



To the attention of:

Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission

Mr. Charles Michel
President of the European Council

Mr. António Costa
Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic
Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the European Union

cc:

Mrs. Stella Kyriakides
Commissioner responsible for Health and Food Safety

14 January 2021

Subject: Imperative need to ensure the mass vaccination against COVID-19 for all

Dear President von der Leyen,

Dear President Michel,

Dear Prime Minister Costa,

It has been more than a year since we witnessed the first recorded cases of COVID-19. Since then the virus has caused an unprecedented crisis that has cost millions of lives worldwide and has devastated our societies, our healthcare systems and our economies.

During this period, we have also witnessed an unprecedented collaboration between scientists to develop effective COVID-19 vaccines and treatments. Their contribution has been crucial in accelerating the development of the first vaccines and in the successful conduct of clinical trials. However, now that the results of scientific efforts have started to bear fruit, the stakes are to ensure the timely mass production and availability of safe, effective and affordable vaccines in order to quickly achieve collective immunisation of the population and to radically curb the pandemic.

On 21 December 2020, the European Commission approved the COVID-19 vaccine developed by BioNTech and Pfizer, following the positive recommendation by the European Medicines Agency (EMA), and the first delivery of the vaccine to Member States was carried

out on 26 December 2020. Moreover, on 6 January 2021, the Commission also approved the COVID-19 vaccine developed by Moderna. Unquestionably, these are positive developments.

However, it is still uncertain if the EMA will recommend AstraZeneca vaccine in January, while Sanofi and GSK have announced that their COVID-19 vaccines will not be ready until the end of 2021, the vaccine under development by Johnson & Johnson is not expected before March and the doses ordered from CureVac are not expected until the summer.

In this context, it is imperative to avoid any cases of non-compliance with vaccine delivery schedules and any shortages of available quantities, which could cause significant delays in the vaccination of healthcare workers and vulnerable groups as well as of the general population.

These circumstances underline the need to rethink our ways and redesign our course of action. Complementing the significant amounts of funds that have been channelled by the EU for the development and production of the vaccines, the EU leadership should now take radical measures to avoid delays in peoples' access to the new vaccines, overcoming any impasse. In this way, public health but also the economy, employment and social cohesion in Europe could be effectively protected.

It is time for COVID-19 vaccines to be treated in practice as public goods that are guaranteed for all. To this end, the EU should overcome the barriers and restrictions arising from patents and intellectual property rights in order to ensure the widespread production and distribution of vaccines in all countries and to all citizens.

Last but not least, the EU should live up to its reputation as the world's leading humanitarian aid provider by supporting the World Health Organization (WHO) COVAX initiative to provide affordable and accessible vaccines around the world, especially to the poorest and less developed countries. **As the WHO has pointed out, no one will ever be truly safe until everyone is safe.**

Yours sincerely,

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