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Press release | 04.10.2022

Commission must not rubber stamp away the rule of law in Hungary

Hungary

Today, MEPs will debate proposals by the Commission to protect the EU budget from systemic corruption in Hungary in public procurement, under the rule of law conditionality mechanism. The Commission appears to be moving toward deeming anti-corruption proposals by the Hungarian government satisfactory enough to suggest for the Council to end the process, without any measures being imposed.

Terry Reintke MEP, Greens/EFA negotiator for the rule of law conditionality mechanism, comments:

“Less than a month after MEPs declared Hungary is no longer a democracy. Still, the European Commission is not doing enough to freeze funding to Hungary and to properly protect the EU budget. The Commission's proposals under the Conditionality Mechanism are too narrow and inadequate to address systemic corruption and state capture in Hungary."

“The Commission must fulfil its role of the Guardian of the Treaties and stop treating the rule of law as negotiable and use the conditionality mechanism properly. This cannot just be a paper tool that is nice in theory. Therefore, the Commission should launch a new conditionality check based on the problems with the independence of the judiciary in Hungary, where the budgetary implications are clear-cut.”

Daniel Freund MEP, Greens/EFA negotiator for the rule of law conditionality mechanism, comments:

"The conditions that the Commission has set are far too weak. Viktor Orbán and Fidesz have spent the last twelve years dismantling democracy and the rule of law. The Commission has not proposed a single measure that would make courts and public prosecutors independent again."

“Without an independent judiciary or an independent prosecutor, anti-corruption measures will not work. Hungary is no longer a democracy and the Commission’s efforts will not change that without decisive action. With the rule of law mechanism, the Commission has a strong instrument that it is employing way too late and far too cautiously. It is absurd that Viktor Orbán can avert these sanctions before the end of the year with a few pseudo-reforms.”

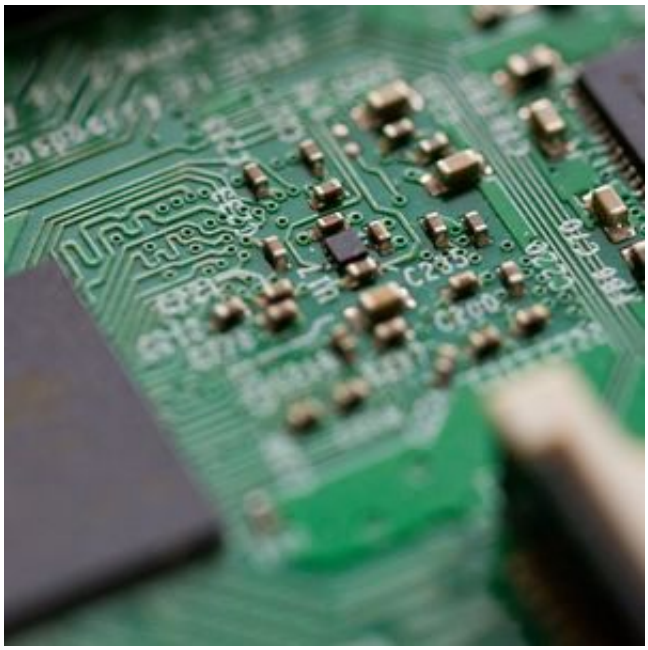
More:

The debate can be followed live from after 15:00 here.
The Commission finally triggered the conditionality mechanism against the Hungarian government in April this year, which resulted in the proposal to suspend some EU funds. The previous plenary session voted on Greens/EFA MEP, Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield's report into the "Existence of a clear risk of a serious breach by Hungary of the values on which the Union is founded". The report states that Hungary has moved from being a democracy to a 'hybrid regime of electoral autocracy'.

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