UNITED FUND
FOR BELGIUM

June 2021

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

As mentioned in my letter of last year, it was at the end of our previous fiscal year that the Covid-19 crisis burst in all its brutal force: United Fund for Belgium was forced to cancel its biennial Gala Dinner, to close down its office and the interaction with the Associations we supported came to a nearly total standstill. During this entire fiscal year 2020/2021, we have remained totally virtual when it comes to our daily operations, our Board Meetings and even our Annual General Assembly in June last year. We launched a special Covid-19 Campaign supporting our Associations in their effort to adapt to the new normal and this campaign turned out to be a financial success: we raised 42 k€ in a very short period, supporting 24 special Covid projects. On the contrary, our autumn activities were limited to our Golf Tournament and a number of digital events, which turned out to be well attended but financially very poor. Needless to say that we continue learning on a daily basis on how to navigate this new normal. I can now confirm to you that as an organization, we have withstood this brutal storm, even more, we have delivered a very good year as you will see from the numbers below. Our donors, our Board and our Executive Team have performed superbly in these very, very difficult circumstances. Last year I quoted Churchill who said: "Difficulties mastered are opportunities won" and I believe we have never been as close as we can to our beneficiary organizations and donors and have laid the foundation for even more opportunities.

During the Campaign 2020/2021, United Fund for Belgium has **financed projects** for k€ 731, distributing that amount to 114 different charity projects from associations across the whole country, including 24 projects supported as part of the "coronavirus" campaign. This is substantially higher than last year (k€ 482) and more importantly, the second highest level of the last five years.

As importantly, we have continued to diversify our sources of funding. **Corporate donations** remain of course the single largest component and increased substantially this year (K€ 598 vs K€ 489 in 2019-2020), which is very good news. They were reinforced by very successful **in house-campaigns** at some of our donors (K€ 50 vs K€ 31) and **individual gifts** (K€ 12 vs K€ 18), although the latter were a little weaker.

Also, due to the Covid-19 situation, corporate donors were not able to organize any "**voluntary days**" (K€0 vs K€8) but our special Corona Campaign managed to raise 42 k€ in a very short 1-month period.

Covid-19 hit us particularly hard in the profits from **sales & fundraising events**: they fell from K€ 146 to K€ 56 this year. The merchandise sales activities, such as the Dandoy Speculoos at St Nicolas, the Galler chocolate Easter-eggs and the Xmas cards, were still successful (K€ 40 vs k€ 47) but when it comes to events, the situation was critical (k € 15 vs k€ 90).

Fortunately, donations to help cover **operational costs** and/or build up the Martin Kallen Fund remained nearly stable (k€ 86 vs k€ 89 last year).

As a result of all this, **total contributions** reached k€ 845 this year (vs k€ 772 in 2019-20) a solid 9.5 % increase vs last year which we can consider as a success in these very difficult Covid-19 conditions.

As mentioned before, this year, **donations collected** via the corporate & individual fundraising campaign, will be distributed to 114 different charity projects across the whole country.

We have continued our efforts to professionalize and digitalize our operations. Also, we have continued to strengthen our team with the arrival of Ms. Yana Antalovtsi, Marketing & Communication Coordinator.

We have started this new fiscal year with a different mindset: we hope that after the summer, we will be able to hold some serious “live” activities given the improvement in the Covid-19 situation. This fiscal year will only be 9 months long as the Board has decided to adjust our fiscal year with the Calendar year and it will thus end on 31/12/2021.

The team is determined to be closer than ever to our current communities so that together we can continue supporting social integration in Belgium, a need that is better understood by us all than ever before after this painful period in our history as human societies.

Next year 2022 will be an exceptional year as we will celebrate our 50-year existence. The unique success that United Fund for Belgium has achieved over those 50 years is, however, owed mainly to our **donors** and to the many **volunteers** who help and have helped our cause (including the members of the Board Committees and my colleagues in the Board of Directors). As President, I already want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all of them and invite all of you to join us in these celebrations.

Dirk Luyten
President
United Fund for Belgium