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European political parties should respect European values

Plenary debate with Josep-Maria Terricabras

MEPs have been discussing a request to review how the European parliament funds European political parties.

The main concern is to avoid a misuse of public money and to ensure that European political parties respect European values.

European political parties are pan-European political organisations with elected members at different levels in several EU member states, and who share common goals. They may be drawn from a variety of national political parties.

The European Free Alliance was established as a European political party in 2004 and brings together parties representing stateless nations, minorities and regions.

More recently however funding scandals involving far-right parties have prompted some to argue for a review of the arrangements for funding these parties.

EFA Group President **Josep-Maria Terricabras** took part in the debate in Strasbourg. He spoke in favour of measures to avoid any misuse of funds, arguing that we must avoid being cheated by the far-right.

But he warned against linking recognition as a European political party to an increased number of MEPs. He argued that this could unfairly penalise smaller parties or groups, who nonetheless enjoy representation at other levels of government.

Finally, he warned against revising a regulation which only entered into force recently, without there being a proper review, and given that a new regulation will be brought forward in 2018.

Speaking in the debate, **Josep-Maria Terricabras** said:

"We - the Greens/EFA Group - are very reluctant to initiate a revision of a Regulation, which just entered into

force two months ago and without a proper assessment. In fact a review clause is foreseen for the new Regulation in 2018. Thus, no need for a revision now.

"The main concern of some colleagues is to prevent the misuse of European funds which has been detected as a practice of some extreme-right parties. We completely agree with that.

"Mainly we should prevent multi-party membership of MEPs, which has the only goal of maximizing funds for the party. Therefore we have to make impossible cross-membership of MEPs belonging to the same list or party. We have to avoid being cheated by them.

"However, some of the proposals may put at risk the existence and funding of pro-European small parties. Not to count members of the regional parliaments as elected members of a European Party would also be negative as a representation criterion.

"We have to be prudent, since some measures would harm the political diversity and representation of citizens.

"The proposal to increase the number of MEPs in order to be registered and financed as an EU party or foundation would probably be a first step towards eliminating the smaller groups in the Chamber.

"To receive funds, European political parties do not need to have a certain amount of MEPs in the Chamber, they only need to have any representation in the Chamber, as is the practice of all national and regional parliaments around the world.

"We have to ensure by all means that European political parties respect the fundamental values of the EU."

- [Listen to the plenary speech of Josep-Maria Terricabras](#)

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Josep Maria Terricabras

EFA President and first Vice President of the Greens/EFA Group

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