

in collaboration with



**Call
to
Europe**

A free Hungary in a Stronger Europe

Friday 25 - Saturday 26 October 2024

Budapest

Merlin Színház Theatre ([link](#))

CONTEXT

As Hungary takes the helm of the European Union presidency, a unique opportunity arises to reignite the flame of unity and progressivism within the nation and across the continent. Against the backdrop of challenges posed by authoritarian rule, Budapest becomes the stage for a gathering of democratic, socialist, and green activists determined to shape a brighter future.

A freer Hungary in a stronger Europe means breaking away from the shadows of authoritarian control and moving towards a future where every citizen's voice matters. It's about dismantling systems that restrict media freedom and transparency, ensuring that truth, not propaganda, shapes our democracy. People deserve more than hollow promises—they deserve essential services that work for them, not for the few. And true freedom means building an economy that offers quality jobs and opportunities for all, not just those loyal to the regime. This Hungary is one where citizens can live without fear of censorship or exclusion, where the economy thrives through investment in innovation and fairness, and where solidarity replaces division. **A new Hungary is within reach, one that leads with openness, justice, and hope—standing tall as part of a stronger, more united Europe.**

This upcoming conference symbolises a resurgence of hope and underscores the urgent need to refocus on how Europe serves its people. At the heart of the progressives' initiatives lies a shared vision for a Europe that prioritises accessible public services, true democracy, sustainable infrastructure, universal welfare, quality housing, and renewable energy. It's a model that sees these elements not just as ideals but as essential drivers of growth and prosperity for all.

In Budapest, amidst the exchange of ideas and the forging of alliances, this conference marks a pivotal moment in the journey toward a Europe that truly delivers value for its citizens, guided by principles of solidarity and progress.

Progressive forces are coming together to emphasize that true freedom goes beyond just words – it requires actual actions. First, freedom means living in a **real democracy**, where corruption is rooted out, the media is free, and everyone is treated equally under the law. Second, freedom means being **free from daily struggles**, where good jobs, affordable housing, and quality healthcare allow people to live with dignity. Finally, freedom means feeling **secure about the future**, protected from the threats of war and the challenges of climate change. The commitment of democratic, socialist, and progressive forces to building a free Hungary within a strong Europe is unwavering.

For information and registrations

<https://feps-europe.eu/event/call-to-europe-a-free-hungary-in-a-stronger-europe/>

Friday, 25 October 2024

Just Transition Beyond 2024 (side event)

Evaluating progress & future directions of the Just Transition process

Closed-door side-meeting by FEPS, FES Just Climate Centre, SOLIDAR and CEE Bankwatch

12:00-12:45

Registration and light networking lunch

12:45-13:00

Opening Remarks

- **Anelia Stefanova**, Program Director, CEE Bankwatch Network
- **László Andor**, FEPS Secretary General

13:00-14:15

Roundtable One: The Just Transition in practice

Evaluating progress, expectations and tools for local impact

- **Ferenc Rabi**, President of BDSZ, Trade Union of Mining, Energy and Industrial Workers
- **Ada Amon**, CEO, Budapest Climate Agency
- **Milan Petit**, SEER Project Lead and Author of the FEPS FES Policy Study on [“Expected labour market effects of the Green Deal Industrial Plan - The potential of labour policy for Just Transition regions”](#)
- **Alexandru Kelemen**, Co-Founder of Valea Jiului Implicata and Executive Director of the Romanian Association for Integrated Territorial Development (ADTI)
- **Csaba Vaszkó**, Just Transition Expert, Hungary

Moderated by: **Miloslaw Stepien**, Just Transition Coordinator, CEE Bankwatch Network

Exchange with all participants

14:15-14:30

Coffee Break

14:30-15:45

Roundtable Two: Looking ahead

The future of EU Just Transition funding

- **Benoit Nadler**, Deputy Head of Unit, Policy Development and Economic Analysis, DG REGIO, European Commission
- **Daniel Attard**, Member of the European Parliament, S&D Group
- **Alexandra Köves**, Ecological Economist, Corvinus University
- **Miloslaw Stepien**, Just Transition Coordinator, CEE Bankwatch Network

Moderated by: **Andrea Casamenti**, Just Transition Policy Coordinator, SOLIDAR

15:45-16:00

Closing remarks

16:00

Registrations & Networking Coffee

17:00

S&D Panel

True Democracy: Media Freedom & Rule of Law in Europe and Hungary

In an era where democratic values face unprecedented challenges, the protection of media freedom and the rule of law are critical to preserving a functioning democracy. Across Europe, these pillars are under threat, as seen most starkly in Hungary, where government control over media and judicial independence has raised alarms. Reaffirming the integrity of free press and an independent judiciary is essential not only for Hungary but for the entire European project, ensuring that citizens' voices are heard and that rules are applied without bias.

Discussion with:

- **Birgit Sippel**, S&D MEP and Coordinator for the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
- **Lisa Kretschmer**, Head of Advocacy, Reporters without Borders
- **András Léderer**, Head of Advocacy, Hungarian Helsinki Committee
- **Sándor Rónai**, Member of the Democratic Coalition Presidency
- **Ágnes Urbán**, Media Analyst, Hungarian media watchdog Mérték Media Monitor
- **Áron Demeter**, Head of Research and Communications, Amnesty International Hungary

Moderated by: **Viktor Kazai**, Researcher, Institute for European Studies at the Université Libre de Bruxelles and Senior Expert on the Rule of Law, Civil Liberties Union for Europe

18:30

S&D Leaders' Session

Intervention by progressive leaders on how to steer a new course of action for Europe and Hungary to deliver a society based on democracy, quality jobs and prosperity for all.

Video message:

Iratxe García Pérez, S&D President

Lead speakers:

- **Gaby Bischoff**, Member of the European Parliament and S&D Vice-President
- **Klára Dobrev**, Head of the Hungarian Delegation, S&D Group

Addresses by:

- **Tamás Székely***, President VDSZ
- **Petra Bayr**, Member of Parliament of Austria and Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and Development, Social Democratic Party, Austria
- **Liutauras Gudžinskas**, Vice President, Lithuanian Social Democratic Party LSDP and Associate Professor of Comparative Politics, Vilnius University
- **Zoltán Vajda**, MP, MSZP*

Moderated by: **Zsolt Kerner**, Journalist, 24.hu

19:30

Networking Dinner Reception

Saturday, 26 October 2024

09:00

Registrations & Coffee

09:30

Panel discussion

Investing in the Just Transition is investing in Europe's Future

A just transition is essential for shaping a future where economic prosperity and environmental responsibility go hand in hand. By investing in sustainable industries, quality jobs, and social protections, Europe can lead the way in addressing the climate crisis without leaving workers or communities behind. This approach ensures that the transition is not only fair but also serves as a foundation for long-term economic resilience and social cohesion.

Discussion with:

- **Daniel Attard**, Member of the European Parliament, S&D Group
- **Atanas Pekanov**, Economist, Austrian Institute of Economic Research (WIFO) and former Deputy Prime Minister of Bulgaria in charge of EU funds
- **Miłosława Stępień**, Just Transition Coordinator, CEE Bankwatch Network

Moderated by: **Andrea Casamenti**, Just Transition Policy Coordinator, SOLIDAR

10:45

Coffee Break Session with Pills of Progressivism

Desk 1 – Social Europe – with **FEPS**

Desk 2 – Community activation – with **Esely Közösség**

Desk 3 – Youth and Disadvantaged backgrounds – with **Institute for Social Democracy**

Desk 4 – Housing for Youth – with **Demokratikus Lendület (DEL)**

Desk 5 – Biodiversity and Just Transition – with **CEE Bankwatch Network**

Desk 6 – The Digital transition – with **Atelier Europe**

11:45

Panel discussion

Jobs, Health, Housing - Progressive leadership for shared well-being

Access to good jobs, quality healthcare, and affordable housing are the pillars of shared well-being in any society. Progressive leadership must prioritize policies that address these fundamental needs, ensuring that everyone can thrive in a fair and equitable Europe. By championing investment in public services, worker protections, and affordable living, progressives can create the conditions for a more inclusive society where economic security and social justice are intertwined.

Discussion with:

- **Gaby Bischoff**, Member of the European Parliament and S&D Vice-President
- **Gergely Arató**, Member of the Hungarian Parliament and former State Secretary, Ministry of Education, Hungary
- **Gábor Harangozó**, Program Director, Institute for Social Democracy & former Member of the European Parliament
- **András Bíró-Nagy**, Director, Policy Solutions

Moderated by: **László Andor**, FEPS Secretary General

13:00

Networking Lunch

14:00

Change starts Locally

- **Gergely Karácsony**, Mayor of Budapest

Interviewed by: **Kata Jaksity**, Journalist and Communication Expert

14:30

Inputs from the Youth on a “Free Hungary” Your Call for Hungary in Europe

Short pitches by youth representative and young elected politicians

15:00

High-level talk

A Free Hungary in a Stronger Europe

Hungary's future lies in a Europe where freedom, democracy, and social justice prevail. As democratic values face increasing pressure, progressive leaders must stand united in defending the rule of law, media freedom, and human rights. By strengthening Hungary's place in the European family, we can build a more cohesive and resilient Europe, one that upholds the core principles of equality, solidarity, and shared prosperity.

- **Ágnes Vadai**, Member of the Hungarian Parliament and Vice President of Demokratikus Koalíció
- **Zita Gurmai**, Vice President of MSZP, President of PES Women & Member of the Hungarian Parliament
- **Tímea Szabó**, Member of the Hungarian Parliament, Parliamentary representative of Párbeszéd – A Zöldek Pártja*
- **Imre Komjáthi**, President of MSZP (timing tbc)

Moderated by: **Kata Jaksity**, Journalist and Communication Expert

15:45

Closing Remarks

- **László Andor**, FEPS Secretary General
- **Kata Tüttő**, Member of the Budapest Assembly and Vice President of the PES Group in the European Committee of the Regions

* *not yet confirmed*