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*Ms Viviane Reding  
European Commission Vice-President in charge of Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship  
BE-1049 Brussels  
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Vienna, 28 April 2010  
FRA-2010-D-718

**Re: Response to your letter of 19 April 2010**

Dear Vice-President,

Thank you for your letter dated 19 April, the electronic version of which was sent to me today by your Cabinet. Regrettably however, I learned of its existence reading the article in today's copy of Die Welt.

On 7 December 2010, as you know, exactly ten years will have passed since the solemn proclamation of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union at the Nice European Council. Accordingly, the Agency's annual Fundamental Rights Conference, to be organised together with the Belgian Presidency of the European Union, is scheduled to take place from 7-8 December 2010. We hope you will be able to participate in this important conference as key note speaker. It is in this context that the project about which you raised concern was to be an additional outreach element, since it was the Agency's intention to transform the planned social evening of the conference into a more broadly accessible extension of the conference and its themes.

Contrary to wrong media reporting, the artistic project did not risk undermining the dignity of the Charter in any manner whatsoever. However, given the nature of this reporting, and taking the concerns expressed in your letter very seriously, I have taken the decision to cancel the project in its original form.

In addition to the collection, analysis and dissemination of data, Article 4 (h) of the Agency's founding Regulation also describes as one of its core tasks, to "... *promote dialogue with civil society, in order to raise public awareness of fundamental rights and actively disseminate information about its work*". Indeed communication on fundamental rights issues, in an accessible and

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targeted way to various stakeholders, partners and specifically identified segments of the public is vital to the Agency achieving its objectives as laid down in the Regulation. The Agency's awareness raising mandate is further underlined in the Stockholm Programme, which refers to the Agency being used *"for the communication to citizens of human rights issues affecting them in their everyday life."*

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I understand that earlier this week my Head of Communications and your Head of Cabinet engaged in constructive discussions on how best to communicate the Charter's relevance to the everyday lives of EU citizens and others residing on the territory of the European Union's Member States. The discussion focussed more specifically on how, whilst fully respecting our different roles and competences, the European Commission and the Agency can work together in this area, including on a presentation for the 7<sup>th</sup> of December 2010.

Accordingly, I will instruct the relevant staff at the Agency to be in contact with their counterparts at the Commission. I believe that this is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the important work of the European Union in this area and bring it to the attention, understanding and benefit of those we serve.

I look forward to working with you during your term in office towards what I am convinced will be a fruitful cooperation.

Yours sincerely,



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