



Brussels, 6 July 2020

**Dear President of the European Commission, Ursula Von der Leyen**

**Dear President of the European Council, Charles Michel**

**Dear Members of the European Parliament**

**Dear Members of the Governments of EU Member States**

**CC: Vera Jurova, European Commission Vice-President on Values and Transparency  
The German Presidency of the EU Council**

On 27 May, the European Commission presented a draft multiannual budget that foresees a reduction of funds for the Rights and Values programme of over 20%.

On 8 June, the European Civic Forum, the Stefan Batory Foundation and national platforms of civic organisations across 19 countries wrote [a letter](#) to the European institutions to protest against this decision. They argued that Commission's proposal is incomprehensible in light of the multiple pressing challenges which the programme is supposed to address. Within only a few days over 300 grassroots associations from across Europe, as well as European platforms and networks joined our call.

Today we express our satisfaction with the declaration made by European Commissioner Didier Reynders that the European Commission has changed its position and advises the European Council not to cut the budget of the programme. We see this as a direct effect of our referral.

However, we must remind that our organisations have been consistently calling for a substantial increase in funding for the Rights and Values programme in order to enable civil society to promote and protect the rights and values enshrined in the EU Treaty. We also recall that in 2019, the European Parliament voted to triple programme's funding to 1,83 billion EUR, as the original volume of 641 million EUR proposed by the Commission was far too small to bring tangible result.

We expect that the Commission will now take concrete necessary steps towards the EU Council to ensure that the Rights and Values programme will benefit of these much needed budget allocations.

We are keen to discuss with you at any moment the various necessities this programme should respond to. We strongly believe that while facing the COVID-19 crisis, the EU must not economise on the defence of its foundational values and citizens' rights.

Sincere regards,

**Jean-Marc ROIRANT**  
President  
European Civic Forum

**Ewa KULIK-BIELINSKA**  
Executive Director  
Stefan Batory Foundation