

Jutta Urpilainen
Commissioner for International Partnerships
European Commission
Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels

Brussels, 8 April 2020

Concerns: Measures to assist the African countries with the COVID-19 outbreak

Dear Commissioner Urpilainen,

The COVID-19 pandemic has now reached most countries on the African continent, if not all. This health crisis and its consequences will undoubtedly be severe for the African countries.

On the 9th of March the European Commission published its communication “Towards a Comprehensive Strategy With Africa,” a document that is setting a new tone for relations with the African countries. The current pandemic is asking us to truly stand side by side with our African counterparts.

The African countries have limited access to health care, and testing for COVID-19 cannot be performed at a scale similar to what is happening in developed countries. Furthermore, the socio-economic context in most of the African countries is a very different one compared to that of the European Union. The sort of measures that are taken within the European Union, including lockdowns and extensive social distancing, are not always feasible within developing countries. This situation should not be overlooked and special attention needs to be given to these countries.

In the communication presented on the 9th of March the EU proposes to upgrade its support to the strengthening of health care systems. I embrace this and I would like to ask you to work in the spirit of this proposal by already intensifying the EU’s support for the health care systems in the African countries.

I am asking you to take these special circumstances into account and to truly show Europe’s solidarity with the African countries, by assisting them with adequate funding and expertise to combat the consequences of this global crisis.

Yours sincerely,

Samira Rafaela
Member of the European Parliament