



## IED Conference on The Rule of law: a shared value for citizens in Europe Bratislava, 06/11/2019

### Recommendations

Protecting the rule of law as one of the founding values of the EU requires continuous, enhanced and cumulative engagement on behalf of the supranational institutions of the Union, the Member States and EU citizens.

**The European Union**, including first and foremost the European Commission, should:

- where its present competences allow, initiate further legislative acts, containing *more detailed, concrete and palpable provisions on the rule of law*, with the aim of clarifying the broad concept of the rule of law;
- *fully exhaust its legal competences*, in particular in the area of anti-corruption policy which by the Treaty of Lisbon allows the EU more room for maneuver than in the area of the rule of law;
- make use of the existing instruments and play by the same set of rules it wants to see implemented: the end does not justify all means because there are some means that spoil the end;
- *strive against political interference by the Member States*, which through the EU institutions continue to jealously guard their state sovereignty rights for their own benefit;
- *depart from political decisions* and an approach based on “double standards” in the area of rule of law and anti-corruption;
- take a *clearer stance* and adopt *tougher measures towards Member States*, where it is necessary, with the aim of formulating a *more coherent and credible approach*, also with a view to the promotion of EU values in the enlargement and Eastern Partnership context;
- enrich the political discourse about the rule of law with *human stories* in order to enhance EU citizens’ consciousness and understanding regarding the meaning and overwhelming importance of the rule of law for themselves but also for the EU as a whole;
- promote a *European identity* among EU citizens that would progressively cut the ground away from the narrative of the EU as “an alien that is constantly poking its nose in the affairs of individual EU countries”.

**The Member States** should:

- stop expecting the EU to act as a “*policeman*” and rush to help whenever there are negative developments because the *Union’s legal competences are limited* scope-wise and by the legally enshrined principles of conferral, subsidiarity and proportionality;
- “*do their homework*”, which includes accurately applying and enforcing European, national and local law as well as prosecuting those who do not;

- as “Masters of the Treaties” start a comprehensive discussion about the *future of Europe* as well as a *Treaty change* that bridges the currently existing Union of sovereign countries towards a more federalized entity where the Member States decide to give up competences in favor of the supranational bodies;
- trigger an *educational process* addressed towards its population with the aim of developing an understanding of the historical significance of the European integration process and the rule of law as well as a sense of citizenship among citizens and a rule of law consciousness.

Finally, **EU citizens** as the only source of direct democratic legitimation are called upon to:

- become aware of their *fundamental citizenship duties* and proactively shape their own future;
- keep themselves *constantly informed* about ongoing events;
- participate in the elections;
- keep their national parliaments and the European Parliament *accountable*;
- not to take the European values of democracy, human rights and rule of law as well as the achievements on the European continent since the end of the Second World War for granted.