

EU Parliament to vote on stripping Polish MEP of vice presidency

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News

European Parliament political group leaders are recommending that controversial Polish MEP Ryszard Czarnecki is stripped of his vice presidency role.



Ryszard Czarnecki | *Photo credit: European Parliament audiovisual*

They will propose this to the full plenary in Strasbourg next week.

If, as expected, the proposal is passed, it means he would no longer represent the Parliament in the role.

Political group leaders in the Conference of Presidents decided on Thursday by the required majority to terminate Czarnecki's term of office as Vice-President due to "serious misconduct". It still needs

ratifying by the full House.

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The move comes after the ECR group deputy had compared fellow MEP Róża Thun to Polish Nazi collaborators during World War II.

The full Parliament will vote on the proposal on 7 February and will need a majority of two-thirds of the votes cast, constituting a majority of its component members, to remove Czarnecki from office. It would then need to elect a new Vice-President at a later stage.

A parliamentary source said the proposal by the Conference of Presidents is not aimed at Poland or the ECR political group but “simply expresses the opinion of the political leaders that Czarnecki should no longer represent them.”

Czarnecki, a member of the Poland’s ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party, called Thun a “szmalcownik” - a pejorative term used for Poles who blackmailed hidden Jews, or Poles who protected Jews, during the Nazi occupation.

Six days after he made the comments, four MEPs wrote a letter to Tajani asking him to “firmly denounce the unacceptable and degrading statement.”

“These remarks exceed the boundaries of responsible political discourse, both on a personal and on an institutional level,” they wrote.

The letter was signed by the group leaders of the EPP (Manfred Weber), S&D (Gianni Pittella), ALDE (Guy Verhofstadt), and Greens/EFA (Philippe Lamberts) groups.

The issue comes amidst tensions between Poland the EU - particularly the European Commission - over the rule of law and what many believe to be the ruling PiS party’s attempt to eradicate the independence of the judiciary.

An unprecedented move to trigger Article 7 of the EU treaty against Poland is underway, which could ultimately see Poland lose its EU voting rights - although not be expelled from the bloc.

Czarnecki has refused to apologise and was not available for comment.

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