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EFA President welcomes EP vote on Hungary

Press release by EFA MEP J-M Terricabras (Catalonia)

Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya MEP and President of the EFA Group in the European Parliament, **Josep-Maria Terricabras**, has strongly welcomed the European Parliament's decision to recommend to the Member States to apply article 7 of the Treaty on European Union, because it believes that there are serious indications of violation of the rule of law by the Hungarian government headed by Viktor Orbán.

Terricabras described the overwhelming vote as *"a positive decision for the European project, which is going through one of its most difficult periods. Fundamental rights and the rule of law are the reason for being in Europe "*and he added that it might be *"the most important decision of the legislature. "*

"The Hungarian government has taken many decisions contrary to European values such as attacking the independence of the media, judges and the academic world. They have tried to silence all those critical of their actions as a government," said Terricabras. *"The Hungarian people deserve more. They have the right to freedom of expression, non-discrimination, tolerance and justice expected from European standards,"* he added.

The European Parliament report was approved by 448 votes in favour and 197 against.

"It is important that the proposal has been approved by a broad majority and that members of the European People's Party have voted in favour because it means that they are willing to defend European values, even if it means voting against members of their own political family," he said. In this regard, for Terricabras *"it is significant that members of the Spanish People's Party abstained."*

"We need courageous institutions with political will, to send a clear message: the European Union will not sit idly by and turn a blind eye when its core values are threatened. In this regard, it would be worth the Spanish state taking note."

The report prepared by Dutch Green MEP, Judith Sargentini, highlights the following areas of concern for the European Parliament:

- The functioning of the constitutional and electoral system.

- The independence of the judiciary and other institutions, as well as judges.

- Corruption and conflicts of interests.

- Data protection and privacy.

- Freedom of expression.

- Academic freedom.

- Freedom of religion.

- Freedom of association.

- The right to equal treatment.

- The rights of minorities, including the Gypsy and Jewish population, as well as protection against hate speech for those minorities.

- The fundamental rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees.

- Economic and social rights.

The proposal will now be debated by the EU Member States to the European Council.

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[Quote from Terry Reintke]

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Josep Maria Terricabras

EFA President and first Vice President of the Greens/EFA Group

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