



Defending democracy, empowering women (5) PROTECTION OF DEMOCRACY PROTECTION OF WORKERS

Date 19 September 2025 (Friday). 10:00 - 14:00

Venue: Kazincbarcika, Kazinczy Ferenc Square 2. (Miner's Club)

The *Foundation for European Progressive Studies* (FEPS), in collaboration with the *Táncsics Mihály Foundation*, has launched a dedicated initiative to strengthen women's political participation and to counter exclusionary trends with the overarching goal of advancing a gender-transformative and more resilient democracy. This event will mark the end of a larger series started in March 2025 with an International Women's Day conference in Budapest, followed by a closed-door roundtable in Szeged and conferences in Kóny and Nyírbátor.

The upcoming closing conference in Kazincbarcika will focus on defending democracy, safeguarding workers' rights and strengthening the role of women in the European Union, with particular attention to the Hungarian context. It will highlight how women's contribution, both in the paid workforce and in unpaid care and domestic work, is central to the economy and society, in line with the EU's commitments under the Gender Equality Strategy and the European Care Strategy.

The event series feeds into the broader effort to enable long-term institutional and societal change by fostering greater inclusion, amplifying women's voices, and reinforcing democratic values against regressive forces in the European Union. More than a conference, it is a call to action for a more equal and democratic European future.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

- 9:45-10:00** **Arrival and registration**
- 10:00-10:15** **Welcome remarks**
- **Péter Szitka**, Mayor of Kazincbarcika (to be confirmed)
- 10:15-10:20** **Video Input:**
Laetitia Thissen, Senior Policy Analyst on Gender, Equality, *Foundation for European Progressive Studies* (FEPS)
- 10.20-10:35** **Opening speeches:**
- **Dr. Zita Gurmai**, Vice President of the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) and President of PES Women
 - **Dr. István Hiller**, President of the Táncsics Foundation
 - **Dr. László Varga**, Member of the Board of Trustees of the Táncsics Foundation, former Member of Parliament
- 10:35-12:00** **Part I: DEFENDING DEMOCRACY AND WORKERS' RIGHTS: GENDER EQUALITY AS A CORNERSTONE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE**





Democracy and social rights are under increasing pressure across Europe. This panel explores how defending workers' rights and advancing gender equality are mutually reinforcing in the fight against inequality, exploitation, and regressive forces. Particular attention will be given to the situation in Hungary, while bringing in broader EU perspectives.

Introduction:

László Pásztor, President of the Kazincbarcika Miner's Trade Union

Input on Protection of workers:

Imre Komjáthi, Member of Parliament, President of the MSZP

Panel discussion:

- **Irén Eördöghné Pataki**, President of the Kazincbarcika Chemist's Trade Union
- **Edit Tokai**, Local Government Representative, Kazincbarcika
- **András Pulai**, Director of the Publicus Institute

Moderator:

Dr Zita Gurmai, Vice-President of the MSZP and President of PES Women

Q&A Session

12:00-12:30 Lunch Break

12:30-13:50 Part II: WOMEN SHAPING EUROPE: EQUALITY, CARE AND PARTICIPATION
Building on the EU Gender Equality Strategy and the European Care Strategy, this panel will examine how women's leadership and participation are vital for democratic resilience. It will explore how unpaid care, labour rights, and equal representation intersect with European policy priorities, and what this means for Hungary.

Panel discussion:

- **Anna Kormos**, Local Government Representative, Mezőcsát
- **Gizella Homolya**, Former Head of Human Affairs
- **Dr. László Andor**, Secretary General of FEPS
- **György Bartha**, Executive Vice-President of BÖK, Local Government Representative

Moderator:

Zsombor Németh

Q&A Session

13:50-14:00 Closing remarks:
Dr. László Andor, Secretary General of FEPS

