



V4 for Europe – Developing positive scenarios for Europe’s future

*Organized by the Hungarian Europe Society in cooperation with
the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*

May 16 (Tuesday), 2017

**Mercure Budapest Korona
(Budapest 1053, Kecskeméti utca 14.)**

9.00 – 9.30 *Registration*

9.30 – 9.45 *Opening remarks*

János Molnár, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Budapest

Zsuzsanna Szélényi, Member of Parliament; Member, Hungarian Europe Society

9.45 – 10.15 *Keynote speech: From the Historical Concept of Populism in the European Periphery to the Emergence of Modern Populism*

Movements retrospectively labeled as populist sprung up on the semicircle of the European periphery spanning from Ireland across the Mediterranean to the Eastern regions of the continent in the 19th century. Their novel imaginaries invariably incorporated notions of backwardness and the need for emancipation. These movements, however, split along the lines of seeking a model-following pattern of development (catching up) or some alternative, divergent mode of modernization, contrastable to those found in "core" countries. At the same time, these populisms relied heavily on concepts of societal organization and justice borrowed from these states and partially reproduced, through the transfers of ideas, the structures of dependency they sought to overcome. Emancipatory concepts have been appropriated by political entrepreneurs and populisms, at various historical junctures, could become co-opted by status-quo and anti-emancipatory political formations. Do the current forms of populism follow the old pattern and do they fit similarly into today's political realities in Europe?

Gergely Romsics, Senior Research Fellow, Research Center for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences

10.15 – 12.00 *Panel 1: Threats to the EU’s security – Views from a Visegrad perspective*

Threat perceptions in Central Europe are different from those in Western Europe. While the focus there might be on regional conflicts in Africa and the Middle East, terrorism, mass migration, and climate change, some of the main concerns of the Visegrad states are rather energy dependency and Russia’s hybrid challenge. The uncertainty over Washington’s

transatlantic commitments adds a particular hue to this problematique and puts pressure on Europe to redesign the Union's own security capacities. This panel looks at security threats the EU faces from the perspective of Central Europe in order to identify some of the main concerns the Union should address to accommodate regional differences.

- **Dániel Bartha**, Executive Director, Center for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Democracy, Budapest: *“Ungrounded Fear? Perceptions and Security Interests of the V4”*
- **Malgorzata Bonikowska**, President, Centre for International Relations, Warsaw: *“Threats to the EU Security from a V4 Perspective: Information War and the Fake News Phenomenon”*
- **Michal Šimečka**, Senior researcher, Institute of International Relations, Prague: *“Visegrad Perspectives on European Security: Rediscovering the EU Mainstream?”*
- **Magdalena Vasaryova**, Former Slovak Ambassador to Austria and Poland, Bratislava: *“What Security Means to Modern Europeans? Is There Still a Divide between East and West?”*

Moderator: Zsuzsanna Végh, Vice-chair, Hungarian Europe Society, Budapest

12.00 – 13.00 Lunch

13.00 – 15.00 Panel 2: Is there a populist foreign policy? – The revival of nationalism and new concepts of national interest in Central Europe

With the strengthening of populist forces and nationalist narratives in Central Europe, we also witness certain shifts and transformations in the foreign policy thinking and making of countries like Poland and Hungary increasingly emphasizing national sovereignty also in matters of international relevance. But can there be a ‘sovereign concept of foreign policy’ within the framework of the European Union? If so, what does it amount to? This panel explores the foreign policies of populist regimes, especially of Hungary and Poland, and hypothesizes that their approach is characterized by a new take on the concept of national interest and economic protectionism in the context of the European Union.

- **Botond Feledy**, Rector, Saint Ignatius Jesuit College, Budapest: *“Domestication of Foreign Policy: New Risks, Old Populism”*
- **Grigorij Mesežnikov**, Director, Institute of Public Affairs – IVO, Bratislava: *“Visegrad in the EU: Old or New Europe?”*
- **Lucia Najšlova**, Lecturer, Charles University, Prague: *“Post-crisis'?: EU Migration Policies”*
- **Wojciech Przybylski**, Editor-in-chief, Visegrad Insight, Warsaw: *“Chaotic Hypocrisy - Solidarity, Unity and Sovereignty Narratives in the EU”*

Moderator: András Radnóti, Member, Hungarian Europe Society, Budapest

15.00 – 15.15 Coffee Break

15.15 – 17.15 Panel 3: Can European foreign policy frameworks counter the populist flow?

Populist political forces have been long strengthening in Europe, but the last years have made it clear that the EU lacks both the institutional capacities and the political will to respond to such growing illiberal challenges as posed by the governments of Hungary and Poland. While currently among the loudest, they are only the first of many rising actors openly questioning the liberal values of the EU and the value of acting together on the international stage in a variety of issues. As Mai'a K. Davis Cross puts it, “[t]he main argument is that ideas are a core part of why institutions matter and how they shape state behavior.” By questioning the core ideas of the integration, populist forces undermine the institutions and operational frameworks of the EU and promote their ideas of *modus operandi*. Considering that European foreign policy as such is a volatile and little centralized construct, can it deal with the phenomenon of populist and nationalist foreign policy? How might we safeguard the EU’s cohesion and unity in the face of such a challenge whilst reflecting on the tide of national sentiment within the Union?

- **Dušan Fischer**, Research fellow, Research Center of the Slovak Foreign Policy Association, Bratislava: ***“It Was Never Meant to Be Simple - A Call for Normalcy in the EU Foreign Policy”***
- **Piotr Buras**, Director, European Council on Foreign Relations Warsaw Office, Warsaw: ***“Poland under Kaczynski: Is There a Populist Foreign Policy?”***
- **Martin Michelot**, Deputy Director, EUROPEUM Institute for European Policy, Prague: ***“Thinking Critically about Two-speed Europe: What Does It Mean for EU Foreign Policy and Security?”***
- **Edit Zgut**, Analyst, Political Capital, Budapest: ***“Populism and Russian Influence in Central Eastern Europe”***

Moderator: István Hegedűs, Chairman, Hungarian Europe Society

17.15 – 17.30 Closing remarks

István Hegedűs, Chairman, Hungarian Europe Society, Budapest