



Budapest, 22-24 February 2019

[Andrássy University Budapest](#)

[Pollack Mihály tér 3, 1088](#)

22nd February 2019 | Budapest, Hungary

[European Youth Centre Budapest](#)

[Zivatar u. 1, 1024](#)

23-24 February 2019 | Budapest, Hungary



Co-funded by the
Europe for Citizens Programme
of the European Union

PROGRAMME

Friday 22nd February 2019

Venue: Andrassy University Budapest – Pollack Mihály tér 3, 1088 Budapest

15:15 – 15:30

FLASHMOB: Kálvin square

I CHOOSE EUROPE | EURÓPÁT VÁLASZTOM

Join us with European Flags to sing the European anthem and support the future of Europe

15:30 – 16:00

PUBLIC DEBATE

Registrations

16:00 – 17:30

1st panel with Members of the European Parliament and local political representatives:

- **“TOWARDS THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS: WHAT IS AT STAKE FOR HUNGARY AND FOR EUROPE?”**

Introduced and moderated by

Andrew DUFF, President of The Spinelli Group

with the participation of

CSEH Katalin, Momentum lead candidate for the European Parliament elections

ARATÓ Gergely, Member of the National Council of the Democratic Coalition and of the National Parliament

GYÖNGYÖSI Márton, Executive Vice-President Jobbik

HARANGOZÓ Gábor, Member of the European Parliament (MSZP)

HARASZTI Miklós, Politician, writer, journalist, human rights advocate, and university professor

Followed by Debate

17:30 – 19:00

2nd panel with Members of the European Parliament and local political representatives

- **“DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW: EUROPEAN TRENDS AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE”**

Introduced and moderated by

NAGY Eszter, Secretary General of the Union of European Federalists Hungary

with the participation of

BALÁZS Péter, Director of Center for European Neighbourhood Studies

DONÁTH Anna, Vice-President of Momentum Movement

Sandro GOZI, President of the Union of European Federalists

KUNHALMI Ágnes, Member of the National Parliament of Hungary (MSZP)

SZÉL Bernadett, Member of the National Parliament of Hungary and member of Committee of European Affairs

Followed by Debate

Saturday 23rd February 2019

Venue: European Youth Centre Budapest – Zivatar u. 1, 1024 Budapest

OPEN SEMINAR

08:30 – 09:00

Registrations

09:00 – 09:30

OPENING

- Welcoming
- Introduction of participants
- Outline of the programme and the objectives of the day
Introduced by Paolo VACCA, Secretary General of the Union of European Federalists

09:30 – 12:00

PANEL DISCUSSION

"HUNGARY 15 YEARS AFTER THE EUROPEAN UNION ACCESSION: PERSPECTIVES ON EUROPE AND CHALLENGES FOR DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW"

- Discussion with academic and political experts and representatives of civil society
András DÉSI, Senior Editor & Reporter at Népszabadság
Gábor GYORI, Senior analyst at the think-tank Policy Solutions
Stefánia KAPRONCZAY, Executive Director at Társaság a Szabadságjogokért - Hungarian Civil Liberties Union
András PULAI, Director of Strategy at Publicus, Millennium Institute
Zsuzsanna SZELENYI, Visitor fellow of the Institute for Human Sciences, Former MP, Hungary
Moderated by Eszter NAGY, Secretary General of UEF Hungary

Debate with participants

12:00 – 13:00

Lunch

13:00 – 14:30

PANEL DISCUSSION

"SCENARIOS FOR THE VISEGRAD COUNTRIES AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE: BETWEEN NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN SOVEREIGNTY"

- Discussion with academic and political experts and representatives of civil society
Dániel BARTHA, Director at Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy
Petr FLEISCHMANN, Advisor on Foreign Affairs
Magdalena JAKUBOWSKA, Vicepresident, Res Publica Foundation / Visegrad Insight
Moderated by Leonie MARTIN, Vice-president of the Young European Federalists (JEF)

Debate with participants

14:45 – 16:30

PANEL DISCUSSION

"WHAT CAN THE EUROPEAN UNION DO FOR DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW ACROSS EUROPE?"

- Discussion with academic and political experts and representatives of civil society
Dóra GYORFFY, Professor of international Political Economy at the Péter Pázmány Catholic University and the Corvinus University of Budapest
Krisztina HEGEDUS, Policy Advisor at the European Parliament
Gabriella HORN, Web editor for the Open Society Archives and freelance journalist
Leonie MARTIN, Vice-president of the Young European Federalists (JEF)
Anita SZUCS, Professor at Corvinus University
Erik USZKIEWICZ, Hungarian Europe Society

	Moderated by <i>Sebastiano PUTOTO</i> , Executive Board member of the Young European Federalists (JEF)
	Debate with participants
16:30 – 17:00	Coffee break
17:00 – 18:30	<u>POLITICAL COMMISSION MEETING (internal UEF/JEF meeting)</u>
	Session I: Defining the background and the key issues
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rule of Law and European integration <i>Introduced by Sebastiano PUTOTO, Executive Board of JEF</i> • European trends and national developments <i>Introduced by Jacopo BARBATI, Vice-President of JEF</i> • Existing mechanisms on European level <i>Introduced by Leonie MARTIN, Vice-president of the Young European Federalists (JEF) and</i>
19:30	Dinner

Sunday 24th February 2019

Venue: European Youth Centre Budapest – Zivatar u. 1, 1024 Budapest

	<u>POLITICAL COMMISSION MEETING (internal UEF/JEF meeting)</u>
	<u>Rotating group discussions</u>
09:00 – 11:00	Session II: Preparing JEF and UEF policies - Deep dive into selected topics: <u>What measures can Europe implement to safeguard democracy and rule of law across Europe?</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “Article 7” procedure and Review mechanism on Democracy, Rule of Law and Fundamental Rights <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Facilitated by Leonie MARTIN, Vice-president of JEF</i> • The role of the European Public Prosecutor’s Office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Facilitated by Eszter NAGY, Secretary General of UEF Hungary</i> • Rule of Law conditionality in the EU budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Facilitated by Sebastiano PUTOTO, Executive Board of JEF</i> • Media literacy and a European media space <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Facilitated by Jacopo BARBATI, Vice-President of JEF</i>
11:00 – 11:20	Coffee break
11:20 – 12:30	<u>PLENARY SESSION</u>
	Outcomes of the Session II
12:30	<u>CLOSING</u>

PARTICIPATION CONDITIONS

Travel Reimbursement

Participants residing outside Budapest will be eligible to **reimbursement of their travel expenses** (accommodation and subsistence excluded) **70% and up to a maximum reimbursement of 150 EUR**. Reimbursements will be made on the spot and in cash, **upon presentation of proof of payment**. Please, do not forget to bring **the original receipts and tickets** with you.

Contribution

Accepted participants are required to make a **contribution of 60 euros** to help towards covering the costs of venue hire, catering (accommodation for event days, a welcome reception, breakfasts, one lunch, one dinner and coffee break), documents and other expenses.

The contribution **fee is waived for local, Budapest based participants**.

SPEAKERS

Andrew DUFF

Andrew Duff is President of The Spinelli Group and a British politician. He was a Member of the European Parliament (ALDE/UK) from 1999-2014. He was a member of the Convention on the Charter of Fundamental Rights and of the Convention on the Future of Europe, and one of Parliament's representatives at the IGC, which drafted the Treaty of Lisbon. Duff was President of the Union of European Federalists 2008-13. Before becoming an MEP, Duff was Director of the Federal Trust in London. He is a founder member of the European Council on Foreign Relations; an honorary member of the board of the Trans-European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA); and a member of the advisory board of Transparency International (Europe). Founding member of The Spinelli Group, Andrew Duff became its President in October 2017.



NAGY Eszter

Eszter Nagy is the secretary general of UEF Hungary. She has long time (1997-2009) experience in the Hungarian foreign service. In the Ministry of Foreign Affairs she worked as French desk officer, later as press, cultural attaché and consul in Ottawa at the Hungarian Embassy in Canada. After returning to Budapest, she joined the Cultural, Research and Development Cooperation Department in the Ministry, and was posted to Tallinn as deputy head of mission of the Hungarian Embassy in Estonia. Back in Hungary she worked at the Common Foreign and Security Policy Department in the Ministry. She holds a Master's degree of the Global Economic Relations Program in international relations at the Central European University in Budapest.



CSEH Katalin

Katalin Cseh is the International Officer of Momentum Movement and the party's Lead Candidate for the European Parliament. She is a former member of the Party's National Board and one of the party's founding members. In the past few years, she has worked on a number of projects focusing on international and regional cooperation, youth involvement and gender equality. She graduated as a medical doctor and also holds an MSc degree in Health Economics. Prior to joining the Board, Katalin practiced obstetric medicine in Budapest. Currently she is studying for her MBA degree.



ARATÓ Gergely

Arató Gergely was the State Secretary at the Ministry of Education of Hungarian Republic from 2004 to 2010. He served as a local councilor for 4 years and as a Member of Parliament for 8 years.

After 2010 he became a college lecturer. Since 2014 he was a political advisor of Democratic Coalition's MEP-s at the European Parliament on asylum, human rights and Roma issues, and the senior strategy advisor of the 2018 campaign.

He is a member of National Council of the Democratic Coalition. Since 2018 he is the Member of Parliament and Deputy Head of the Parliamentary Group of Democratic Coalition.



GYÖNGYÖSI Márton

Márton Gyöngyösi is an MP for Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary since 2010. Currently he is Executive Vice-President, as well as leader of the Parliamentary Group of Jobbik. He has long political experience as Vice-Chairman of the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the Hungarian National Assembly, and member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. Mr Gyöngyösi holds a degree in Economy and Political Sciences of Trinity College, Dublin. He worked as a tax consultant for KPMG and EY between 2000 and 2010.



HARANGOZÓ Gábor

Gábor Harangozó is a candidate for the European Parliamentary election of Hungarian Socialist Party. Gabor started his political carrier as the youngest socialist MEP in 2004, since than he was member of the Hungarian Parliament, Council of Europe PA, and OSCE-PA. He is member of the Party Board and president of the Somogy County party organization.



HARASZTI Miklós

Miklós Haraszti is a Hungarian politician, writer, journalist, human rights advocate, and university professor. His books have been widely translated. He went from a leader of Hungary's free press and democracy movement in the 1970s and 1980s to a member of Parliament in the 1990s. He served as the OSCE's Representative on Freedom of the Media from 2004 to 2010, and as the UN's Special Rapporteur on human rights in Belarus from 2012 to 2018. Since 2010, he has headed election observation missions for the OSCE in several countries. He has taught at Columbia University, New York, and Central European University (CEU), Budapest.



BALÁZS Péter

Péter Balázs Graduated in Budapest at the Faculty of Economics (today Corvinus University), he got his PhD degree and habilitated at the same University. He is a ScD of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. In parallel with his government and diplomatic career he has been teaching and doing research. He was nominated Professor of the Corvinus University in 2000 and joined the CEU as a full time Professor in 2005.

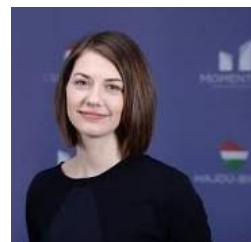
He was the Government Representative of Hungary in the European Convention drafting the Constitutional Treaty which has become, the Lisbon Treaty. In 2004 he was nominated the first Hungarian Member of the European Commission responsible for regional policy. On the invitation of the European Commission he coordinates priority projects of the Trans-European Transport Network.

Professor Balázs is holding an Ad Personal Jean Monnet Chair. His research activities are centered on the foreign policy of the EU and problems of the late modernization and European integration of the Eastern part of the continent.



DONÁTH Anna Júlia

Anna Júlia Donáth is the Vice president of Hungarian Party Momentum and holds the second position on the party's list for the European elections. During the 2018 parliamentary elections, she received the highest share of votes within her party. Anna studied Sociology at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest and Migration and Ethnic Studies at the University of Amsterdam. Prior to joining Momentum, she worked in Brussels before becoming a project manager for Menedék – the Hungarian Association for Migrants. In late 2018, she became a key figure of the wave of protests that erupted in late 2018 against the so-called "slave law" introduced by the Hungarian government.



Sandro GOZI

Sandro Gozi is the President of Union of European Federalists, he was the Secretary of State for European Affairs in the Renzi and Gentiloni Governments (2014-2018) and Member of the Italian Chamber of Deputies (2006-2018). Prior to that, he was a diplomat and then spent more than a decade in the European institutions notably as a European Commission official (1996-2000) and then as member of the Cabinet of European Commission President Romano Prodi (2000-2004) and advisor to European Commission President Jose Barroso.



KUNHALMI Ágnes

Ágnes Kunhalmi studied at the communication faculty in the Szeged University and later political science at ELTE University in Budapest. Between 2003-2004 she worked as a civil servant at the Ministry of Agriculture, in the period 2006-2010 she was local government representative in the 2nd district in Budapest. Between 2010-2014 member of the Education committee of the Budapest local government. She got elected member of the Parliament from the country list of the Hungarian Socialist Party in 2014, and she became the deputy head of the Cultural Committee of the Hungarian Parliament. In 2018 she got elected as an individual candidate in the 18th district of Budapest, and continued her position as the deputy head of the Cultural Committee. In the Hungarian Socialist Party between 2010-14 she was member of the presidential board, in 2014-18 she was the Socialist Party's president in Budapest. In 2018 she was elected president of the Socialist Party's electoral committee.



SZÉL Bernadett Bernadett Szél is an independent member of the Hungarian Parliament. She is in opposition and is member of the Committee on European Affairs. She has MSc degree in Economics and PhD in Sociology from the Corvinus University of Budapest. She worked in the private sector as well as in the NGO-sector, her last workplace before politics was the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. She ran for office first in 2010 as candidate in her individual constituency, became Member of Parliament in 2012 first upon the decision of the Party Congress of LMP. She was elected to Parliament in 2014 and then in 2018 when she was prime minister candidate of LMP. She was co-president and Parliamentary Group Leader of LMP and member of the Parliamentary Committee on National Security. She decided to leave her party after the elections but her commitment for democratic Hungary and green politics remained the same, works currently as independent MP.



András DÉSI

András Dési has been for more than 26 years Senior Editor & Reporter with Hungary's leading daily newspaper NÉPSZABADSÁG shut down in October 2016. During his career, he had spent more than 10 years as NÉPSZABADSÁG's Permanent Correspondent in France and in Germany. Currently Mr. Dési is a free-lance author & journalist. Until January 2019 he was Country Reporter for "Reporters sans frontieres" (Reporters Without Borders), since February 2019 he serves as Senior Adviser for the Paris-based international NGO. Mr. Dési is a former Marshall Memorial Fellow (2006), since 2005 Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite de la République française (Knight of The National Order of Merit of France).



Gábor GYORI

Gabor Gyori is a senior analyst at the Hungarian think-tank Policy Solutions. Previously, he worked as an analyst at the Prime Minister's Office and at the Demos Hungary Foundation. He studied in the United States and received an MA in International Relations from the University of Chicago and a BA in Social Studies from Harvard University.



Stefánia KAPRONCZAY

Stefánia Kapronczay is the Executive Director of the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (since July, 2013). Kapronczay graduated cum laude from the Faculty of Law at ELTE as lawyer, also completed master program in sociology in 2010. Stefania started working at the HCLU in 2005 and she was the Head of the Patients' Rights Program from 2008 to 2012. As program director Kapronczay lead HCLU's effort to stop restrictions on reproductive rights, criminalization of homelessness and to foster the rights of persons with disabilities. Between 2012 and 2013 she was a scholar at Stanford University, and graduating as Master of the Science of Law. Stefania wrote her dissertation on the sexual and reproductive rights of people with disabilities. She was elected as the co-chair of the International Network of Civil Liberties Organizations in May 2014. She was a German Marshall Fund fellow in 2015. Stefania is an advisory board member to School of Public Life, a community-based research and training centre, former member to the advisory board of the Rajk László College for Advanced Studies. She is a 2018 class member of the European Young Leaders (EYL40) programme.



András PULAI

András Pulai studied international relations and ISES - Hungary, EPU - Austria, and UCL - UK. Director of strategy of Publicus Institute, a polling company, since 2007. Director of Millennium Institute, a public policy institute since its inception. Frequent participant of political and policy debates in domestic and international media, and conferences.



Zsuzsanna SZELENYI

Zsuzsanna Szelényi is Visitor fellow of the Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna, Former MP, Hungary, specialist of foreign relations. In the framework of IWM's Europe's Future program Zsuzsanna Szelényi conducts research about the effective political action opposing national populism within the European Union. Between 2014-2018 Ms Szelényi has been a liberal Member of Parliament in Hungary. She covered foreign and security policy, European politics, migration, constitutional affairs and gender issues. Before rejoining to politics in 2013 in Hungary, Ms Szelényi spent most of her career at the international arena. For fourteen years she served at the Council of Europe advising governments and NGOs on various issues. Between 2010-2013 she worked as human development consultant for international organizations in various Central European and North African countries.



Ms. Szelényi started her career as founder of Fidesz, a youth party at the régime change in Hungary in 1988. She became Member of Parliament in 1990 but left politics in 1994 and had a professional career. In 2013 she returned to the Hungarian politics for the call of former Prime Minister Gordon Bajnai, who formed a new party, 'Together'.

Ms Szelényi completed studies at the Global Masters of Arts Program (GMAP) within the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy (USA). She holds an MA of Psychology of the University of Eotvos Lorand, (Hungary), and an MA of International Relations of the Corvinus University, (Hungary).

Dániel BARTHA

Dániel Bartha is the director of the Budapest based Centre for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy (CEID) since 2014. Previously he served as the director of the Bratislava based Central European Policy Institute (CEPI, currently GLOBSEC Policy Institute), Vice-President of the Centre for Democracy Public Foundation and as Program Director of the International Centre for Democratic Transition (ICDT). His main research areas are the Central European foreign and security policy and regional integration.



Petr FLEISCHMANN

Petr Fleischmann is holding a PhD degree in history from the European University Institute of Florence and a Master degree in Philosophy from the university Paris Sorbonne. In the recent past, Petr worked as adviser at the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Security of the Czech Republic Senate. He has been working as journalist and columnist at the daily newspaper Lidové Noviny, as editor in chief at Premiéra TV, a foreign affairs journalist at the TV Nova. Peter has exercised role of foreign correspondent in France of Mlada Fronta daily newspaper as well as his carrier includes other journalism and lectures related roles.



Magdalena JAKUBOWSKA

Magdalena Jakubowska successfully serves the role of vicepresident and director of operations at Res Publica since summer 2017, where she manages and supports key ventures, including institutional cooperation and partnerships, strategic development, and program management. She is also responsible for operational planning, and security stream also developing female empowerment agenda #WomenAreNATO. Earlier, from 2015 until 2017, Magda has established the presence of and served the role of Director of Operations at the Center for European Policy Analysis (CEPA) Warsaw Office. In 2016 Magda has earned a diploma from the Leadership Academy for Poland featuring a Harvard-type leadership and management development program. Previously, Magda worked at the Polish Institute of International Affairs. She holds a degree from the faculty of Languages for Specific Purposes at the University of Warsaw and from International Relations at the Warsaw School of Economics (SGH).



Dóra GYORFFY

Dóra Györffy is professor of international political economy at the Péter Pázmány Catholic University and the Corvinus University of Budapest. She holds a BA in Government from Harvard University, an MA and PhD in International Relations and European Studies from Central European University and a Doctor of Science degree in Economics from the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Her research deals with issues of European political economy focusing on the role of trust in decisions over macroeconomic policy. She has published over 50 articles and 4 monographs in English and Hungarian on these issues, including *Institutional Trust and Economic Policy: Lessons from the History of the Euro* by CEU Press, 2013 and *Trust and Crisis Management in the European Union: An Institutional Account of Success and Failure in Program Countries* by Palgrave Macmillan, 2018.

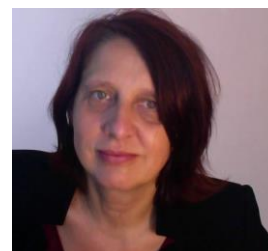


Krisztina HEGEDUS

Krisztina Hegedus is a Policy Advisor at the European Parliament.

Gabriella HORN

Gabriella HORN, with an MA in English and French (ELTE Budapest) as well as an MA in Journalism and Communication (ELTE Budapest) Gabriella has worked as a journalist and editor. Over the years she has published a series of investigative articles at Atlatzo.hu, worked as a news editor for 168ora.hu, and has written articles for major print weeklies in Hungary, including *Heti Világgazdaság* and *Magyar Narancs*. She is currently working as a web editor for the Open Society Archives and as a freelance journalist and blog author (*Bozotharc.blog.hu*). From the beginnings she has been involved in the Nyomtass te is!-project, distributing independent news across the country.



Leonie MARTIN

Leonie Martin is as Senior Vice-President of the Young European Federalists (JEF) Europe the ex-officio board member of the UEF. She hails from the Euroregion Meuse-Rhine and currently works in Brussels. She has master degree in European public policy and administration from Maastricht University and one in International and European law from the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Leonie has also lived in Budapest,



Berlin and the Washington D.C. area and she can be reached on twitter at [leoniemartin90](#).

Anita SZUCS

Anita Szűcs, Ph.D. is an associate professor at Corvinus University of Budapest. She graduated from Corvinus University of Budapest in 2002. She received her Ph.D. in political science from Corvinus University of Budapest in 2007. Her research mainly focuses on French foreign policy, Francophonie, and includes different fields of theory of international relations. She has published studies and book chapters in the field. She has written about France European-policy, French identity change after the Cold War, and theoretical problems of International Relations. Her latest article is on Kant and the theoretical roots of the international society. She is member of the Committee on World Economics and Development Studies of the Section of Economics and Law at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.



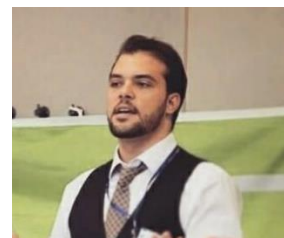
Erik USZKIEWICZ

Erik Uszkiewicz is a lawyer, and a Ph.D.-candidate at ELTE University, Budapest, his research topic focuses on prejudice and discrimination in the jurisdictional practice. In the recent past, Erik worked for various civil society organizations as a researcher and project manager. He is the Vice-Chair person of the Hungarian Europe Society, and a founding member of Mérték Media Monitor, a Budapest-based media policy think-tank and watchdog organisation. Currently, he is a member of the MTA-ELTE SPECTRA Lendület Research Group. He has an extensive publication activity in Hungary and abroad.



Sebastiano PUTOTO

Sebastiano Putoto is a member of the Executive board of the Young European Federalists (JEF) since 2017, having served on the boards of JEF Brussels and JEF Belgium before that. Prior to becoming a JEFer, he co-founded a youth association focusing on the rise of populism in Europe, Euroscepticism, and youth democratic participation. He has a background in Economics, and now works in Brussels as a policy advisor to a Member of the European Parliament, focusing on EU economic and monetary affairs, the EU budget, and youth policy. An EU institutional reform enthusiast, he is also a relentless tweeter.



Jacopo BARBATI

Jacopo Barbati, 30, Vice President of JEF-Europe.

Physicist, currently working as automation developer and data analyst. Joined JEF-Europe in 2006 and FC member since 2007 before being elected to the board in 2015 and Vice President in 2017. Interested in Eastern Europe and Baltics region, has written more than 60 articles on the network of The New Federalist and had a blog on open Democracy during the 2014 European Parliament campaign.



BACKGROUND INFORMATION FOR THE POLITICAL COMMISSION

Saturday 23rd - Sunday 24th February 2019

A study by the European Parliament

The EU framework for enforcing the respect of the rule of law and the Union's fundamental principles and values

The rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights are all key values among those listed in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU). They have a “constitutional” nature. The EU pledges to promote these values (Article 3 TEU) and to protect them through various instruments, in particular through the two-phase mechanism laid down in Article 7 TEU: Firstly, Article 7 (1) TEU provides for a prevention mechanism which can be initiated by the Parliament, the Commission or one third of the EU Member States if the Council determines that there is a risk of a serious and persistent breach of EU values. Secondly, Article 7 (2–3) TEU provides for a sanction mechanism, which can be triggered by the Commission or one third of the Member States.

In addition to the Article 7 TEU mechanism – which could lead to the withdrawal of the voting rights of a Member State in the community institutions – there is another Treaty-based mechanism to safeguard the respect of the founding values and principles: according to the infringement procedure (Article 258–260 TFEU), the Commission, as the “guardian of the Treaties”, can report a breach of the EU law by a Member State to the Court of Justice of the European Union. If the Court finds that the Member State concerned has failed to fulfil its obligations under the Treaties, the Member State must “take the necessary measures to comply with the judgment”.

To complement the above-mentioned mechanisms, in 2014, the Commission adopted the so-called Rule of Law Framework “to resolve future threats to the rule of law in Member states before the conditions for activating the mechanisms foreseen in Article 7 TEU would be met”.

The mechanism is based on a prior dialogue with the Member State concerned with the aim of avoiding any recourse to Article 7 TEU.

The Parliament study, which you can find linked at the end of this short introduction, offers an overview and analytical approach of these mechanisms, also in light of the recent Polish and Hungarian cases where there has been a breach of the Treaty values.

In addition, it examines the proposals made by the European Parliament and the Commission to improve the situation. It concludes that all initiatives have been positive. However, they either represent relatively insignificant advances on the measures already adopted by the EU or imply reforms of the Treaties that are highly unlikely to be undertaken now.

In the view of the authors of the study, two truly useful measures could be taken without modifying the Treaties. First, the signing by the EU of the European Convention on Human Rights, submitting to the jurisdiction of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg; and second, establishing an economic conditionality in the Cohesion Policy as a coercive means towards those States that seriously, flagrantly and repeatedly violate the rule of law, democracy or fundamental rights, once Article 7(1) TEU has been applied to them or in the event of a final decision from the Court of Justice of the European Union.

The rule of law and other values and principles such as democracy and fundamental rights set out in Article 2 TEU are the true “constitutional” principles of the EU. Hence the importance of promoting and safeguarding them. No state can join the EU without respecting these founding values and principles, and a Member State can be

sanctioned if it violates them. However, over the last few years, there have been cases in which, unfortunately, some Member States have violated in a serious and persistent manner the founding values and principles of the EU, particularly the rule of law. Therefore, it is urgent to ensure that there are efficient mechanisms available to guarantee their respect o within the EU.

This European Parliament study aims to examine the legal framework of the founding values and principles of the EU and the instruments to safeguard them, and look into the specific cases that have arisen.

Chapter 1 studies the concept of the rule of law as well as the place of the rule of law and other founding values of the EU (Article 2 TEU) in the legal and constitutional makeup.

Chapter 2 analyses the instruments at the EU's disposal to uphold the founding values and principles of the European project and, in particular, the impact of the mechanisms laid down in Article 7 TEU and Article 258 TFEU, as well as the Rule of Law Framework adopted by the Commission and the Annual Rule of Law Dialogue with the Member States launched by the Council.

Chapter 3 focuses on the most relevant and topical cases to have challenged respect for the rule of law in the Union: Poland and Hungary. At the same time, it looks into the interpretation of Article 2 in relation to Article 4 TEU.

Lastly, Chapter 4 lists out the proposals put forward by the Parliament and the Commission to improve respect for the rule of law, democracy and fundamental rights and introduces policy recommendations addressed to the most relevant actors, including the Parliament.

The full study can be found at [this link](#).

COUNTRY BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Want to know more about democracies under pressure?

We have collected background information from the Freedom House, Amnesty International and naturally also the statements of JEF Europe. Please note that this is not a complete list of cases where democracy is under pressure, but a collection of cases we identify as severe and that is currently under our radar of JEF Europe.

- JEF Europe resolution [Regarding the protection of the Rule of Law in the European Union](#). Our Political Commissions on Institutional Affairs (PC1) and on Internal European Affairs (PC2) are currently revising the current resolution to be discussed and adopted at the Federal Commission in March 2019 in London. Please don't hesitate to get in touch with our PC chairs to join the discussion.¹
- [Overview of Venice Commission](#), an advisory body of the Council of Europe, composed of independent experts in the field of constitutional law (sorted by countries)
- [Annual Report 2019](#) by the Partner Organisations to the Council of Europe Platform to Promote the Protection of Journalism and Safety of Journalists

BELARUS

In Belarus, often called Europe's last dictatorship, only a few types of NGOs are allowed. An assembly of more than three people is illegal without government approval. Even clapping in public is seen as a silent protest, and is forbidden. In 2016, at least four people were executed and four people were sentenced to death according to Amnesty International.

Further reading:

- [Freedom House Report Belarus 2018](#)
- [Amnesty International on Belarus](#)

JEF statements:

Open Letter to the President of the Republic of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenka (March 2017)V

HUNGARY

After Viktor Orbán and his party Fidesz won a ⅔ majority in the Hungarian parliament in 2010, they have pushed through a set of constitutional and legal changes to take control of the country's institution and strengthen the party's position vis-à-vis the opposition. Fidesz has also implemented a restrictive media law in the early 2010s and adopted a law on foreign funding for civil society in 2017, weakening the Freedom of Speech and civil society as well as limiting academic freedom. Freedom House categorized the country in 2019 for the first time as "partly free", after five consecutive years of decline and 13 years without improvement.

Further reading:

- [Freedom House Report 2019 - Democracy in Retreat](#)
- [Freedom House Report Hungary 2018](#)
- [Amnesty International on Hungary](#)
- Report by Amnesty Hungary, Hungarian Helsinki Committee and Hungarian Civil Liberties Union on developments between September 2018 - January 2019

JEF statements:

¹ For PC1: [Mariasophia Falcone](#) & [Juho Mäki-Lohiluoma](#); for PC2: [Diletta Alese](#) & [Thevagar Mohanadhasan](#). Every JEF member can join the discussion.

- [Sargentini report: Rule of law reaffirmed as a fundamental value among European political parties](#) (September 2018)
- [JEF Europe concerned with Fidesz-KDNP win in Hungary \(April 2018\)](#)
- [Commission starts infringement procedure on Hungary: JEF calls for launch of Art. 7 procedure \(May 2017\)](#)
- [JEF Europe and AEGEE Europe call upon the European Commission and the European Council to take action towards the Hungarian attacks on the CEU \(April 2017\)](#)

POLAND

The ruling party Law and Justice (PiS) have through hastily drafted legislation and other measures increased government influence over the country's media, judiciary, civil service, and education system. Poland's judiciary reform has triggered a never-before-seen moment in the history of European integration, triggering the often called "Nuclear process", namely the article 7 of the Treaty of the European Union.

Further reading:

- [Freedom House Report Poland 2018](#)
- [Amnesty International on Poland](#)

JEF statements:

- [JEF Europe and JEF Poland Joint Statement on the Rule of Law in Poland](#) (December 2017)
- [JEF Europe and JEF Poland call upon European institutions to defend rule of law](#) (July 2017)
- [Situation in Poland: JEF Europe calls upon EU national governments to respect core democratic values](#) (March 2016)

ROMANIA

Ongoing concerns in Romania include police brutality, discrimination against Roma and other vulnerable groups. Political corruption remains an entrenched problem as well as political influence in the judiciary.

A new set of laws, in particular changes made to Romania's criminal code, further weaken the rule of law, negatively impact the separation of powers, undermine the judiciary's independence and Romania's commitment to fight corruption and organised crime. The European Commission and MEPs are among those who warn against the proposals that seek to reverse decades of democratic reforms in Romania. In Bucharest, tens of thousands of people have taken to the streets to protest against corruption and government reforms since the beginning of 2018.

Further reading:

- [Freedom House Report 2018](#)
- [Amnesty International on Romania](#)
- [The rule of law in Romania, European Parliament report](#)

MALTA

Ongoing concerns in Malta relate, on the one side, to high levels of corruption and money laundering; and on the other side, on the concentration of power in the office of the the Prime Minister and consequently weak institutional powers of the Judiciary and the Parliament, undermining the system of checks and balances. Concerns about the rule of law in Malta emerged after the journalist and blogger Daphne Caruana Galizia, who had reported aggressively on political corruption, was killed in a bomb attack in October 2017.

Further reading:

- [Freedom House Report 2018](#)

- [Amnesty International on Malta](#)
- [Opinion of the Venice Commission of the Council of Europe](#)
- [Rule of law in Malta, European Parliament](#)

SLOVAKIA

One of the main concerns in Slovakia remains the high level of corruption.

In May 2017 members of the European Parliament Civil Liberties Committee (LIBE) established a new working group to monitor the situation as regards the rule of law and the fight against corruption within the EU, with specific reference to Slovakia. The group's visit to Bratislava was a follow-up to a previous mission after the assassinations of journalist Ján Kuciak, a journalist working on organised crime in Slovakia, and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová.

Further reading:

- [Freedom House Report 2018](#)
- [Amnesty International on Slovakia](#)

ITALY

The Italian media landscape has long been classified as only “partly free” by NGOs such as Freedom House and Reporters without borders. Aside from concentrated media ownership, major issues concern recurrent threats by organised crimes and extremist political groups towards journalists. To add to this, Italian journalists are increasingly concerned by the attitude of one of the political parties in Government, who have not hesitated to ‘name and shame’ journalists they don’t like.

The attitude towards migrants and refugees has also become a matter of concern, with increasing negative sentiment in the population and by the Government. There are doubts that the so-called “Security Decree”, one of the latest acts of law on the issue, may be unconstitutional.

Further readings:

- [Freedom House Report 2018](#)
- [Amnesty International on Italy](#)
- [Reporters Without Borders on Italy](#)
- [ANSA newswire on the “Security Decree”](#)

CZECH REPUBLIC

In recent years, Czech Republic has experienced a number of corruption scandals, as well as the rise of illiberal rhetoric and the influence of powerful business entities in the political arena that jeopardised free and democratic legislative activity. More recently, Prime Minister Andrej Babiš has been accused of conflict of interest in the assignment of EU funds to companies linked to him.

Further readings:

- [Freedom House Report 2018](#)
- [Amnesty International on Czechia](#)
- [Transparency international on PM Babis conflict of interest](#)

BULGARIA

Despite fairly positive economic results by Bulgaria since joining the EU, the country suffers from a corruption-ridden model of governance, a weak judicial system, and media monopolies and a lack of transparency over media funding sources.

Further readings:

- [Freedom House Report 2018](#)
- [Amnesty International on Bulgaria](#)
- [Rule of Law index for Bulgaria \(World Justice Project\)](#)

SERBIA

Serbia has seen in recent years a deterioration in the conduct of elections, continued attempts by the government and allied media outlets to undermine independent journalists through legal harassment and smear campaigns, and President Aleksandar Vučić's de facto accumulation of executive powers that conflict with his constitutional role.

Further readings:

- [Freedom House Report 2019](#)
- [Amnesty International on Serbia](#)

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

A candidate for membership since 2016, no formal negotiations have started for Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) to join the EU. As a matter of fact, a number of reforms are still lagging behind in BiH, including due judicial process and the protection of minorities.

Further readings:

- [Freedom House Report 2018](#)
- [Amnesty International on Bosnia-Herzegovina](#)
- [OSCE Analysis of Judicial Response to Discrimination Challenges in Bosnia and Herzegovina](#)