

Valdis Dombrovskis
Executive Vice-President of the
European Commission

Sent by email

Global trade union call for universal access to Covid-19 vaccines and health products and technologies

Dear Executive Vice-President Dombrovskis,
Dear Valdis,

It has been nearly two years since the outbreak of the global Covid-19 pandemic. Workers have stepped up, putting themselves at risk to safeguard people's lives, livelihoods, and the global economy, and driven outstanding advances in science and medicine with the rapid development of Covid-19 tests, treatments, drugs, medical devices, personal protective equipment and, most importantly, vaccines.

Immediate collective action is needed to ensure equal and universal access to Covid-19 vaccines and wider health products and technologies. The ETUC wrote in February 2021 to the European Commission asking the President to support a TRIPS waiver for COVID vaccines at the WTO. We renewed that call in September. We support the international trade union movement's urgent call on the European Commission, to take all actions needed to make Covid-19 vaccines available for all, and to support the temporary and targeted 'TRIPS waiver' proposed by South Africa and India at the World Trade Organisation, tackling a key obstacle to protecting workers and communities around the world as the coronavirus continues to impact. The WTO system envisages suspending intellectual property rules in exceptional circumstances: the pandemic is clearly an exceptional circumstance.

The European Commission is increasingly isolated in its opposition to a vaccine waiver requested by developing countries. The Commission should stop acting in the interests of big pharma and follow the US and Australia in doing the right thing to keep people safe.

This act of solidarity must be accompanied by a commitment to share technology and the production knowledge and skills necessary to facilitate manufacturing in centres around the world.

No one is safe until we are all safe.

Yours sincerely,



Luca Visentini
ETUC General Secretary