

FOREWORD

In it for the long run

This is the fifth edition of the FEPS Progressive Yearbook. We are presenting it in a year of decisive elections: a new European Parliament will be elected in May; and the outcomes of the US presidential race and the general election in the United Kingdom later this year are certainly no less important. Some, however, would argue that a couple of elections in 2023 were even more decisive, namely, the parliamentary elections in Spain and Poland. These votes, which took place in the second half of 2023, mean a lot for the future political leadership in Europe and the chances of stopping the populist far right in general.

Whilst the various manifestations of nationalism and extremism – in Europe and elsewhere in the world – have continued to be the focus of interest, progressives turned 2023 into a year of thinking about the long term. No doubt was left about our commitment to protect the environment and fight climate change, and the reconciliation of the digital transformation with the requirements of the European Social Model. With the stubborn cost of living crisis in many parts of Europe, these are expected to remain critical questions for the spring campaigns and the composition of the policy agenda of the incoming new EU leadership.

Meanwhile, 2023 has been a year when leading EU experts and research groups started to think again about the shape and size of our integration in the long run. This is much more than speculation: very concrete plans have been developed, including by experts invited by FEPS, about changes in the EU Treaty to ensure that the needs and expectations of our citizens are better served.

For FEPS, the Progressive Person of the Year is also a politician who was involved in addressing the greatest long-term challenge of our time: climate change. Indeed, the progressive legacy of the outgoing European Commission on this topic will have to be picked up by the new crew.

We hope that the interpretation of current developments – political, economic, social and cultural – by the authors of this yearbook will help overcome the state of cognitive dissonance that could be widely observed in Europe in the aftermath of the shocks of recent years.

The chronology of 2023 allows you to look back, and the predictions at the end of the volume stimulate thinking about the possible scenarios in the upcoming year. FEPS publications, online and offline, remain at the service of Socialists and Democrats in Europe and beyond, in their daily struggles for the primacy of progressive ideas, also in 2024.

László Andor
Ania Skrzypek
Hedwig Giusto