

**RES-3**

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Concerning: 3) Policy Papers

**Poland, Hungary, Slovakia: European comeback wanted**

1 Poland, Hungary, Slovakia: European comeback wanted

2 The European Union project has been recently challenged by international  
3 situations for which member states would have to stand all together, politically  
4 reflecting the values and ideals the European construction is supposed to be  
5 based on, in order to fulfil their role as a global player. Unfortunately, they  
6 have not always been able to appear as unite to the international community,  
7 as the ongoing refugee crisis tragically shows every day. One reason for this  
8 are the discrepancies between European governments' political stands and the  
9 apparently nearly impossibility to find a consensus or an internal arrangement  
10 regarding important political topics. Particularly, in the central Europe region,  
11 the Polish, Hungarian and Slovakian governments showed in the last months  
12 a rather questionable political shift towards right-wing authoritarian populist  
13 attitudes and policies.

14 Governments of the Visegrad group are, as in other countries in Europe, polit-  
15 ically and electorally put under pressure by the extreme right. The legislative  
16 election in Slovakia on March 5th, 2016 resulted in the populist self-defined  
17 social democrat Robert Fico to keep his first place, while two extreme right, re-  
18 spectively nationalist and neo-Nazi, parties entered the Parliament with more  
19 than 8% of the votes. The PiS party in Poland, that has been governing  
20 the country for one year, was democratically confirmed at the last legislative  
21 election in October 2015. In Hungary, the sovereignist

22 conservative Viktor Orban has been leading the country for 6 years. Populist  
23 parties came into power thanks to xenophobic, nationalistic and Eurosceptical  
24 discourses around the migration question.

25 From a strictly electoral perspective, all three governments are democratic.  
26 Nevertheless, their anti-liberalism and conservatism allows one to regard them  
27 as populist, whether on the questions of public morality, like in Poland where  
28 the already barely existing rights to abortion and sexual orientation is being  
29 challenged, economy, like in Slovakia where the government shows a really au-  
30 thoritative attitude, or politics, like in Hungary where the xenophobic rhetoric  
31 of Orban is backed up by an assumed democratic-authoritarian leading style.

32 Nevertheless, it is clear that the Rule of Law is being flouted. The Polish  
33 government put at risk the principles of separation of powers by taking over  
34 the media and the constitutional control by passing a law that makes it im-  
35 possible for the constitutional Court to work. The European Council reacted  
36 by opening a procedure to check and secure the Rule of Law in Poland. While  
37 having shown a sincere will to move towards EU requirements in the past,  
38 the political shifts happening for a few years in the central European region  
39 are now threatening the political union between EU member states, while the  
40 concerned countries considerably benefit from European investments into their  
41 public sector.

42 The clear mutual advantages of a political and economic Union – while still  
43 waiting for a social one – will finally be put under high pressure by these  
44 populist, nationalist and conservative governments that ultimately encourage  
45 the comeback of nationalisms all over Europe and the weakening of the project  
46 for a common future. FYEG calls for the creation of a real European political  
47 space including

- 48 • the Europeanisation of political debate at the European level, not allow-  
49 ing national governments to set the agenda
- 50 • the creation and support to diffusion of European media and watchdogs
- 51 • the federalisation of political parties

52 The state of play in the European Union requires an urgent reaction from  
53 EU authorities and member states, reminding partners of the principles the  
54 European construction was built on and committing to come back at the ta-  
55 ble to find common solutions to common challenges without stepping back  
56 to old national reflexes. The absence of such reactions would only lead to  
57 further legitimization of selfish attitudes from national governments, ultimately

<sup>58</sup> unravelling the political Union that we have been trying to develop in the last  
<sup>59</sup> decades.

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