



Ms Stella Kyriakides  
Commissioner for Health and Food Safety

Dear Ms Kyriakides  
Honorable Commissioner,

The COVID-19 and its effects on the people of Europe challenge our healthcare systems and the principles of our Union. The uncertainty, the on-going infections and the death toll affect disrupt our European Way of Living that had assured long-term prosperity since the end of WW2. Extensive media coverage regarding precaution, prevention and global evolution of the virus and its results charge further the people's psychological burden.

Scientific researchers have revealed a profound and broad spectrum of psychological impact that such crises can inflict on people. Many individuals being either healthy or suffering by some mental illness will unavoidably see their condition being aggravated as they and their caregivers will suffer distress.

A good practice to deal with this issue is presented by a group of China's clinics and research centres, namely the Second Xiangya Hospital, the Institute of Mental Health, the Medical Psychology Research Center of the Second Xiangya Hospital, and the Chinese Medical and Psychological Disease Clinical Medicine Research Center. They have developed a detailed intervention plan on mental health, which proposes to the government to act in the following three areas:

- Build a psychological intervention medical team, which provided online courses to guide medical staff to deal with common psychological problems;
- Create a psychological assistance hotline team, which provided guidance and supervision to solve psychological problems;
- Secure psychological interventions, through various group activities in order to release stress.

Having in mind the side effects of the pandemic and the practice described above, we would like to propose that the European Commission takes in consideration the need to include the protection of mental health in its current crisis response. We would like to propose the creation of a high-level experts' group, which will:

1. Advise the European Commission on how to protect the European Citizens' mental health. Especially by mainstreaming awareness for mental health and proposing activities that will support the citizens' psychology
2. Assist the European Council by proposing actions to be undertaken by the national governments.

3. Coordinate actions in the local and regional level, in cooperation with the European networks.
4. Find ways to cooperate with the private sector in order to help it adapt to the current situation.

Finally, having in mind the enormous psychological effect of the current crisis, we would also like to propose to you to declare 2020 as the “European Year for Mental Health.”

Best regards,

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