



A EU budget to ensure intergenerational equity

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COVID-19 crisis shows us how interdependent and vulnerable we are. Climate change increases inequalities and has a higher impact on the most vulnerable, namely children and future generations. The European Green Deal should continue to be our compass to improve the health and well-being of Europeans by transforming our economic model; and the EU budget should be robust enough to build a resilient, inclusive and climate neutral European economy.

We are living in unprecedented times and the current health crisis will shape our world in the next decades. COVID-19 is a health crisis that is attacking our well-being. From one day to another, our way of living in society drastically changed. People became fearful of being in contact with others, fearful about their health status, fearful to be a source of infection to others. At the same time, we carry on the feeling that we are all together in the same boat, that we all share some responsibilities no matter of our job, our social status and our generation. I am a grandmother of a 15 month-old and as many others around the world, we have been deprived to see our children and our grandchildren. COVID-19 is illustrating how interdependent we are on each other as a people, as societies and in our economies too.

COVID-19 is a health crisis that Europe has to solve very urgently. We are starting to live the first economic and social consequences. The world and Europe as we knew it before is no longer the same and **we need to start thinking on the recovery of the European economy and the well-being of the Europeans**. Parliament asked for a massive recovery and reconstruction package for investment to support the European economy. The EU budget is the main common existing tool, endorsed by all Member States, to support investment in

Europe. However, we need an appropriated and significant size to take into account the downturn. New instruments, as the so-called **Recovery Bonds** endorsed by the European Parliament, **should be created to recover the economy by financing an EU budget aligned with the European Green Deal**, promoting resilience of Europe, and repairing the social, health and internal market damage.

The European Green Deal (EGD) is our sustainable growth strategy and the situation on COVID-19 should not put it on hold. COVID-19 is challenging our health and well-being and the EGD should continue to be our compass to improve the health and well-being of Europeans by transforming our economic model. **The new Multi-Annual Financial Framework (MFF) proposal should allocate significant resources to build a resilient, inclusive and climate neutral European economy**, whilst sticking to the ambition and commitments previously agreed. Intergenerational solidarity is crosscutting to the EU budget and it is better addressed if we prioritise areas in which could also bring a significant value added to the economic and social recovery.

Climate change is an issue of intergenerational justice by increasing inequalities with a higher impact on the most vulnerable, namely children and future generations. In this crisis, it was clear that if we don't take care of our health we are more vulnerable. Climate change also causes global illnesses and premature deaths. The next MFF should make sure that health considerations are present in all policies to achieve healthier populations. One of the key areas is agriculture, where a new European agriculture policy should be in place towards a sustainable and healthier agriculture. Children are one of the most vulnerable group of climate change. We, Socialist and Democrats in the European Parliament, should continue to fight for the Child Guarantee, a long-standing demand of our Group. **Future resilient societies will only be possible if we help next generations adapt and cope successfully with the changes.** Skills, knowledge, research and innovation are crucial to ensure this. We need a stronger European Social Fund supporting the upgrading and reskilling, more investments should be channelled into eliminating the digital divide and EU programmes such as Horizon Europe should be increased.

Cohesion policy cannot suffer further cuts. It is under this policy that the EU quickly reaches regions, communities and people in general (as it was again clear during the current crisis). The structural funds can address climate injustice by investing in local, regional or national green infrastructure to provide essential services like public transport, water distribution, waste treatment and energy security. Moreover, it is also under the structural funds that we can establish programmes to engage young people at the communities.

Future crises will not be just endogenous, specific to an individual economy or a particular system. Disruptions will be at all levels. Today it is the COVID-19 pandemic, tomorrow, maybe even closer that we think, a crisis linked to climate change. If we have success in eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities, we can have resilient systems to ensure intergenerational equity in face of climate change.



About the author

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