

## Open Country or Exclusive Society?

Hungary after the elections and before EU-presidency

n-ost media conference 2010

6.-10. October in the European Capital of Culture, Pécs (Southern Hungary)

N-ost is pleased to invite journalists and experts in East European studies to its 6<sup>th</sup> annual media conference, which will be held in the city of Pécs. After the previous conferences held in Berlin, Prague, Sofia, Bucharest, and Rostov-on-Don, this year we chose the European Capital of Culture in Southern Hungary. This international convention will focus on Hungary and the dramatic changes it faced after the landslide victory of national conservative Viktor Orban from the Fidesz Party. We are fortunate that the conference will fall in between two critical points in time - the days after the Hungarian local elections and the time right before Hungary takes over the EU presidency, which will bring the country to the centre of public and media attention.

The n-ost media conference:

- **connects** over 80 Eastern European and German-speaking journalists and experts in interests such as media politics.
- **teaches** through a broad variety of workshops about different journalistic topics offered by accredited and experienced coaches.
- **offers research access** to topics that reveal a new view of the country: from racism to rock music to energy and wine.
- **discusses** the current development in Hungary through dialogue with experts and leading intellectuals from the country.

## Programme

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6 <sup>th</sup> , 2010
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2 pm           Uhr Hotel check-in

5:30 pm       ■ CONFERENCE OPENING

6 pm           ■ KEYNOTE SPEECH

### **From an open to an exclusive society?**

Péter Nádas about Hungary's journey since 1989

The storyteller, dramatist and essayist **Péter Nádas** is known as one of the most merited critics of his country. As an introduction to the n-ost media conference Nádas will explain Hungary's difficult progress since the fall of the Iron Curtain.

What changes and events, following the fall of The Iron Curtain, influenced the shift to the right of the parliament election in 2010? Is Hungary on its way to an authoritarian system? How strong is its democratic power? Is Hungary, former land of k.u.k. monarchical rule, distancing itself from the European system of values? How does Hungary perceive Europe and vice-versa?

6:45 pm       ■ PANEL DISCUSSION

### **Hungary before the EU presidency**

Between internal and external challenges

The victory of the national-conservative Fidesz party is causing Hungary to redefine itself. Also, right-wing extremists entered to the parliament due to their approach toward problems such as, the economic crisis, corruption and relocation of young people. At the same time though, Hungary prepares itself to take over the EU presidency in January 2011.

But many are unsatisfied with Hungary's progress since it entered the European Union. This is in part due to its society, evidently, split, whereas again and again the great Roma minority is the one excluded.

The two-thirds majority from Prime Minister Victor Orban gives Hungary the chance to overcome this political division and address its economical and structural problems. But how much room would this authority leave for democratic progress within Hungary? What incentives could the country give while in presidency?

- Rudolf Ungváry, writer and journalist
- Prof. Dr. Katalin Forray, Universität Pécs
- Prof. Dr. Ferenc Mészlivetz, Director of the Institute for Social and European Studies, Budapest
- Zoltán Balog, Secretary of State in the Ministry of the Interior, responsible for integration (inquired)

Moderation: Peter Kapern, Deutschlandfunk

8 pm           **Buffet**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2010

9 am **Introductions and Networking meeting**

10 am– 5 pm **Workshops**

- Reporter under time pressure: Reportage in the Daily Newspaper  
Instructor: Holger Gertz, Süddeutsche Zeitung
- When readership is lost: Rating killers and Writing Don'ts  
Instructor: Peter Linden, freelancer and Trainer
- Good writing, poorly sold? Marketing for freelancers  
Instructor: Cordula Nussbaum, freelancer and Coach
- Radio at its best: The Three-Minute Piece  
Instructor: Peter Kapern, Deutschlandfunk
- Basic ABCs of Videojournalism – Introduction and Tips for Practice  
Instructor: Mathias Sdun, Videoblogger
- Photojournalism: Introduction for Print Journalists  
Instructor: Jan Zappner, Freelance Photographer and Trainer, Berlin
- Unwanted questions? The Right of Information in the Practice  
Instructor: Ádám Földes, Transparency International Hungary (English)
- Writing in the Web: When journalists write blogs  
Instructor: Verena Reygers, Frei Journalistin und Bloggerin  
([www.maedchenmannschaft.net](http://www.maedchenmannschaft.net) / Der Freitag)

1 pm Lunch break

7 pm  Panel DISCUSSION

**Society without a voice?**

Media and Civil Society

In the course of transformation, in Hungary a manifold media landscape developed. However, these are only partly independent and superficially pluralistic, although public television stations and private newspapers or radio stations feel committed to party's interests. And also Hungarian civil society is left without an audible and independent voice.

How do NGOs and media contribute to a critical public? To which traditions can they tie this? How is the relationship between each other and how can they strengthen one another? How can social support for freedom of the press and an engaged civil society be improved? Is there a way out of the circle of false expectations and indifference?

- Balázs Weyer, Editor-in-Chief, Medienportals [Origo.hu](http://Origo.hu)
- Éva Vajda, Freelancer, Soma price for investigative journalism 2007
- Balázs Dénes, Chairman of Hungarian Society for Civil Rights and Liberties TASZ

Moderation: Thomas Morawski, Head of ZDF-Studio for South-Eastern Europe, Vienna

8:30 pm  **Buffett**

In champagne cellar Caesar in cooperation with Slow Food Pécs

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2010

9 am

**Research Excursion**

- *Lidl, Aldi und Co: Hungary's economy and the role of foreign investors*  
After 1989, Hungary's State property rapidly fell in the hands of national and foreign investors. In an agricultural country like Hungary, more fruits from other countries like Spain and Holland make their way to the supermarkets than do from their own crops. Who benefits from this turning point? What mistakes did Hungary made in the process of transformation? How does the local economy survive? Examples of success from SMEs. Visit to local company.
- *No Gas, No Water, No Electricity: How can Hungary be independent?*  
The region is still struggling against the remnants that the decomposition of uranium ore and coal left in the Mecsek-mountains from back in the day. Despite the still unknown but high number of cancer victims, it wasn't until the year 2000 that this obsolete coal-burning power plant in Pécs was modernised.  
  
Besides, Mecsek is once again a dump site for the radioactive waste from the only atomic power plant in Hungary. Why is Hungary's interest in renewable energy so insignificant? Why haven't pressure groups been able to acquire EU subsidies for alternative energy sources?
- *The vines blossom again: Viticulture tradition in the Mecsek-mountains*  
For over 2.000 years the Mecsek-mountains have produced some of the best first-class wine in Villány, a region of about 2,500 acres, just south of Pécs. However, it wasn't again until after the fall of The Curtain that this wine industry recovered. Great financial support, energy, skill and ambition brought the region back to flourish. Today it is so attractive that even German winegrowers have established themselves there and produce even organic wine. Visit to German and Hungarian winegrowers from the region around Pécs.
- *Antisocial = asocial? The hard way of Hungarian civil society*  
After the fall of The Iron Curtain in 1989, there was barely any societal structure which one could follow. Communism, the authoritarian government under Horthy, and the adaptation of Germany's national socialistic totalitarian structure leaves no wonder about the lack of societal structure. Not even after the political thaw in the years until 1956. This has barely changed over the last 20 years. The Hungarian people - millions of which lived at poverty level and even more in fear of impoverishment - never learned "to get themselves out of the mud." Where are there places of voluntary commitment of participation and "dispute culture"? What are the difficulties of existing NGOs? Visit to social and political NGOs and initiatives.
- *Support or exclusion? Roma in and around Pécs*  
The only high school for Roma in whole Hungary is found in Pécs. But considering the big Roma community in the city, the European Capital of Culture Programme includes only a few Roma-events. Also, almost 80 percent of Hungarians - independent of their political preference - are hostile against the Roma minority. How is Roma's reality of life in

Pécs and in neighbouring villages? What options are there to help Roma improve their social conditions? Are Roma people politically represented by interest groups? Visit in the Gandhi-Gymnasium and the Roma village Gilvánfalva, where unemployment is over 90 percent and the only employer is the local administration.

- *Brain drain and Student boom in a weak-structured region*

Thanks to the Bologna Processes many foreign students have made their way to Pécs. They not only give the city an international flair, but also bring money. At the same time though, more and more young people are leaving Hungary in search of qualified education and a good job. What do young people find in Pécs that may not be offered anywhere else? At the same time why have young people so many problems in the Hungarian job market? What possibilities does the EU have to influence continuing education in companies and personnel development? Visits: personnel recruiters, youth projects, university.

- *Strudel and Games – or just something that lasts? Pécs 2010*

Although the applying concept for Pécs as the European Capital of Culture was originally penned by intellectuals, politics took over soon after. This was followed by scandals and major delays of the construction of the European Capital of Culture projects. What awaits for Pécs? Is there a lasting effect for touristic development? What is the construction status of central projects such as the cultural quarter around the surrounding area of ceramic factory Zsolnay? Excursion to projects and discussion with people in charge.

- *Union instead of separation: Pécs' Rock music and off-culture*

Alternative music has played an important political role in Hungary ever since. Particularly during the fall of the Iron Curtain, music gave a new concept to views of life. Today, rock music and music in general belong to the Hungarian societal domains, unifying society instead of separating it. However, popularity of music groups is almost limited exclusively to Hungary, with the exception of the legendary Omega from Bátorfő, who is heard in Poland as well as in England. Why have other musicians not been able to succeed in Europe? How has the role of music been grounded in society for the last 20 years? Visit to the musicians Presser, Kóbor and others.

Evening

Think and Drink: Workshops on the "Futures of N-ost"

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2010
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**■ For n-ost members:**  
9 am n-ost member convention and workshop about the development of n-ost

**■ For all other conference participants:**  
9 am Optional: Events of the European Capital of Culture programme

**■ For all participants:**  
14 pm Lunch

15 pm **■ CITY TOUR**

**East and West: A tour of Pécs' world cultural heritage**

Roman, Turkish, German, Jewish and many others have left marks in the course of the history of Pécs'. The archaeological and historical city tour exposes the colourful mixture of the East and West. Since the 18<sup>th</sup> Century it is known that under Pécs city centre another city hides, the Roman Sopianae. Today, this extraordinary Roman legacy is the reason for which UNESCO gave Pécs a status of World Cultural Heritage. The early Christian grave-chamber with still intact mural paintings from the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Century, and their two-storied architecture are like anything in Europe alike.

7 pm Dinner at cooking and tourist school Pécs

8:30 pm Final party

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2010
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10 am **■ PANEL DISCUSSION**

**What remains from the year as a European Capital of Culture?**

A multi-perspective conclusion

"City without limits" – this is the motto of the European Capital of Culture Pécs 2010. Is the city fulfilling its promises given the fact that Hungarians, Serbians, Croatians, Germans, Roma and other minorities live in and around the city? What cultural incentives will remain in memory? What is the economic balance after regarding the fact that many construction project have been delayed? Is the city able to use their honorary year for marketing strategies? And what is the impact of the European Capital of Culture year in terms of cultural work and adhesion to Europe?

- Csaba Ruzsa, Executive Director of European Capital of Culture Pécs
- Tamás Szalay, Art Director of European Capital of Culture Pécs
- Nóra Somlyódy, Author and former editor of Magyar Narancs
- Christian Gracza, former Robert Bosch Cultural Manager in Pécs
- Jürgen Fischer, Programme Coordinator, Ruhr 2010

Moderation: Klaus Prömpers, Head of ZDF-Studio for South-Eastern Europe, Vienna

12 pm End of conference

1 pm Lunch and departure

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