

Discrimination against Central Eastern European citizens is unacceptable

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Letter sent to the European Commission by 10 EPP Group Heads of Delegations from Central Eastern Europe

The Heads of Delegation of the EPP Group's 10 Central Eastern European Member States (Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia) sent an open letter today to Jos  Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, expressing their deep concern regarding the numerous discriminatory actions carried out against Central and Eastern European citizens. They call on the Commission to step up against such measures.

In the letter, the signing parties recalled the launch of the Dutch Freedom Party's (PVV) internet website, set up against Eastern European citizens, and the launch of a similar website by the Belgian Flemish far-right party, Vlaams Belang, targeting all migrants. The EPP Group MEPs also raise concern on the recent decision of Switzerland, which has temporarily re-introduced an authorisation requirement for workers coming from the eight Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2004.

The 10 Central Eastern European EPP Group Heads of Delegation strongly condemn these developments: "We believe that these discriminatory actions go against the fundamental European values of human dignity, freedom, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights and that these unacceptable measures are making second-class citizens of Central Eastern Europeans and thus risk destroying the very basis of the Union - equality of EU citizens", as stated in the letter.

"We cannot accept any form of discrimination from either inside or outside the European Union. These discriminatory measures set dangerous precedents and could encourage extreme political forces to use similar actions against Central Eastern European citizens. This would lead to dangerous consequences, such as the strengthening of xenophobia, extremism and far-right movements, and would create deep divisions between European nations, thus weakening the EU as a whole."

With this in mind, the Heads of the 10 Central Eastern European EPP Group Delegations are calling on President Barroso to step up against these and other discriminatory actions: "We are calling on you to make a stand against the use of double standards, to use all your power to put pressure on all movements, political forces and even on states to put an end to these unacceptable actions."

The letter was signed by:

• Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, Head of the Polish Delegation of the EPP Group, as co-initiator;

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- Andr s Gy rk, Head of the Hungarian Delegation of the EPP Group, as co-initiator;
- Theodor Dumitru Stolojan, Head of the Romanian Delegation of the EPP Group;
- Andrey Kovatchev, Head of the Bulgarian Delegation of the EPP Group;
- Tunne Kelam, Head of the Estonian Delegation of the EPP Group;
- Vytautas Landsbergis, Head of the Lithuanian Delegation of the EPP Group;
- Kri stis Kari nis, Head of the Latvian Delegation of the EPP Group;
- Milan Zver, Head of the Slovenian Delegation of the EPP Group;
- Zuzana Roithov , Head of the Czech Delegation of the EPP Group;
- Anna Z borsk , Head of the Slovakian Delegation of the EPP Group.