

China Sends Medical Experts to Support Italy and Spain's Fight Against Coronavirus

Rome blasts the EU for ignoring its pleas for help

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China has sent a team of medical experts and aid to support Italy and Spain in their fight against coronavirus after Rome blasted the European Union for ignoring its pleas for help.

A charter flight with a nine-member Chinese medical-aid team and tons of supplies arrived in Rome last night.

Organised by the National Health Commission and the Red Cross Society of China, the flight carried 700 pieces of equipment including ventilators, monitors and defibrillators.

“Today, Italy is not alone,” said Foreign Minister Luigi Di Maio. “Many people in the world are supporting us.”

It is the third team of experts deployed by the Chinese authorities. Missions and shipments of supplies have already been sent to Iraq and Iran, the latter being one of the countries worst affected by coronavirus so far.

Earlier this week, Italy's permanent representative to the EU, Maurizio Massari, complained that Italy's plea for medical help to combat the coronavirus outbreak crippling the country had gone unanswered.



Doctors and members of the Chinese Red Cross pose for a photo prior to a press conference in Rome

Mr Massari noted that while the EU had ignored Italian requests for aid, China had begun helping bilaterally.

“Italy, the European country struck hardest by the coronavirus, has done everything it can to contain and manage the epidemic,” he said.

“We must ensure, under EU co-ordination, the supply of the necessary medical equipment and its redistribution among those countries and regions most in need. Today, this means Italy; tomorrow, the need could be elsewhere.”

“Italy has already asked to activate the European Union Mechanism of Civil Protection for the supply of medical equipment for individual protection.

“But, unfortunately, not a single EU country responded to the commission’s call. Only China responded bilaterally. Certainly, this is not a good sign of European solidarity.”

The Chinese experts and equipment arrived two days after the number of confirmed confirmed cases in Italy topped 10,000.

Beijing has been praised by the World Health Organisation for its efforts against the coronavirus. Authorities responded to the outbreak by building new hospitals in a matter of days and locking down Hubei province, which has a population of 58 million, to contain the spread of the disease.

National Health Commission spokesman Mi Feng told a briefing earlier this week that the peak of China’s outbreak was “generally over.”

Health authorities reported just 15 new cases and 11 additional deaths yesterday, a dramatic fall from the thousands of new cases being reported daily last month.

So far, China has recorded 80,793 cases of infection and 3,169 deaths.

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Featured image: Doctors and members of the Chinese Red Cross pose for a photo prior to a press conference in Rome

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