

**BRATISLAVA INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LIBERAL ARTS**

**Diverging Paths: Assessing the Heterogeneity of Far-Right  
Movements in Europe Through the Lens of Migration via the  
Examples of Italy and Hungary**

**Bachelor Thesis**

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**February 2024**

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**Maximilián Péteri**

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## **Declaration of Originality**

I hereby declare that this bachelor thesis is my own work and has not been published in part or in whole somewhere else. All used literature is attributed and cited in references. Speeches in Italian used in this thesis have all been translated by a fluent Italian speaker to English. I declare that I have used Quillbot several times to rephrase my own thoughts during the writing of this thesis.

Bratislava, February 20, 2024

Maximilián Péteri

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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Péteri: Assessing the Heterogeneity of Far-Right Movements

## **Abstract**

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The thesis aims to show the heterogeneity of the far-right through the lenses of migration. In the current times, the far-right is rising in popularity among voters from numerous European countries and the elections into European Parliament are coming in June of 2024, which is one of the reasons why research like this is important. It brings the question if those parties could form a well working coalition on the level of EU party politics. The research is going to focus on the cases of Hungary and Italy.

Recently, there have been reports about Orban joining Meloni in ECR. Even though it is unlikely that Fidesz will join the ECR, it is clear that Orban wants to lead a more cohesive ID and ECR alliance. Rather than walking away from the EU, it seems that his goal is to change it from within. As far-right movements continue to change and influence the political landscape, these claims demand a critical analysis of such movements and their implications for European party politics.

The research attempts to compare migration, which is the common denominator in discourse. Populist discourse may be influenced by Hungary and Italy distinct geographical locations, and the research takes such details into consideration for an adequate analysis.

## Péteri: Assessing the Heterogeneity of Far-Right Movements

The methodology used in the research is discourse analysis, focusing on migration. Other important topics the research focuses on are European party politics, electoral strategies, and rhetoric. Through this, the research aims to demonstrate the hypothesis that the far-right parties are too heterogeneous to be able to effectively cooperate. The focus are politicians from the governing parties, such as the ministers of interior and foreign affairs.

## Abstrakt

Autor: Maximilián Péteri

Názov: Rozchádzajúce sa cesty: Posudzovanie heterogenity krajne pravicových hnutí v Európe cez prizmu migrácie na príkladoch Talianska a Maďarska

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Cieľom práce je poukázať na heterogénnosť krajnej pravice cez prizmu migrácie. V súčasnosti rastie popularita krajnej pravice medzi voličmi z mnohých európskych krajín a v júni 2024 sa blížia voľby do Európskeho parlamentu, čo je jeden z dôvodov, prečo je takýto výskum dôležitý. Nastoľuje sa otázka, či by tieto strany mohli vytvoriť fungujúcu koalíciu na úrovni straníckej politiky EÚ. Výskum sa sústreďuje na prípady Maďarska a Talianska.

Nedávno sa objavili informácie o spojení Orbána s Meloni v ECR. Aj keď je nepravdepodobné, že Fidesz vstúpi do ECR, je jasné, že Orbán chce viesť súdržnejšiu alianciu ID a ECR. Zdá sa, že jeho cieľom nie je odísť z EÚ, ale zmeniť ju zvnútra. Keďže krajne pravicové hnutia naďalej menia a ovplyvňujú politickú scénu, tieto tvrdenia si vyžadujú kritickú analýzu takýchto hnutí a ich dôsledkov pre európsku stranícku politiku.

Výskum sa snaží porovnať migráciu, ktorá je spoločným menovateľom v rámci diskurzu. Populistický diskurz môže byť ovplyvnený odlišnou geografickou polohou Maďarska a Talianska a výskum zohľadňuje tieto detaily pre adekvátnu analýzu.

Péteri: Assessing the Heterogeneity of Far-Right Movements

Metodológia použitá vo výskume je diskurzívna analýza so zameraním na migráciu. Ďalšími dôležitými témami, na ktoré sa výskum zameriava, sú európska stranícka politika, volebné stratégie a rétorika. Prostredníctvom nich sa výskum snaží dokázať hypotézu, že krajne pravicové strany sú príliš heterogénne na to, aby boli schopné efektívne spolupracovať. V centre pozornosti sú politici z vládnych strán, napríklad ministri vnútra a zahraničných vecí.



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## **Introduction**

The electoral success of far-right parties in Europe has been steadily increasing over the last years, greatly altering the political climate on the continent. The far-right has become more normalized in many European countries, making a worrying precedent over all of Europe. For example, north of Europe has seen far-right succeed in Sweden with the far-right party Sweden Democrats supporting a minority government in 2022 or the Finns Party in Finland achieving over 20% of votes in the 2023 elections (Moller-Nielsen, 2023; Henley J., 2022). In the west it has been notably Le Pen's National Rally, succeeding more and more in both the national assembly, which is the main legislative, but also in the presidential elections in France (Berlinger, 2023). In the east, one notable example is The People's Party Our Slovakia, which has successfully entered the government in 2016 elections. Some more examples include the victory of Geert Wilders in the 2023 elections in Netherlands (Corder & Caser, 2023). A somewhat different development has occurred in Hungary. Nonetheless, Fidesz [Hungarian Civic Alliance], at the moment a far-right party that has initially started as liberal, continues to rule the nation after winning fourth election in a row in 2022 (Tait & Garamvolgyi, 2022). In the south, we most recently saw Fdi [Brothers of Italy] win in Italy (Kirby, 2022). The success of these parties in numerous countries of Europe have brought the concerns over mainstreaming the far-right Europe. I have decided to put my focus on two parties from two different countries from Europe to conduct this research. Those parties being Fidesz and Fratelli d'Italia lead by Viktor Orban and Giorgia Meloni, respectively. These parties were chosen based on the recent victories at the time of writing this thesis and also due to the echo these leaders received after being victorious in their elections, with many expecting a closer coalition between their parties.

In Italy, with the victory of Giorgia Meloni in September 2022, Italy has seen its most far-right government be formed since the rule of Benito Mussolini (Picheta et al., 2022). What is more, this victory came exactly a century after Mussolini's march on Rome, giving the party's ascent historical significance. Orban's victory came earlier in 2022, securing crucial fourth victory in the general elections in a row. With Orban's position in European Union, it was anticipated that he would pursue a closer relationship with a party with like-minded ideas, which the Meloni's party fulfils. This has also been

proven to be true with recent remarks made by Orbán hoping to join Meloni and her MEPs in the European Parliament (Baccini, 2024). It is uncertain what will happen after the elections, but it is clear that Orbán is hoping to merge ID [Identity and Democracy] and ECR [European Conservatives and Reformists] and become their leader. However, with differences in some key aspects between Orbán and Meloni, as this research will show, seems unlikely to happen. Orbán's position in the European Union has been compromised for a longer period of time, and the same can be said about the Fidesz MEPs in the European parliament. This research will have a look at these two parties and analyse their historical background, their stances towards migration and lastly the importance of European party politics with the aim to show why the far-right parties might be too heterogeneous to be able to effectively cooperate. Political parties that support ideologies defined by openly ethnicist, anti-immigration, and explicitly xenophobic views are referred to as "far-right" parties in this research. Far-right political parties frequently support strict immigration laws, place a high value on preserving national identity, and sometimes even contain prejudices against minority communities. These parties also use populism<sup>1</sup> to achieve greater success. The research focuses on far-right rather than on populism. Furthermore, far-right parties may support authoritarian governance structures, reject open societies, and support a strong state presence in societal affairs.

The methodology used in this research is discourse analysis, with focus on migration. The research looks at the historical background of far-right, migration and European party politics. Firstly, it is important to have a brief look at the historical background of the far-right and the respective parties this research is concerned about. While there are different ways for a party to get labelled as far-right, it is important to properly assess it. The first chapter delves deeper into the history and assesses the position of Fidesz and Fratelli d'Italia in the history of the far-right and compares its current development. Looking at history of the far-right also helps us see the re-emergence of the old ideas of far-right with new challenges, which is migration in this case. It also helps explain when and how the far-right has become more prevalent, as well as how the far-right of the past has affected the far-right of today. Furthermore, since migration

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<sup>1</sup> I purposefully do not label all of the parties concerned in this research as populist, due to the fact that doing so would require to include parties which do not belong to the far-right grouping. Populism is used by parties from different political ideologies as a tool to amass more votes or radicalize their politics among others, using the people vs. elite narrative (Mudde, 2004). Populism in this case is used as a political means, rather than an ideology and it radicalises it the politics and the supporters of far-right parties.

is one of the key talking points, it is salient to properly analyse the state and how the countries have been dealing with migration, as well as the differences due to their geographical positions. This is done in depth in the second chapter. To help prove the hypothesis, discourse analysis regarding statements about migration is included in the second chapter. Finally, there is the role of the European Parliament, which is crucial for forming relationships, therefore is significantly important for the possible collaboration of parties from different states. The third chapter focuses on this as well as providing an analysis of the discourse from ministers, regarding migration and others with the aim to show the heterogeneity of the far-right with concrete examples. The European Parliament is a great tool for seeing what is going on the far-right and it is important for the purpose of this thesis also since it can be used as a map to better locate the parties as well as provide us with a tool to see their moves.

# 1. History of Far-Right: Highlights from the Post-War Period to the Migration Crisis

## 1.1 History of the European Far-Right After the Second World War and Prior- East and West Contrasts

The far-right has been present in Europe for decades and its popularity has fluctuated over the years. Knowing how the far-right in Europe has been doing in history is key to understanding the current development as well. That is why this chapter seeks to locate how the far-right has been prevalent in different time periods. The aim is to have a look at the far-right in various times in history, to acknowledge its presence and also the development. It is also crucial to show that the parties do have historical background and their differences can be traced back to post war period or beyond. The aim of this chapter is also to try and highlight the similarities and differences of the far-right in the respective countries, which will be key to conducting this research later on and show how their backgrounds have contributed to their current state. This research is not going to analyse the whole history of far-right, but it seeks to highlight certain key points in history which have contributed to the current development. A great analysis of this topic has been done by Zeev Sternhell<sup>2</sup>.

The far-right has a long history in Europe, however, the popularity of far-right in Europe began in the 1920s and 1930s (Halperin, 2023). The surge was mainly in the fascist Italy and then later in Nazi Germany. During this time the popularity surged, and it can be considered as the highest point of far-right politics in Europe in history. After the end of the Second World War, the “far-right movements faced the necessity of reinventing their radicalism” (Camus, Lebourg, & Todd, 2017, p.53). The parties saw a need not to distance themselves from what they have caused and have been associated with, but to rebrand (Camus, Lebourg, & Todd, 2017). After the end of the Second World War, the support for far-right has gone down, until the late 1950s. Not even a quarter of century after the end of the Second World War, the memories of the fascist regimes and the atrocities committed have started to slowly erase from the

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<sup>2</sup> Sternhell, Z. (1994). *The birth of fascist ideology: From cultural rebellion to political revolution* (1st pbk.). Princeton University Press.  
Sternhell, Z., & Maisel, D. 2010. *The Anti-Enlightenment Tradition*. Yale University Press.

memory of people and allowed the far-right to start coming back to life once again (Hainsworth, 2008).

Focusing on the countries this research is concerned with, Italy has often been called the birthplace of fascism and therefore the far-right politics. After the end of the Second World War, Italy has managed to re-establish democracy again in 1946. After the first elections, the previous fascist regime has been obliterated and the Christian democrats have comfortably won. However, the MSI [Italian Social Movement] has managed to gain some support which was already somewhat worrying. The party has received over 500 000 votes. (Ministry of Interior, n.d.). The MSI was an Italian party which was founded in 1946 by once Mussolini's officers. The party has tried to avoid the statements which would make it obvious and easy to connect to the previous regime, however, from their heavy focus on nationalism and its authoritative tendencies, the party was described as fascist (Newell, 2010). To some this might come as a surprise, since the party has gained around 2% of votes almost immediately after the old regime has collapsed. It needs to be noted, that the Italian case of the support for far-right appearing so quickly, was an exception in Europe (Mudde, 2019). Another example is France, where the Poujadist<sup>3</sup> movement rose to power in the 1960s.

Looking at Hungary, which is one of the countries this research aims to investigate, the country has had several dramatical shifts. Since after the first World War, it has lost significant amount of territory with the signing of treaty of Trianon, many Hungarian politicians tried to get these territories back to re-establish the once great Hungary (Treaty of Trianon, n.d.). This resulted in several far-right politicians getting in power and later on even joining the Axis powers. Not long after the war Hungary became the Hungarian People's Republic, which happened due to the agreement that after the war, Hungary would be under Soviet influence. Due to this fact, it is difficult to trace any far-right support, as it would be immediately suppressed by the Soviet regime. What is however important to note, is the interwar period in Hungary. Having lost a significant amount of its territory after signing the Treaty of Trianon, several people

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<sup>3</sup> The Poujadist movement, created by Pierre Poujade, which in 1956 won 51 seats and approximately 11.5% of the votes. The party has however only had a limited success, as it ceased to exist due to a bad leadership and the lack of political programme after only two years (Oxford reference, n.d.). However, one of the party members was also Jean-Marie Le Pen. He, along with several other people, has created the Front National and became the first president of the party. The first elections of the party in 1973 were not a big success, only receiving around 100 000 votes. This led to the party having internal structural reshaping to improve the results in the next election. The success did not come in the next two elections, however, in 1986 the party succeeded and got into parliament after receiving nearly 10% of the votes (Stockemer, 2017).

called for the restoration of Great Hungary. One of the people being also Miklós Horthy. Hungarian regent, who was chosen to appoint a king, however, he remained an uncrowned king for 24 years (Szalay, 2020). Horthy has previously served as an admiral before, which was however strange since Hungary no longer had access to the sea. Since it was very unlikely for Hungarians to accept exiled Otto von Habsburg as their king, it was Horthy's role to run the country and find a plausible replacement for himself, which he however never did (Arendt, 1963). Labelled by many as a fascist leader, his cult still to this day has a big following, and Horthy's actions have been praised by Fidesz officials in recent times as well (Verseck, 2012). In 1939 the Arrow Cross party has also been created, and it received almost 30% of votes in the elections held the same year, but it spent its time in opposition. Not long after, in 1944, the Arrow Cross come to power but only until the Soviet Union took control over the state. Thus, it is possible to argue, that some nostalgies or nationalistic tendencies have lasted for almost a century in Hungary. The far-right in Hungary has never really disappeared, it was only incubating during communism, since it could not be addressed back then due to the political regime of the country.

In most cases, support for far-right politicians fell dramatically after World War II. People chose alternatives if they could, or in other nations they were unable to make their own decisions due to Soviet influence, which prevented the emergence of any significant far-right politics at all. This does not necessarily mean that it was not present at all, but it was heavily suppressed, just like in Hungary. The difference between west and east after the Second World War can be spotted, as in the East there were no debates regarding far-right or nazims, while in the West those were present, such as the previously shown example of France. The main differences were that in for example West Germany, there were debates being held in the 1980s about the German national collective responsibility (Knowlton & James, 1993, pp. 179-180). In Italy, following the fall of the fascist regime there the affiliation to far-right was at least being criticised, while in Hungary, no talks about the condemnation of the far-right have been ongoing, due to the presence of the Soviet regime. In Hungary, the topic existed but due to the presence of the regime, it was only incubating, and important debates emerge, though without a truly democratic framework.

## **1.2 Far-Right in Europe in the Last 20 Years**

Recent history of far-right allows us to see the recent development of Fidesz and also Fdi. In the last 20 years, there have been two major events that have largely

contributed to the rise of popularity of far-right parties. All parties have taken different paths, and various factors have contributed to shaping them. That is why this part aims to have a closer look at the parties' leaders and their affiliation with the far right. It is also important to note that the far-right has had its rise in popularity before as well, however, for the purpose of this thesis, the research focuses on more contemporary rise.

The rise of the far-right in recent history in Europe has been attributed to different factors, one of which being the financial crisis of 2008 (Rodríguez-Aguilera, 2014). It was during this time that it allowed for an alternative to truly emerge and it was the best chance the parties had at coming back to relevancy, most likely since the end of the Cold War (Saull et al., 2014). The crisis shook the entire world and caused for huge changes of order not only in Europe and posed as a booster to increase the chances of far-right to succeed in Europe.

### **1.3 Far-Right Re-emergence in Hungary After the Fall of Communism**

When it comes to far-right in Hungary, the first party to be elected to Parliament after the fall of communism, was the MIÉP [Hungarian Justice and Life Party]. Lead by István Csurka, the party was chauvinistic and antisemitic and had other far-right characteristics. MIÉP came from the MDF [Hungarian Democratic Forum] party after internal disagreements (Körösényi, 1999, p. 37). MIÉP has received 5.47% of votes in 1998 election, which gained them 14 seats. The party has however not been a part of the ruling government (Inter-Parliamentary Union, n.d.). In the next elections, the party has not had that much success and ended receiving less than the required 5% of votes to get into the Parliament, which ultimately led to the party joining forces with Jobbik in 2006 to improve their chances of getting into the parliament. This however did not work out in the upcoming 2006 elections and the alliance has only received 2.2% of votes which was not enough to enter the parliament (Kovács, 2013). This ultimately led the coalition to disintegrate.

The far-right in Hungary entered an unsuccessful period of time, until the first success came in 2010, when a party with the name of „Jobbik“ has received enough votes to enter the parliament. The party has been created in 2003. Jobbik has been very ethnicist, with strong anti-Roma and antisemitic rhetoric, which has been used against minorities. The party has also established the „Hungarian Guard“, members of this guard have started wearing uniforms that were very close look wise to the uniforms



worn by a fascist party which was prominent before the Second World War (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2010). Before Jobbik has entered the parliament in 2010, Hungarian government has been split mainly into two camps<sup>4</sup>. Jobbik has capitalised on the struggles of the Socialist party and these events have been heavily disliked by their voters, which consequently lead to the party losing a big portion of its supporters.

Jobbik's main strategy ahead of the elections was deeply connected to the feeling of detachment of the state from the Hungarian people. Nationalist slogans were the main subject, with one of the main slogans being "Hungary belongs to Hungarians" (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2010, p. 89). The party focused on the Hungarian sentiment and aimed to bring up the feeling of the state being stolen away by foreigners, or minorities from what they considered real Hungarian people.

In 2014, Jobbik has also managed to get 3 seats in the Euro Parliament elections. While for Jobbik, the elections to the national assembly are more important, the elections into European Parliament are important for the parties to measure its electoral strength. This marked a success for the party, as the only party with more seats than them was Orban's Fidesz with 12 seats (European Parliament, n.d.). Jobbik has managed to achieve this success by continuing to use the nationalist rhetoric which have proven to get them votes, but also the scandal which the Hungarian socialist party has been associated with. Jobbik has made sure to be able to capitalise on this, as there were lots of Hungarians coming into streets to protest. Another point which has seemingly helped them to gain votes, was their resentment towards the Roma minority. Jobbik has claimed that if they were trusted with votes, they would bring an end to the Roma issue (Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2015).

At the time, Jobbik was the only prominent far-right party in Hungary. Their antisemitic remarks were being used constantly, with the party's members often being reluctant to talk about the Holocaust. Essentially all minorities were being constantly attacked by the party's members (Kirchick J., 2012). With the development in Europe and the 2015 migration crisis things have started to change. Even though Jobbik was the one party with radical nationalist views at the time, Fidesz has resorted to similar approach. With

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<sup>4</sup> The conservatives and the socialists have been the only two relevant parties, until the Socialist party MSZP started to fall off, due to changes they have decided to implement to deal with economic problems but also due to scandals regarding corruption with the involvement of the party members and other people close to it (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2010).

the influx of migrants entering the European Union, mainly due to wars in the Middle East and economic difficulties, there was a change about to happen within Orban's political strategy. For him, it was an open confrontation with the EU, instead of looking for solution with his counter parts in the European Union (Yahya, 2015). Fidesz has decided to capitalise on this opportunity to cement their position in the Hungarian government. In order to be able to get more votes, Orban has started to openly say, that immigration has become the biggest problem that Hungary faces. The shift towards strict rejection of migrants has come to a point, where the Hungarian prime minister has considered himself as the one who has to protect Europe from incoming migrant invasion (Thorpe, 2018). It would be after the attacks in the headquarters of Charlie Hebdo, that we would see Orban start to openly frame migrants as the ones causing unrest in Europe. These attacks have prompted him to start using more xenophobic discourse and try to capitalise on these statements (Mudde, 2015). Orban has chosen a different path compared to other European politicians after the attacks, in the words of Cas Mudde, "As leaders from around the world descended on Paris to speak in defence of free speech, however hypocritical they were, the Hungarian PM used the #JeSuisCharlie demonstration to launch an anti-immigration campaign that is becoming more problematic by the day" (Mudde, 2015). These events could be considered as one of the first steps that Fidesz made to move to the far-right. Their discourse has slowly started to look more and more similar to the one of Jobbik and it were just some of the many other practices the party started to use. The discourse used by the party has obviously changed the way that migrants were being seen by the Hungarian citizens. After 2015, fear of migrants spread to many EU member states, but Hungary's citizens appeared to have more negative opinions than the average, in part because of the way Fidesz has handled the situation (Wike et al., 2016). The shift in discourse marked the change in politics of Fidesz. With the slogans coming closer and closer to the ones that were being used by Jobbik, it was clear that the party took a turn in conducting their politics. The discourse also impacted the view of immigration the citizens have, although it is important to note that the number of people who considered immigration to be the main problem of the European Union was increasing in almost all countries of the European Union (European Commission, 2016). The progressive change of discourse has marked a drastic change in Orban's way of doing politics.

## 1.4 Development of Fidesz

Fidesz was originally founded by young democratic university students, who wanted to secure better future for Hungary. At the time, the party was pro-European as it was stated in their political program, upon the launching of the party (Fidesz Declaration of Political Program and Chronology, 1989). Members of Fidesz have been vocal against the struggle the Hungarian people had to go through throughout their history and made it very clear, that Hungary belongs to Europe. The party was keen to fight to foster democracy and respect for human rights, which they deemed crucial for individuals (Fidesz Declaration of Political Program and Chronology, 1989). The party made it clear they wanted to allow young Hungarian politicians to find their place, as the party had an upper limit of 35 years for people to be allowed in the party, this has however been abolished in 1993 (The New York Times, 1993). These young democrats offered the Hungarian citizens a seemingly prospective alternative to the dominant socialist party which was ruling the polls at the time.

In the first Hungarian elections after the fall of the soviet regime, the party won almost 9% of the votes, which was enough to grant them their first entry into the parliament which they however served as an opposition party (International Parliamentary Union, n.d.). Due to the party being in the opposition it was unable to affect the policies that much. In the elections held in 1994, the party has won 7% of the votes, which was not a plausible result for Fidesz. This result has prompted the party to look for allies, which they found in Hungarian Democratic Forum and Independent Smallholders Party. The coalition of these parties has managed to do exceptionally well in the 1998 elections, in which it won 30% of votes and consequently allowed Viktor Orban to become the Hungarian prime minister for the first time (International Parliamentary Union, n.d.).

On the other hand, in the 2002 elections, Fidesz has lost the elections and was forced to go into opposition. The party has also accused the winning party of electoral fraud (Beauchamp, 2018). After the elections, Fidesz has undergone a pretty dramatic change. Then after the next elections, “A second electoral loss for the party in 2006 only accelerated the shift” (Beauchamp, 2018). Fidesz was visibly moving further away from the centre of the political spectrum and started turning more authoritarian. In 2009 Orban said that “central political forcefield” was needed to govern the country in the spectrum of 15 to 20 years (Lendvai, 2018). More pro nationalistic approach and possibly more importantly corruption scandals among the governing socialist party and the fact that it was unable to deal very well with the financial crisis in 2008 has handed

Fidesz their victory in the following elections in 2010 (Beauchamp, 2018). Fidesz was able to secure 263 seats in the parliament in the elections, giving the party a constitutional majority and the ability to amend the Hungarian constitution through parliamentary vote (Beauchamp, 2018; Inter-Parliamentary Union, n.d.). From here on, Fidesz has continuously won each and every election that followed, cementing its position in the government and using all means possible to stay in power. As Paul Krugman wrote in his article, “The Fidesz parliamentary bloc, which enacted constitutional changes without including or consulting any opposition party, slashed the size of the parliament in half, redrew all of the individual constituencies unilaterally, changed the two-round system to a single first-past-the-post election for individual constituencies, and altered the way votes were aggregated” (Krugman, 2014). The party has also started changing voting districts as a form of gerrymandering, in order to increase the chances of victory in future elections (Krugman, 2014). The Party has also seemingly seized power over majority of media outlets in the country progressively over the years as well. The media have been constantly under attack from the governing party and Fidesz has also tried to hinder its “enemy” media outlets by imposing tax only on selected outlets, further trying to make sure only the media, which favours the Fidesz, is able to inform the citizens (LSE Media Policy Project Blog, 2017). This all, along with a migration crisis which the party used to push their agenda and framed them as a threat has helped the party keep the spot and power in Hungary. What has Fidesz, and mainly Orban, also done, is the emphasis being put on upholding Christian values as a part of the party's ideology. This started taking place after the breakout of the 2015 migration crisis, which will be covered more in depth in second chapter.

### **1.5 Italian Far-Right**

The development of far-right support in Italy in the last 20 years has been intriguing. There are few prominent far-right parties: Casa Pound, Forza Nuova or La Destra–Fiamma Tricolore to name some of them (Inter-Parliamentary Union, n.d.). These parties have not however managed to enter parliament at no point of their existence. However, it is likely that the voters of these parties who often opt out for some other far-right leaning parties, such as Lega and Fratelli d'Italia. Matteo Salvini's Lega is framed as right-wing, however with far-right tendencies which can be seen for example with regards to migration, but the party shares clear attributes of a far-right party under the working definition that this research works with.

Lega, previously known as Lega Nord, is one of the oldest parties in the Italian government. It has previously focused mainly on the northern part of Italy, which has however changed after the election of Matteo Salvini as the new leader of the party in 2017 (Vampa & Giovannini, 2022). This led to a dramatic change of the party's ideology. Previously focusing on region politics, it became a "mass party" after Salvini has started to implement his changes (Albertazzi, Giovannini, & Seddone, 2018). Since the 2015 migrant crisis, Salvini has been trying to capitalise on the votes of far-right sympathisers. Focusing on nativism and anti-immigrant with populist attributes resonated with a big part of voters and has made Lega one of the biggest parties in Italy (Vampa & Giovannini, 2022). The Meloni lead Fratelli d'Italia also falls into this category, but it will get its attention in the following part of the research.

### **1.6 Development of Fratelli D'Italia**

The other party which this research pays more attention to is a Meloni lead Fratelli d'Italia. It was created in 2012 after splitting from The People of Freedom party, but has its roots in National Alliance party, which was a direct successor of MSI (Britannica, 2017). The party has not had a huge voters base, since in 2013 elections, the party received around 2% of votes (Election Resources, 2013). This result granted them couple of seats in the parliament, however without any significant role. On the other hand, in 2018 elections, the party has been more successful gaining more than twice the number of votes than in 2013 elections, which also resulted in receiving three times more seats compared to previous elections (Election Resources, 2018). It is possible that the fact that the party decided to be in the opposition, is what allowed them to win confidently in the most recent elections.

When it comes to the elections to the European Parliament, FdI has received over 6% of the votes, which was another success for the party (European Parliament, 2019). Before the elections Fratelli d'Italia have joined the European Conservatives and Reformists party, which allowed it to create pacts with other similar smaller parties. The party has also been somewhat successful in the regional elections, with one of its members being elected in Abruzzo region, in which the party has made it more complicated for migrants to get to social housing (Roberts, 2022). This was one of the few changes for which the party was praised by the far-right supporters, some of them often stating that this was needed on the national level, which was being repeated more and more as the ruling government started to slowly fall apart.

After the Italian government has collapsed in February 2021, Fratelli d'Italia would launch their biggest campaign prior to the 2022 general elections. The party started to focus even more on slogans, often times implying the need to return to traditional Italy, with slogans such as "We are defending God, homeland and family" or her personal one previously already in 2019 during a rally in San Giovanni "I am Giorgia, I am a woman, I am a mother, I am Italian, I am Christian" putting more emphasis at protecting traditional values (Saviano, 2022). These among others have brought great success to the centre-right coalition, which eventually won in the elections, with Meloni's party receiving majority of the votes and her being responsible for forming the new government.

### **1.7 Examination of Meloni and Orbán in the History of Far-Right**

Meloni and Orbán had different paths bringing them to their current political affiliations. Orbán, as mentioned prior, started out as a young pro-European democrat, in a post-communist time with the aims of improving the position of his country in Europe. Following the success of getting into the parliament for the first time in 1990, the party tried to improve their chances of getting more votes the next elections, which saw the party turn to more conservative politics. Fidesz has ruled the country for the first time in 1998, however, after this term the party was unable to win the elections until 2010 (Inter-Parliamentary Union, n.d.). The party has started to go further and further from the centre-right, in an attempt to cement their leading position in the government. It was during Orbán's second government, when the party started to take serious steps to disrupt the checks and balances in the country (Dettmer, 2020).

Meloni on the other hand, has from the beginning been a part of right-wing political sphere. She first joined the Movimento Sociale Italiano, which was founded by a group of people who have praised the fascist leader, Benito Mussolini. She continued to work with the party on the youth programmes after the party's rebranding to Alleanza Nazionale (Pietromarchi, 2022). It was with this party where she would be first elected to the Italian government, forming a coalition with the party of Silvio Berlusconi. Then in 2012, Meloni with the help of Ignazio La Russa and Guido Crosetto, formed her current party, Fratelli d'Italia (Pietromarchi, 2022). At the time, the party was viewed as majorly populist and Eurosceptic. Later, with the focus on traditional values, she secured the position of president of the European Conservatives and Reformists in the

European Parliament (Gehrke, 2020). After the Italian government collapsed in 2021, Fratelli d'Italia have decided to stay in opposition and focus on the coming elections.

The pre-electoral campaign of Fratelli d'Italia has been very similar to the one that Orbán had. The party focused heavily on conservative values, Euroscepticism, going against the LGBTQ and mainly on migration. After winning the elections, Meloni became the first far-right prime minister since the Second World War (Saviano, 2022).

Orbán, on the other hand, has not started out as a regular far-right politician. As mentioned before, him and his party have started as pro-European party. The turn to far-right politics with the use of xenophobic discourse could be attributed with the influx of migrants and the attacks on Charlie Hebdo in Paris among others (Mudde, 2015). Orbán started to comment on the actions of migrants in Europe and started portraying them as the enemies immediately after. It is important to note that both Meloni and Orbán have been actively using populist elements in their campaigns as well, however, populist elements are used by parties coming from various ideological backgrounds.

The European far-right's history has developed in an intriguing way. From rising to the forefront of the political field in the 1920s to being relegated to the side-lines following World War II, to its resurgence in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Pahnke, 2021). It has found its way back across Europe and with it emerged some of the most popular far-right parties present today. Focusing on the examples of Fratelli d'Italia and Fidesz, we can see, the history behind the two parties and the paths they took are very different. The ideologies in these countries had their setbacks, but they still managed to resurface, even if they were not present for decades in the case of Hungary. While fascism as such was condemned after the Second World War, it was able to survive through rebranding and it was able to adapt to the political climate at the time and last throughout the years through the MSI among others. What the parties use as the base of their rhetoric: migration, Christian or national values, denying minorities their full rights, is what unites them. Without digging into the history of these parties, one could hardly ever think that they come from such distinct backgrounds. For this, it is important to keep in mind the historical development, as it helps us assess the contemporary far-right. The far-right has changed throughout the years, but with the 2015 migration crisis came a new challenge and more importantly, an opportunity for the far-right to reinvent itself. The same ideas which ones brought it to the spotlight are being used once again now, this time against migrants. The following chapter seeks to pay more attention to

also this transformation and show how the far-right chose to scape goat migration to get in power once again.



## **2. Diverging Paths of Migration, from Common Denominator to Being the Main Difference**

The topic of migration is often a predominant in the rhetoric of many far-right parties. This is also true for the parties which this research is concerned with. The topic of migration is key to conducting this research. To be able to put the topic into perspective, it is crucial to properly analyse the data with regards to migration in both countries. Geographically, the countries are very much different. Hungary shares the outer land border of the Schengen area, while Italy is on the edge of the maritime border. For the far-right, global migration is the new opportunity to reinvent the old slogans. For the parties, it is a new challenge but is being met with the same ideas. This part of the research seeks to show the migration related statistic and have a better look how the topic of migration shapes the rhetoric of the parties and whether there are obstacles that may prevent the parties to effectively cooperate. It also analyses the discourse used with regards to migration and national identity, which is often closely tied with nativist line of thinking.

### **2.1 Migration in Hungary**

To start, during 2015 there was one of the largest migration waves ever experienced by the European Union (Wagner, 2015). It posed a significant challenge to the European Union as a whole to deal with the situation. For those wishing to get into European Union, there are several routes they can take, however, this research is going to focus on the ones which include passing or arriving in Hungary or Italy. One being the Mediterranean route that has its point of entry in Italy, which I will focus on in the next sub-chapter, and the Balkan route that has its entry, or re-entry, point in Hungary (Swiss Federal Statistical Office, 2022).

The location of Hungary is crucial to migrants trying to enter European Union through the Balkan route. Since Hungary shares a border with Serbia, for many of the asylum-seekers it serves as a point of re-entering the European Union (ECHO, 2015). This prompted Hungary to construct a 155km long barbed-wire fence along the borders with Serbia to combat illegal migration and carefully guard the borders after an influx of migrants started entering the country in 2015 (Saleed, 2017). There are however two sides to this story. The fence sure acts as a barrier, which Hungary hoped would make

it impossible for incoming people trying to enter (CBC Radio, 2020). On the other hand, it is important to note the friendship between Belgrade's and Budapest's governments. Orban has very close relationship with the Serbian president Alexander Vučić, even after the country has built the afore-mentioned fence along the whole border. For some, it could be seen as an act of friendship but also a strong symbol as it was stated in an interview with one of the former national politicians in Orban's government with CBC Radio, "It's very symbolic and a very good political message saying, 'look Hungarians, we are the ones to protect you.'" (Korte, 2020; CBC Radio, 2020). If the symbolism is so obvious, it brings the question to how much of a threat was it really? For Fidesz it plays perfectly in their hands to be able to say they are protecting Hungarians, but on the other hand was there really a threat or was it simply a play to, yet again, amass more votes?<sup>5</sup>

For the majority of the migrants, who are able to enter the country, Hungary has always been primarily a transit country on their way to either the Nordic nations or Germany and the United Kingdom (IOM, 2017). Applying for asylum in Hungary is also very problematic and requires the completion of several difficult steps, including personally delivering the application at the embassy in Belgrade, or another neighbouring country that is not part of the European Union, if you are not directly in Hungary and others. In 2022, only 44 people have managed to successfully apply for asylum in Hungary (ECRE, 2023). These figures clearly indicate the goals of those seeking to enter this country. Yet migrants coming from war torn territories face constant backlash and are frequently framed as one of the main causes of the country's problems by Orban (Quackenbush, 2016).

## 2.2 Migration in Italy

On the other hand, the case of Italy is significantly different. Like Hungary, Italy shares an external border with the European Union and Schengen area, but this border is maritime. The central Mediterranean routes is one of the most used, if not the most used, routes by migrants. Majority of asylum seekers coming into the EU come aboard ships from Tunisia or Libya with the aim of getting to Italian coast, for example to the island of Lampedusa, which is a part of the Italian territory (Wallis, 2023). The number of people trying to enter Italy has been increasing since 2019 again every year

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<sup>5</sup> Migrants are also used as a weapon, for example there was a dramatic increase in migration ahead of the Slovak elections in 2023 (Ciesnik, 2023).

(Carbonaro, 2023; Statista, n.d.). Some days, there are over 1000 people arriving at the island of Lampedusa, which is rather small and lacks the capacity to accommodate all people seeking refuge (Carbonaro, 2023).

Due to Italy's geographical position, it has had to deal with migration for years now, however in the last elections it became increasingly obvious that this topic would become one of the most talked about and important for gathering votes, mainly by far-right parties. Italy has received over 75000 applications for refuge in 2022, according to UNHCR, with approximately 16% of them being positively answered (worlddata.info, n.d.). The perception of migrants by the Italian citizens differs with regard to the people either being refugees or economic migrants, with the majority of them being more understanding towards refugees (Dixon et al., 2018, pp. 74). With this in mind, it is understandable that the topic of migration would be a hot topic before the elections. Giorgia Meloni's party Fratelli d'Italia during their campaign have focused heavily on trying to provide solutions to the ongoing migration crisis in Italy, pleasing many of the right-wing voters desires. One of the biggest promises by the party's leader, was that Italy would turn away migrant boats trying to reach the coast of Italy, before arriving in Italian waters or on Italian soil (Mellersh, 2022). Such resolution would however greatly increase the risk of deaths of migrants on the sea on the incoming boats.

The previously mentioned resolutions have been proposed during the election campaign and have not yet been taken into place, however, one new decree has been put to work since the party has taken power in the country (Torrissi, 2023). Meloni has stated that the party's main focus to combat illegal migration will be going after the boat riders and smugglers with decades long sentences in prison for those that get caught (Torrissi, 2023). With Meloni only being in power for a limited amount of time, it is to be expected that more resolutions are going to be implemented to satisfy the voters among whom many have voted for Meloni for her plans to fight against migration.

Furthermore, because naval migration cannot be stopped without suffering significant casualties, Italy has been dealing with an influx of migrants on a constant basis. This represents a significant distinction between the two countries. Italy has been dealing with migration for much longer time and at a higher rate, based on the data provided before. In this sense, it is obvious that migration would be one of the key talking points doing an election campaign. More importantly, from Meloni's point of view, Italy would benefit greatly if it could receive help from other European countries, by being able to relocate at least some of the asylum-seekers which are currently based in Italy, to other

countries. One of these countries would naturally be Hungary, due to the relationship of the two leaders and its future prospects which could benefit both countries. For Meloni this would be great relief and also a way to solidify her position in the government, but since Orban has been consistently opposing any EU proposals regarding this matter, this seems rather unlikely to happen.

Having looked closely at the differences but also similarities of the countries' dealings with migration, I believe it can be said that the major difference between the parties is the number of migrants which have entered the country in last few years. While in Italy it is a challenge, I will not call this a problem as I believe migration is natural just needs to be properly addressed, in Hungary it is a construct created to gather more votes in elections. It is the easiest thing for receiving votes to securitise or blame the "other" for problems which the country has had even before the arrival of these "other" people, in the case of Hungary, refugees coming from impoverished or war-torn regions.

### **2.3 Migration-Connected Discourse in Hungary**

The topic of migration is being used often by Fidesz. With the current political situation in Hungary and with how the migrants are being framed as "the other" and scapegoated for numerous issues the country is facing, this seems very unlikely (Descamps, 2015). Orban has gone so far with blaming migrants, as to have blamed for spreading the corona virus during the initial outbreak, stating that "It's no coincidence that the virus first showed up among Iranians" (AFP, 2020). Following the statement Orban doubled down and drew a link between virus outbreak and migration, even though the infected students were university scholarship holders (News Wires, 2020). Although this is only one example, I believe it clearly demonstrates how far the leader of Fidesz is willing to go in portraying migrants as the issue.

What is more, portraying migrants as the issue usually takes place during pre-election campaigns. For the most part, the focus is on migrants coming from the Middle East or Africa. However, in the pre-election campaign in Hungary which took place in 2022, Orban shifted his focus more on refugees coming from Ukraine. Even though he was not completely against them, unlike those who are coming from Africa or the middle east, he still made remarks saying, "If there is a war, hundreds of thousands, or millions of refugees could come from Ukraine, which would completely redraw Hungary's political and economic landscape" (News Wires, 2022).

Orban's line of thinking seems to be clear. For him, it is needed to exaggerate the concerns with migration. It does not matter if people are coming from the Middle East or Africa or anywhere else, for Orban they are a problem since they are not Hungarians and he wants to portray anyone as a mass as a threat to the country and most importantly, to his voters. The shift of focus from migrants coming from the Middle East to the ones coming from Ukraine shows his opportunistic tactics hoping to benefit from the misery of others.

## **2.4 Anti-Migrant Rhetoric**

Another key talking point of Orban's Fidesz and Meloni's Fratelli d'Italia is their anti-migration rhetoric. This rhetoric is commonly used among far-right parties. It is usually aimed against migrants which may be residing, or those seeking to entry. But more often than not, this rhetoric is also employed to win over votes, when necessary, the situation is even securitized. A close analysis of this rhetoric is necessary to learn more about the tactics used by these parties and to spot any overlaps or differences which can help investigate why these two parties would not be able to cooperate.

The rhetoric which is being used to portray immigrants coming to both countries is very similar. Both Meloni and Orban have put heavy focus on letting their voters know that immigrants are the "enemies". This is one of the features of the far-right, creating a common enemy, it is not applicable to all parties, but this occurrence is common. In this case, it was the immigrants who have become the target. In Hungary it has previously been the Roma population who has been looked down or blamed for all sorts of problems, that however changed over the years as the focus shifted to migrants instead (Rorke, 2015). What is interesting in this instance, though, is how different the numbers of migrants entering the two nations are. Because of the previously mentioned fence being built on the border with Serbia, Orban's rhetoric from the start of the migration crisis in 2015 has somewhat changed, or perhaps more accurately stated, it is not used as frequently, yet it still exists in the background with Orban's view of Christian state and traditions (Walker, 2019). This can also be attributed to the populist element that is commonly shared by many right-wing politicians. Nonetheless, it creates a peculiar situation, when the "enemy" which the ruling party is constantly spreading fear about, is not present in the case of Hungary.

Although the 2015 peak has not been surpassed, the exaggeration and securitization<sup>6</sup> of migrants in Hungary may give some Hungarians the impression that they still pose a threat.

Italy on the other hand has been dealing with migration, due to its geographical position. Since the maritime border is much more complicated to protect, it is technically impossible to stop it. However, Meloni has proposed in her campaign to block all ships that try to illegally enter the Italian waters, so that they do not have the responsibility over them (Tondo, 2022). Among others Meloni has made it one of the main topics of her campaign to limit the migration to Italy. In her programme, her, and the party, have called for strengthening “Operation Safe Streets” as one of the ways to combat migration in the country (Fratelli d'Italia, 2022). This would entail using Italian armed forces to maintain public order. These examples show the lengths the party will go to, trying to secure votes from those, who deem such actions necessary.

## 2.5 National Identity

The concept of national identity puts a strong emphasis on individuals “who report strong national identification, and who therefore more readily construe themselves in terms of nationality, can also be expected to be more concerned with the principle of nationalism” as described by Pehrson and Green (Pehrson and Green, 2010 as cited in Reicher, 2001, p. 699). The central idea is that of being a member of a specific group, in this case, the national group (Pehrson & Green, 2010, pp. 699). The idea of us and them is what really matters for those being so adamant of focusing on national identity. It offers a way to say that the focus should be on the “real” citizens and the need to protect them and their traditions. This concept of national identity is often connected with parties which can be defined as the far-right, therefore also the ones which this research is concerned with. As Pehrson and Green put it, “we might expect people who identify strongly with their national group to oppose immigration to the extent that they construe immigration to be a violation of the principle of nationalism” (Pehrson & Green, 2010, pp. 700). This part seeks to identify the importance of national identity for the respective parties and find out whether it could pose a problem in their cooperation.

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<sup>6</sup> von Rosen, J. (2019). The Securitization of Migration as a Threat to Liberal, Democratic Societies. *Sicherheit Und Frieden (S+F) / Security and Peace*, 37(1), 35–40. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26679776>

The emphasis on national identity can be spotted in the discourse of both Fidesz and Fratelli d'Italia. Furthermore, the framing of migrants as the ones who are ruining the country often comes with remarks connected to nativism. The focus on protecting the national identity can be observed in the discourse of both parties. While it is a common denominator of both parties, I believe it may pose a problem as well, due to the fact that both leaders or their respective parties focus only on their own citizens, which would hinder any higher cooperation. This section will attempt to illustrate this by stating that the parties' only priorities are the welfare of their fellow citizens and winning over votes.

To show a couple of examples now, the statements from Meloni both prior to the 2022 elections and after being elected. At a political event held in December 2023 in Rome, Meloni has said that: "there is no place for Islamic culture in Europe" and then further affirming her statement by saying that "there is a problem between Islamic culture and the values of our civilisation", speaking of the recent wave of immigrants from the Middle East and Africa, the majority of whom are Muslims (ET online, 2023). The "fear" of growing Muslim minority is common for other far-right or populist leaders. In close connection with this, come statements regarding the importance of Christianity in Italy, which Meloni also made one of her main talking points during her campaign as well. For example, the already previously mentioned statement from 2019 when Meloni proclaimed "I am Giorgia! I am a woman. I am a mother. I am Italian, and I am Christian. And you cannot take that away from me!" (D'Emilio, 2022). Making religion the basis of a campaign is almost a given for far-right or conservative leaders, as it facilitates highlighting the party's devotion to the tradition of their country. Meloni has also come back to this statement during her visit to Hungary. In her speech, she highlighted how important the phrase became for national identity, as she said "What I wanted to say with those words is that we live in an era in which everything that defines us is under attack. Why? And why is it dangerous? It is dangerous for our identity – our national identity, our family identity, our religious identity – is also what makes us aware of our rights and able to defend those rights. Without that identity, we are only numbers, unconscious numbers, tools in the hands of those who want to use us" (Meloni, 2023). Another example can be seen in this speech by Meloni, which was given during the event named "Motherhood is (not) an undertaking", during which she emphasised how important it is for Italians to have more children so that they can preserve the Italian identity. Another example was given during her speech in Budapest, highlighting the importance of national identity amidst a decline in births in Italy. When talking about

how everything is being misused and used to attack people, she said that “It is dangerous for our identity – our national identity, our family identity, our religious identity – is also what makes us aware of our rights and able to defend those rights. Without that identity, we are only numbers, unconscious numbers, tools in the hands of those who want to use us” (Meloni, 2023).

Over the years, Viktor Orban has substantially followed the same path. At times it can seem that Orban has made it his entire personality, to “protect Europe’s Christian values” (Walker, 2018). Orban seems to see himself as the protector of Christian Hungary, as evidenced by his repeated remarks about how crucial it is to keep Hungary safe from incoming migrants (Walker, 2018). To shed some more light on this rhetoric, it is important to say that it has not been presented by Orban for too long, and more importantly, Orban himself was not a devoted Christian for a long time. Based on this information, it seems more likely that this approach of defending “Christian Europe” or “Christian Hungary” to be more precise, only goes in line with his personal interests. Nonetheless, the rhetoric is present and apparent and serves Orban also to achieve his political goals.

While it may seem that this would be one of the points which brings the two leaders closer, I would say otherwise. Looking at the situation more in detail, Meloni’s support comes from people who do experience an incoming flow of migration, while the Hungarian people barely do. One could say that it is due to Orban’s actions and that his fence and battle against migration works, however, if that were true there would be no need to use such discourse.

Therefore, it appears that both leaders only have concerns about their own countries when it comes to migration, which would be problematic when attempting to forge strong ties on the political stage of Europe. For the two parties, migration serves a different purpose and has a different meaning. If there was at least some noticeable problem in the handling of migration among Hungary’s citizens, I’d be willing to assert that cooperation would be far more likely to occur.

## **2.6 European Migration Policy Views**

After the European Union experienced a sudden inflow of incoming migrants in 2015, many countries have called for a more cohesive approach on the level of European Union. Ever since, we have seen Orban to go against any EU proposed solution, while



Meloni, has been advocating for a cohesive approach by the EU. The uncoordinated dealing with migrants coming into European Union has been bothering numerous members of the EU. Countries that have called for a new resolution were mostly those who were the countries of first contact, namely Italy, Spain or Greece (Liboreiro, 2023). Such pact of cooperation would however require the cooperation and agreement of all EU countries. In this sense, we saw the difference between Meloni and Orban, with Meloni being in favour of the new EU rules while Orban being against it.

In 2020, the New Pact on Migration and Asylum was revealed for the first time, with hopes of bringing better cooperation and collective responsibility to all countries of the European Union. With the aim of relieving pressure from the countries of first contact but also making it fair for the countries which are the target destinations. The first draft was however still open to changes as stated by Roberta Metsola, saying that the New Pact “was not perfect” but she believed that it was a move in the right direction (Liboreiro, 2023).

After couple of years, the New Pact with some changes has been agreed upon. The resolution granted that the countries of first contact would be able to relocate unwanted migrants to not only countries of origin, but also in a country where a migrant has “stayed” or “settled” or has family in such location according to Politico (Sorgi & Barigazzi, 2023). The deal has also included the afore-mentioned problem with relocating migrants across states of the European Union. With Poland but also Hungary stating they would refuse mandatory relocation. Since the agreement is binding to all member states of the European Union, it lead to some outrageous statements, which however seem to be in line with the hypothesis of this research. Orban has notably compared the situation as being “legally raped” (AP, 2023). This expression was followed by Orban further trying to defend his view saying, “Because legally we are, how to say it — we are raped. So if you are raped legally, forced to accept something what you don’t like, how would you like to have a compromise?” (AP, 2023). Such statements could be what makes it impossible to cooperate. For Fidesz leader the relocation of migrants if something unthinkable, yet for Meloni, it is way to lift the pressure off its country when dealing with migration which was one of the key points promised to voters before the last elections.

Agreement on solving migration crisis is one of the key prospects for Fidesz and Fratelli d’Italia to be able to cooperate. However with the recent development of the New Pact on Migration and asylum, it seems unlikely that there will be a consensus reached. If

Orban did want the relationship with Meloni to flourish, it would be needed for him to step back and either accept quota of migrants to be moved to Hungary, or responsibly pay for each migrant the country refuses to accept, however, this would very likely not be enough to achieve a level of cooperation which Orban would want and needs in the European Union. The only hope for Orban at the moment regarding this New Pact, is to wait until the official voting and see what his possibilities are afterwards.

The points previously mentioned in this chapter: differences in the number of incoming migrants, the ability to protect their borders, the anti-migrant discourse, protection of national identity to one key point. The view of migration is significantly different, even though the amount of migration the two respective countries deal with is contrasting. Since the numbers are so different, it is difficult for the parties to agree on set quota or coordinated handling of migration, mainly due to the stance of Orban's Hungary. Even though both states are on the outer border of the Schengen area, for Italy the situation is far more complicated since it cannot just build a fence along the border like Hungary did. The discourse which is used by both parties is similar at times, especially during pre-election campaign, however the situations which the countries are in are very much different. Agreeing on solving migration challenges would be one of the most important things for Orban and Meloni at the moment, however, with statements against this coming from Orban, this seems unlikely at least in the near future. For those who get into the countries, as we can see, the purpose the country has in their journey is very distant. While Hungary is for the majority of cases only a transit country, Italy is both a transit country but also a desired destination for many. This is one of the key differences also proving difficult in finding some kind of working agreement. When we factor in National identity, based on the examples shown in this chapter, we notice that there is a strong emphasis on this in both countries. Protecting national identity is often one of the centre thoughts for far-right parties, and the like of Orban and Meloni are no exception, especially when the citizens are aware that their governments are dealing with migration, or are thought to be dealing with migration. When such parties believe that national identity is under threat, it is likely that they focus on themselves, which is also what seems to be happening here in the case of Hungary, which does not want to take a step back at any means. These differences in the handling and overall migration, help us spot the differences between the parties and help show that far-right is not the same and there often are striking differences between far-right parties.

### **3. The Far-Right's Heterogeneity within the European Parliament**

Having previously already explained the historical background of far-right with connection to Fidesz and Fratelli d'Italia and the situation with migration, it is now important to look at the body which possibly could allow the two parties to cooperate on an international level, which is the European Parliament. To be able to assess this I will examine the position of these two parties in the European Parliament. Furthermore, this chapter will analyse the discourse used by prominent Italian and Hungarian politicians and their rhetoric regarding various topics but focusing on migration and the possible cooperation of far-right in the European Parliament, as these are the topics which I believe biggest contrasts can be found.

#### **3.1 The Role of the European Parliament**

The European Parliament is a crucial body of the European Union, with directly elected members every five years responsible for law-making. The three main roles of the European Parliament are: Legislative, Supervisory, and budgetary (European Union, n.d.). The parliament has 705 members, and those members form alliances based on their political affiliation, not based on their nationality. This allows for the cooperation of MEPs from different countries of the European Union. In the parliament there are several factions which the MEPs can be a part of. The rules state that to form a faction in the European Parliament, it needs to have minimum of 23 members "and at least one-quarter of the Member States must be represented within the group" (European Parliament, n.d.). Currently there are 7 political groups in the European Parliament. While there are other European bodies which hold more power, the European Parliament provides us with a great map to see where the parties are located.

The European Parliament is vital to law-making, as mentioned previously, but it is also an important platform for building relationships at the level of European Union. It makes it possible for MEPs from different nations to work together and gain support in the European Parliament. For instance, it can be important for some of them, particularly for smaller states and parties, when it comes to voting. From the 7 major political groups in the European Parliament, 2 of them are located further right on the political spectrum. Interestingly enough, there is not a single far-right, or right wing party with far-right factions, in the European Parliament (European Parliament, n.d.). There are

two such parties which are very similar on the political spectrum, yet they do not cooperate as one. Those being ECR and ID. In these groups, there are their own far-right factions. Most notable parties from the ECR group are Polish PiS [Law and Justice] and Meloni's Fratelli d'Italia. For ID group, it is Le Pens National Rally and Salvini's Lega.

### **3.2 Far-Right in European Parliament**

While being considered as far-right groups by many, the two groups do not share the same vision regarding various issues. Previously the MEPs from both groups have voted against the resolution declaring that Hungary is no longer a democracy (Tonne, 2022). While this may seem as a step closer to possible cooperation, it is not so certain. One of the major disagreements between the two groups is the stance towards the war in Ukraine. More often than not, the likes of ID have voted against or abstained voting for resolutions noting significance of financial, political help to Ukraine or supporting sanctions against Russia, while the like of ECR were mostly for those resolutions (Tonne, 2022).

Those are only a few examples listed, but by this it is visible that the far-right in general is not totally cohesive in the European Parliament, which is why there is more than one far-right party. While being located on the same political spectrum, the goals of the parties are different. What is more, the MEPs from one party are sometimes unable to vote uniformly. Some examples from recent voting's include the "Act in Support of Ammunition Production" from 1<sup>st</sup> of June 2023, or alternatively the proposal "on temporary trade liberalisation supplementing trade concessions applicable to Ukrainian products..." from 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2023, where the MEPs from the ID group had differing views on the proposals (How They Vote, 2023). This is not applicable for each and every voting but shows that even the individual MEPs in the group are not completely cohesive, raising concerns over the possibility to cooperate effectively in a bigger grouping.

When we consider the votes of the European Parliament on migration, things however change up a bit. The votes regarding pro-immigrant resolutions are always voted against pretty much by all member groups of ECR and ID. However, this changes when it comes to the relocation of migrants, under New Pact on Migration and Asylum. A lot of members from the ID and ECR groups have been vocal against the agreement. Representatives from the Polish PiS have stated their opinions clearly, that they would

not want a single migrant to be relocated to their countries. Since the final decision is taken in the European Council, countries have the power of veto, which many of promised to use. Mateusz Morawiecki said regarding the New Pact that, “This is an attempt to attack not only the sovereignty of Poland and other member states, but also an attempt to destabilize the EU in a non-democratic manner” (Reuters, 2023). Openly denying any relocation of migrants would prove difficult when trying to cooperate with other far-right groups. While it is natural that each of these groups are against migration, there is simply no solution to it without compromise, which is seemingly not an option as of now. While not being a part of neither ID nor ECR, Orban also had similar remarks on the New Pact (Rodríguez-Pina, 2023).

The denial of migrant relocation has been ongoing for a while now. Orban has also notably said that “The only way to stop migration is for anyone who wants to enter the EU to stay out of it until the relevant decision is made. No other solution will achieve the desired result” (Rodríguez-Pina, 2023). The comment was made with remarks on the complicated asylum process that migrants have to take if they wish to apply for asylum in Hungary. Orban has suggest that this model is the “only regulation that works in Europe” (Rodríguez-Pina, 2023). While it fits perfectly to his rhetoric and pursuit of “protecting” the Christian Hungary or Europe, this is impossible to implement in other states, such as Italy, that share the naval border. What is more, if there is no incentive to accept quota of migrants into Hungary from Italy, it is hard to imagine that the cooperation of Meloni and Orban would be possible, or functional.

### **3.3 Fidesz and Fratelli D’Italia in the Context of European Parliament**

As mentioned previously, Meloni’s Fratelli d’Italia is a part of one of the two influential far-right groups in the European Parliament. While the party does not have too many MEPs in the group, Giorgia Meloni herself serves as the president of ECR. While only having 5 seats currently, this is a subject to change and it is likely that more MEPs will get elected as a result of the dominant position in the Italian politics currently, since FdI is sitting on around 29% in the polls since the party took into office (Politico, 2024). With Meloni as a president of the group it gives it strong position ahead of the elections.

On the other hand, Orbán's Fidesz has been without a party<sup>7</sup> in the European Parliament for a while, as it has been previously mentioned in the first chapter. Its previous membership in the EPP has been suspended "over growing concerns that the rule of law was being eroded in Hungary and that the party was engaging in anti-Brussels rhetoric and attacking EPP leadership" (Henley, 2021). Afterwards, it was expected that Fidesz's MEPs would try to find a new home for themselves, mainly within the likes of ID or ECR. With this comes the connection to the relationship of Meloni and Orbán. With Meloni being the president of the ECR group, it could be believed that Orbán's MEPs would be invited to become a part of the group, further strengthening it and overtaking ID with the number of MEPs, this has however not happened.

There are several reasons why MEPs elected for Fidesz have not reached an agreement with any of the groups. The analysis by Patrik Szicherle provides a great insight into the situation. One of the options according to this analysis<sup>8</sup> was, that Orbán would join ECR, as suggested in this thesis already, or forming a new right-wing alliance. Neither of which has happened (Szicherle, 2021).

### 3.4 Fratelli D'Italia and Fidesz Discourse

To investigate whether the cooperation of Fidesz and Fratelli d'Italia is likely to happen, an examination of discourse is crucial. Now, it is important to say that there are multiple factors that come into play when negotiating a deal or trying to form a working alliance, but since this research is focused on migration, I will therefore examine the discourse regarding this issue, trying to show what prevents the two parties from further collaboration. Looking at points made by the country's prime ministers and their ministers of interior or foreign affairs, it should give us a clearer picture and show whether it is likely to expect these parties to form an alliance.

Looking closer at the remarks made by the politician in Italy, the Minister of Interior under Meloni's government has also close affiliation to Lega's Salvini (InfoMigrants, 2022). Not long after being elected he said that Italy has "To develop a new European

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<sup>7</sup> Being a part of a group in the European parliament is of great importance, since if a party is without a group, it fails to have any impact on voting and can hardly get support on voting they would like to advocate for (Krekó, 2021).

<sup>8</sup> Szicherle, P. March 25, 2021. Hungary's Fidesz will lose influence after departing EPP. *Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung*. [www.cz.boell.org](http://www.cz.boell.org)

migration and asylum policy that is truly inspired by the principles of solidarity and responsibility and that is equally shared by all member states” (Cerasa, 2022). Clearly stating that the goal for Italy is to come up with a European solution to increased migration. For this goal, once again, it would be needed that all countries would be willing to cooperate, but that is likely not going to happen with Orban, due to his previously mentioned remarks on the decision to relocate migrants from the countries who are dealing with the highest influx of refugees.

With the debates regarding the elections to European Parliament, it has been often argued if the far-right alliances could strike a deal. This was also brought up by the Minister of Foreign affairs Antonio Tajani in an interview, where he was asked about the cooperation with Salvini’s Lega. Since Lega and Fdi are a coalition in the Italian government, it has brought closer the possibility of transferring this cooperation to the level of European party politics as well, since Lega are a part of the ID alliance and Fdi belong to ECR. While Tajani is affiliated to EPP in the European party politics, he still gave an interesting insight on the topic. Tajani has said that “With Lega we are in a government in a convincing and effective manner. With some forces from the European far-right it would not be possible to collaborate. They want to demolish Europe, and we want to reinforce it. I repeated it to you as well: primarily we will need to wait for the results from the European Parliament elections” (Tajani, 2023). While Tajani is referring from the position of cooperation between EPP and these parties, it gives an interesting picture. Even for other parties in the European Parliament there is difference between the ID and ECR. While he does not address it directly in this interview, the same principle could be applied to Fidesz. Its policies have been more aligned with those of ID group, which are very likely to prove problematic when trying to have a working alliance in the European Parliament. While Fidesz would benefit greatly from joining either of the factions, the same cannot be said for the alliances, which is likely why Orban’s MEPs have not joined either of them.

Another point to consider is the portrayal of migrants by the parties. While either by Meloni or Tajani, we see that there is emphasis put on giving the right to asylum to those fleeing war- and war-torn regions in general. It was highlighted by Antonio Tajani in an interview saying, “These people are fleeing because they are dying of hunger, they are fleeing from the war” (Tajani, 2023). There is currently more focus on fighting the traffickers, than the migrants, and this seems to be a turn for Italy as well. Since the government found no help so far among its European counterparts, it has resolved to trying to find solution elsewhere. Sure, there has been progress regarding the New

Pact on Migration and Asylum, but that has also not been welcomed with positive remarks by all member states. The situation with migration in Italy is peculiar and with every coming day, there are more people arriving, which is also why it has become such a big talking point for Meloni's government and finding solution to it, is what could guarantee the party more success. But the fact that the party is struggling to find support even from parties with a similar ideology, is what is holding it back significantly.

The support from Hungary in the form of a help with relocation of several migrants would be a big help to Italian government. However, Orban has said multiple times that his country will not welcome any migrants, even further saying that "There's no guarantee that by letting migrants in and mixing cultures, we'll end up with something better than our traditional society. It's too risky. Whether we're talking about terrorism, public safety, or the economic consequences, we wouldn't want to be part of that adventure. If you want to do it, do it. But don't force us to follow you. That's all I'm asking" (Orbán, 2023). This statement has been made by Orban during an interview with *Le Point* in early December 2023 and it goes very much in line with his statements after the EU Summit in Granada from early October 2023, when the New Pact on Migration and Asylum has been discussed. Orban's unwillingness to provide any help to countries struggling to deal with migration is seemingly stronger than the possibility of having a strong partner on the level of European Parliament. If he were to help Italy take in at least some migrants, it would greatly improve its chances at good cooperation with Meloni lead government, which Fidesz does need with its current position in the European Union.

As it has been stated by Meloni during the European council meeting in June 2023, she expressed her understanding for the situation of Hungary and Poland, who disagree with the pact. She said that "I am never disappointed with those who defend their own national interests, and the choice by Poland and Hungary does not regard my priority when it comes to immigration, which is the external dimension, but rather the internal dimension, i.e., the migration and asylum pact" (Meloni, 2023). She highlighted the importance of national interests of the respective states and further affirmed that the steps to battle illegal migration in Italy, will continue outside of Europe. "The only way to address the issue all together is to work on the external dimension, and this is where we have managed to make a complete breakthrough in this debate, in relation to which I invite you to ask anyone who knows about the dynamics here" (Meloni, 2023). Seeing this shift has suggested that the Meloni lead government has



given up on any support coming from its counterparts in Hungary or some other collective effort within the European Union.

It has been highlighted in several interviews by Antonio Tajani, that migration is a global issue and that it is needed that not only Europe, but the world acts together (Tajani, 2023). On the other hand, there is Viktor Orban, who has been fuelling the anti-migration narrative, making it seem like he does not care about any of these points to a degree where he seemingly will not ever cooperate to make it easier for the countries struggling with migration. Orban's hate towards migration is almost omnipresent. An example from September 2023, "we believe that migration isn't good, but bad, and that it's good for everyone to live in the place that God has chosen for them as their homeland" (Orbán, 2023). While it is Orban's own interpretation, it sends a clear message. If you are not from Hungary, we do not want you here, just stay in the country where you were born.

Coming back to the history of the parties concerned in this research, one thing is fascinating. Orban's involvement into far-right politician has in my opinion already exceeded that one of Meloni. The differences are striking. The stance on migration might be similar, but the discourse is almost incomparable. Italy having so much more migrants has seemingly much less harsh words coming from the prime minister regarding migration. We have Orban who is hardly dealing with any migration at all and acts as if it was the biggest problem. On the other hand, Italy is dealing with one of its worst migration waves in recent history and is trying to find a solution, although some of them were questionable. Then there is also the situation with support of Ukraine and the ties with Russia and these are the subjects where the parties are shifting more and more from one another.

### **3.5 What is there for Fidesz in European Party Politics?**

Since Orban's departure, Fidesz has been significantly weaker in terms of European politics. This is crucial because for Orban, and for everyone else, it is a place where alliances are formed. For a person like Orban, this is majorly important, because of his troublesome relationship with the European Union. Fidesz's MEPs have not been able to find an alliance to be a part of, after leaving EPP and with new elections coming soon, it is almost certain that Fidesz's MEPs will not be joining any of the factions with similar ideology and beliefs at this point.

Orban would ideally need to join one of the two right-wing factions in the European Parliament. Those are ID and ECR. Both are right wing-with their own far-right factions in them, but ultimately these two groups do not cooperate with each other. It has also been highlighted by the MEP from Fratelli d'Italia, Nicola Procaccini in an interview with Euractiv (Pascale, 2022). However, none of Fidesz's MEPs have joined either of the factions. With regards to Orban's situation, it could have been anticipated that he would try to join either of the two factions. Even more so ECR, since Meloni is the President of this group. This did not however happen for several reasons.

Even though Fidesz and Fratelli d'Italia are on a similar political spectrum, there are several obstacles which disallow their cooperation in the European Parliament to happen. First, looking at prospects which have shown the closeness of the two parties. One of the first signs to show that Hungary might be hoping to develop further cooperation with the newly elected Italian prime minister, was right after the elections. Orban was among the first few European politicians to congratulate Meloni on her success in the Italian elections and congratulating her on the successful formation of government.

However, with the further development, it seems rather unlikely for Orban to be joining the ECR at least. While their position on migration is similar, the main difference for them is Ukraine. With this, it is unlikely for the cooperation to happen. At the same time, Orban might end up being a very demanding ally, while not having so much power to back it up. While the European Parliament is an important platform for Orban, he himself, is not that important. Unless a major shift is bound to happen after the 2024 elections, this will stay the same. What Orban might be hoping to do after the elections, is to merge the two far-right groups, ID and ECR, and become their leader, however, this task would prove to be incredibly difficult, but it is definitely something that would be of great success for Orban.

To put together the findings of the last chapter, as we can see, the far-right in the context of European party politics is very difficult. There are several MEPs from far-right parties, how are however split between two far-right alliances. The ID and ECR alliances are among the smaller alliances in the European Parliament alone, but would be quite powerful, if paired together. The question of which party would Fidesz be able to join remains unanswered. With party being closer in some aspects to ECR and in some to ID, it is a peculiar situation. As mentioned before, Orban and Meloni do have a close relationship, however, they differ majorly when it comes to solving the migration

issue. It seems like the only way to get the MEPs work together, would be through shared solution to migration, which would require Hungary to relocate several migrants into their country. Since Orbán has refused to work with any migrant quotas, and Italy has started to look for solutions elsewhere, it seems that any efforts for Fidesz to join ECR are unlikely at this point. The discourse analysis of prominent Italian and Hungarian politicians from Meloni's and Orbán's government has also showed much needed important contrast. As we could see, the politicians affiliated to the government have very different views on certain issues. When it comes to migration, politicians from both countries oppose illegal migration, but it is presented in completely different ways. While, as we have seen, Orbán's political background is very much different to that of other far-right parties, Orbán's discourse is at times more radical than "regular" far-right parties. On the other hand, we saw that Meloni and her counterparts, have progressively slowed down on the open anti-migrant discourse as time has passed since having been elected to the government. The change to trying to find solutions to illegal migration, instead of completely denouncing it, as it was done before elections is striking. With the recent development, also in the rhetoric of these politicians, it is safe to say that the likes of Fidesz and Fratelli d'Italia will not be cooperating anytime soon at the level of European party politics.

## Conclusion

The aim of this thesis was to show that the far-right in Europe is simply too diverse, through the examples of Italy and Hungary and with the focus on migration among others. I believe that the research has proved that the far-right in Europe is in an interesting spot at the moment. We saw the rise of these parties in the recent years, yet their cooperation has not really been successful. If we stay within the realm of European party politics, we can see through this research major differences, that prevent the far-right parties to create a well-working alliance.

As discussed in the first chapter, one of the main differences between the far-right in Italy and Hungary, Fratelli d'Italia and Fidesz, is their history and development. Meloni's Fratelli d'Italia have a long history in far-right politics, with the prime minister herself coming from parties with neo-fascist or far-right background, in the form of Movimento Sociale Italiano, which has shaped her political career since its beginning. Meloni has been pretty much consistent in her views and has always however around or in parties with similar ideology. On the other hand, we saw that Orban's political orientation has changed significantly since the first time he entered politics. Once a pro-European democrat has shaped over the years into a far-right politician. Both leaders also employ populist strategies, which are typical of political parties across the board and are unrelated to far-right ideology. However, the populist discourse is not tied only to far-right politicians, which has played part in determining which parties to include in this research. While we could see that the paths these parties and politicians took to develop themselves, the issue which they focus on addressing are still very similar. Close focus on migration, Christian and national values, and the denial of full rights to minorities are seemingly what still unites them. One of the most important points is the re-emergence of the far-right ideas, which we could fully see with the new challenge which has been brought by migration and the far-right parties have applied the same line of thinking as once was present. New challenges, old ideas.

The topic of migration is what resonates with both parties. However, as it was shown in the second chapter, we see that the situation in connection to migration is drastically different for the two countries. The amount of people entering the respective countries largely differ, which is due to several reasons, mainly due to the fact that Italy is a coastal country and the fact that since Hungary has built a wall along its border, the attempts to enter have significantly dropped. It is also the fact that as we could see,

Hungary has made it difficult to apply for an asylum, for those who would like to do so, and it is incredibly rare to receive an asylum in the country. A common denominator for both was the focus on the national identity, which plays a big part in the discourse of both prime ministers. Given the significance of migration rhetoric in the discourse of both prime ministers, it created the prospect of a cooperative resolution to the issue of migration. However, as we have seen, Orban's firm stance on immigration and the disparities in how they are handled have prevented this from occurring thus far. It is possible, I think, to argue that despite the fact that both leaders use rhetoric that is hostile to immigration, in the end, this issue sets them apart from one another. Better cooperation was not possible because of the stark differences in the migration conditions between the two countries. Although the discourse made it clear that the nations were facing very similar issues, Hungary at least did not feel pressured to come together and cooperate to find a solution. With the European elections coming close, it is possible that we will see Orban take a step back to try and gain more power in the European Parliament, but that is something we will only find out in the future.

Lastly, the true distinctions between far-right groups were seen after the discourse analysis used by ministers from Italy and Hungary. As shown, the fact that there are two far-right alliances in the European Parliament shows us the heterogeneity of the far-right. Despite being placed on the same political spectrum, the parties' internal objectives diverge significantly, making cooperation difficult and creating the possibility of multiple far-right alliances in the European Parliament. The same seems to be true after analysing the discourse of politicians from the Italian and Hungarian government. As we can see, the politicians from governing coalition have numerous times made comments on the situation regarding migration and have disagreed on the topic. Additionally, it was brought up in one of the interviews that the two alliances in the European Parliament, ID and ECR, are not likely to work together, presumably because of their divergent perspectives on the nature and function of the EU. Although it is true that the parties in the European Parliament's factions do not always have to agree on everything, it appears that among the far-right, the differences are too great to bridge.

What has been demonstrated in this research through migration, is seemingly that even though parties can look very similar and even be on the same political spectrum, however, that does not guarantee their cooperation. I suggest that it should be natural to look at bigger picture when trying to put far-right parties, or political parties in general, into the same group. Even though one could see that Orban has been

delighted to see Meloni win and run the Italian government, with hopes of forming a stronger coalition or joining the likes of ECR in the European Parliament, this has not happened. Even though we see that in the case of Fidesz and Fratelli d'Italia, the nature of the parties and their different views on solving situation with migration prohibited them to form a working coalition, it is not guaranteed that there would be the same outcome when looking at different far-right parties therefore each case should be approached individually. The European Parliament proves to be a great map to keep track of what is happening in the far-right in Europe and it allows us to have a clear picture of the steps the far-right parties are taking across Europe. This research has showed that while the discourse and overall image of far-right parties seem similar, there are major discrepancies in them, and it is hard for them to collaborate effectively. With the recent news about Orban joining ECR things hint at one point, Orban would like to have a more united group that he could lead, which would be the coalition of ID and ECR. His aim is seemingly to take the EU, not to leave it. However, based on findings on migration and the issue of support for Ukraine, it seems unlikely that Orban would join the like of ECR, but it all depends on the outcome of European Parliament elections in June.

## Resumé

Táto práca sleduje rozdiely medzi krajnou pravice v Európe na príkladoch Talianska a Maďarska. Cieľom tejto práce je ukázať, že krajne pravicové strany sú príliš rozličné na to, aby mohli efektívne spolupracovať. Dôležitosť tejto témy súvisí so zvýšenou podporou krajne pravicových strán v Európe v posledných rokoch a ich možnou spoluprácou na úrovni európskej politiky. Spolupráca medzi týmito stranami je najlepšie viditeľná v Európskom parlamente, preto bola táto platforma predmetom skúmania počas výskumu. Skúmanými stranami boli Fratelli d'Italia v Taliansku a Fidesz v Maďarsku.

V prvej kapitole sa výskum zameriava na historický vývoj krajnej pravice, najmä od obdobia po druhej svetovej vojne, a zdôrazňuje kľúčové body týkajúce sa krajnej pravice. Taliansko bolo rodom fašizmu a aj po zániku fašistického Talianska pokračovalo v jeho existencii prostredníctvom hnutia Movimento Sociale Italiano, ktoré tvorili Mussoliniho dôstojníci, ktorí sa snažili zmeniť meno, nie nevyhnutne zmeniť svoje myšlienky. V Maďarsku vidíme, že vývoj bol výrazne odlišný, a to v dôsledku prítomnosti sovietskeho režimu, ktorý zakázal vynorenie sa krajne pravicových myšlienok, hoci strana Šípový kríž bola vo voľbách, po skončení vlády Miklósa Horthyho.

V nedávnej histórii sa krajne pravicová ideológia v Maďarsku znovu objavovala od pádu komunizmu. V krajine existovali strany ako MIÉP, ktoré sa pokúšali dostať do parlamentu, avšak bez toho, aby boli aktívnou súčasťou vlády. Neskôr bol prítomný Jobbik, ktorý aktívne používal silnú protirómsku a antisemitskú rétoriku voči menšinám. Jobbiku sa podarilo dostať do parlamentu v roku 2010 po tom, ako sa predtým vládnuca socialistická strana nedokázala udržať vo vláde okrem iného aj po korupčných škandáloch. V tom čase bol Jobbik jedinou významnou krajne pravicovou stranou v Maďarsku. Zmena nastala s migračnou krízou v roku 2015, keď Orbán a jeho Fidesz zmenili politickú stratégiu a začali migráciu prezentovať ako jeden z najväčších problémov Maďarska. Orbán sa tiež usiloval byť človekom, ktorý má chrániť Európu pred prichádzajúcou inváziou migrantov, čo bolo spojené s xenofóbnym diskurzom, blízky tomu, ktorý používal Jobbik.

Vývoj krajnej pravice v Taliansku bol odlišný, do vlády sa pokúšali vstúpiť menšie krajne pravicové strany, ktoré boli mnohokrát neúspešné. Najväčší úspech prišiel neskôr po tom, čo Lega zverila vedenie Matteovi Salviniemu, ktorý sa zameril na

nativistické a protiimigrantské názory, čo oslovilo krajne pravicových voličov a z Lega urobilo jednu z najväčších strán v Taliansku.

Neskôr sa výskum zamerail na vývoj Fideszu a Fratelli d'Italia, ktorý priniesol niekoľko rozdielov. Hlavne v prípade Fideszu, ktorý začínal ako liberálna strana, ktorá sa neskôr zmenila na krajne pravicovú, zatiaľ čo Fratelli d'Italia a jej líderka Giorgia Meloni mali vždy úzke väzby s krajne pravicovými stranami. Skúmanie týchto strán v histórii krajnej pravice ponúklo zaujímavý pohľad a poukázalo na skutočnosť, že hoci strany pochádzajú z rôznych prostredí, spojila ich migračná kríza v roku 2015. Bola to nová výzva, proti ktorej však stáli rovnaké myšlienky pochádzajúce z ideológie krajne pravicových strán.

V druhej kapitole sa bližšia pozornosť venovala migrácii, ktorú krajne pravicové strany často používajú ako jeden z hlavných problémov, ktorým ich krajiny čelia. Výnimkou to nebolo ani v prípade strán Fidesz a Fratelli d'Italia. V kapitole sa uvádzajú štatistické údaje o prichádzajúcich migrantoch a poukazuje sa na rozdiely v množstve prekročených hraníc. Nezabúda ani na rozdielnu geografickú polohu oboch krajín. Migrácia do Maďarska je podstatne menej rozšírená ako do Talianska, a to aj z dôvodu, že Taliansko vzhľadom na svoj námorný štatút nemôže postaviť bariéru, ako to urobilo Maďarsko, aj keby chcelo. Výskum sa v tejto kapitole zameriava aj na protimigračnú rétoriku, ktorá je prítomná v oboch stranách. Dôležitým menovateľom je aj spomínaný dôraz na národnú identitu, ktorú vyzdvihujú Orbán aj Meloni. Okrem toho kapitola poukazuje na európske snahy o riešenie problému migrácie, ktorému Únia čelí, a na postoje Orbána, ktorý odmieta akýkoľvek súlad s európskymi snahami, zatiaľ čo Meloni je im veľmi naklonená.

Tretia kapitola sa zaoberá tým, ako možno v Európskom parlamente pozorovať heterogenitu krajnej pravice. Európsky parlament slúži aj ako mapa na lokalizáciu krajnej pravice a jej krokov. V Európskom parlamente existuje niekoľko krajne pravicových skupín, nie sú však všetky v jednom zoskupení. V Európskom parlamente sú dve pravicové skupiny s vlastnými krajne pravicovými frakciami, ID a ECR. Tieto dve skupiny umožňujú v tomto výskume bližšie rozvinúť argument, že krajne pravicové skupiny sú príliš rozdielne na to, aby mohli účinne spolupracovať. Táto časť výskumu poukazuje na hlasovanie o kľúčových otázkach a ukazuje rozdiely v hlasovaní týchto dvoch skupín, ale aj strán v rámci týchto skupín. Ďalšie časti sa zameriavajú na kontext strán Fidesz a Fratelli d'Italia, keďže Fidesz je už niekoľko rokov bez skupiny, zatiaľ čo líder Fratelli d'Italia Meloni je predsedkyňou ECR. Neskôr výskum ukazuje a analyzuje



diskurz ministrov vnútra a zahraničných vecí spolu s Orbánom a Meloni. Poukazuje na rozdielnosť diskurzu v súvislosti s rovnakými otázkami, ktoré sa tiež ukazujú ako ťažké je nájsť spoločnú reč, ktorá by umožnila Fideszu vstúpiť do ECR a zabezpečiť si silnejšiu pozíciu v Európskom parlamente. Diskurz prominentných talianskych a maďarských politikov takisto poukazuje na rozdiely medzi krajinami v otázkach migrácie a fungovania krajne pravicových frakcií v Európskom parlamente, ktoré dokazujú výrazný rozdiel v pohľadoch na fungovanie Európskej Únie ako jeden z hlavných rozdielov ktoré znemožňujú bližšiu kooperáciu. Na záver práca analyzuje pozíciu, v ktorej sa nachádzajú poslanci Fideszu, a čo by mohlo Orbána v Európskom parlamente v budúcnosti čakať, keďže je to dôležité vzhľadom na jeho postavenie v Európskej únii.

V závere sa uvádza, že súčasný stav krajnej pravice pred voľbami do europarlamentu v júni 2024 je komplikovaný a spolupráca sa zdá byť nepravdepodobná. Dôvodom je rozdielne zázemie strán a ich zameranie na vlastné krajiny, ktoré im bráni v ďalšej spolupráci. Takisto tvrdenie, že už len skutočnosť, že v Európskom parlamente sú dve krajne pravicové skupiny, je znakom toho, že veľká súdržná krajne pravicová koalícia pravdepodobne nevznikne, a to z dôvodu rozdielných názorov krajne pravicových strán v Európskom parlamente na kľúčové témy.

Ukázalo sa, že migrácia je pre obe strany významnou témou. Kontrast v migračnej dynamike medzi Talianskom a Maďarskom je však zarážajúci. K rozdielnej miere migrácie prispievajú faktory, ako je geografia pobrežia Talianska a plot na Maďarskej hranici so Srbskom. Napriek spoločnému zdôrazňovaniu národnej identity oboma premiérmi, najmä v ich rétorike o migrácii, zostáva spoločné riešenie kvôli Orbánovmu neochvejnému postojú nedosiahnuteľné. Tieto rozdiely zdôrazňujú náročnosť posilňovania spolupráce medzi krajne pravicovými stranami. Keďže sa blížia voľby do Európskeho parlamentu, Orbánovo potenciálne strategické manévrovanie s cieľom získať väčšiu moc v Európskom parlamente vnáša do situácie ďalšiu vrstvu neistoty.

Analýza aliancií v Európskom parlamente a diskurz talianskych a maďarských ministrov odhalila hlboké rozdiely v rámci krajne pravicových skupín. Existencia dvoch odlišných krajne pravicových aliancií poukazuje na ich rozdielne ciele. Nezhody v otázkach migrácie a ideológie EÚ tieto skupiny ešte viac štiepia, čo možno pozorovať na neochote aliancií ako ID a ECR spolupracovať. Hoci medzi stranami ako Fidesz a Fratelli d'Italia existuje zdanlivá zhoda, ich odlišné názory na niektoré problémy bránia vytvoreniu koalície. Nedávne správy o Orbánovom vstupe do ECR naznačujú, že

Orbán by chcel mať jednotnejšiu skupinu, ktorú by mohol viesť a ktorá by bola koalíciou ID a ECR. Jeho cieľom je zrejme EÚ ukoristiť, nie z nej vystúpiť. Na základe zistení o migrácii a otázke podpory Ukrajiny sa však zdá nepravdepodobné, že by sa Orbán pripojil k ECR, ale všetko závisí od výsledku volieb do Európskeho parlamentu v júni.

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