

Rule of law in Hungary: MEPs conclude three-day trip to assess the situation

A delegation from the Civil Liberties Committee concluded on Friday a visit to Hungary in which they met with the Government, the opposition, journalists and NGOs.

The [aim of the trip](#) was to assess the respect for press and academic freedom, judicial independence, the rights of minorities and the wider rule of law context on the ground. With that purpose, they exchanged views with the Justice and Interior ministers, Budapest's Mayor and representatives of the political opposition. They also met civil society organisations, journalists, the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, representatives of academia and the education system, and of several cultural institutions.

The delegation was headed by [Gwendoline DELBOS-CORFIELD](#) (Greens/EFA, FR), and the other members were [Bettina VOLLATH](#) (S&D, AT), [Jorge BUXADÉ VILLALBA](#) (ECR, ES), [Nicolas BAY](#) (ID, FR), [Anna DONÁTH](#) (Renew, HU), [Isabel WISELER-LIMA](#) (EPP, LU) and [Malin BJÖRK](#) (The Left, SE).

"The last three days in Budapest have been packed but fruitful. We heard from over a hundred people and their diverse accounts will help us formulate a broadly informed view of what is happening in various aspects - justice, education, media - of rule of law in Hungary," said Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield at the end of the trip.

"This visit has been planned for years but the pandemic put it on hold. It is an essential part of our regular work as members of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs to support the rule of law and democracy across the EU, as we do in all EU countries.

In Budapest, the delegation representing all of the European Parliament's political groups listened carefully for three packed days to viewpoints on issues ranging from social rights and judicial independence to media freedom and minority rights. Through our discussions, we did not only gather information but also tried to gauge prevailing trends and the circumstances under which various government and civil society actors operate. We talked with ministers, judges, members of parliament, opposition politicians, civil society organisations, academics, researchers and artists. With the input gathered, we are now going to continue our work and present a fine-tuned, updated report on the Hungarian rule of law situation to Parliament in December."

Background

In September 2018, the [European Parliament asked EU member states](#) to determine, in accordance with [Treaty Article 7](#), whether Hungary is at risk of breaching the EU's founding values. According to MEPs, the [situation has deteriorated further in the years](#) since. In July 2021, the plenary adopted a [new resolution criticising Hungarian anti-LGBTIQ legislation](#) and denouncing the dismantling of democracy and the rule of law in the country.

In its [2021 Rule of Law report](#), the European Commission highlighted the worsening situation in the country. It noted, among other issues, the risk to media pluralism, and the pressure faced by civil society organisations critical of the government. For the Commission, the transparency and quality of the Hungarian legislative process also remains a source of concern.

You can check the [agenda](#) of the delegation.

Further information

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

Multimedia material

[Video recording of the press conference will be available here \(01.10. 2021, 15:00\)](#)

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