

The President

D 309209 06.06.2018

Mr Anthony Venables
ECIT Foundation (European Citizens' Rights, Involvement and Trust)
Rue Washington, 40
1050-Bruxelles
BELGIUM

Dear Mr Venables,

Thank you for your online application of 6 April 2018 seeking the patronage of the European Parliament for the Summer University on European Citizenship, 'Towards the next European Elections – European Citizenship writ large', to be held in Brussels from 6-8 September 2018.

Allow me to start by saying how much the European Parliament appreciates what your initiative set outs to achieve: to bring together policymakers, civil society activists, academics and students and give them the opportunity to debate European Citizenship in the context of the numerous challenges Europe is facing, and with the 2019 European Elections very much on the horizon.

Since the introduction of EU citizenship and of its corresponding rights by the Treaty of Maastricht in 1992, and their further enhancement following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in December 2009, positive developments for the consolidation of EU citizenship as an institution in its own right have become increasingly prominent. This can be attributed to the fact that EU citizenship includes such fundamental rights as the freedom to travel, work and study in another Member State, to participate in European political life, the promotion of equality and respect for diversity, and the right to be protected from discrimination, especially that carried out on the basis of nationality. All this has enabled European citizens to learn, live and work in any Member State, under the same conditions and with the same rights as national citizens.

Ongoing efforts to promote EU citizenship are thus closely linked to improvements in the quality of democracy within the Union, to the practical enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms, and to the opportunity for every citizen to participate in the democratic life of the Union. In this context, the prospect of the UK's withdrawal from the EU has starkly highlighted the importance of the rights of EU citizenship and their crucial role in the everyday lives of millions of EU citizens. It has also raised awareness in Europe about the loss of rights on both sides that Brexit could entail, not least the 3 million EU citizens living in the UK and the 1.2 million UK citizens in the EU.

With next year's European Elections looming, the European Parliament has acknowledged that action to enhance voter turnout is a shared responsibility of the EU and Member States, and has thus encouraged the Member States to promote democratic participation by better informing citizens of their right to stand and vote in local and European elections, through multiple channels and in a language which is easy to understand, and by removing all barriers to their participation, such as economic, social or language discrimination, unfair practices or corruption. Our institution has also urged the Member States to remove accessibility obstacles for citizens with disabilities and to facilitate voting in all elections for citizens

residing, working, or studying away from their usual voting location, such as by embracing electronic identification and voting solutions¹.

Given the clear European dimension of your initiative, it is with great pleasure that I grant your event the European Parliament's patronage².

May I take this opportunity to wish you every success with what should be an excellent Summer University.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Antonio Tajani', followed by a horizontal line.

Antonio Tajani

¹ European Parliament resolution of 12 December 2017 on the EU Citizenship Report 2017: Strengthening Citizens' Rights in a Union of Democratic Change. Texts adopted, P8_TA(2017)0487.

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