

HUNGARY "NO LONGER A DEMOCRACY," SAYS EU REPORT

Posted on September 17, 2022



An expression is used to define Orbán's Hungary, that of a “hybrid regime of electoral autocracy”—a new

political concept coined specifically for the occasion.

Category: [NEWS](#)

Tags: [democracy](#), [European Commission](#), [Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield](#), [Hélène de Lauzun](#), [hostility](#), [Hungary](#), [Ursula von der Leyen](#), [Viktor Orbán](#)

The European Union is launching a new offensive against Viktor Orbán's Hungary, following [a report](#) voted by European parliamentarians on Thursday, September 15th, that considers the Hungarian regime no longer a democracy.

<https://twitter.com/GreensEFA/status/1570359563651538944>

This is not the first time that the European Union has expressed its hostility to the Hungarian government. Already in 2018, the Parliament activated Article 7 of the treaties, asking that Hungary's rights be suspended in the European Council.

The report presented by Green MEP Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield is based on various international bodies, such as official reports from the Council of Europe, OLAF (the agency that works on corruption issues), and the Venice Commission on the independence of justice. The MEP speaks of "dramatic deteriorations" in the Hungarian situation, in "almost all areas." A new expression is used to define Orbán's Hungary, that of a "hybrid regime of electoral autocracy"—a new political concept coined specifically for the occasion.

The deputy's accusation is far-reaching. Like the other authors of the report, she believes that Hungary is no longer a democracy, which implies that it no longer has a place among the 27 member states because, she explains [in an interview](#) with the newspaper *Ouest-France*: "the decisions that are taken at the level of the European Council must be taken among 27 fully democratic states."

The list of grievances against Hungary is long: government propaganda preventing access

to undistorted information, massive use of fake news, stifling of the independent press. However, she is obliged to acknowledge that the elections held a few weeks ago were free elections, and that the international observers on the ground recognised this. She therefore believes that the problem lies elsewhere, mainly in disinformation.

Unwittingly, the 'ills' Delbos-Corfield identifies as currently affecting Orbán's Hungary could just as easily be plaguing the governments of other countries, such as France, where the control of information is evident and powerful. There, [an extreme political homogeneity](#) exists within the journalistic class, and [a high concentration of the press](#) rests in the hands of a few people with close ties to the government.

The report was voted on by parliamentarians who, Delbos-Corfield explains, "have gone to the limit of their role." She now more or less directly calls for sanctions, which can only come from the European Council.

This is where the situation becomes seriously challenging for Hungary's opponents. To vote on such sanctions, a qualified majority vote is needed, i.e., 20 to 21 out of 26 members. [The latest election results in Sweden](#) and the increasingly certain victory of [the right-wing coalition](#) in Italy's legislative elections on September 25th will complicate the issue.

A conspicuous panic is emerging among some MEPs who criticise the rise of political forces in various member states that honour national identity and have de facto positioned themselves against the values and political model embodied by the Union today.

The Hungarian Prime Minister was not impressed by this new manifestation of hostility. On a trip to Belgrade with President Aleksandar Vučić, [Orbán said](#): "This is the third or fourth time they have accepted a resolution condemning Hungary in the European Parliament. At first we thought it was important, but now we know it's a joke."

The text voted on Thursday, September 15th, is not binding, but is simply intended to put

moral pressure on the Commission to continue, or not, to grant EU funds to Hungary. Even before the publication of the report, Commission President Ursula von der Leyen had already stated on Wednesday, September 14th, her willingness to apply the 'principle of conditionality' to Hungary, which allows the suspension of community aid in the event of a violation of the rule of law in a Member State. The Commission's decision on whether to extend the suspension of funds to Hungary is due on Sunday, September 18th. Today Hungary is the second largest recipient of EU aid per capita.