

To Didier Reynders
European Commissioner for Justice

Date 8 July 2022

Subject European Commission initiative SLAPP welcomed by the Meijers Committee

**Meijers
Committee**
Standing
committee of
experts on
international
immigration,
refugee and
criminal law

Dear Mr Reynders,

With this letter, the Meijers Committee would like to welcome the Commission's initiatives that aims to protect journalists and human rights defenders in strategic lawsuits against public participation (hereafter: SLAPP). We are delighted to see that civil society organisations in Europe joined forces to counter SLAPPs which resulted in mobilising the European Commission, the European Parliament, and the Council of Europe into responding and countering threats against media freedom and pluralism with concrete initiatives. One of the latter being the EU Commission's proposal for an EU anti-SLAPP directive of 27 April 2022 (COM (2022) 177).

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The Meijers Committee strongly supports the Commission's approach in defining SLAPPs with cross-border implications, which takes into account how attempts to limit public participation resonate and impact public interest across borders. We also welcome its definition of responsibilities that states ensure that safeguards have to be applied to all cases beyond the scope of minimum EU standards. The anti-SLAPP directive contributes to the creation of a favourable environment for participation in public debate, thus safeguarding the freedom of expression and the right to effective remedies (see also ECtHR, *Dink v. Turkey*), enabling journalists and social watchdogs to express their opinions and ideas without fear.

As such, the members of the Meijers Committee consider this initiative as a landmark step in the right direction.

As always, we remain available for your questions and remarks.

Yours faithfully,



Prof. dr. A.B. Terlouw
Chairwoman