Why write?

Members of Parliament (as well as Members of European Parliament) need to hear from their constituents. They depend on you to educate them about what issues are most important to their constituents. Writing a letter only takes a few minutes of your time, but it ensures that the people who make decisions on your behalf every day know how you want to be represented.

Why doesn’t TBEC provide templates for letters?

An original letter sent by one committed and passionate constituent is far more powerful than a pile of identical letters or postcards. Mass email actions and template letters have less impact because the MP/MEP knows that they only take a few seconds to complete and are not necessarily representative of the priorities of their constituents. The fact that you have taken the time to craft a personalised and well-informed letter demonstrates to the MP/MEP that there are people in their constituency who care deeply about an issue and your opinions are likely to be taken more seriously as a result.

Snail mail or email?

Every MP/MEP is different. Some are happy to correspond with constituents via email whereas others give preference to written mail.

Writing your letter

**General rules:**

Be succinct – aim for your letter to be no longer than one and a half sides of A4.

Keep to the point – focus on one issue and don’t try and cover too many things in one letter.

Don’t forget to include your address so your MP/MEP knows where to send the response.

**Structuring your letter:**

1. **Introduction.** If this is your first letter to your MP/MEP, you might want to start by introducing yourself and sharing why it is that you care about the issue that you are raising. If you have a personal connection to the topic of your letter then this is a great way of engaging your MP/MEP and conveying your passion and commitment. Remember to acknowledge your MP/MEP for any supportive actions that they have already taken – MPs/MEPs rarely hear the words ‘thank you’ from their constituents. Also, check the website www.theyworkforyou.com on there you can find lots of details about your M.P. and particularly their voting record. If they are interested in international development you should use this in your opening.

2. **Use the EPIC format to help compose the main part of your letter.** The acronym ‘EPIC’ is a useful way to remember how to structure a laser talk or letter. After your introductory paragraph, the main part of your letter should follow this structure:

   - **E = Engage your MP/MEP.** Get your MP/MEP’s attention with a dramatic fact or short statement.
   - **P = State the problem.** Present the causes of the problem you just introduced. How widespread or serious is the problem?
I = Inform the MP/MEP about the solutions. Here you inform the MP/MEP about a solution to the problem. Develop your solution by giving examples of how and where it has worked, how it is proven and cost-effective and how it has benefited the poorest. You could cite a recent study or report or tell a first-person account of how the solution has impacted you or others you know.

C = Call to Action. Now that you’ve engaged your MP/MEP, presented the problem and informed them of a solution, you need to let them know what you want them to do about it.

3. Include your request(s). In the final part of your letter you should ensure that your ask is very clear – this is the most important part of the letter. If the ask is complex or you want a number of elements to be included, you could use bullet points.

4. Ask for a response.

What to do afterwards:

1. Congratulate yourself. You have taken an important action to help generate the political will to fight TB.

2. Follow up with your MP/MEP if you haven’t had an acknowledgement of your letter after a couple of weeks. Give your MP/MEP’s office a ring to check they have received your letter.

3. Share your reply. When you get a response from your MP/MEP, share it with the rest of the TBEC network by emailing the TBEC list serve. If you are happy to share your letter this will be a useful tool for others.