



Mr Valdis Dombrovskis,
Commissioner on Trade,
European Commission
Valdis.Dombrovskis@ec.europa.eu

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Dear Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis,

EPSU (European Federation of Public Services Unions) and our global federation PSI (Public Services International) represent the many health and care workers that are at the frontline of the current COVID-19 pandemic.

We see that the take up of vaccines, PPE, and other essential COVID-19 related medicines is moving too slowly, not least because there are unnecessary barriers to their production in the form of intellectual property rights. EPSU and PSI are therefore urging governments to support the proposal of India, South Africa and other governments for a "[Waiver from certain provisions of the TRIPS agreement for the prevention, containment and treatment of COVID-19](#)".

Without a waiver, the WTO's agreement on TRIPS risks to prolong the pandemic and the associated suffering of health and care workers, and of everyone. Our youth groups report on the tremendous mental health issues faced by young people and young workers. A waiver, on the other hand, would enable more manufacturers to produce COVID-19 vaccines and medicines, thereby scaling up production and supporting governments to tackle the pandemic more quickly, effectively, and fairly. This is more and more essential given the virus mutations that we are seeing risk to undermine collective vaccination efforts.

We are disappointed therefore to learn that the EU is opposing the waiver, arguing that the TRIPS provisions are sufficiently flexible.

The EU's opposition is in stark contrast to the position of the WHO, UN Human Rights Experts, MSF, UNITAID and UNAIDS, all of whom support a waiver. More information on the reasons why a waiver is essential is set out in the attached PSI briefing, also [available on the PSI website](#).

We would urge the Commission to support the waiver and work actively to secure a positive position in the WTO. We understand that to be implemented, the waiver proposal must be endorsed by the WTO's General Council. We are convinced that the EU could play a key role in gathering support.

The current problems we see in the production of COVID-19 vaccines, accompanying syringes and other necessary materials underline the need for the EU and Member States to support all measures to increase, requisition and convert production capacity. The

EPSU Secretariat 40 rue Joseph II, box 5 – 1000 Brussels, Belgium
Phone: +32 2 250 10 80 Fax: +32 2 520 10 99 Mail: epsu@epsu.org www.epsu.org

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pandemic is having such an immense public health, economic and social impact that determined public intervention is necessary and entirely justified.

Supporting the TRIPS waiver would help the EU to live up to its promise to ensure countries across the world have access to COVID-19 vaccines and medical supplies quickly.

We would appreciate an exchange with your services on this vital issue.

Yours sincerely,



Jan Willem Goudriaan
EPSU General Secretary