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NGO in General Consultative Status  
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Dear President von derLeyen,

We follow with great attention and appreciation the current efforts of the European Union to alleviate the immense suffering brought by the pandemic throughout the continent. We see solidarity between all states as the only chance to emerge one day from this crisis stronger and more united than before, but Europe can only be credible if it is also concerned about the dignity, well-being and progress in the rest of the world.

We are sensitive to the cry of many peoples facing the COVID-19 pandemic while living in very serious economic and health situations. Among them, we are struck like a punch in the stomach by the anguish of the Syrian people because Europe has a great responsibility for them.

European people have shown solidarity and welcome towards the Syrian people in recent years. On the other hand, over and above the political reasons that led the European Council to decide to impose an embargo in Syria and then to extend it until now, it cannot be denied that this decision effectively prevents the organization of any health response to the current crisis. Syrian civilians, exhausted and deprived of everything after 9 years of war are totally isolated from the rest of the world with a largely destroyed health system. Because of the restrictions on banks, they cannot receive urgent humanitarian aid from European NGOs or family members in Europe and the return of the latter to their homeland under these conditions is unthinkable. Paradoxically, at a time of vital global solidarity, any effort of solidarity towards Syrian civilians is prevented by measures taken by the European Union, theoretically established to protect the people.

We are at a historic time when we must have the courage to take unprecedented decisions because the situation demands it. No geostrategic consideration can override the right that every Syrian has, to respect for his or her human dignity. In the new world context of the fight against COVID-19, to prevent Syrians from receiving food, energy, medicine, treatment, or peaceful economic activity in order to survive would be to betray the fundamental values that form the European identity. Desperation and poverty would cause greater instability in the region with new emigration and new fundamentalist currents, the dire consequences of which we have already experienced.

We are confident that Europe will respond in line with its values of universality, the indivisibility of human rights, and respect for the dignity of each human person. As you yourself have said several times, "solidarity is at the heart of Europe and this is what will enable it to be reborn".

The opportunity for a first temporary step in the lifting of the embargo will come shortly when a decision is taken on the extension of the restrictive measures that expire in June. We are calling for the European Union to loosen the constraints that have made humanitarian action impossible, starting with the blocking of any economic transaction that also affects serious, transparent and impartial humanitarian agencies.

Certain that we can count on your attention and ready to provide any further information through our Syrian and European collaborators and volunteers who are working, despite the immense difficulties to bring education, work opportunities, medicine, and comfort to the local population. We greet you with much esteem for your valuable work.

  
Marco Desalvo  
NGO New Humanity President

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