



## **SPAIN AND GREECE**

Economic, Health and Social Affairs

### **Policy Proposal**

**On behalf of Spain and Greece to European Commission  
on initiating unified actions framework in times of health crisis  
(epidemic/pandemic) faced by all 27 member states.**

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## *1. Introduction- Background*

In the year 2020, we saw a start of pandemic Covid-19 taking over European Union, becoming a colossal challenge for us since the Spanish flu in 1918 in department of health affairs. As a united union of 27 member states, we all were left weak with less time to accumulate unified actions to fight against it, making our strategies fragmented, leaving our valuable citizens to face the brunt of the new pandemic.

Addressing the honourable European Commission and ministers of our fellow member states on the covid crisis, we would like to discuss the potential mutual efforts in order to save us from the devastating crisis which we all are currently experiencing or might again in future. Despite our regular efforts together, we have failed to conquer these crisis and save our citizens from facing its burden. We equally acknowledge our fellow member states facing similar crisis and hence, today we would like propose some policies keeping in mind the previous discussions by our fellow member states.

Nonetheless, learning with our experiences, we aim at cooperating with our fellow member states in order to build a reliable and plausible framework to strengthen and unify our future actions to prevent our citizens being caused any pain and become better prepared for any future health crises.

## *2. Objectives- Our aims*

- We as tourism renowned countries, are highly dependable on tourism contributing to our GDP and it being the worst hit department, many of our citizens are facing unemployment and we would like to cure that initially.
- We aim at cooperating with our esteemed fellow member states with unified actions and goals and establish a common approach in order to tackle health crisis more efficiently.
- Article 3 (ex Article 2 TEU) in Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, states Union's aim is to promote peace, its values and the well-being of its peoples (Europa, 2012). Therefore, we with the support of European Commission and fellow member states make our pioneer aim to promote good health and act in harmony to achieve the maximum benefits for our European Union citizens.
- Develop a better and more enhanced healthcare system in order to support each other in such crisis and achieve healthcare equality.
- Less disruption to our citizens working across domestic borders. Softer measures acquired for border closures in order to be less harmed in domestic tourism and employment.

- To acquire funds for stronger medical infrastructure along with a well-coursed, detailed and unified Framework presented by the European Commission in order to understand the distribution of funds criteria among the states.

### 3. Policy Recommendations

- We acknowledge that our main priority should be standing in favour of solidarity to face these difficult circumstances together, consequently, in this context, the EU4Health proposal would be more than welcomed. It is of vital importance to coordinate our efforts together in order to tackle the current and further pandemics. This could only be done through *a common health union*, ensuring that each state receives adequate assistance.
- With our undue support for EU4 health proposal, we very much look forward to the funds distributed for intensive advancements in the healthcare system. However, we could fully agree with EU4Health proposal if *fair representation of each member state* within the team of experts is guaranteed to ensure free distribution. Also keeping in mind the importance of medical supplies, we with the support of European commission and fellow member states recommend systematic and unified approach along with effective distribution of medical supplies including the protective equipment and facilitate the organizations producing such materials.
- To reach a compromise and to *improve the current state* of Spain and Greece, empirical evidence of which provided that both economies are highly dependent on tourism revenue. Hence, after weighing the *benefits of vaccination passports*, we would like the European commission to introduce them to expedite the process of domestic tourism and recommend to add the vaccines from licensed institutes once the international tourism gains its momentum. We believe that we can reach a compromise and thus solidarity in times of crisis will help the most affected member states as Spain and Greece. As was mentioned before our countries have important economic dependency on tourism, this means that we need to foster this field and again attract more visitors. These Digital Green Certificates will be a sufficient tool during the current pandemic time and shall be acknowledged in future as well based on its successful outcomes during the current times.
- *Article 43B* requires that *enhanced cooperation* shall be open to all Member States when it is established. It shall also be open to them at any time, provided the Member State in question complies with the decisions taken within the framework. Spain and Greece, as a devoted member of union, consolidated countries' perspectives of dealing with crucial situation such as pandemic with our fellow members' approach.

- Considering the *importance of free trading within EU countries* it should be stated that Intra-EU trade accounts for 67% of Spain’s exports and speaking about imports, 62% come from EU countries. In terms of Greece’s export in EU countries trade accounts for 53% of the whole export and 51% of import value come from EU Member States (An official website of the European Union). Accordingly, we strongly support the introduction and establishment of ‘green-lanes’ to ensure continuous trade amongst member states even if epidemiological conditions impair the freedom of movement. Reinforced with empirical evidence of its relevance, free trading for EU countries is essential to sustaining a stable economy during a pandemic rather than impairing it more by paralyzing the cross-border transport of goods.
- “More than a year on from the onset of the pandemic, it remains an open question what role *border closures*, travel restrictions and health-related travel requirements should play in a *pandemic management response*,” said MPI President Andrew Selee. “As new strains of the virus emerge, governments face the challenge of developing risk mitigation strategies that move beyond the blunt tools of border closures and travel bans. They also need to avoid unilateral responses and work with other governments and international organizations to develop well-planned border health policies.”(*COVID-19 and the State of Global Mobility in 2020. Report by Meghan Benton, Jeanne Batalova, Samuel Davidoff-Gore, Timo Schmidt*).
- Greece and Spain, among the idea of bringing the health issues as a priority of our agenda, it is crucial to *rescue economic performance*, tourism and other pillars to reduce loss caused by COVID-19 and herewith future pandemics. We uphold the notion that complete border closures are the last resort that should only be applied if all other measures failed.
- The responsibility for the distribution of the vaccine in accordance with the necessity of each state, at least *50% of the population* of each country should be covered leading to providing an efficient roll out process and distribution of much needed vaccines.

It is crucial to protect each member state sovereignty and decision-making capacity to successfully fulfil our main aim, which is to pursue an efficient joint action against pandemics. We kindly ask to act in accordance to Article 168 TFEU, which stipulates that the EU shall complement national policies toward public health concerns and encourage cooperation between member states.

## 4. Commitment

We hereby, commit that in the times of health crisis, we as countries would cooperate with European Commission to achieve maximum harmony and reduce the effects of an epidemic/pandemic.

Upon exploring the emergency situation occurring not only in the EU but throughout the world from multiple perspectives, we would like to conclude and commit our approach to provide a better and enhanced healthcare system, minimal losses in the economy and effective response to future pandemics. As we have already seen, different actions of European Union members ensured a contrasting result. Spain and Greece undershore cooperating with our fellow member states with unified actions and goals. Our main aim is to establish a common approach in order to deal with the health crisis now and in the future more efficiently.

Taking into consideration the importance of free movement throughout the union, especially when our countries are highly dependent on tourism revenue, the optimal instrument would be vaccine passports. We also acknowledge the importance of EU4Health proposal and definitely support the idea. All in all, the principal objective of Greece and Spain is solidarity, improving medical infrastructure and health systems, preventing economic recession and cooperating with our fellow member states which we hereby commit to.

### References

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4. Europa.EU, 2012. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12012M/TXT>