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Greens/EFA Group call for inquiry committee into allegations of spying on EU officials

Hungary

The Greens/EFA Group are calling for a committee of inquiry to be set up inside the European Parliament to look into the revelations put forward by Direkt 36, De Tijd, Der Spiegel and Der Standard, that the Hungarian state appears to have been spying on EU officials. Any allegations of a Member State spying on EU institutions and EU officials are incredibly serious and require all tools to be deployed to uncover the extent of this case.

Terry Reintke MEP, President of the Greens/EFA Group, comments:

“For more than a decade, Viktor Orbán has been deploying anti-democratic tactics at home and now it seems he has been deploying an autocratic-style spying network in Brussels. This isn’t some Cold War le Carré novel, there must be no space for espionage in modern EU policy-making. If it proves to be true that Hungary has been undermining the EU with these vile spy tactics, then the Council and Commission must say enough is enough.

“The allegations of intelligence infiltration within the European Commission must be urgently and thoroughly investigated through a European Parliament inquiry committee. We demand full clarity on the scope of Orbán’s alleged spy network. We need to know who may have been targeted, what information could have been harvested and and most importantly, given Fidesz’ links with Russia and China, where this intelligence has been sent to.

“We need to clarify what role Commissioner Olivér Várhelyi, formerly the head of the Hungarian EU delegation, may have played in this alleged network. It seems Orbán showed no hesitation in spying on OLAF to obstruct corruption investigations against himself and his family. But an espionage network infiltrating European institutions crosses every red line. If sensitive data has indeed leaked, this poses a severe security risk, and the Council must finally act by stripping Hungary of its voting rights.”

Bas Eickhout MEP, President of the Greens/EFA Group, comments:

"The reported allegations concerning espionage by the Hungarian authorities at the EU are unprecedented. The very allegation that Hungary may have used aggressive intelligence techniques is dangerous and deeply

worrying. The potential use of Hungarian intelligence agents under diplomatic cover along with the recruitment of EU officials to gain access to confidential information and manipulate Commission documents is shocking. Such actions by a Member State fully jeopardises the trust and sincere cooperation necessary for the functioning of our Union.

“The revelations that this took place while now Commissioner Várhelyi headed the Permanent Representation gives rise to great concern about his possible involvement. The Parliament and Commission must do everything within their power to fully investigate these reports, hold those responsible accountable, and ensure that no such activities continue in the present. We cannot allow a Member State to treat the EU as an enemy."

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