

Viviane Reding

Member of the European Parliament
Former Vice-President of the European Commission

Danuta Hübner
Member of the European Parliament
Chair of the Committee on
Constitutional Affairs

Brussels, 18 November 2016

Re: Amendment 882 presented by Charles Goerens (ALDE) in the context of the draft report “Possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union”.

Dear Chair Hübner,
Esteemed colleagues of the AFCO-Committee,

The Committee on Constitutional Affairs will soon be requested to vote on the draft-report “Possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union” presented by rapporteur Guy Verhofstadt.

In view of this upcoming vote, I wish to express my concern and draw your attention to the amendment presented by Charles Goerens (ALDE) proposing to insert in the Treaties a European associate citizenship for nationals of a former Member State who feel and wish to be part of the European project.

The approach suggested by Mr Goerens, is clearly misguided and even dangerous. A voluntary citizenship for citizens from former Member States would not only erode the European citizenship that adds rights and duties to the national citizenship, but it would also erode the credibility of the European Union.

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Moreover, the suggestion to make the associate citizenship conditional upon an annual membership fee is outrageous. This amounts to selling out European citizenship - a practice, which I have always firmly denounced and will continue to do so. European citizenship, including the right to representation in the European Parliament and the Freedom of Movement, are not for sale.

The UK and the EU have to work out a new relationship, exclusively based on the negotiations that will follow the activation of the Article 50 and the completion of the withdrawal-procedure. The negotiations of this new relationship need to be firmly guided by the indivisibility of our Fundamental Freedoms, and by the principle of reciprocal treatment. The approach suggested by Mr Goerens fails to meet both criteria, and opens the door to ever more unbridled cherry-picking - a practice already detrimental to the EU's unity and capacity to act.

I hope this amendment will be met with a firm rejection on behalf of the AFCO-members.

Sincerely,

