

**Humanistic Outlook Group****14 Kílatók utja Leányfalu 2016 Hungary****cereteli@freemail.hu****+36 30 650 2099**

4 December 2020

Your excellency **Mr. António Guterres**,

The **Humanist Outlook Group (HOG)** is convinced that the main reason for the global economic, financial, social, political and humanitarian crisis that erupted this year against the backdrop of a new coronavirus infection is the pandemic of fear and panic that has engulfed people, societies and states. According to the HOG, the distorted picture of the number of victims of the new virus is primarily due to the appearance of the WHO recommendations “Emergency use ICD codes for COVID-19 disease outbreak“ in 2019 <https://icd.who.int/browse10/2019/en#/U07> (annex 1) of the following text : “**Both U07.1 and U07.2 may be used for mortality coding as cause of death**“ (see annex 2).

This addition causes misunderstanding and concern because, in accordance with the new recommendation (“An emergency ICD-10 code of ‘U07.2 COVID-19, virus not identified’ is assigned to a clinical or epidemiological diagnosis of COVID-19 where laboratory confirmation is inconclusive or not available“) doctors are obliged to state COVID-19 as the cause of death even in cases where no trace of COVID-19 has been tested in the laboratory or where no laboratory test has been carried out at all.

In view of the above circumstances, the HOG considers that the WHO recommendations should be removed from the text as soon as possible (<https://www.who.int/standards/classifications/classification-of-diseases/emergency-use-icd-codes-for-covid-19-disease-outbreak> (annex 2)) provision “An emergency ICD-10 code of ‘U07.2 COVID-19, virus not identified’ is assigned to a clinical or epidemiological diagnosis of COVID-19 where laboratory confirmation is inconclusive or not available“.

Otherwise, according to the HOG forecasts, the situation will unfortunately only get worse: the pandemic of panic and fear will grow exponentially and in parallel the world economic, financial, social, political and humanitarian crises will deepen.

Yours sincerely

**Akaki Tsereteli**

**The Director of the Humanistic Outlook Group**