PARLIAMENT OF ESTONIA

President of the European Commission   20th of March 2020
Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen   Tallinn, Estonia

Let me start by thanking you for your efforts and commitment in stressing the EU values during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With regard to the situation developing in all our countries and across the European Union due to the spread of COVID-19, the EU Affairs Committee of the Parliament of Estonia welcomes and supports the ongoing work towards finding common EU level solutions. The endorsement of the guidelines proposed by the European Commission on border management by the European Council on 17 March sends a strong signal and reaffirms the need and wish of the Member States to work together.

However, the current practices to address the crisis still vary from Member State to Member State. This has created a situation where EU citizens are stuck on internal EU borders. The medical as well as many other sectors of our highly integrated economies are strained to their limits. We recognise the right of the Member States to take appropriate measures in order to protect the public health of their citizens. Though, we also recall that this has to be done in line with the Free Movement Directive, including by facilitating transit of EU citizens and residents who are returning home.

The EU Affairs Committee therefore underlines the need for a common response in the EU that should include:

- Establishing transit routes to facilitate the transit of all EU citizens and permanent residents through Member States to return home;

- Minimizing the negative impact on the EU's Single Market by ensuring the free movement and transit of goods, including free movement of food commodities;

- Jointly addressing the shortage of medical equipment and supplies in order to assure all countries have sufficient means to deal with the pandemic.

We have no doubt that you will take into consideration aforementioned matters.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Anneli Ott
Chairwoman
European Union Affairs Committee
Parliament of Estonia