
Rule of law in Hungary debated by MEPs with government and experts

Civil Liberties MEPs discussed the situation of the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights in Hungary with Foreign Affairs Minister and several experts on Thursday.

The Civil Liberties Committee [was tasked by the full Parliament](#) in May to assess whether Hungary is at risk of a serious breach of EU values. If, on the basis of Article 7(1) of the EU Treaty, the Parliament concludes that this is the case, it could ask the Council to act.

As part of the preparatory work for the report to be drafted by [Judith Sargentini \(Greens/EFA, NL\)](#), MEPs held a hearing in which Hungary Foreign Affairs and Trade Minister Péter Szijjártó presented the government's views. Hungarian Helsinki Committee Co-Chair Marta Pardavi, University of Pécs, and Mertek Media Monitor representative Gábor Polyák, as well as Centre for Fundamental Rights Director Miklós Szánthó also took part.

You can watch the [recording of the debate](#).

Quick facts

[Article 7 of the Treaty](#), which has so far never been used, provides a mechanism to enforce EU values.

Under Article 7(1), and following an initiative by one third of EU member states, by Parliament or by the EU Commission, EU ministers may determine that there is a clear risk of a serious breach of EU values by a member state and, in order to prevent an actual breach, it may address specific recommendations to the country concerned.

Under Article 7(2), an actual breach of EU values can be determined by the European Council on a proposal from a third of the member states or the EU Commission. The European Council need to decide unanimously and Parliament needs to give its consent. Article 7(3) is used to launch sanctions, such as suspending a country's voting rights in the Council.

To be passed by Parliament as a whole, the draft resolution prepared by the Civil Liberties Committee will need to be backed by two-thirds of the votes cast and an absolute majority of MEPs, i.e. at least 376 votes.

Further information

[Video extracts from the hearing on situation in Hungary](#)
[Procedure](#)
[Webpage of the Civil Liberties Committee](#)
[Audiovisual material for media](#)

Contacts

Estefania NARRILLOS

Press Officer

 (+32) 2 28 31324 (BXL)

 (+33) 3 881 73661 (STR)

 (+32) 498 98 39 85

 [@EP_Justice](#)

 estefania.narrillos@europarl.europa.eu
