

Speech Dr. Zumpfort – Populism in Europe

In times of economic turmoils, socialist as well as right-wing populism is on the rise in the European Union. The countries most affected by the Euro-crisis, tend to be the most vulnerable for the populist thread.

Case Study Greece

I would like to demonstrate the extent of populism and its effect with the help of Greece as an example. The current economic and political situation is due to populist promises made by politicians of conservative Nea Dimokratia and socialist Pasok during the last four decades. Since the collapse of the Greek military junta in 1974, the ruling parties promised the Greek population heaven and earth. Worse than any of those promises, was, that the Greek administrations, whether conservatives or social democrats, actually implemented several of these promises. Those promises led to an excessive growth of welfare expenditures. The state apparatus swelled to a dangerous size, with more than seven-hundred-thousand civil servants in a country with less than 11 million people. Unfortunately, the consequence of the current crisis in Greece is not less, but rather more Welfare-populism. In this years election, SYRIZA, a populist socialist party, gained 26,9% of the Greeks votes. Several other right- and left-wing parties received enough votes to find their way into the Greek parliament as well.

Populism did not only lead into the current crisis in Greece, it also prevents solutions. Investors abstain because of unpredictable political developments and more and more capital flows out of the country.

<http://eng.cfe.org/mboard/bbsDetail.asp?cid=mn2007430103030&idx=2014>

<http://www.dradio.de/dlf/sendungen/themenderwoche/1755692/>

<http://www.welt.de/wirtschaft/article106613106/Warum-in-Griechenland-seit-Jahren-alles-stockt.html>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/gr.html>

<http://www.nationmultimedia.com/home/2010/06/21/opinion/Big-Fat-Greek-Spending-Lessons-for-a-Welfare-State-30132019.html>

http://www.grreporter.info/en/712_thousand_number_civil_servants_greece/6531

True Finns

Recent developments in Finland are cause for concern. The True Finns, a populist part socialist, part conservative-nationalist received more than 19% in the Finnish elections of 2011. They are demanding tax increases, subsidies for the agricultural sector and higher state expenditures in general.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/True_Finns

Geert Wilders:

Geert Wilders is one of the politicians, almost always mentioned when it comes to populism. He is the european face of anti-islam populism.

Examples:

Right wing populism:

- ▲ Geert Wilders in the Netherlands

One of the most famous and infamous European populist of the last years is undoubtedly Geert Wilders, leader of the Dutch Party for Freedom

- ⤴ Victor Orban in Hungary and Jobbik <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jobbik>
- ⤴ Silvio Berlusconi in Italy, Lega Nord

A politician who harmed his country with his populism and populist measures, is

- ⤴ <http://www.voxeu.org/article/back-berlusconi-end-populism-europe>
- ⤴ Marine Le Pen with the Front National in France + last elections right-wing
- ⤴ Joerg Haider in Austria
- ⤴ NPD/ Die Freiheit in Germany – right-wing socialists; the FNF started a campaign to address extremism in Germany

Left wing populism:

- ⤴ Die Linke Deutschland

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/interactive/2011/nov/06/europe-far-right-nationalist-populist-interactive>

http://www.eurotopics.net/de/home/presseschau/archiv/magazin/politik-verteilerseite/populismus_2007_10/debatte_populismus_2007_10/

<http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/continent-of-fear-the-rise-of-europe-s-right-wing-populists-a-719842.html>

<http://www.demos.co.uk/projects/thefarrightineurope>