

**Question for written answer E-002401/2021
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Position within the WTO in light of new developments regarding the pandemic.

New details are emerging concerning the pandemic and the mistakes made in trying to tackle it, and it is our duty to correct them.

India, a major vaccine producer, and a further 80 nations proposed several months ago in the WTO to temporarily suspend four sections of the TRIPS Agreement. This proposal was rejected, preventing other pharmaceutical manufacturers from producing vaccines for the world. Now, it is the Commission itself which is seeing the catastrophic result of the excessive power delegated to multinationals in the arbitration of decisions on the production, distribution and delivery of a vital product. The Commission is now seeing the unfairness of that arbitrary power when it takes legal action or prevents exports of doses for breach of contract.

Now, with the pandemic advancing in southern countries, the proposal will again be put to the WTO. Now, Nobel prize laureates for peace, former European leaders such as François Hollande or Gordon Brown, and 170 other world leaders have joined forces with the WHO and the United Nations. The US administration has now admitted, through its press secretary, that it is reconsidering the issue of patents and unequal global access, which its Trade Representative has described as 'completely unacceptable'.

Does the Commission now accept that these new developments should lead it to rethink its position in the WTO, or will it continue to be the subject of international public humiliation for its management of the pandemic?