



Coronavirus: Commission encourages and facilitates cross-border treatment of patients and deployment of medical staff

Brussels, 3 April 2020

The coronavirus pandemic is putting healthcare systems across the EU under unprecedented and increasing pressure. To support and encourage cross-border healthcare cooperation between national, regional and local authorities, the Commission has today issued [practical guidance](#) to Member States. Cooperation across borders can help ease the pressure on overburdened hospitals by transferring patients suffering from coronavirus for treatment in Member States where hospital places are available. The Commission will also support Member States or non-governmental organisations to send qualified teams of medical personnel to offer assistance across borders.

Vice-President for Promoting our European Way of Life, Margaritis **Schinias**, said: *"EU unity and solidarity are vital in the fight against Coronavirus. Cooperating across borders can make the difference in saving lives by alleviating overstretched health care capacities in Member States. Faced with the greatest crisis in generations, we will leave no stone unturned in our collective response."*

Commissioner Stella **Kyriakides**, responsible for Health and Food Safety said: *"We can only overcome the coronavirus crisis together. Life-saving cooperation between Member States is key. EU solidarity has been tangible over the past weeks with Member States treating patients from their neighbours, even when stretched themselves. This is the EU at its best, and with our guidance today, we want to encourage more cross-border treatment of patients, more deployment of healthcare staff from EU countries with extra capacity, to where it is needed most. Solidarity saves lives."*

Today's guidelines set out a more coordinated approach to cross-border cooperation on emergency healthcare. The guidelines also outline additional support and assistance to be provided by the Commission to Member States health authorities, in particular by:

- Coordinating requests for cross-border healthcare assistance through the [Health Security Committee](#), chaired by the Commission, and the EU Early Warning and Response System. Such requests could cover for instance intensive care places, treatment and transfer of patients or qualified teams of medical personnel. The Commission will closely monitor these requests and the assistance available in the Member States.
- Supporting health authorities requesting assistance through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. The Mechanism allows the Commission to coordinate and co-fund the emergency cross border transport of patients and qualified teams of medical personnel.
- Setting out arrangements for patient mobility across borders and clarifying the steps to be taken for the reimbursement of healthcare costs of cross-border treatment in compliance with the Social Security Coordination Regulations.
- Encouraging the deployment of qualified teams of medical personnel across borders. The Commission also encourages local, regional and national health authorities to use existing bi-lateral and regional agreements and clarify the mutual recognition of professional medical qualifications.
- Operating a Clinical Management Support System to support healthcare professionals to share knowledge and expertise. The system provides a Web conferencing platform that allow clinicians to exchange knowledge, discuss, and share clinical cases across the EU.*

In addition, regarding financial assistance for cross-border healthcare cooperation, the Commission has also extended the Solidarity Fund to cover public health emergencies. Moreover, health expenditure is eligible under the Structural Funds and [further flexibility](#) to shift funds was already provided as part of the co-ordinated economic response to the coronavirus outbreak. Finally, additional support will be available through the Emergency Support Instrument (ESI) presented [yesterday](#).

More Information

[Dedicated Commission webpage on the EU's response to the coronavirus outbreak](#)

* Clinicians and healthcare professionals interested in receiving more information and for joining the system can contact SANTE-COVID-CLINICIANS-NETWORK@ec.europa.eu

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