



PHILIP MORRIS  
INTERNATIONAL

April 1, 2020

Lausanne  
Switzerland

Dear Rachel, Meirion and Matthew,

Further to my email on March 29, we have not heard back from you, despite your assurances that you would revert after discussing it internally. We note that you are continuing to publish highly misleading and inaccurate assertions on your news website.

The media has a responsibility to accurately report facts and to separate these facts from unsupported conjecture and opinions. The assertion that our donation was a “publicity stunt” is a fabrication: the headline is not supported by any facts. Indeed, the information we provided to you – both before and after publication – demonstrated that the opposite is true. By deliberately omitting the fact that we have not publicized this donation from your reporting, you are publishing an inaccurate and misleading story, which is now being picked up and shared by further news agencies.

You also continue to mislead readers by not revealing further key information that we provided to you, notably that this emergency request came from the Greek authorities in the hope that we would be able to source ventilators faster than them. We were able to.

Given the nature of the allegations, we provided you with a response in a timely manner, including a short on-the-record quote. You continue to refuse to publish this quote in its entirety, despite it being highly relevant to the points raised in the article. We can only assume, therefore, that the reason behind your decision is that it would disprove the whole premise of your story, or that your motives are improper.

This is most recent in a series of inaccurate and misleading articles that you have published in your series sponsored by Vital Strategies, which in turn, is funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies. Your website states that “you inform the public through in-depth investigative journalism, with no corporate or political agenda” and that “Editorial independence is guaranteed by our constitution.” To date, the actions of your reporting indicate that this is not the case; in one article almost three quarters of those you quoted received funding from the same initial source as the BIJ – Bloomberg Philanthropies – and it now appears that you are refusing to include our reply, perhaps because it does not agree with the political agenda of your funders.

Finally, we note that the BIJ refuses to sign up to and be held to account by the standards expected of a recognized press code of practice, such as the Independent Press Standards Organisation, which requires the press to balance freedom of expression with an obligation to “take care not to publish inaccurate, misleading, or



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distorted information including headlines that are not supported by the text [facts]”. Your founder states on your website: “Many years ago when working on a major investigation into the aerospace and airline industry, I learnt that the safest airlines were those which operated in countries where accountability was strongest.” It’s a pity that your current reporting falls short of the accountability standards set by your own founder.

Journalism plays a key role holding individuals, governments and organizations to account. It also has a responsibility to tell the truth and be held accountable when it does not.

Please confirm receipt, that the corrections will be made immediately, and that you will issue a correction notice and statement. All our rights are reserved.

Regards,

David