

Dear President,

the tragic emergence of COVID-19, with the extremely serious impact it is producing for our health care, economic and social systems, constitutes a completely unpredictable and unprecedented phenomenon for its global scale, which has ravaged the habits and patterns of life of our societies.

We are called upon to face an enemy of which we still know very little, apart from the great dangers it poses in terms of human lives and to the well-being of our societies.

The costs of the pandemic and its duration cannot as yet be quantified: in any case, today already the effects of a substantial stoppage of movements, trade and a large part of economic activities are being felt very acutely in the everyday experience of all of us citizens of a Continent which has been hit particularly hard.

The risk of so many job losses, the definitive closure of so many businesses and the growing marginalization of large swaths of our population is clear to see; the condition of unease and frustration which may be a consequence could undermine the very solidity of our democratic systems.

The European Union and each of our countries are called upon to undertake an exceptional effort to stem and to redress the most dramatic consequences of the pandemic. The huge scale of the resources deployed to this end by other countries must encourage us to work for a response which is coordinated and shared in order to avoid Europe a whole being less equipped than it must be.

The EU Institutions have already undertaken important measures and are preparing a number of others which will combine with the efforts of each individual Member State.

The seriousness of the situation requires, in the spirit of solidarity which is one of the foundations of European integration, an unprecedented mobilization of resources especially in the Eurozone.

In particular, it is necessary to ensure that our countries can avail themselves of stable, sustainable and long-term funding for the policies required to tackle the damage caused by the pandemic, including the investments to develop a European industrial strategy.

In this light, it is important to explore the feasibilities and opportunities which may ensue from all the ideas which could be implemented, including, among others, the use of financial instruments or a solidarity fund issued by an EU Institution or body to raise resources and investments for the benefit of all Member States.

What should prevail in the examination of these ideas is the objective assessment of the results which could accrue so as to maximize the resources and investments which could be mobilized in the fight against COVID-19.

We should be far-sighted in our reasoning and actions, taking as our reference the principles of sharing, solidarity and cooperation which inspired the birth of the European Union. We have therefore seek an advanced compromise among the different views and interests of the Member States. Those in the front line in these difficult times, those who are undertaking huge sacrifices, the workers, the families and our entire European community expect an effective response resulting from engagement, cooperation and cohesiveness.

Beyond ensuring the essential stability of the Economic and Monetary Union and guaranteeing the proper working of the internal market, we do need to demonstrate that the European Union, together with all its Member States, is committed, in such a difficult phase, to providing a concrete and prompt response to the expectations and needs of our peoples, to leave no one behind, and to shape a common future.

Furthermore, it is essential to develop a European industrial sovereignty, especially to produce essential goods and materials in the field of public health, and the coordination between all Member States to guarantee mechanisms of solidarity to face future pandemics. A franc dialog with non-EU countries should also prevail to promote food safety and demanding sanitary standards, as the ones implemented within the European Union, able to prevent the emergence and the spread of new pandemics.

In the current exchange on these issues, it is essential that Parliaments be involved, as representative institutions and the highest expression of democracy and the needs and aspirations of our peoples.

Our Houses of Parliament, each in their own constitutional systems and in accordance with their parliamentary regulations, are contributing to the adoption of extraordinary measures to contain the pandemic, strengthen our health-care systems, and safeguard the production and distribution of essential goods and services in order to limit negative effects on employment and the economy. We

believe it is of fundamental importance for national parliaments to also play an active role in the definition at European level of adequate solutions to ensure that we can overcome this emergency, which jeopardises the protection of our common values, fundamental rights and the very solidity of our social models.

Certain as we are of being able to count on your attention, we convey to you our very best wishes

Signed by:

Gerard Larcher, President of the Senat of the French Republic

Constantine An. Tassoulas, President of the Hellenic Parliament

Maria Elisabetta Alberti Casellati, President of the Italian Senate

Roberto Fico, President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies

Fernand Etgen, President of the Chamber of Deputies of
Luxemburg

Eduardo Luís Barreto Ferro Rodrigues, President of the Assembly
of the Republic of Portugal

Igor Zorčič, President of the National Assembly of Slovenia

Alojz Kovšca, President of the National Council of Slovenia

Meritxell Batet Lamaña, President of the Congress of Deputies of
Spain

María Pilar Llop Cuenca, President of the Senate of Spain