

## Culture Action Europe reacts to Mr Navracsics' hearing

*Brussels, October 3th 2014*

As stated in our communication of September 27<sup>th</sup>, we have attentively followed the EP hearing of Mr. Tibor Navracsics, Commissioner-designate for Education, Culture, Youth and Citizenship, held on October 1<sup>st</sup> and offer herewith our view on it.

Throughout the hearing, Mr. Navracsics explicitly expressed his allegiance to European fundamental values. Throughout, he repeatedly, and with no ambiguity, stated that if confirmed he would abide by the Treaties and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU and would operate independently and only in the EU's general interest. Having been explicitly questioned, he answered that, as regards his portfolio, he would act against any government violating European treaties and laws.

Although not all the answers provided by Mr. Navracsics were fully convincing and this, in particular, as regards the measures adopted by the Hungarian government limiting freedom of expression and hampering civil society. He, however, stressed his past personal role as mediator with other European institutions – i.e. Council of Europe and European Court of Justice - in the disputes between his Member State and the EU. As regards education and culture, Mr. Navracsics expressed that he firmly believes they are crucial aspects of EU policy that should have a stronger position beyond their instrumental role in the current "growth and jobs" strategy.

Overall indeed, Mr. Navracsics is a liberal view that acknowledges the primacy of the rule of law over the power of the governments and that slightly privileges education over culture.

In politics, as in institutions and legislation, words matter and most of Mr Navracsics's words were promising. CAE wishes to publicly acknowledge the effort made by Mr. Navracsics to dispel possible concerns regarding his competence as well as his independence of action if confirmed as Commissioner. CAE also expects that he will take a strong stance geared towards including policies on culture and education as autonomous, distinct policies within the overall EC programmes. If confirmed, he shall be held accountable to the commitments made.

The decision is now in the hands of the EP. Expressing honestly our concerns, comments and views we hope to have contributed to the best possible solution.

We firmly believe that the European Commission's composition should not result from the appointments of national governments. It should be the representation of a political programme resulting from the European election. We will do our utmost to attain this.

*Through our 110 European and national network members we give voice to over 80.000 cultural organisations across Europe, active in all domains of creation and heritage. Culture Action Europe (CAE) is the political umbrella of the European cultural sector.*