**“My Voice, My Choice” … and what about the choice of European citizens?**

**On 24 April 2025, a European citizens' initiative ended its collection of signatures. Under the individualistic name of ‘My Voice, My Choice’, it is asking the EU to fund ‘abortion tourism’, enabling women to go and have an abortion in a country that is more permissive than their own. What does this maneuvering reveal about the desire to manipulate the institutions, in defiance of the law in each country?**

My voice, my choice! This should be in fact the watchword of all European citizens. Our voices count. Our choices count. Our votes must be respected. It is therefore particularly rude to have given this name to a European Citizens' Initiative that directly attacks the voices, choices and expressed votes of Europeans. The Commission cannot accede to this request without seriously undermining the freedoms of citizens in EU countries.

In fact: in May 2008, European citizens voted in favor of the Treaty of Lisbon, which defines the respective competences of the European Union and the Member States. Article 5 of the Treaty reiterates the principle of conferral of competence, according to which EU action is strictly limited to those areas in which the Member States have conferred competence. Abortion is not an EU competence and remains the exclusive competence of the Member States, as the European Commissioner for Equality, Hadja Lahbib, pointed out in March 2025. The misnamed actual initiative nevertheless calls on the Commission to ‘do everything in its power to ensure that abortion is safe and accessible to all’. Its spokeswoman has announced that its aim is to introduce a right to abortion in the EU. By registering an initiative that encourages it to ‘do everything in its power’ to exceed its competences, the Commission has shown itself to be blatantly disloyal to its Member States. You can't play with the fundamental principles of European law without setting a precedent with far-reaching consequences.

But the disloyalty lies above all in the subterfuge proposed to the Commission: to set up a mechanism enabling citizens to circumvent their national legislation by going to another country to obtain what they are refused, and to support this ‘solidarity effort’ financially. The ruse is clever and skillfully presented: with no concrete proposal for a funding mechanism, the Commission has been able to register this initiative without rejecting it a priori on the grounds of illegality. Above all, the stratagem borders on tartuffery. ‘*The scandal of the world is what offends, and it is not sin to sin in silence*’, said Tartuffe. ‘*Our initiative does not aim to harmonize or interfere with the laws and regulations of the Member States but rather falls within the supporting competences of the EU*’, add the signatories of this initiative. Supporting what, and who? European citizens who wish to derogate from the laws legitimately established by their respective national representations? How could this be anything other than interference with Member States' legislation? It would be unacceptable for the European Union to circumvent, undermine and thwart national political choices in this way. The Commission cannot directly contradict the legitimate choices of each Member State in the highly sensitive area of protecting unborn human life.

While abortion falls within the exclusive remit of the Member States, the legal protection of the dignity, right to life and integrity of every human being from the moment of conception falls within the remit of the EU. The embryo is the beginning of the development process of a human being, as established by the CJEU in the Brüstle v Greenpeace judgment. To be consistent in the exercise of its competences, the EU should put an end to European funding of activities that involve the destruction of human embryos, particularly in the fields of research, development aid and public health. This was the demand of 1.8 million European citizens united in 2014 by the One of Us citizens' initiative. This initiative remains unrivalled, with a budget 5 times smaller than the My Voice My Choice initiative. The Commission did not follow up... At a time when it is being presented with a diametrically opposed and manifestly illegal initiative, it would be a good idea for it to remember this request - and the choices made by European citizens in defining its competences.

Signatures:

1. Pr Tonio Borg (Malta)
2. Antonio Fenech (Malta)
3. Dr Miriam Sciberra (Malta)
4. Pr Gregor Puppinck (France)
5. Pr Jean-Marie Le Méné (France)
6. Nicolas Tardy-Joubert (France)
7. Franck Meyer (France)
8. Anne Honoré (France)
9. Wouter Suenens (Belgium)
10. Jakub Baltroszewicz (Poland)
11. Tomasz Kancelarczyk (Poland)
12. Krzysztof Zuba (Poland)
13. Alexandra Linder (Germany)
14. Cornelia Kaminski (Germany)
15. Marie Elisabeth Hohenberg (Germany)
16. Marcela Dobešová (Slovakia)
17. Andrej Mikolášik (Slovakia)
18. Anna Kováčová (Slovakia)
19. Diliana Nikolova (Bulgaria)
20. Alojz Peterle (Slovenia)
21. Darja Pečnik (Slovenia)
22. Jaime Mayor Oreja (Spain)
23. Ana del Pino (Spain)
24. Agustín Buades Rullán (Spain)
25. Miguel Gómez de Agüero (Spain)
26. Pr Nicolás Jouve (Spain)
27. Pr Julio Tudela (Spain)
28. Pr José Castro Velarde (Spain)
29. Pr Alicia Latorre (Spain)
30. María Torrego Barona (Spain)
31. Álvaro Ortega (Spain)
32. Dª Eva Maria Martín García (Spain)
33. Pr. Dr. José Antonio Díez Fernández (Spain)
34. María Menéndez de Zubillaga (Spain)
35. Susana Macías (Spain)
36. Javier Puente Redondo (Spain)
37. Pablo Siegrist (Spain)
38. Josep Miró (Spain)
39. Kristoffer Dahl (Denmark)
40. Pr Massimo Gandolfini (Italy)
41. Pr Giovanna Abbagnara (Italy)
42. Pr Marina Casini (Italy)
43. Pr Aldo Bova (Italy)
44. Tista Bobbink (The Netherlands)
45. Arthur Alderliesten (The Netherlands)
46. Kees van Helden (The Netherlands)
47. Leontine Bakermans (The Netherlands)
48. Elisa Garcia (The Netherlands)
49. Isilda Pegado (Portugal)
50. José Maria Dias Miranda (Portugal)
51. João Perry da Câmara (Portugal)
52. José Alexandre Oliveira (Portugal)
53. André Grosbusch (Luxembourg)
54. Josef Jelinek (Czech Republic)
55. Ante Čaljkušić (Croatia)

***The ONE OF US European Federation brings together 50 NGOs from 19 European countries. Each of them provides practical help to women and men in the field of maternity, paternity, parenthood and family life. Our* raison d'être *is to protect human dignity in EU policies, as asked by the 1,9 million citizens.***