

Press release by President Charles Michel on an international Treaty on Pandemics

The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, today proposed an international treaty on pandemics within the framework of the World Health Organization, while participating by video message in the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic on 3 and 4 December 2020.

"The number of epidemics has multiplied in recent decades," said President Michel. "We knew the world was not immune to a major pandemic. Yet, we were caught off guard. This is a form of failure, and we will have to learn the lessons and draw the conclusions from it."

When confronted with future pandemics, an international treaty, anchored in collective mobilisation and solidarity, would enable the international community to better anticipate, prepare for and manage future pandemics. The success of this collective action has been demonstrated in developing safe and effective vaccines in record time.

President Michel enumerated a number of areas such a treaty could address:

- risk monitoring;
- better financing and coordination of research;
- a more efficient system of alerts and information sharing;
- improving access to healthcare;
- resilience: strengthening healthcare systems and securing supply chains.

"The objective is to do better," said President Michel. "To do better in all areas where we recognise it is in our interest to strengthen cooperation."

President Michel has spoken with the Director-General of the World Health Organization, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. President Michel reaffirmed that the WHO is the cornerstone of international cooperation against pandemics. This treaty would complement and reinforce their efforts. President Michel will also be sending letters to the Presidencies of the G7 and G20 to present his proposal. Other relevant international organisations and agencies should also be involved in this process.

[Speech of President Charles Michel at the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Press office - General Secretariat of the Council

Rue de la Loi 175 - B-1048 BRUSSELS - Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 6319

press@consilium.europa.eu - www.consilium.europa.eu/press