

## **Hungary: Beware the rise of nationalism**

**The new constitution is permeated with the notion that Hungarians are “the chosen people among the Europeans,” said Michael Frank in *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.**

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**Michael Frank**

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Hungary has just lurched toward dangerous nationalism, said Michael Frank. The new constitution pushed through last week by Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s right-wing Fidesz party, which controls two thirds of the parliament, is permeated with the notion that Hungarians are “the chosen people among the Europeans” Such a nationalistic sentiment, no matter which country espouses it, has “always brought disaster upon the Continent.”

The document invokes the Holy Crown of St. Stephen, the national symbol of Hungary’s glory days that pro-Nazi regimes exploited in the 1940s. The state is enjoined to protect church, family, and the unborn, yet there’s no mention of the rights of minorities. Worst of all is a passage in which Hungary seems to claim the allegiance of the 3 million Hungarians who live in neighboring countries that were once part of Greater Hungary. Slovakia, Ukraine, and Romania—which have all had territories gobbled up by Hungary in the past in the name of protecting Hungarians—are already alarmed.

It will be up to the European Union to bring political pressure to bear—and, if necessary, take legal steps—to ensure that Hungary makes its constitution more democratic. Otherwise, “emotional nationalism could end up poisoning central Europe.”