

Hungarian Government is at least at risk of breaching EU fundamental values

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At the request of ALDE Group the European Parliament today debated the constitutional situation in Hungary following the adoption of a fourth amendment to the Hungarian Constitution. Since its entry into force on January 2012, the country's ruling party (Fidesz) - which represents two-thirds of the seats in the parliament - has restricted laws on the judicial system, homelessness, higher education, election campaigns and family rights.

ALDE President Guy Verhofstadt said: " In Hungary, we see a supermajority behaving like a bulldozer defying all criticism, smearing its opponents, amending its Constitution almost on a weekly basis and a government that passes controversial laws beyond any control and allows anti-Semites to receive state honours".

"The Commission continues repeating that it is carrying out an 'in-depth legal analysis' and relies on a true cooperation with the country. This is not the first time that the Commission has had to intervene on Hungary. How can we and the Commission sincerely continue believing in a government that, disregarding all our warnings, keeps introducing new amendments incompatible with EU laws and our European values. Hungary is trampling over our common values and denying them to its citizens".

"That's why there is a clear case to trigger Article 7.1 of the Treaty, because in Hungary there is a clear risk of a serious breach of the fundamental European values set out in Article 2. In my opinion there is already a breach, but we can at least agree there is a risk of such a breach. The Commission should launch the procedure without delay, or else we in the Parliament should have the courage to do it ourselves".

ALDE MEP Sophie in 't Veld (D66, Netherlands), vice-president of the Civil Liberties Committee said: "Fundamental rights and the rule of law are not optional, they are essential. After being reticent on the matter, the European Commission has to act and make clear that within the EU not only the single market regulations are enforced but also fundamental rights. This is a very important step in the development of a true community of values and in becoming a political union."