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Press release | 05.11.2014

Hungary defamation case

Court ruling a symbolic victory for minorities receiving abuse in Hungary

The district court of Budapest yesterday ruled in favour of Green MEP Ulrike Lunacek in a defamation case brought against the Hungarian journalist Zsolt Bayer for injurious statements made on Hungarian television. Commenting on the ruling, **Ulrike Lunacek** said:

"It is welcome that the Hungarian judiciary has taken action against the defamatory statements made by Zsolt Bayer in this case but yesterday's ruling should also be taken as a symbolic victory for all those who have been insulted by Bayer and others in similar and sometimes more offensive ways.

"The Greens have consistently expressed concern about the erosion of fundamental rights in Hungary, as well as the worrying rise of right-wing populism and campaigns against minorities and those who support them. Yesterday's ruling against the anti-Semitic and anti-Roma journalist Zsolt Bayer is a small but symbolically-important development in this regard. The Budapest district court has proved that such injurious behaviour has consequences."

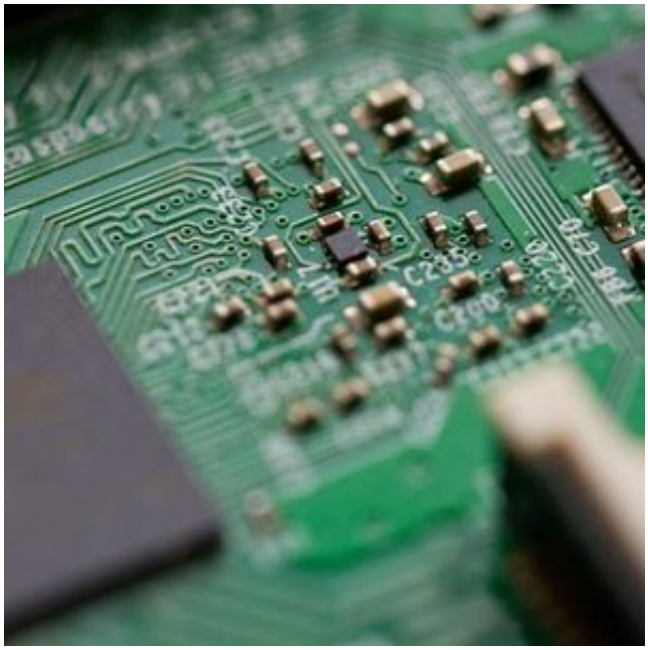
Background:

In February 2012, the known as anti-Semitic and anti-Roma journalist Zsolt Bayer engaged in a verbal attack of Ulrike Lunacek and EU commissioner Nelly Kroes on the Hungarian Echo TV programme. Ulrike Lunacek initially brought a case to the Hungarian media authority but this was not considered due to lack of jurisdiction. In consequence, she launched a private lawsuit against Bayer in the Budapest district court. Yesterday's ruling is the first instance judgment in this case, with the court fining Bayer 500,000 Forints (about €1,600). The European Parliament's Civil Liberties committee in 2012 held a hearing on the situation in Hungary. More information here.

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Responsible MEPs



Ulrike Lunacek

EP Vice-President, Member

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