

COVID-19 can be overcome only internationally

An increasing number of people in Europe have received or will receive their first dose of a coronavirus vaccine in these weeks. And those who are not yet eligible for the vaccine draw new hope in the current times of a lockdown and of restrictions, of economic and social challenges.

The hope that it will be possible to overcome the pandemic rests exclusively on various vaccines that have been approved and are now administered. Only these vaccines will help us overcome the deadly threat of this virus.

People in wealthy countries suffer differently and, in general, less from the pandemic than people in poorer countries. In many countries it is not only about a loss of prosperity, as is the case for the USA or Europe, but about the physical survival of those infected and of people who can no longer earn a livelihood.

All people in the world have a right to health and to live with dignity. Vaccinations are the only option we have to ensure the survival of many people also in the poorest countries. That is why it is unacceptable that the rich countries receive half of the vaccines that are currently available, even though they make up only about 13 percent of the world's population. The allocation of doses of vaccine reveals like under a magnifying glass how purchasing power decides about life and death worldwide. Despite the production by private companies, coronavirus vaccines are a public good that must be fairly and equitably available to everyone. Any obstacles, such as patent rights, must be suspended.

This implies in concrete terms that the COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) Facility which was initiated by the World Health Organization (WHO) and by Gavi, the Global Vaccine Alliance must be strengthened and respected by all countries. Governments who are trying to go it alone and buy up the limited supply, leaving no vaccines for the countries of the Global South must be ostracized.

In spring 2020, many policy-makers in Europe underlined the fact that the pandemic can be overcome only globally because the virus does not stop at borders. This still holds true.

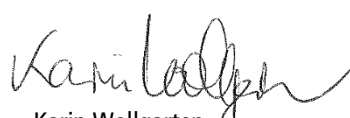
The coronavirus pandemic has led to a wave of solidarity, especially in the global community of Kolping Families. More than one million euros have been donated to the Corona Fund of KOLPING INTERNATIONAL, helping to support people in need and ensure their survival. Our joint political commitment to vaccine equity is now equally important.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ottmar Dillenburg'.

Msgr. Ottmar Dillenburg
General Praeses

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Markus Demele'.

Dr. Markus Demele
General Secretary

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karin Wollgarten'.

Karin Wollgarten
Managing Director