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Paris, April 21th 2022

Ref :/ François-Xavier Bellamy and the core values of EPP

Dear Sir, Mister President,

It certainly has been a concern of yours that a third of French voters have chosen a far-right candidate in the first round of the presidential election in France, while the EPP candidate, Mrs Valérie Pécresse, benefitted from less than 5% of the votes. Such a situation is a cause for alarm for anyone who treasures democracy.

In such times, courage has to be expected from political leaders.

I would like therefore to discuss with you the preoccupying situation of Mr François-Xavier Bellamy, head of the French EPP delegation, who has kept intensely quiet about whether he would this weekend vote Le Pen, Macron, or abstain.

He has been an official sponsor of Eric Zemmour allowing him to run. As you are aware, Eric Zemmour routinely states that all foreigners have come to France to rape, pillage and murder, that Muslims are actually conducting a civil war and his core proposal is to forcibly « remigrate » them out of the country. While Mr Bellamy has explained that his sponsorship carried no endorsement of Zemmour campaign because of personal fidelity for Mrs Pécresse, but a healthy preoccupation for a full democratic debate, he still made it clear on February 24th that should Mrs Pécresse not qualify for the second round he would vote Zemmour over Macron.

In February 19th 2020, he joined in "Valeurs actuelles" a far-right campaign to present ECHR as an illegitimate body under influence from Mr Soros. He remained personally prudent on precise factual accusations, but set the principle that fundamental rights are up to political debates and not for courts to decide.

In January 15th the same year, he intervened in the Hungary article 7 plenary debate in defence of Viktor Orbán, with the rather bold view that there is in fact no democratic or fundamental rights problem in this country.

This refusal to oppose Marine Le Pen, his support for a candidate even more extreme than herself, and constant disregard for the basic principles of fundamental rights place him much more appropriately in the family of the far-right than the EPP, and thus raise the question of whether he should still be a member of the group that you head.

There has to be vast intellectual and political diversity inside a group bringing together political parties spanning over a continent, and strength does not come through purity. Still, some core values have to be maintained, as EPP did with courage when it stepped up to Fidesz. Leniency here comes with a cost which anyone can contemplate in France. Failing to deliver a clear message on fundamental issues can prove deadly.

In the coming days, these choices will have to be repeated all across France in the parliamentary elections, and we do urge you to send a strong political signal to your political family. As Dr Konrad Adenauer warned us, *history is but the sum of things that could have been avoided.*

Faithfully yours,

Arthur COLIN



Vice-Président

Copy : Mr Donald Tusk