



**European Federation
of Funeral Services**

Administrative Office:
D-40474 Düsseldorf (Germany)
Cecilienallee 5

Tel.: +49 211 1600849
Fax: +49 211 16008949
E-Mail: teraa@effs.eu
Web: www.effs.eu

Registered on November 29, 1994
with the Public Security Directorate for
Vienna (Federal Ministry of the Interior),
No. IV-SD/2136, VVM/94.

President: Guillaume Fontaine
Executive Director: Anke Teraa

January 22, 2021

**To the
Presidency of the European Council
Ministers of Health Portugal, Germany, Slovenia**

Ms. Marta Temido
Mr. Jens Spahn
Mr. Janez Janša

cc: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen
European Council President Charles Michel

(by email)

Priority Vaccination for Funeral Professionals

Dear Ms. Temido, Mr. Spahn and Mr. Janša,

We are writing to you today as the European Federation of Funeral Services, representing the interests of funeral professionals across Europe, with the specific request to declare funeral professionals as a priority group for vaccinations. We completely support your decisions regarding procurement and distribution of vaccines on a European level and strongly feel that the priority groups for vaccination should also be decided and declared on a European level by the European Council.

We believe it goes without saying that funeral professionals are essential in dealing with the pandemic and unfortunately they appear to be overlooked in priority rankings in most European countries. Our observations show that each country autonomously defines their priority groups and in several countries, for e.g. in Germany and Italy, these decisions are even taken at municipal level. Sweden and the Czech Republic, in contrast, have defined funeral professionals as priority groups and they are ready to be vaccinated. Just as health care workers in hospitals, retirement homes et al., funeral professionals deal with COVID-19 cases each and every day. They are not only handling the deceased, who have died either from or with COVID-19, but are also in contact with the bereaved, generally being the closest family members of the deceased and thereby, whilst of course protecting themselves with PPE, are exposed to a high risk of infection with every contact.

Reports from around Europe confirm that funeral professionals are faced with very challenging situations and there are often backlogs and waiting periods because of the pandemic. Please allow us to point out just two examples:



**European Federation
of Funeral Services**

Administrative Office:

D-40474 Düsseldorf (Germany)
Cecilienallee 5

Tel.: +49 211 1600849

Fax: +49 211 16008949

E-Mail: teraa@effs.eu

Web: www.effs.eu

Registered on November 29, 1994
with the Public Security Directorate for
Vienna (Federal Ministry of the Interior),
No. IV-SD/2136, VVM/94.

President: Guillaume Fontaine

Executive Director: Anke Teraa

January 22, 2021

1. Funeral services without priority vaccination, resulting in a higher risk of getting the virus, could lead to a collapse of services, especially in those countries such as Spain and Portugal, where funerals are normally carried out within 24 – 48 hours.
2. Traditionally funeral homes are small businesses and should one employee contract the virus, all employees, i.e. the funeral home itself needs to go into quarantine and the funeral home needs to close.

With a focus on continuing to provide this utmost important service to the bereaved families, it is essential that funeral professionals receive vaccinations as a priority.

We therefore appeal to you as the Presidency of the European Council to take our request under consideration to define this profession as such.

We thank you in advance for your time and would very much appreciate your response in this matter.

Sincerely,

Guillaume Fontaine
President (France)

Anke Teraa
Executive Director

Ulf Lernéus
Vice President (Sweden)

Luca Tabossi
Vice President (Italy)