

Tibor Navracsics
Member of the European Commission

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Dear Sirs,

Following my initial response of 5 June to your open letter, I am coming back to you with a more in-depth reply on behalf of President Jean-Claude Juncker.

The issues that you are raising are real and I understand your frustration. In July 2014, President Juncker himself stated before the European Parliament that *'a 29th state is currently emerging within the borders of the European Union. It is the state where people without jobs live. A state in which young people become unemployed'*¹. That is why he proposed and the EU implemented an ambitious investment programme for growth, investment, competitiveness and jobs² as well as an expansion of the 'Youth Guarantee' programme³.

And that is why, during its five-year mandate, the European Commission placed a strong focus on investing in and empowering youth. Programmes such as Erasmus+ and Europe for Citizens continued to reach out to young people, offering them chances to learn and make new friends. We launched the European Solidarity Corps and the DiscoverEU initiative to enhance participation, foster a sense of European citizenship and create opportunities for young people to build communities.

Dialogue with citizens has been the working method of this Commission. Since the beginning of its term, more than 1,500 town hall style debates, so called Citizens' Dialogues, have taken place in 583 locations across Europe. I held a number of debates myself, many of them involving young people, for example at D'Broej Centrum West in Molenbeek, Brussels, in April 2017. For the first time, the European Council conclusions welcomed the Dialogues and Citizens' Consultations and made a direct link with the preparation of the Strategic Agenda⁴ which sets out EU Leaders' priorities for the coming years.

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¹ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-14-567_en.htm

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/priorities/jobs-growth-and-investment/investment-plan-europe-juncker-plan_en

³ <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1079>

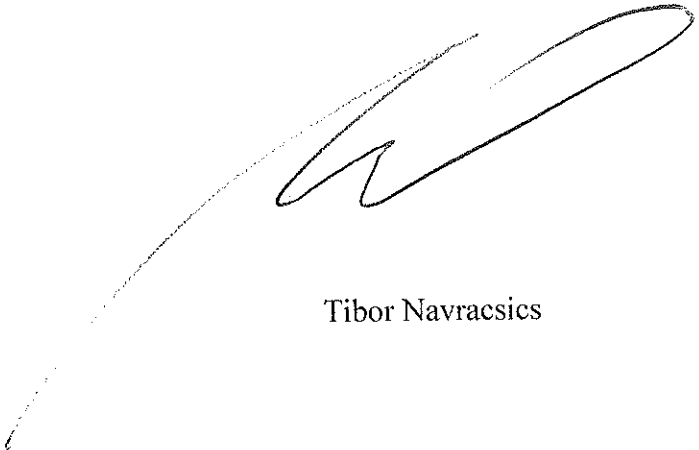
⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/euco-sibiu-citizensdialogues_en.pdf

As the Commissioner responsible for youth, I strongly believe in the powerful ideas that young people are putting forward. Since I assumed office in 2014, I have been working to create fresh opportunities for young people to participate and shape the policies that concern them. This is illustrated by the new EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027⁵. It is the basis of a much more open and inclusive new EU Youth Dialogue that reaches out in particular to those young people who are not members of youth organisations.

While focusing on innovative steps to further empower, engage and connect Europe's young people, the new EU Youth Strategy also incorporates 11 EU Youth Goals⁶. They are the outcome of a dialogue in 2017 and 2018 involving nearly 50,000 young people who, just like you, are concerned about the future of Europe. They present a vision for a Europe that enables young people to make the most of their lives. To help achieve these Goals, I invite you to continue to engage systematically in meaningful dialogue with policy makers at local, national and European level.

Despite the criticism you voice, I find your open letter encouraging. It highlights that Europe's youth cares and expects the EU to deliver. This is good. We as European citizens have a very important role to play in shaping the future of Europe, because as President Juncker said, *'Europe is above all a Union of citizens. They are the heart, soul and driving force of the European project'*.

Yours sincerely,



Tibor Navraicsics

Copy: Mr Donald Tusk, President of the European Council

⁵ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C:2018:456:FULL>

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy/youthgoals_en