

M. David Sassoli  
President of the European Parliament  
Wiertzstraat 60  
1000 Brussels  
Belgium

Brussels, 22 October 2021

**Subject: Response to the allegations of our colleagues from the European Parliament mission in Budapest, Hungary**

Mr. President,

We are writing to you in response to a letter sent to you by our colleagues, Mrs Delbos-Corfield, Chair of the LIBE Committee's mission to Budapest, Mrs Wiseler-Lima, Mrs Vollath, Mrs Donáth and Mrs Björk. The signatories of this letter claim that we have violated Parliament's rules of procedure in the course of this parliamentary mission. These are false claims, which are neither factually nor legally substantiated.

Firstly, it is stated that we "participated in a TV show". This is true and we answered to this invitation as a parliamentarian, outside the framework of the mission and even before it began. We hope that our colleagues would not have the unbelievable pretense of restricting the exercise of our parliamentary mandate by preventing us from expressing ourselves freely in the context of events which, moreover, have no connection with the official activities of Parliament.

We are then accused of having "organised interviews separately and made several public statements, adding pressure in an extremely sensitive political context". We have indeed received numerous media requests to which we have of course responded, as we do in all circumstances in the context of our usual political and parliamentary activity.

In order to comply fully with the provisions of Article 11 of the Bureau's decision of 2 October 2000, we systematically reminded journalist that our comments were made in a personal capacity, without committing either Parliament, the LIBE Committee or the mission mandated by it. We challenge our colleagues to provide any evidence to the contrary. Furthermore, and given our known and constant positions on this subject, which have been abundantly expressed before and after this mission, there was little doubt that our remarks were not made on behalf of the European Parliament. To claim otherwise would be a remarkable display of bad faith. As for the "extremely sensitive political context", this is a feeling expressed in a personal capacity by our five colleagues and which we do not share, as we obviously have neither the same sensitivity as they do nor the slightest appetite for the sensitiveness that distort the facts and distance us from rationality.

The signatories further claim that "the communication and media work they undertook was done with the sole purpose of undermining the legitimacy of the European Parliament scrutiny work". This is a political judgment. Our communication is part of the usual framework of the exercise of our mandate as Members of the European Parliament, which has been entrusted to us by the voters through universal suffrage. As such, we contribute to the functioning of democracy and to the pluralism of ideas and

opinions. Mrs Delbos-Corfield, who seems to see easily the infringement of fundamental rights in Hungary, also seems very inclined to want to limit the rights of her parliamentary colleagues...

As for the press release we issued, it again reflects our own positions, which is absolutely indisputable when reading it. It was only published after the mission and thus did not interfere with it. The goal was to make known our point of view, which, it is true, differed greatly from that of our colleagues.

The letter from our colleagues gives an unpleasant feeling of wanting to control, limit or even censor our expression and our political activity as Members of the European Parliament. This is rather tasty coming from colleagues who spend their time criticizing a supposed control of the Hungarian press by the government; we would by the way like to underline that we have replied to media from all political sides. However, we are extremely concerned about the anti-democratic drift and the desire to undermine freedom of expression that this letter reveals.

In order to provide you with complete information, we would like to point out that we have participated rigorously and assiduously in this parliamentary mission, fully respecting the agenda, the panels heard and the way in which Mrs Delbos-Corfield has distributed speaking time.

Furthermore, in the context of the final press conference she held as chair of the mission, organised by the services and on the premises of the European Parliament, Mrs Delbos-Corfield made particularly derogatory and misleading remarks about us, indicating, as she was alone and speaking improperly on behalf of all of us, that "the two men left many meetings while the five women were there all the time". This gross and infamous lie - which could be considered gender discrimination! - will be particularly easy to refute if we note that we participated in all the meetings, as evidenced by our signatures on the attendance sheets, while two members, Mrs Vollath and Mrs Björk, left Hungary on Thursday afternoon and Friday morning respectively, even though the mission ended at 3pm on Friday.

Finally, Mrs Delbos-Corfield seemed particularly fussy about the need to preserve the pseudo appearance of neutrality and fairness of this mission; it would have been preferable if she had refrained from wearing a mask with the colours and logo of her political party (Europe écologie les Verts) during the first day of the mission. This visible and asserted partisan attitude did not fail to astonish many of the people interviewed and undeniably contributed to discrediting the mission she was leading and which she claimed to want to conduct objectively...

The above factual statement is intended only to provide you with the most complete information possible. We are not asking for any particular action or procedure on your part with regard to our colleagues because, unlike them, we have no taste for slanderous accusations and childish denunciation.

Please accept, Mr. President, our warm and respectful greetings.



Jorge Buxadé



Nicolas Bay