Members of the European Parliament

Brussels, 13 September 2017

Dear Member of the European Parliament,

Re: Show your support for civil society on Thursday in the plenary vote on the GIEGOLD report

Tomorrow (Thursday 14 September) you will be voting on the Giegold report on "transparency, accountability and integrity in the EU institutions" 2015/2041(INI). Social Platform - the largest civil society alliance fighting for social justice - would like to alert you to a number of amendments that relate to the funding of non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

We ask you to please **vote against amendments 26, 27, 29, 30 and 31** undermining civil society's vital role in participatory democracy in Europe,

WHY?

- **All types of beneficiaries of EU funding should be subject to the same rules and requirements.** Designing specific rules and additional requirements for NGOs that receive support from the EU budget would lead to unfair treatment compared to other types of beneficiaries. Improvements could be made to make the rules consistent in all EU Programmes. However, this is a consideration that is applicable to all types of beneficiaries and not only to NGOs.

- **These amendments aim at limiting participation of civil society organisations in the decision making process at EU level, and they include ambiguous language and accusations** about NGOs being "politically active organisations" that–"disseminate untruths" to "influence politicians and governments". Amendment 26 suggests indirectly that controls applied to NGO funding are less stringent and transparent than to other beneficiaries, which is far from being true. At the workshop that was organised by the CONT Committee in preparation of the Pieper report, the European Court of Auditors clarified that other beneficiaries are more at risk and that areas such as agriculture and structural funds where funding to NGOs is extremely limited are where most mismanagement of funds occurs. For information, the Pieper report was referred to the European Court of Auditors by the coordinators of all groups - including the EPP – as the allegations against NGOs lacked evidence.

We therefore encourage you to **vote against** the following amendments:

> **AM 26:** 33 a. Regrets that the Commissions control and monitoring systems are not sufficiently transparent and that their data requirements differ between and within Commission systems, also points out the inconsistent application of rules between the Commission DGs **on the funding of NGOs**; calls on the Commission to establish harmonised rules to be applied to any grants awarded by the EU.
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> **AM 27:** (New) 44 a. Calls for the EU public procurement directives to be amended for **political active organisations** in such a way that organisations are eligible for funding only if they argue by means of verifiable facts; calls for recipients, before they receive funding, to give a corresponding undertaking and for the Commission and

Social Platform is the largest civil society alliance fighting for social justice and participatory democracy in Europe. Consisting of 47 pan-European networks of NGOs, we campaign to ensure that EU policies are developed in partnership with the people they affect, respecting fundamental rights, promoting solidarity and improving lives. Social Platform acknowledges the financial support of the European Commission's 'Europe for Citizens' programme, managed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA).

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Court of Auditors to conduct appropriate random checks; **rejects any funding of organisations which demonstrably disseminate untruths and/or whose objectives are contrary to** the fundamental values and/or **policy objectives of the European Union.**

AM 29: 58a. Calls for a comprehensive analysis by the Commission regarding whether and by what means it is providing training on the financial rules applicable to the EU budget for **lobbyists receiving EU funding, including NGOs**; calls for this analysis to be submitted by 1 February 2018, together with a list of corresponding training events and identification of the beneficiaries.

AM 30: (New) 53 a. Urges the Commission, in parallel with the revision of the Financial Regulation, to consider the introduction of an **EU-wide code of conduct also for NGOs and lobbyists applying for EU funding**; points out that this code of conduct would provide guidance to NGOs on how to comply with legal and transparency obligations, sound financial management and an appropriate use of resources; calls on the Commission to establish simplified procedures for small NGOs to ensure a level playing field in the application procedures.

AM 31: (New) 45 a. Calls on the Commission to present an opinion by 1 February 2018 on whether and to which extent and - where applicable - **by which criteria outcome agreements with the aim of influencing politicians and governments are developed with NGOs receiving EU funding.**

Many thanks in advance for giving this important issue your kind attention. We are at your disposal should you need any further information.

Kind regards,

Kélig Puyet
Director of Social Platform