few weeks is partly a painful one to tell. When Europe really needed to be there for each other, too many initially looked out for themselves. When Europe really needed an 'all for one' spirit, too many initially gave an 'only for me' response. And when Europe really needed to prove that this is not a 'fair weather Union', too many initially refused to share their umbrella. But it was not long before some felt the consequences of their own uncoordinated actions. This is why over the last few weeks we took exceptional and extraordinary measures to coordinate and enable the action that was needed."

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Coronavirus: Joint Statement by President von der Leyen and President Michel following G20 Leaders' videoconference

President Ursula von der Leyen and European Council President Charles Michel participated today (Thursday) in an extraordinary G20 Leaders' videoconference called by Saudi Arabia, current holder of the G20 Presidency. The two Presidents thanked all G20 leaders for the solidarity shown to the European Union and underlined that the EU is committed to international cooperation in tackling this

pandemic and will continue to assist vulnerable countries and communities around the world, especially in Africa. They 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.

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Coronavirus: Commission bid to ensure supply of personal protective equipment for the EU proves successful

The joint procurement of personal protective equipment recently launched by the European Commission to address the coronavirus crisis has proven successful. Producers have made offers covering and in some cases even exceeding the quantities requested by the Member States taking part in the procurement (includes Ireland), for every single item requested. Internal Market Commissioner Thierry Breton said: "This joint procurement demonstrates the power of working together in a coordinated manner. It allows Member States to join forces when purchasing medical supplies."

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Coronavirus: Harmonised EU standards for medical devices adopted by Commission

New harmonised standards for medical devices approved this week by the European Commission are intended to speed up the entry of safe, essential medical equipment and devices onto the EU market. EU Health Commissioner Stella Kyriakides said: "With the measures we adopt today, we speed up the entry of safe, essential medical equipment and devices such as masks, gowns and suits in the EU market. This equipment is fundamental for our health professionals – the brave and resilient women and men at the front line - to keep saving lives".

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Green light for accession talks with Albania and North Macedonia

EU Ministers have given a political go-ahead to open accession talks with Albania and the Republic of North Macedonia subject to final endorsement by the European Council members at their video conference today, Thursday. President von der Leyen said: "The European Union delivers on its promise. North Macedonia and Albania did what was asked of them and they have continued making progress in the reforms needed." EU leaders are expected to endorse the decision at their meeting this afternoon.

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Other news

Coronavirus: Commission ready to continue supporting EU's agri-food sector

The European Commission has taken a number of measures to help the EU agri-food sector since the beginning of the corona virus crisis. It has extended the deadline for CAP payment applications to 15 June 2020. It has increased state aid to a maximum aid of €100,000 per farm and a maximum of €800,000 for food processing and marketing companies. And it has also set up "green lanes" at designated border crossing-points to enable the continuous flow of food products. EU Agriculture

Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski said: "I will continue to follow the situation in close contact with Member States. We are ready to take further action when necessary."

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Coronavirus: European Commission issues guidelines to protect critical European assets and technology in current crisis

The European Commission has issued guidelines to ensure a strong EU-wide approach to foreign investment screening in a time of public health crisis and related economic vulnerability. The aim is to preserve EU companies and critical assets, notably in areas such as health, medical research, biotechnology and infrastructures that are essential for our security and public order, without undermining the EU's general openness to foreign investment.

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Coronavirus: AI-ROBOTICS vs COVID-19 initiative

The European Commission has launched an initiative to collect ideas about deployable Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics solutions as well as information on other initiatives that could help face the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. The aim is to create a unique repository that is easily accessible to all citizens, stakeholders and policymakers and become part of the common European response to the outbreak of COVID-19.

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Coronavirus: EU to provide €30 million for struggling Irish SMEs

The European Commission is advancing a payment of €30 million to Ireland in structural funds to deal with the Covid-19 crisis. Ireland can also hold on to a further €4 million of unspent structural funds from 2019. Gerry Kiely, Head of the European Commission Representation in Ireland, says the money will assist health-related small and medium-sized businesses that are struggling because of difficulties caused by the virus.

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Coronavirus: European Medicines Agency urges people not to buy medicines from unregistered websites

The European Medicines Agency (EMA) is urging the general public not to buy medicines from unauthorised websites and other vendors aiming to exploit fears and concerns during the ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). To protect yourself from fraudulent vendors, only buy medicines from a local pharmacy or retailer or from an online pharmacy that is registered with the national competent authorities.

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Coronavirus: New EU guidelines to ensure continuous flow of goods across EU

The European Commission has issued new practical advice on how to keep freight moving across the EU during the current pandemic. Member States are requested to designate, without delay, all the relevant internal border-crossing points on the trans-European transport network (TEN-T) as 'green lane' border crossings. The green lane border crossings should be open to all freight vehicles, whatever goods they are carrying. Crossing the border, including any checks and health screening, should not take more than 15 minutes.

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Coronavirus: EU enables immediate support to hard-hit fisheries sector

Fishing and aquaculture have been among the hardest hit sectors by the Covid-19 pandemic. The European Commission has therefore decided to revise EU state aid rules to allow Member States to provide temporary relief to economic operators hit by the crisis. The new rules include a large increase of the maximum amount of de minimis aid per undertaking, from currently €30,000 to €120,000. The revised state aid rules will enable Member States to make immediate support available, in the form of grants or tax advantages, to operators facing a sudden shortage or unavailability of liquidity.

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Coronavirus: EU Civil Protection Mechanism helps repatriate EU citizens stranded in 3rd countries

The EU is helping a number of EU Member States with the repatriation of their citizens stranded abroad due to the increasing number of restrictions in third countries. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism has so far facilitated the repatriation of 1,381 EU citizens to Europe from Wuhan, Japan, Oakland, Morocco and Tunisia since the beginning of the outbreak.

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Coronavirus: European Commission adopts Temporary Framework to enable Member States to further support the economy in the COVID-19 outbreak

The European Commission has adopted a Temporary Framework to enable Member States to use the full flexibility foreseen under State aid rules to support the economy in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak. The Temporary Framework enables Member States to ensure that sufficient liquidity remains available to businesses of all types and to preserve the continuity of economic activity during and after the COVID-19 outbreak. Executive Vice President Margrethe Vestager said: "The economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak is severe. We need to act fast to manage the impact as much as we can. And we need to act in a coordinated manner."

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Ireland has largest share of exports to non-EU countries

Only 37% of Ireland's goods exports went to other EU27 countries in 2019, the lowest share in the EU, according to Eurostat. This compares to an EU average of 59% - 80% of goods exported by Slovakia and Luxembourg were within the EU27. The main destinations of Irish goods exports were: US (31%), UK and Belgium (10%). Ireland (38%) also had the lowest level of goods imports from other EU27 countries, well below the EU average of 61%. The top countries of origin for Irish goods imports were: UK (28%), US (14%) and France (13%).

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Water abstraction for public supply third highest in Ireland

According to new Eurostat figures, Ireland abstracted 128m³ of fresh water per person for public supply in 2017, 3rd highest in the EU after Greece (179m³ per person; 2016 data) and Italy (157m³ per person). The vast majority of EU Member States abstracted between 45 and 89m³ freshwater per person for public supply in 2017 with Malta in bottom place at 31m³

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Death rate from tuberculosis below EU average in Ireland

New Eurostat figures published for World Tuberculosis Day this week show that for every million inhabitants in Ireland, over 5 people died from tuberculosis in 2016. This is below the average EU death rate of 8 per million inhabitants, down from 11 in 2011. Death rates were highest in Lithuania (60 per million) and Romania (50) and lowest in the Netherlands and Sweden (both 2). In total, 3,770 people in the EU died from tuberculosis in 2016 with men more likely to be affected than women. Over half of those who died were aged 65 and over.

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Numbers seeking asylum in the EU up 12% in 2019

A total of 612,700 people applied for asylum in the EU in 2019, up 12% on 2018. The Eurostat figures show that the top three countries of origin of asylum seekers in 2019 were: Syria (12%), Afghanistan (9%) and Venezuela (7%). Germany (23% of all first-time applicants), France (20%), Spain (19%) and Greece (12%) registered the highest shares of applicants. Ireland accounted for only 0.8% (or 4,740 applicants), although this figure was up 30% on the previous year. The top three countries of origin were: Albania (20%), Georgia (13%) and Zimbabwe (9%).

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Agenda

Thursday 26 March: Video conference of the members of the European Council

EU leaders are meeting this afternoon (Thursday) by video conference to discuss the EU's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Leaders will focus on the four priorities identified: limiting the spread of the virus; providing medical equipment, with a particular focus on masks and respirators; promoting research, including research into a vaccine; and tackling socio-economic consequences. They will also discuss ways to help citizens stranded in third countries.

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Friday 27 March: Video conference of cohesion policy ministers

EU ministers responsible for cohesion policy will hold a video conference tomorrow morning. They will discuss how best to use structural and investment funds to address the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak.

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Thursday 30 April: Life Information and Networking Day (online)

The European Commission is organising a virtual conference on the 2020 LIFE call for project proposals, which will also be launched in April. The event is open to potential applicants presenting project proposals on green technology, nature protection and climate action. The information session will cover significant changes to the programme compared to previous years.

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Public consultations

Availability of private short-term export-credit insurance capacity for exports

The European Commission has launched an urgent public consultation on the availability of private short-term export-credit insurance capacity for exports in light of the economic impact of the coronavirus outbreak. This follows the indication by several Member States that they expect a forthcoming global contraction of the private insurance market for exports to all countries due to the coronavirus outbreak.

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Trade – preferential tariff scheme between the EU and developing countries

The European has launched a preparatory work in order to support a possible review of the legal framework governing the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP). The public consultation results will feed into this work. The consultation is open until 3 June 2020.

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Calls for Tender/Proposals

Invitation to tender No NP/DUB/2020/4 concerning a negotiated procedure for the production of a short educational film on Ireland and the European Union

The European Commission Representation in Ireland intends to issue a call for tender for the production of a short educational film on Ireland and the European Union primarily targeting secondary schools. If you are interested in this tender, please request the documents, indicating in the subject line the reference of the tender NP/DUB/2020/4, by sending an email to eu-ie-info-request@ec.europa.eu by 14 April 2020.

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Invitation to tender No NP/DUB/2020/2 concerning a negotiated procedure for the supply of a marquee and ancillary equipment at the National Ploughing Championships

The European Commission Representation in Ireland intends issuing a call for tenders for the supply of a marquee and ancillary equipment at the National Ploughing Championships in Ballintrane, Fenagh, Co. Carlow on 15th to 17th September 2020. If you are interested in this tender, please request the documents, indicating in the subject line the reference of the tender NP/DUB/2020/2, by sending an email to eu-ie-info-request@ec.europa.eu before 3rd April 2020.

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Invitation to tender No NP/DUB/2020/3 concerning a negotiated procedure for the supply of promotional items

The European Commission Representation in Ireland intends to issue a call for tenders for the supply of promotional items in 2020. If you are interested in this tender, please request the documents, indicating in the subject line the reference of the tender NP/DUB/2020/3, by sending an email to eu-ie-info-request@ec.europa.eu before 3rd April 2020

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Call to acquire a new European world-class supercomputer

The European High Performance Computing Joint Undertaking (EuroHPC JU) and the Minho Advanced Computing Centre (MACC) have launched a call for tender for the procurement of a petascale supercomputer, capable of executing more than one Petaflop, or 1 million billion calculations per second. The procurement will include the acquisition, delivery, installation and maintenance of a EuroHPC petascale supercomputer located in the MACC in Portugal.

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