

## Solidarity Call for Parliamentarians in Europe

Mercator European Dialogue

25. March 2020

13 Members of Parliament from 8 European countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Malta) came together to discuss European solidarity during the Corona crisis. The session was held via video call and was facilitated by the Mercator European Dialogue. During the call, the parliamentarians introduced the current national situation and engaged in an open conversation covering national and local challenges and best practices as well as steps towards European solidarity and common solutions.

### Highlights of the Conversation

- There was great consensus and concern **that European solidarity is lacking** in the current corona crisis and that according action must be taken. An MP from Germany concluded: “We as European national parliamentarians should send out a sign of solidarity”.
- Parliamentarians perceive strong measures taken by governments as currently needed. Yet, a growing concern towards the **ability of parliaments to uphold scrutiny** was voiced.
- Two **solidarity initiatives** were brought forward: Franziska Brantner (German MP from the Green Party) introduced her idea that it is time for national MPs to set a sign of solidarity between European countries. Lars Castellucci (German MP from the Socialist Party) together with Angela Schiro (Italian MP from the Socialist Party) presented their initiative to publish a solidarity message to be signed by one parliamentarian per EU country. Most participants of the call voiced their encouragement towards the introduced initiatives.
- “If we **want open borders**, we need the same approaches within the EU, and this is essential for border regions.” This point was made by a Belgian MP who shared how Belgian restrictions were bypassed by citizens traveling to the Netherlands which had not taken measures yet.
- Parliamentarians identified the need of a joint **European procurement and production of medical equipment** despite a missing European approach to the health sector.
- A Lithuanian parliamentarian asked for shared experience regarding **measures to support people who depend on others** for supplies while being in quarantine. Best practice examples were shared among MPs; Denmark has great, self-organized citizen initiatives which offer grocery delivery to the people in need. In Greece, municipalities and local authorities offer grocery delivery to people in need through their “help me at home” service. Similarly, local authorities in Malta offer support through the delivery of groceries and medicine. A Maltese parliamentarian shared how volunteers are calling citizens from his office to identify concrete needs of citizens.
- The aftermath of this crisis will impose **immense economic challenges on all member states** of the EU and all parliamentarians agreed that this can only be tackled through European action ideally in the form of a common EU package to shoulder the burden.