



**Union
Syndicale
Fédérale
Consilium**

For the attention of Mr Charles Michel, President of the European Council,
and of the Staff of the General Secretariat of the Council,
Rue de la Loi, 175
1048 Bruxelles

Brussels, 29 April 2020

Subject : Europe and Social Media

Dear President Michel, dear colleagues,

Europe is going through an unprecedented crisis.

From the inside, we see the efforts and the energy that the European Institutions are deploying to address this crisis and mitigate its disastrous consequences. These efforts are not necessarily reported in the international media. At the same time, "fake news" is spreading rapidly, irreparably undermining the morale of our fellow citizens, and jeopardising the reputation and the very essence of the European project.

Europhobic populists and extremists are well organised. They are feeding those sections of the press that are negatively disposed, in particular towards the European Institutions, and they have an active presence on social media.

This partly explains why a growing number of European citizens are questioning the usefulness of 'Europe' and wonder what European solidarity really means.

Since the start of the crisis, many of us have also faced criticism from friends and relatives, who have been saying: 'Europe is absent, Europe is doing nothing'.

Like many other pro-Europeans, Mr Michel, you use social media to inform people that Europe is being pro-active. However, information-sharing has been very limited. Accurate information has been reaching only a limited number of citizens and many negative comments have remained unanswered.

Today, social media plays a crucial role and many citizens rely on social media for their information. We firmly believe that it is possible to act quickly on this front.

Some Heads of State have said that we are facing the worst crisis since the Second World War. Yet even here, there are many critics of Europe.

So, for the sake of the future of Europe, its citizens and the European civil service, we would encourage staff to follow the Council, the Presidency, the European Council and its President on social media networks, in particular Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. This could enable staff to use social media to share messages or press conferences, add a comment or provide a summary in their mother tongue, or use these to answer the questions and doubts raised by citizens.

This fast and efficient way of sharing factual and accurate information will help demonstrate to a large number of citizens that the European Union is deploying unprecedented means to help them weather the crisis.

As staff members in the Institutions, if we used social media to relay accurate information, we would be able to disseminate such information more effectively to many more people around Europe and the world.

We are convinced that a majority of the staff of our institution, and maybe also of the other European institutions, would be ready to become spokespersons for European action.

Such an initiative would enable more citizens to gain a more balanced view and to form their opinion based on accurate and transparent information.

We are keen to join you in conveying the solidarity-based values that underpin the European Union and do justice to all the efforts the European Union has been making to overcome this crisis.

Yours sincerely,

The Executive Committee
Union Syndicale Council