

Dear Aral,

Here is the uncomfortable truth I must put before you today: I feel terribly regretful I did not wait to know you and your politics better before introducing you to the DiEM25 community, which you have offended at its core, questioning its integrity, experience and brains.

I invited you to join the movement after you expressed your interest in doing so, I vouched for you and now I need to publicly apologise to DiEM25 membership and leadership for the way you have set about insulting them via your public statements.

**The most offensive bit of your statement is this:**

***“DiEM25, today, is a Yanis Varoufakis fan club with 60,000 members”***

And sadly, it reflects how little you know about DiEM25, its leaders, intellectuals, social activists and experienced people forming this movement. Reducing their efforts and dedication over two years to a ‘fan club’ is highly disrespectful and, as your friend, I am embarrassed. It takes time (It took me months) to understand how valuable this pan-European movement is.

I encouraged DiEM25 to embrace you as a positive advisor and a force for good, as someone charismatic who could bring a less “technical” perspective, offer a more accessible discourse on the role of technology today, even if your political and geopolitical knowledge and exposure to the way policies are done in the EU is limited.

By the time you decided to join:

- a. You knew how our movement was structured.
- b. You knew that priorities were established, resources were limited.
- c. You knew all the Advisory Panel members and you insisted, in order to become part of DiEM25, on becoming one of the advisory members.

There was absolutely no hidden agenda and a very public list of principles you endorsed by becoming an advisor. You were warmly welcomed and given a floor immediately, which is, contrary to your angry claims, a gesture of openness to new and different ideas and proposals. You were given a main stage in several events and invited to actively form a part of an emergent movement. CC members dedicated considerable time to listening to you, and you also participated in the last “Coordinating Collective” elections.

**The Tech Pillar, my role in it, and a little context**

**On your criticism on the tech pillar.**

I am the one to blame for the delay in the 7th pillar launch, which was a joint proposal built upon the developed principles, proposals and ideas of several other people, from Richard Stallman to Julian Assange, who have been working on policy frames long before us, including on the Free Software Foundation and the European Commons assembly, which I invited to the Berlin event, as well as diverse hacker communities from around the continent.

Life is complicated at the moment and my time availability is considerably reduced and given these personal circumstances, I might have to consider leaving the CC and will have to find a good lead person for this, not to delay the process even further.

But what you state is false. There is not the slightest lack of enthusiasm among the DiEM25 membership and friends on developing this pillar further, and there are several offers from highly capable people to take this forward, from actual public administrations developing their own plans to policy experts. But there are

also priorities and the most important recent priority has been to configure and decide whether the movement wanted to develop an electoral wing.

The Tech pillar is important, but in the pipeline. And it is not a personal project but something which will be done in collaboration. Your ideas and the ideas of each and every member and external advisors will be welcome, and considered. It will take time, patience, dialogue and learning to develop a full plan, and follow internal procedures to sign it off. As we explained to you several times, it involves allocation of resources, human resources and it cannot be considered in isolation from other issues that are better developed and more urgent for the membership. It is a complex topic and it will take months and many people to develop it, as it has to deal with issues well beyond your or my expertise: you are a developer and designer, not a policy expert and I am a tech lawyer trained abroad. To have a realistic set of policies, more expertise is needed but also more time and a process similar to the other processes followed by the other six pillars.

**This is different from the other criticisms you make on internal practices:**

You seem very upset about the administrative decision of a small organisation not to release the code of their website and platforms. What you preach v. what you practice is, to me, a little inconsistent. Over the years you have decided to trust each and every aspect of your life to Apple products. A company which refuses to share its code and is closed and insecure by design. You sell your products via Apple store and you are an avid Facebook user. I imagine some of your personal decisions are financial, while others are based in convenience, design, usability, reliability. Embracing and adopting a truly secure and completely free software life is a lot of hard work. I, for instance, have to travel with two computers to handle the sensitive issues of my clients and it takes time and it takes lots of resources.

Your current recommendations, often framed as demands that the movement must accept without delay, should come: 1. with a plan on how to fund them, if you want them immediately adopted. 2. With a plan on how to mitigate damages and deal with disruption in the transitions. 3. With the understanding that it might take time to change the view of a developer on how and why to share his or her code, and that should be done gently and respectfully.

The dedicated developers of DiEM25 have sacrificed weekends, holidays and lots of pro bono hours to keep the systems running and updated. Your asks, while valid and very useful, will only happen with time.

And it is sad you feel the need to doubt the integrity of the people involved in the coding and the systems run by Diem, volunteers fighting for democracy, while you blindly trust a company like Apple. I honestly trust DiEM25 1 zillion times more than an American corporation with abusive labour practices.

On so-called “gate-keeping” and other processes.

DiEM25 has 2.5 paid staffers. Be realistic. To fulfil all of your demands, some valid, some utopian, and do it in all the European languages will be extremely costly. Regarding transparency, all CC sessions’ minutes are available (hey, Facebook algorithms and Apple algorithms are also trained by all your clicks).

Indeed, we need to improve tech and security practices and it will take time. Add it to my list of fails, I have offered a Crypto session to all CC members and staffers, but I have failed to deliver it. Not so long ago, you also were using Surveillance Valley products (I think you still use them and sell your product through them): one must be tolerant and educate patiently rather than rage against those who do not do what you want. And realistic regarding resources.

**Diem, Assange and YOUR popularity**

This is the most difficult topic for me to address because I am obviously partial. Julian is my client since 2010 when the harassment by US government against him escalated, and there were threats to cancel his

passport, long before the sex allegations. Before that, he was a personal friend, and someone dedicated to freedom of expression and social justice, and the use of tech as a tool for liberation.

Up to this very day, Wikileaks is the publisher most attacked by western governments, and its journalists are subject to the largest investigation ever. But it is also the only publisher with not a single record of censorship, exposing the very core of corruption in the “radically transparent” way you praise. It seems, however, that in some cases radical transparency should be embraced while in others (if it exposes painful truths or truths with undesired outcomes) it is better not to publish and the mere act of publication (the same kind of communications you want Diem to make public by default) leads to accusations of “Russian collusion”. You say:

*“Now that DiEM has an electoral wing (which I think was a positive and necessary move), what happens if DiEM gets into political power? Does Wikileaks become its own little NSA? Via proxy of Moscow perhaps..”*

Regarding the coverage and reporting on Assange, while she is an accomplished journalist, Carole has made some blatant mistakes in trying to connect Wikileaks with Cambridge Analytica and Bannon. I do not want to think she did it intentionally, but I am surprised she cannot confirm her facts and set the record straight: Wikileaks privately and publicly refused to cooperate with Cambridge Analytica.

Regarding Russia, I will wholeheartedly celebrate the creation of a DiEM25-Moscow in Russia and I will be thrilled to promote Diem principles there. We need bridges with the Russian people, not demonization: and I find abhorrent the way good people like you allow yourselves to be distracted with an “evil Russian spies” narrative while no one discusses the real elephants in the room (as opposed to a journalist, who, against international law, cannot leave a western country).

Regarding the controversial views of any advisor, a political movement is not the opinion police when it comes to advisory members, and I find the attitude of expelling and excluding people, especially people facing 24/7 surveillance as a political prisoner, as being in complete contradiction not only with DiEM25 principles, but with human rights principles. I probably do not agree with 35% with many of the views of advisory members or CC members. But I would rather work alongside people whose ideas are different to mine (as long as they are not breaking just laws or hurting people), than in a movement where I do not have the right to offend and be offended, where I always have to be nice and one word counts more than a thousand actions.

I know the social cost of thinking differently and the pressure brought to bear when you stand by someone whose enemies are the most powerful governments and media groups in the World.  
I understand you felt the heat and you prefer to withdraw.

But I also think, truly, that your time and energy are better placed doing your own thing than constantly trying to undermine something you no longer believe in. And I also think you owe a big apology to the people whose integrity and intentions you have questioned. It is easy to be a hater. Go for the difficult task: be a lover.

Let's move on and start over for 2018.

Renata

P.S. This saddens me, because these kinds of communication are conversations best held between friends in the private sphere, not as statements announced to the World. But I am obliged to make this response public because I am taking full responsibility (and I apologise to the DiEM25 community) for all the disturbances, locally and regionally, that my delays and your account of them have caused them.