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**De eerste vicevoorzitter Europese Commissie  
De heer F. Timmermans  
Wetstraat 200  
1049 Brussel  
België**

NL-Wilnis, 14-02-2017

Regarding: The unveiling of the Max van der Stoel memorial in Prague on March 1, 2017

Dear Mr. Timmermans,

In a couple of weeks' time, on March 1 to be precise, the Czech Foreign Minister and you are going to unveil the monument commemorating the dramatic and spectacular meeting between professor Jan Patočka, the founder of human rights movement Charta '77 and Max van der Stoel, our Foreign Minister at the time. March 1 marks the fortieth anniversary of the meeting. I was invited to attend the event by the ambassador, Mr. Ed Hoeks. I accepted the invitation immediately and with pleasure.

After receiving the invitation, the question whether the underlying 'story' would be properly understood at the unveiling impressed itself on me (I use the word 'story' in the sense given to it by Václav Havel, Patočka's student, in his essay 'Story and Totalitarianism': 'The starting-point of every story is, as is well known, an event. The event – the imposition of one 'logic' in the world on another – is formed by that out of which every story emerges and by which it is nourished: the situation, the relation and the conflict'). The question was raised in my mind, because of two events I remember, one in The Hague and the other in Prague. Both happened ten years ago. The event in The Hague was a seminar, which I had been invited to attend by the Czech ambassador, Mr. Petr Mareš. That seminar was entitled: 'Charta '77 and Max van der Stoel: Meeting with/the Consequences. The Dilemmas of Foreign Support to the Democratic Opposition in Authoritarian Regimes'. It took place on Friday 2 March 2007. The invitation read, in part: 'Mr. Max van der Stoel and Mr. Jiří Dienstbier, one of the founding fathers of Charta '77 and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Czechoslovakia after the Velvet Revolution, will be the key speakers.'

Naturally, the 'story' of the meeting between Max van der Stoel and Jan Patočka came up. It was, after all, a commemoration of the event. However, during the seminar I got the feeling that the hero, professor Jan Patočka, wasn't being honoured. The seminar was rather an expression of the sentiment: 'didn't the Left handle this well'. (This was reflected in the title of the seminar, which used the word 'authoritarian'. Patočka fought against a 'totalitarian' regime, which is different.) For this reason, I asked why the seminar was so ideologically biased. It

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gave the impression that Jan Patočka – and with him Charta '77 – was on the Left. To that I added that Mr. Jiří Dienstbier - with all due respect for his achievements as a member of Charta '77 – could not be the correct spokesman for Charta '77 on this occasion, because its spokesmen always represented the three ideological foundations of the movement: religious, artistic/cultural/scientific and left-wing. I reminded the participants that Dienstbier is on the left and therefore not the Charta member to 'represent' and therefore commemorate Jan Patočka. My remarks were met with hostility, some commotion ensued in the room, and a few coarse, emotional and very critical comments were directed at me. During the lunch break several people approached me and criticized my understanding of the 'story' of March 1 1977 in an unpleasant manner. Out on the terrace I met Mr. Max van der Stoel. He did not, contrary to the others, condemn my initiative.

The second event took place in Prague. Almost two months after the seminar I participated in an international conference dedicated to the memory of Jan Patočka (the conference was a part of the '37<sup>th</sup> yearly meeting of the Husserl Circle'). The conference took place from 22 – 28 April 2007. It was entitled: 'Jan Patočka 1907-1977'. Václav Havel opened the conference in Czech. He commemorated Charta '77 in a very dignified manner. He ended his speech in English with the words: 'Charta '77 had a happy ending'. Many other interesting lectures were delivered subsequently by Petr Pithart, Martin Palouš, Kwok-ying Lau ('Patočka's Concept of Europe: an Intercultural Consideration'), Don Ihde and many others. This conference, organized by the Czechs, was not a biased, left-wing meeting. The difference in 'decoration' between 'The Hague' and 'Prague' was enormous, almost as if the fall of communism had not changed anything. In the Netherlands, the left-wing projections and the failure to understand the motivating force behind Charta remained intact and its members were annexed as left-wing heroes, whereas in 'Prague' they were regarded as non-violent protesters who defied communism.

With the coming unveiling of the Max van der Stoel memorial, 'Hague' and 'Prague' will come together, while the difference in perception will once again go unnoticed. I fear that the Dutch attendees will once more experience the 'commemoration of the meeting' between Patočka and Max van der Stoel through their ideological bias, which hasn't changed, while the Czechs will still understand the meeting as a historic step towards liberation from a totalitarian regime. These different perceptions were caused, in my view, by the absence of an authoritative history of Charta '77 (and the Dutch understanding and response to it). In 1984 I tried to remedy this situation in my book: *What Charta '77 Really Meant*. Ten years ago (when I received my secret police – StB – file) I started on a new research project, which has resulted in my second book on the topic: *Dissidents and Peace-Fiddlers*. I attach a copy for you to this letter. It will be presented in the coming days.

In the following paragraphs, I will link the results of my investigation to the unveiling of the monument.

During its existence Charta '77 was not only threatened by the communist authorities, but also by left-wing organizations and their representatives from Western countries. Charta '77 was misportrayed by 'the Left'. It was presented as a supporter of the peace movement. That portrayal was an injustice to Charta and the product of wishful thinking on the part of these organizations. Key figures in spreading this falsehood were, on the Czech side, Jan Kavan and on the Dutch side: Mient Jan Faber. As regards Kavan, I'm not referring to the issue of whether or not he worked for the StB. While he was acquitted by a judge, questions remain. But these are not relevant at the moment. What is relevant is the fact that he (well known because of his company Palach Press) influenced the media at the time, from London, where he lived, by spreading the idea that Charta '77 was more or less in agreement with the European Nuclear



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Disarmament (END) movement. I describe this in my book on page 168 *et seq.* (Cf. Přemysl Vachalovský's book *Jan Kavan v Labyrinty Služeb*). Mient Jan Faber did something similar in our country. He declared during one of the best attended peace demonstrations in Amsterdam (1981), that Charta '77 agreed with the demonstration. And he spread more of these falsehoods. Thus arose the notion that Charta '77 was a left-wing human rights organization and that Jan Patočka was a leftist.

And that is not all. After the Velvet Revolution, Jan Kavan (who had emigrated back to his country) and Mient Jan Faber worked closely together with the Helsinki Citizens' Assembly (HCA), which pretended to be the only true representative of civil society. It was founded in October 1990 in Prague. Charta '77 was taken advantage of again in order to 'legitimate' the HCA. In the HCA documents (flyers etc.) Charta was presented as its founder. Charta was 'founding father', 'initiator' etc. The fact that Václav Havel gave a speech during its first meeting was blown out of all proportion to suggest that he was a co-founder of the HCA. When I was confronted with these facts, I contacted Mr. Miroslav Lehký, who served as spokesman for Charta '77 in 1990 (the year the HCA was founded). He ensured me that there was no relation whatsoever between the HCA and Charta '77 and that the foundation of the HCA was never on the agenda for Charta's spokesmen.

At the end of the 90's, Jan Kavan found a better life in politics; he became a government minister and even served a year as chairman of the UN General Assembly in 2002. Mient Jan Faber took a different, equally successful road. He continued with the IKV and the HCA. The Czech government stopped financially supporting the HCA at the end of the '90's, which led to its demise. It was taken over by the IKV, which enabled the IKV to 'internationalize'. It went on to create a (seemingly) impressive track record. The IKV thus became an interesting partner for our Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It became a 'strategic partner'. The flow of money increased. Not just for projects, but for core funding as well. From 2003 – 2006 (together with Pax-Christi) the support was two million euro's annually. From 2016 – 2021 this figure will increase to over eleven million a year for Pax (the successor to IKV and Pax-Christi). Pax has to spend this money on political propoganda. Leftist propoganda, of course!

As we can now see, two charlatans, Jan Kavan and Mient Jan Faber, have tricked the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs into believing that Patočka and Charta '77 supported the IKV/Pax peace movement, which provided the legitimacy required to receive large subsidies.

I add to all of this the fact that you were Foreign Minister until a year and a half ago. Therefore, I feel entitled to confront you with these nefarious state subsidies. When you unveil the Max van der Stoel monument, I ask you to turn the event into one that is more respectful of the true 'story'. The desire for liberty is a passion you find on the whole democratic political spectrum, not just on the left. I hope you will take this nuance into account. Given your position as first deputy president of the European Commission I think the principle of *noblesse oblige* requires it.

Sincerely,

Johann Grünbauer  
President SGTRS

Attachment: *Dissidenten en Vredessjoemelaars (Dissidents and Peace-Fiddlers)* copy.