COVID-19: Council gives go-ahead to further use of cohesion resources

The EU is taking further measures to enable cohesion policy money to be focused on tackling the effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

EU ambassadors today agreed the Council’s position on a second package of measures in less than a month aimed at freeing up more money from EU structural funds for crisis-related operations. Given the unprecedented challenges facing member states, the proposed changes were endorsed without amendment in order to speed up the legislative process.

"The COVID-19 outbreak is an unprecedented challenge for the Union and its member states. This calls for a European response where we must act quickly and in solidarity. The proposed measures provide crucial resources and additional flexibility to combat this crisis. United, we have to show the way forward to our citizens and businesses. The future of Europe really depends on how we act right now."

Andreja Metelko-Zgombić, Croatian State Secretary for European Affairs, President of the Council

The main new element of the proposal, Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus, is that it offers additional flexibility on the use of structural funds so that member states can respond quickly and effectively to the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak.

So, member states will be able to transfer money between different funds to meet their particular requirements. For example, money earmarked for an infrastructure project could be used to buy medical ventilators, support SMEs or
invest in short-term employment schemes.

The new measures will also temporarily remove the existing conditions on which regions are entitled to receive support. This will allow resources to be redirected to those regions most adversely affected by the crisis.

As a temporary and exceptional measure, member states can request up to 100% financing from the EU budget between 1 July 2020 and 30 June 2021 for programmes dealing with the impact of the pandemic.

### Next steps

The European Parliament will now need to agree its position on the new measures. Once there is an agreement, the Council is expected to adopt the measures by written procedure.

[Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative Plus, 2 April 2020](#)

[COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak (background information)](#)

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