



Ms Roberta Metsola

President of the European Parliament

Dear Madame President,

in response to a letter from a group of MEPs from RENEW Europe of June 28, 2022, asking for the immediate withdrawal of accreditation of all the NGOs not supporting abortion, we want to strongly oppose the serious attempt to censor the freedom of thought, speech and pluralism which represent the foundation of the values of the European Union in accordance with the objective of maintaining an open, transparent and regular dialogue with representative associations of the third sector.

A non-governmental organization may be removed from the register of accredited institutions of the European Parliament only in specific cases determined by the provisions of the internal EU law. Under these provisions, an organization already registered may be disbarred only in the event of a serious breach of the Code of Conduct, by decision of the Registry Secretariat, after a thorough investigation¹ conducted in contradictory with the interested party. In essence, the withdrawal of the long-term accreditation is certainly not allowed simply because the targeting of the NGOs in question is not shared by eight MEPs of the centre-left.

There is no evidence that the mission pursued by some NGOs accredited to the European Parliament has breached any provisions of the Code of Conduct. The authors of the letter of 28 June 2022 allege that these organizations should be excluded because of their pursuit of *curtailing of the fundamental rights to a bodily autonomy, self-determination and access to health for women*. In their opinion this kind of activity is supposed to fall afoul of rule (e) of the Code of Conduct, according to which accredited organizations shall not damage the

¹ §1.1. and 7.2. of Annex III to Interinstitutional Agreement of 20 May 2021 between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on a mandatory transparency register.



reputation of the register or cause prejudice to the Union institutions or use their logos without express authorization.

We strongly disagree with this position and firmly underline the lack of legal basis of the claim. Participation in pro-life movement do not violate rule (e) or any other provision of the Code of Conduct. We would like to emphasize that non-governmental organizations have no legal obligation - as the authors of the letter seem to suggest - to support the introduction of abortion on request throughout the European Union. No provision of European Union law grants anyone the right to abortion², while many provisions grant everyone the right to life (Article 2 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, Article 2 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights, Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

We consider the pressure to exclude the NGOs involved in the defence of the right to live from the premises of the European Parliament as an attempt to unlawfully restrict freedom of speech. We believe that conservative organizations have the same right to proclaim views on the need to strengthen the protection of life as left-wing organizations have the right to demand broad access to abortion. There should be a place among accredited institutions at European Parliament for both types of organization. We would like to remind that according to the settled case law of the European Court of Human Rights freedom of speech *is applicable not only to "information" or "ideas" that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive or as a matter of indifference, but also to those that offend, shock or disturb the State or any sector of the population. Such are the demands of that pluralism, tolerance and broadmindedness without which there is no "democratic society"*.³

Bearing in mind the above, we call for refraining from actions aimed at annihilating pluralism among non-governmental organizations operating in the forum of the European Parliament.

² Neither European Convention on Human Rights – which, according to European Court of Human Rights – does not confer right to abortion – judgment of 16 December 2010, *A.,B. i C. v. Ireland* (Grand Chamber), §214.

³ ECtHR's judgments of: 7 December 1976, *Handyside v. United Kingdom*, §49; 21 February 2012, *Tuşalp v. Turkey*, §48; 12 November 2013, *Jokšas v. Lithuania*, §69; 4 November 2014, *Braun v. Poland*, §36; 3 October 2017, *Dmitriyevskiy v. Russia*, §90; 28 June 2018, *Paraskevopoulos v. Greece*, §29; 28 July 2020, *Monica Macovei v. Romania*, §72; 7 December 2021, *Yefimov and Youth Human Rights Group v. Russia*, §40; 3 May 2022, *Bumbeş v. Romania*, §62.



Yours sincerely,

Mr. BUXADE'

MR. TERTSCH

MR. KOSA

MR. JAKI

MR. DEUTSCH

MR. SHALLER-BAROSS

MR. UHRIK

MR. KUHS

MS. GAL

MS. KRUK

MR. TROCSANYI

MR. ZIMNIOK

MR. BECK

MR. MADISON



MR. FEST

MR. HIDVEGHI

MR. KRAH

MR. MEUTHEN

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MS. DONATO

MR. SARYUSZ-WOLSKI

MR. WASZCZYKOWSKI

MR. KRASNODEŃSKI

MR. FIDANZA
