
COVID-19 Coronavirus: EU Economic and Social Committee, “a test for European unity. Solidarity, coordination and action”

“This crisis calls for a change in our modus operandi: it must be an opportunity to show solidarity, coordination and action. This is a test for European unity. Now is the time to show whether we are a real Union or not”. The European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) said this in a statement today, calling “for exceptional policy coordination and coherence at European level”. In particular, the EU is urged to “guarantee all the necessary supplies to our health systems” in compliance with the rules of the single market, and to provide support to Member States as they struggle to contain and fight against the pandemic. There is also a need for “a comprehensive emergency package through which the EU would take responsibility for a meaningful share of the overall emergency effort”. For the EESC, this would require finding the “means to release tens of billions of euros from EU resources, despite existing limitations on the use of the EU budget”. It would be necessary to protect the stock exchanges and to have the main interest rate of the ECB decreased to 0% (or less) as it has been done in the US. Governments should be able to deploy necessary measures, “irrespective of their current debt level”, and institutions and Member States should propose “clear policies” in order to safeguard jobs. The integrity of Europe today depends on “decisive action”, not on “unilateral action, blaming games or divisions”.

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