



**YOUNG
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Resolution

3. Guaranteeing democracy and rule of law in the EU

Resolution presented by SSU Sweden, SSF Sweden, SONK Finland, SDY Finland, DSU Denmark, AUF Norway, SU Faroe Islands, UJ Iceland, SDY Estonia

Nowhere on earth is there greater wealth, more equality or support for democratic values as in Europe. Even though Europe constitutes of citizens from different nations and states with diverse cultures and heritages, we have more in common than what divides us as Europeans. Since the end of the Second World War has the relationship between the European states improved and along with that has the respect for democracy and rule of law developed. Common values has been created and on those values has the European Union been built. But now are these values challenged by right-wing populism and nationalistic extremists, all over Europe.

Using populist rhetoric and arguments about national sovereignty, these nationalistic groups try to dismantle democracy as we know it. We know that the historical and political differences within Europe cannot motivate any country to be less democratic, more authoritarian, or less respectful to rule of law than any other country. The EU has to be able to enforce democracy and rule of law in times of uncertainty and right-wing populism. Member states that do not respect the rules or the basic principle of rule of law should have to face consequences.

Today, EU acts as a treasure chest of free money for member states to use, in the name of solidarity. European cohesion policy and extensive structural funds is motivated by the insight that your country will be better off if your neighbouring countries also do good. But what happens if your neighbours actually use that money to attack the most fundamental values on which the European Union is built?

This is particularly noticeable in the case of Poland. The right-wing government in Poland is trying to take control over traditional mechanisms of the modern democracy, clearly leading their country on a path towards authoritarianism. Law and justice (PiS) have already attacked the freedom of media and are now aiming towards the judicial system. The most controversial reform would give Poland's parliament control of the body that appoints judges and force Supreme Court judges to stand down unless they are kept on the advice of the justice minister. The European Commission has taken a tough line, threatening to trigger its Article 7 procedure if any judge is forced to resign.

At the same time, is Poland the biggest beneficiary of structural funds. To put this in context, during the previous budgetary cycle Poland received more than the equivalent of the entire Marshall Plan for Europe. Poland is scheduled to get another Marshall Plan in the current budgetary cycle. That is €1 billion of EU citizens' money going to Poland every month, of every year.

Solidarity is not a one way road – nor is cooperation in the EU. With the membership in the EU follows both rights and obligations. If you don't follow your obligations you should lose your rights.

Therefore YES:

YES Bureau meeting
24-26 November 2017
hosted by SDY Estonia

- Encourage the European Commission to trigger article 7.1 if the Polish government do not comply with the concerns regarding Rule of Law
- Demand a reform of access to EU funds - member states should have to comply with the rule of law to access cohesion funds