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Press release | 08.10.2020

Bulgaria: Rule of law report

Quotes from Ska Keller MEP and Daniel Freund MEP

Members of the European Parliament have just voted (Thurs. 8 Oct.) on a report on the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights in Bulgaria, following widespread protests over a series of corruption scandals tied to the country's political elite.

Ska Keller MEP, President of the Greens/EFA group and shadow rapporteur on the rule of law in Bulgaria, comments:

"The Parliament is sending a strong signal that we cannot turn a blind eye towards EU countries that have a rule of law and fundamental rights problem. We must call them out when they are failing on upholding our common European values that each country signed up to when they join the EU. The people of Bulgaria deserve to live in a European country free from corruption and where their rights are guaranteed by the rule of law.

"We stand with the protesters on the streets of Bulgaria. The Bulgarian government should improve the rule of law record and put much greater efforts into the fight against corruption more intensively. Given the current crisis in Bulgaria, it would be premature to end the Commission's monitoring and reporting of the country through the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism."

Daniel Freund MEP, Greens/EFA Member of the Budgetary Control committee who recently visited Bulgaria, comments:

"EU funds are supposed to contribute to development and help citizens, not build villas for corrupt politicians or disappear into fake farms. The European Commission cannot stand by as the situation in Bulgaria deteriorates and corruption is widespread. The Commission should look at freezing EU funds to the government and instead directly fund beneficiaries in Bulgaria ensure that this money goes to where it's needed and not into the pockets of the corrupt.

"The people protesting are looking to Brussels for help and the EU must show that it's on the side of Bulgarian citizens. In the current negotiations on the EU's long-term budget, the Parliament is pushing for a mechanism that would support the rule of law and protect EU funds from corruption, which must not be watered down by the Council."

More:

The report voted on today expresses concern for the “significant deterioration of respect for the principles of rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights, including the independence of the judiciary, separation of powers, the fight against corruption and freedom of the media”. The report also highlights the need for the Bulgarian government to ensure tighter control on the way EU money is spent and to address concerns that EU money is used to enrich people close to the ruling EPP member party.

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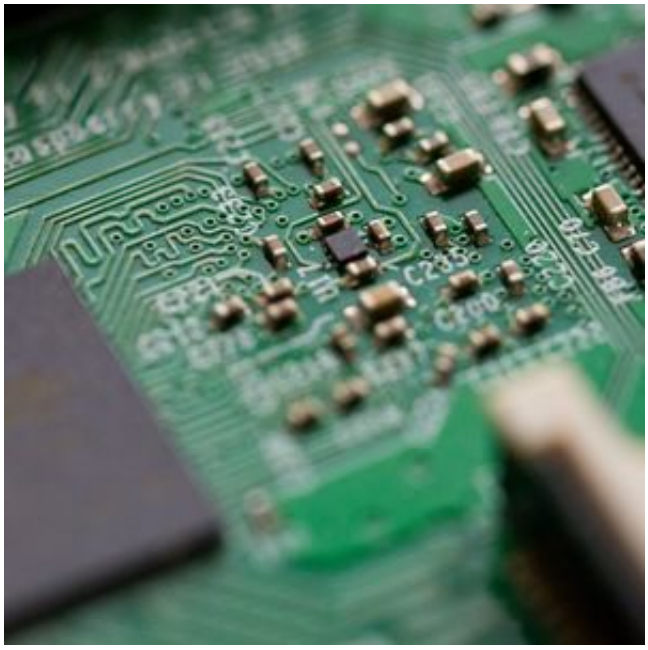

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