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27 March 2020

COVID-19 – an effective and human rights-compliant response

Motion for a resolution

tabled by Ms Jennifer DE TEMMERMAN and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

The World Health Organization (WHO) developed a special tool for determining which diseases and pathogens to prioritise for research and development in public health emergency contexts in 2015. In 2018, “Disease X” was added to this list. It appears that “Disease X” is now among us, in the form of COVID-19, provoked by a novel, very contagious coronavirus: 2019-nCoV. First reported to the WHO Country Office in China on 31 December 2019, the outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020, and a pandemic on 11 March 2020. At the time of writing, the disease had spread to six continents, infecting hundreds of thousands and killings thousands.

Following the Ebola-epidemic of 2015-2016, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted [Resolution 2114 \(2016\)](#) on “The handling of international public-health emergencies”, urging new ways of working to face international health crises before they happen. Unfortunately, the world was not ready for this pandemic. The global financial system and many health systems are already buckling under the pressure, with worse to come. Other real-world consequences include risks to European democracies, discrimination against migrants, refugees, “foreign-looking” people, the poor and the marginalised, further deepening of inequalities, and a particularly harsh impact on women, the elderly, and persons in fragile health.

The focus must thus now turn to ensuring an effective and human rights-compliant response to COVID-19, in order to save lives and guarantee access to health care to all those who need it, as well as to manage the social, economic, financial and political consequences of the pandemic in an equitable way through international co-operation. The work of national, regional and international health authorities, including WHO, as well as all national and European decision-making, must be transparent and de-politicised, and put human rights and lives first.

Signed (see overleaf)



*Signed*¹:

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EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
SOC: Socialists, Democrats and Greens Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: Representatives not belonging to a Political Group

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