

European Elections Information Campaign
17th Oktober 2018

Open Letter to

The President of the European Parliament
The President of the European Council
The President of the European Commission

As former officials of the EU institutions who have contributed to the development of the European Union and remain committed to the project of European unification, we are alarmed by the nationalistic trends apparent in many EU countries . We underline all the dangers that a retreat to national populist politics would entail. On the occasion of the forthcoming European Parliament elections in May next year we believe that the EU institutions should launch an extensive and effective media information campaign to publicize all across all parts of the Union the achievements made in individual areas of policy which affects its citizens.

We are aware that growing nationalism is closely linked to an increasingly complex world and to a desire for more secure and comprehensive living conditions. The flow of migration from war-torn areas and poverty-stricken regions of Africa into Europe are other factors reinforcing these disturbing trends. To address these challenges as a matter of priority in a joint European policy should be the obligation of the Union which was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize only a few years ago.

However, we believe that the Euro-sceptic attitude of many citizens stems also from inadequate and incorrect information. This could be countered by an information campaign based on facts under the motto "Facts not Fakes".

Citizens must be informed through relevant examples and figures showing how EU policy contributes to the improvement of their daily lives. They must be able to understand how decisions are taken in Brussels, how national and European politics interact and the role of the European Parliament in this process. This could help them to understand that patriotism and a commitment to Europe are not opposing concepts, but rather the basis for ones own self-determination in a changing world.

Citizens should be made aware that, for example,

- the EU directive on shower heads has led to an annual reduction of water consumption comparable to countries such as Denmark;
- the directives on vacuum cleaners and light bulbs contribute to an energy reduction of several nuclear power plants;
- financial aid from the EU budget benefits many municipalities and regions in the member states;

- The construction of many roads and airports is subsidized by the EU;
- infrastructure and digital development are promoted throughout Europe;
- the EU Erasmus Programme has already enabled more than four million
- students and trainees to study and work in another member state than their home country and have been able to get to know their European neighbours better;

Anyone familiar with such 50 examples of focused and successful European policy.....

will realize that each vote in the European Parliament elections counts, and that Brussels is not just a bureaucratic monstrosity, and furthermore must be enabled to understand that in Brussels and Strasbourg policy is made by and for individuals in the framework of the European project which has furthered peace, democracy and prosperity for all Europeans for over sixty years.

We therefore appeal to the EU institutions

to launch an information campaign on the European Parliament elections
to explain their relevance and context in clear and simple terms,
to distinguish between the good and the false,
to draw attention to disinformation and challenge prejudice through facts.

Such a campaign would help our citizens make their own informed decisions, and not fall prey to nationalistic political rhetoric.

Signed

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I support this appeal

To be made public