

APPEAL TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

FROM SOLIDARITY ASSOCIATIONS

CALLING FOR URGENT ASSISTANCE FOR THE POOREST

Today, Europe is facing an unprecedented wave of poverty exacerbated by the Covid-19 epidemic. **All over Europe, millions of people have suffered a drastic reduction in their income or even its total loss.** Among them are single-parent families, impoverished workers, the aged and students, as well as the self-employed, those doing business in the hospitality sector and retailers. Children too are the main victims of the crisis.

Over the last few weeks, **solidarity associations and their thousands of volunteers and staff have been in the front line, continuing their aid initiatives during the emergency. Against this background, they have had to deal with a very sharp rise in the number of requests for assistance** and have been aiding people who had not previously needed help.

Needs are already great today and are set to increase considerably over the coming weeks and months since **this already severe economic and social crisis will be a lasting one and may lead to volatile situations. Millions of Europeans could fall into insecurity and poverty, in all likelihood lastingly.** They must not be left to fend for themselves.

On 27 May, the European Commission presented its propositions for a revival plan and the 2021-2027 European Budget.

It especially announced **the launch of a programme responding to the emergency (REACT)**, which will greatly increase the resources allocated to food and material aid until 2022, through the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD).

It is more than ever necessary to strengthen the latter and increase the marginal share assigned to food and material aid in the European budget presented before the crisis.

Today, our associations are calling on all EU institutions and heads of state and government sitting in council to measure the extreme gravity of the current situation and make the fight against poverty a long-term priority for the European Union by :

- ➔ **Providing massive, immediate financial support** in response to the current wave of poverty from the 55 billion euros allocated to the three-year REACT 2020-2022 programme of the revival plan;
- ➔ **Increasing resources devoted to the fight against poverty and food aid** in the 2021-2027 European budget;
- ➔ **Supporting European solidarity associations in their battle against poverty.**

Immediately increasing financial resources devoted to material and food aid will prevent millions of people in Europe living below the poverty threshold from facing hunger.

**13 MILLION EUROPEANS ARE CURRENTLY RECEIVING AID
AND THAT COULD RISE TO 87 MILLION.**

MATERIAL AND FOOD AID FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION

For many years, solidarity associations have been helping millions of people suffering from poverty and social exclusion all over Europe. The initiatives they wage enable them to provide those people with the means to eat, often in the long term.

They also do more than just supply food aid, ensuring improvements in standards of living, health and the enjoyment of rights, and access to housing, education, culture, holidays, leisure activities and sport.

Food aid for the poorest currently has a budget of 500 million a year, i.e. 0.37% of the European budget.

Ensuring food and material support for 13 million Europeans, that sum is a major, essential European tool that has proved its efficacy during this crisis.

Included in the ESF+ from 2021, those funds must be increased in the 2021-2027 European budget.

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