



## The Global EU response to COVID-19 must foresee a stronger role for civil society

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Statement by

The COVID-19 is forcing us apart with lockdowns, but at the same time showing us that we must stick together if we want to defeat the pandemic. We must react jointly and swiftly to address this unexpected crisis both in Europe and in other regions of the world, because the virus knows no borders, skin colors or social status.

The new Communication on the Global EU response to COVID-19, unanimously adopted today by the EU External Action Service and the European Commission, is strongly welcomed as it spells out a number of initiatives that would be beneficial in tackling the negative impact of the Coronavirus pandemic, which has no precedents in recent history.

We believe that an efficient coordination among all international players, including the United Nations agencies, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, to address the pervasive consequences of COVID-19 is essential and we welcome the leadership role that the EU will take along with the UN-wide response.

The proposed EU short-term measures tackling the humanitarian, health, social and economic impact of the worldwide crisis will set the tone for future cooperation. We are particularly happy that priority will be given to the most vulnerable regions, such as Africa, the European Neighbourhood from East and South, the Western Balkans, and the Middle

East, while upholding EU fundamental values and principles.

However, the role of civil society in implementing these measures should be fully ensured and stakeholders be empowered to hold everyone accountable. The actions taken need to be inclusive and the policies developed must not leave anyone behind.

The way in which the crisis will be tackled, will determine long-term changes that can build more resilient and equal societies while strengthening global solidarity, in particular when it comes to medical and food supply.

The spread of Covid-19 will not be contained until it is controlled everywhere. The EU as the global leader in humanitarian aid should ensure genuine international cooperation, collaboration and solidarity worldwide.

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