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[Press release](#) | 13.12.2023

Rule of law & EU policy must not be blackmailed by Orbán

Hungary

Today, the leaders of the main democratic political groups in the European Parliament are sending a [letter](#) to the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, ahead of the Commission's expected decision to proceed with payments under Cohesion Policy to Hungary. The Commission is scheduled to agree to release funding despite detailed analysis, which shows that the Commission's own conditions have yet to be met by Budapest.

Philippe Lamberts MEP, President of the Greens/EFA Group, comments:

“The Commission needs to act as the guardian of the treaties and protect the rule of law and contribute to the return of European democratic standards in Hungary instead of undermining it. The Commission arguing that the Hungarian government has met the necessary criteria shows that they are ignoring both the legal and the political reality. It seems that the Commission is willing to let slide, for political purposes, the fact that Hungary is no longer a democracy. The main democratic groups in the European Parliament all disagree with the legal assessment of the Commission and oppose the decision it is about to take.”

“The day after the Hungarian Parliament adopted the sovereignty law, which will potentially jail opposition politicians and criminalise civil society, the Commission intends to release ten billion euros of EU money. This deal comes without the necessary safeguards to ensure that EU funds will not be lost to corruption or lead to the further degradation of democracy and the rule of law or removal of people's rights.”

Terry Reintke MEP, President of the Greens/EFA Group, comments:

“Viktor Orbán is undermining EU decision making and support for Ukraine, and being rewarded for it. The fact that both the Commission and Council have allowed this inevitable situation is a dismal failure. For years now Viktor Orbán has been playing this cat and mouse game of making grand threats, followed by limited concessions and ultimately getting his way. This move will only embolden wannabe autocrats across this continent by showing that they can get away with trashing the rules without consequence.”

“It is a fundamental failure of the Council not to properly pursue the Article 7 procedure for Hungary and for fellow EU leaders to hold the Hungarian government to account. The EU needs to move beyond unanimity in foreign policy and budgetary powers in the Council if the EU is to be a serious and credible”

actor. We cannot let down our Ukrainian friends who are literally spilling their blood on the frontlines for European values. We must not allow Putin's friend in Europe to derail the EU's commitment to Kyiv.”

More:

The joint letter signed by European Parliament Group leaders is [available here](#). The [Hungarian Helsinki Committee](#) and [Verfassungsblog](#) have undertaken detailed analysis of the Commission's conditions to the Hungarian government. Last year the European Parliament [recognised](#) that Hungary can no longer be considered a democracy, but a hybrid regime of electoral autocracy.

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