



**OLIVÉR VÁRHELYI**  
MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD AND ENLARGEMENT

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Brussels, 24 March 2020  
Ares(2020)

**Dear Prime Minister,**

I would like update you on possible means by which the EU plans to support Kosovo in mitigating the COVID-19 crisis.

Europe is facing an unprecedented public health crisis and far-reaching measures are being taken all over the continent. In these difficult times, cooperation and solidarity are key. The EU stands by the countries of the Western Balkans region in seeking ways to help you address both the outbreak and its aftermath.

We are looking intensively at how to associate Kosovo and other partners to initiatives that the EU is taking in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as on how to best offer support in mitigating its socio-economic impact. Regarding stranded citizens from the region in the EU, the Commission is also in discussion with Member States about third country citizens who may find themselves in an overstay situation in the Schengen area as a result of travel restrictions.

**H.E. Albin Kurti**  
Prime Minister of Kosovo  
Pristina,  
Kosovo

In terms of financial assistance, I have instructed my services to:

- make use of up to €5 million for immediate needs to be funded out of the EU approximation facility.
- start work on re-designing up to €50 million in assistance from the 2019 and 2020 programmes, which should now be used to mitigate against the socio-economic impact of the crisis. Originally planned projects may be financed in subsequent programming exercises.
- urgently bring forward and frontload projects already in the pipeline that can improve liquidity and support the private sector. This includes upcoming payment requests of up to €13 million in budget support payments insofar as the relevant conditions are met. In addition, we are looking at other projects and will adapt accordingly.

Moreover, we are working together with International Financial Institutions, looking at how best to address the liquidity and financial problems of the private sector and we are examining how our multi-country facilities, such as the Western Balkans Guarantee, can best help the region.

We are also working closely with the Regional Cooperation Council and the Secretariats of CEFTA and the Transport Community Treaty to address issues affecting the supply of essential goods to facilitate movement of goods within the region, and between the region and the EU. Your request that border-crossing points with the EU be considered as part of the green lane proposal by the Commission has been retained in the Communication adopted 23 March. We call on your full cooperation for working together as a region, as it is only through close collaboration and solidarity that a challenge of this magnitude can be addressed.

This is a rapidly evolving situation and we will need to adapt accordingly. I have asked the head of the EU Office/EUSR, Ambassador Apostolova and her team in Pristina to liaise closely with you in taking this forward, while services in Brussels will regularly update your Embassy.

Working together, we will come through this crisis stronger.

Yours sincerely,



Olivér Várhelyi