

Ms Ilze Juhansone
Secretary-General
European Commission
Rue de la Loi 200
B-1049 Brussels

Brussels, 3 April 2020

Subject: The impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the Commission work programme

Dear Ms Juhansone,

Allow me firstly to acknowledge the valuable efforts of the European Commission to help tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and its negative socio-economic knock-on effect. As the association of European Chambers of Commerce & Industry, we are ensuring that our network remains informed of those measures that relate most directly to the business community. Chambers are themselves also providing a wide range of services to help businesses, particularly SMEs, survive the economic slowdown and be as well placed as possible to drive Europe's economic recovery.

This extraordinary situation was of course not reflected in President von der Leyen's political guidelines from summer 2019, nor even in the Commission's 2020 work programme that was adopted just over two months ago. Notwithstanding this, I call on you and your services to ensure that the plight of the European business community is now factored into the way in which the Commission pursues its broad priorities, particularly in the coming weeks and months.

As a first step, **I would strongly recommend that the Commission considers postponing or extending certain policy initiatives, particularly those that are at consultation stage currently or will be in the coming weeks.** As you will understand, key stakeholders such as the network of 1.700 Chambers across Europe are fully dedicated to mitigating the impact of the economic slowdown crisis mode. They are not currently, therefore, in a position to consider and provide input on longer term policy initiatives.

Furthermore, the crisis will certainly necessitate reconsideration by all actors of specific policy objectives and the way in which they should be pursued. This cannot be done properly until the full scale of the socio-economic impact of this crisis is clearer.

It is encouraging to note that this approach has today been applied to the ongoing consultation on the review of the Non-Financial Disclosure Directive. Other dossiers for consideration include Artificial Intelligence and the feedback period for the report on the application of the General Data Protection Regulation, launched earlier this week. Each of these is of great relevance to the European business community and to our competitiveness, which will of course be critical to the recovery from this crisis.

Thank you in advance for considering this request, on behalf of the European Chamber network and the millions of small, medium and large companies that we represent and support. EUROCHAMBRES remains fully operational, even remotely, and we and our senior elected representatives across the Chamber network are available to provide input and discuss how to move ahead with your services.

Kind regards,



Arnaldo Abruzzini
CEO
EUROCHAMBRES