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Press release | 09.06.2015

Investigative journalism fund

Commission under fire for blocking proposed fund

The Greens/EFA group in the EU Parliament today submitted a complaint to the European Ombudsman against the European Commission for blocking a proposed funding programme under the EU budget aimed at promoting cross-border investigative journalism. The complaint focuses on the Commission's use of dubious administrative procedures not to implement a programme for investigative journalism, despite the fund having been proposed by the European Parliament in 2009 and officially included as an EU budget line from 2010-14 (1). Commenting on the case, Green MEP **Benedek Javor** said:

"It is unacceptable that the Commission has used underhand administrative methods to block this important initiative. The role of investigative journalism in a democracy is vital, as has been confirmed by the recent Luxembourg Leaks revelations. The EU should be doing all in its power to promote this important democratic tool and that was the reason the European Parliament proposed this fund. It is inexplicable and reflects badly on the credibility of the EU for the Commission to go to such lengths to prevent this programme from taking off."

Green budgetary spokesperson **Helga Truepel** said:

"We are now calling on the Ombusman to investigate the matter and the methods used by the Commission to block the funding. In particular, it is important to clarify how the conclusions of the feasibility study carried out were altered and who in the Commission was responsible for this. The Greens/EFA group will continue to push for this programme to be included in the negotiations on the forthcoming EU budget, as we have done in the past."

(1) The European Parliament proposed a research grant scheme to support cross-border investigative journalism in 2009. A budget line was included in the EU budget between 2010 and 2014 but the European Commission made sure the fund was not implemented during that period and the budget line was dropped in 2015 without any trial run either as a pilot project or a preparatory action.

In addition, the conclusions of the feasibility study commissioned in the framework of the preparatory actions and carried out by an expert team were reversed from positive to negative when the study was finally published in March 2015. The expert team last week issued a statement complaining about the manipulation of its findings: http://www.aej-uk.org/investigative-pr.pdf

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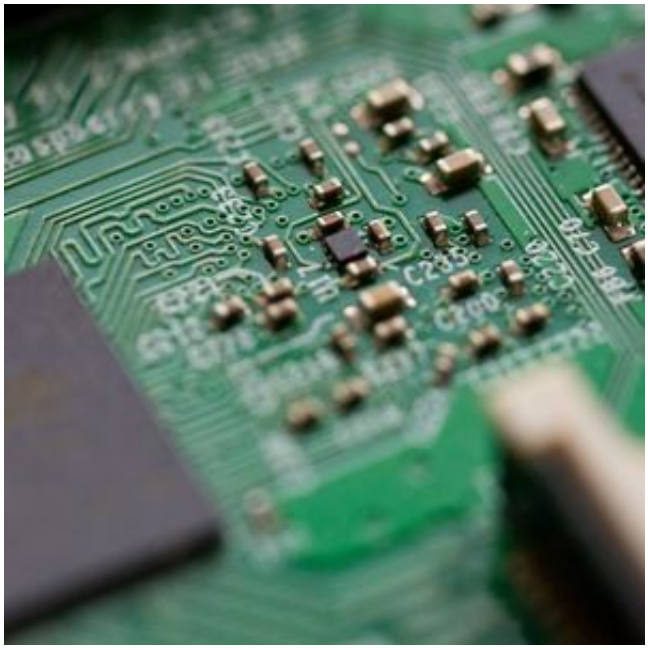


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Benedek Jávor

Former Member



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