
Letter from the Hungarian Delegation on recent developments in Hungary



Today 17:35

Honourable Members,

Please find below a letter from the Members of the Hungarian EPP Delegation.

Best regards,

Marton Vajna
Delegation Coordinator

Dear Colleague,

In recent days we have all experienced an increasing pressure on the European People's Party on behalf of the European public media, the liberal and left wings of the political spectrum, universities, etc... This is not the first time that this is happening. We also understand, that many of your constituents are also asking you about what is going on in Hungary, or

asking you about what is going on in Hungary, or asking you to exercise pressure on your Hungarian colleagues.

We are writing this letter to give you first-hand background information and explanation to help you to answer these inquiries, and to understand the situation without the disturbance of the firm and steady political bias the European mainstream press has exercised constantly against Hungary and our prime minister.

Viktor Orbán, our prime minister, we in Fidesz, in your sister party, and Hungary have been always in the vanguard of political innovation since 1988. Since then, Fidesz was one of the major force which transformed our country into a European democracy. Maybe the fact that we won two consecutive elections and presently we are way ahead in the opinion polls for the next year's elections, is due to the fact that several times we tried uncharted waters and found bold new ways, and we were in constant consultation with the people, not only at the general elections in every four years.

In 2007 Hungary has started from a position worse than Greece. She was the first country, under the socialist government then, that asked the IMF for help. Since 2010 with Orbán in government our country changed completely. At the moment we have zero inflation, our unemployment rate - including the youth unemployment ranks among the five lowest in the union. Our deficit has been within the limits of Maastricht in the last six years. We have had a steady growth rate between 2 and 4 percent in recent years. We created a work-based economy, with our next goal at close to reach full employment, namely everybody who wants to work will be able to. We also changed our social system considerably: instead of subsidies we provide work opportunities for people. We solved the huge Swiss franc-based mortgage crisis, and the disastrous semiprivate pension fund crisis, all which are now serving examples for other countries. We replaced our 1949 (communist) constitution with the first Hungarian democratic Charta ever. Not to speak about the successful protection of our external Schengen borders, which task some other member states failed.

We also admit that in all these activities and achievements we, and particularly Viktor Orbán were under constant attacks for our bold and sometimes unorthodox solutions.

We are not perfect, not every experiment succeeded, but we are also flexible and ready to engage to substantial discussions about the future of our country and our common Europe. This is why PM Viktor Orbán decided to join us tomorrow again in the European Parliament to discuss questions of major importance for us. We always thought that discussions are much better ways of handling conflicts than unilateral declarations or double standard labelling, or spreading rumours without real foundations, or accepting the opposition criticism of our government at face value without further verification.

We would also like to confirm that our party, Fidesz and our prime minister are committed Europeans. When we criticize certain measures of the Institutions, we do it for the sake of making it better, to help it to survive the blows. We are far away from the camp of those, nowadays emerging parties in Europe who fight Europe with the aim of destroying it. We are convinced, that the Union should change, considerably to conquer the challenges which lay ahead. And in the spirit of the Rome Declaration, we are keen to participate in the lively debate and in the action to re-launch Europe, as candidate Macron proposes as well from one of the great founding member states of the Union. We have ideas. we have

experiences of renewal and innovation to contribute to this historic task.

We would like to remind you also, that in the recent debates around our country our government always played according to the rules. We are members of the club, we accepted not only the benefits but the burdens of membership. This is how we solved and closed the debates of the past on our press-law, on our new constitution, on our legislation on the judiciary with mutual satisfaction and declarations of acceptance with the European Commission. (According to the newest Judicial scoreboard, Hungary ranks among the best in terms of judicial independence.) We changed the adopted rules if it was necessary, we reversed regulations which did not meet the common standards. This attitude of our government has not changed. We fight for what we presume important for ourselves and for the common goals, even if the majority thinks otherwise, but we have always believed that in politics arguments and determination in fair debate can change majorities, minorities can become mainstream, and we are always ready to debate.

Many of you expressed to us, that you have found the tone and the language of our recent national consultation on state fixed utility prices, taxation, stopping migration and on NGO's too offensive. What is true that in the lively pluralistic national political debate we use a straight political language in Hungary. Our opposition in Hungary does the same. Just read their recent mails directed to you by them in the last few weeks to verify. It is a Hungarian way of politics. Hungarian citizens are among the most pro-Europeans in the EU, largely due to the honest and open debates on key European issues we have carried out through national consultations in recent years.

We, on the other hand, find the Western straightjacketed, dull political language sometimes appalling and meaningless, unable to express the existing differences. Listening to that we understand why is the gap widening between the political class and the people. But we accept that, it is your country, you know it better. But please do not try to make us speak to the public in the bureaucratic, scientific language like bankers or technocrats do, because we will lose our political support. Take it as a style question, if you don't like it and cut through please to the essence. But please do not compare us to the anti-European parties whose goal is to destroy our

The national consultation raises the issues of present political debates, it tries to increase our public backing when we debate these issues in the EU Institutions. We presume that it is a normal way of involving the public to the debates which direction the Union should go. We do not want massive immigration, we want to keep the setting - in the name of subsidiarity - of the utility prices and taxation in national hands. We also want that if NGO's take part in the political life, they should declare who is financing them, these rules are already applied in other participants: parties, politicians and the press in several countries. It is a matter of transparency. This is the same what we are trying to do here in the European Parliament with the Pieper-report, for instance.

In a previous mail we explained you already the situation around the university of George Soros in Budapest, so we can be short. From the new law on this it is crystal clear that no one wants to close down the CEU. In a calmer moment the rector of the university, the Canadian liberal professor Michael Ignatieff also admitted this, as he had done in the letter addressed recently to its staff and students, in which he states: nothing is threatening our university. The new regulation applies to 28 universities in Hungary and it only requires common standards to be fulfilled, and stop the situation that some non-EU universities enjoy greater business advantages than the European ones. The claim that Orbán closed the CEU is absurd. Even more absurd that this allegedly closed university is accusing the government that it was closed. We have been through of such evident false claims of the past. Some of you still may recall that the Hungarian opposition and the European press shouted in choir, together with Nellie Kroes, that the „only remaining voice of opposition" the Klub Rádió was shut down. In reality the radio never stopped even for a minute broadcasting, it is still on for the benefit of a lively, competitive media life in Hungary.

Dear Friend, much is on the table. Hungary, Fidesz and the EPP is attacked and put under pressure by several directions nowadays. We shared these thoughts and explanations with you by asking to be critical about the accusations. Again, we make mistakes, we are not perfect, but we are also ready to correct them. For that we need sincere and straight further conversations, in which we have been always ready to engage.

Yours sincerely,

András GYÜRK

József SZÁJER

Kinga GÁL

Andrea BOCSKOR

Andor DELI

Tamás DEUTSCH

Norbert ERDŐS

György HÖLVÉNYI

Ádám KÓSA

György SCHÖPFLIN

László TÖKÉS