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**Subject:** To the President of the European Commission, the President of the Council of the European Union, the Presidents of the European Parliament, the Court of Justice, the Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions

We are in the middle of global health crisis and its economic fallout is already becoming apparent. Within this context, we would like to draw your attention to the situation of ACIs (Auxiliary Conference Interpreters) who work for the European Institutions. This is a large, indispensable workforce that covers more than 50% of interpretation needs.

These interpreters make it possible for multilingualism to underpin the effective functioning of the European Union, and most of them work almost exclusively for the European Institutions. A large majority also moved to Brussels and Luxembourg in order to be fully available to the Institutions. Their remuneration is subject to Community tax.

Since the arrival of Covid-19 in Europe and the slow-down in activity at the Institutions, these interpreters, who have always embodied loyalty, availability and flexibility while catering to the needs of the European Union, have experienced economic losses that represent between 50% and 100% of their income. The conditions of their contractual relationship with the Institutions means that most of them will not be eligible for aid at national level, even if their Member States were to implement measures to support this category of self-employed workers.

At this juncture, a sign of solidarity from the European Institutions was much needed in order to afford this indispensable workforce a minimum degree of protection. Sadly, what is happening is quite the opposite. In a coordinated fashion and without any consultation with the trade unions, staff committees or ACI representatives, DG SCIC (for the Commission and the Council) and DG LINC (for the European Parliament) have decided to cancel contracts awarded as part of the long term recruitment exercise, starting from the end of May 2020 (long term contracts constitute only a fraction of ACI contracts and are their only source of income in the current economic situation). The cancellation of these contracts has already begun, on a week by week basis.

This decision essentially deprives a very large number of ACIs of what is their only source of livelihood for a number of months, and is especially onerous for those who work exclusively for the Institutions.

While the word “solidarity” is being invoked by every leader of the European Union, we join ACIs in calling for this decision to be overturned and for social dialogue to be initiated to find a pragmatic solution to ensure effective protection for this particularly vulnerable category of workers. There must be a joint discussion toward more sustainable solutions in the medium term.

**The Central Staff Committee, the Staff Committees in Luxembourg and Brussels, the Trade Unions of the European Commission**