
EU ELECTIONS 2019: THE CASE FOR AN ALLIANCE AGAINST FAR-RIGHT

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In many member states far-right parties are strengthening their grip on public discourse and the political agenda.

The surge of hate speech has been gone mainstream in national politics in Italy, France and Germany, the three biggest member-states in EU and eurozone - but also in other member states with ultra-conservative governments, like Poland, Hungary and Austria.

It has turned the refugee issue into the core element of the European political debate.

The surge of the far-right is extremely dangerous for the European establishment and our societies - especially when the EU decision-making bodies, such as the EU Council and the European Commission, cannot efficiently address the much-needed institutional reforms.

Hate speech comes to fill in the gap of a problematic public sphere in Europe, where democratic forces have a hard time building a wide, progressive front against the narrative of nationalist decline.

Nonetheless, there are some coordinated efforts to create a pro-European political front that can cope with far-right forces ahead of the EU elections in May 2019.

The debate between the left-wing, socialist and green forces has been enriched with specific proposals that can tackle some of the major issues in EU level, such as social justice, tax transparency and the need for a sustainable growth model.

A number of leaders have endorsed the efforts for a wider progressive front, such as prime ministers Alexis Tsipras (Greece), Antonio Costa (Portugal) or Pedro Sanchez (Spain), while leading figures in the European Parliament, like Udo Bullmann, Gabrielle Zimmer or Ska Keller keep pushing for the necessary reforms that can essentially reinvigorate the European project and its founding principles.

In this context, communications channels with the democratic centre and the liberals should also be fostered so that this alliance can be broader and more dynamic.

These progressive political forces can build their alliance against the decline of social rights and the increase of inequalities caused by neoliberal policies, and, further, around some fundamental elements that could otherwise divide them:

-the need to balance between security and the protection of human rights

- the need to deal with structural deficiencies of eurozone's architecture without dismantling the EU treaties

- the need to introduce a new labour model that can incorporate environmental concerns, an ever-growing global population and pressing job demand.

The EU elections offer the ground for the proper elaboration of all these proposals. The far-right is not an alternative to the ongoing challenges we are facing, but a huge step backwards in the EU integration process.

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