

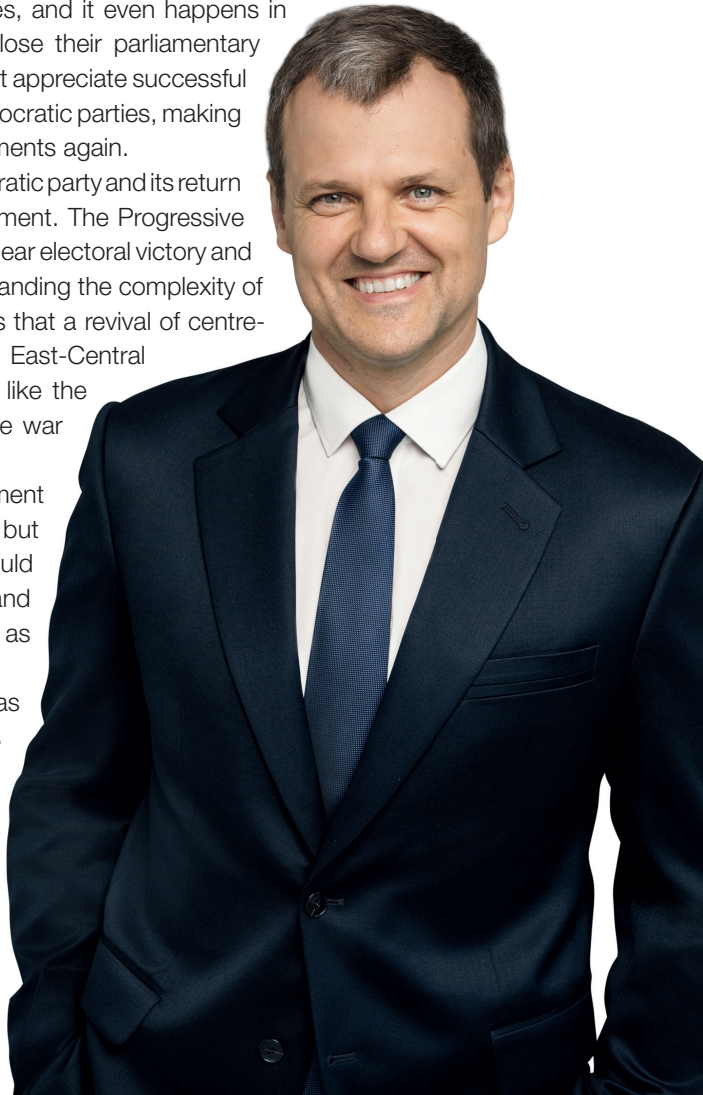
Progressive Person of the Year

The last decade, as perhaps the one before, has been a roller coaster for socialist parties across Europe. Sometimes, we experience a slow erosion of support, and at other times, outright drops, splits and falls from which it is harder to recover. Spending time in opposition may last several cycles, and it even happens in some countries that Social Democrats lose their parliamentary representation altogether. Hence, we must appreciate successful efforts to rebuild and empower social democratic parties, making them capable of leading national governments again.

The reconstruction of the social democratic party and its return to power in Lithuania is a major achievement. The Progressive Party of Lithuania (LSDP) has delivered a clear electoral victory and formed a coalition government, notwithstanding the complexity of coalition talks. LSDP's victory also shows that a revival of centre-left politics is possible in the Baltic and East-Central European region, even in difficult times, like the years of the Covid-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

Forming a pro-European government in this difficult context is a collective but also individual achievement, which should inspire progressive activists, thinkers and organisations in the region and Europe as a whole.

The new government of Lithuania was formed in December 2024 by Gintautas Paluckas. He had gained experience in municipal politics and contributed massively to turning around LSDP and constructing a new coalition government. He knows the power of grassroots-level mobilisation. But he is also a prime minister with concrete objectives: stronger social solidarity, reduced inequality, and sustainable economic growth.



For us, Gintautas Paluckas is the Progressive Person of the Year. He connects the vision of a fairer, greener and more competitive Lithuania with EU policies in support of climate action, digital transformation and geopolitical resilience. He has already started to prepare Lithuania for the presidency of the Council in 2027. His achievements should receive attention, and the case of LSDP should be studied when our wider political family is looking for a robust recovery strategy, with a particular focus on East-Central Europe.

