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Commission to trigger rule of law conditionality mechanism against Hungary

Quotes from Daniel Freund MEP & Terry Reintke MEP

The President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, has announced that the Commission will trigger the Rule of Law Conditionality Mechanism against the Hungarian government. The Conditionality Mechanism has been in place since January 2021. The Greens/EFA Group took the Commission to the European Court of Justice over their failure to trigger the Mechanism. The Greens/EFA Group now call on the Commission to follow through with the announcement and formally trigger the mechanism without delay.

Daniel Freund MEP, Greens/EFA Member who negotiated the text on behalf of the group from the Budgetary Control Committee, comments:

“The launching of the mechanism is a welcome and necessary step, but it comes too late. This should have been triggered ages ago. There are numerous cases of concern including around the independence of judiciary and other public bodies, and the lack of proper safeguards related to the fight against corruption. But these issues aren’t new.

“It was a strategic mistake not to trigger the mechanism long before the Hungarian elections. The Commission’s lack of action on Hungary has shown that wannabe autocrats in other Member States can easily follow Orban’s lead and bend the rules of democracy while using EU money for their own benefit. The Commission must now follow through on today’s announcement and formally trigger the mechanism.”

Terry Reintke MEP, Greens/EFA Member who negotiated the text on behalf of the group from the in Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee, and shadow rapporteur on Poland, comments:

“We welcome that the Commission has announced that it will finally take action and launch the conditionality mechanism against Hungary. The Commission must show that they are serious about defending the rule of law by taking action against the government of Poland, as well.

“There is a strong case to be made for triggering the regulation against the Polish government and the longer the Commission dithers, the worse the damage to democracy will become. So long as the independence of the judiciary is in question and ECJ rulings are not implemented, the rule of law is under threat in Poland. The Commission, as guardian of the Treaties, must act to defend European values and the rule of law.”

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