



**AIACE**

**International Association of Former Staff of the European Union**

*More than 12.500 members – open to former employees of the EU institutions and all bodies*

**The President**



Madrid, 19 March 2020

Dear colleagues and friends,

It is difficult to imagine that we would experience a situation such as that of the pandemic caused by the Coronavirus, which is now hitting us mercilessly, and has led to the declaration of a state of emergency and 'lockdowns' in several Member States. It is an epidemic of unprecedented scale and nature, with an increasing number of people affected and dying.

In addition to all kinds of preventative measures, at a different level, we are being forced to have another look at issues that are not of prime importance in our lives. And this is, of course, the case with the AIACE programme. As you are aware, these circumstances have forced us to cancel or postpone all scheduled meetings, including our annual meeting, the Yearly Congress, which will now be held in Loutraki from 15 to 22 May 2021.

All of this is of limited importance, of course, compared to the priority of preserving the health of all of us, as we are a group, which- as you are well aware - is, in principle, vulnerable.

The health authorities in each country where you live have unveiled the way in which to proceed with regard to prevention and the measures to be taken.

A letter from Chr. Roques, Director in the Commission's Human Resources DG, dated 18 March, was sent to pensioners about the latest developments regarding the COVID-19 epidemic. It will be sent by post to all pensioners and we have forwarded it to the national sections for distribution, (a copy is attached).

It goes without saying how important it is to follow each country's communications and health procedures as well as related requirements if you are affected by the disease. Our Health Insurance remains at the service of members and beneficiaries under the known conditions.

At the level of AIACE, on the one hand, Secretary General Didier Hespel, - demonstrating his "permanent" dedication in difficult logistical conditions (the Secretariat is closed) - has not failed to keep the national sections well informed of any necessary information.

On the other hand - and where a need for assistance in certain cases might arise - the section in your country of residence and under the conditions of each national AIACE

*15 Sections : Belgique/België – Danmark - Deutschland – Éire/Ireland - España - France – Ελλάς/Grèce - Italia – Luxembourg - Nederland – Österreich – Portugal – Suomi/Finland – Sverige - United Kingdom*

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*Office address : European Commission, N105 00/036, B-1049 Brussels, Belgium -*

*Telephone : direct line (+32-2)295.29.60 exchange (+32-2) 299.11.11*

*E-mail address : [aiace-int@ec.europa.eu](mailto:aiace-int@ec.europa.eu) Website : [www.aiace-europa.eu](http://www.aiace-europa.eu)*

*Company number: 0408999411*

section, will certainly be able to give you guidance or the necessary support, including recourse - limited to complicated situations - to the volunteer "ambassadors".

May I convey to you with this message my feelings of empathy, which I am sure are shared in this exceptional situation which, let me say, reveals our vulnerabilities and which will test our societies, both in the hope of overcoming it and in the certainty that Europe will be able to rise to this challenge and the hope that it will ultimately be strengthened.

Wishing you much courage, please accept my fraternal thoughts,

Joaquín Díaz Pardo

Didier HESPEL