



**LETTER BY THE RECTOR MARTIN BAREŠ
TO ALL AT MASARYK UNIVERSITY**

Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,
Dear students,

As the rector of Masaryk University, I am now addressing you in an extraordinary situation. We have to openly acknowledge that the spread of the novel coronavirus is becoming a truly global problem and challenge. And we have to admit that the situation facing our university, society and country is unprecedented in living memory.

There are now three key tasks ahead of us:

1. **As an institution and as individuals, we must endeavour to reduce as much as possible the potential spread of the novel coronavirus.** The university management and our Emergency Committee that meets several times a week have been taking preventive measures, such as cancelling in-person classes, prohibiting any mass events at the university, travelling abroad and accepting visitors from abroad.
2. **It is also key for our university to be ready to extend help to the society at large and to those who now need it the most;** to show solidarity and offer a helping hand whenever possible and needed. I would like to appeal for all of you to consider where and how you could help. One of the areas where help is needed is providing childcare to health professionals and their families. Many healthcare facilities have been struggling with staffing issues as some of their employees must take care of their school-age children and cannot attend work. If you are able to help, please contact your dean or the head of your economic unit or write to koronavirus@muni.cz. Another option is to help the most vulnerable groups, particularly elderly people, with their grocery and

pharmacy shopping and any other activities that could mean a higher risk of exposure for them now and in the upcoming days and weeks.

3. **Finally, we have to keep the university up and running.** I promise you that the university management will look for solutions that will enable all students to transition smoothly into the next phase of their studies once the current crisis has passed. We will look for viable options and endeavour to make sure that none of our students are unduly hurt by the current situation. The university management vows to be as accommodating as possible to all students in this respect.

To conclude with, I would like to say that the situation we are facing must be approached with respect and caution but not with fear. We must think and act calmly and with a clear head but also in a decisive and determined manner.

As we enter the second century of our existence, our university and our community find themselves in a situation that none of us has ever had to deal with. However, the true nature of institutions – and people – comes out in times of crisis and we now have the opportunity to prove how strongly we are tied to our roots: the ideals of T. G. Masaryk such as courage, wisdom, openness and humanism.

As one university and one community, we must and we will act together as one – calmly, responsibly and with solidarity. And I believe that we will come out of this crisis unified and stronger than before because we are *Masaryk's university*.

Yours faithfully,

Martin Bareš
Rector

Brno, 12 March 2020