

Tonio Borg LL.D, M.P.
20, Bakery Street,
Lija, Malta

17th November 2012

Honourable Members of the European Parliament,

Further to my explanations at the hearing on 13 November, I would like to reaffirm the following points:

I am a strong believer in the innate dignity of all, regardless of their sexual orientation or distinctions outlined in Article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights. I also believe that in line with Article 21, it is necessary to combat discrimination in a proactive manner. It is for this reason that I believe that for crimes or offences committed on the basis of discrimination, punishment should be aggravated. I am proud to have supported such action and legal requirements for aggravated punishment in a national context and will continue with such support at an EU level.

I reiterate my commitment to work proactively to fight discrimination in line with article 19 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, article 21 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and EU anti-discrimination legislation and case law. In the particular field of health this will mean concretely, for example, to combat the stigma and discrimination in the field of HIV/AIDS and define risk groups for blood donation in function of personal behaviour and not of sexual orientation. I would also, in line with the European Parliament's resolution of September 2011, fight to stop considering transgender people as mentally ill and support a non-pathologising reclassification for gender identity in the negotiations on the 11th version of the World Health Organizations International Classification of Diseases.

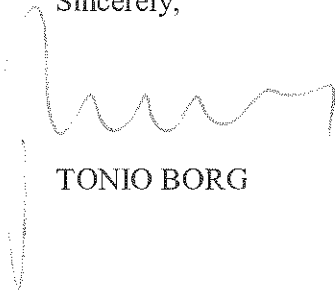
I fully subscribe and support the proposal agreed by the College of Commissioners on the 14th of November on gender balance in executive boards, which in my view is an excellent example where positive discrimination is needed to achieve non-discrimination in social reality and I will actively support EU policies with regard to women's rights.

I reiterate that if I am given the trust by the European Parliament I will immediately launch the Inter Service Consultation on Tobacco with the aim to have it adopted by the College of Commissioners by January 2013. In addition I also confirm my intention to table the two proposals on novel food and cloning by mid 2013 and not to postpone the ban on marketing of cosmetic products if tested on animals, due to enter into force in March 2013. I am conscious that enforcement of EU legislation is one of my key responsibilities and I undertake to put my energy into ensuring such enforcement in particular in the field of animal transport.

I reiterate my intention to work closely with the European Parliament to deliver agreements on the files pending in co-decision such as those relating to Alternative Dispute Resolution, Online Dispute Resolution, Health Threats, Clinical Trials and Medical Devices. These proposals represent a real benefit for European consumers and patients and I am eager to assist in any way to bring them to agreement.

Finally I would like to once again reaffirm my full commitment to the Charter of Fundamental Rights in its totality and without reservation, and to actively support it throughout the European Union,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tonio Borg', with a vertical line extending downwards from the start of the signature.

TONIO BORG