

Brussels, 3 August 2024

## STATEMENT

### **YEPP condemns Hungary's move to ease visa restrictions for Russians and Belarusians and calls for EU actions against Hungary**

The Youth of the European People's Party (YEPP) has condemned in the strongest possible terms the Hungarian Government's recent move to ease visa restrictions to Hungary for Russian and Belarusian citizens. YEPP has also reiterated its call for the European Council to initiate proceedings from Article 7.2 of the Treaty of the European Union to temporarily suspend Hungary's voting rights at the European Council.

YEPP President Lidia Pereira, said, "Hungary's decision to substantially ease visa restrictions for Russians and Belarusians is not just an internal Hungarian matter but a threat to us all in the European Union. Allowing Russians to enter Hungary for nearly any employment reasons, and bring their families, without any background security clearance for such individuals, would reopen Europe's doors to Russian spies and saboteurs.

"This is just the latest affront in a long list of actions taken by the Hungarian Government which have undermined the otherwise unified EU policy towards Russia in light of its barbaric invasion of Ukraine. Hungary, as a member of the Schengen Zone, has a responsibility not to undermine its fellow member States' security. This decision by Hungary would allow Russian spies to easily access other EU states by exploiting the Schengen Zone's free travel rules. We have also seen in recent weeks the growth of efforts by Russian agents and allies to sabotage critical infrastructure in Europe, and specifically defence manufacturing sites being used to produce armaments to support Ukraine. Do we really want to make it easier for such saboteurs to gain access to our union?

"At YEPP's Council Meeting in Brno in February 2024, we passed a resolution calling on the European Council to initiate Article 7.2 proceedings of the TEU to temporarily suspend Hungary's voting rights at the European Council in light of its efforts to block further aid for Ukraine<sup>1</sup>. This latest move by Hungary only serves to further justify this position taken by YEPP, and highlight the urgency of taking such action as soon as possible.

"YEPP also strongly supports the calls of EPP Group Leader Manfred Weber for an investigation by the European Commission into whether Hungary's decision breaches European law. Hungary cannot be allowed to continue to act as a proxy for Russian interests, and a fifth columnist within the European Union," Ms Pereira concluded.

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<sup>1</sup>YEPP Resolution, *Actions against Hungary over its Rule of Law violations and threats to Ukraine*, adopted at the YEPP Council Meeting in Brno, 24/11/2023. <https://youthpepp.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Actions-against-Hungary-over-its-Rule-of-Law-violations-and-threats-to-Ukraine-1.pdf>

**ENDS**