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## **FAR-RIGHT PARTIES RE-REGISTER TO ACCESS EU FUNDS**

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Two far-right European political parties are now officially registered, opening European parliament funding opportunities for 2019.

APF members include politicians from the Greek neo-nazi Golden Dawn party and Germany's NPD, another ultra-nationalist political party with a neo-nazi ideology.

The APF joins the Alliance of European National Movements (AENM), yet another nationalist party, which had also only been officially registered earlier this year.

The AENM, a party founded in Hungary, is led by the firebrand and accused Russian spy, Hungarian MEP Bela Kovacs.

The latest move is significant because last year both parties, the APF and AENM, had missed an EU parliament funding deadline at the end of September, after failing to pass a registration and scrutiny test from a new oversight body known as the Authority for European Political Parties and Foundations.

The authority was set up in 2016, independent from the parliament, and tasked with ensuring that parties meet the required minimum criteria.

Both have since managed to register with the authority, a required step before demanding grant money from the parliament.

The 57-year-old Kovacs, who belongs to the far-right Jobbik party, was also required to co-sign a letter, saying the party will respect minorities and adhere to a broad range of 'EU values'.

The APF had been awarded a [ ] grant in 2016, and the AENM obtained around [ ] But the late registration means they won't get any funding in the lead up to next year's EU parliament elections.

However, access to the parliament purse in 2019 is now possible, although ongoing talks over new rules and the upcoming national elections may make that prospect onerous.

Last September, the European Commission proposed overhauling political party financing by declaring the desire to make it more transparent, ensure democratic legitimacy, and improve enforcement of the rules.

This includes making sure the APF doesn't fudge its membership numbers, which are needed to

gain access to the grants.

Last year, it was revealed that APF's French representative was a National Front regional councillor from Brittany.

When contacted by French newspaper Le Monde, the councillor denied any knowledge of the APF, suggesting her name had been forged to meet the seven-member threshold.

Under the new rules, only national parties - not individuals - would be able to create a European party that is eligible for funding.

The EU parliament and member states are likely to start discussions on the regulation next week. The plan is to get the new rules agreed within the next few months and ready for launch in 2019.

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Kaynak/Source: