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## **EU Parliament: rules to protect journalists from unfounded lawsuits.**

### **Metsola, “we shield those seeking the truth”**

Parliament wants to “reinforce protection of journalists and activists in the EU against unfounded and abusive lawsuits aimed to silence them”. With 498 votes to 33 and 105 abstentions, MEPs adopted today their negotiating position on new rules to protect journalists, media, human rights defenders, activists, researchers and artists from the so-called Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPPs) aimed at threatening and intimidating them. According to MEPs, “the new rules - a statement issued in Strasbourg reads - should apply in cross-border cases when the defendant, claimant and court are not based in the same country or when the act of public participation - be it a press article, social media post, video, piece of research, or artwork - has relevance for more than one member state and can be accessed electronically”. The draft directive foresees safeguards for victims of SLAPPs, “including the possibility of asking for the early dismissal of the lawsuit, in which case a claimant will have to prove that their case is not unfounded. The claimant would also have to cover the full costs of the proceedings”. European Parliament President Roberta Metsola said “journalism takes courage – but journalists should not be forced to be brave to do it. The European Parliament will always shield those seeking the truth and will uphold our democratic right to know”.

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