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Rights in criminal proceedings

New rules ensure broad information for accused persons and suspects in criminal proceedings

New EU rules strengthening the right to information of accused persons and suspects in criminal proceedings were today adopted by the European Parliament's civil liberties committee (1). The Greens welcomed the new rules, which will ensure suspects and accused persons are given information on their rights in a language they understand prior to any interview, as well as access to materials relating to the case. After the vote, Green home affaires spokesperson **Jan Philipp Albrecht** said:

"These rules are an important step towards binding minimum standards in criminal proceedings. In the future, all European citizens accused or suspected of a crime will be informed about their rights in a language they can understand. Unfortunately, the Commission has done the second step before the first: it would have made much more sense to substantially harmonise these rights first before dealing with applicable information. The content of the new letter of rights will now be clarified in the forthcoming EU legislation on access to a lawyer. Member states must now clear the path towards harmonised rights in the EU."

(1) The committee endorsed a legislative agreement on the directive on the right to information in criminal proceedings. The directive is the so called 'B measure' of the 'roadmap for strengthening procedural rights of suspected or accused persons in criminal proceedings', which the Council presented in November 2009. The right to interpretation and translation, the right to communication with relatives and the right to access to a lawyer also belong to the roadmap, which is aimed at setting common minimum standards for criminal proceedings.

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Responsible MEPs



Jan Philipp Albrecht

Member

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