



Mariya Gabriel  
Commissioner for Innovation, Research,  
Culture, Education and Youth  
European Commission  
Rue de la Loi/Wetstraat 200  
1049 Brussels

Brussels, 16 April 2020

Concerns: Urgent call for measures addressing the youth

Dear Commissioner Gabriel,

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, Europe and its member states have taken many measures to safeguard the health of our society, guarantee employment (relief) and implement different programmes to lessen the burden on the society due to the impact of COVID-19. Whilst these are vital elements in our response measures, we should not overlook a key component of our European society: our future, our youth. Hence, the vital question: Where is our youth?

While Member States have ensured continued education, we must make sure that the youth population are always included in our response. There are youth with parents who do not speak their children's language of education. Youth that live in a single parent house. Youth who, in regular cases, do not have a stable home or caregivers to count on, let alone during a crisis. Youth with no or limited access to internet. And worse, youth who are experiencing violence at home.

The burden and stress of continued 'distance' education is placed on the shoulders of our teachers and the school systems. The Commission has rightly stated before, that whatever actions we take now will determine what kind of world our children will live in. What kind of message are we sending to our youth? That our European society is not as inclusive and prepared for challenges such as these? We must guarantee that despite these challenges, the youth have the best possible opportunity to develop themselves. That we safeguard children's rights to education and healthy living conditions, as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

I therefore call on the Commission and the Member States to take action on the following questions and matters:

- 1) I commend the efforts with the Distance Learning Network on ensuring the continuity of education during the COVID-19 outbreak. How does the Commission and Member States ensure that every single child in EU has access to continued education?

- 2) While remote learning solutions are vital, does the Commission have a complete overview of the youth who do not have access to proper internet connection and therefore the possibility of remote learning?
- 3) Are parents or caregivers supported when they lack the skills, means and knowledge in enabling the education of their children?
- 4) Are there measures in place to safeguard the education of youth from minority groups, migrants and the impoverished youth?
- 5) In order to have a better understanding of the consequences of the measure taken during the COVID-19 outbreak, I also urge the EC to have an impact assessment done on the accessibility of education for youth during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Finally, it is a fact that when economies suffer a blow, the youth will have more obstacles to enter the labour market. I urge the Commission to ensure that the youth programmes consider this. An impact assessment is necessary to have an informed idea on how to further mitigate the consequences COVID-19 for youth employment. Accessibility of the labour market for our youth should be on top of the Commissions agenda. A healthy economy means also an economy where our youth participate.

I call on the Commission to ensure that our future leaders have equal opportunity to participate in our societies.

Yours sincerely,

Samira Rafaela  
Radka Maxová  
Dragoş Pişlaru  
Sylvie Brunet  
Stéphane Bijoux  
Irena Joveva  
Marie-Pierre Vedrenne  
Ilana Cicurel  
Jordi Cañas  
Veronique Trillet-Lenoir  
Anna Donáth  
Monica Semedo  
Atidzhe Alieva-Veli