

European Council
Cabinet of the President

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Cab PEC/CSF/tas

Dear Mr Siciliano and Mr Goudriaan,

Thank you for your email dated 18 June 2020 addressed to President Michel who has asked me to reply on his behalf.

The COVID-19 pandemic constitutes an unprecedented challenge to the European Union, and its Member States. It has tested the resilience of our societies and economies and has placed extraordinary pressure on national healthcare systems.

Responsibility for national healthcare systems lies, by definition, with the Member States. Many of our Member States have begun or will soon begin a reflection on what lessons for their healthcare systems, including long term care for the elderly, can be learned from the pandemic. For aspects of relevance to the European Union as a whole, a process of reflection will also begin in the second semester of 2020.

Recovery from COVID 19 requires a joint effort at EU level. The European Commission's proposal on a Recovery Fund and the Multiannual Financial Framework are an important step and will help target support towards the sectors and regions most affected by the COVID19 pandemic. Last week, leaders had the first discussion on the proposals put on the table by the Commission in a Videoconference. President Michel invited leaders for a European Council on the 17/18 July with the aim of finding a global compromise.

Mr Jan Willem GOUDRIAAN
General Secretary
European federation of Public Service Unions (EPSU)
40, Rue Joseph II, box 5
B - 1000 Brussels

e-mail: jwgoudriaan@epsu.org

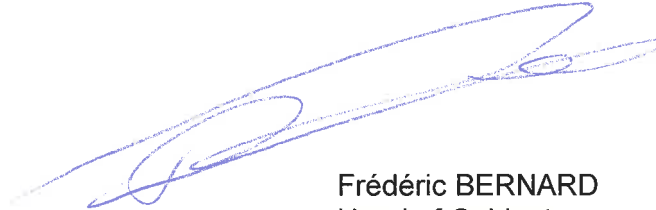
Mr Agostino SICILIANO
General Secretary
European Federation of Retired and Elderly People (FERPA)
Blvd du Roi Albert II, 5, B
1210 Brussels

e-mail: asiciliano@etuc.org

Finally, I would point out that the Council's preparatory bodies are monitoring the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the access to quality and affordable long-term care services while the Social Policy Committee is currently preparing the 2021 Pension Adequacy and Long-term Care Report.

There is no doubt that Health will be a central part of the EU's activity in the coming years. The Council has already begun work on the EU4Health proposal. Rest assured, that high priority is given to this file aiming to have it adopted by the end of the year.

Yours sincerely,



Frédéric BERNARD
Head of Cabinet