

FOREWORD

Left turn of the tide?

The FEPS *Progressive Yearbook* has become a tradition, and we are proud to introduce this third edition. Our annual publication is now close to the heart of the progressive political family in Brussels and reaches out to a broad readership in Europe and beyond.

This third edition is launched at a very special moment. The past year has brought important changes which might amount to a new trend in Europe. The first half of 2021 was marked by a strong social season in the EU institutions, and critical electoral results came in the second half of the year. Olaf Scholz from the SPD became Chancellor of Germany and formed a ‘traffic light’ coalition government on the waves of a Social Democratic revival. The electoral victory was claimed against initial polls and was groundbreaking, encouraging all progressives. With this renewed sense of hope, we also welcomed the outcomes of the municipal elections in Italy. A genuine hero of these elections is the former MEP Roberto Gualtieri, the new mayor of Rome, whom we have the honour to call the Progressive Person of the Year – and who features prominently in this *Progressive Yearbook* with an interview.

No less important is the continuing robust performance of Nordic Social Democracy. Important developments have been the elections in Norway, bringing the centre-left back to government, and the change of the leadership in the Swedish SAP – resulting in the phenomenal situation where Social Democrats lead all the countries of Northern Europe, with three of the four prime ministers being women.

But while there have been so many positive developments, there is also much about which to be concerned. Policymaking at the EU level remains overshadowed by the fight against the pandemic. The bloc continues to struggle with deviations in the field of democracy and the rule of law, strategic autonomy remains an elusive concept, and discussion on the need for new fiscal rules often starts and ends with beating around the bush.

Assessing the state of play, and raising the question of what to do about these policies in practice, therefore forms an integral part of the considerations in this volume. As in the past, this year’s *Progressive Yearbook* starts with a chronology and ends with predictions about the upcoming year.

Through the texts included here, we, together with our distinguished authors, hope to contribute to the important reflections about the alternative paths unfolding before us. And we also want to express our optimism about the promising potential of progressive politics. It is with great pleasure that we therefore put the *Progressive Yearbook*, along with our other FEPS publications, at the service of Socialists at the local, national and EU level in their ongoing work for the primacy of progressive ideas.

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