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Hungarian laws cannot be put above European Values

The Greens were disappointed yesterday by the the remarks of Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister Tibor Navracsics in a hearing with Commissioner Neelie Kroes. In an ignorant if not scandalous reply to a clear demand from the Commissioner to request an opinion of the Council of Europe on the Hungarian media legislation, Tibor Navracsics tried to place the controversial new Hungarian constitution and other laws above the democratic norms of the EU. In a private discussion before the hearing, Navracsics seems to have promised to Kroes that the Hungarian government would follow her request – but he later denied this promise in public during the hearing.

Ulrike Lunacek, foreign affairs spokesperson of the Greens/EFA group said after the hearing: *"It is not sufficient that Orbán comes to Strasbourg and sends his deputy to Brussels with a few conciliatory words for the European Parliament. The clear and critical remarks of Mme Kroes show that there is justified and grave concern about the Hungarian laws passed by this government being contradictory to the fundamental values of the EU. What we need is more than a charming PR offensive by the Hungarian government; we need clear steps that demonstrate the willingness to cooperate with their European partners and respect our shared fundamental values."*

Rui Tavares, Green member of the Committee on Civil Rights, Justice and Home Affairs added: *"From what we have heard in this hearing it is clear that the situation in Hungary is far from the comforting myth that our friends from the conservative groups claimed it to be. The Parliament should make use of the powers it got in the Lisbon Treaty; this Committee should prepare a thorough, unbiased report on the situation in Hungary. If the result proves what the evidence suggests so far, that the Hungarian government continues drifting away from our common fundamental rights, democracy and pluralism base, we have no other choice than to follow the path prescribed in the Treaties and start a procedure based on Article 7.1."*

The co-president of the Greens/EFA group, Daniel Cohn-Bendit declared: "A procedure following Article 7.1 of the Treaty on the European Union is not a tribunal, as our friends from the EPP group try to paint it. On the contrary, it is a clear, fair and fact based process that creates the opportunity to clarify which parts of the Hungarian legal system and government practice fail to comply with the fundamental values the EU is built upon. It also gives Hungary the chance to react to these concerns and prove, with concrete measures that it is determined to remain part of the European family, as Prime Minister Orbán and Deputy Prime Minister Navracsics have claimed repeatedly. "

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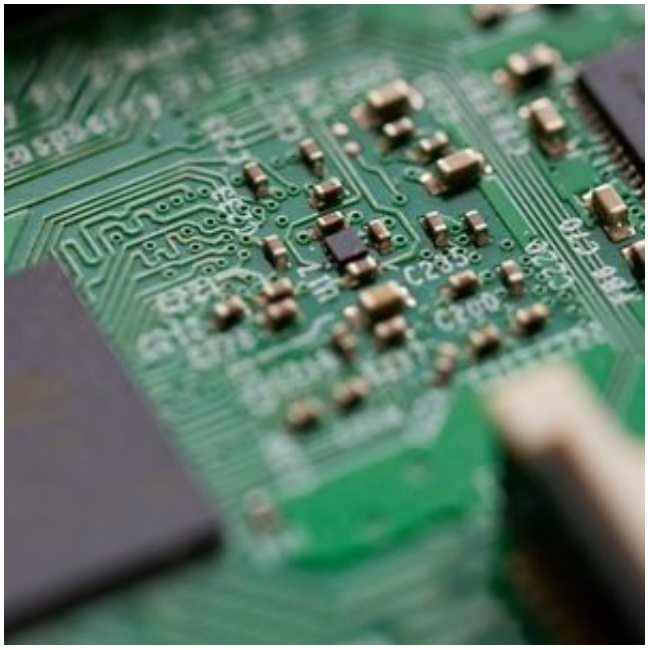


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Ulrike Lunacek

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