Press release | 07.03.2012

Hungary

Commission infringement progress welcome; bigger picture of democratic roll-back unresolved

The European Commission today announced it would be continuing with infringement proceedings against the Hungarian government for the proposed laws threatening the independence of the judiciary and the data protection authority, as well as seeking further clarification over a new law affecting the independence of the central bank (1). The Greens welcomed the decision but expressed concern that the Commission is continuing to ignore the wider concerns with constitutional changes, which are leading to a scale-back of democracy in Hungary. Commenting after the announcement, Greens/EFA co-president **Dany Cohn-Bendit** said:

"The decision by the Commission to proceed with infringement proceedings against the Hungarian government in certain areas is a welcome step but, by restricting its analysis to such narrow areas, the Commission is ignoring the bigger picture of democratic roll-back in Hungary. The Commission is right to take action to address the 'reforms' threatening the independence of the judiciary and the data protection authority. However, in focusing on these narrow areas, the Commission is continuing to ignore wider concerns with constitutional changes, which are completely at odds with the core values on which the EU is founded and which the Commission, as guardian of the Treaty, has a duty to defend."

Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** continued:

"The EU must take stronger action in defence of core EU values and prevent the slide away from democracy in Hungary, which is totally against the interests of its citizens and its economy. If the Commission lacks the courage to act, the EU Parliament must fill the void. The Greens/EFA group has already called for the initiation of a procedure under Article 7.1 of the EU Treaty to examine whether Hungary is in breach of EU fundamental values (2) and will continue to push for this. Clearly, the best solution for all would be for the Orban government to have a belated change of heart."

(1) See Commission statement:
http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/12/222&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

(2) See press release of 5 January: http://www.greens-efa.eu/democracy-in-hungary-5109.html
and also press release and letter to Commission President Barroso at http://www.greens-efa.eu/de/letter-to-barroso-5104.html

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Press release

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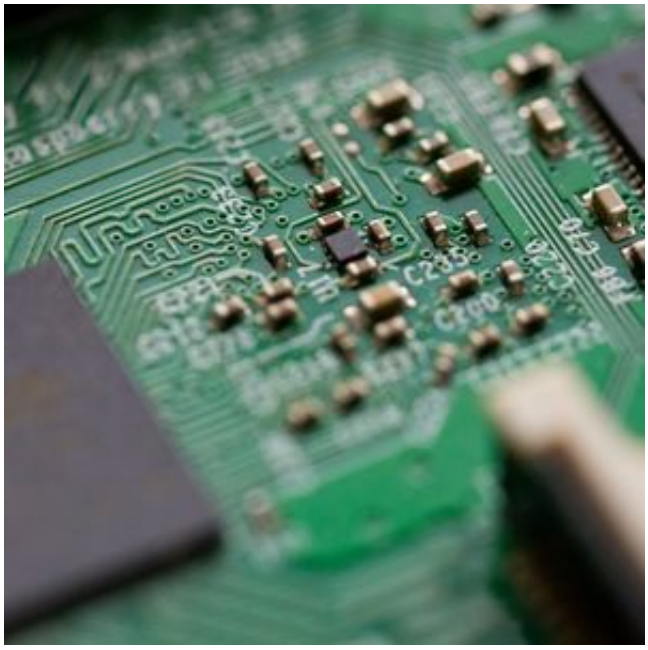


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