



Could Hungary Break the Back of the EU?

Hungary's new constitution was a long time coming. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, Hungary's constitution was amended numerous times, allowing more and more freedom for a free market economy to grow and making other provisions that limited government power. In 2010 the process of developing a new constitution began in earnest which included questionnaires mailed out to all Hungarians for their input and opinion. Nearly one million questionnaires were returned and provisions in the new constitution were either added or deleted based largely on that input. In April the Hungarian parliament approved it overwhelmingly and it was signed into law by President Pal Schmitt (pictured), to take effect on January 1, 2012.



Noteworthy are the limits on spending until the public debt drops below 50 percent of the country's gross domestic product (it is now about 80 percent) as well as the president's power to dissolve parliament if acceptable budgets aren't approved. The life of a fetus is protected from the moment of conception while marriage is defined as being between one man and one woman. It reduces mandatory retirement for judges from the current age of 70 to 62, and limits the powers of the head of the country's central bank. In addition, its preamble contains references to the Holy Crown as well as to God, Christianity, the fatherland, and traditional family values.

An [editorial at Scotland on Sunday](#) was nearly ecstatic:

When all the usual suspects — the European Union, the United Nations, the IMF, the leftist commentariat, Hillary Clinton et al — are hand-wringing and getting their underpinnings in a twist over some alleged affront to the New World Order, it is a pretty reliable indication that someone, somewhere is doing something uncharacteristically constructive....

It is a long time since any western nation produced a document of such intellectual and cultural integrity, moral worth and wholly admirable quality. In the moral desert of 21st-century Europe, it is startling to find this gem of traditional values, patriotic assertion and respect for genuine freedom....

The new constitution makes the classic statement of Burkean philosophy: "Our Basic Law is the foundation of our legal system; it is a contract between Hungarians past, present and future." That recognition of the seamless continuum of history and the transience of generations stands head and shoulders above the trashy verbiage of EU treaties. Not only does it "recognize the role of Christianity in preserving nationhood," it "professes that the family and the nation constitute the principal framework of our coexistence." No wonder it is anathema to the Frankfurt Marxists



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on January 18, 2012

of the EU...

The Hungarian constitution reflects an awakening of cultural and moral sensibilities, a revolt against Brussels-directed integration and PC impositions. It is the product of a highly civilized nation reclaiming its heritage and autonomy. It should be an inspiration to the rest of Europe, marinated in moral relativism and political passivity.

One of those “Frankfurt Marxists” no doubt includes Charles Gati who, [according to Lew Rockwell](#), “has been joined at the hip to the renamed Hungarian communist party and its governing allies from even before the regime change in 1989” and now serves as a professor and interim director of Russian and Eurasian Studies at Johns Hopkins. In a recent article Gati expressed his disapproval of the restrictions on the country’s central bank, calling it part of [“Hungary’s Backward Slide.”](#)

He wrote that the new constitution “appeals to age-old nationalist suspicions [and] government propaganda [that] has come to compare Western banks to Soviet tanks and Brussels to Moscow, while ... criticism from Washington or Berlin is angrily rejected as interference in domestic affairs.” He ridiculed the efforts to build a new constitution, saying that “it draws on a golden age of Hungarian history that never was, echoing the professed values of the old Kingdom of Hungary.” [In another article](#) Gati was much more blunt in how to “resolve” the issue: “There are opportunities indeed to remove this government — if possible in a democratic way, if not then in some other way.”

Rockwell is not optimistic that the restrictions on Hungary’s central bank will remain in place especially in light of that country’s emergent financial difficulties: It must refinance \$7.5 billion while raising additional capital in order to pay its bills, which it cannot do without help from the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund. And so Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has sent his finance minister Tamas Fellegi to bow and scrape before those august powers to keep his country from defaulting.

Ambrose Evans-Pritchard of *The Telegraph* is even less optimistic, if possible. He quoted Olli Rehn, a European Union commissioner, as saying, “Governments [like Hungary] must refrain from seeking to influence their central bank. Certain provisions in the new constitution are in breach of these principles. This needs to be addressed before we can start formal negotiations.” Evans-Pritchard concluded: “The warning is clear. Hungary will be left at the mercy of hostile markets until it bows to EU pressure.”

As the old expression goes: “When one sleeps with dogs one wakes up with fleas.” It is possible that Orban might be able to call the EU’s bluff by threatening to default, costing the banks so precious and so close to the EU’s orbit some serious pain. On the other hand the consequences inflicted on his own citizenry by such a default could cost him his job if not his life.

Photo of Hungarian President Pal Schmitt signing the new Constitution: AP Images



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