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Dear President von der Leyen,
Dear President Michel,
Dear President Sassoli,

11 May 2020

This year we celebrated Europe Day in circumstances of great anxiety. Europe is facing one of the most difficult situations in decades. Trust of citizens in the European institutions has weakened at a time of global power readjustments and economic upheavals. The Covid-19 pandemic has deepened the challenges our continent is confronting and increased the urgency of searching for new solutions. Charting the way towards the future of Europe has become a priority of the first order.

As members of the World Leadership Alliance – Club de Madrid, one hundred and nine democratically elected, former heads of state and government from around the globe, we feel a special responsibility to stand with our successors, with the leaders of the European Union and with our fellow citizens, in addressing the crisis and considering the needs for the future. Forty-two members of the WLA - Club de Madrid are former heads of state or government of member countries of the European Union. We are following developments closely, and stand ready to support and help you, both in our own countries, and across the Union.

As president of WLA – Club de Madrid I have initiated consultations with a number of former European Presidents and Prime Ministers, some of whom also held positions of high responsibility in the European Union and other international institutions. We all understand the paramount need to develop a clear, long term vision of the role of the European Union. The Union must be the anchor of stability and prosperity in Europe and a major shaping force in enabling global progress. We are strongly committed to democracy and other core European values, which must serve in these difficult times as the foundation of the future. Moreover, at the time of weakening global governance, a leading role for the European Union at the global level is more necessary than ever. While our focus is on the future, we understand the central importance of the measures that the European Union must take immediately to overcome the public health crisis and the great economic and social challenges that flow from it. Our future will depend on the adequacy and quality of the decisions that are taken today. We strongly support the efforts of the Commission, the Council, and the European Parliament to craft effective and sustainable solutions by making good use of the treaty provisions and policy tools of the EU. They should ensure the much needed coordination of national policies and help preserve the core of the European integration, including the freedom of movement.

We have heard references to the need for a new Marshall Plan. These need to be fleshed out by the Commission with content that will sustain visionary decisions, based on adequate financial and other policy instruments for the European Union. The European Council should act with wisdom, responsibility, and political courage. A new European budget must be designed to meet the needs of this historic moment. Innovative solutions are needed, and all proposed instruments, including “perpetual bonds”, deserve serious consideration.

Strengthening the cohesion of the European Union will require policies that reflect internal solidarity and enhance competitiveness in an increasingly demanding global environment. This will require both insight and conviction. The European Union can draw on its rich experience which includes the evolution of the Single Market, the Cohesion Policy the European Stability Mechanism,

among the policy tools. This layered and extensive experience provides a platform on which the EU can innovate today. Simplistic, short-term, cost-benefit calculations should not prevail. A sophisticated and sustainable vision of solidarity is essential. The necessary reforms should be undertaken with courage and statesmanship. As Commission President von der Leyen has said, Europe must lead the transition to a healthy planet and a new digital world, but it can only do so by bringing people together and upgrading the social market economy to fit our ambitions.

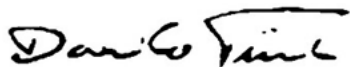
It is understood that all necessary reforms cannot be undertaken immediately. While immediate decisions are needed, and some are perhaps overdue, the evolution of the European Union is a process. Therefore, the Conference on the Future of Europe must be prepared comprehensively and inclusively, without undue delay. The success of our policies, including the “green recovery”, the European Green Deal and Digital Europe, will depend on their securing the broadest possible support among citizens, and the Conference must help to generate that.

Engaging with all segments of society and stakeholders will be demanding, and we shall be happy to assist in every way possible. The WLA – Club de Madrid and its European members have established contact with relevant persons in the European Commission and European Parliament and will expand these as we proceed. We will be honoured to act on any suggestions that you may wish to make.

Our activities will, of course, be aligned with yours in addressing the challenges for the European Union. In respect of the global challenges that we face in this crisis, we have also engaged with the United Nations, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund, the President of the World Bank Group, and the Heads of State and Government of the G20. The WLA – Club de Madrid will hold its annual policy dialogue in Berlin, in late October, focusing on “multilateralism that delivers”. Former Heads of State and Government of democratic countries from all parts of the world will participate. All of us, strongly believe that the cohesion and success of the European Union are essential for our collective recovery.

We strongly supported your initiative in launching the pledging event on 4 May 2020 to enhance global preparedness and ensure adequate funding for a Covid-19 vaccine. We congratulate you on the initiative and on the success of the event. It was an excellent example of the importance of leadership by the European Union in this critically important area of international cooperation. We shall continue to support you in these endeavours and look forward to hearing your views on how we can do that most effectively.

Yours sincerely,
Danilo Türk



Danilo Turk
President of the World Leadership Alliance – Club de Madrid
Former President of Slovenia (2007-2012)

Cc: Angel Gurría, Secretary General, OECD