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Mrs. Reding, European Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship
European Commission
Directorate-General for Justice
Unit A1 - Judicial Cooperation in Civil Matters

Honoured Mrs. Reding,

Having read the Green Paper *'Less bureaucracy for citizens: promoting free movement of public documents and recognition of the effects of civil status records'* we, PerspectivE, the youth organisation of the Dutch political party Christian Union, would like to give our opinion.

First of all, we would like to acknowledge the purpose of the Green Paper to reduce bureaucracy and to improve the lives of citizens. There is a possibility for the Commission to make propositions to the Council of Ministers on measures to determine aspects of family law with cross-border implications, in accordance with article 81.3 TFEU. We appreciate the efforts of the Commission to strive after these goals and we do see room for improvement when it comes to public documents and civil status records. Nevertheless, we have serious doubts on the definition and analysis of the problems recognized by the Green Paper.¹ And we have concerns on the solutions presented by the Commission.

When it comes to the solutions of the Commission there is a serious problem that the Commission takes a one-size-fits-all approach in pursuing uniformity by EU family law. This approach is not suited for many different types of public documents and civil status records for which different solutions could and should be envisaged. Next to that, family law in different member states is more and more diverse. An obligation to accept public documents and civil status records from other member states can therefore be in sharp contrast with national family legislation, which will only cause many complications. We would therefore like to advise the Commission to analyse the different issues separately and to compile a list of all possible practical solutions instead of only focusing on harmonisation of family law.

We encourage more cooperation between Member States' authorities with regard to civil status records. We are not sure whether the Commission can play a role to encourage this cooperation and we would like the Commission to formulate which possibilities there are in this respect. For us it is important that involvement of the Commission would reduce bureaucracy and not create an extra layer of bureaucracy, and that this involvement is not directed towards a common EU family law. In light of efficiency we are also positive on designating one information contact point on civil status matters in each Member State.

¹ We would like to refer to the evaluation of European Dignity Watch:
http://www.europeandignitywatch.org/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF/Analyse_Eng.pdf

In conclusion, we are positive on improvement in terms of reduction of bureaucracy when it comes to public documents and civil status records. But we are not yet positive on the direction that the Commission proposed to tackle the problems. The problems should be disentangled and further analysed. The one-size-fits-all approach should be left aside. And we would like to encourage the Commission to formulate all possible solutions, respecting the diverse types of family law in the Member States of the European Union.

Yours sincerely,

Niels Rijke

Member of the board of PerspectivE, youth of the Christian Union party