



Mr Charles Michel
President of the European Council
European Council
Rue de la Loi 175
BE – 1048 Brussels
BELGIUM

24 February 2021

Dear President,

**Two messages ahead of the video conference meeting of members of EU Council on
25-26 February 2021**

Ahead of the video conference meeting of the members of the European Council on 25 and 26 February 2021, we would like to convey to you two messages concerning vaccines and new restrictions at EU internal borders.

Concerning the **new restrictions at internal borders of the European Union**, we are extremely concerned by the disruptions they provoke to the free movement of goods and services in the Single Market. A repetition of the uncoordinated and disproportionate restrictions that were introduced in Spring 2020 must absolutely be avoided,

We urge the members of the European Council to better coordinated national COVID-19 mitigation measures, to keep the borders open and preserve functioning of the Single Market. Unjustified and disproportionate unilateral restrictions need to be avoided and efficient green lanes need to be put in place where border checks cannot be avoided.

Concerning **COVID vaccines**, there is certainly room for improvement to increase production, accelerate vaccinations and ensure that all countries around the world have access to COVID vaccines. However, a waiver of TRIPs agreement in the WTO and the protection of the Intellectual property rights is not the right answer.

Without the right balance between access to life-saving medicines and protection of intellectual property rights, the ability to develop vaccines and innovative solutions in the future will be undermined. Furthermore, intellectual property protection is also key to ensure product safety and a safe deployment of vaccines.

The development of vaccines against the coronavirus in record time is a success story, which shows what public private partnerships and global cooperation can achieve. Private sector research across the world started long before the massive public investment that allowed to accelerate the development of these vaccines. These research efforts have been key to achieve this success. They would not have taken place without an efficient intellectual property protection system designed to encourage and reward creativity and innovation benefiting society as a whole.



Moreover, there is no evidence that intellectual property protection is preventing access to vaccines. The challenges that we face relate to production capabilities, risk-control conditions, logistics and infrastructure and they should be addressed by increased investments and global cooperation.

Yours Sincerely,

Pierre Gattaz
President

Markus J. Beyrer
Director General