Press release | 08.06.2012

Ukraine

Football must not divert attention from serious political problems

With the European football championships starting today, amidst persisting concerns about the political and rights situation in Ukraine, Green MEPs are seeking to draw attention to the ongoing problems in the country. Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** and foreign affairs spokesperson **Werner Schulz** will travel to the Ukraine from 13-15 June, with a view to assessing the human rights situation in the country. Ahead of the visit and at the outset of the championships, the Green Euro-MPs stated:

"The Euro football championships should not divert attention from the ongoing political repression in the Ukraine. Instead, the event should be used as an opportunity to apply pressure on president Viktor Yanukovych to stop rolling back democratic rights and freedoms in the country. Visiting football fans, sportsmen and politicians should not shield their eyes from the rights abuses in Ukraine and should use their experience there to become advocates for an end to repression, notably the treatment of opposition politicians like Yulia Tymoshenko."

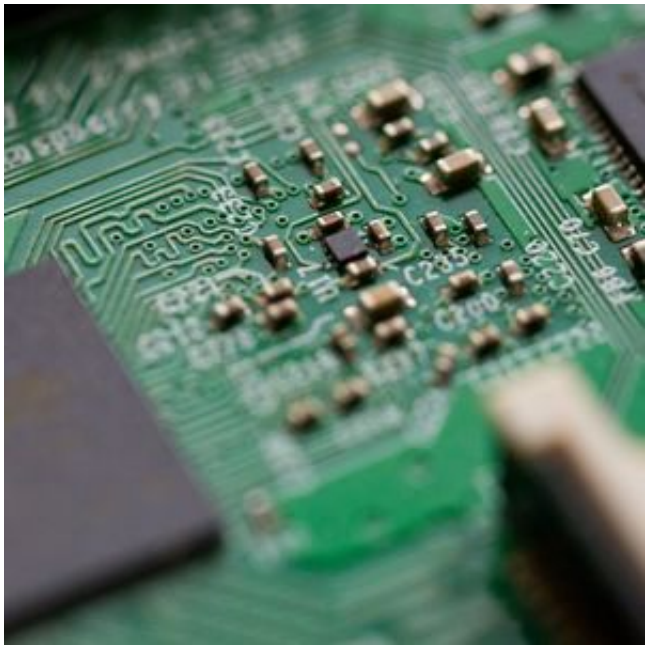
As part of their visit, Rebecca Harms and Werner Schulz will try to visit imprisoned opposition politicians. They will also raise awareness on the rights situation in the Ukraine at the Metalist Stadium in Kharkiv. Their visit will include meetings with politicians from the opposition Udar party, with Grygoriy Nemyrva from the Batkivshchyna party, Olga Aivazovska from OPORA (the Ukrainian electoral monitoring organisation) and with members of the Gorshenin Institute.

Rebecca Harms and Werner Schulz will host a press conference on Thursday, 14 June, at the offices of the Heinrich Böll Stiftung in Kiev.

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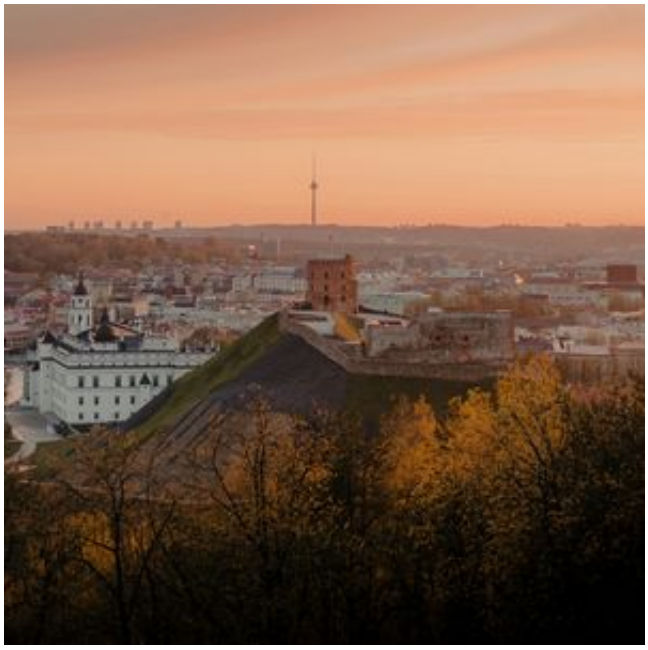
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Rebecca Harms

Member

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