



November 2019

Monthly Report About the Far- Right in Europe



International Alliance for Peace and Development

Introduction

Europe has witnessed recently a slow, yet constant shift in the general mood towards the far-right groups. It also manifests itself in several ways, perhaps the most important of which is the penetration of the far rights parties into the heart of the European policies as candidates, voters and public opinion leaders who lead the demonstrations and organize various events.

Europe has witnessed, during recent months, many events that indicate a powerful rise to the far-right, and in this context, it is possible to distinguish between two levels of the rise of the far-right in Europe, one of which is at the level of political process practices, while the other is presented at the popular level.

At the political level, the far-right forces have succeeded in boosting their popularity through elections in a number of European countries. And at the popular level, the rise of the extremist far-right forces appears in a number of countries, the most important of which is Germany. The **highest representation of the far-right's activity** was recorded in November compared to October; thus, the report includes the activity of the far-right during the first and the second halves of November, provided with an analytical view.

First: The Far-Right's Activity during the First Half of November

This year is witnessing changes in the path of the far-right activity within Europe. As we find that the far-right parties are reaping the fruits they have been sowing since 2016, as the first half of November has witnessed more events than its counterpart of October.

There has been a penetration by the far-right parties all over the European countries, the phenomenon of extremism, violence and spreading hatred could be the main factor in the transformation of the extremist far-right activity at that speed within Europe. The general observe of the far-right activity has proved new moves in new areas within Europe, **as is the case in Spain**, which recorded the highest rate of the far-right activity

in this month, after the victory of **the far-right Vox Party** over other parties, which is now considered as the country's third most-powerful party.

Spain is one of the most European countries that have been subjected to parliamentary elections. Spain's general elections held on Sunday, November 10th is the fourth over the last four years, as the elections held prior to this one, ended last April with no clear majority, and the Socialists failed to form a coalition government.

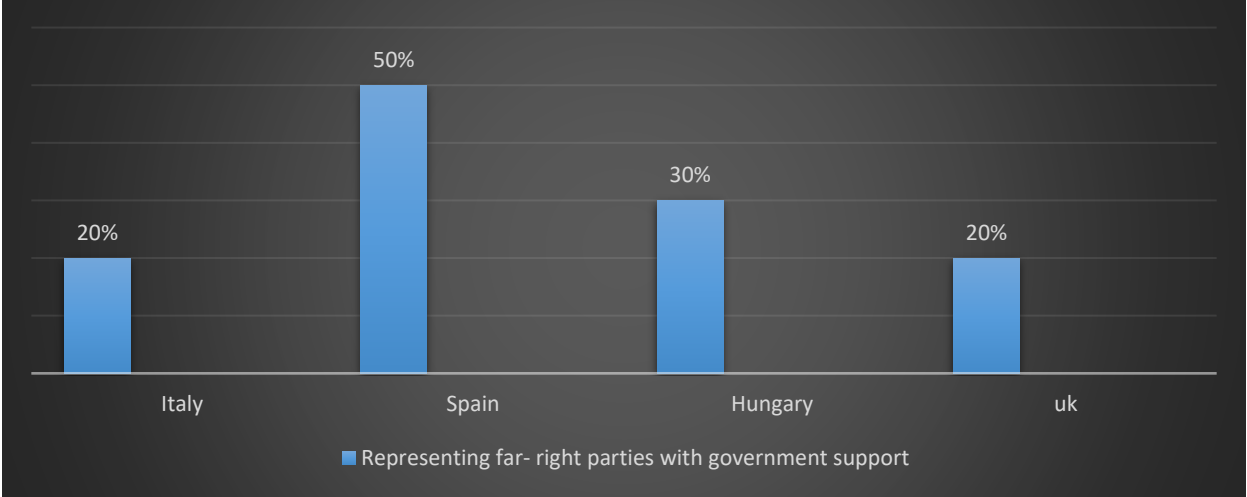
In November 10 elections, we find that the Socialist party won 120 of the 350 seats, three less than in April's elections. The People's Party has won 88 seats, 22 up from the last elections, while Vox has won 52 seats, 25 up from April's election.

This makes us wonder, what now? Addressing Socialist supporters, Spain's acting Prime Minister, Pedro Sánchez, said it was his priority to "form a stable government and adapt politics for the benefit of the majority of the Spanish people". "I would like to call the political parties because they need to act with responsibility in order to solve the political situation in Spain," he added. So, will there be a representation for the far-right party within the Spanish government in the new coalition or not?

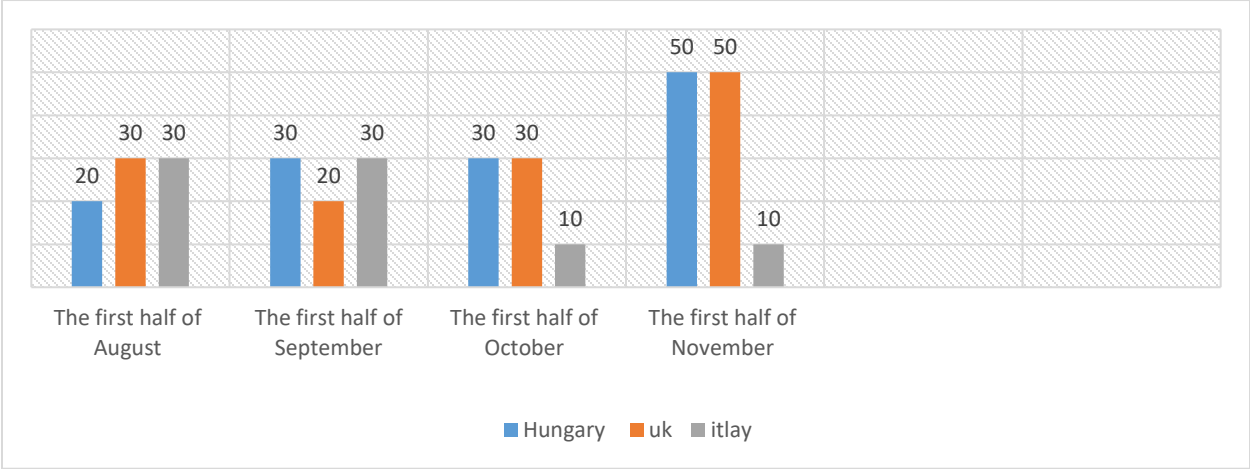
The answer of this question could be found through comparing the election conditions in 2016 and the governmental coordination of the parties. In 2016, the far-right Vox party won only 0.2% of the vote in the Spanish legislative elections, which, of course, illustrates the growing proportion of representation in the current election that has been observed previously. There is a major shift in the representation of the far-right party within the Spanish society.

Thus, no country seems to be immune to far-right policies. Additionally, the European countries enjoy a fairly fertile soil to the far-right policies, with a plurality of population believing that there are a lot of immigrants must get rid of. This also tells much about the rapid success of the far-right party within Spain, and the best evidence for this is the comparison of the aforementioned elections.

This leads us to expect that Vox Party will be represented within the Spanish government; so, Spain will be one of the European countries supporting the far-right party, according to the chart, Spain joined the countries (Italy/ Hungary/ United Kingdom) during that month in supporting the far-right party in Europe.



Spain wasn't the only country showing high representation of the activity of the far-right party during the first half of November. **Hungary** is also one of the countries showing a high representation for the party in the political process, through the observing of the observatory unit during the first halves of the months prior to November according to the following diagram.



It proved that Hungary is transforming rapidly. During the first half of August, Hungary achieved 20% compared to the United Kingdom and Italy that achieved 30%, due to the supportive government measures that were faster in the first half of August in both the

United Kingdom and Italy. Given the first half of September and the governmental measures taken by Hungary against immigrants and refugees, made its representation more than 30%, unlike Italy and the United Kingdom, and also in the first half of October, when the government support indicators that support the activities of the far-right declined, with Matteo leaving the Italian government. Hungary kept its indicators that support the activity of the far-right stable, unlike the status in November, which really proved Hungary to be one of the countries supporting extremism, or to put it more precisely, supporting repression of migrants and refugees.

This pointed accusing fingers to Hungary, and by dating back to August in particular, charges were filed against Hungary and it was asked to appear before the European Court of Human Rights and the situation is repeated with regard to the European Parliament's refusal of three commissioners from Hungary, Romania and France, meaning that three heads of state were rejected to represent the Presidency of the Commission, but the reason why these three heads, representing the European Parliament, were rejected is still unannounced until the moment of writing the report? Or, to put it more precisely, why are the reasons of this rejection still in the dark until the right moment?

However, political experts have analyzed the refusal of three heads and set out the reasons for each country separately. For France, experts said that France is one of the largest countries taking decisive steps against the movements of the far-right, in addition to the recent pro-immigration agreement it concluded with a number of other European countries, therefore, the refusal was attributed to the fact that the majority of French members in the European Parliament belong to the far-right party. As for Romania's refusal, or to put it more precisely, the defeat of Romania, was attributed to the poor number of members representing political parties within the European Parliament, paving the way for Ursula von der Leyen, German Defense Minister, success.

Among the most important events announced during the first half of November is appointing **Ursula von der leyen as a** President of the Commission despite the fact that

Ms. Ursula's speech, delivered this afternoon, revealed her anti-immigration stance, which was concluded from her statement "protecting Europe". A phrase regarded by many political analysts as a call for extremism, and although Germany is one of most presented countries within the European Parliament in terms of the number of seats, this made its progress clear in its choice to take over the position of the commission, but it makes us underline a large number of points in that issue.

First: regarding the above-mentioned issue, mainly related to Hungary, the first supporter of the idea of immigrants and refugees-free Europe, why its head has not been elected?

Second: The European Union status and the decisions issued by the European Union after Ms. Ursula took over

Third: Germany status under the control of the far-right party

This makes us analyze the situation of Germany not only during the end of that year, but also during the upcoming years. In respect of the future of Germany and, especially, the future of Merkel government after the course of recent events, there is a huge gap in Merkel's government controlling over the situation of the Yemeni extremist parties by monitoring the status of the far-right activity of during the previous months. The far-right has committed a large number of reprisals and other acts. And despite the German government's restriction of the far-right movements and activities within the country, the country's far-right party is operating through popular support to put an end to immigration and asylum processes that has become a norm in the politics of Merkel and the European Union.

Merkel is stuck in a bind, because she stands idly and helplessly in the face of the popular will that greatly wants to support the far-right party. Additionally, the elections held in September and October (local elections) that was won by the far-right, supported this analysis.

As previously mentioned, the victory of the German representative over Hungary's is mainly due to the larger number of seats in the European parliament seized by Germany, which makes us highlight the idea of the expected upcoming cooperation between the anti-immigration and refugees European countries to address the call supported by France regarding the new agreement on immigration.

As for **Austria** during the first half of November, a new alliance was built to support the far-right party after winning last October's elections that were held in the light of great tensions regarding corruption issues, but the far-right party did not surrender; it ran the elections and succeeded to win new seats. Additionally, the far-right party maintained its position and strength by holding various partnerships, so that it could ensure continuity. However, it makes us highlight the party's discussions with the left party. It is highly expected that the two parties of the alliance could succeed in overcoming the recent troubles the far-right party has got into in Austria.

As for **France** status during the first half of November, it is still one of the countries putting restrictions on the country's far-right activity. Protests of solidarity for the prevention of terrorism against Islam and Muslims were organized in Paris. As more than 13500 people demonstrated in Paris and raised the slogan reading: "Stop fear of Islam". The demonstration, however, was criticized by Yemeni extremist parties.

As for **Poland's** far-right situation; Poland is considered a new country to the list of counties witnessing far-right activities this month. Under the title of "Independence", the Polish, far-right party organized an anti-immigrants and refugees march on November 14, as during the last ten years, Poland was the headquarter of the far-right gatherings.

Second: The Far-Right's Activity during the Second Half of November

Compared to the previous months, **November** is considered **one of the highest months showing representation of the far-right's activity**. While October, on the other hand, is considered the least month showing representation of the far-right's activity. The

second half of November witnessed great and different movements from a number of countries such as Serbia and Germany, Italy and Spain.

There have been several attempts to incorporate the Serbian far-right party during the month of October, and this issue has been renewed once again, as the far-right party is exploiting the social, economic and unemployment issues, then it links them to immigration; yet until now, the party couldn't prove his existence within the political arena. However, it is expected that Serbia will be, in the periods to come, among the countries supporting far-right activity.

In Germany, during the **the second half of November**, the far-right party has organized a march with about 7000 people in Hanover, to protest against immigration issues. German police banned the party's gathering, but the decision was canceled by a court order. General monitoring indicates that Germany is on the verge of being dominated by the far-right, which makes us retrieve Germany's coping mechanisms with a bit of analysis, as shown in the following paragraphs- :

First: Coping Mechanisms:

The official efforts aiming at containing the threats of the far-right in Germany include a number of aspects that vary between political, legislative and security, perhaps the most prominent of which are the following:

1- Police Restructuring

Last August witnessed the announcement of a restructuring plan to the federal police in proportion to the efforts exerted to reduce the far-right activity, by establishing a new structure for the Federal Criminal Police Office and increasing employment within it. Restructuring process requires increasing the number of police officers, creating 440 new jobs within its corridors, and establishing a "main center for combating hate crimes" in the Federal Criminal Police Office in Wiesbaden .

The move aims to monitor the far-right networks early, and to improve information exchange between authorities at the local and international levels. The authorities also

plan to create a system for evaluating the risks of the far-right party, which is ready to do violence. With regard to online hate crimes, the Federal Criminal Police Office is also planning to create a center operating through intensifying Internet censorship to quickly identify the ones sending threat and hate messages.

2- Legal Amendments:

Germany has a strict, punishable by imprisonment law against hate speech – 5 years as maximum for racist speech. In 2018, the German police took action in 1472 cases of spreading hate publications, including 1130 cases against people who expressed far-right views.

Although the increasing activity of the far-right during the past months led the decision-makers in Germany to adopt a new package of measures to control this phenomenon, and then the German interior ministers discussed with the Federal Interior Minister in October 2019, a package of measures aiming at early detection of the violence of the far-right, including tightening the possession of weapons law, and following-up the armed agents to monitor the severity of their positions and whether they have extremist inclinations, in a radar-like mechanism to detect far-right tendencies.

The package includes measures aiming at exposing the far-right activity to state employees, especially among security institutions, and setting up a mechanism to deal with those found to be involved in far-right activity. In addition to setting strict rules for electronic platforms owners promoting far-right or racist ideas.

As for the latest legal mechanisms that were controversial in this context, the city of Dresden declared a state of emergency against the Nazis, as the Municipal Council of Dresden voted in favor of the decision by 39 votes to 29. According to the decision, the council's priority list includes, during his mandate period between 2019 and 2024, promoting democratic culture, protecting marginalized minorities, human rights, and victims of far-right violence, and supporting civil society initiatives operating in this direction.

3- Political Measures:

At the political level, two axes of the governmental containment efforts of the far-right can be felt, the first of which is the intensification of international cooperation with neighboring countries concerned with this issue. And in this context, Munich, a German city, witnessed at the end of last month a meeting of six European countries interior ministers (Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Britain, Poland) along with the European Commissioner for Internal Affairs, the European Commissioner for Security Affairs, the Secretary General of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) and US representatives, to discuss ways to combat far-right extremism, terrorism and anti-Semitism, and secure the fifth-generation cellular networks.

The second axis, on the other hand, is concerned with the German interior by highlighting popular protests rejecting the far-right. For example, the German Foreign Minister asked to organize protests against far-right terrorism, calling for the defense of democracy after the killing of "Walter Lübeck", calling on the German masses to appear as more numerous than far-rights, anti-Semites and those wanting to divide society.

Second: The Effectiveness of Response Measures:

A wide sector of observers believe that the interest of the German government in the far-right scene has failed to prevent many violent incidents to take place. This is due, according to many, to factors such as the sensitivity of the German society to the idea of government monitoring of citizens and residents, which is due to the German historical inheritance linked to the practices of the Nazi party in the past and its severe consequences on society and Germany. As some believe that this sensitivity affects the government's ability to conduct intelligence operations against far-right groups in a society rejecting surveillance and stressing commitment to political freedom.

On the other hand, it is necessary to shed light on the questions raised about the limits of the far-right penetration to the German intelligence agencies and its relationship to the presence of the far-right forces in the political scene, especially in light of some

cases in which FBI informants failed to report the activities of some extremist groups despite being aware of it.

There are some thesis calling on the German government to change its perspective regarding dealing with adherents of the far-right's thought, on the basis of their structuring in organized groups not just individuals, and these thesis stem from the conviction that there are no single criminals in such crimes, and that the government must turn into fighting networks, which require taking tougher measures, such as: improving the monitoring of the far-right by granting the authorities concerned more powers, and legally prosecuting online and social media websites hate speech promoters. Political parties should also be encouraged to get rid of the elements of the far-right existing among their lines.

As for **Italy**, there are two scenes dominating the political scene, operations to arrest of far-right party members, and parliaments with extremist orientation calling for marriage and procreation in order to eliminate immigration and immigrants.

Analytical vision

There are fears that the first people affected by far right politics in Europe will be Arabs and Muslims who will have to face many new troubles, and that such measures foreshadow internal tensions in Europe in the future, as a result of hostile and racist rhetoric towards foreigners and Muslims, which threatens the security and stability of European countries in general.

In the long term, the warnings of the negative impact of the rise of the far-right appear on the tolerance model of the modern, European nation-state, which has become very fragile with the escalation of exclusion speech and the direction towards practicing this discourse in real life, which would be dreadful if it continued, because the far-right forces are labeling peoples in the country upon their ethnic background compulsively, and thus excluding those who do not belong to this country, which constitutes a threat

on the project of a united Europe that the continent seeks to achieve since the end of World War II.

However, there is a more optimistic trend believing that the rise of the far-right may be the beginning of the end of this phenomenon, based on the fact that the current European generation, which has grown under a number of taken-for-granted pillars such as luxury, freedom, peace, democracy and human rights, according to the European model, will recognize the danger of the rise of such parties; therefore, it will reject them. Also, allowing the far-right parties to obtain political representation and participate in the exchange of power, would seriously expose this party to what it has been avoiding, which is to be subjected to a rational, practical test that could reveal that it does not have the real alternative for the traditional political forces.

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