



Wojciech Przybylski

Nations don't want to be treated like children

A response to Samuel Abrahám

Nation-states have enough instruments of their own to ward off the threat of populism. Wojciech Przybylski, editor of *Res Publica Nowa*, responds to Samuel Abrahám's warning that European stability is threatened by the type of illiberal politician gaining ground in the Visegrád Four nations.

Far more frightening than populism in Europe is its citizens' belief that the EU is the answer to national problems. We live in a Europe where the new member states must develop sufficiently in order to fully participate. Indeed, one can say that an institutionalized democracy is not a long-term experience for Poland, Slovakia or Hungary. According to this logic, these countries should humbly accept lessons from more experienced states.

However the opposite is the case: radical political language is often much more common in "mature" systems like the Netherlands or France.

Discussion
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Furthermore, considering the history of some countries, the question of radical populism is a ghost of the past. Austria had to face international pressure when Jörg Haider won support for the first time. Luckily, international intervention from the EU was limited and never repeated again, even though populist parties now have a well-established place on the political scene.

I believe that nation-states have enough instruments, ranging from public opinion to constitutional tools, against such threats. Especially those that are entangled in a net of international agreements and economic relationships. Moreover, I consider lack of such belief dangerous to democracy itself. Having just escaped from the political rhetoric of moral ends in Poland under the twin rule, I feel relieved. Nonetheless, I would again be frightened if any supranational body with no responsibility to citizens but to governments only suddenly interfered with the politics of Kaczynski. Nations don't want to be treated like children, even if they behave as such.

The question is not about finding systemic solutions against populism, but making good political decisions despite its permanent presence in politics.



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