
European Commission: global response to Covid-19, €1 billion for research, air bridge flights to South Sudan, aid to Tajikistan

The European Commission's global response to the Covid-19 pandemic remains on track. Three news items from Brussels today highlight commitments along these lines. First, the Commission will co-fund with €100 million from the Horizon 2020 programme a call launched by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), a global partnership created in 2017 working to support the rapid development of coronavirus vaccines. As part of the Coronavirus Global Response initiative led by President Ursula von der Leyen, €15.9 billion has been pledged to date for universal access to tests, treatments and vaccines against the coronavirus outbreak and for the global recovery. The second news item concerns humanitarian air bridge flights to South Sudan as part of the European support to vulnerable countries during the coronavirus pandemic. The first flight, landed today in the African country, delivered humanitarian supplies and medical equipment. Another flight will depart in the coming days bringing the total amount of cargo transported to 89 tonnes. "This makes it one of the largest EU Humanitarian Air Bridge operations since its launch", reads a release by the Commission. Janez Lenarčič, Commissioner for Crisis Management, said: "Tackling the pandemic globally is in the interest of all." The third report concerns a €112.2 million package to strengthen health, education and social services in Tajikistan. According to Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen, in this way the Country "will be able to increase and improve its healthcare coverage, and young Tajik people will have greater access to higher quality education, even in times of crisis, and better chances of subsequent employment." The EU has recently delivered 13 tons of critical medical supplies and 60 tonnes of potato seeds to vulnerable small farmers.

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