



FRANS TIMMERMANS

First Vice-President

Brussels, 18/05/2015

Ares (2015)

Honourable Members,

Thank you for your letter on the situation of the NGO sector in Hungary.

The Commission shares your concern. Civil society plays a crucial role in protecting and promoting fundamental rights and this role must be supported and defended.

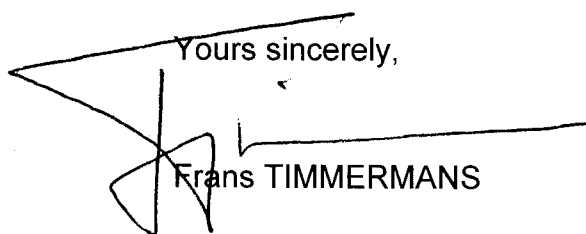
The Commission is particularly concerned about the disagreement between Norway and Hungary and about the follow-up to this dispute, which may have a serious impact on a number of NGOs working on the promotion of human rights. The Commission has encouraged both parties to resolve the issue without further delays in a flexible and constructive way, taking note of the EEA and Norwegian Financial Mechanisms 2009 – 2014.

The Commission understands that a Hungarian court has ruled that the police violated the law when it searched the headquarters of the Ökotárs Foundation last year. Notwithstanding this, there still is no resolution of the problem.

I also note that the Norwegian Financing Mechanism has commissioned an independent audit of the NGOs concerned which once available, may contribute to resolving the issue.

I can assure you that the Commission is following closely the situation and will consider whether there is a need for further action.

Yours sincerely,



Frans TIMMERMANS

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