

Weekly Newsletter

News

Gyurcsány announces departure from Socialists

Ferenc Gyurcsány, a former Prime Minister, has announced he is leaving the Socialist Party and will set up a new parliamentary group after succeeding in persuading the necessary number of lawmakers to join him. The new Democratic Coalition party is to be a Western-style, civic centre-left formation with ten lawmakers, Gyurcsány announced on Saturday, the first anniversary of the establishment of its forerunner, the Democratic Coalition Platform.

Gyurcsány said the reason why he had decided to leave the Socialists was because the party had failed in its efforts to transform itself.

In his hour-long speech, Gyurcsány vowed to “wake society from its nightmare,” in which community and individual well-being is “dependent on the will of the government”. Instead, he said he wanted to realise the dream in which each person was clear about his own responsibility to himself and his country.

Csaba Molnár, a one-time party group leader in parliament, will head the new group, which is to be formed this week.



The new political force is to take over the legal apparatus of an already existing one called the Democratic Party, whose name will be changed to Democratic Coalition. The reason for this procedure is that establishing an entirely new party would require the approval of the public prosecutor. Gyurcsány said that the new party group had not asked for the parliamentary speaker’s approval, adding that he trusted that their opposition would not use “underhand and dishonest” means to undermine the decision. Whereas the house rules state that lawmakers who leave a party group must be independent for a period of six months before they can join a new formation, a precedent from 1996 shows that an exception can be made.



Fotó: HVG.hu

Gyurcsány said friends and enemies remained in his former party. But he also pledged to avoid making statements about the Socialists which could play into the hands of the Fidesz leader and prime minister, Viktor Orbán. Gyurcsány said the left wing in Hungary had been most successful when it had simultaneously represented classical left-wing values and progressiveness, at once civic and Socialist. He insisted that it was impossible to give a traditional left-wing response to a “right-wing Christian course”, and the job should be to organise a “diverse civic centre” instead. He branded the new constitution as “illegitimate”, and insisted that members and heads of the independent branches of state such as the constitutional court and the public prosecutor “exclusively serve Viktor Orbán”.

The Socialist group will be left with 49 seats once Gyurcsány’s ten quit, as against 261 seats for Fidesz, 46 for Jobbik and 15 for LMP.

The main opposition Socialist Party expects 1,500-2,000 of its members to quit and join the Democratic Coalition, daily Népszabadság reported on Tuesday. An unnamed party stalwart told the paper that Gyurcsány and his followers are “stronger outside the party, in liberal circles, than within the party.” According to the paper, the Socialists will have to re-elect officials at several locations because the heads of local organisations (for instance in Érd near Budapest) have said they would step down to join the Democratic Coalition. Several county heads are also planning to leave the Socialists. Democratic Coalition director László Varjú told the paper that the group is supported by “a small group of more than ten people” in about half of the constituencies.

Source: MTI

Farewell and a new beginning – An interview with Ferenc Gyurcsány

Ferenc Gyurcsány announced the foundation of a new left-of-center party, which would represent the kind of politics that could not win a majority at the 2010 elections.

Is it final? Are you going to break away from MSZP?

The leaders of the Democratic Coalition decided to part with the socialists and to go our own way. The final decision will be announced on Saturday.

When did you realize that cooperation with MSZP was no longer possible?

It was a slow process, but the lack of willingness to carry out essential reforms, and the fact that the socialists voted for the dual citizenship contributed to our decision. It has become clear that there are two competing views here that cannot be expressed by one party only.

In what way is the new party different from MSZP?

The Democratic Coalition is a unique party because it tries to wake up people to the fact that, without courage and determination, Hungary won't be successful. We have to understand that the way forward is not by attacking the market economy, which is the foundation of our liberty, but making hard decisions in the field of healthcare, education and pensions. When I was in office, I tried to implement these reforms, but Fidesz made people believe that it is possible to have your cake and eat it. We are trying to represent reform-oriented politics, which did not have a majority in 2010. And we are hoping for an awakening.

Are you suggesting that MSZP is following the policies of the Medgyessy era, while you wish to continue the policies of your premiership?

As far as political mentality is concerned, I believe, I do. There was an illusion in 2002 that handing out more money to the people would boost the economy. That is what Viktor Orbán thought when he introduced the flat tax last year. But, just as Medgyessy's economic policies failed, so too will Orbán's taxes, the state debt is growing, and unemployment is getting higher. We are heading towards bankruptcy. Contrary to the current prime minister, I have learnt my lesson. That is the difference.

How are you proposing to garner more votes by dividing the electorate?

I believe that there is a need for a party that is open, accommodating, western oriented, patriotic but not nationalistic. The number of undecided voters is huge, and Fidesz has lost more than one million voters as well.

But MSZP hasn't gained any votes yet...

This proves once again that we need to change. We are living through a difficult period. It is the first time since the 1960's that teachers and actors don't get their wages paid. There is no teaching in schools because there is no money to pay for heating. What is at stake here is the ability of the state to function. We have to redefine ourselves and give an alternative to the people. We have to prove that we have the means to put an end to Viktor Orbán's destructive policies. That is what we are doing.

http://www.vasarnapihitek.hu/fokusz/gyurcsany_mszp_baloldal_orban_gazdasagpolitika_felsooktatás

Democratic Coalition to appeal to international organizations, Brussels if speaker rejects new group

The newly formed Democratic Coalition party will turn to the European Union and the Council of Europe if the house speaker rejects its bid to form a parliamentary group, Csaba Molnár, who plans to head the group, told a news conference on Monday. Molnár said the matter of forming a new group with ten former lawmakers of the Socialist party was technical in nature rather than legal or political. Molnár said on Sunday he had informed Speaker László Kövér in a letter about the party's intention to establish a new group. Molnár said they would consider any rejection of their request "an attack" on the rule-governed state and would therefore appeal to international organisations, the EU and the Council of Europe.

The group put in a request for their lawmakers to be given an opportunity to speak in the chamber before the start of the parliamentary business on Monday. Parliament's secretariat said a decision to rearrange the seating in the chamber had not been made.

Source: MTI

Civil rights protest draws tens of thousands

Civil groups held a demonstration in protest against the government's policies in Budapest on Sunday. Speakers at the demonstration called on civil groups to unite and provide an alternative to

the current holders of power.

The rally, held under the banner “You don’t like the system?” was organised by the One Million for the Freedom of Press facebook group. They called for a collaboration of democratic forces with the aim of “re-establishing the republic and forming the fourth republic”.

The organisers set up a stage at the foot of Elizabeth Bridge, and people in their tens of thousands stretched down the main street, vowing to start a campaign in two weeks’ time for the formation of a new republic. A symbolic vote is scheduled for the national holiday of March 15.

The demonstration’s spokesman, Péter Juhász, said the people gathered today were again “listening to our voice for democracy” 55 years after the revolution. He said they welcomed any organisation which wanted to restore the system of democratic institutions and preserve free speech.

Réka Kinga Papp of the Graduates’ Network said an alternative to Fidesz was needed, and she called on the crowd to use civil disobedience in order to realise their interests.

Balázs Dénes, President of the Society for Civil Liberties (TASZ), said that a “muscle-flexing political system”, engendering fear and vulnerability, was emerging in Hungary. He said the expression of outrage and dissatisfaction counted for little in itself, and should go alongside the responsibility of political understanding and discernment.

Source: MTI

“I’m a devoted 'Gyurcsányist'” – interview with Mr. István Vágó

Viewers have deemed the former 'quiz king' to be the perfect example of the type of 'the scientist above all' for decades; i.e. somebody who is not interested in narrow-minded animosities of everyday life. Following his dismissal from TV2, Mr. Vágó unmasked himself, and considers it to be a great success of his life that now he can express his opinion in television programs together with the well-known Hungarian political scientist and researcher Mr. József Debreczeni and others. Hereby we kindly share with you a part of Index.hu's interview with Mr. Vágó.

How did your career start out at ATV?

I am not working for ATV. They asked me whether I wanted to come and express my opinion on various public affairs, and I said, “Oh yeah, sure”.

Who invited you to join the program?

One of my close friends, Mr. Zsolt Gréczy (host of the program called “*Demokraták*” [*Democrats*]). I belong to the hard core of the Hungarian Democratic Charter (*in Hungarian: 'Magyar Demokratikus Charta'*) and have to admit that I also am a devoted “Gyurcsányist”. I think that the former prime minister's ousting was absolutely unfair, given that he is a very apt and truly democratic Hungarian politician who fell victim to a premeditated and double – both internal and external – character killing. Zsolt is aware of this conviction of mine, and it was him who invited me to the program. This is a political “coming out” on my part because while working for commercial TV stations, it was very hard for me to discern what I was thinking about political questions and public affairs in general.

What was the single most important factor that attracted you to the program?

I think the honor of being able to sit next to Mr. József Debreczeni, Mr. Szabolcs Kerék-Bárczy and the other [*well-known Hungarian political scientists*]. The fact that Mr. József Debreczeni – who anticipated like a prophet what here and now happens in Hungary – gives me the honor of sitting next to me in a television program – well, this is a great success in my life.

What disturbs you most in Hungary today?

That politicians of Fidesz are also very much aware when they tell lies to the people, in my opinion. For example they tell us that raising taxes is no austerity. Or when they curb the powers of the Constitutional Court, and tell us that they actually enlarge them. When they pass a media law, which causes journalists to exercise political self-censorship, and they tell us that this media law actually serves the harmonic mental and psychological development of our children. How dare they think that we are stupid? Why do they tell lies to all the people? And why is it that they see a deadly enemy in anyone who does not support their stance? What they are committing against Mr. Gyurcsány is a joke – more exactly, it's not a joke at all! How can a party's chief mission be the total annihilation of the other political side? The only thing I can see is that all of their actions are aimed at annihilating and liquidating us.

For example, what's the case of Klubrádió [*a private, left-leaning radio channel*] all about? Whatever I listen to, it is only music flowing from all the radio channels in Hungary today and, in spite of that, decision-makers call for a proposal to establish a brand new music radio channel (instead of one dealing with public affairs)! That's the absolute greatest cynicism I've ever seen! And they do all this like nothing unusual has happened. Instead, they should tell it outright that “Well, Klubrádió is not broadcasting what we like (both literally and metaphorically), so, we are going to shut this radio channel down”. Why can't they just do it all in a straightforward manner?

What do you think will be the end result of your political coming-out?

If you mean whether I will ever be a candidate for MP of any political party in Hungary, then I have to tell you that it's not likely given that I am not an expert in any field of public policy; what's more, I would not like to see that any of my former colleagues, e.g. Mr. István Pálffy, says about me the same things that I am now saying about him: that he is not on the right course since he has been acting as a media politician. But who knows what might happen until the following general elections – whenever they will be held? [*Note: the next general elections in Hungary are due in 2014*] So, we should talk about that issue sometime later as well.

For decades, you have been displaying yourself as an omniscient person who is able to observe 'worldly affairs' from the sky above. Don't you care about what your viewers will think of you now that you are in politics?

Not at all! But my earlier role of a kind-hearted teacher like in the TV program “*Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?*” has come to an end once and for all, given that I had to act as a cruel, sadistic interrogator in that program. Back then I already had to get used to the idea that some of my earlier viewers would turn away from me. Of course, the world of politics is a little bit different. However, I really try to represent the most decent and rationalistic stance that fits into the framework of my political and other ideals, and I do think that I do not have to please those people who judge me for doing this. For example I now encourage all Nazis to hate me, because not only does it not hurt me (fortunately!), but it's also an honor for me.

http://index.hu/kultur/media/2011/10/23/vago_gyurcsanyista_vagyok/

Hungarians rally against far-right theatre director

Hungarians rallied on Saturday against the appointment of far-rightists to direct a Budapest theatre, a move which has triggered international protests. "We see an unfortunate crossing of borders here which is unacceptable," actor and organiser Mihály Hajagos told a crowd of several thousand including local actress Dorka Gryllus, known from Dan Garbarski's "Irina Palm".

"György Dörner and István Csurka are of such extreme and hateful convictions" that they are unsuitable to head the capital's New Theatre, Hajagos said.

Protesters called on Budapest mayor István Tarlós and Viktor Orbán to withdraw the appointments and reopen applications for the jobs. Tarlós, a member of Orban's ruling centre-right Fidesz party, nominated Dörner as the new director of the theatre, even though outgoing boss István Márta had reapplied for the job and received a majority of votes from a professional board. Dörner then named as his administrator Csurka, the leader of MIEP, a party with a xenophobic and anti-Semitic reputation. The appointment was slammed by opposition parties and led German conductor Christoph von Dohnányi to cancel on Friday upcoming concerts in Budapest's opera house.

Dohnányi said he was unwilling to perform in a city "the mayor of which entrusts the management of a theatre to two known anti-Semites of the extreme right". In July, Tarlos had already picked somebody close to the government to head the Attila József theatre, over a candidate preferred by the theatre world.

Source: AFP

Ferenc Gyurcsány Splits

The Hungarian Socialist Party claims ownership over both of the previous Prime Minister's legs, pectorals and one of his testicles. The Democratic Coalition can take the rest – writes Hírcsárda, the satirical news site.



As it looks, the exit of Ferenc Gyurcsány from the Socialist Party goes less than smoothly. Although Gyurcsány announced previously that he would not wish to take along a single pin from the socialists, according to our information at least, he does plan to keep the pin factory that produces them.

Another interesting development is that the Socialists do not seem to agree that the Democratic Coalition simply takes Gyurcsány away from them. "We are the ones who raised him, we are the ones who made a fallen Prime Minister out of him, we do have a right to claim part of him for ourselves" – said Mr. Oszkár Tóth, member of the Socialist Party, who wished to remain anonymous. (26/b Mártírok útja, please ring long, as the button is faulty). The leadership of the party is in session even at these moments, and is debating about what of the former Prime Minister they should keep.

The first proposal was to split him up evenly, with one horizontal or vertical cut. But the alternative of quartering him was not yet rejected either. According to leaked information, as a compromise solution, they may wish to opt for his two legs, his pectorals, and one of his testicles. Eventually, they may agree to settle for his nose and his frontal lobe in exchange for one of his legs.

Speaking through his press spokesman, Gyurcsán merely remarked that following the foundation of his new party, he originally wanted to extend his right (left?) hand to the socialists as a friendly gesture, but given the situation, he will not do that, as they may not give it back.

http://hircsarda.blog.hu/2011/10/23/gyurcsany_ferenc_ketteszakad

We've got it – that's how the election law will change

(by the humorous website Hírcsárda)

For all Hungarian voters, the democratic provisions of the new election law will guarantee the free choice between Fidesz and the Christian Democrats.

Speaking about the draft, Lajos Kósa said: there will be a number of witty new elements in the text, and it was quite obvious that those preparing the law did not wish to use the election systems of the crisis-ridden West. Therefore, from now on, the vote will neither be general, nor voluntary, or secret. "The national voters' list will be compiled, by the National Election Committee, from the Kubatov list, as anyone wishing to get on that list, has had ample opportunity to do so during recent years" – Kósa said. Those on the list will receive a written personal invitation to vote, signed by Imre Kerényi, with which they have to turn up, on election day, at Kossuth Square. For that day, the square will be re-named into Elvis Presley square – or, if the removal of the statues will be completed by then, into Elvis Presley Park.

Subsequently, a casual mass fiesta will begin, during which the participants will hail Fidesz, the Christian Democrats, or both of them at the same time, with witty little verses. The level of support for them will be measured by the volume of the performances, as continuously pronounced by host Kálmán Rákay.

When 2/3 of those present on the square are already present, the event will end, and the National Election Committee will proclaim the result.

Although the election law has been criticized by many, Lajos Kósa insisted that they were not asked for their opinion: they wanted a law, and now they got one.

http://hircsarda.blog.hu/2011/10/21/igy_modosul_a_valasztasi_torveny

GKI-Erste confidence index falls further in October

Economic think-tank GKI's combined monthly index of business and consumer confidence in Hungary prepared jointly with Erste Bank dropped for the eighth consecutive month in October, GKI reported at the weekend.

The seasonally adjusted index fell to -24.0 this month from -20.9 in September, and it is now level with its low at the end of 2008-beginning of 2009, GKI said.

The business confidence index fell 3.2 to -14.9, and the consumer confidence index fell to -49.8 from -47.2 in the previous month.

Within the business sector, only the construction-sector confidence index improved slightly in October, after falling sharply in September from its already low level.

Industrial expectations have been deteriorating for six months, in accordance with European trends. This time, only the assessment of stocks from own production improved compared to the previous month. The assessment of production in the past period and the production outlook for the coming quarter, as well as that of the stock of orders including export orders deteriorated significantly.

The trade sector's confidence index fell sharply in October after a modest correction in September. Expectations concerning orders fell sharply, with selling positions deteriorated and the level of stocks rose slightly.

The index for services fell less than the trade sector index did.

The number of industrial companies planning lay-offs again exceeded the number of those planning to hire new staff, there were weaker intentions to hire in the trade and services sectors but the construction sector showed some strengthening. Consumers' fears of unemployment increased.

Companies in all sectors apart from the construction industry intend to increase prices more than in September, while consumers' inflationary fears strengthened further.

The assessment of the position of the Hungarian economy deteriorated sharply in the industry, fell in the trade and service sectors as well as among consumers, and was unchanged in the construction sector.

Consumers are more pessimistic than a month earlier regarding their own financial position in the coming 12 months. Their expectations concerning their own ability to make savings and buy

consumer durables in the next 12 months also deteriorated.

Source: MTI

Hungarian News from the EU

The European Semester is a great tool to be executed

Member of European Parliament (MEP) Csaba Tabajdi, head of delegation of Hungarian socialists in the European Parliament said that the aim of the European Financial Semester is to secure the genuineness of the Union's economical policy. It is used by the community as a mirror towards the member states and gives an evaluation which is independent from any government party's political interest. This point underlines the importance of the fine run of the system. MEP Tabajdi added that the professional analysis is hardly enough while a determined political message is to be sent to those member states which avoid following goals defined jointly. As head of delegation Tabajdi also added, that the case of Hungary exemplifies that the European Semester is still unable to fulfill the role it was exactly created for. Though the European Commission pointed at the unsustainability of the economic policy of Hungarian PM Orbán's government, not even a clear political sign was sent to the Hungarian government from the Union. Sadly, concerns of the European Commission became reality and the Hungarian economy was led to the edge of bankruptcy, as head of delegation Tabajdi said. He additionally reminded that the functioning of the European Semester and the country-specific recommendations were arranged and supported by all European heads of states and heads of governments including Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. Regrettably, Hungary is the only member state raising a written objection against the recommendations by the European Commission in June, 2011.

For European values in Hungary and for Hungarian interests in Europe

After Ferenc Gyurcsány, former socialist Prime Minister founded a new political party last Saturday named Democratic Coalition (DK) members of delegation of Hungarian Socialists in the European Parliament made it clear that they are going to carry on working as members of MSZP in the future, too. Members of European Parliament (MEP's) Csaba Tabajdi, Kinga Göncz, Zita Gurmai and Edit Herczog underlined that they keep on effectively fighting for the freedom of press and for democratic values in Europe. Members of delegation will keep working with the motto 'For European values in Hungary and for Hungarian interests in Europe' as members of MSZP.

This is what they say – Hungary in the international press

The EU must create a mechanism to discipline or reject errant members

There are many academic tomes and commentaries on European integration.(...) Yet what has been unfolding in the past 15 months or so should make even the most ardent pro-European think about an orderly mechanism for making member states exit: the euro crisis and, less obviously, Hungary's backsliding from liberal democracy to a soft form of authoritarianism, or what an American paper recently called "Lukashenko lite". Only an EU that can credibly enforce fiscal as well as political and legal standards will survive in the long run – and that credibility will require a realistic scenario for what can happen to misbehaving member states. (...) Hence, there are also no real mechanisms in place for pressuring a country to reverse political course or, at the limit, leave. To be sure, the Lisbon treaty envisaged member states getting out voluntarily, and there is the possibility of suspending voting rights in cases of grave violations of core EU values such as liberal democracy and the rule of law. But national governments are unwilling even to suggest that possibility for Hungary, for fear of opening a can of worms (what about Berlusconi ...?)

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/oct/22/euro-europe-eurozone>

They don't like the system

October 23rd is a resonant date for Hungarians. Fifty-five years ago the failed anti-Soviet uprising began when teenage street fighters starting lobbing Molotov cocktails at Russian tanks. The

revolution was crushed by the Soviets, but remains seared into the country's collective consciousness. The young, middle-aged and elderly protestors at yesterday's demonstration in Budapest hoped to capture the spirit of 1956. Tens of thousands of them marched under the banner of *Nem tetszik a rendszer?* ("You don't like the system?"). Budapest is hardly the only European capital to be convulsed by protest at the moment. But the Hungarian crowds were not focused on the iniquities of global capitalism. They were protesting against what they see as the government's increasing centralisation of power. This, they say, has taken several forms. Once-independent institutions such as the state presidency have been filled with supporters of the ruling Fidesz party, independent-minded journalists have been sacked or sidelined, and civil servants have been purged simply for having served under the former, Socialist, administration.

<http://www.economist.com/blogs/eastern-approaches/2011/10/remembering-1956>

Hungary Holds Interest Rates as Europe's Debt Crisis Raises Borrowing Cost

Hungary's central bank kept interest rates unchanged for a ninth month, saying the European debt crisis raised the country's borrowing and risk costs and pressured the forint, justifying "a wait-and-see" approach. (...) "We see a good chance that the recent volatility on international markets will persist for a longer period and therefore the Monetary Council believes that a wait-and-see monetary policy is justified in the current situation," Simor told reporters in Budapest after the decision. As European leaders grapple to contain the euro area's debt crisis, investors are demanding higher yields on riskier debt. The forint weakened 2.4 percent against the euro since the last rate-setting meeting, Hungary's credit-default swaps rose to the highest in 2 1/2 years and the five-year bond yield this month reached the highest since January.

<http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-10-25/hungary-holds-interest-rates-as-europe-s-debt-crisis-raises-borrowing-cost.html>

Hungary's prime minister wants new banking rules

Hungary will seek to expand the regulation of its banking sector, particularly links between investment and retail banking operations, the country's prime minister said Monday. Hungary "cannot afford to pay the losses of banks and bankers," which should be borne instead by the banks' owners and shareholders, Orbán said in Parliament. "Retail banks have to be separated from investment banks," Orbán said, calling their intertwinement "one of the most problematic developments of the past 20 years" in the global economy.

http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/articles/2011/10/24/hungarys_prime_minister_wants_new_banking_rules/

Hungary Banks Vow to Fight Government Policy

Hungarian banks, angered by new government measures that they say are taking large chunks of their earnings, are vowing to fight to protect their rights and profits, but their mostly Western owners say they nevertheless remain committed to the market. The sector has been hit hard by a special "crisis tax" that the government introduced in 2010 as an emergency revenue source and by controversial new legislation designed to help households indebted with foreign currency based mortgages at the banks' cost. Those moves have been widely criticized at home and abroad for being anti-business, anti-bank, even unconstitutional and perhaps illegal.

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204485304576645051124522310.html?KEYWORDS=hungary>

Comments

A market economy with a human face

The new "Democratic coalition" aims to create a market economy with a human face, according to

its leader, former Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány.

Gyurcsány was answering questions at a press conference organized by the Hungarian International Associated Press (HIPA) on Wednesday, at the Hilton hotel in the Buda Castle District.

Gyurcsány said he believed that Hungarians have failed to take advantage of the opportunities open to the country since 1989. "People believed that the change of regime would bring prosperity" he said. "We have to tell people it doesn't just happen automatically."

Why has the Democratic coalition split from the Hungarian socialist party, MszP? Gyurcsány explained that there have been two cultural groups within the Hungarian left since the 1960s. "There are those that believe in the classical socialist structure of high tax and high spending. Then there are those that believe in a more open civic society." The existing leaders of MszP are of the former kind, and wish to move the party to the left.

"If the opposition party is preparing to govern the country, you have to understand that you have to rule from the centre" he said. "The reality for Hungary is the market economy. We don't say we want to find alternatives to the market economy. I want to reform it."

The former PM is no pure market economist however. When asked if he is a liberal- a title which is apparently jinxed in Hungarian politics, he replied, "If liberal means believing that everyone has the right to be what they want to be, then I am a liberal. If liberal means I believe that the market can solve everything, then I am not a liberal."

He also explained that he did not believe simply giving lots of money to the less well off was the solution to poverty. "It is much better to help give them better opportunities and education" he said. Asked if it is his ambition to become prime minister again, Gyurcsány said not. "If we would like to win, we need a person who is better than me now." he said. He does still have ambitions to be involved in politics. "The opposition needs me as one of the politicians who are shaping the other side." he declared.

What three things he would he like to change now? First, the constitution. "We have to restore the status of the constitutional court." he declared. The current government took away the power of the constitutional court to regulate the laws of parliament. "There is no balance. Without balance the government can govern unconstitutionally. Why should we accept that?"

Secondly, he would reform the tax system, returning to a progressive tax system, and removing the existing special taxes that are being levied, mainly on multi national companies.

Thirdly, health care reform. "In the medium term, the government will not be in a position to pay enough to doctors." He declared. "We have to pay privately into the health care system because from the budget alone we are not able to finance it."

Adding a fourth priority the former prime minister talked of the need to reopen the doors of universities. The current government is talking about reducing university places by 40%. "We have to ask students to give direct contributions to modernize the Universities.

Is Hungary ready for a party such as this, which refuses to take populist measures? "I think at least 20% are- I would like to represent the 20% who say "enough"... One advantage of the current government is that people will soon realize that there is no free lunch."

While many may believe that the former Prime Minister is a spent force in Hungarian politics, Ferenc Gyurcsány clearly has a clear well thought out manifesto. Perhaps that explains why the government is so keen to see him behind bars!

Nick Ryan; FreeHungary; October 26. 2011.

For the Democratic Coalition's birthday

Anyone who was there in the Vasas Stadium could see the atmosphere was really relaxed and festive at the Democratic Coalition's first birthday. One could say that the baby stood up and took a first step on the road to quick evolution. The Hungarian parliament lacks a center left, conservative political power that is open for both liberal and for social democratic values. There is no political community that would admit that it respects the freedom of competition and would stand for social capitalism with sensitivity for the poor as well.

'Ordinary political analysts' failed to recognize this very momentous aspect when they broadcast and interpreted the Democratic Coalition's birthday celebrations. They did not say a single word about Csaba Molnár's and Ferenc Gyurcsány's speech. They miscalculated the number of attendance. Népszabadság wrote that there were 1000 people. They should have rechecked sport news in which they usually measure 2000 people when broadcasting sport events from the same stadium. This time it was as crowded as at a sport match, plus the arena was packed.

The Democratic Coalition's birthday is a historical moment anyway. An empty field in the political scene has been occupied by Gyurcsány.

I hope MSZP (Hungarian Socialist Party) and the Democratic Coalition will be able to co-operate in a smooth way. However, MSZP started a debate over the mandates, although it promised it would not. It is funny when some speak about treachery and call upon Iván Vitányi, the father of the Hungarian social democratic movement and Ferenc Gyurcsány, the last successful left-wing politician to secure their mandates. It is even funnier when these requests come from people who and whose performance is not known at all.

The Democratic Coalition provides hope for a lot of people. It will not be a one-man party, but it will be a community of many different citizens with different political values. There were many former MSZP, SZDSZ (Alliance of Free Democrats, a former liberal party) and MDF (Hungarian Democratic Forum, winner of the first free elections in Hungary in 1990) politicians, and several other famous musicians and sportsmen also appeared at the event held in the Vasas Stadium. 'Approximately one thousand' were willing to complete the Democratic Coalition's entry form. The Democratic Coalition, so far a platform within MSZP, has a total of 6000 members by now. Of course there will be some who will choose to remain in MSZP, but there will be many others who will opt for the Democratic Coalition. They will be happy with the new party without the old MSZP. The new faction in the Parliament has been established as well. It has ten members. If the current House Rules and the Parliament's 1996 decision are respected, then the new faction is officially functional from Monday. By the way, it was József Szájer (a Fidesz politician) who spoke in defence of the decision in 1996, when MDNP stepped out from MDF.

It will turn out soon whether Fidesz is afraid of the new faction, especially in light of their declining popularity. It will turn out if they take steps against the new faction's formation. If they do, it will be an international scandal as they will try to numb the opposition.

http://greczy.blog.hu/2011/10/23/a_demokratikus_koalicio_szuletesnapjara

Démarche

Where is WikiLeaks now? The country is facing its biggest uncertainty ever: as to whether the US ambassador to Hungary handed the *démarche* over to Orbán or not, actually is a *démarche* like a string, or a Cosa Nostra type dead fish wrapped in paper, or the government loyalists are right and there was no talk of any notes or messages and, on the contrary, the US ambassador was full of praises of the situation in Hungary and expressed her hopes that her own government will soon follow in the footsteps of the Hungarian government.

The communication of the government of national issues is built on the premise that any international criticism may only appear in the form of a smack, slap or a clap in diplomacy, and so far Viktor Orbán has not gotten any smack from any prime minister or leaders of international institutions during his face-to-face meetings with them; they haven't even warned that he might get one, instead they were all smiling at him and praised him in their speeches for his efforts, and even the US ambassador to Hungary had a great time in his company in the parliament, henceforth Viktor Orbán remains the brightest star of the (political) universe.

Looking at all this from the other side, one must say that the habits and language of diplomacy of the US or actually of the entire world's is outdated.

We are lucky in the sense that we have already overtaken the declining western world in this field as well. As we have recently seen the party (Fidesz) leader Lajos Kósa, who is also the government's expert in devaluation and destruction of the Hungarian Forint, stated in the national television that

the IMF delegation was not called into Hungary, they just showed up here by themselves, and also that the local representative of the IMF is so grossly unaware of the situation in Hungary that she should have been sent home. Let's admit that this statement has the same magnitude as the one which states that the US ambassador to Hungary went to Orbán to say thank you; it is not by accident then that the local representative of the IMF, in her own outdated diplomatic language, stuttered that actually: „The helping hand – *IMF delegation* – is available to all IMF member countries, and it is always requested by the country itself”.

Gusztáv Megyesi; ÉS; October 21. 2011.