

Press release by President Charles Michel on an international Treaty on Pandemics



The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, today proposed an international treaty on pandemics within the framework of the World Health Organization, while participating by video message in the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic on 3 and 4 December 2020.

“The number of epidemics has multiplied in recent decades,” said President Michel. “We knew the world was not immune to a major pandemic. Yet, we were caught off guard. This is a form of failure, and we will have to learn the lessons and draw the conclusions from it.”

When confronted with future pandemics, an international treaty, anchored in collective mobilisation and solidarity, would enable the international community to better anticipate, prepare for and manage future pandemics. The success of this collective action has been demonstrated in developing safe and effective vaccines in record time.

President Michel enumerated a number of areas such a treaty could address:

- risk monitoring;
- better financing and coordination of research;
- a more efficient system of alerts and information sharing;
- improving access to healthcare;
- resilience: strengthening healthcare systems and securing supply chains.

“The objective is to do better,” said President Michel. “To do better in all areas where we recognise it is in our interest to strengthen cooperation.”

President Michel has spoken with the Director-General of the World Health Organization, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus. President Michel reaffirmed that the WHO is the cornerstone of international cooperation against pandemics. This treaty would complement and reinforce their efforts. President Michel will also be sending letters to the Presidencies of the G7 and G20 to present his proposal. Other relevant international organisations and agencies should also be involved in this process.

[Speech of President Charles Michel at the Special Session of the UN General Assembly in response to the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union on the alignment of certain countries concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in Libya



On 1 October 2020, the Council adopted Council Decision (CFSP) 2020/1385[1].

The Council decided that the restrictive measures concerning one person should be extended for a further period of six months, and the entries for two persons should be deleted.

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania[2], the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this Council Decision.

They will ensure that their national policies conform to this Council Decision.

The European Union takes note of this commitment and welcomes it.

[1]Published on 02.10.2020 in the Official Journal of the European Union no. L 320, p. 9.

[2]The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Awareness seminar on the Registered Community Design system for Japanese users

December 03, 2020 [Learning](#)

Awareness seminar on the Registered Community Design system for Japanese users



Building on previous joint awareness events, a virtual seminar on the Registered Community Design (RCD) system was organised on 3 December 2020 by the Japan Patent Attorneys' Association (JPAA) with the participation of panellists from the EUIPO.

The seminar covered RCD proceedings from filing to registration, design invalidity proceedings, and case-law on the concept of individual character. It also covered other issues related to design protection, such as the notion of technical function, and designs of interconnections or spare parts.

In addition, the EUIPO explained the Common Practice for Assessing Disclosure of Designs on the Internet and showed demos of DesignView and DesignClass, initiatives developed by the European Union Intellectual Property Network (EUIPN).

As part of the EUIPO's Strategic Plan 2025, this workshop falls within Strategic Driver 1, Goal 1.1, Initiative 3, working towards the development of 'enhanced engagement with global partners for the extension of common tools and practices'.

[Media advisory – Press conference by President Charles Michel “Taking stock](#)

of the past year and looking forward to future challenges”



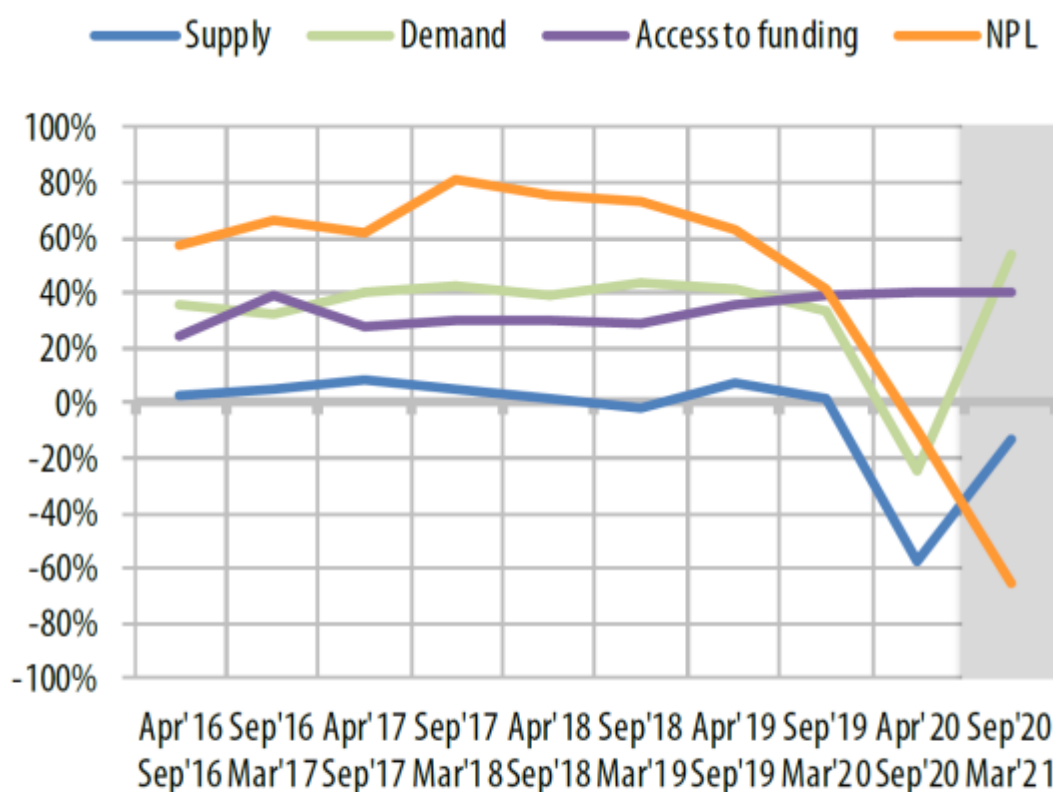
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Banks in Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe give stable outlook amid second wave of pandemic



Source: EIB – CESEE Bank Lending Survey.

Note: All indicators in net percentages.

Supply/Demand: Positive figures refer to increasing (easing) demand (supply).

Access to funding: Positive values indicate increased access to funding.

NPL: Negative figures indicate increasing NPL ratios.

The survey results show that international banking group strategies and commitment to the CESEE region are tilted towards expansion or stability. Nonetheless, COVID-19 has brought about a deceleration in activities to increase capital. CESEE subsidiaries and local banks further report a decrease in demand for credit and have tightened credit standards over the past six months.

The surveyed banks indicate that demand for financing contracted for the first time in the past five years. Investment in particular is decreasing while working capital needs continue to contribute to the demand for financing.

Non-performing loan ratios deteriorated, although less than anticipated in the spring 2020 edition of the survey. This trend is expected to continue over the next six months and is affecting credit standards. Banking groups and national banks report tightened credit standards across the board, including for lending to small and medium-sized companies. Collateral requirements in particular tightened significantly.

“COVID-19 has led to an unprecedented shock for our economies. Regulatory and

policy measures have played a significant role in keeping the economy afloat. In particular, public guarantee schemes have been very effective in maintaining lending activity by banks in the CESEE region” said EIB Vice-President **Ricardo Mourinho Félix**, responsible for economic studies. “The EIB Group will continue to support the region through the pan-European Guarantee Fund and our regular investment and advisory activities, not only to alleviate the hardship endured but also to reignite the investment needed to make the region’s economies greener, more digital, more competitive and more inclusive”, he added.

“Despite the relentless pandemic, the financial systems in the CESEE region are still coping. International banks are showing their commitment to the region. The decline in demand for investment financing is worrying in light of the twin green and digital challenge that economies in the region are facing. To reignite investment and in order to tackle the green and digital transformation to remain competitive in the long term, public support and coordination will be key,” added EIB Chief Economist **Debora Revoltella**.

The CESEE Bank Lending Survey is part of regular reporting from the EIB, International Monetary Fund (IMF), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and World Bank for the European Bank Coordination [“Vienna Initiative”](#), a framework for safeguarding the financial stability of emerging Europe. The survey for the new edition of the report was conducted as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded. Previous editions are accessible [here](#).

Background information

About the EIB Economics Department

The EIB Economics Department provides economic research and studies, as well as unique analysis of investment activities in the European Union and beyond, and supports the Bank in its operations and in the definition of its positioning, strategy and policy. Chief Economist Debora Revoltella heads the Department, a team of 40 economists.

About the EIB CESEE Bank Lending Survey

The EIB CESEE Bank Lending Survey is a unique, bi-annual survey of some 90 local banks, banking groups and financial institutions in Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe. The latest edition of the survey was conducted in September 2020 and collects information about the period from March to September 2020 as well as expectations for the period from October 2020 to March 2021. The survey collects information on credit standards, credit terms and conditions, approval rates and the various factors that may be responsible for changes, including domestic and international elements. Demand for loans is also investigated in terms of loan applications as well as their quality. The survey also includes specific questions on credit quality and the funding conditions for banks. It is designed to build a panel of observations to support time series analysis, observations that can provide an almost real-time assessment of the health of the banking sector in the CESEE region. The CESEE Bank Lending Survey was developed and is managed by the EIB Economics Department, and is part of a series of reports by the

EBRD, IMF and World Bank for the [Vienna Initiative](#).

[For more information](#)