

From: 5.1.2e)
Sent: Wed 4/15/2020 7:31:23 AM

Subject: FW: EU lawmakers: Brussels needs emergency health competence

Received: Wed 4/15/2020 7:31:23 AM

Van: POLITICO Pro Health Care Alert

Verzonden: woensdag 15 april 2020 09:31:18 (UTC+01:00) Amsterdam, Berlin, Bern, Rome, Stockholm, Vienna

Aan: 5.1.2e

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The four largest parties in the European Parliament are proposing that the EU have "greater powers" to act on cross-border health threats, according to a draft joint motion for a <u>resolution obtained today by POLITICO</u>.

The groups are calling for "new and strengthened instruments" so the EU can coordinate "without delay" an emergency response; send resources where they are most needed; and collect standardized data.

The groups believe "the pandemic has shown the limits of the Union's capacity to act decisively and exposed the lack of the Commission's executive and budgetary powers."

The draft, which is subject to amendments, is non-binding but shows a consensus among the European People's Party, Socialists & Democrats, Renew Europe and the Greens. It will be voted on later this week.

Specifically, the groups are calling for the creation of a European Health Response Mechanism "to better prepare and respond in a common and coordinated way" to health crises. The mechanism would include both an information hub and emergency response team to send equipment and staff to to hard-hit regions.

The Commission should also strengthen its existing mechanisms like rescEU, which the EU is currently using to create a stockpile of medical gear through the Civil Protection Mechanism, they said.

The groups are also calling for strengthening the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the European Medical Agency (EMA). And an <u>expert panel</u> on the coronavirus established by the Commission should become a "permanent independent expert team" that coordinates with the ECDC.

In addition, the groups propose the creation of a "COVID-19 R&I Fund" to help finance vaccine and treatment development.

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