



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

April 9, 2026

The Honorable Ursula von der Leyen
President
European Commission
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels, Belgium

Dear President von der Leyen:

We write to express our deep concern that, in connection with the election scheduled to take place in Hungary on April 12, 2026, actions taken by the European Commission and other European Union institutions have gone far beyond customary expressions of political opinion regarding developments within a member state. Taken together, these actions constitute a pattern of direct and indirect intervention in Hungary's internal political, media, and civil society environment during an active electoral period. In assuming a role that is widely perceived within Hungary as aligned with particular political outcomes, the European Union risks undermining confidence in its institutional neutrality and its respect for the sovereign democratic processes of its member states.

Hungarian public officials, analysts, and civil society participants have repeatedly raised concerns regarding the structure and distribution of substantial EU-linked funding to media organizations, advocacy groups, and non-governmental actors operating within Hungary. It is broadly understood within Hungary that these financial flows overwhelmingly benefit organizations that are critical of the current government. During an electoral period, the effect of these funding patterns is not merely abstract; rather, they contribute in concrete ways to shaping the informational environment in which voters form their judgments. This has led to a widespread perception that EU institutions are active and partisan participants in Hungary's domestic politics.

Concerns of a similar nature arise in connection with the implementation of the Digital Services Act (DSA). The DSA imposes obligations on large online platforms to mitigate so-called "systemic risks," including disinformation and harmful content. However, the breadth and

ambiguity of these categories, combined with the compliance incentives placed on platforms, create conditions under which lawful political expression may be restricted, deprioritized, or removed altogether. Hungarian officials and commentators have demonstrated that, in practice, these mechanisms have actually been applied in ways that discriminate against viewpoints aligned with the current government. The resulting dynamic raises grave concerns about indirect censorship, particularly where private platforms act under regulatory pressure to suppress or limit certain forms of political speech.

At the institutional level, the continued advancement of formal rule-of-law proceedings, together with repeated European Parliament resolutions and reports, has contributed to an atmosphere of sustained political pressure directed at Hungary. While the EU's proceedings attempt to raise concerns regarding governance and legal standards, Hungarian authorities and authoritative independent observers have consistently disputed their substance and application. The persistence and timing of these measures—particularly during an electoral period—have reinforced perceptions that they are being applied in a politically selective manner. This perception is strengthened by the case of Poland, in which the EU put similar pressures against a conservative government – and then cynically dropped its pressures entirely as soon as a progressive government was in power in Poland, without that government having made the rule-of-law changes that the EU had previously demanded. The cumulative effect is to create the appearance that EU institutions seek to strongly shape the political environment of a member state during a democratic election.

Taken together, these dynamics raise serious concerns regarding the boundary between legitimate EU oversight and authoritarian political intervention, deeply destructive of public confidence in the fairness of the electoral process and in the neutrality of European institutions. In light of the historically close and cooperative relationship between the United States and the European Union across a wide range of political, economic, and security matters, we seek clarity regarding actions by EU institutions that may bear directly on democratic processes within allied nations. To address these concerns and obtain greater clarity regarding the Commission's position, we respectfully request a briefing with your staff to address the following questions:

1. Will the Commission provide a comprehensive and transparent public accounting of EU-linked funding to media organizations, NGOs, and civil society entities operating in Hungary since January 2024, including funding sources, selection criteria, amounts disbursed, and safeguards to prevent the use of such funds for partisan political activity?
2. Will the Commission provide public transparency as to what specific criteria or standards used to determine whether EU-supported funding streams may have the effect—intended or unintended—of influencing electoral discourse within member states?
3. Will the Commission provide public transparency as to its actions under the Digital Services Act which may affect political content, public debate, or platform operations in Hungary, and whether measures are in place to ensure that such actions are applied in a viewpoint-neutral and politically impartial manner?

4. How does the Commission assess and mitigate the risk that regulatory compliance pressures placed on online platforms could result in the suppression of lawful political speech, particularly in the context of national elections?
5. In light of ongoing Article 7 proceedings and European Parliament reporting, what steps does the Commission take to ensure that its communications and enforcement activities do not contribute to perceptions of political bias or institutional interference during electoral periods within member states?

To schedule the briefing, please contact the office of Representative Chris Smith or Representative Andy Harris. Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
Member of Congress



ANDY HARRIS, M.D.
Member of Congress