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[Press release](#) | 24.10.2018

Austrian government using Orban's playbook

Civil society space

The Austrian government wants to exclude environmental organisations from environmental impact assessments. The amendment to the Environmental Impact Assessment Act will be put to the vote tomorrow (Thursday, 25 October) in the Austrian National Council. The amendments aim to exclude Austrian environmental organisations if they have fewer than 100 members. Therefore, many non-governmental organisations would be excluded from environmental impact assessment procedures for major construction projects such as roads and water management, as well as from procedures under the Habitats and Water Framework Directives. The organisations would also be forced to pass the names and addresses of their members to the Ministry of the Environment.

Ska Keller, President of the **Greens/EFA** Group in the European Parliament, warns against EU infringement proceedings:

"The Austrian Federal Government is pushing ahead with the Orbanisation of Austria. The proposals are clearly directed against civil society participation and violate European data protection law as well as the European Directive on Environmental Impact Assessments. If the Austrian Federal Government does not withdraw this attack on environmental groups and civil rights, the EU Commission must initiate infringement proceedings".

Thomas Waitz, agricultural policy spokesman for the **Greens/EFA** Group:

"Schwarz-Blau wants to muzzle environmental organisations and silence public participation. Less democratic participation means more environmental destruction. Environment Minister Elisabeth Köstinger must change her attitude and seek dialogue with the environmental organisations".

[Questions by Thomas Waitz to the European Commission](#)

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