

Budapest, 10 June 2020

Dear Delegation,

The Governing Board of the EMCI would like to express solidarity with the attempts made by the Delegation in order to find an acceptable solution for free-lance interpreters, who work mostly for the EU institutions.

As representatives of Universities training highly professional conference interpreters, we teach not only interpretation techniques, but also professional ethics and the history, structure and functioning of the EU institutions. We have always been able to motivate our students to train hard with the prospect of finding employment with the EU Institutions whom we perceived as a fair and reliable employer to both staff and free-lance colleagues as well as key sponsors and pedagogical partners for our study programmes.

The Covid-19 crisis was an unprecedented shock for everyone. The EU showed a degree of solidarity with free-lance interpreters by honouring all contracts until the end of May. We also understand that the interpreting services receive financial resources on the basis of services provided and most interpreting assignments were cancelled. The Interpretation Services are not to blame for this situation. Some language units have shown solidarity and some staff members have been willing to contribute to a special solidarity fund. However, we might have hoped for a more determined stance at management level to defend their highly qualified and loyal colleagues, both staff and free-lance.

We would kindly ask the representatives of the European Commission, the members of the European Parliament, the Council and the Court to find some way to tide over free-lance interpreters working primarily for the EU Institutions in these difficult times.

We would like to stress, that the measures have affected many categories of interpreters and trainers. As training Institutions, we are particularly concerned about our key trainers, external trainers and former students, as well as current and future students. Many colleagues work exclusively for the European Institutions and have moved to Brussels to be close to their employer. This excludes them from the various national support measures and leaves them with no income.

We would ask you to intervene to secure some assistance and support for these colleagues who have served the Institutions – and in so doing, multilingualism and democracy – so well for many years.

Please feel free to send this letter to the MEPs, Commissioners, Heads of Interpreting Services and interpreters.

Kind regards,

The Governing Board of the EMCI