

The “European Affairs in the Croatian Parliament” bulletin is published monthly by the European Affairs Department. It provides the reader with an overview of parliamentary activities in the field of EU affairs and inter-parliamentary cooperation as well as with access to EU documents forwarded to national parliaments.

### In Focus

#### EU additional measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemia

In April, European Parliament and Council adopted additional measures so that EU funding can be granted immediately and with exceptional flexibility to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The adopted measures are already published in the Official Journal of the European Union.

##### €100 billion to keep people in jobs and businesses running: the SURE initiative

Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE) is designed to help protect jobs and workers affected by the coronavirus pandemic. It will provide financial assistance, in the form of loans granted on favourable terms from the EU to Member States, of up to €100 billion in total. These loans will assist Member States to address sudden increases in public expenditure to preserve employment. Specifically, these loans will help Member States to cover the costs directly related to the creation or extension of national short-time work schemes, and other similar measures they have put in place for the self-employed as a response to the current coronavirus pandemic.

##### The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived

As most of Europe practices social distancing to slow the spread of the virus, it is all the more important that those who rely on others for the most basic of needs are not cut off from help. The Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived will evolve to meet the challenge: in particular, the use of electronic vouchers to reduce the risk of contamination will be introduced, as well as the possibility of buying protective equipment for those delivering the aid.

##### Supporting fishermen and farmers

Europe's farming and fisheries have an essential role in providing us with the food we eat. They are hard hit by the crisis, in turn hitting our food supply chains and the local economies that the sector sustains.

As with the structural funds, the use of the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund will be made more flexible. Member States will be able to provide support:

- to fishermen for the temporary cessation of fishing activities;
- to aquaculture farmers for the temporary suspension or reduction of production;
- to producer organisations for the temporary storage of fishery and aquaculture products.

##### Redirecting all Cohesion Policy funds to fight the emergency

All uncommitted money from the three Cohesion Policy funds – the European Regional Development Fund, the European Social Fund and the Cohesion Fund – will be mobilised to address the effects of the public health crisis.



To make sure that funds can be re-directed to where they are most urgently needed, transfers between funds as well as between categories of regions and between policy objectives will be made possible. Moreover, co-financing requirements will be abandoned, as Member States are already using all their means to fight the crisis. Administration will be simplified.

### **The Emergency Support Instrument**

The European Union has not faced a health crisis in its history on this scale or spreading at this speed. In response, the first priority is to save lives and to meet the needs of our health care systems and professionals who are working miracles every day right across our Union.

### **European Roadmap towards lifting coronavirus containment measures**

Responding to the [call of the European Council](#) of 26 March, the Commission, in cooperation with the President of the European Council, has put forward a [European roadmap](#) towards lifting coronavirus containment measures. It takes into account the expertise of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control the Commission's Advisory Panel on the coronavirus, experience of Member States and guidance from the World Health Organization. Evidently, any such reflection is based on the scientific knowledge available today, and should be revised as further evidence appears.

The following recommendations should guide Member States' reflections on gradually lifting containment measures:

**Action will be gradual.** Measures will be lifted step by step and sufficient time should pass between the steps (e.g. one month), as their effect can only be measured over time.

**General measures should progressively become targeted.** This would allow gradually going back to normality, while continuing to protect the EU population from the virus. For example:

The **most vulnerable groups** should be protected for a longer time.

**Diagnosed people should remain quarantined and treated adequately** to decrease transmission risks.

**Safe, targeted alternatives** should replace existing general prohibitive measures.

**General states of emergencies should gradually be replaced by more targeted interventions by governments.** This would ensure the democratic accountability of the measures taken and a wide acceptance by the populations.

**The lifting of measures should start with those with a local impact and be gradually extended to measures with a broader geographic coverage, taking into account national specificities.** This would allow for effective and tailored actions and the potentially swift redeployment of measures in case new infections occur.

**A phased approach to opening internal and external borders** to allow for the flow of essential workers and goods.

**Internal border controls should be lifted in a coordinated manner.** Travel restrictions should first be eased between identified low-risk areas. Neighbouring Member States should stay in close contact to facilitate this.

**In a second phase, external borders would reopen access for non-EU residents,** taking into account the spread of the coronavirus outside the EU. Restrictions to non-essential travel to the EU must be continuously reviewed.



**Economic activity should be phased in** to ensure that authorities and businesses can adequately adjust to increasing activities in a safe way. The whole population should not return to the workplace at the same time and social distancing should continue to apply. Teleworking should be encouraged. At the work place, occupational health and safety rules should be observed. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, in cooperation with the European Commission [issued guidance for the safe return to the workplace](#). It sets out the critical importance of sound occupational safety and health measures and conditions in all sectors of activity.

**Gatherings of people should progressively be permitted.** When reflecting on the most appropriate sequencing, Member States should focus on the specificities of different categories of activity, such as: **schools and universities, commercial activity** (retail) with possible gradation; **social activities** (restaurants, cafés, sport centres) with possible gradation and **mass gatherings**.

**Efforts to prevent the spread of the virus should be sustained**, with awareness campaigns to encourage the population to keep up the strong hygiene practices and social distancing.

**Measures should be continuously monitored** and a certain readiness should be developed, as there is a risk of a strong resurgence and a return to strict containment measures.

As part of the EU's joint response to the COVID-19 outbreak, European Parliament and Council adopted three urgent proposals. The first urgent measures to help people and businesses tackle the crisis were voted on in the European parliament plenary less than two weeks after the Commission tabled its proposals.

## **Activities of the Croatian Parliament in the Decision-Making Process**

### **Activities of the European Affairs Committee**

On 14 April 2020 the European Affairs Committee started the procedure for the adoption of the Work Programme for the consideration of the positions of the Republic of Croatia for 2020. Parliamentary working bodies are invited to propose the draft legislative acts of the European Union from within their scope of competence and interest. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic this year there will be no preliminary discussion on the European action of Parliament in 2020.

### **Application of EU law**

In April, Croatian Parliament enacted 9 laws in the process of implementation of European law.

## **EU documents Forwarded Directly to the Croatian Parliament**

According to the Protocol (no 1) on the Role of the National Parliaments in the European Union, all draft laws and communications shall be forwarded directly to the national parliaments.

The Croatian Parliament publishes on a daily basis the EU documents received, along with the information on: document number, adoption procedure, transmission date and subsidiarity deadline.

In April 2020, EU institutions forwarded to the Croatian Parliament [45 documents](#): 24 draft laws and 21 communications and other non-binding documents.



## Inter-parliamentary Cooperation in the European Union

Inter-parliamentary cooperation in the European Union encompasses the cooperation between the European Parliament and the national parliaments and the cooperation among the national parliaments in the frame of the parliamentary dimension of the Council Presidency.

All conferences, meetings and other activities that take place in the framework of inter-parliamentary cooperation in the European Union are not held until further notice due to the situation related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

