

Conclusions of the President of the European Council following the video conference of the members of the European Council, 23 April 2020

I would first like to thank all our health workers, doctors and researchers who are working around the clock to save lives.

I would also like to offer words of support to those who are ill and are fighting the virus as we speak.

This pandemic is putting our societies under serious strain. The well-being of each EU member state depends on the well-being of the whole of the EU.

We are all in this together. Fighting Corona and its consequences will take time but we have already made a lot of progress and taken bold action.

Members of the European Council today held their fourth video conference to deal with the COVID-19 and its consequences. We have expressed a strong will to move forward together.

We discussed progress on the various dimensions of the European response to the pandemic and welcomed the Joint European Roadmap towards lifting of COVID-19 containment measures. We all agreed that the health and safety of our citizens comes first.

We also agreed to continue to follow the situation closely, in particular as we approach the holiday season, and to coordinate as much as possible to ensure a gradual and orderly lifting of restrictions.

We welcomed the Joint Roadmap for Recovery. It sets out some important principles, such as solidarity, cohesion and convergence. It further defines four key areas for action: a fully functioning Single Market, an unprecedented investment effort, acting globally, and a functioning system of governance.

It is of utmost importance to increase the strategic autonomy of the Union and produce essential goods in Europe.

Following the meeting of the Eurogroup in an inclusive format on 9 April 2020, we endorsed the agreement on three important safety nets for workers, businesses and sovereigns, amounting to a package worth 540 billion euros.

We called for the package to be operational by 1 June 2020.

We also agreed to work towards establishing a recovery fund, which is needed and urgent. This fund shall be of a sufficient magnitude, targeted towards the sectors and geographical parts of Europe most affected, and be dedicated to dealing with this unprecedented crisis.

We have therefore tasked the Commission to analyse the exact needs and to urgently come up with a proposal that is commensurate with the challenge we are facing.

The Commission proposal should clarify the link with the MFF, which in any event will need to be adjusted to deal with the current crisis and its aftermath.

The Eurogroup in an inclusive format will continue to closely monitor the economic situation and prepare the ground for a robust recovery.

We remain committed to giving the necessary impetus to work on the recovery fund as well as the MFF, so that a balanced agreement on both can be found as soon as possible.

The illegal drilling activities by Turkey in Cyprus' Exclusive Economic Zone were raised by some Member States. We expressed our full solidarity with Cyprus and recalled and reaffirmed our previous conclusions on this matter.

We decided to hold a video conference with the Western Balkans on May 6.

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