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## Declaration by the Committee of Ministers on the COVID-19 pandemic

*(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 22 April 2020  
at the 1374<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)*

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The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, in which all of its 47 member States are represented, expresses its deep sadness at the suffering and bereavement caused in Europe and elsewhere in the world by the COVID-19 pandemic.

It expresses its profound gratitude to all those who, at the risk of their own health, are fighting to overcome this terrible disease and bring relief and care for those who are seriously ill. It also expresses its deep gratitude to all those who continue to work in order to ensure that people's basic material needs can be met.

The COVID-19 pandemic is the worst health crisis since the Organisation was founded in 1949, and authorities at all levels must do their utmost to protect people's health in all circumstances, including the most vulnerable members of our societies.

The challenge we face today is unprecedented. The Committee of Ministers recalls its deep and constant attachment to its core values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, as expressed in the Statute of the Council of Europe and the European Convention on Human Rights. It also recalls that measures to combat the disease and its wider consequences must be taken in accordance with the Organisation's principles and the commitments entered into by member States. The Secretary General's information document on "Respecting democracy, rule of law and human rights in the framework of the Covid-19 sanitary crisis: a toolkit for member States" provides useful guidance in this respect.

The Committee of Ministers considers that solidarity and co-operation between States is essential to deal effectively with the pandemic, and underlines that the Council of Europe, including its Development Bank, will continue to make every effort to assist its member States during this crisis and its aftermath.