

Mr. Valdis Dombrovskis
 Executive Vice President for an
 Economy that Works for People
 European Commission

January 25, 2021

*declined
by phone*

Dear Mr. Dombrovskis,

I am writing to request a virtual meeting in the margins of the World Economic Forum online conference this week. The meeting would enable us to exchange views about trade policies that can drive health security, accelerate the economic recovery, and improve pandemic preparedness.

As a global science and technology company with a strong home footprint in Europe, including 2 billion Euros in R&D investments and more than 27,000 employees, Merck remains committed to enabling scientists, governments, and healthcare providers to end the Covid-19 pandemic.

I wish to thank you and your colleagues at the European Commission for your leadership in the area of trade and health. At Merck, we welcomed the 2020 concept paper prepared by Trade Commissioner Hogan then endorsed by the Ottawa Group. Our hope is that these efforts will lead to new negotiations at the WTO to eliminate tariffs, in order to enhance the efficiency and resilience of health technology supply chains.

As a speaker on the "Fixing the International Trade System" panel, I will thank the European Commission for its leadership at the WTO, and I will call for the renewal of zero-for-zero negotiations. Ideally an expanded zero-for-zero agreement will cover the full range of medicines, biologics, and the equipment and inputs for their R&D and manufacture. Removal of tariff barriers on inputs as well as finished products will enhance supply chain efficiency, improving healthcare delivery and future pandemic responses.

I would welcome the chance to exchange views about pro-health trade policies and possible action at the EU as well as multilateral levels. I would be deeply honored if you were available for a bilateral virtual exchange during or shortly after the WEF event.

Best regards,

Art.4(1)(b)



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