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Commission launches proceedings against Malta & Cyprus

Golden passports: quote from Sven Giegold MEP

Today, the European Commission announced that it is launching infringement proceedings against Malta and Cyprus over their programmes that sell citizenship through investment or real estate purchases. This follows on from [revelations by Al Jazeera](#) that showed links between top Cypriot officials and the sale of passports. On the initiative of the Greens/EFA group, this Thursday the European Parliament will debate and vote on 'Serious security threats through the sale of EU passports and visas to criminals'.

Sven Giegold MEP, Greens/EFA Member of the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee and of the Standing Subcommittee on Tax in the European Parliament, comments:

"This is an important and overdue step in the fight against money laundering and corruption in Europe. Malta and Cyprus have been a security blackspot in Europe by allowing the sale of passports to criminals, corrupt and money launderers from all over the world. Any EU country that sells citizenship is going against the duty of all member states to cooperate in the spirit of trust. Wealth should not be the criteria for citizenship and residence rights in the EU.

"The Council of Ministers must finally put the issue of golden passports and visas on the agenda. Apart from the proceedings against Malta and Cyprus, the Commission should also look into the residency by investment schemes in Bulgaria, Portugal and other member states. The European Parliament has called for a ban on commercial citizenship sales across Europe and the Commission must follow-up in the light of the revelations about Cyprus and existing issues with these schemes elsewhere. Criminals and the corrupt must not be allowed to launder their identity through buying European passports."

The debate on 'Serious security threats through the sale of EU passports and visas to criminals' can be viewed live on Thursday from around 09:45 here: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/plenary/en/home.html>

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