

Finland: ANDERSSON: The Left must clean out members who oppose support for Ukraine

Monday 10 June 2024, by [TEIVAINEN Aleksi](#) (Date first published: 31 May 2024).

CHAIRPERSON of the Left Alliance Li Andersson says The Left, one of the seven political groups in the European Parliament, should clean out members who question support for Ukraine and show sympathy for Russia.

“The groups are always reformed at the start of the term, and we want changes to the group that make it more cohesive on foreign and security policy,” she [said](#) to Helsingin Sanomat on Tuesday.

The Left Alliance is part of The Left in the European Parliament.

Helsingin Sanomat reported earlier this week that several members of the political group voted this term against resolutions concerning Ukraine, questioning the need for support - especially military support - for Ukraine. Some members have also criticised the economic sanctions slapped on Russia over its war of aggression in Ukraine.

An analysis conducted by the newspaper found that the group has divided on votes concerning Ukraine, with support coming from parties from the Nordics and opposition from parties in Central and Southern Europe.

Andersson, who herself is vying for a seat in the European Parliament, pointed out that The Left has nonetheless unanimously condemned the war of aggression prosecuted by Russia.

“I’ve stressed that there are certain things we won’t compromise on. The entire group has condemned the war unequivocally. Had that not been the case, we would’ve left the group or someone else would’ve had to leave,” she stated.

“On other issues, you can see that other parties differ from us in terms of their security policy analysis. They don’t reflect the thinking of the Left Alliance.”

How Russia and Ukraine support are viewed by other parties in the group is becoming a threshold question within the Left Alliance - one that defines what parties are capable of co-operation, according to Helsingin Sanomat.

Andersson said MEPs **Clare Daly** and **Mick Wallace** from Ireland, two fierce critics of support for Ukraine, can no longer sit with The Left. Despite also parroting Russian propaganda and seeking to torpedo resolutions on Russia, Daly and Wallace have been allowed to continue as members of The Left.

“The Nordic Green Left, [the umbrella party for left-wing parties in the Nordics], as a whole is of the

opinion that if they manage to win re-election, they can't join our group," stated Andersson.

Sahra Wagenknecht, a German left-wing populist who has opposed military aid to Ukraine and called for the resumption of gas trade with Russia, is similarly not welcome to The Left, according to Andersson.

"We'll represent our stance in every vote. MEPs of the Left Alliance will vote in favour of supporting Ukraine," she pledged.

Helsingin Sanomat on Wednesday wrote that the European Parliament's political groups have generated more discussion than previously in the run-up to the elections, a reflection of the groups' growing importance in decision-making.

Johanna Kantola, a professor of political science at the University of [Helsinki](#), [said](#) to the newspaper that the groups have marked differences: while the largest groups in the parliament – the centre-right EPP, the social democratic S&D and liberal Renew Europe – have highlighted their European and supranational nature, some of it has been lip service.

National interests are visible in votes and the groups exercise no group discipline, she said.

The Greens and European Free Alliance is a genuinely supranational group with a shared set of values, according to Kantola.

Finnish parties in the European Parliament have been aligned as follows: the Christian Democrats, Movement Now and National Coalition have been part of the EPP, the Finns Party of the ECR, the Social Democrats of S&D, the Centre and Swedish People's Party of Renew Europe, the Left Alliance of The Left, and the Green League of the Greens and EFA.

Riikka Purra, the chairperson of the Finns Party, stated in mid-May that the Finns Party would stay in the ECR even if the group was joined by Fidesz, the party led by authoritarian Hungarian Prime Minister **Viktor Orbán**.

"We don't have another group to go to, and you can't be without a group. That's when you need other structures that make it possible to co-exist," she was [quoted saying](#) in Brussels on 14 May by Helsingin Sanomat.

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