



Věra Jourová
Vice-President of the European Commission

Dubravka Šuica
Vice-President of the European Commission

Didier Reynders
Member of the European Commission

Brussels,
Ares (2023) 1356894

Dear Ms. Neven,

We wish to thank you for your letter of 23 February 2023 related to the objectives and scope of the Defence of Democracy Package announced by the European Commission.

The Commission is firmly committed to defend our basic EU values including democracy, a key value of the European Union, which should be nurtured and protected.

In the preparation of the package, the Commission has engaged in extensive consultations. During the recent weeks and months some voices are asking for a very strong instrument, others for a narrower scope of the new directive. For the Commission it is of utmost importance to find the right balance for this new tool also in the light of intensifying geopolitical competition.

As clarified recently in the European Parliament, the Commission decided to take more time to consult broadly and gather more information. We will reinforce the analysis underlying the proposal and upgrade it into a full Impact Assessment on a possible legislative initiative. Ongoing reflections build on the European Democracy Action Plan (EDAP)¹ and the Annual report on the Application of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights² and on numerous contributions received.

The threat foreign interference poses to our democracies is real and looking at the actions by the Kremlin and other third country actors, we should not be naive. It is time to bring

¹ COM(2020) 790 final

² COM(2022) 716 final

Ms Marilyn Neven

Programme Manager, Europe Programme

International IDEA

Email : m.neven@idea.int

covert foreign influence and shady funding to light. We remain committed to ensure that the package paves the way towards not only increased transparency, but also deeper participation and effective involvement of civil society organisations in public policy making. The Commission firmly believes that a strong and enabled civic space is indispensable to the resilience of a democratic and plural society.

We remain grateful for your valuable input and contribution to this endeavour. And, most importantly, we look forward to continuing valuable exchanges on these topics in our common efforts to nurture and protect democracy.

We thank you again for sharing your views with us.

Yours sincerely,

(e-signed)

Věra Jourová

(e-signed)

Dubravka Šuica

(e-signed)

Didier Reynders