

Mrs. Ursula Von der Leyen  
The Head of European Commission

Mr. Janez Lenarčič  
European Commissioner for Crisis Management  
European Commission

### Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) – consequences for exhibition industry

Dear Mrs. Ursula Von der Leyen

Dear Mr. Janez Lenarčič

I'm contacting you on behalf of Polish Chamber of Exhibition Industry, the only national economic chamber representing the Polish exhibition sector and the member of UFI – The Global Exhibition Industry Association. The core members of PCEI are trade fair and exhibition organizers, operators of exhibition and conference venues, providers of design, construction and furnishing services for exhibition stands, transportation and spedition agents as well as providers of other services for the exhibition industry.

The current crisis caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19 disease) puts us – the European exhibition industry in a very difficult position and we all are aware of the consequences of it.

We observe avalanche cancellations or rescheduling (mainly for autumn 2020) various types of events, including trade fairs throughout Europe. More than 600 trade fairs were planned for March and April 2020 in Europe. If most of these exhibitions are cancelled or postponed it will have huge impact for the economic situation of numerous European, including Polish, companies leading their business activity in the exhibition industry. For most of these companies, trade fairs are the only source of income. Many of our Members, being small and medium enterprises, declare that they may not survive until autumn.

We want to stress that the number of companies operating in the Polish exhibition industry is over 500 and the number of people working directly and indirectly for exhibition market are tens of thousands of employees. The number of companies operating in the European exhibition industry is over 1000 with other tens of thousands workers. A six-month or even longer break in organizing exhibitions which are the main and often the only source of income for them, will most likely force many of these companies to cease their operations which will cause the loss of job for their employees.

It must not be forgotten that there is another group of stakeholders of exhibitions – Exhibitors, who will be severely affected by cancellations or postponed trade fairs. For companies exhibiting at trade fairs and exhibition, these events are platforms for launching their latest products and services and thus acquiring customers. Therefore, most probably they will also suffer from huge losses.

All this can lead to deepening of the already significant economic crisis in Europe and to the disappearing of the exhibition industry from economic scene or transformation of this important economic sector to a niche business.

In order to counter this danger as the national exhibition industry organization, on behalf our Members we call on The European Union to provide special funding for the exhibition industry players affected by cancellations of trade fairs throughout Europe to support them in the period until the crisis situation caused by the coronavirus is under control. The existence of the exhibition industry must be ensured in the long term.

*Beata Kozyra, PhD*

President of the board

Polish Chamber of Exhibition Industry

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping loops and strokes, positioned over the typed name and title.