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Slovakia says western members can't dictate EU future after Brexit

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The EU's future cannot be decided by just two or three powerful Western members, Slovakia's prime minister said on Thursday, in a dig at France and Germany and a plea for more involvement by the bloc's newer ex-communist members.

Prime Minister Robert Fico was speaking on the eve of taking over the rotating presidency of the European Union, which has been shaken to its core by Britain's shock vote to leave. The other 27 EU leaders will meet in Bratislava in September to ponder the future.

"Crucial decisions about the future of Europe cannot be defined by two, three member states, or the founding states of the EU," Fico told reporters.

Germany, France and Italy held three-way talks on Monday to consider the 'Brexit' vote. Two days earlier, the EU's six founding members, also including Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, had held a meeting of foreign ministers.

"The future of the EU can no longer be defined without active involvement of the states that joined after 2004," Fico said. The bulk of the post-2004 entrants are former communist nations from central and eastern Europe.

Slovakia and the other so-called Visegrad states - Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic - are calling for more powers to be returned to EU capitals and a reduction in the role of the executive European Commission in Brussels.

"There's a feeling among member states that sometimes they agree something and then the Commission comes up with proposals that don't reflect that," Fico's foreign minister, Miroslav Lajcak, said. "If our citizens understand less and less what the EU is doing, it's because there is too much institutions and too little member states."

Lajcak said he would agree to any measure that might reverse the Brexit vote, but Fico acknowledged it was the reality. "The British people have reacted to European policy," he said. "No one has the right to be angry with the British voters."

MIGRATION STAND-OFF

The Visegrad four defied the Commission, and the bloc's top power Germany, by refusing to take in refugees who arrived in Europe last year in an influx of some 1.3 million people.

"There are policies of the EU that need to be labeled as failed ones quite clearly," said Fico. "The vast majority of EU citizens fully disagree with the current state of migration policies in the EU."

Western EU states have accused the Visegrad group of showing no solidarity in the migration crisis, and seeking to benefit from the bloc's joint budget without being willing to accept shared responsibilities.

Lajcak said Slovakia's concerns on migration should be heard by Berlin and Brussels, adding that Bratislava was ready to help alleviate the migration crisis in other ways.

"We cannot accept a situation that when some of the founding countries have their views, it's called 'positions', and when some of the new members have their views, it's called a 'problem'," Lajcak said.