
European Council: Sassoli, “our task is to develop a European health policy”. Support for COVAX

In his address to the European Council, EP President David Sassoli spoke at length about the vaccination roll-out, the “new strains” of the virus, and the importance to give a coordinated response to the health crisis. “In the course of the ongoing crisis, the European Union has come to exercise de facto powers in the area of public health, which should perhaps be codified in due course. Indeed, the pandemic has shown us that important decisions concerning security, health, supplies of medical equipment and vaccines, research and manufacturing, arrangements regulating the movement of people and the opening and closing of our borders can only properly be taken at European level”. “The lesson the pandemic has taught us is that there can be no return to how things were before. It would be a mistake, a waste of energy, and it would leave us ill-equipped to address future challenges. Our task now is to develop a European health policy”. “This month, the COVAX facility will start delivering vaccines”, the president went on to say. “I know that all the Member States are in a position to donate their vaccine surplus to countries that need it. I would encourage a unified approach with Member States pledging their doses through COVAX, in order to ensure fair and equitable redistribution”. The COVID-19 pandemic - Sassoli added - “has been a wake-up call alerting us to the need for a stronger, more united and more assertive foreign and security policy. It has highlighted the need to strengthen Union leadership on the international stage and to deepen our partnerships with countries that share our way of thinking and commitment to democracy, the rule of law and human rights”. The European Union “also needs to take on an active role in the Mediterranean Dialogue” as part of its neighbourhood policy.

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