

Fundamental rights in Hungary: MEPs call for triggering Article 7

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The situation in Hungary justifies the triggering of the procedure which may result in sanctions for Hungary, MEPs say in a resolution adopted on Wednesday.

- MEPs see serious deterioration of rule of law and democracy
- Controversial laws must be suspended or withdrawn
- EU funds for Hungary under surveillance

Wrapping up a [previous plenary debate](#), MEPs say that Hungary's current fundamental rights situation justifies launching the formal procedure to determine whether there is a "clear risk of a serious breach" of EU values by a Member State.

The resolution calls for:

- the launching of Article 7(1). MEPs instruct the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs to draw up a formal resolution for a plenary vote
- the Hungarian Government to repeal laws tightening rules against asylum-seekers and non-governmental organisations, and to reach an agreement with the US authorities, making it possible for Central European University to remain in Budapest as a free institution
- the European Commission to strictly monitor the use of EU funds by the Hungarian Government

A test for the EU

Recent developments in Hungary have led to a serious deterioration in the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights which is testing the EU's ability to defend its founding values, MEPs say. They also repeated the need for a process to safeguard the EU's core values supported in the [resolution of 25 October 2016](#).

The resolution was adopted by 393 votes to 221 with 64 abstentions.

Background

Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union provides a mechanism to enforce EU values. Under Article 7(1), the Council may determine that there is a clear risk of a serious breach of EU values by a Member State and is intended to prevent an actual breach by addressing specific recommendations to the Member State in question. This can be triggered by one third of Member States, by Parliament or by the Commission. The Council has to adopt a decision by a four-fifths majority after having received Parliament's consent which also requires a two-thirds majority of the votes cast and an absolute majority of MEPs.

The next phase is Article 7(2), by which an actual breach of EU values can be determined by the Council on a proposal by a third of Member States or the Commission. The Council needs to decide by unanimity and the Parliament needs to give its consent. Article 7(3) launches sanctions, such as the suspension of voting rights in the Council.

Press release

Further information

- The adopted text will be available here (Click on 17 May): <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/texts-adopted.html>
- Video recording of the plenary debate of April: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/plenary/video?debate=1493213104697>
- Press Release: MEPs discuss situation in Hungary with Prime Minister Orbán (26 April, 2017): <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20170424IPR72035/meps-discuss-situation-in-hungary-with-prime-minister-orb%C3%A1n>
- Press Release: MEPs call for EU democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights watchdog (25 October, 2016): <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/news-room/20161020IPR47863/meps-call-for-eu-democracy-rule-of-law-and-fundamental-rights-watchdog>
- Article 7 of TEU: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:12012M007>
- EP Research Briefing: Understanding the EU Rule of Law mechanisms (January, 2016): http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2016/573922/EPRS_BRI%282016%29573922_EN.pdf

Political groups

- News pages of the EPP group : <http://bit.ly/1WuQLqB>
- Press release by the S&D group: <http://bit.ly/2qrZXCb>
- News pages of the ECR group: <http://bit.ly/1Y0YFrj>
- News pages of the ALDE group: <http://bit.ly/2ikk6qK>
- Press release by the GUE/NGL group: <http://bit.ly/2qwdoip>
- Press release by the Greens/EFA group: <http://bit.ly/2qQuaeS>
- News pages of the EFDD group: <http://bit.ly/1TUnDFU>
- News pages of the ENF group: <http://bit.ly/2cxzxcR>

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