

**Question for written answer E-000062/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Paid extensions of Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions contracts

The pandemic that broke out in February 2020 forced many researchers to suspend their work and research projects: conferences and seminars have been cancelled and laboratories, libraries and archives have closed. As a direct consequence, many researchers funded by the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions programme (MSCA) were obliged to accept unpaid extensions or suspend contracts without achieving the expected results. Moreover, since these are international research mobility programmes, these researchers work abroad without being able to count on financial support from their host country and without being able to rely on indirect support systems such as family or friends. In the last month, MEPs have repeatedly reached out to the Commission to request solutions, but no satisfactory outcome has been achieved for the dozens, if not hundreds, of researchers affected. In the light of a second wave of lockdowns this winter that is threatening the livelihoods of even more researchers:

1. Is the Commission willing to use exceptional circumstance clauses for MSCA researchers to give them a blanket one-year extension to their funding?
2. Should the Commission refuse to do so, what alternative measures would it consider that go beyond the current scope of flexibility, given that the current measures are insufficient?