

## **COVID-19: Council adopts measures to help the most deprived EU citizens**

The Council today adopted new rules intended to minimise the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on the most deprived EU citizens. The amendments to the regulation on the fund for aid to the most deprived (FEAD) will make it easier for member states, partner organisations and other parties involved to access the fund and protect their staff involved in distributing the aid. Around 13 million EU citizens benefit from the fund each year. The new rules are expected to enter into force by the end of the week.

The new act provides for a temporary possibility of 100% co-financing from the EU budget and for costs to be eligible in cases where the delivery of food or basic material assistance is delayed, or where operations are suspended or not fully implemented. Expenditure for crisis response operations will be deemed eligible as of 1 February 2020.

Further to that the new rules provide for the following:

- possibility of delivering food aid and basic material assistance through vouchers
- the cost of purchasing personal protective materials and equipment for partner organisations to be considered an eligible cost
- certain elements of the operational programme in response to the outbreak will not require approval by the European Commission

The Council's vote on the amendments was taken by means of a written procedure, which was concluded today. The European Parliament voted on 17 April. Both institutions negotiated and processed the proposal as a matter of urgency.

It is expected that the amending regulation will be published in the EU Official Journal on 24 April 2020. It will enter into force on the day following that of its publication.

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