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To the attention of
Valdis Dombrovskis, Executive Vice-President of the European Commission
Paolo Gentiloni, Commissioner on Economy

Brussels, April 15, 2021

Dear Vice-President Dombrovskis, dear Commissioner Gentiloni,

The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) is the biggest EU spending programme for the years to come. It was put together in record time by EU institutions to face the dramatic impact of the pandemic. We are now eagerly waiting for Member States to present their national recovery plans.

Speed is of the essence. But one shouldn't confuse speed and haste. A subtle equilibrium must be found between the need to act urgently and the need to carefully select the projects and reforms the RRF will fund. During the negotiations, Renew Europe insisted that civil society organisations, in particular youth organisations, social partners and local authorities be consulted during the preparation of the plans by national governments. We believed back then - and we still do - that their views matter in coming with the best projects and the best reforms.

We were heard. Article 18.4 (q) of the RRF Regulation states that the national plans should contain "a summary of the consultation process, conducted in accordance with the national legal framework, of local and regional authorities, social partners, civil society organisations, youth organisations and other relevant stakeholders, and how the input of the stakeholders is reflected in the recovery and resilience plan".

We hear from mayors and civil society organisations that this is not done.

In Hungary, notably, the Mayor of Budapest took to the press with some of our Renew Europe MEPs to bemoan the fact that the central government makes no effort to consult¹. The Committee of the Regions and the Council of European Municipalities and Regions, local and regional authorities also stressed that 10 Member States did not involve local authorities in the preparation of the plans.²

¹ See [op-ed published on 16/02](#).

² See Committee of the Regions study [A new consultation warns: many EU governments are excluding regions and cities from the preparation of post-COVID recovery plans](#).

The situation is even worse when we look at civil society organisations working on children and youth. Based in 13 Member States, they report that only 3 Member States organised consultations dedicated to children and youth policies. (We remind you that children and youth is an area in which Member States must spend, under Article 3 of the RRF.)

Worried by this state of affairs, Renew Europe proposed to hold a plenary discussion last month on the consultation processes leading up to the preparation of the national recovery and resilience plans. Other parliamentary groups supported that demand. You came to the hemicycle and insisted on the importance of a transparent and open process.

And yet, as the deadline to submit national recovery plans is drawing near (April 30), the voices from the ground aren't being heard.

- *How does the Commission prompt Member States to consult national stakeholders?*
- *What will be the consequences for those who didn't — or did poorly?*
- *How can the Commission assure us that civil society and local authorities will be better involved in the implementation of the plans and their future amendments?*

As politicians from a reformist political family we know that reforms work best when they are understood and accepted by the very people they impact. We also know that the lack of transparency in the design of the plans will benefit insiders and those who can sway the choice of political priorities. We don't want the recovery money to just cater the needs of some but to work for all.

We look forward to your answers and wish to remind you that, after the official submission deadline we will, as parliamentarians, closely monitor the plans and make the recommendations deemed necessary to improve the content of the plans. As such, we expect the European Commission to respect and apply the provisions of Article 26 of the Regulation and take into account our views.

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