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News | 11.07.2023

Diana Riba: Freedom of expression and the right to dissent are not mere privileges but essential pillars of a vibrant and open society.

EFA MEP Diana Riba I Giner intervened in plenary ahead of today's vote for the report on the initiative that aims to protect journalists and human rights defenders in strategic lawsuits against public participation (SLAPP).

The Catalan MEP warned about the decay of the freedom of expression and information in Europe and the alarming increase in legal persecution against journalists and political opponents across member states, some even using spyware against their own citizens.

“Freedom of expression and freedom of information has deteriorated alarmingly in recent years in Europe
- The number of gag lawsuits filed in member states has risen sharply”

“And in countries such as Poland, media laws have already been passed that directly violate the principle of freedom of the press.” She added.

MEP Riba emphasised the importance of legislation such as the anti-SLAPP Directive and the Media Freedom Act to protect press rights in the current framework of advancing reactionary ideologies in the continent.

Diana Riba, EFA MEP, recognized that the text is not as ambitious as the group would like but she pointed out that it is an essential step in the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms.

“Although it is not as ambitious as our Group would have liked, the text that this House will approve tomorrow is an important step in the fight to defend our fundamental democratic values and we must prevent its content from being diluted in trialogues” She said.

“Freedom of expression and the right to dissent are not mere privileges but essential pillars of a vibrant and open society.” She concluded

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