Europe: a Patient

To: the President of the European Parliament David Sassoli

the President of the European Council Charles Michel

the President of the European Commission Ursula van der Leyen

and all politicians of good will

Due to the sheer magnitude of the crisis brought about by COVID-19, the solutions adopted to

combat it will determine the future of liberal democracy, the economy and European integration.

Therefore, we call on you to take political responsibility and to take the initiative. This is what was

patently lacking in the EU response to the 2008 financial crisis—a mistake whose grave

consequences we are still suffering.

We call on you to allocate financial resources which will provide:

1. workers: with a real possibility to earn their own living during the quarantine and the crisis,

2. enterprises: with a chance to survive the economic crisis,

3. public services (healthcare in particular): with precipitous funding,

4. all of us: with effective research on COVID-19 medication and on a SARS-CoV-2 vaccine.

It is not only thousands of Europeans infected with the coronavirus that need to be saved today.

There is another patient at risk of death—European values, such as the recognition of the intrinsic

value of human life, of democracy, of solidarity, of community, of the dignity of work and of the

worker.

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These values must now manifest in practical terms, in the concrete decisions we now face. Europe must show that:

- The life of every single person, including the elderly, is an absolute value in itself and not a burden on the State Budget or the economy. To consider the death of a substantial part of society an external cost—to deliberately sacrifice human life for the sake of a rapid return to the path of GDP—is nothing but barbaric (as well as additionally being economically ineffective).
- One of the great achievements of European civilization is the introduction of universal pension plans—a move which made the state responsible for the solidarity of the whole society towards the elderly. We must not leave in solitude those people who devoted their whole lives to work for our common welfare—they deserve our gratitude and have the right to care as well as the right to have their lives protected.
- There is no free market without the freedom of the people who participate in it—
 in any situation of extreme imbalance, such narrowly understood freedom cannot
 but turn out to have been a mere delusion. When workers become hostages forced
 to put their own lives and health at risk in order to earn their livings, the system
 of the free exchange of goods and services transforms into a ruthless economic
 regime.

Therefore, we propose:

1. Unconditional support for all

Unconditional basic income should be paid out for at least three months both to those who are currently employed and the unemployed, directly into their bank accounts. We must remember that bureaucracy is the enemy of the vulnerable. If financial support is dependent on long and complex procedures, it will fail to promptly reach those who are in imminent danger of falling into spiraling debt and poverty. We have no time for income verification—it may be a standard labour market procedure at times of peace, but not when we are at war. Appropriate verification and taxation of additional basic income paid into the accounts of the wealthiest should be carried out at the end of the tax year.

The economy cannot wait for demand stimulus and boost in consumption. We urgently need to buy ourselves the time required to undergo the necessary quarantine. We cannot wait for bail-out money transferred to the big players to trickle down to the market, consumers and citizens. This did not happen during times of peace and will not happen during a period of crisis or war. We must not irresponsibly force employees who have lost financial stability to discontinue the necessary quarantine. For that reason, we need the immediate, direct and universal transfer of funds from the European Union to its citizens, funded directly from the EU budget. We also require the issuance of money by the European Central Bank.

2. Subsidising enterprises for employment retention and income socialisation

It is of the utmost importance to provide European enterprises, especially SMEs, with the means to maintain their production potential and a stable economic environment through the provision of liquidity, as well as tax deferrals. Monetary policy must go hand in hand with fiscal policy in this matter, as the previous crisis in the European Union was extremely long and acutely impactful on the poorest, because the governments were afraid to admit that quantitative easing did not boost economic growth. This is why we hereby request the subsidizing of the anti-crisis efforts by the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The advantage of Europe over authoritarian systems must come from the power of its institutions and the ability to react to critical situations.

At the same time, the structure of subsidized enterprises' key ownership has to be changed. Resources devoted to retaining jobs should serve employees, not company boards or financial markets. A continued surge of disparity and increase in the privatization of public services cannot be the aftermath of the crisis. Europe must save jobs, not the incomes of boards of directors. For this reason, the aid for enterprises should be combined with responsibility for European taxpayers and their support. We call for the public aid for companies to be subsidized by European funds and for the European Central Bank to acquire shares in the supported enterprises. This solution, implemented during the financial crisis of 2008, will guarantee control over wages and dividends, as well as the unified participation of European communities in the future income of the companies.

3. Public service subsidisation through an appropriate form of European bonds valid throughout the European Union

The crisis we are facing concerns public health. It shows that a society is as safe and as strong as its weakest members. As a result, societies and the economy cannot afford to be deprived of access to high-quality universal healthcare. In fact, it was the wrong response to the financial crisis of 2008

that led to the degradation of public services in the name of an alleged economic rationality, which is now generating additional costs and making it more difficult to effectively combat the pandemic.

Today, by releasing additional financial aid for the member states allowing them radically increase their healthcare expenditure, especially the ones most impacted by the pandemic, through the use of an adequate type of European bonds valid throughout the EU, the Union would show that the life and death of European citizens are the highest priorities, and that European solidarity is a real and not illusive ideal. It would also allow for the implementation of the controlled mobilization of production resources in Europe for the common good: healthcare.

4. European research on medicine and the vaccine

It is necessary to fund research on medicine for COVID-19 and a vaccine for SARS-CoV-2 from European public resources. The medicine and vaccine discovered thanks to these funds should be patent-free, according to the principles of universal solidarity.

United Europe emerged as an answer to the spiritual and material devastation of World War II rooted in the crisis and unemployment of the 1930s. Crisis is a time for making choices. On the one hand, it may lead us to the fall of the European Union and slipping into chaos and authoritarianism. On the other, however, it can be a chance to renew the social agreement between Europe and its citizens. It can be an opportunity to change the management model to one that is more solidary and balanced.

The belief that European nations which have found themselves in a difficult economic situation will cope with the pandemic on their own is deceptive. If we want to both defeat the pandemic and ward off the shadow of the upcoming severe economic crisis, to save Europe from

descending into chaos that will last for decades, we need to act according to the rule: *United we stand, divided we fall.*

We address our letter to the leaders of EU institutions, the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission and the President of the European Parliament and the MEPs of all the political groups of the European Parliament. We represent different ideological backgrounds. We are convinced that today, liberals, who acknowledge the inherent value of each individual, conservatives, who believe in intergenerational solidarity, and people of the left, who call for us to respect the dignity of labour, need to act together.

The real division line does not run between the liberals, the left and the conservatives. The demarcation line emerges between those who are ready to sacrifice their co-citizens for short-term profits, supposedly protecting the GDP, and those who oppose such logic.

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Signatories

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- 2. **Luigino Bruni,** economist, Scientific Director of Economy of Francesco Papal Program
- 3. **Aleksander Kwaśniewski**, former President of Poland
- 4. **Jan Zielonka**, political scientist, Professor of Oxford University
- 5. **Agnieszka Holland**, director and screenwriter
- 6. **Ladislau Dowbor**, chief economic advisor to former President of Brasil, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva
- 7. **Carlo Ginzburg**, Italian historian
- 8. **Ulrike Guerot**, German political thinker and founder and director of the European Democracy Lab

- 9. **Alessandra Smerilli**, State Councilor of Vatican City
- 10. Slavoj Žižek, Slovenian philosopher, hegelianist
- 11. **Fernando Savater**, Spanish philosopher, essayist
- 12. **Mieke Bal**, Dutch artist, cultural theorist
- 13. **Rocco Buttiglione**, Italian Union of Christian and Centre Democrats politician and an academic
- 14. **Dorota Gardias**, president of Forum Związków Zawodowych, one of three major Polish trade unions
- 15. **Rowan Williams**, 104th archbishop of Canterbury.
- 16. **Aleksander Smolar**, Polish political adviser, president of the Stefan Batory Foundation
- 17. Stefano Zamagni, president of Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences
- 18. **Vera Zamagni**, professor of economic history, University of Bologna
- 19. **Agnieszka Dziemianowicz-Bąk**, Polish politician and MP
- 20. Krzysztof Pomian, Polish philosopher, historian and essayist
- 21. John Milbank, English Anglican theologian
- 22. Alenka Zupančič, Slovenian psychoanalytic theorist and philosopher
- 23. **Axel Honneth**, philosopher and sociologist, director of the Institut für Sozialforschung at Frankfurt University since 2001
- 24. **Reinhard Bütikofer**, one of the Co-Chairs of EGP, and MEP for the German Green party Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen. Chair of the European Parliament Delegation for Relations with China.
- 25. **Małgorzata Omilanowska**, former Minister of Culture and National Heritage in Polish government
- 26. **Michał Boni**, Polish politician, former Minister of Digitalisation
- 27. **Michał Kołodziejczak**, Polish agrarian activist, president of Agrounia movement.
- 28. **Robert Biedroń**, Polish politician, group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament
- 29. **Claus Offe**, German political sociologist, Political Sociology at the Hertie School of Governance in Berlin.
- 30. **Stefano Quintarelli**, member of the: Leadership Council of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network for the United Nations and High-Level Expert Group on Artificial Intelligence of the European Commission
- 31. Mladen Dolar, Slovene philosopher, psychoanalyst, cultural theorist and film critic
- 32. **Tomaso Montanari**, art historian and opinion maker, professor of University of Siena
- 33. **Claus Leggewie**, German professor of Political Science and director of the Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut (KWI) in Essen

- 34. **Kira Peter-Hansen**, Danish politician, Socialist People's Party Member of the European Parliament
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- 43. **Jan Śpiewak**, Polish social activist and politician
- 44. **Tomasz Terlikowski**, Polish journalist
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- 49. **Jutta Paulus**, German pharmacist and politician, MEP for Alliance 90/The Greens
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- 52. **Benoît Biteau**, French politician, Member of the European Parliament, Group of the Greens, European Free Alliance
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- 55. **Damien Carême,** French politician, MEP serving on the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
- 56. David Cormand, French politician, MEP
- 57. **Mounir Satouri**, French politician, MEP for Group of the Greens, European Free Alliance

- 58. **Tilly Metz**, Luxembourgish teacher and politician, Member of the European Parliament, Group of the Greens, European Free Alliance
- 59. **Krzysztof Garbaczewski,** theatre director
- 60. Mareike Dittmer, director of The Art Stations Foundations CH, Museum Susch
- 61. **Monika Kostera**, Polish economist, professor of management and organization theoretist
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- 63. Piotr Graczyk, Polish philosopher
- 64. **Kacper Pobłocki**, Polish social anthropologist
- 65. **Przemysław Czapliński**, Polish historian of literature, essayist, literary critic
- 66. **Andrzej Friszke**, Polish historian
- 67. **Ryszard Nycz**, Polish historian of literature
- 68. **Maciej Szlinder**, President of the Polish Basic Income Network
- 69. **Anda Rottenberg**, Polish art historian, art critic, writer, former director of the Zachęta National Gallery of Art in Warsaw and member of the International Association of Art Critics (AICA).
- 70. Karol Tarnowski, Professor of humanities, phenomenologist,
- 71. **Adam Leszczyński**, historian, sociologist, journalist and publicist, member of the Krytyka Polityczna team and co-founder of OKO.press
- 72. **Marcin Wicha**, graphic artist, draftsman (creator of satirical drawings), columnist, author of books for adults and children
- 73. **Adam Chmielewsk**i, professor of humanities, philosopher of science and politics, editor-in-chief of the magazine "Studia Philosophica Wratislaviensia", head of the Wrocław office for the European Capital of Cultur
- 74. **Emanuele Ferragina**, sociologist, interested in exclusion from the labor market
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- 82. **Bogusław Liberadzki**, Polish politician, economist, MEP
- 83. Rafał Woś, Polish publicist and economic journalist
- 84. **Bartosz Bartosik**, member of the editorial board of "Więź", secretary of the think tank Laboratorium "Więź" and member of the Social Dialogue Committee Team at the Polish National Chamber of Commerce
- 85. Anna Dziewit Meller, writer, columnist and journalist
- 86. **Zygmunt Miłoszewski**, award-winning Polish writer, previously a journalist and editor for the Polish edition of Newsweek, an author of novels, features and short stories
- 87. Marta Miłoszewska, Polish director, academic teacher, social activist
- 88. **Miłosława Stępień**, member of The Polish Green Party
- 89. **Joanna Mytkowska,** art critic, curator, director of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw
- 90. **Mateusz Szymanówka**, Tanztage and Sophiensæle director
- 91. **Piotr Bernatowicz**, art critic, director of the Ujazdowski Castle Center for Contemporary Art in Warsaw
- 92. **Karol Radziszewski**, Polish artist, painter, performer, publicist, author of installations, actions, photographs and video films
- 93. **Agata Urbanik**, facilitator, trainer and social researcher, one of the founders of the Pole Dialogu Foundation
- 94. **Dariusz Piórkowski SJ**, publicist, pastor, spiritual director
- 95. **Jędrzej Malko**, journalist, researcher of the history of economic discourses, analyst at the Kalecki Foundation
- 96. **Weronika Paszewska**, co-founder and director of AkcjaDemokracja, trainer, psychologist, activist
- 97. **Joanna Kos-Krauze**, Polish film director and screenwriter
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- 131. Massimo Veltri, Italian politician
- 132. **Renate Siebert**, sociologist, University of Calabria
- 133. Rudi Assuntino, Italian musicologist, singer, songwriter, tv director and script writer
- 134. **Salvatore Adorno**, Italian professor of contemporary history, University of Catania
- 135. **Wojciech Kubalewski**, Polish politician, IT specialist and entrepreneur, co-chairman of The Polish Green Party
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- 153. **Giulia Mafai**, costumography designer
- 154. Alberto Ziparo, urban studies, University of Florence
- 155. Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield, French politician Europe Ecologie Les Verts, MEP

- 156. **Karima Delli**, French politician and MOP Parliament elected in the 2009 European election, 2014 European elections and in the 2019 European elections for the Île-de-France constituency.
- 157. Maria Rosaria Stabili, political scientist, Roma TRE University
- 158. Maria Luisa Boccia, Italian politician, writer
- 159. Laura Guidi, gender historian, University of Naples
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- 170. Piotr Trzaskowski, activist, political scientist
- 171. **Claude Gruffat**, French entrepreneur and politician, MEP Group of the Greens, European Free Alliance
- 172. **Yannick Jadot**, French environmentalist and Member of the European Parliament elected in the 2009 European election for the West France constituency. Jadot coordinated Greenpeace actions in France between 2002 and 2008.
- 173. **Andrzej Gniazdowski**, Polish philosopher, Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the Polish Academy of Sciences
- 174. **Ryszard Szarfenberg**, Polish politologist, Professor of University of Warsaw, Institute of Social Policy
- 175. Małgorzata Kowalska, professor of humanities, philosopher, translator
- 176. **Zbigniew Mikołejko**, professor of humanities, philosopher and religion historian, essayist
- 177. Marcin Miłkowski, analytical philosopher
- 178. Anna Cieplak, culture animator, urban activist, writer, winner of Conrad Award
- 179. Grzegorz Uzdański, philosopher, writer, poet
- 180. Jakub Majmurek, film critic, publicist
- 181. Marta Dziewańska, curator, Museum of Fine Arts Bern
- 182. Aleksandra Andrzejewska, activist, "Rozkwit" Association
- 183. Franciszek Sterczewski, MP in the Sejm of the 9th term, urban activist

- 184. **Tomasz Stawiszyński**, philosopher, publicist, essayist, editor of Radio TOK FM
- 185. **Mikołaj Grynberg**, photographer, writer, reporter
- 186. Lucinia Speciale, History of Medieval Art Professor, University of Salento
- 187. Magdalena Kicińska, journalist, writer, poet
- 188. Elżbieta Korolczuk, sociologist, cultural expert, activist for women's rights
- 189. Bolesław Rok, CSR expert
- 190. Mikołaj Trzaska, saxophonist, bass clarinetist, film music composer
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- 195. Alexia Panayiotou, scientist, specialist in management and organization studies
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- 197. Michał Sutowski, political scientist, publicist, translator
- 198. Maciej Wereszczyński, climate activist
- 199. Zoi Michailova, performer artist and DJ
- 200. Olga Stefan, Independent researcher and curator based in Zurich
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- 202. **Yegór Osipov-Gipsh**, Dutch journalist and researcher
- 203. **Paul Zawadzki**, anthropologist, political scientist, L'École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris Sciences et Lettres University
- 204. Emanuele Trevi, writer
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- 214. **Ludwika Wujec**, polish politician, physicist, member of the anticommunist opposition in Poland

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- 217. Małgorzata Jacyno, sociologist, University of Warsaw
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- 220. Magdalena Biejat, Polish MP
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- 224. Alicja Zdziechiewicz, writer and ecological activist
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- 227. **Rafael Lewandowski,** French-Polish film director, screenwriter, movie producer
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- 239. **Tomasz Swoboda**, literary scholar, translator, University of Gdańsk
- 240. **Joanna Jurewicz**, orientalist, University of Warsaw
- 241. Jagna Brudzińska, sociologist of economics, Polish Academy of Sciences
- 242. **Katarzyna Bojarska**, literary and art critic, translator, SWPS University of Social Sciences and Humanities
- 243. **Monika Murawska**, philosopher, art historian, Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw
- 244. **Iwona Lorenc**, esthetician, philosopher of art, University of Warsaw
- 245. **Ruta Śpiewak**, village sociologist, Polish Academy of Sciences
- 246. Hanna Gosk, literary scholar, University of Warsaw

- 247. **Justyna Kowalska-Leder**, historian of Polish literature and culture, culture expert, University of Warsaw
- 248. **Catherine Klein Gousseff**, historian, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS)
- 249. **Jean-Michel Salanskis**, philosopher, mathematician, Université Paris X-Nanterre
- 250. **Ziemowit Szczerek**, writer, journalist
- 251. **Luigi Marinelli**, philologist, director of the Department of European, American and Intercultural Studies Sapienza University of Rome
- 252. **Krzysztof Nawratek**, architect, University of Sheffield
- 253. Roch Dunin-Wąsowicz, sociologist
- 254. **László Andor**, Hungarian economist. From 2010-2014 he was Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
- 255. **Konstanty Gebert**, "Dawid Warszawski", translator, journalist, academic teacher
- 256. **Nikolay Aretov**, Institute for Literature, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
- 257. **Katya Mihaylova**, Bulgarian cultural anthropologist and folklorist, associate professor of Bulgarian Academy of Sciences
- 258. **Nikolay Papuchiev**, D.Sc, an Associated professor in anthropology, Sofia University, Bulgaria
- 259. Ana Stoykova, Professor in Medieval Literature Bulgarian Academy of Science
- 260. **Ireneusz Kania**, translator
- 261. **Agnieszka Ścigaj**, Polish sociologist, social entrepreneur, MP
- 262. Łukasz Kobeszko, Polish journalist and philosopher
- 263. Anna Engelking, cultural anthropologist, Polish Academy of Sciences
- 264. **Paweł Maciejko**, Proffesor, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Johns Hopkins University

^{*} Signatories support the letter as individual citizens, not as representatives of institutions