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Freedom of the press

EU Parliament snuffs out resolutions on press freedom in Italy and Europe

A right-wing majority in the European Parliament today succeeded (1) by a very narrow margin (2) in rejecting tabled resolutions addressing press freedom in Italy and Europe.

Greens/EFA President **Rebecca Harms** and Dutch Green MEP **Judith Sargentini**, EP civil liberties committee member and co-author of the Greens/EFA Resolution (1), said:

"This is a black day for press freedom in Europe. We are bitterly disappointed that a right-wing majority of Conservatives, Christian Democrats and Eurosceptics has succeeded in rejecting EU Parliament resolutions in support of press freedom in Italy and Europe. A call for a EU Directive against concentration of media ownership has therefore been silenced. The votes were very tight but send a far-reaching message that contradicts the fundamental values of the European Union.

Silvio Berlusconi's control of both government and media in Italy is profoundly undemocratic. A recent court judgment against Berlusconi's media company and a ridiculous attempt by a Berlusconi channel to discredit the judge are further proof, if any was needed. (2)

While Italy's problems certainly stand out, the proposed EU Parliament resolutions addressed the EU as a whole. We demand a free and open press in countries that wish to join the EU - to accept anything less from existing members is hypocrisy. The Greens hope that a new and vigorous debate on media freedom can arise out of the ashes of these stifled resolutions in the EU Parliament."

*** ENDS ***

Notes to editors:

(1) Read the Greens/EFA resolution on press freedom in Italy

(2) Greens/EFA MEPs wore turquoise scarves in support of Italian judge Raimondo Mesiano, who ruled against Berlusconi's media company in a bribery case recently. A TV documentary aired on a Berlusconi-owned channel subsequently secretly filmed the judge with a narration of insinuating comments attempting to discredit him, commenting even on his turquoise colour of socks.

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