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2) Declaration on right-wing populism and fascist tendencies rise in Croatia

Signed by CSDY Croatia

During the recent two years, since the centre right which is now centre-right/liberal coalition formed the government, we are witnessing the rise of right-wing populism and tendencies of relativizing fascism in Croatia, in both direct and indirect ways. Having taken that into consideration, especially in the aftermath of the massive fascist gathering in Warsaw, Croatian Social Democratic Youth would wish to submit this resolution to Young European Socialists and seek for a support.

Historical Revisionism

Nowadays Croatia is facing many challenges of economic nature. While reforms and measures are needed to revitalize the economy and offer better standard to Croatian citizens, the only reforms one can see is aimed at revising the anti fascist heritage. The centreright/liberal coalition fails to ban symbols of the fascist puppet state known as the Independent Croatian State, condemn actions such as placing boards with fascist symbols at Jasenovac – a place of great suffering and war crimes during WWII, press conferences where a man wore same moustache as Adolf Hitler did, with silence and passing the hot potato to various committees whose work is slow, the current Croatian government gives an indirect approval to such fascist tendencies and pro-fascist actions. Moreover, the Croatian capital lost the Marshal Tito Square thanks to political blackmail done by a far-right populist party whose only aim is to revise the anti fascist history of Zagreb and Croatia and put the focus off the important topics. All of these actions give a favourable wind in the back of right-wing and populist tendencies and serve as a bad example to the Croatian public, especially the youth.

Women's rights

At the same time, extreme Catholic and pro-life groups and activists are running a campaign to ban abortion, even though the Constitutional Court of Croatia has ruled that abortion should not be banned. There were also cases of putting names of women who allegedly planned to end their pregnancy due to poverty and inability to feed another child. It is clear that these groups are after women's rights after limiting LGBT rights. With these actions, these groups and individuals manipulate the general public in order to reverse positive trends which started over a hundred years ago and is still ongoing with a single aim to achieve gender equality and a better and happier society.

The ratification of the Istanbul Convention has been put to hold since the above mentioned extremists are leading a campaign saying that it is promoting "gender ideology" (which is nonexistent term in science) and blackmailing the Government with their parliamentary votes (which are supporting rather unstable parliamentary majority) in favour of not ratifying the Convention, undermining all the benefits in fight against the violence and help towards victims which it could bring.

Attacks on the LGBTIQ+ community

Right after the 2015 General Elections in Croatia when the far-right fraction of the ruling party formed the Government, a tragic event took place at a nightclub during a LGBTfriendly party in Zagreb. People who were enjoying a night out were attacked by pepper spray. Davor Ivo Stier, a former MEP and former Minister of Foreign and European Affairs visited the site and did not condemn the act of violence.

Croatian Minister of Health, Milan Kujundžić even spoke publicly against LGBTIQ+ rights on recent application meeting for European Medicine Agency and that shows just how deep is the problem.

Conclusion

These unfortunate events and tendencies happening not only in Croatia, but throughout Europe, especially its post-socialist era, should serve us - the young socialist and democrats, as a red light. It is a signal that certain groups and political options want to make the clock go counter-clockwise and question the rights and freedoms many are taking for granted.

With this resolution we wish to have our saying in the ongoing debate provoked by right-wing populists, religious fundamentalists and far-right options.

We want to say: YES to freedom of choice, YES to democracy, YES to human rights, YES to pluralism, YES to the truth about the past! What is even more important: we as young socialdemocrats need to act together for our own countries, for the EU and for Europe as a whole.