

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ADVISORY

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Hungary: MEPs must send a strong message in critical vote for freedoms and rights in Hungary and in the EU

Spokespeople available for comment

The European Parliament must vote in favour of triggering EU action against Hungary's increasingly repressive policies, which are eroding fundamental rights, freedoms and the rule of law that are at the heart of EU values, Amnesty International said today, ahead of the historic vote on 12 September.

In order to trigger proceedings under Article 7.1 of the Treaty on European Union, two-thirds of MEPs must vote to endorse a report on Hungary which concludes that the country is at risk of seriously breaching the EU's founding principles. This could ultimately result in the suspension of Hungary's EU membership rights.

"It is essential to bring Hungary back to the EU's shared path of respect for rights and freedoms. Taking a stance now will also send a clear signal that politics of fear, hate and disregard for opposing voices won't be tolerated in the EU," said Berber Biala-Hettinga, Amnesty International's expert on human rights in the EU.

"Under the false pretext of tackling a migration crisis, the Hungarian government has been attacking NGOs, getting rid of independent media and removing essential checks and balances to power. Hard-won freedoms and rights are vanishing before our eyes," said Berber Biala-Hettinga.

For questions or to schedule an interview please e-mail Alison Abrahams at alison.abrahams@amnesty.org or Sorina Juglan at sorina.juglan@amnesty.org or call +32-2-5482773.

Background

Amnesty International is calling on MEPs to vote YES, together with Human Rights Watch, Reporters without Borders, the Open Society European Policy Institute and other Hungarian and European civil society associations: <https://bit.ly/2QpOQWC>.

Amnesty International sees the vote on 12 September as a crucial one for Hungary as well as for human rights and the rule of law in the EU: <https://bit.ly/2wYyHgb>.

Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union enables the EU to promote and safeguard its founding principles such as respect for the rule of law, for democratic values, and for

fundamental rights and freedoms. Once initiated, it can lead to sanctions such as a suspension of Hungary's voting rights in the Council.

Amnesty International, the Hungarian Helsinki Committee and the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union have drawn attention to alarming developments since the renewed electoral victory of the ruling party Fidesz in the Hungarian parliamentary elections in April 2018:

<https://bit.ly/2Q4j9jC>.

The report on which the MEPs will be voting on 12 Sept lists numerous reasons for concern, related to the functioning of the country's constitutional system, the independence of the judiciary, freedom of expression and freedom of association, as well as the right to equal treatment, the rights of persons belonging to minorities, including Roma and Jews, the fundamental rights of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, and many more.