

## **Open letter to Jean-Claude JUNCKER regarding the designation of Mr. Tibor Navracsics as Commissioner for Education, Youth, Culture and Citizenship**

Cc: Members of the European Parliament

Dear Mr. Juncker,

Following the presentation of your College of Commissioners and the corresponding attribution of portfolios, you announced the nomination of Mr. Tibor Navracsics as Commissioner for Education, Youth, Culture and Citizenship. The signatories of this open letter, representing civil society networks and organisations that delivered the European Year of Citizens in 2013 and 2014, consider that this appointment is completely unacceptable.

Mr. Navracsics has been a key proponent of policies implemented by the Hungarian governments led by Mr. Orban that acted against the values of the European treaties and project and were criticised by the European Commission for decisions such as the constitutional reform process of 2013 and the reforms affecting media freedom in 2011. This is why, on the basis of the core democratic principles of the EU, we feel that his appointment would put under threat the relations between the European Commission and civil society organisations.

At a time when the Hungarian government is seeking to intimidate associations that do not share its views by sending the police to their premises, your proposed appointment is a surprising and worrying message that goes against the values at the heart of the European project and the aspirations expressed in the new European Commission work plan that you presented to the European Parliament in June.

For us, the Education, Culture, Youth and Citizenship sectors must above all embrace the values of the European project promoting an open and inclusive society for everyone. After placing the economy before the social in this period of crisis, the nomination of Mr Navracsics can only be understood as turning your back on the implementation of these values and sends citizens a dispiriting signal for the future of Europe. You will understand, Mr. President, that **we have no choice but to call on the European Parliament to reject your proposed appointment of Mr. Navracsics to this role.**

Convinced that the strict application of Article 11 of the European Treaty would contribute to the needed reestablishment of confidence that citizens have in the European Institutions we would also like to share another serious concern. In accordance with the recommendations that the European Year of Citizens Alliance - EYCA<sup>1</sup> - has made, **we ask that citizenship and civil dialogue is included as a responsibility of a Vice President of the European Commission.**

This could logically fall under the portfolio of the Vice-President in charge of “Better Regulation, Inter-Institutional Relations, the Rule of Law and the Charter of Fundamental Rights”. In this way, civil dialogue could be given the same status as social dialogue and become a crucial tool to strengthen the democratic legitimacy of the European Union.

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<sup>1</sup> The European Year of Citizens Alliance (EYCA) established by 62 European networks has been gathering more than 4,500 organisations across 50 European countries to work together during the European Year of Citizens: <http://ey2013-alliance.eu/>. One of the key achievements of this collective work are the policy recommendations *It's about Us, it's about Europe! Towards a Democratic European Citizenship*, available for download here: [http://ey2013-alliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/web\\_EYCA-Report\\_EN1.pdf](http://ey2013-alliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/web_EYCA-Report_EN1.pdf)

With concern for the legitimacy and effectiveness of the dialogue between the European institutions and civil society in all its forms of organisation, and our commitment to sustain the proclaimed values of the European project, please accept, Mr. President, our most respectful greetings.

*List of first signatory organisations*



*European Association for the Defense of Human Rights*



*European Civil Society Platform on Lifelong Learning*



*Comité pour les relations nationales et internationales des associations de jeunesse et d'éducation populaire*



*Association Nationale des Conseils d'enfants et de Jeunes*



*List of signatory MEPs*

Gilles Pargneaux,...