

**Professor Danuta Hübner**

**„The role of European political parties in the context  
of multiple challenges to democracy”**

**Public hearing “The statute and funding of European political parties and  
political foundations”**

**Meeting of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs**

**European Parliament, Brussels (online), 25 May 2021**

Thank you for this indeed very insightful presentation, which comes at an opportune moment, helping the two co-rapporteurs produce a well-documented evaluation report on Regulation 1141/2014 on the statute and funding of European political parties and European political foundations, that Parliament is due to adopt before the end of 2021.

As you know there will be an important follow up to this report, notably the revision of the Regulation 1114/2014 to be prepared by the European Commission by the end of the year, after consultations with the stakeholders and after the adoption of the AFCO report.

Since their establishment, European political parties have enhanced their role within the polity of the European Union. We must look at their role within the context of multiple challenges to democracy worldwide. But we also must look at them in view of the 2024 European elections. European political parties are increasingly called upon to ensure an effective connection with people. We count on them. From this perspective, cooperation with national parties has to be encouraged. We need them for the process of bringing the Union closer to the citizens.

In January, this committee had an exchange of views with Mr. Michael Adam, the Director of the Authority for European political parties and European political foundations. Mr. Adam recalled that 2019, being the year of the last European elections, exposed the need for clarifications in terms of what could be financed by the European political parties in the context of the electoral campaign. This could be looked at in view of the upcoming revision of the Regulation. In the same vein, the system of contributions and donations and their provenance could also be re-examined. Members of this committee highlighted additional shortcomings that were passed on by the European political parties and the European political foundations, and the need for the current Regulation to be amended in a timely fashion, well before the upcoming elections.

We have to look at the possibility for the European political parties and foundations to take part not only in European elections but also in popular votes on European issues, including by financing referendum campaigns on European issues. The Conference on the Future of Europe might increase aperitif for this type of democratic tools.

The European Parliament has to ask the question whether European political parties and foundations can play a role in the promotion of European policies towards the neighboring countries. I believe that they should be open to membership from parties or individuals from these countries and allowed to receive their contributions, provided full transparency is ensured.

In the European Parliament, we generally welcome the reinforcement of the provisions aiming at monitoring the respect by European political parties and foundations of the fundamental values of the Union as well as of the procedure for dealing with infringements, including sanctions and recovery of funds. My impression is that these provisions, important as they are, also are difficult to expose and therefore to apply. We need, therefore, to reflect on what is the best way to apply these provisions and what can be done to improve enforceability of such provisions.

In this context, it seems as well relevant to assess potential changes regarding the level of detail and comparability of information provided by the EU political parties and foundations to the Authority in campaigns in the European elections.