



Union
Syndicale
Bruxelles
Commission

COMMISSION STAFF AT THE FRONTLINE OF AN EU THAT IS ALIVE, BEAUTIFUL AND CARING

FR VERSION WILL FOLLOW

Brussels, 06 April 2020

The world is going through an unprecedented health crisis. Health workers in the EU and elsewhere are at the frontline in the fight against the pandemic, working endless hours and risking their lives. **Union Syndicale** wishes, first and foremost, to join its voice to that of so many around the world in expressing its heartfelt gratitude to those workers. Society has a debt of gratitude for them that is difficult to overstate.

Union Syndicale wishes also to express its deep appreciation for the work of those colleagues in the EU institutions, in Brussels and elsewhere, within and outside the EU, who are also at the frontline of the EU's efforts to counter the pandemic and to ensure an appropriate response to it, both on the medical as well as on the socioeconomic front.

Union Syndicale wishes in particular to underline the tremendous efforts and significant achievements of our colleagues in DGs JRC, RTD, and SANTE.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/mex_20_573;

<https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/news/new-control-material-developed-jrc-scientists-help-prevent-coronavirus-test-failures>

https://ec.europa.eu/info/research-and-innovation/research-area/health-research-and-innovation/coronavirus-research_en

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/research_and_innovation/research_by_area/documents/ec_rtd_cv_projects-1.pdf

Our deep appreciation goes also to so many in the Commission support services, including external contractors, who work tirelessly to enable the institutions to continue to operate normally in the present confinement mode.

While Europe is being destabilised by this unprecedented crisis, the collective effort of the Commission services illustrates the potential of an EU capable of rising up to the challenge and acting in unison for the

sake of its citizens.

EU leaders must now do whatever it takes to save lives, to save jobs, to improve living conditions and relaunch the economy of all Member States.

For the European Union, this crisis poses fundamental challenges. It is not an overstatement to say that its very existence is at stake. European Union citizens have their eyes on Brussels and are watching very closely the responses the EU is giving to tackle the health crisis and its consequences.

Union Syndicale firmly believes that those responses citizens are waiting for cannot be “business as usual”. Extraordinary circumstances demand extraordinary, creative measures. Lives are being lost, unemployment is rising sharply; in some Member States, the productive system has been practically brought to a halt... **Union Syndicale** urges EU leaders to respond collectively, proactively, rapidly and imaginatively. All countries are being affected, some much more so than others. There is no future for a European Union that turns its back on those in greatest need. **Solidarity is the key.**

This crisis presents not only challenges, but also a tremendous opportunity for the European integration project to regain the appeal that, in the eyes of many, it has lost in recent times. **Union Syndicale** calls on our political leaders to seize this opportunity - perhaps the last true opportunity – to make bold proposals, to turn things around, to ensure that the EU remains **alive, beautiful and caring.**

The EU that we want has to be driven by more humane, re-energized institutions, with adequate resources and more efficient, less bureaucratic working methods. The competence of the Commission staff is a key asset in the EU efforts to get out of the crisis and deal with its consequences.

Union Syndicale calls on President von der Leyen and Commissioner Hahn to engage, together with Commission staff, in a reflection on the lessons, in terms of working conditions and methods, that need to be drawn from the present crisis and the extraordinary circumstances in which we find ourselves.

Union Syndicale believes that those lessons include much greater attention to staff working environment and the duty of care.

Union Syndicale firmly believes that the EU must come out of this crisis stronger, more united and closer to its citizens. Staff stands ready, as always, to play its part fully in this endeavour. **Union Syndicale** calls on EU political leaders to set aside petty national interests and seize this historic opportunity.

**The Executive Committee
Union Syndicale Brussels**

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