

Brussels, 4 November 2020

Dear President von der Leyen,
Dear Commissioner Gabriel,
Dear Commissioner Kyriakides,

The complexity of the current crisis has moved us, as science and ethics policy advisors, to join forces and collaborate on the forthcoming Joint Opinion “Improving pandemic preparedness and management”. On the basis of this work and in view of policy and legislation addressing pandemics, in particular the upcoming legislative proposals for a strengthened EU health security framework, we are herewith providing a series of recommendations on developing strong European preparedness for and management of pandemics and epidemics.

With this advance communication of our recommendations, annexed to this letter and to be followed by the publication of the Joint Opinion on 11 November, we intend to inform and support your ongoing policy efforts in this regard in a timely manner. A preliminary draft of the scientific opinion, including the recommendations, has been shared with the Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, so it could provide insights during the development of the European Commission’s forthcoming legislative package on a European Health Union.

In what was a truly fruitful interdisciplinary effort, we have identified important lessons learned and to be learned. For this purpose, we analysed the current and, in part, previous pandemics in their complexity, drawing on insights from research and scholarship and taking European values and respect for fundamental rights as critical orientation.

COVID-19 has highlighted mutual vulnerabilities and the need for shared responsibilities within and between the Member States of the European Union, as well as internationally. Our recommendations include strengthened European and global solidarity and coordination in governance, research and community efforts to improve pandemic preparedness and management, addressing all aspects and causes of such health crises in their complex interplay, from biomedical and health to social and environmental ones.

Our recommendations and the forthcoming Opinion build on our first joint [“Statement on scientific advice to European policy makers during the COVID-19 pandemic”](#) (June 2020). It is our plan to continue this collaboration in 2021 with a third joint advice on how Europe can develop stronger resilience to crises in general. The unit hosting the secretariats of the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors and the European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies already reached out to the relevant Commission services in this regard.

The Group of Chief Scientific Advisors to the European Commission
The European Group on Ethics in Science and New Technologies
The special advisor to President Ursula von der Leyen on the response to the coronavirus and COVID-19

We hope you will find our work insightful and of help in your remarkable efforts to respond to this unprecedented crisis.

Yours sincerely,

Rolf Heuer



on behalf of the Group of Chief
Scientific Advisors to the
European Commission

Christiane Woopen



on behalf of the European
Group on Ethics in Science and
New Technologies

Peter Piot



Special Advisor to President
Ursula von der Leyen on the
response to COVID-19

ANNEX: Joint recommendations on improving pandemic preparedness and management