R10new Barcelona vs Lobbies — Stop Lawfare, Protect Our Right to The City

Proposers:

Agenda item: 4. Resolutions

Motion text

During the last years, the political landscape in many institutions at different levels has changed, bringing the option of developing and putting forward real progressive, transformative and green policies. The possibilities, limits and potentialities of progressive and green organisations in government, including compromising or keeping the relations with social movements, has been triggering a great debate within the Green Family. We consider that being able to bring real ambition and being brave in policy-making is something to celebrate, and we should make the best of the trust that electors put on our proposals. Political parties and organisations thrive with the development of political and ideological debates in the context of policy-making and the creation of proposals, and we also welcome these experiences in the context of legislative chambers at all levels and other cross-party spaces. Sadly, we have witnessed how trying to start certain debates or implement specific policies which challenge the status-quo has prompted the reaction of elite groups that hold lots of economic and social power. These groups do not have anything to do with democratic representation of the people: big corporations that make profit of people’s rights, seeing that their privileges are at risk, are (mis)using legal tools with the aims of political thuggery and damaging the image of the institutions and trying to put an end to the policies and legal frames that protect the rights of the citizens.

These practices, called lawfare, are persistently being used by big corporations that make profit of basic rights, such as housing, access to water and breathing clear air, in Barcelona as a response to the proposals of the progressive and green local government of the city. Once the institutions started tackling the privileges of big private corporations and putting forward a set of proposals in line with the general interest and the right to the city, those lobbies started legal procedures against the government of the city as political weapons. This follows a clear agenda of trying to stop the public servants from fulfilling their commitments. During the last seven years, the members of the local government of Barcelona received 11 lawsuits, and 10 of them have already been dismissed.

All these lawsuits are always being put forward by legal entities that are

closely related to real estate corporations, vulture funds, the multinational company in charge of the management of the water of the city, but also the automotive sector and the tourism lobby. During the last two mandates, Barcelona has been a leader in developing policies that contribute to achieving the right to the city: housing policies and putting an end to the privatisation of the water to manage it as a common good. Also, green policies have been implemented to reduce the air and noise pollution due to cars, foster the use of public transport and active mobility (walking and biking) and increase the healthy and green areas in the city. In this sense, mass media, in general not independent from these economic powers, is also joining this campaign of delegitimation. Traditional media and online pamphlets are spreading fake news and feeding the anti-political narrative, puting at the same level politicians facing charges for corruption with this legal abuse.

With this resolution, the Federation of Young European Greens:

- Welcome the brave proposals put forward by Barcelona en Comú at the Barcelona City Council government for the past 7 years and welcome such proposals in other local governments.

- Endorse the green and progressive organisation in the upcomong 2023 municipal elections and similar organisations in other elections in the future.

- Show its solidarity with Mayor Ada Colau and the Barcelona en Comú councilors as well as government officials across the Member States in the local government, who are being victims of this prosecution solely for prioritising the rights of Barcelonians

- Urge the corresponding institutions to put an end to the privilege of big corporations that are making profit of our rights, including housing, water supply, and healthy cities, and stop them from employing lawfare schemes against political parties and organisations which are developing progressive policies to move forward into equal access to the right to the city

- Calls for initiatives on both national and European levels to enact legislation limiting the maximum amount of money that can be spent on lobbying by individuals or (corporate) organisations, eventually with a ban on corporate lobbying, and the facilitation of lobbying by and consultation of civil society organisations and academia.

Reason

The 2023 Spanish municipal elections are coming close. Fortunately, in Barcelona we have had the pleasure of having a fearless, progressive local government that has implemented the most ambitious, innovative policies towards a greener, more equal city. This has, however, com at a cost—the wealthy ruling class and all major lobbies have begun a lawfare strategy, targeting individual Barcelona en Comú councilors. The only reason behind it: prioritising policies that benefit all Barcelonians in major issues such as housing and the right to a greener city.