
Democracy and fundamental rights in Hungary: MEPs assess the situation

MEPs in the Civil Liberties Committee discussed on Thursday the situation of democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights in Hungary.

Judith Sargentini (Greens/EFA, NL) presented a [draft proposal](#) to the committee calling on the Council to determine whether there is a clear risk of a serious breach by Hungary of the values on which the Union is founded.

The Civil Liberties Committee was tasked in May 2017 with studying the situation in Hungary, with a view to activating [Article 7\(1\) of the EU Treaty](#).

In the [plenary resolution of May 2017](#), MEPs stated that the situation in the country justifies triggering the procedure, which may result in sanctions for Hungary, including temporarily losing its voting rights in the Council.

According to Ms Sargentini, lead MEP on the report, “the Hungarian people can no longer count on the fundamental rights that we take for granted in the rest of Europe.”

“In Europe, we commit ourselves to the shared values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and human rights. Regrettably, Hungarians cannot be certain that they will be given honest and equal treatment by their government”, she added.

“I cannot reach any other conclusion than to call for the activation of article 7. We need to stand up for the Hungarian people whose rights have been undermined”, Ms Sargentini concluded.

Several MEPs agreed with her assessment that there is a systemic risk to democracy and rule of law in Hungary and thanked Sargentini for the factual approach taken in the draft report. Other speakers demanded that this procedure is not used to gain political points and some criticised the attacks on a government widely supported by the Hungarian population.

Next steps

The Civil Liberties Committee will vote on Ms Sargentini's proposal in June. The report will then be put to a vote by the whole Parliament in September. To be adopted, it has 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 recording of the discussion in committee](#)

[Video recording of the press conference with Ms Sargentini](#)

[Fundamental rights in Hungary: MEPs call for triggering Article 7 \(Press release, 17.05.2017\)](#)

[Understanding the EU rule of law mechanisms \(EP Research Service, January 2016\)](#)

[Procedure file](#)

[Multimedia package](#)

[Civil Liberties Committee web page](#)

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