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Press release | 22.12.2011

Serbia

European Commission withholds crucial information about Serbian justice reform

The European Commission seems to have withheld important information in its progress report on judicial reform in Serbia. Dutch Green MEP Marije Cornelissen received a confidential evaluation report that strongly criticizes the process of reappointment of judges. The European Commission however says in its official progress report of October that the process is going well. Cornelissen asked the Commission for an explanation.

Cornelissen: *"We need to be able to trust the information of the European Commission. This is information that the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers base their decisions on. Nobody is served by swiping failures under the carpet. Not the EU, nor Serbia. Problems should be discussed to implement necessary reforms´.*
The internal monitoring report of the EU Delegation condemns the events surrounding the reappointment of Serbian judges in blunt terms: ´the entire decision review process was conducted only to satisfy form and is a schoolbook example of travesty of justice´. In contradiction to this, the progress report says: 'the review of judges has so far been conducted in a satisfactory manner. Despite some procedural shortcomings, the majority of decisions were generally taken in line with the guidelines´.
The Green group supports the process of accession of Serbia to the EU wholeheartedly and notices many improvements in Serbia. ´I note that the prospect of accession has put in motion important reforms in Serbia. We expect the Commission to make an honest assessment of the progress Serbia makes".

Cornelissen has asked the European Commission about the discrepancy between the confidential evaluation and the public progress report. She also asked how the Commission will tackle the problems with judicial reform in Serbia.

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