



Will coronavirus kill the European Union?

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It took COVID-19 several weeks to mass migrate from China to Europe, but the continent is now awash in the virus. The pandemic has fully arrived in Italy and Spain. Other nations await the disease, hoping to slow its spread. It will kill many Europeans. It also might kill the European Union, at least the idea of a European community in any meaningful sense, Doug Bandow, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, says in an [article](#) published on The National Interest. The mind boggles. The three largest European economies, in Germany, United Kingdom, and France, also are likely suffer grievously in the COVID-19 crisis. Smaller states might face an economic wipe-out, pushing them to also request bail-outs.

Governments in Austria, Hungary, Poland, and elsewhere trend nationalist and are unlikely to extend their hands, whether or not filled with Euros. London is out of the EU and feels little responsibility for its former partners. Berlin has fallen into almost perpetual political crisis as support for the two traditional governing parties has hemorrhaged.

France's Macron saw a further erosion of his authority when his party did poorly in municipal elections in mid-March. Greece in relative economic good times and political stability was difficult enough. Italy today would be well-nigh impossible. And even with a bail-out, Italy could decide that it was better off outside of the Euro.

Crises always create unintended consequences. The biggest one from the spreading coronavirus could be a substantial weakening of central European authority. If any Europeans once believed that Europeans could be counted on to help one another, that illusion has been dispelled. Italy is on its own. As is every other EU member.

Doug Bandow is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties. He worked as special assistant to President Ronald Reagan and editor of the political magazine Inquiry. He writes regularly for leading publications such as Fortune magazine, National Interest, the Wall Street Journal, and the Washington Times. Bandow speaks frequently at academic conferences, on college campuses, and to business groups.