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Parliamentary Immunity lifted for Greek neo-Nazi MEP Ioannis Lagos – Quote from Marie Toussaint MEP

Today, Members of the European Parliament voted by a large majority of 655, to waive the immunity of MEP Ioannis Lagos, former leader of the neo-Nazi "Golden Dawn" party, who was sentenced in October by the Greek courts to 13 years in prison for "leading and belonging to a criminal organization." Several members of the neo-Nazi party, which became Greece's third largest political force in 2015, were convicted of violence against left-wing organizations and migrants, the destruction of property, intimidation, and for the assassination of anti-fascist musician, Pavlos Fyssas in 2013.

Marie Toussaint, Greens/EFA MEP and rapporteur for the immunity file for the European Parliament, comments:

"The Greek judicial system has demanded action from the European Parliament for months and it was imperative to waive the immunity of Ioannis Lagos so that he can finally face justice in his own country. Lagos' guilty sentence is for the most serious of crimes and he cannot be allowed to evade justice with impunity. The extreme methods and the past electoral success of Golden Dawn in Greece, shows why we must always stand up to fascism, hate speech and the extreme violence it gives rise to, wherever it exists.

"The waiver of immunity is in accordance with the principles laid down in European law and his crimes do not directly relate to the exercise by Mr Lagos of his duties as MEP. Ioannis Lagos had, on the day of the verdict, left Greece for Brussels in order to escape conviction for belonging to, and leading a criminal organization, possession of a weapon and breaching the law on rockets and fireworks."

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