



Dear colleague

The societal impact of the COVID-19 crisis has not been felt evenly. The virus is currently hitting harder in neighbourhoods with poorer socioeconomic profiles, neighbourhoods which are often densely populated. The consequences of the lockdown have not affected everyone in the same way either. People with a low educational level have been hardest hit – by unemployment, by poorer housing conditions, by insecurity. Their children have suffered most under the new school system, partly (but by no means exclusively) because of limited access to e-learning.

We, the undersigned, professors and emeriti of all of the Flemish universities and research institutions, are therefore calling for a new Social Contract. We call for the fairer distribution of resources and burdens, including more balanced taxation of wages and wealth, a socially just climate transition, much-needed intergenerational solidarity and the creation of opportunities for people who are finding it difficult to cope with the new knowledge economy. We also call for careful monitoring of the social effects of the COVID-19 crisis. It is only with more effective social policy *and* fairer taxation that a caring welfare society can be maintained.

We also appeal for solidarity. We call on all colleagues to continue to pay special attention in their teaching and supervision to students who are struggling with the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis. We also ask colleagues to endorse our call by donating €1000. The money will be used for initiatives to boost educational opportunities for children, pupils and students from a range of disadvantaged groups. In doing so, we aim to link our call for fairer taxation and a more effective social policy to a personal commitment to a solidary society. COVID-19 is exceptional. Exceptional events call for extraordinary actions. The university world has also been tested by COVID-19. It's still being tested. But at no point in the sudden switch to online teaching were we forced into unemployment. At no point, for example, did the salaries of senior academic staff ever come under threat. For many others, the picture was much less favourable. Through our initiative, 1000 x 1000, we hope to reach at least one thousand colleagues in the academic world. Together, we aim to raise one million euros to invest in the development of children and young people from underprivileged families through the King Baudouin Foundation (see [www.1000x1000.be](http://www.1000x1000.be) for more information).

We hope you are willing to support our initiative and endorse our call. You can do so by adding your name to the call ([www.1000x1000.be](http://www.1000x1000.be)) and by depositing 1000 euros into bank account BE10 0000 0000 0404 in the name of the King Baudouin Foundation. Please use the structured payment reference \*\*\*125/0028/00058\*\*\*. Our initiative aims to recruit 1000

colleagues who can each donate 1000 euros, but all donations from all parts of the university world are of course welcome. Your donation will remain anonymous and is eligible for a tax deduction. You can also endorse the call publicly by adding your name to the list of signatories at [www.1000x1000.be](http://www.1000x1000.be). If you are keen to support the initiative, please don't hesitate to spread the word to other colleagues as well.

Thank you very much!

Peter Aerts, Lieven Bervoets, Marnix Beyen, Bruno Blondé, Philippe Büscher, Bea Cantillon, Andreas De Block, Bruno De Wever, Nico Koedam, Ides Nicaise, Jean-Michel Rigo, Raoul Van Damme , Ann Vanreusel, Erik Verbruggen, Erik Verheyen, Filip Volckaert.