Press release | 20.01.2016

Fundamental rights

Presumption of innocence guaranteed across Europe under new EU rules

The European Parliament today adopted a final legislative agreement, which establishes the presumption of innocence in criminal proceedings in EU law. After the vote, Green justice and home affairs spokesperson **Jan Philipp Albrecht** said:

"The new rules adopted today will set out EU-wide minimum standards on the presumption of innocence. The presumption of innocence is a fundamental principle of the rule of law and a democratic justice system, which ensures that suspects or those accused of breaking the law are innocent until proven guilty. Some EU governments had wanted to have this basic right waved in certain circumstances but thankfully this was not included in the final agreement.

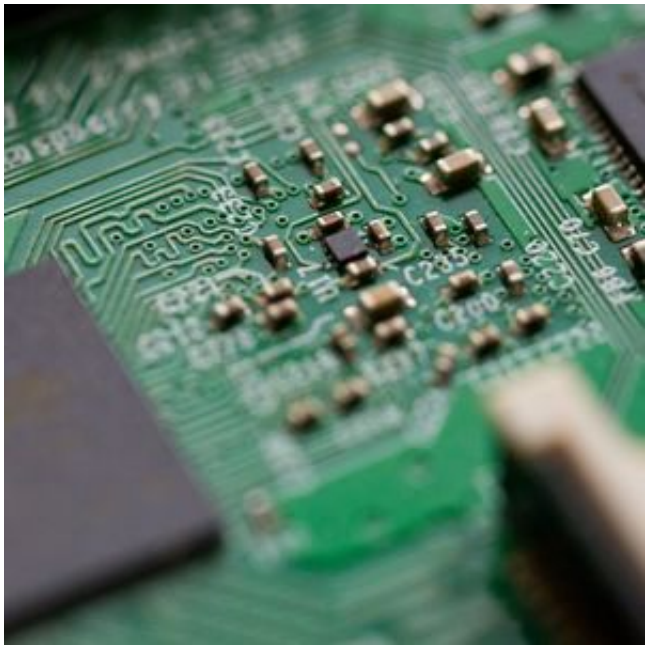
"The legislation also establishes the right of suspects and accused persons to be present in trials, as well as the right to remain silent. Illegally obtained evidence will not be admissible in legal proceedings.

"This legislation is another important step in realising EU-wide minimum standards in criminal proceedings. In addition to the adoption of EU legislation on the protection of children in criminal proceedings, there now needs to be progress on EU rules on legal aid. The European Commission should also propose further measures, such as in the field of pre-trial detention."

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Jan Philipp Albrecht

Member

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