Press release | 28.05.2013

Fundamental rights and justice

EU-wide right to lawyer established; a breakthrough for basic rights

EU rules on the right of access to a lawyer in criminal proceedings were finalised in a final round of trialogue negotiations between the European Parliament and Council this evening. Green justice and home affairs spokesperson **Jan Philipp Albrecht** welcomed the deal, stating:

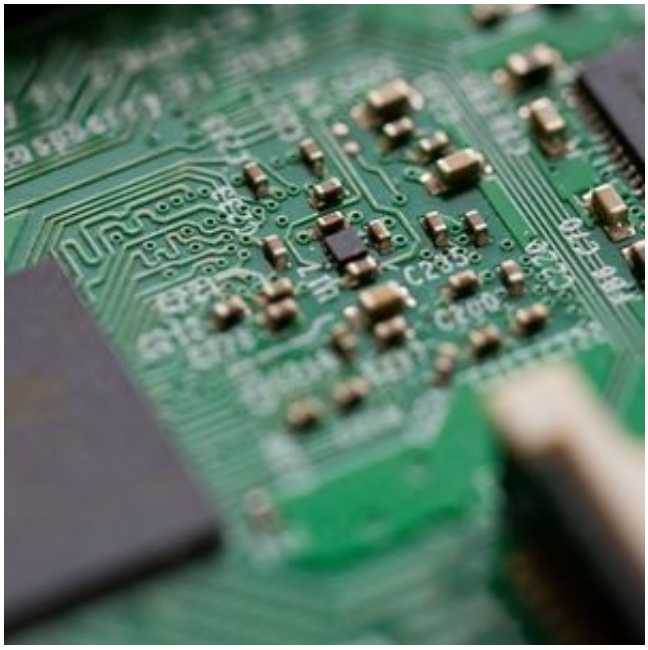
"Today's agreement on establishing the right of access to a lawyer across the EU is a major breakthrough for basic citizens' rights in Europe. The outcome will ensure a high standard of protection for all those in criminal proceedings thanks to the insistence of the European Parliament, which faced down attempts by EU governments to water down the legislation. The agreement will ensure that basic juridical standards, like the right to a fair trial, are made binding and not simply left to the whims of member states.

"For years EU member states have simply placed blind faith in the ability of different jurisdictions to provide the same level of rights, despite the widely varying degrees of rights and protection offered to suspects and accused citizens in different member states. The legislation agreed today marks an important step towards common rights and standards, along the way towards a unified system. Further progress must now follow. Without common standards guaranteeing a high level of rights, there can be no further deepening of cooperation between police and justice authorities in the EU."

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Jan Philipp Albrecht

Member

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