



European Parliament

President Ursula von der Leyen  
Commissioner Didier Reynders  
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## **Planned infringement procedures regarding “golden passports”**

Honorable President von der Leyen,

Honorable Commissioner Reynders,

You both recently mentioned on different occasions how the investor citizenship programmes of Cyprus and Malta violate European rules and undermine security. My concern with regard to such programmes has grown further over the revelations by Al-Jazeera on the Cypriot programme. I was therefore pleased to hear in news reports about your plans to open an infringement procedure against Cyprus and Malta still this year<sup>1</sup>. I also took note of your presidential remarks during the SOTEU speech. It's crucial for the EU's credibility that the Commission enforces our common rules rigorously.

The Commission report on Investor Citizenship and Residence Schemes in the European Union from January 2019<sup>2</sup> has shown that while citizenship by investment programmes are a serious problem, investor residence schemes are equally problematic. Both forms potentially violate the principle of sincere cooperation between member states, anchored in Article 4.3 of the Treaty. They are both a blatant violation of loyalty in a shared Schengen space. In comparison to citizenship schemes, residence schemes affect a considerably larger number of member states (about 20) and individuals involved and can lead to similar problems in terms of security or illicit money flows. This has been demonstrated by the sale of golden visa to criminals by Portugal.

I would therefore urge you not to limit the infringement procedures to infringements through citizenship schemes, but to take a more encompassing approach and also target those residence schemes that threaten Europe's security in an equal manner. This would ensure the consistency that is needed for a credible answer of the EU-Commission to this ongoing violation of European law.

I stand ready to discuss the matter further with you or provide additional information.

In cooperation,

Sven Giegold

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.bild.de/bild-plus/politik/ausland/politik-ausland/nach-bild-bericht-ueber-visa-skandal-eu-verfahren-gegen-zypern-wegen-goldener-pa-72936558.jsRedirectFrom=conversionToLogin.bild.html>

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/report-commission-european-parliament-council-european-economic-and-social-committee-and-committee-regions-investor-citizenship-and-residence-schemes-european-union\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/report-commission-european-parliament-council-european-economic-and-social-committee-and-committee-regions-investor-citizenship-and-residence-schemes-european-union_en)