



Brussels, 16 September 2021

Note for the attention of Commissioner Johannes Hahn

Subject: Postponing the forced and immediate return to the office strategy and providing necessary clarifications

Generation 2004 is closely following the move to [Phase 3](#) of the return to the office strategy from Monday 20.09.2021 for all Commission sites as you announced 01.09.2021. We draw your attention to the almost 600 (to date) comments were posted to your speech on [My Intracomm](#).

Although some colleagues are relieved to go back to the office and should be allowed to do so, many others have reached out to us to express their astonishment and fears at this acceleration in the strategy while the sanitary situation is again deteriorating in several sites – especially Brussels – and the vaccination rates are still below what would be considered a safe level. The Commission follows the authorities in the country of each site, but given that Brussels is currently recommending continuing teleworking due to the vaccination levels¹, we ask why site-specific local guidance is being overlooked.

This, together with growing concerns about variants and the effectiveness of the current vaccines to address them, understandably makes staff nervous about returning from 18 months of telework. We notice that infections are already growing by the day in European schools.

Against this background, Generation 2004 calls on the Commission to postpone the forced and imminent return to the office until the necessary sanitary conditions are in place on all sites, the fears expressed by staff have been addressed and questions arising from the [new teleworking guidelines](#), made public only 3 working days before their application, have been answered.²

¹ Rudi Vervoort (Minister-President of the Brussels-Capital Region), [Communiqué de presse](#), 27.08.2021.

² Email Coronavirus: Communication to Commission staff - Update 41, 15.09.2021 and applicable from 20.09.2021 : we have sent a list of specific questions to HR.

We believe that it is premature to push on with Phase 3 before the issues detailed above are addressed and all of the worries voiced by staff are acknowledged and answered. While we fully understand and support the need for many to go back to the office, we kindly request that this be made voluntary and that you postpone the obligation to return.

Kind regards,

Łukasz WARDYN

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Łukasz Wardyn', with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Chair of Generation 2004

CC: Ms Gertrud INGESTAD, Director-General for Human Resources; Mr Christian ROQUES, Director DG HR, Mr Ewoud SAKKERS, Head of HR E.1