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[Press release](#) | 17.04.2019

Parliament votes for EU measures to support justice, rights and values

Rule of law

Today, the European Parliament has just voted to confirm two complimentary programmes that will help support the rule of law in the EU. The **Rights and Values Programme** will ensure that the European Union can directly support NGOs or other organisations that work on advancing rights, European values, democracy and the rule of law. Several EU governments, such as those in Hungary and Poland, have used various methods to attempt to restrict funds for NGOs and other civil society actors promoting the basic principles that the EU is based on.

The **Justice Programme** includes greater support for citizens, civil society and legal experts and contribute to the development of justice in the EU, based on the rule of law, on mutual recognition and mutual trust between judicial professionals. In several EU countries, namely Poland, Hungary, Romania and Malta, the independence and integrity of the judiciary is under threat from governmental interference.

Respect for the rule of law within the Union is a prerequisite for the protection of fundamental rights, as well as for upholding all rights and obligations deriving from the Treaties.

Heidi Hautala, Greens/EFA rapporteur on the **EU Justice Programme**, comments:

"Access to justice and the independence of judiciaries across the EU are under threat. That's why we need the tools to support the judicial officials and today's vote on the Justice Programme will provide exactly that. There is broad political support for improving the justice system across the EU and we need to ensure that all citizens regardless of gender or ethnicity are able to access justice and effective redress. Non-discriminatory access to justice and gender mainstreaming are at the heart of this initiative."

Bodil Valero, Greens/EFA rapporteur on the **Rights and Values Programme**, comments:

"In several countries we see the rule of law under threat as the pillars of democracy are being undermined by corruption and the autocratic whims of leaders like Viktor Orbán. The Rights and Values Programme will help provide support for those organisations that work tirelessly for democracy, human rights and the values we all share, in countries where the rule of law is wavering."

"Civil society actors are often the targets of governmental attacks, which is why the EU should be able to provide NGOs and the vital work they do with support when they're under threat."

More:

The Greens/EFA group Presidents Ska Keller and Philippe Lamberts, outlined plans for measures to strengthen the rule of law in Europe, in an article published yesterday here:

<https://euobserver.com/opinion/144677>

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