



European
Flour
Millers



BREAD-INITIATIVE

Brussels, 14 April 2020

President Ursula von der Leyen

Commissioner Breton (Internal Market)
Commissioner VP Dombrovskis (An Economy that works for people)
Commissioner Hogan (Trade)
Commissioner Kyriakides (Health and Food Safety)
Commissioner Lenarcic (Crisis Management)
Commissioner VP Schinas (Promoting European Way of Life)
Commissioner Schmit (Jobs and Social Rights)
Commissioner Valean (Transport)
Commissioner Wojciechowski (Agriculture)

COVID-19 Crisis – Business Continuity of Daily Bread Production

Dear President, dear Commissioners,

We are writing this letter to highlight the need to ensure access to bread and bakery products for consumers in Europe and neighboring countries in all available distribution channels during the COVID crisis period.

The bread-initiative is composed of five European sectors, including the European bakery sector, which is composed of more than 190,000 small- and-medium sized bakeries and 2,200 large bakery companies who employ over 2 million people.

The supply chain for bread and bakery products faces serious challenges in maintaining its production to meet consumer demand. In addition to the baking and packaging of bread and bakery products, bakers also deliver directly to retailers or to bakery shops. Current levels of **absenteeism of the workforce** due to the corona crisis are triggered by a **lack of access to personal protective equipment (PPE)**. As we approach the peak COVID-19 infection levels in many countries, more employees are getting ill and cannot go to work.

Bakeries do the utmost on worker safety, production safety and all measures of social distancing, but those working in the factory and in small bakeries have to be protected as much as possible and their activity needs to be classified as essential in order to prioritize their access to COVID support measures, including flexibility of worktime arrangements.

The spread of the virus has brought drastic changes in consumer habits when buying bakery products and resulted in an enormous impact on all production levels. They are particularly **disastrous for small bakeries and bakery shops**, which need special attention from the EU Commission and Member States to be able to continue serving their customers and to be considered as safe distribution channels for bread and bakery wares. EFSA clearly stated that

the COVID-19 virus is not transmitted via food. However, **many consumers are avoiding small bakery shops and bake-off stations**, for fear of virus transmission. Small bakeries do not have the financial and human resources to remain viable for a prolonged confinement period and need to gain access to EU's financial solidarity measures and SME support mechanism.

All members of the Bread-Initiative are therefore asking the Commission to ensure consumer access to their daily bread and food security by:

- **safeguarding the continuous supply of flour and bakery ingredients to bakeries,**
- **securing that bread and bakery production and all distribution channels including small bakeries and bake-off stations stay open,**
- **classifying them as essential business activities and relevant parts of the food chain.**

We would like to highlight the commitment of all members of the Bread-Initiative to do their utmost to produce and provide "the daily bread" to all European consumers.

We will further inform the Commission of any emerging issue linked to our essential business activities during the COVID-19 crisis and thank you for your attention and willingness to support our activities in these difficult times.

President CEBP



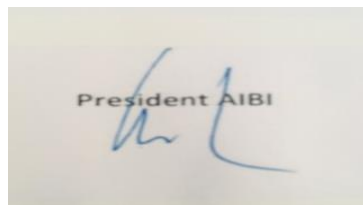
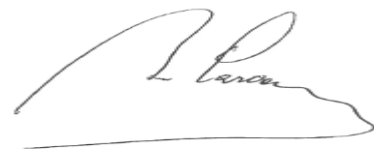
President European Flour Millers



President FEDIMA



President COFALEC



President AIBI

BREAD-INITIATIVE. EU

www.bread-initiative.eu

Five European trade associations combined in Brussels to form Bread Initiative. The members are [AIBI](#), [CEBP](#), [COFALEC](#), [European Flour Millers](#) and [Fedima](#). The aim of the bread-initiative.eu is to improve bread's image and to emphasize both its health value and the European cultural heritage associated with this product. At the same time, we want to demonstrate to European consumers the economic importance of the industrial sectors linked to bread.