Press release | 11.03.2013

Hungary

Orban government again back-steps on democracy with new constitutional amendments

The Hungarian parliament today passed a series of constitutional amendments undermining the role of the independent Constitutional Court and the rights of minorities. The Greens hit out at the votes, which come just as the European Parliament is concluding an assessment of previous controversial constitutional reforms, democracy and fundamental rights in Hungary, and called on the European Commission and Council to take action. Commenting on the situation, Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** said:

"The constitutional amendments passed today sadly seem to be a further step back for democracy in Hungary. There is a worrying sense of déja-vu, with anti-democratic laws again being passed and the Orban-led government ignoring the concerns raised by international human rights bodies.

"If these concerns are confirmed by the Venice Commission evaluation, this recurring desire to ignore the fundamental rights on which the European Union is founded cannot be ignored, and the Commission and Council must use the instruments at their disposal to prevent further democratic roll-back in Hungary. However, this situation highlights the need to consider expanding the instruments at the disposal of EU institutions for addressing breaches of fundamental values in member states, as the 'nuclear option' of Article 7 is clearly proving to be an inflexible and cumbersome procedure in such cases."

Greens/EFA MEP and European Parliament draftsperson on democracy, fundamental rights and the rule of law in Hungary **Rui Tavares** (Portugal) said:

"These controversial constitutional amendments clearly are a cause for concern in the context of the ongoing European Parliament assessment of democracy and fundamental rights in Hungary, in cooperation with the Hungarian authorities. If, as it seems, these amendments compromise the prerogatives of the Constitutional Court and undermine fundamental rights, this would clearly be a backward step and would force the Union and its institutions to reopen their assessment of certain issues in Hungary."

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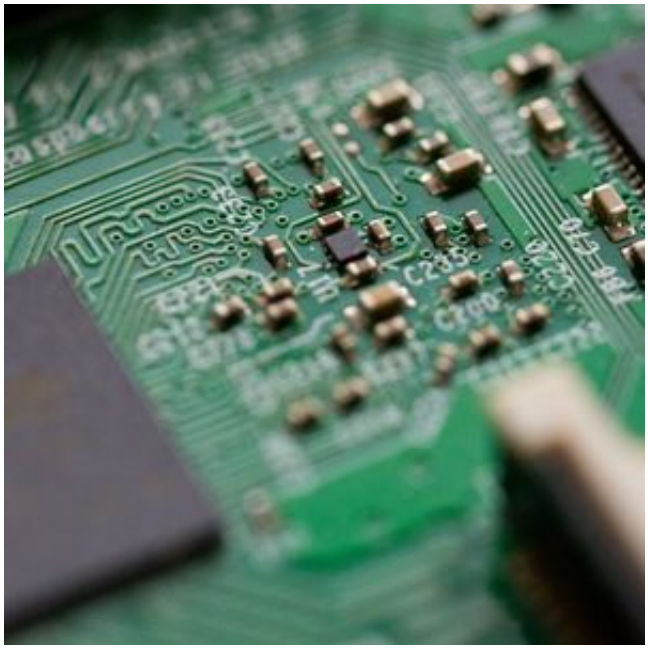


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Rebecca Harms

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