



VĚRA JOUROVÁ

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ML/mdl/Ares (2020) 1824070

Dear Ms Móra, Dear Mr Jarý,

Thank you for your letter of 30 March 2020, in which you draw my attention to the ‘Recommendations for a Comprehensive European Policy and Strategy for Civil Society’. The involvement of 108 civil society organisations from 12 Member States illustrates the common interests and concerns of civil society. I read with great interest your proposal that the European Commission should develop a Green Paper with a comprehensive policy strategy on civil society and implement corresponding policies in order to broaden civil space in Europe.

As you know, President von der Leyen has entrusted me with the preparation of the European Democracy Action Plan. This initiative aims to respond to the numerous challenges to our democracies. It will be constructed around three integrated themes, building on the President’s Political Guidelines: (i) the integrity of elections and how to ensure that electoral systems are free and fair; (ii) strengthening freedom of expression and the democratic debate, taking into consideration media freedom but also the role of civil society; and (iii) tackling disinformation and building resilience in our democracy.

Many of the suggestions raised in your ‘Recommendations for a Comprehensive European Policy and Strategy for Civil Society’ will be invaluable in our ongoing work on the European Democracy Action Plan. I intend to carry this out with the highest level of transparency and comprehensive inclusion of civil society.

I share your view that solutions to improve the resilience of our democracies and to reinforce European democratic systems need to engage a range of actors at a various levels, as well as on the importance of solid checks and balances. Civil society plays a key role, holding those in power to account and stimulating public debate and citizens’ engagement.

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Ms Veronika Móra

Ökotárs - Hungarian Environmental Partnership Foundation

Josef Jarý

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My intention is that the initiatives presented in the European Democracy Action Plan will be aimed at engaging civil society to help shape the European democratic agenda. Civil society can also play a key role in helping to deliver the concrete input essential to making democracy work in practice: such as in 'fact-checking', media literacy, and tangible cooperation.

I believe that through systemic dialogue with civil society organisations, we can make sure that strengthening the role of civil society can take its place as one of the key themes of the European Democracy Action Plan.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Věra', followed by a long, sweeping horizontal stroke that ends in a small loop.

Věra Jourová