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[Press release](#) | 03.05.2022

## Reform of the EU electoral law: Big wins to strengthen Europe's democracy

The Greens/EFA group brought to the plenary several proposals to make universal suffrage a fairer process. The report adopted today by the parliament on the reform of the European electoral law incorporates provisions on what in legal terms is already known as the 'Junqueras doctrine'.

Oriol Junqueras was elected as an EFA MEP in 2019, unfortunately, he was never able to take his position as a Member of the Parliament because he was in jail as a political prisoner following the Catalan referendum. The Junqueras doctrine, defended in the court of Luxembourg by the lawyer Andreu Van den Eynde, also allowed Carles Puigdemont, Toni Comín and Clara Ponsatí to become fully-fledged MEPs and take their seats on the chamber.

Following the Junqueras case, where, in violation of EU law, an EFA MEP was stripped of his parliamentary immunity over political interests, the Greens/EFA group have pushed for the establishment of an independent electoral authority to solve and rule on disputes about MEP immunity cases.

The text also includes many forward-thinking proposals like the creation of a EU Constituency, as well as a recommendation to decrease the voting age at 16, the introduction of gender balanced lists through quotas or zipped lists and transnational lists.

### **Jordi Solé EFA Group President said:**

*"As European and Catalan citizens committed to democracy and to equal and fair political participation, we celebrate the inclusion on the Report of the provisions to enforce the ECJ ruling on Junqueras case. There is an explicit provision saying that immunity is acquired since the official declaration of the results, without any further requirements. Therefore, the inclusion of the "Junqueras Doctrine" is a big win, a setback to Spanish attempts to silence us, and a big step forward on our pursue to strengthen European democracy".*

*"Today the European Parliament sends a clear message: the need to deepen European democracy through a necessary reform of the Electoral Law. The European Parliament calls for more citizen participation. The creation of transnational lists for the next elections in 2024, the recommendation to lower the voting age to 16 years and the introduction of gender-balanced electoral lists, are crucial steps for this undertaking. We, Greens/EFA, have been a driving force for such positive outcome."*

### **Diana Riba ERC MEP said:**

*“It is important that, today, Parliament has taken a clear stand in protecting members’ immunity and their electorate, so we can avoid Member states being able to manipulate through various legal arguments, the results of the European votes, as was the case with Oriol Junqueras.”*

*“Thanks to that judicial victory, we now have clear jurisprudence and we know that an MEP has immunity from the moment of proclamation of the results. “*

*“This is a victory not only for the Catalan Republican cause, but for the democratic cause in Europe.”*

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