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COVID-19
Data on the Italian Situation and
an Urgent Solution from Experts for European
Governments

Europe today is in a worse situation than China was on January 31st - multiple independent breakouts, sustained community transmission and a 50% day-on-day growth rate between March 4th and March 9th for cases in Italy, Germany, France, Spain, UK, Switzerland & the Netherlands. The lockdown in North Italy is too late. Italy today already has proportionally a higher percentage of population infected than China ever did.

Public health in Italy is in severe distress with its 31,506 cases (March, 17) and a 6,5% intensive therapy rate (i.e. people needing intensive therapy that need to be intubated).

The mortality rate at 7,9% is one of the highest we have seen. As healthcare quality worsens with higher loads, and most importantly as spaces fill up in hospitals, we can expect mortality rates to go up with time.

By locking provinces down, Italy has given other countries a peak into their future; it will be catastrophic if others wait until the number of cases escalates to a point where they can not be handled anymore. Our containment efforts are bound to fail if we keep life going as normal and act 2-3 weeks late. We can't afford to wait until the situation worsens. The hit to the economy and the markets will be far worse if we make a delayed decision.

We need a Europe-wide lock-down, now. The problem is not the ratio between those sick and those deceased. The problem is with the following data:

- around 33% of those affected with COVID-19 are in need of being recovered in isolation (11.108 cases are currently recovered with symptoms in Italy alone)

- around 6,5% of those affected with COVID-19 are in need of intensive therapy, requiring to be intubated (2060 cases are currently recovered -March 17th- in intensive therapy in Italy alone)

The numbers laid out above are about to bring to the collapse the Italian healthcare system, which was foreseen an increment of at least +18,000 cases by the 24th of March but today 17th of March the cases are 31,506. An increment that – as admitted by Prof. Antonio Pesenti, Coordinator of the Crisis Unit of Regione Lombardia, during his interview to “Corriere della Sera” on March 7th – will be impossible to handle.

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It is the percentages outlined above (33% of those affected recovered and 6,5% of people of those affected needing intensive therapy) that demonstrate COVID-19 must be treated by other European Governments as a extreme risk to their population. No European country's healthcare system is able to handle the impact of an epidemic of this kind – an epidemic which will certainly see an increase of the percentage of deaths -beyond what has already been registered- **for the lack of places in intensive therapy and in the hospitals in general.**

The only efficient containment measure to slow down a pandemic that is destroying the healthcare system of European countries, and compromising the health of an incalculable number of citizens - with disastrous consequences also to the economy, business and services industries – is, according to experts contacted by Atomium-EISMD and Prof Antonio Pesenti, Head of the Crisis Unit of Regione Lombardia, to adopt the measures already adopted by the Chinese government some time before the peak of the crisis in China: meaning forbid (not simply advice) all citizens to not leave their homes for a period of 3 weeks, if not for primary needs and imposing a temporary closing of all not-indispensable industries and services.