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European Solidarity Tracker

The European Solidarity Tracker collects and displays instances of pan-European solidarity throughout the coronavirus crisis.

[Claire Busse](#) [Ulrike Franke](#) ✕ [Rafael Loss](#) ✕ [Jana Puglierin](#) ✕ [Marlene Riedel](#) [Pawel Zerka](#) ✕

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“Let us do the right thing together – with one big heart, not 27 small ones.”

— Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, in a speech to the European Parliament on 26 March 2020

The coronavirus pandemic has had a severe impact on Europe. While not all EU member states have suffered equally, none has been spared social and economic hardship either. Early on, national impulses led to border closures and export restrictions on medical supplies, which lifted only recently as the crisis continued to unfold.

Nevertheless, even in the earliest days of Europe’s exposure to the novel coronavirus, pan-European solidarity was on display. Individual acts of solidarity paved the way for donations of hundreds of thousands of protective masks and other medical supplies to those countries most affected. The institutions of the European Union eventually assumed a critical role in coordinating Europe’s response to the crisis.

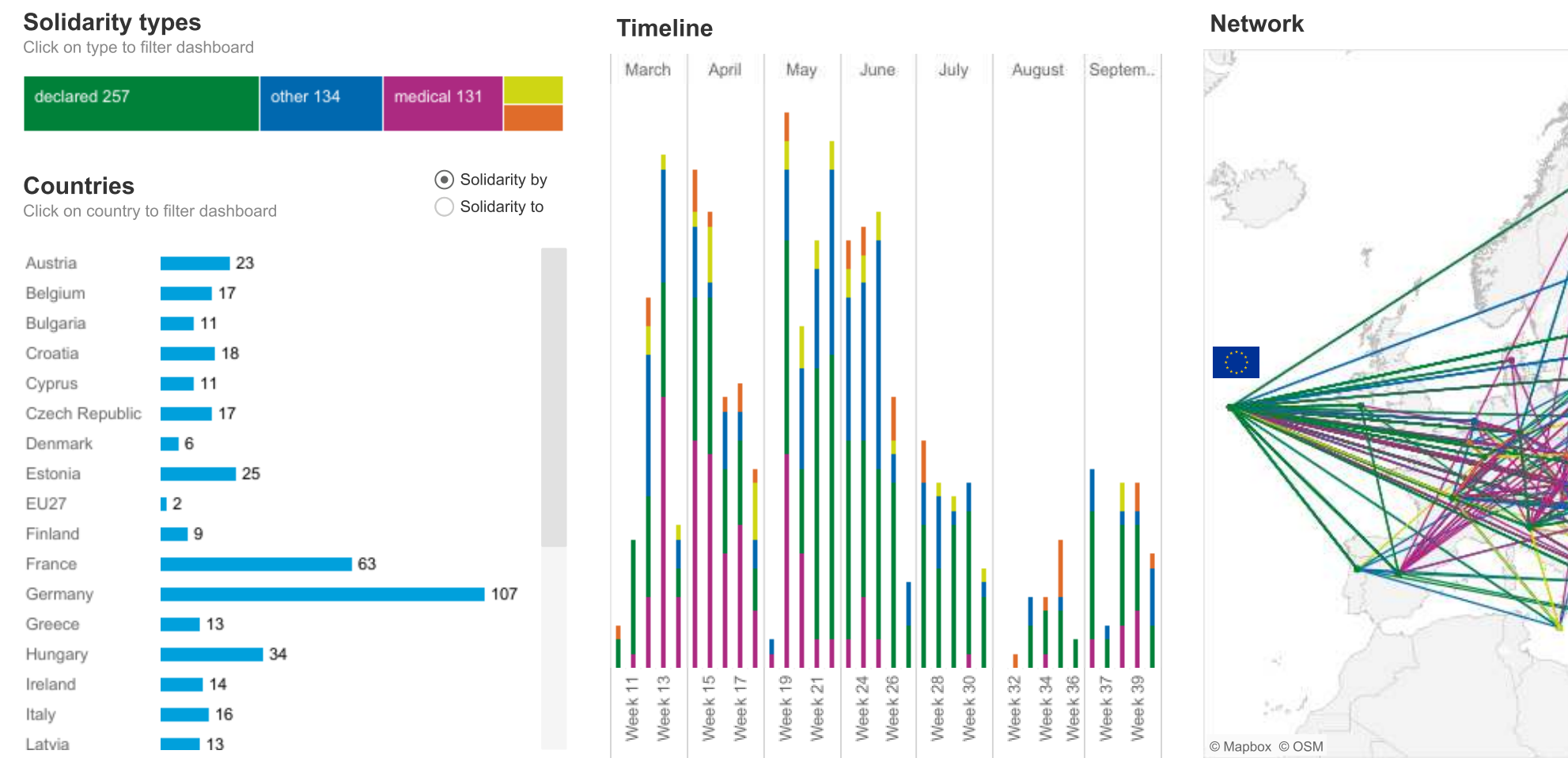
The European Solidarity Tracker collects and displays instances of pan-European solidarity throughout the first wave of the coronavirus crisis. It was updated and expanded continuously throughout the summer of 2020; data collection concluded on 30 September.

European Solidarity Tracker

Explore how the coronavirus crisis tests European solidarity

Member states

EU actions



information for accuracy. After its initial launch in June, the European Solidarity Tracker received regular updates through to 30 September 2020.

Why do we need a European Solidarity Tracker?

The coronavirus crisis is a major test for European solidarity. In the early stages of the crisis in particular, many member states called for “more solidarity” and a coordinated European response to deliver it. Against this backdrop, Rethink: Europe developed a tool that collects and visualises solidarity among EU member states and EU institutions. The European Solidarity Tracker documents a dense network of mutual aid and cooperation across Europe and illustrates the critical role the EU has played throughout the coronavirus crisis. This stands in stark contrast to claims of a total lack of European solidarity. By recognising that solidarity comes in different forms, the European Solidarity Tracker illustrates how no one member state or group of countries alone can be fully sovereign in this crisis. Member states should internalise the strategic dimension of solidarity as a necessary condition for united action in the world.

What are the key findings?

Despite divisions, unilateral travel restrictions, and export bans, Europeans are deeply interconnected. Every member state has shown solidarity towards fellow Europeans. The EU institutions have stepped up their response not only in financial and economic terms, but also when it comes to the people of Europe. The European Solidarity Tracker stands in contrast to claims that the European project has failed. Instead it showcases a European Union that stands together, with member states that help one another in a time of severe peril.

How do we define and conceptualise solidarity?

To capture the complexity of “solidarity” and depict as many acts of solidarity as possible, a comprehensive understanding of solidarity is needed. Our working definition of “solidarity” therefore includes instances of medical solidarity, such as providing medical supplies and personnel and receiving covid-19 patients for treatment from other member states. Secondly, much of the response to the crisis has come in the form of financial and economic support to address the immediate impact on Europe’s economies and kickstart its economic recovery. We therefore include these under the term economic solidarity. Thirdly, political leaders’ references to European solidarity and declared commitments are categorised as declared solidarity. Finally, we include cross-border civil society initiatives and private donations to pan-European causes under the term people-level solidarity.

We are aware that many other activities that Europeans have made happen amid the coronavirus crisis could also qualify for inclusion in the European Solidarity Tracker. The EU can rightly be proud, for example, of its collective effort to repatriate Europeans stranded abroad. We decided to exclude such instances. The sheer volume of flights, many of which turned out to be commercial, would simply crowd out other, more tangible, acts of solidarity.

What are the limitations of the European Solidarity Tracker?

The information displayed in the European Solidarity Tracker presents a non-exhaustive collection, and covers the first wave of the pandemic in Europe. It is incomplete and thus only indicative of the full response Europeans have mounted to the coronavirus crisis. Rethink: Europe has set out to capture the pan-European debate around solidarity and the interconnectedness of EU member states. National activities directed at a country’s own citizens, therefore, are not included. Similarly, the activities of third countries towards the EU and the EU’s activities towards third countries are not included at launch.

In July 2020, we expanded the European Solidarity Tracker to include a new section on Chinese donations of medical supplies to EU member states during the coronavirus crisis.

How do I use the European Solidarity Tracker?

The European Solidarity Tracker is an interactive data visualisation tool created with Tableau. Where interactions allow for the filtering of information, instructions are included. Items can be filtered by the actors involved in an act of solidarity. “EU” hereby indicates items that concern the institutions of the union, whereas “EU27” is used for items that address the community of EU member states. Items can also be filtered by the “solidarity type” of the act in question (“medical,” “economic,” “declared,” “people-level” and “other”). Additionally, a time-range slider allows the user to specify particular time periods of interest. Hovering over the interface will reveal additional information on individual items.

Publications



European Solidarity Tracker: The solidarity that always was there

Claire Busse, Rafael Loss – 10 June 2020
ECFR’s new tracker reveals the breadth and depth of solidarity expressed throughout Europe during the coronavirus crisis – with findings that will surprise critics.

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- [Tracking European solidarity during covid-19: Lessons from the first wave](#) by Rafael Loss
- [Crisis communication: Italy, the coronavirus, and European solidarity](#) by Teresa Coratella
- **Podcast** with Jana Puglierin (Berlin), Arturo Varvelli (Rome) and José Ignacio Torreblanca (Madrid): [Europe’s way out of the coronavirus crisis: from self-interest to solidarity?](#)
- [The truth about European solidarity during corona](#) by Rafael Loss, Jana Puglierin
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