

GREEN/20/37

March 26, 2020

Green Statement from Mr. Moreno and Ms. Mulas on Belgium—Staff Report for the 2020 Article IV Consultation (SM/20/69)

We thank staff for the set of insightful reports and Mr. Delannoy for his informative and comprehensive buff statement.

Strong communication strategy is needed on the Art. IV report. Even though the staff report includes the early impact of the COVID-19, the situation in Belgium and elsewhere is changing rapidly. Therefore, all macroeconomic and economic policy considerations need to be reassessed under the prism of the need to tackle the ongoing crisis. *The communication of the Art. IV report should open with a strong focus on COVID-19 developments, the authorities' response, and IMF's support.*

We would like to express the full support of our constituency to the measures announced by the authorities to contain the spread of COVID-19 and its economic consequences. We strongly welcome the new government's specific mandate to address the fall-out from the COVID-19 crisis. The short-term priority should be to address the crisis with all the necessary means, ensuring healthcare provision and establishing mechanisms to minimize the impact of the fall of economic activity on employment and the viability of companies. We fully support the authorities for adopting a string of targeted fiscal and financial measures in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. We encourage them to continue assessing the economic impact and to be ready to implement further measures, if needed.

European and international cooperation is paramount to overcome speedily the COVID-19 crisis. We share authorities' views, highlighted in the Buff, on welcoming the actions adopted by the Eurogroup, the European Commission and the ECB. A common and structural response by the EU is necessary. Also, more European and international measures, including through the IMF, will be needed as the situation evolves to provide the necessary support to mitigate the impact, especially on the most vulnerable people and countries.