
COVID-19 Coronavirus: Michel (European Council), “we must stand united and roll up our sleeves”. Dombrovskis, “we praise the Italian authorities”

“We must stand united and roll up our sleeves. Together”. The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, said this in his address to the plenary session of the European Parliament in Brussels today. In the afternoon, Michel will have a video conference with the 27 Member States’ governments to discuss the coronavirus emergency. In his address to MEPs, he reiterated the position of the European authorities. “We express our full support to the people and countries who have directly or indirectly been affected” by COVID-19, which has become a “global challenge”. “We need to strengthen our coordination and cooperation” at EU level, and we need “more Europe to contain and curb” the epidemic. Michel insisted on the need to show solidarity in providing medical equipment to the most exposed countries and in supporting scientific research to “find a vaccine”. It focused on the economic and social consequences: “We will find measures to minimise the negative impacts” of this health emergency, by mobilising all actors, including the ECB and the European Investment Bank. Concerning the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027, Michel told Parliament that an agreement between Member States is still far away. Finally, speaking about the refugees at the border with Turkey, he expressed support for Greece. He stressed the need to “respect human dignity and rights”, and reported on the outcome of the talks with the Turkish President Erdogan about the need to comply with the 2016 EU-Turkey agreement and to ease the migratory pressure on Greece, Cyprus and Bulgaria. As for the coronavirus, the President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen has today announced she had a phone call with the Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. The goal was to keep in touch and agree on a common way forward. European Commission Vice-President Valdis Dombrovskis stated: “We praise the Italian authorities for the bold measures they have taken. We know they will put a strain on Italian people, but it is better to take these tough measures now, to protect as many people as possible from the coronavirus”.

Valentina Bombelli