



Letter addressed to:

**Ursula von der Leyen, President
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium**

and

**Charles Michel, President
European Council
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 175
1048 Brussels
Belgium**

Logatec, 28th May 2020

SUBJECT: Solidarity between generations must guide the EU response to and recovery from COVID-19

Dear President von der Leyen,
Dear President Michel,

In this context of the COVID-19 crisis, we welcome and support your efforts to step up a European response and underline the importance of respecting of the EU principle of solidarity between generations, enshrined in article 3 of the Treaty on the European Union.

We reaffirm the intrinsic value of human life at every age, strongly deplore all forms of ageism, and call on the Union and the Member States to protect human rights of all persons, without discrimination on the ground of age. It is important to continue the reflection on demographic change and solidarity between generations in discussions at the level of the EU and in the Member States. Only through such an approach will it be possible to guarantee adequate protection of human rights of all persons, especially those with greater risk factor: older persons, persons with disabilities, children and others. Keeping them at the heart of discussions is also of key importance for strengthening social cohesion.

Even as confinement measures start to be lifted, we are concerned about the reports of reinforced ageism, the still dramatic situation in some Member States' nursing homes and the effects of long-term confinement on older persons, their families and the wider society.

We urgently call for sufficient protective equipment, testing and treatment in residential care facilities and home care settings. Carers are often younger professionals or family members, many of which themselves have children and have already paid a heavy price for their efforts to contain the pandemic. All necessary efforts should be put towards protecting them from infection.

We are warning about the **negative effects of singling out older persons in the rolling back of confinement measures**. This is discriminatory and, reinforces stigmatisation of older persons. Prolonged confinement measures should be limited to what is necessary according to medical advice, be proportional, limited in time and applied in a non-discriminatory way, in line with the principles of EU law.

The crisis has shown **the important – and neglected – role that informal carers play** as a non-recognised first line. Particularly families who are stepping in for reduced schooling, childcare and long-term care services are providing safety nets during the lock-downs, and many of them are heavily challenged to combine care and employment. Supporting them should be integral part of response and recovery strategies.

We call on the Commission to continue the reflection on demographic change and ageing via the Report on the Impact of Demographic Change and the announced Green Paper on Ageing. Your action and initiatives are more urgent than ever in the context of COVID-19 and the publication of the Report should not be postponed any further as this may delay the launch of the Green Paper on Ageing.

In the medium and long-term, **we call for stronger investment in health promotion and disease prevention, to rebuild the resilience of our social and healthcare systems** to crises such as the current one. The emergency and recovery programmes under discussion should lead to coordinated and solidarity-based answers to achieve health and protection for all. An initiative on the quality and financing of long-term care and working conditions in the sector should address the shortcomings laid bare by the crisis.

We stand ready to support the EU Commission and Member States in their efforts to address this emergency and its long-term consequences in the spirit of the European values that unite us.

Milan Brglez, MEP

Jarosław Duda, MEP

Ivars Ijabs, MEP

Irena Joveva, MEP

Dietmar Köster, MEP

Elena Yoncheva, MEP

Alexis Georgoulis, MEP

Manuel Pizarro, MEP

Agnes Jongerius, MEP

Frances Fitzgerald, MEP

Inese Vaidere, MEP

Juozas Olekas, MEP

Carlos Zorrinho, MEP

Isabel Carvalhais, MEP

Bettina Vollath, MEP

Athanasios Konstantinou, MEP

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Niklas Nienä, MEP