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[Press release](#) | 18.04.2011

Hungary

New constitution a step backwards for pluralism and democracy

The Hungarian parliament today adopted a new constitution in spite of widespread concerns about democratic restrictions it would introduce. Commenting after the adoption, Greens/EFA co-president **Dany Cohn-Bendit** said:

"Rather than being a 21st Century constitution, this constitution is a throwback to the dark days of the last century, replete with nationalist symbolism and democratic restrictions. Instead of trying to unite all sections of Hungarian society in a process for constitutional reform, Viktor Orbán and his centre-right majority have steamrolled this fundamental reform through parliament (1). In doing so, they have failed to grasp a core tenet of democracy, namely that democracy does not just give the majority a right to rule, it also gives the majority the duty to respect and protect the rights of the minority. That the outcome is a step backwards for pluralism and minority representation is not surprising but nonetheless disturbing, all the more so given Hungary currently retains the EU presidency."

Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** added:

"The constitution adopted by the Hungarian parliament today represents a step backwards for pluralism and democracy in Hungary. This constitution is at odds with the fundamental values on which the EU is based. Accession countries are expected to fulfil these values in order to become EU members, yet it seems that EU member states are free to flout the same values with impunity. It is simply unacceptable that the Commission and EU member states are once again happy to turn a blind eye to the undermining of these core EU values."

(1) The constitution was adopted today less than a month after being presented to parliament with only deputies from the governing Fidesz-KDNP voting in favour. The government has a two-thirds majority in parliament, which is necessary to adopt constitutional reforms. Two of the main opposition parties boycotted the vote altogether.

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Rebecca Harms

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