

EP stands up for democracy in Hungary during COVID-19

- Civil Liberties Committee concerned about the expansion of “state of danger” measures and the proposed changes to Hungary’s criminal law
- Commission should act to assess if the proposed measures comply with the EU’s founding values
- All member states have a responsibility to respect and protect fundamental rights, the rule of law and democratic principles, even in difficult times

The Civil Liberties Committee highlights that any extraordinary measure adopted by the Hungarian government in response to the pandemic must respect the EU’s founding values.

Following developments in Hungary, where the government is trying to expand its executive authority in order to rule by decree while the country remains in a “state of danger”, [Juan Fernando López Aguilar \(S&D, ES\)](#), made the following statement, in his capacity as Chair of the Civil Liberties Committee.

“On behalf of the Civil Liberties Committee, I would like to express our concern about the Hungarian National Assembly’s intention to vote on extending the ‘state of danger’ in Hungary and the related changes to the Criminal Code. We are aware that member states have a responsibility to take protective measures in these difficult times, but these measures should always ensure that fundamental rights, rule of law and democratic principles are protected.

In this context, we would call on the Commission to assess if the proposed bill complies with the values enshrined in [Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union](#) and to remind member states of their responsibility to respect and protect these common values”.

Background

The Hungarian government tabled a bill on Monday 23 March, which would authorise the executive to rule by decree if adopted. Although the Hungarian legislature did not approve the proposal, the governing Fidesz-KDNP alliance can still push the bill through Parliament next Tuesday, leveraging its two-thirds majority

Further information

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

[European Parliamentary Research Service “Protecting the rule of law in the EU: Existing mechanisms and possible improvements”](#)

[Rule of law concerns in member states: how the EU can act \(infographic\)](#)

[Press release: Rule of law in Poland and Hungary has worsened \(16.01.2020\)](#)

[Free photos, video and audio material](#)

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