



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EUROPEAN CIVIL PROTECTION AND HUMANITARIAN AID OPERATIONS (ECHO)

The Director-General

Brussels
ECHO/MP

Dear Petitioner,

Our thoughts are always with all those affected by the earthquake that struck Zagreb at a most unfortunate time, when Croatia – like the rest of the EU, and the world – was fighting a pandemic. The European Commission stands always in full solidarity with Croatia and you can always count on the European Commission's assistance. Following a request for assistance from your government, Member States sent urgently needed winter tents, foldable beds, sleeping bags and electrical heaters to Zagreb, via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, in line with the items requested by the Government of Croatia.

The EU Civil Protection Mechanism operates based on voluntary offers by its Member and Participating States. A number of EU Member States have requested protective or medical equipment through the Mechanism to assist in their response to the COVID-19 outbreak, including Croatia. The Commission immediately liaised with Member and Participating States as regards the follow-up on all requests. Due to the rapidly evolving situation across our continent and the general shortage of relevant protective and medical equipment on the market, not all of these requests could have been responded to. In early May, Croatia received 25,000 masks from the rescEU medical stockpile, as well as disinfectants and gloves.

The Commission continues to develop its strategic reserve of medical equipment, in the framework of rescEU, which will also include other medical items such as ventilators and therapeutics and vaccines, when available. It will support Member States that are facing shortages of equipment needed to treat infected patients, protect healthcare workers and help slow the spread of the virus. My services are working on this matter with utmost attention and speed.

This remains an extremely challenging time for the entire European Union. Let me reassure you that the Commission is in contact with both Member States and industry representatives to increase European production of medical and personal protective equipment and I am convinced that these efforts will be fruitful in the coming weeks and months.

Moreover, on 24 June the Croat authorities applied for assistance from the EU Solidarity Fund which provides funding following severe disasters to help cover the cost of emergency and recovery operations such as the repair of essential infrastructure, assistance to the population, cost of rescue services, provisional housing, cleaning-up operations and the securing of the cultural heritage. It can be used retroactively. The

funds will be transferred to Croatia as soon as the Commission has fully assessed the application and the Council and the European Parliament have approved it.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paraskevi Michou'.

Paraskevi MICHOU