

INFOCUS

Struggle over the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union

C4EP analysis on the subject – *Can the European Parliament take away the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union from the Hungarian government?*

“This coordination is the task of the presidency, and it is also what provides the individual member states with significant political influence, that can later be transformed to political advantages via exchange of interests (additionally some opportunities to elevate country image, and other less important, but still useful perks). If anyone is wondering, why EU member states still maintain this, at first glance confusing system, here is the simple explanation: because it is worth it to them. They can profit from the opportunity of taking this role by casually acting in the interest of other member states, which in turn, do not forget it to them. In exchange they can return the favour, even outside of the scope of activities of the EU. Like it or not, that is politics. The institution of the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union exists because it offers all existing political actors the opportunity to bargain, to give and receive political favours.”

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Read more about the presidency of the Council of the EU on the official website

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EP resolution on the breaches of the Rule of Law and fundamental rights in Hungary and frozen EU funds

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Euronews: Hungary might not 'credibly fulfil' tasks of EU Council presidency, MEPs say in critical resolution

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Politico: MEPs outline strategy to strangle Hungary's EU presidency

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Parliament easily backs measure aimed at restraining Hungary's EU presidency

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Justice Minister: EP wants to prevent Hungary from fulfilling Council of the EU presidency

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EP resolution on Hungary is clear violation of European rules says PM

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Specter of China looms over EU-US summit
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Half a million march in Warsaw against Poland's ruling party
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C4REPORT

Atlantic Council - "Post-election transatlantic relations with Turkey" – 31st May, 2023

The Atlantic Council's event discussing the results of the 2023 Turkish election showed that it will hold important implications for the future of US-Turkey relations and Turkey's transatlantic relationship. The reelection of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and the continued dominance of his Justice and Development Party (AKP) suggest a continuation of the current political dynamics in Turkey.

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"International Justice is patient" – 5 June, 2023

An interesting roundtable discussion has been organised in the lecture series of the Supranational Criminal Law (SCL) roundtable discussions on the question of accountability for war crimes in Ukraine and for the crime of aggression. It has taken place in the framework of the 2023 edition of the International Criminal Court Moot Court Competition of the International Bar Association, where our organisation was presented by Tamás Lattmann, general manager, as a judge. The SCL Lecture Series is a series on international criminal law and has been organised, since 2003, by the Asser institute, the Coalition for the ICC and the Grotius Centre for International Legal Studies of Leiden University.

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C4EPOSITION

Botond Feledy, Foreign policy expert, Director of Red Snow Consulting:

The fight between the Hungarian government and the EU partners and institutions has been ongoing for more than a decade, with a steadily growing intensity. Ever since Fidesz took the helm of government in 2010, debates started about austerity and the media law, going into the first ever Hungarian presidency in 2011. Still, that six months proved to be very fruitful, bringing online the European Semester and several other achievements. The quarrel exploded in 2015 with the migration crisis, with saying no to the Juncker presidency with the brits (to no avail though), with the several torpedoed common foreign policy statements on China, with the divorce from EPP by Fidesz, just to get to the great bifurcation point of the aggression of Russia against Ukraine. Since 24th February 2022, the Hungarian government is driving narratives about the war, the West and the U.S. that is definitely an outlier in the Central European region, in the Eastern flanks of NATO. Still, Budapest is doubling down on its pro-Russia stance, threatening to veto support for Ukraine, at the same time, suffering from the conditionality procedure launched against Hungary, just as much as from the blocking of regular EU funds for lacking to fulfil the so called enabling horizontal conditions and missing the super milestones of the RRF.

The relations are at historical low between Budapest and Brussels. The lack of confidence is increasing in both parties for different reasons, driving to an eventual deadlock. Hence, the concerns about the Hungarian Presidency in 2024. Still, a new parliament will be in place by that time and no one knows how many eurosceptic pro-Orban parties might make it, in which proportion. That parliament will be up to electing the new commission. History might bring new challenges by the fall of 2024, just think about the war in Ukraine, the US presidential election, the conflict around CRMs, Taiwan or energy security.

A greater crisis might well cover up for Hungary in 2024. A Council vote to change the order of the presidency might necessarily bring up the question of Poland - where it remains to be seen what happens this fall at the general election. Therefore I think currently the chance is thin that a coalition would flex its muscles to get through the presidency cancelling initiative, not to mention the usual reticence of governments to punish another one, for being afraid to get into the same basket one day. (Just think of the 7. article procedure: never eschewed.) Shall several new circumstances strengthen the case against Hungary, like further vetoes and pro-Russia stance, spying scandals or serious roll back of democratic institutions, or furthering divides inside the EU in critical junctures, Budapest might create the coalition against itself by itself.