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Brussels, 29th of April 2020

Mr. Thierry Breton, Commissioner for Internal Market, European Commission

Ms. Ylva Johansson, Commissioner for Home Affairs, European Commission

Ms. Jana Maláčová, Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Czech Republic

Mr. Jan Hamáček, First deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, Czech Republic

Mr. Hubertus Heil, Federal Minister of Labour and Social Affairs, Germany

**Mr. Horst Seehofer, Federal Minister of the Interior, Building and Community,
Germany**

Ms. Marlena Maląg, Minister of Family, Labour and Social Policy, Poland

Mr. Mariusz Kamiński, Minister of the Interior and Administration, Poland

Dear Commissioners, Dear Ministers,

One of the greatest achievements of the European project is the EU single market based on the free movement of workers, goods, capital and services. The extent of interdependency, to which economies of the EU Member States have grown over the years, is particularly visible in frontier areas.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in reinstatement of border control at the internal borders between many Member States. Furthermore, some governments have also introduced compulsory quarantine periods for persons arriving to their territory.

On March 16, 2020, the European Commission presented special guidelines setting out principles for an integrated approach to an effective border management to protect health while preserving the integrity of the single market - “COVID-19. Guidelines for border management measures to protect health and ensure the availability of goods and essential services”.



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- Principle n. 23 states that Member States should permit and facilitate the crossing of frontier workers, in particular but not only those working in the health care and food sector, and other essential services (e.g. child care, elderly care, critical staff for utilities) to ensure continued professional activity.

- Principle no. 25 asks Member States, and in particular neighbouring Member States, for close cooperation and coordination at EU level to ensure effectiveness and proportionality of the measures taken.

Further guidelines in this area - “Guidelines concerning the exercise of the free movement of workers during COVID-19 outbreak” - were issued by the European Commission on March 30, 2020. In this document, the European Commission calls on the Member States to allow frontier and posted workers to continue crossing their borders to their workplace, if work in the sector concerned is still allowed in the host Member State.

However, guidelines issued by the Commission are not binding and some Member States have not implemented them. It has resulted, inter alia, in a very difficult situation of frontier workers living and working in the border areas of Czechia, Germany and Poland. As a result of a compulsory 14-day quarantine for everyone crossing the border to Poland, tens of thousands of people have been prevented from going to work, were forced to relocate, or even lost their jobs. It should be noted that, according to Eurostat data from 2018, Polish frontier workers are the largest group of such workers in the EU. According to the data of the Czech Statistical Office, as many as 47,5 thousand Poles worked in 2018 in Czechia, many of them from directly neighbouring Silesia.

Preventing tens of thousands of frontier workers in the border areas between Czechia, Germany and Poland from commuting to work has also resulted in acute work force shortages in institutions and businesses in the host Member States - in various sectors, from health care and nursing facilities to retail and logistics. Some of them are on the verge of bankruptcy; some have had to considerably scale down their activities.

This situation is not acceptable - European citizens must be allowed to work and functioning of businesses must be secured in line with the rules of the European single market.



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Dear Commissioners, Dear Ministers, we ask you to immediately resolve this unfortunate and harmful situation.

Signed (in alphabetical order):

Petra Kammerevert, Member of the European Parliament, member of the IMCO committee, S&D, DE

Łukasz Kohut, Member of the European Parliament, member of the ITRE committee, S&D, PL

Marcel Kolaja, Vice-President of the European Parliament, member of the IMCO committee, Greens/EFA, CZ