
COVID-19 Coronavirus: European Commission, task force in place to coordinate responses

(Brussels) Since “the risk level in the EU has risen from moderate to high”, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, announced the creation of a “Coronavirus response team” at a press conference in Brussels today. The team is composed of five commissioners in charge of coordinating responses to stop the COVID-19 from spreading further. The group includes Janez Lenarčič, commissioner in charge of crisis management; Stella Kyriakides, in charge of health issues; Ylva Johansson, in charge of border-related issues; Adina Vălean, in charge of mobility; and Paolo Gentiloni, in charge of macroeconomic aspects. Their work will be based on three main pillars. The first pillar covers medical and health aspects, with a special focus on “prevention and procurement”, “relief measures, information and foresight” in close cooperation with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control and the European Medicines Agency. The second pillar covers mobility in all of its forms, including Schengen-related matters. The third pillar covers the economy, monitoring the consequences of the outbreak on tourism and transport, trade, supply chains and macro-economic aspects in general. Although “it is still too soon to measure the impact of this downside”, this “does not mean we can minimise it”, Commissioner Gentiloni said, taking the floor at the press conference. As for the economic aspects, the Commission will assess the requests coming from Member States in a spirit of “solidarity and understanding”. “We need a coordinated response”, Gentiloni insisted, which is why the Eurogroup ministers will be holding a videoconference meeting on Wednesday. We are also in contact with the G20 and with the G7 ministers. The EU “is ready to use all available policies to safeguard our growth against these downside risks”, the Commissioner concluded. Also today, the Commission has launched a dedicated webpage on COVID-19.

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