

# **European Parliament election**

## **11 challenges for human rights in Europe**

### **Defending the Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights**

1. According to your political group, what tools should the European Union (EU) use to ensure member states adhere to the founding principles of the EU, including respect for human dignity and human rights, democracy, equality, and the rule of law? Do you favor proposals to condition and restrict access to certain EU funding for member states that do not comply with EU standards on the rule of law and human rights?

We are unequivocally committed to defend the founding principles of the European Union. Currently, the EU has to rely on the infringement proceedings, or Article 7 procedure, in case of a systemic threat to rule of law to defend our shared principles. We believe that we need a new and better rule of law mechanism which allows us to act quicker when necessary. We envision a panel of independent experts continuously analyzing Member States' adherence to the rule of law principle. We also envision that suspending allocation of some EU funds would be in the tool box.

2. Which steps should the EU take collectively to protect journalists against attacks for their work and media pluralism in EU countries?

Freedom of the press is fundamental for the functioning of our democracy. We are committed to defend the safety of journalists and freedom of the press. After the horrendous murders of Daphne Caruana Galizia and Ján Kuciak and his fiancée, we must step up our cross-border cooperation. We believe that the first requirement is that Member States dedicate sufficient police and judicial resources to defend journalists and ensure that those making threats, intimidating journalists, or committing violence against journalists are prosecuted and convicted. At the EU level, we must step up cross-border law enforcement cooperation through Europol and Eurojust to support Member States' police and judicial systems to defend journalists.

3. Which steps should the EU take to protect civil society from legislations that can unduly restrict their rights, activities and access to funding?

We believe that the EU must protect civil society to ensure that we have vibrant democracies in the EU. We must do this using the two avenues open to us: enforcing commonly agreed rules and ensuring sufficient funding for the civil society. We believe that the Commission must challenge national legislation when it undermines civil society to ensure that all Member States respect and follow our common rules and legislation. We also believe that we

can help civil society through funding. Therefore, we strongly support establishing a European Values Instrument as part of the next EU budget to provide sustained funding to civil society.

### ***Tackling Discrimination and Promoting Equality***

4. What are your group's plans to address discrimination against women, promote gender equality in EU countries and protect women and girls from gender-based violence?

As the EPP, we are committed to fighting all forms of discrimination and we believe in equality of opportunities. We believe that our anti-discrimination legislation is strong but that we need to step up the implementation and enforcement of existing legislation at the national level.

5. What are your group's plans to address racial discrimination, antisemitism, islamophobia, attacks and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, hate speech, racially motivated crimes, and attacks and promote tolerance in the EU?

We strongly condemn all forms of discrimination, hate speech, and violence. These are completely unacceptable in a civilized, tolerant, and inclusive society. We must ensure that Member States enforce existing anti-discrimination legislation and we must challenge demagogues and populist spreading hate, lies, and conspiracies. We are a party based on values and we will always speak up and defend freedom, respect for human dignity, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minority groups.

6. What are your political groups' propositions to advance the rights of persons with disabilities?

We are convinced that we must do more together to strengthen the rights of persons with disabilities. We believe that we must roll out the EU Disability Card throughout the European Union to strengthen access to services to people with disabilities. We also demand that the European institutions show leadership in making their websites fully accessible to people with disabilities and that accessibility is always considered when legislation is being prepared, especially with regards to the built environment, public transport, public services, and household appliances.

### ***Respecting Migrants and Refugee's Rights***

7. What migration policy does your political group support that would ensure all migrants and asylum seekers who reach EU territory are treated humanely and that respects their right to asylum? Does your political group support a policy to secure responsibility sharing among

EU member states to alleviate the pressure on first countries of arrival? If your party's migration policy does not address any of these goals can you explain why and what your political group supports?

We believe that we must take a collective responsibility over border security and immigration. It is absolutely necessary that Member States show solidarity with each other to responsibly address immigration. As Christian democrats, we are committed to providing shelter to those who escape persecution, and as we are committed to the rule of law, we must ensure that asylum processes and the rights of asylum seekers are respected. With better border protection we want to put an end to the cynical business of human traffickers and ensure border security for the whole of European Union. We must agree on the same rules for asylum, ensure that our system is not abused, and that rejected asylum seekers are returned.

8. What should the European Parliament do to ensure that EU external migration policy protects the rights of migrants and asylum seekers, including the right to seek asylum, and does not expose them to abuse?

In the long-term, we want to create a real partnership with African countries to help them develop their economies and create opportunities for their citizens to lessen pressure to migrate. We believe that economic partnership with African countries is extremely important to control future migration. In the short-term, we want to negotiate similar agreements, as we have with Turkey, on providing assistance to refugees and asylum seekers as close to their homes as possible. Furthermore, we need to continue being among the global leading providers of humanitarian assistance.

### ***Respecting Rights While Countering Terrorism***

8. What concrete steps should the European Parliament take to ensure that human rights, including the right to privacy, are protected in the context of the EU directives and other EU policies to counter and prevent terrorism? What should the Parliament do to ensure that Directives are subject to oversight and, if necessary, revision if they violate rights when implemented, especially if poorly transposed into domestic law?

We believe that we must strike the right balance between security and privacy. It is important to strengthen European legislation against terrorism. We believe that we must ensure that we do not hamper our efforts to combat terrorism by unduly limiting our law enforcement's authority to use data or share it cross-border to keep us safe. At the same time, privacy is a fundamental right and we must defend it. We do not believe in blanket solutions, instead, we believe that with each piece of legislation, we must find the right balance between security and privacy.

### ***Ensuring Respect for Human rights in the EU's Foreign Policy***

10. What should the European Parliament do to ensure that respect for and promotion of human rights are at the centre the EU's bilateral and multilateral relations with third countries, including trade policy?

We are committed to using our economic strength to make a positive change in the world and promote human rights, high product standards, environmental protection, and social rights. Our trade policy must continue to not only focus on opening markets to our excellent companies but also on promoting our values, including high social and environmental standards, and respect for human rights. We want to have a special focus to target ending child labour through trade agreements.

11. Do you support a Global EU Human Rights Sanction Regime against individuals or groups of individuals responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian and human rights law, including torture, rape, enforced disappearances, and extra-judiciary killings? How should the European Parliament further help advance justice and accountability for abuses?

The EU has many Human Rights Sanction regimes in place, but we feel that they are not adequate for dealing with serious violations of human rights. We strongly support a new EU Human Rights Sanction Regime and naming it after Sergei Magnitsky. We believe that we should move from unanimity decisions to qualified majority voting on imposing sanctions. The European Union must be ready to show leadership in defending values globally and impose sanctions on violators.