

Civil liberties MEPs call for better monitoring of democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights in the EU

A binding EU mechanism, based on objective, evidence based and non-political criteria, should be set up to monitor the state of democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights in EU member states on an annual basis said Civil Liberties MEPs in a report voted on Monday night. They call on the European Commission to submit a proposal by September 2017.

The new mechanism would be designed to ensure that the values enshrined in the EU Treaties are respected throughout the Union. "Recent cases in different member states have shown there is a need for stronger and more objective tools for the enforcement of agreed rules and standards", says lead MEP Sophie In't Veld (ALDE, NL).

"Instead of responding to incidents, we need to put in place a systematic mechanism to ensure the respect for democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights in all member states and EU institutions, fostering a culture of democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights", she adds.

How it would work

Whereas "failure of a candidate country to meet the required standards, values and democratic principles" results in a delay in accession to the Union, the failure of a member state to meet these same standards "has little consequence in practice", the draft report says.

To remedy this shortcoming, the new mechanism would establish a policy cycle and a monitoring mechanism, similar to the model known from the Economic Semester.

The European Commission should on an annual basis, and in consultation of a panel of experts, draw up an assessment report which also looks at possible risks, breaches and violations and gives country specific recommendations.

This report would be made public and serve as a basis for an inter-parliamentary debate. If a member state falls short of fulfilling one or more of the benchmarks set, the Commission should immediately start a dialogue with the country and may also decide to launch a "systemic infringement" action under article 2 of the Treaty on the European Union and Article 258 TFEU, explains the text. The mechanism will also set clear benchmarks on when article 7 should be

invoked.

Next steps

The legislative initiative report on the establishment of an EU mechanism on democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights is scheduled for a plenary vote in Strasbourg at the end of October. The European Commission will have to give a reasoned response to the proposal once approved by the European Parliament.

The draft report on the establishment of an EU mechanism on democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights was passed in the Civil Liberties Committee by 41 votes to 11, with 2 abstentions.

Further information

[Parliament's procedure file:](#)

[Profile of rapporteur Sophia in 't Veld \(ALDE, NL\)](#)


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[Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs](#)

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