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Jan Philipp Albrecht, MEP

EUROPE

ON THE FAR RIGHT

Right-wing extremists and right-wing populists in the European Parliament



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PREFACE BY JAN PHILIPP ALBRECHT

In the wake of the success of charismatic right-wing populists such as Marine Le Pen in France and Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, there is once again a heightened awareness of how extreme right-wing parties in Europe are gaining popularity amongst voters. Their influence on governments and hence on the key issues of European politics is growing. Government heads such as Victor Orban in Hungary are moving ever closer to the right. Throughout Europe, right-wing extremists and populists, including

MEP Marine Le Pen and the leader of the Austrian FPÖ party, Heinz-Christian Strache, are forming alliances. The photo on the front of this brochure shows both politicians at a press conference at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. When the next European Parliament elections take place in 2014, many MEPs and also many voters will be unaware of the presence that right-wing extremists already have in Europe. This is also due to the way extreme right-wing ideology is emerging under new guises. The key players are increasingly aware of the need to link up with like-minded people in other countries and to respond to the prevailing populist mood. The image they display of being patriotic fighters against “the high-ups in the established parties and in Brussels” is gaining in popularity as a result of the continuing global crisis. The racist and misanthropic undertones of their message may seem to go unheard, but they still permeate into people’s consciousness and their discussions with others. Following on from the comprehensive brochure entitled “Strategien gegen Rechtsextremismus” [Strategies to combat right-wing extremism] which I published

in 2010, this brochure aims to shed light on the right-wing extremists and populists in the European Parliament and on their parties within the countries of the EU. Wide-ranging background information will enable the people of Europe to gain an idea of the overall situation. It will also help those involved in the political process in the European Union and my colleagues in the various parliaments and parties to better understand the somewhat blurred spectrum of right-wing extremism and to oppose racist and nationalist tendencies.

I would like to thank all my team, and particularly Tobias Peter, who has contributed hugely to the success of this and the previous brochure. This brochure is of course a snapshot and is being published at a time when Europe and its democracies are in deep crisis. The fateful elections in Greece in 2012 led to an-

other extreme right-wing party, Golden Dawn, entering a parliament in Europe. In view of the economic and social upheavals in many EU Member States, it cannot be assumed that we are again in the clear as regards the success of right-wing extremist and populist parties. As a result, my efforts in opposing right-wing extremism will continue to be a focal point of my work over the coming years. My team and I would be very happy to learn of new developments and receive additional information relating to this brochure. Anybody wishing to receive further information about our work in the European Parliament can send an e-mail to jan.albrecht@europarl.europa.eu.

I hope this brochure will provide you with helpful insights and make some contribution to creating a Europe free of racism, misanthropy and nationalism.




Jan Philipp Albrecht, MEP
Member of the European Parliament

lands”. But who are these MEPS, and what issues are they concerned with? Which countries do they come from, and who is behind them at national level? This brochure gives an insight into an area that has hitherto received little attention: the presence of miscellaneous right-wing extremist parties and MEPs in the European Parliament. Reports on individual European countries allow anyone interested in this subject to gain an overview of the national contexts that have given rise to the MEPs in question and to their positions in Parliament. Although the fascist-leaning parties of many European countries had little chance of electoral success after the Second World War, they have never stopped working to push through their hate-filled view of the world. In order to demonstrate these tendencies, the country reports also examine the situation at the end of the Second World War, but the historical perspective is somewhat brief. It is clear, however, that right-wing extremism is not a modern phenomenon in Europe and that many of the parties concerned have just given themselves a new gloss without abandoning their core racism. Unlike in Western Europe, extreme right-wing parties did not emerge on the political landscape in Eastern Europe until 1989/90, so the country reports only begin at the start of their transition process. But of course fascist parties and movements also existed in Eastern Europe before and during the inter-war period, and the tendencies in question continued to exist up to 1989. The country reports only give an overview



INTRODUCTION

Right-wing extremism in its various guises and nuances is threatening Europe's democracies. In this regard, the term "right-wing extremism" is used to describe an entire group of ideologies and activities that stand in opposition to democracy, plurality and human rights. Its blueprint for society is characterised by an authoritarian and anti-pluralistic mind-set. Right-wing extremist and populist parties are also represented in the European Parliament and are actively working to create a "Europe of Father-

of the situation and look at it solely in terms of party-based right-wing extremism, pointing to the sources for anyone requiring more detailed information. Moreover, ideological differences and peculiarities are only touched upon, as are analytical explanations of partly-concealed anti-Semitic and racist statements. Although it is difficult, the quotations in question cannot be analysed on the basis of their ideological substrate and their respective right-wing extremist motivation but to a great extent must be left to stand on their own. Instead, this brochure is conceived as a source of information on the right-wing extremist and populist MEPs in question and aims to provide information for further political debate. It should also be noted that right-wing extremist groups are active as movements and sub-cultures in all the countries concerned. Although academic research has established a direct link between party-based and movement-based right-wing extremism, these groups are not dealt with in the country reports, but many of the references contain further information on them. All sources are publicly accessible, have been carefully checked and are noted in the report. Because of the wide range of languages involved, secondary sources were very important to the drafting of this brochure, and the usual restrictions apply with regard to the translation of verbatim quotations by third parties. Since these are not official translations, minor discrepancies are possible within the statements. This is not true for quotations from documents and speeches from the European Par-

liament because these are made available by the Parliament itself, at least in English. The biographical data is taken from the European Parliament's website.

THE CONCEPTS....

There are a great many terms used to describe what we refer to in this brochure as right-wing extremism.¹ In general, right-wing extremism describes a political current that directly or indirectly opposes the main cornerstones of liberal democracies, i.e. political pluralism and the constitutional protection of minorities. Its core is made up of ultranationalistic, authoritarian and xenophobic elements. The process of social modernisation with social and functional differentiation and increased individualisation is seen as the opposite of a collective identity constructed on the basis of national loyalties and defined in ethnic, cultural or religious terms.² Individuals are required to subordinate themselves and their (civil) rights to the greater good of the community. Since the 1980s, most extreme right-wing parties, particularly those in Western Europe, have detached themselves from the ties of their fascist tradition and openly anti-democratic orientation. It is now possible to make a distinction between the extreme right, with its strong links to fascist tradition, and populist nationalists (also known as right-wing populists).³ These latter groups tend to be particularly successful at municipal,

regional and national level in what is termed a "grey area" of right-wing extremism.⁴ In contrast to right-wing extremists, the populists of the right focus neither on direct opposition to democracy nor on open violence as a means of political confrontation. In order to present themselves as an electoral alternative to society's "middle ground", they avoid being identified with right-wing extremists. But despite this ideological shift, the principles of the right-wing populist parties are not compatible with those of a pluralistic society guided by concepts of equality and governed by the rule of law. They still believe in the same ideology of inequality, the exclusion of ethnically or biologically-defined minorities and the need to curtail their rights.

THE SOCIAL CONTEXT...

Since the late 1980s, right-wing extremist parties, movements and sub-cultures have been gradually gaining strength throughout Europe. This has been reflected in electoral successes at national and European level, in the growth in membership of right-wing extremist movements and in the attractiveness of sub-cultural groups, particularly to young people. The following parties have been successful at local, regional and national level as well as in the European context: the Austrian Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ), the Belgian Vlaams Belang (VB), the French Front National (FN), the Jobbik party and

the Hungarian Justice and Life party (MIÉP), the Italian Lega Nord, the Austrian Bündnis Zukunft Österreich (BZÖ), the Danish People's Party, the Swiss Volkspartei (SVP) and the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV). There are also a number of parties which have so far only been successful at local or regional level, such as the German Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD), the British National Party (BNP) and the Swedish Democrats (SD). The extreme right is mainly successful at the level of movements and sub-cultures.⁵ At sub-culture level, there is clearly a strong trans-national cooperation between right-wing extremists from various countries. Foreign contacts between right-wing extremists have intensified, communication channels have improved, a regular exchange of information has been established and travel to events organised by groups abroad is commonplace.⁶ The internet plays a central role in communication and in the dissemination of propaganda.

Throughout Europe, the increased electoral success of right-wing populist parties is striking. Although these parties repeatedly seek to distance themselves from the right-wing extremist parties, there are clear structural and personal connections between the extremists and populists. This involves joint mobilisation and mutual support in elections, along with the provision of new blood for populist parties by the extreme right.⁷ For young people in particular, it is more attractive to join extremist groups via sub-cultural networks than to become

directly involved in a political party. Young people are introduced early on to right-wing extremist mind-sets through music, fashion and leisure activities, and right-wing structures are then supported through the purchase of certain clothing brands and recordings and by attending concerts. In many European countries, the right-wing sub-cultural scene is more important and larger in terms of the numbers involved than the membership of the corresponding parties. Apart from this, the cultural aspects that are conveyed through music and the associated ideology have a lasting effect on young people's attitudes.⁸ In some countries, we can see a significant radicalisation of rightist groups and a corresponding increase in the use of violence. Above all in Germany, Switzerland, France and the Netherlands, right-wing extremists are increasingly prepared to resort to violence. For some time now, attention has been focused on Hungary, where right-wing extremists are increasingly making their presence felt and carrying out attacks on Roma. The right-wing extremist party Jobbik and the (banned) paramilitary Hungarian Guard, which has been responsible for many of these attacks, is now the third-largest force in the Hungarian Parliament, having polled 17% of the vote in the Hungarian national elections of 2010. It is also interesting to note that the more successfully parties operate, the smaller sub-cultural movements become, and vice versa. Even in countries where right-wing extremist parties are not represented at national or European level, they are nevertheless attracting

ever more votes at regional and local level. Examples of this are Germany, Sweden and Great Britain.

THE ISSUES...

Throughout Europe, immigration is one of the central buzzwords associated with negative connotations by right-wing extremists. In this context, immigrants, and above all the presence of Muslims within (Western European) society, are identified as being at the root of all social problems. In the right-wing extremist view of the world, unemployment, crime, the shortage of housing, benefit fraud and the sense of being "flooded with foreigners" can be traced directly back to immigration and are the cause of all material and cultural problems. Immigration is seen as the framework for these problems and as a medium for re-articulating them.⁹ Problems affecting all of society are re-articulated by the right-wing extremists and ethnicised with reference to an ethnic/national hegemony as a model for explaining social conflicts. The result is that immigration is seen as a threat to the homogeneous "nation" and "subverts" the "people". According to the right-wing extremist view of the world, social and individual problems arise when people do not feel rooted and at home in "their" culture and when cultures, again viewed as being homogeneous and static, are "intermixed" as a result of migration flows. Consequently, all problems can be resolved not only by putting a

stop to immigration but by repatriating "foreigners" living in various countries. These demands come to the fore when the Swiss SVP demands "Maria statt Scharia" ["Mary not Sharia"], the German NDP calls for a "halt to the Polish invasion" (the use of an election poster containing this demand has now been banned in the courts as sedition), or Hungarian right-wing extremists declare the Sinti and Roma to be the main bogeymen and call for an uprising against the "enslavement" of the Hungarian people.

Right-wing extremist ideology ties in directly with a widespread centre-ground racism that is not (openly) determined in biological or racist terms but is explained by reference to cultural difference. "Foreigners" are deemed incompatible with one's own culture. The fact that this ultimately leads to a racist classification is clear from the fact that the "other" culture is also perceived as being inferior, even though this is usually left unsaid.¹⁰ Questions relating to the identity of a people are raised in terms of a homogeneous community based on a purely biological substrate defined according to blood ties and not in terms of nationality (ethnos versus demos). In this ethnicised outlook, the object of the racism is ultimately different to that of the traditional fascist parties. The old anti-Semitic background does not entirely disappear but retreats behind a virulent anti-Muslim form of racism.¹¹ The ability of this ideology to be assimilated by society's middle ground is evident from surveys which show that half of all Ger-

mans feel a sense of hostility towards Muslims.¹² The fact that the media and prominent publishers openly conduct an anti-Muslim discourse, and spurred on by the Swiss referendum decision to ban the construction of minarets, electoral campaigns are now increasingly focusing on the supposed risk of the "creeping Islamisation" of Europe. While Muslims are the main focus of agitation in Western European countries, it is the Roma who are being attacked, in some cases physically, in Romania and Hungary. The political scientist Dieter Segert observes that:

"It is generally true of the extreme right in all Eastern European countries that the core of their political self-conception is formed by an ethnic/cultural understanding of the nation. This is associated with fears that the very existence of one's own nation might be under threat from ethnic minorities. Such feelings are of course present in those countries in which there are significant ethnic minorities. Alongside Slovakia, this is true for Romania, Bulgaria and some of the successor states of the former socialist Yugoslavia.¹³

Extremist right-wing agitation against immigration and ethnic and religious diversity influences the processes of forming political opinion and decision-making within the political mainstream. This holds true for both Eastern and Western Europe. The public stance of almost all the political parties towards the issues of immigration, crime and

integration has lurched to the right.¹⁴ Most parties, whether on the left or right side of the spectrum, seek to exploit the fear of Islam to their political advantage. Closely linked to this subject of ethnic and religious diversity within society is the criticism of pluralistic democracy voiced by right-wing extremists. Even though the right-wing populists do not position themselves as fundamentally opposed to the existing system and do not openly advocate the use of force, they share with extremists on the right a critical view of politics, political parties and democracy in general.¹⁵ Politics is portrayed as corrupt, elitist and obsessed with power, and politicians as being solely out for themselves. Right-wing extremist parties like to present themselves as the “defender of the common man”. This message is easily assimilated by broad sections of society. Increasing disenchantment with politics and a sense of distance between the citizens and the political system/elite is a phenomenon that is prevalent across Europe. Moreover, criticism of the dismantling of the welfare state and its exploitation by immigrants, combined with an image of self-enriching politicians, has become socially acceptable in most European countries. By proposing a reorganisation of the welfare state – of course in terms of a solidarity-based system of welfare available only to those who belong to the indigenous population – the right-wing extremists are speaking above all to the unskilled, the unemployed and those people who feel threatened by a loss of prosperity (“subjective deprivation”). EU bureau-

crats are often perceived and portrayed as being even more out of touch and distanced from the “real” needs of the people. The fact that so many people accept this view is rooted in a lack of knowledge of European structures, processes and responsibilities. The current financial crisis exacerbates this negative image even further. People have the feeling that they are having to pay for the mistakes of the financial world. While safety nets amounting to millions are being deployed, the people of Greece and elsewhere are having to assume personal responsibility for the consequences of an iron-fist European austerity policy.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT...

The entire political spectrum was already represented in the Parliament after the first general elections to the European Parliament in 1979. There have been repeated attempts to form right-wing extremist political groups in order to be able to take part in parliamentary work with a united voice and to make the most of the financial and organisational benefits involved. For example, in 1984 the “European Right” was formed, the first political group of right-wing extremist parties, under the leadership of Jean-Marie le Pen (Front National, France). The current group is the Europe of Freedom and Democracy group, which comprises both right-wing populist and right-wing extremist members and is essentially a kind of partner-

ship of convenience. Some right-wing populists belong to the European Conservatives and Reformists Group, which is a break-away group from the European People’s Party.

Right-wing populist and extremist parties are also seeking to coordinate themselves and receive financial subsidies from the Parliament by setting up political parties at European level (“European parties”). The “European Alliance for Freedom” (EAF) was recognised as a European party by the European Parliament in February 2011 and received around €372,000 (provisional amount) from EU funds for 2011.¹⁶ Members of the EAF include MEPs¹⁷ from the FPÖ, VB, FN and the German “Bürger in Wut” [“enraged citizens”] party. In March 2012, the European Parliament approved a payment of approximately €290,000 from the EU budget to the “European Alliance of National Movements” (AENM). Its mem-

bers include MEPs from the French Front National (which left Parliament at the end of 2011), the Hungarian Jobbik party, the British National Party and representatives of other right-wing extremist parties. The “Movement for a Europe of Liberties and Democracy” (MELD) includes representatives of the Danish People’s Party, the Greek LAOS party, the Slovak National Party and the Italian Lega Nord. It received around €621,000 for 2012. The conditions for being recognised as a European party are relatively easy to meet: in at least one-quarter of the Member States, it must be represented by Members of regional or national parliaments or hold at least one seat in the European Parliament. In future, the right-wing extremist Swedish National Democrats or the neo-fascist Fiamma Tricolore, parties which are not even represented in the European Parliament, will therefore also be eligible to receive EU money



COUNTRY REPORT: BELGIUM

Proportional representation
5% hurdle at constituency level

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN BELGIUM

In Belgium, nationalism and political self-perception are largely shaped by the existence of two distinct regions, Flanders and Wallonia. Wallonia, which had been the richer part of the country at the beginning of the 20th century as a result of its heavy-industry-based economy, was overtaken in economic terms in the 1960s by the service sector based in Flanders. The economic position of Flanders was strengthened

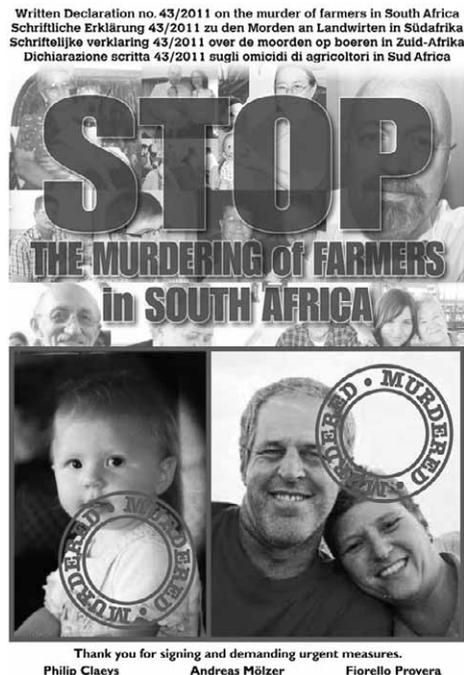
by its many international ports and the industry that grew up around them. By the mid-1960s, all the major parties had split into a Flemish and a Wallonian party. The following country report looks only at players in Flanders. In interpreting the election results to the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate, it must be borne in mind in the following that the Vlaams Blok/Vlaams Belang have only stood in Flanders. The Front National (FN), an extremist right-wing party in the Wallonian part of the country, is in favour of a united Belgium. Although it obtained around 2% of the vote in Wallonia in the 2004 and 2007 elections to the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate, it was not permitted to stand in the 2010 elections due to procedural errors. The FN is currently irrelevant in Belgium in both electoral and political terms.¹⁸

During the German occupation, some of the Flemish (and Wallonian) nationalists in Belgium collaborated with the National Socialists. After the end of the war, corresponding organisations and parties were banned and many collaborators ended up in prison. Despite this, a few Flemish-nationalist organisations, such as Vlaamse Concentratie and the rightist Vlaamse Militanten Orde (VMO; founded as an organisation) were formed. The first electoral successes were achieved by the Christelijke Vlaamse Volksunie electoral alliance, which obtained 3.9% of the Flemish vote and a seat in the parliamentary elections of 1954. On the basis of these positive experiences, the Volksunie

(VU) was formed shortly afterwards and went on to win 6% of the Flemish vote in 1962.¹⁹ The Flemish nationalists continued to gain in strength in the 1960s as a result of the growing language dispute between the Belgian regions that led to isolated rioting. In the 1971 parliamentary elections, the VU won 18.8% of the Flemish vote. At the same time, the influence of liberal forces grew within the party, giving it the gloss of a left-liberal nationalist party in order to make it attractive to larger sections of the electorate.²⁰ This development was rejected by the extremist right of the party, but it was subsequently appeased internally by the integration of the VMO into the VU in 1971 and then by the election to parliament of former VMO Chairman Bob Maes. Barely a month later, a new VMO was formed (and subsequently banned in 1981) under the leadership of Bert Eriksson. The members of this organisation were again made up of right-wing extremists who were prepared to resort to violence. A few other far-right organisations existed at the same time, including the Verbond van Nederlandse Werkgemeenschappen/ Were Di and its 1976 offshoot the Voorpost. Under the Egmont Agreement of May 1977, agreed between the parties in government, including the VU, Belgium was to be divided up into three autonomous regions with their own governments and direct powers. As a result, opponents of the Egmont Agreement and sections of the VU membership formed two parties. On the one hand, there was the far-right Vlaams Nationale Partij (VNP) under Karel Dillen, a former VU member and

founder of the Volksunie Jongeren (the youth organisation of the VU). On the other side, the more nationalist and liberal Vlaamse Volkspartij (VVP) was formed under Lode Claes, who was also a former VU member.

After the Belgian Government collapsed in 1978 as a result of the Egmont Agreement and new elections were called, the VNP and VVP stood with a joint electoral list under the name of Vlaams Blok (VB). After a poor performance in which they gained less than 1% of the vote, the VVP merged with the VNP. The electoral pact was transformed into the Vlaams Blok party under the leadership of Dillen, the only person to have won a seat in the elections.²¹ In its early years, the VB was a small splinter party, gaining between 1% and 2% of the vote in elections to the Chamber of Representatives and the Senate up to the end of the 1980s. Politically it focused on the main aim of an autonomous Flanders. Spurred on by the electoral successes of extremist right-wing parties in neighbouring countries, during the 1980s it shifted from being a separatist-nationalist party into a modern far-right party representing a broad range of issues. Dillen, Chairman of the VB up to 1996 and MEP from 1994 to 2004, launched “Operation Verjüngung” [Operation Rejuvenation] in 1985. Large sections of the party leadership were replaced by young VB members, and Vlaams Blok Jongeren (the youth organisation of the VB) was founded in 1987. In this period, the issue of immigration was emerging on the political agenda, culminating



in the 1987 “Eigen volk eerst!” (“Our own people first”) campaign, as a result of which the VB gained two seats in the Chamber of Representatives and its first seat in the Senate.²² The VB achieved its electoral breakthrough in 1991, when it obtained 6.6% of the vote in elections to the Chamber of Representatives and 6.8% of the vote in elections to the Senate. Up to 2003, the party was successively able to improve on its results by 1-2%. In 2003, it obtained its best result with 11.6% and 18 seats in the Chamber of Deputies and 11.3% and 5 seats in the Senate. In elections to the Flemish Parliament in 2004, the VB was the second largest party in parliament with 24.2% of the vote, but did

not participate in the government due to a broad containment policy on the part of other parties. In terms of issues, the VB represented a strong Flemish ethno-nationalism, opposed immigration, preferred a strong state with a hard-line approach to internal security, and positioned itself as an anti-party within the political establishment.²³ For example, a 70-point plan for the (if necessary forcible) repatriation of immigrants to their supposed country of origin was drawn up and presented.

In November 2004 the VB was formally wound up and a new party, Vlaams Belang, was founded immediately thereafter. This was the result of a ruling by the Belgian Supreme Court which found that three of the organisations associated with the party were racist and that the party had infringed anti-racism legislation. The Vlaams Blok feared that it would lose its public subsidies so it relaunched itself with a watered-down party manifesto. “Foreigners” would no longer be deported indiscriminately but would be able to remain in Belgium if they were not criminals and were willing to integrate. The VB leadership nevertheless made it clear that the party re-

mained substantially the same, despite having been reformed. It viewed the ban as an attack on freedom of opinion. Under the heading “Trial is Assassination”, party leader Frank Vanhecke wrote:

“On 9 November [...] it was decided whether opinions in this country are still free [...] whether the multicultural society is truly able to tolerate the freedom of expression. In the Netherlands, this freedom is threatened by religious and political fanatics carrying revolvers. In our country, the weapons are for the time being still in the drawer.”²⁴

Despite a short-term gain in subsequent elections, the 2010 results saw a collapse, with the VB losing around a third of its voters. The VB is currently represented in the Chamber of Deputies with 12 members and in the Senate with 3 members. The strongest force in the Chamber of Deputies is the national-conservative Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie (N-VA, 17.4%), followed by the Wallonian Socialists (PS, 13.7 %) and the Christian-Democratic party Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams (CD&V, 10.8%).²⁵

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Belgium - Vlaams Belang



PHILIP CLAEYS

Born on 24.05.1965 in Ghent. Degree in translation (1988). Post-graduate qualification in marketing (1991). 1995-99: Chairman, Vlaams Blok youth wing. Chief Editor of the Vlaams Blok magazine. 1995-2003: Group Secretary of the Vlaams Blok in the Flemish Parliament; since 1995: member of the party executive. Member and Deputy Chairman of the "Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty" group which was wound up in November 2007. Member of the European Parliament since 2003. Non-attached. Committees: Foreign Affairs (substitute), Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (member).



FRANK VANHECKE

Born on 30.05.1959 in Bruges. Member of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy group, Vice-Chair/Member of the Bureau. Degree in literature and philosophy (communication sciences) (1981). General Chairman, Vlaams Blok (since 1996). Member of the Bruges City Council (1994-1996 and since 2000). Group leader in the Senate (May 2003 to July 2004). Member of the European Parliament (1994-2003 and again since 2004). Deputy Secretary-General, Technical Group of the European Right (1989-1994). Committees: Budgetary Control (substitute), Human Rights (member), Development (member)

Vlaams Belang obtained 9.9% of the Flemish vote in the 2009 European Parliamentary elections. After Philip Claeys and Frank Vanhecke had initially entered Parliament on behalf of VB, in November 2011 Vanhecke announced that he was leaving VB and moving across to the Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) group. It had previously been assumed that Vanhecke would move to the N-VA, but he in fact joined the EFD group as a non-attached member. However, he has never made a secret of his sympathies for the N-VA, having stated that:

"As a Flemish nationalist, you would today do better to vote for the N-VA rather than for Vlaams Belang."²⁶

In the course of his political life, Vanhecke has been a member of several Flemish nationalist organisations and has been an MEP since 1999. However, he lost his immunity in 2008 because of an article in a party journal, but appealed against this decision at the beginning of 2009.²⁷ In the European Parliament, Vanhecke takes a stance against immigration, is in favour of "watertight external borders", against Turkish entry to the EU and against "eurocratic obstinacy" He saw Italy under Berlusconi as a "model of freedom, freedom of expression and press diversity."²⁸

Philip Claeys has been an MEP since 2003, succeeding Karel Dillen, who retired for health reasons. From 1995 to 1999 he was Chairman of the youth organisation Vlaams Blok Jongeren,

and since 1999 he has been Chief Editor of the party magazine of the Vlaams Blok and subsequently Vlaams Belang. Claeys frequently rails in Parliament against the European Union and against immigration, and links every issue with it:

"Thus, for instance, we are seeing the return of tuberculosis, a disease that, until recently, had completely, or nearly completely, disappeared from Europe and that is now being imported again through mass migration. So here too, urgent action is needed.[...] It is naturally of the greatest importance that public health policy should be given primacy over political correctness."²⁹

He also supports complete freedom of opinion, quoted here in connection with the discharge of the 2007 budget of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights:

"I am voting against discharge because the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights is a completely superfluous agency and is also hostile to the right of freedom of expression."

What Claeys meant exactly by this right was explained at a talk he gave on the subject of "Where is Europe going?" to the Austrian Association of Fraternities [Burschenschaftliche Gemeinschaft] chaired by the extreme right-wing Olympia Fraternity. A report by the Association states that:

“The next speaker, Philipp Claeys MEP, focused in his talk on the problem of freedom of opinion, which is increasingly under threat. As a member of Vlaams Belang, the banning of the Vlaams Blok was still a bad memory, and he used various examples to show how the freedom of expression is being curtailed by political correctness and is ultimately being made impossible. The corresponding “anti-racism laws” would lead to nationalist-minded politicians not only being muzzled but even persecuted by the law. A

common Europe can, however, only stand on the foundation of a broad interpretation of the freedom of opinion, for which reason the fight for this should be given top priority.”³⁰

Claeys maintains close contacts to other right-wing populist and extremist parties and organisations. For example, he attended the Fraternities’ Ball at the Hofburg in Vienna in 2012, meeting Marine Le Pen and Swedish right-wing extremists, among others.³¹



COUNTRY REPORT: BULGARIA

Proportional representation
4% hurdle

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN BULGARIA

Various right-wing extremist groups and parties were already forming just before the political changes of 1989 and the accompanying economic and political reforms. They were above all opposed to the growing influence of Muslim and Turkish groups in Bulgaria, e.g. against the Party Movement for Rights and Freedoms (DPS) founded in 1990, which primarily stood up for the rights of the Turkish minority. A “policy of Bul-

garianisation” among the Turkish minority (with the banning of the Turkish language, culture and names) in the 1980s had given rise to serious tensions and the creation of Turkish underground organisations. Open hostility to Roma and anti-Semitism also grew in the years following 1990.³² During these years, a number of right-wing extremist parties were formed, although they largely failed to achieve any appreciable influence in parliament. One exception was the ultra-nationalist and populist Inner Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation (IMRO or VMRO), which did record some electoral successes at regional and national level.³³ Most recently it was represented in the National Parliament between 2005 and 2009 with five members, but in 2009 failed to win any seats in either the National or European Parliaments. Also still active, although without any influence in parliament, is the right-wing extremist Bulgarian National Radical party (BNRP), which in 1991 demonstrated in front of the building of the Constituent Assembly, chanting slogans against the parliamentary representation of the Turkish minority. The BNRP calls for a fight against Jews and Roma and maintains close contacts with the violent Neo-Nazi skinhead scene. However, any attempts by far-right parties to enter the National Parliament proved unsuccessful until 2005. The reasons for this lie in the large extent to which nationalist positions are integrated within the major parties and in the polarised division of political debate during the transition process. During the 1990s, the main political confrontation

was between the Bulgarian Socialist party (BSP, the pre-1990 governing Bulgarian Communist Party) and the conservative Union of Democratic Forces (SDS) founded by the democratic opposition. The economic reforms, which were also designed to enable Bulgaria to join the European Union, mainly benefited foreign investors and the urban elite. In the predominantly agricultural rural areas there are still high levels of unemployment and corruption. With the rapprochement towards the European Union, the ultra-nationalist and right-wing extremist positions within the main parties were marginalised in order not to jeopardise their acceptance by the European party groups.³⁴ Even though opinion polls showed that a broad majority of the population supported EU accession, the political vacuum that emerged ultimately benefited the far-right parties.

Shortly before the 2005 parliamentary elections, the far-right Ataka (“Attack”) Party was formed and immediately gained slightly less than 9% of the vote, enabling it to enter Parliament with 21 (out of 240) seats as the fourth-largest force. Shortly after the elections, the party published a list of 1,500 Bulgarian Jews on its website under the heading “The Jews are a dangerous, plague-infested race ...”.³⁵ The founder and chairman of the party is Volen Siderov. He is the author of several books on the “global Jewish conspiracy” and regularly rants on the TV station SKAT (which has close links to the party) against Jews, Roma, Turks, homosexuals, for-

ign investors and corrupt politicians in a programme entitled “Ataka”. In the 2006 presidential elections, Siderov obtained 21.5% of the vote in the first round and thus qualified for the run-off, in which he was able to improve his result to 24.1% of the vote. Ataka demands a mono-ethnic Bulgaria covering Macedonia, the Turkish Province of Edirne, parts of Northern Greece and Southern Serbia and stretching right up to the Danube Delta in Romania.³⁶ Ataka also demands withdrawal from NATO, a renegotiation of the EU Accession Treaty and the breaking-off of relations with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. Under the slogan “Give Bulgaria back to the Bulgarians”, Ataka rants against the DPS and advocates a ban on Turkish-language TV programmes. It chants slogans such as “Condemn Gypsies to Work Camps!”, “All Roma are criminals”, “Homosexuals are sick” and “Politicians grunt like swine”, and demands the elevation of the Orthodox faith to the state religion. Ataka maintains good relations with other European right-wing extremist and populist parties. For example, Jean-Marie Le Pen (Front National) appeared as a guest speaker at local election campaign events in 2007. Most recently,

Ataka gained 9.4% of the vote in the parliamentary elections, again winning 21 seats. Ataka initially unconditionally supported a minority government by the right-wing conservative GERB Party. After Ataka supporters attacked the Banya Bashi Mosque in Sofia in May 2011, threw eggs at Muslims and chanted “Turks out!”, three Ataka MPs left the party in protest against the attack. In 2011, a total of eleven MPs left the party because of internal disputes.

The Bulgarian Section of the Helsinki Committee for Human Rights recently observed a worrying escalation of violence against ethnic and religious minorities in Bulgaria. The European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) has also found that racially-motivated violence is often classified by the security forces as “rowdiness” or as non-politically-motivated and has called on Bulgaria to take action against these irregularities. Moreover, in 2007 the European Court of Human Rights condemned Bulgaria for dragging out the investigations in a case involving the murder of a Roma and for the fact that the racist motives of the perpetrator were disregarded.³⁷



SLAVI BINEV

Born on 10.12.1965 in Sofia. Degree from Vasil Levski National Sports Academy, Sofia (1990). Doctorate at the Institute of Psychology, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (2004-2009). Coach of the Bulgarian national taekwondo team (1985). Multiple Bulgarian national taekwondo champion. Taekwondo champion of the Balkans (1990). European taekwondo champion (Open Taekwondo Championships in Celje, Slovenia, 1992). Main shareholder and chairman of the board of directors of 'ER System Holdings' plc (since 1994). Vice-president of the Bulgarian Taekwondo Federation (1996-2008). Member of the European Parliament since 2007.

Member of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly. Member of the Intergroup for friendship with Azerbaijan, the Intergroup for friendship with China, the Intergroup for friendship with Serbia, and the Intergroup for friendship with Macao. Archon of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church (since 2006). Non-attached. Committees: Human Rights (substitute), Economic and Monetary Affairs (member).



DIMITAR STOYANOV

Born on 17.05.1983 in Sofia. Master's Degree in Law (distinction) from St Kliment Ohridski University, Sofia (2011). Founder and Vice-Chairman (2005 - 2011) of the Ataka Party. Founder and Chairman of the National Democratic Party (since 2012). MP in the 40th National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria (2005 - 2007). Parliamentary Secretary in the 40th National Assembly (2006 - 2006). Observer in the European Parliament (2005 - 2006). Member of the Governing Board of the Bulgarian Fencing Federation (2011). Non-attached. Committees: Regional Development (substitute), Agriculture and Rural Development (substitute), Legal Affairs (member).

As the fourth-largest Bulgarian party, Ataka obtained 12% (2007: 14.2%) of the vote in the European Parliament elections and was thus able to appoint both Dimitar Stoyanov and Slavi Binev as non-attached MEPs. Both of them have recently left Ataka (see below). It remains to be seen how their work will develop with their new parties and whether they will join parliamentary groups. It is therefore only possible here to examine their work to date as members of Ataka.

In the election campaign, Ataka announced that its main aims were to prevent Turkish accession to the EU and to represent the interests of Bulgaria in the European Union.

ATAKA is FOR

- Recognition of the five - century genocide over the Bulgarian nationality and 50 milliard euro compensation from Turkey.
- The euro funds to be controlled by the Bulgarian people.
- Re opening of the blocks of NPP Kozloduj.
- EU of the equal national states.
- Christian values as a basic for the European civilization.

ATAKA is AGAINST

- The acceleration of Turkey in the EU, which will be fatal for Bulgaria.
- The stopping of the EU funds for Bulgaria.
- Privileging of ethnic and homo sexual minorities instead of approving the situation of the Bulgarian pensioners.
- Homo sexual marriages, which are imposed on us.
- Poor Bulgaria to be a sponsor of the rich West, as it is now.

Dimitar Stoyanov, stepson of party chairman Siderov, is a founding member and has been the deputy chairman of Ataka. He belonged to the delegation of Bulgarian EU observers from August 2005 to March 2006 and has been an MEP ever since the accession of Bulgaria to the EU in 2007. Even in his role as an observer, Stoyanov came out with racist and sexist statements. About Lívía Járóka, a member of the Roma community and MEP for the Hungarian Fidesz party, who was to receive the prize of “Best Parliamentarian 2006”, he stated in an e-mail to all MEPs and assistants:

“In my country there are tens of thousands of Gypsy girls who are much more beautiful than this honourable one [...] You can even buy yourself a loving wife aged 12 or 13 ... The best of them are very expensive – up to €5,000 each. Wow!”³⁸

Shortly after this, Stoyanov made the following comment to The Telegraph about work-shy Roma who sold their children and were criminals:

“How do you expect me to treat normally someone who sold his daughter like an animal? This is a 12 or 13-year-old girl. No one else is doing this, only the Roma [...] They do a lot of other crimes too, murder, rapes, burglary, when police come to investigate these crimes and understand the suspect is a Roma they drop the investigation because they fear an ethnic arrest. This is not right [...] Racism is

when Bulgarian citizens get killed or raped and no one does anything to catch the criminal [...] This is racism against the Bulgarians in their own country.”³⁹

Stoyanov also makes no attempt to hide his anti-Semitic world view:

“We do not speak usually about the Jews. We speak about the Middle East problems. We defend the Palestinians [...] There are a lot of powerful Jews, with a lot of money, who are paying the media to form the social awareness of the people [...] They also playing with economic crises in countries like Bulgaria and getting rich. These are the concrete realities.”⁴⁰

He also sees himself as a victim of a conspiracy on the part of the European elite, which he claims has launched a media campaign against Ataka:

“We have messed up their plans for distribution of power and so they hate us very much and will try anything to destroy us.”⁴¹

After Stoyanov demanded the resignation of Ataka Party Chairman Siderov because of the latter’s poor performance in the 2011 presidential elections (winning only 3.7% of the vote), Stoyanov was expelled from the party in November 2011. Shortly afterwards, he announced the formation of a new party called the National Democratic Party. He is planning a party which will

be ideologically close to the True Finns and the Slovene National Party (SNS).

Slavi Binev has been an MEP since Bulgaria’s accession to the EU. The former Balkan and European taekwondo champion is an influential businessman in the entertainment, construction and security sectors. Binev likes to present himself to the public as a respected and committed MEP who transcends party boundaries. For example, together with the Maltese social democrat John Attard-Montalto, the British conservative Nirj Deva, the Italian conservative Mario Mauro and the Finnish liberal Hannu Takkula, he drafted a written declaration on introducing the “Chess in Schools” programme into the education systems of the European Union. Patronage of this declaration was assumed by Jerzy Buzek, President of the European Parliament up to January 2012. Binev commented on the adoption of the Declaration by Parliament on his website:

“The text was supported by representatives from all member states of the union and from all the political groups in parliament, which shows the attitude they have towards our MEP in European institutions.”⁴²

Binev uses such initiatives to “de-demonise” himself and present himself as a partner for the future. As a member of the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee and rapporteur for extending the mandate of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, he is already influencing policy within the Parliament. On his website, Binev reports of meetings with representatives of the stock markets and multinational financial corporations,⁴³ and of his speech to the Crans Montana Forum in March 2012.⁴⁴ At the end of April 2012, Binev introduced the Civil Union for Real Democracy Party (GORD) after announcing his resignation from Ataka.



COUNTRY REPORT: DENMARK

Proportional representation with multiple allocation on the basis of regions and a multi-member constituencies.
2% hurdle or a direct mandate.

GESELLSCHAFTLICHE UND POLITISCHE SITUATION IN DÄNEMARK

Right-wing extremist parties were formed relatively late in Denmark after the end of the Second World War. The Fremskridtspartiet (Frp) [Progress Party] founded by Mogens Glistrup in 1972 can be viewed as the first party from a broad right-wing extremist context to have achieved electoral success.⁴⁵

The Frp was initially a populist/neo-liberal protest party, which early on campaigned above all against income tax, achieving around 11% -16% in elections to the Danish Parliament in the 1970s. However, Frp was not interested in serious cooperation with the established parties. While its success in subsequent elections crumbled (1981: 8.9 %; 1984: 3.6 %), the Frp increasingly agitated against immigration. From 1983 to 1985, Glistrup had to serve a prison sentence for tax evasion, and his seat in parliament was taken over by Pia Kjærsgaard, who would later co-found and chair the Dansk Folkeparti (DF) [Danish People's Party]. Kjærsgaard played a crucial role in shifting the party's focus in terms of issues and was interested in serious cooperation with the established parties in the Danish Parliament. During the 1987 electoral campaign, Kjærsgaard stood as the Frp's leading candidate, securing the party minor gains in 1987 (with 4.8% of the vote) and clear gains in the early elections of 1988 (9.0%). After Kjærsgaard failed to be elected as party chairman in 1995 due to internal battles within the party, she and a few other members left the Frp and, in the same year, founded the DF. Thereafter, the Frp repeatedly lost votes in elections and has not been represented in the Danish Parliament since 2001. Despite a further radicalisation towards the extreme right, the party has since become insignificant in political and parliamentary terms.⁴⁶

Since its formation in 1995, the DF has consistently gained votes. In 1998 it

achieved 7.4% of the vote, but this had increased to 12% by 2001. From 2001, the DF even tolerated a minority government between the liberal Venstre (V) party under Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen and the conservative Det Konservative Folkeparti (K). This coalition survived two elections until the Social Democrats (S) finally formed a government in 2011 without DF participation. DF's strong political position over more than a decade has nevertheless left clear traces in Danish politics. Above all, immigration policy has been tightened and was even criticised by the Human Rights Commissioner of the Council of Europe in 2004. Legislation governing aliens was amended or tightened a total of 76 times between 2001 and 2011.⁴⁷ In 2011, Denmark was criticised by the European institutions because, under pressure from the DF, border controls were reintroduced in order to combat cross-border crime.

As stated above, immigration is one of the party's central issues. It stresses a national identity and presents itself as the defender of a national Danish culture and identity. It argues that Christian values are incompatible with the culture of non-western countries. The DF above all sees Islam as a threat. Its work programme reads as follows:

"It has proved particularly difficult to integrate refugees and immigrants with a Muslim background. [...] There is no society in the world where a peaceful integration of Muslims into another culture has

been possible. It is irresponsible to inflict a cultural clash on Denmark that threatens to have very serious consequences. [...] We must recognise the need for our society to protect itself from being overrun.”⁴⁸ [omissions in the original version]

This struck a chord amongst the public. In 2001, 40% of the Danish population considered immigration to be one of society’s most important issues.⁴⁹ The DF is keen to avoid being associated with right-wing extremists, so candidates in national parliamentary elections have to be approved by the party leadership. This party leadership is very much controlled from above, mainly by Kjærsgaard herself, in order to prevent individuals from jeopardising electoral success by making extreme right-wing statements. Nevertheless, links with the right-wing extremist scene do exist. More recently, in August 2011, the findings of an extensive research study carried out by an anti-fascist group attracted attention. The study reported on a right-wing terrorist network known as the ORG. This group, with around 100 members, operates a network within politics, the police, business and the media, and contacts also exist with right-wing extremist groups outside Denmark. The ORG has created files on its political opponents and has also passed this information on to other groups that espouse violence.⁵⁰ A leading member also infiltrated the Danish police in order to obtain additional information from police criminal and civil records. The leader of the ORG, Jesper Nielsen, is a

DF member and used to belong to the party executive in Aarhus, Denmark’s second-largest city. A least one other DF member has been involved in the right-wing extremist network. There are also other links between far-right groups and the DF. The influential Danish MP Søren Krarup, for example, maintains contacts with the right-wing extremist group Den Dansk Forening [the Danish Association].⁵¹ In 2007, he even gave a speech on the occasion of the Danish Association’s 20th anniversary.⁵² Krarup is a major opponent of immigration and above all sees Islam as a threat:

“All western countries are infiltrated by Muslims - some speak nicely to us while waiting until there are enough of them to beat us to death”.⁵³

The DF is opposed to further European integration and wants to strengthen public welfare for Danes. However, the party often links this issue with immigration. For example, Kjærsgaard has said that:

“The social security act is outdated because it was tailored to the Danish family tradition and work ethic and not to Muslims who think it is right to let others look after them while their wives give birth to many children. Child benefit is exploited so that an immigrant is able to earn a top income simply on the basis of the number of children he has. Sentences for gang rape must be raised since this problem only came about

through the vandalism of the many anti-social second-generation immigrants.”⁵⁴

Denmark is assuming an important position within the European right-wing extremist scene. In contrast to most other Western European countries, Nazi symbols are not banned, and the country allows far-reaching freedom of speech. There are close contacts with right-wing extremist groups throughout Europe. Many right-wing extremists, including Germans, exploit the relatively lax Danish laws to produce and sell music and other products. In this relatively open atmosphere, the Danish National-Socialist Movement [Danmarks National-socialistiske Bevægelse (DNSB) makes no attempt to conceal its aims. Its website contains the following statements:

“The National Socialist Movement of Denmark (DNSB) is an organisation of Danish men and women who, believing their existence is at stake, are promoting the National Socialist world view. [...] It is obvious that the National Socialist revolution cannot take place in a small and isolated Northern European country. Therefore, the DNSB cooperates with other like-minded organisations and individuals in other countries. [...] The DNSB acknowledges its historical identity, and sees its mission as being to carry on and develop the ideas of Adolf Hitler’s National Socialist movement.”⁵⁵



MORTEN MESSERSCHMIDT

Born on 13.11.1980 in Fredrikssund. Degree in Law from the University of Copenhagen. Member of the Danish Parliament (2005-2009). Member of the European Parliament since 2009. European of Freedom and Democracy group. Committees: Legal Affairs (substitute), Constitutional Affairs (Vice-Chair).

The DF won 15.3% of the vote in the European Parliament elections and was thus able to significantly improve its result compared to 2004 (6.8%). Morten Messerschmidt and Anna Rosbach entered Parliament in 2009 for the DF. Rosbach left the DF in March 2011 and joined the European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR) as a non-attached member. She indicated her reasons as follows:

“After careful reflections on the policies and rhetoric of my party, it is clear to me that I no longer represent this view. [...] I have been concerned about the direction of the party for some time.”⁵⁶

Messerschmidt, previously a member of the Danish National Parliament from 2005, is a member and vice-chairman of the European of Freedom and Democracy group (EFD). He deals with issues relating to further European integration in the time of the euro crisis and be-

lieves the single currency has failed. He is chairman of the Turkey Assessment Group within Parliament, an open discussion group which meets regularly to discuss problems relating to Turkish accession to the EU. Although advocates of Turkish membership are regularly invited to attend and are able to speak, the group is nevertheless critical of Turkey. In a contribution to the newspaper *Hürriyet* in 2011, Messerschmidt voices his ideas concerning the role of Turkey in Europe:

“[...] [I]t is not my aim to oust Turkey from the European House. On the contrary, it is my firm belief that Europe and Turkey need each other as “cousins”. Europe and Turkey are neighbours, and a sound neighbourhood should be built upon a foundation of mutual trust and understanding, thus aiming at diminishing and closing the existing cultural and political gap between Turkey and Europe.”⁵⁷

Messerschmidt’s criticism is strongly aimed at the Turkish Government under Erdoğan, whom he accuses of having curtailed press freedom and the freedom of opinion in Turkey. But what really hides behind his apparently reasonable words?

Messerschmidt, who describes himself as a realist and pragmatist, has already made compromises in order to gain influence.⁵⁸ As part of this strategic approach, he is seeking, under the cloak of a (partly justified) criticism of Turkish

politics, to actually prevent the access of Turkey to the EU; in other words, through efforts of political persuasion and compromise proposals. What really lies behind his rejection of Turkish accession became clear in 2006 in an interview which Messerschmidt gave to *Frontpage Magazine*:

“Europe will – maybe not in 20, but rather 30-40 years from now – have a Muslim majority of population, if nothing is done. That’ll mean the end of our culture and the end of European civilization.”⁵⁹



Behind the façade of apparently objective discussions in the Turkey Assessment Group hides a pronounced anti-Muslim racism. In the same interview,

Messerschmidt made no secret of his world view:

“It is well known that the Muslim immigrants are disproportional in representing crime records; that the hate towards Jews is increasing in Europe, because of these groups. [...] In many European countries we speak about the necessity of changing the welfare-payments, but the truth is that if we did not have the Muslim burden, many of these changes would not be required.”⁶⁰

For Messerschmidt, European immigration policy should be realigned: firstly European rules for Europeans, secondly rules for other western countries elsewhere in the world. And for the rest:

“And then a third set of rules for the third world, who in general do not really offer anything we can benefit from, speaking of education, labour craft and knowledge.”⁶¹

He believes his country is permanently under threat from “foreigners”. On the reintroduction of Danish border controls, he commented that:

“We are fed up with Polish, Lithuanian and Romanian trucks crossing our borders empty in the morning and leaving in the evening full of televisions and stereos stolen from Danish holiday homes”.⁶²

But the main threat ultimately comes from Muslim immigration into Europe and Denmark, which he believes must be stopped. This is clearly also the aim of Messerschmidt’s work in the Turkey Assessment Group.

As Vice-Chairman of the European Parliament’s Committee on Constitutional Affairs, he will also promote a European citizen’s initiative against the possible EU accession of Turkey.⁶³



COUNTRY REPORT: UNITED KINGDOM

“First-past-the-post” in 650 single-member constituencies. Disproportional electoral system. The person winning the most votes is elected to the House of Commons.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE UK

From the end of the Second World War right up to the 1990s, significant electoral successes by right-wing extremist parties were very much the exception in the UK. Some partial success in local elections was achieved above all by the British National Party, founded in 1960 and wound up seven years later⁶⁴ and by the National Front (NF), which was

formed in 1967 but remained very much at the margins. For example, the British National Party won 9.1% of the vote in the constituency of Southall in the west of London in 1964. The NF was mainly successful in the 1970s on issues relating to immigration and won up to 16% of the vote in individual wards in local elections. It continues to demand the (if necessary, forcible) repatriation of immigrants from Great Britain. Due to the party's lack of success in the parliamentary elections of 1979, open internal disagreements broke out, eventually leading to the departure in 1980 of John Tyndall, who had been leader of the party since 1976 (and previously in the period 1972-74). Tyndall had at the time already been convicted several times, including in 1962 for having founded a paramilitary group. Since the 1990s, the NF has been fighting with a small and outdated membership, failing to achieve any electoral success.⁶⁵ In 1982, parts of the NF membership founded the current British National Party (BNP), again under the leadership of John Tyndall. However, in the 1980s the governing Conservative Party under Margaret Thatcher understood the need to address some of the issues of the right-wing extremists. Internal wrangling prevented any further major successes in the political debate.

In October 1990, the EP Commission on Racism and Xenophobia (today the EUMC) observed that the BNP was an: "openly Nazi party ... whose leadership have serious criminal convictions". In reply to the question whether

the BNP was a racist party, Richard Edmonds, deputy leader up to the end of the 1990s, stated that: "We are 100 per cent racist, yes."⁶⁶ Nick Griffin (member of the NF up to 1989, and member of the BNP since 1995) took over the BNP leadership from Tyndall in 1999. The latter had increasingly come under criticism in the 1990s because of failure to build on the party's initial minor electoral successes. After his election to party leader, Griffin tried visibly to change the party's image, doing away with the image of a Nazi party and aggressive behaviour at public marches.⁶⁷ He hoped in this way to be able to address a broader electorate, even though he personally remained closely linked to the far right. Above all, the BNP blames non-white immigrants for the lack of jobs and general social problems. When, on 26 May 2001, ethnic tensions in Oldham/Greater Manchester spilt over into violent confrontations between white and Asian youngsters, the BNP ranted against "Muslim gangs". Shortly after, the BNP achieved its best-ever result in parliamentary elections, taking 3.9% of the vote. In Oldham, Griffin was able to win 16.4% of the vote. In Burnley, where there had also been violent confrontations, the BNP benefited with 11.3% of the vote. Despite the change of image under Griffin, the BNP clearly continues to belong to the fascist tradition. Until a change was forced by a court ruling at the beginning of 2010, party membership was reserved exclusively for whites.

In the last general election on 6 October

2010, the BNP attracted 563,743 votes, or 1.9%. It was thus unable to achieve its ambitious aim of winning two seats. Nevertheless, it had almost trebled its vote compared to 2005, when it had obtained 192,746 votes (0.7%). Although the party failed to win any seats in the House of Commons, it has still been able to continue building support over recent years: in 1992 it only won around 7,600 votes, but by 2001 this had risen to more than 47,000. It was mainly the increased turnout of 65.1% (compared to 61.3% in 2005) that enabled the democratic parties to cancel out this growth. The BNP achieved its best result in the constituency of Barking (Greater London), where party leader Nick Griffin won 14.8% of the vote. The BNP is mainly successful in local and regional elections and is seeking in the longer term to persuade people to adopt its

world view. "While the number of seats contested by the BNP is not large in absolute terms it does indicate that the party is building local support bases in certain areas."⁶⁸ It is notable that the BNP is still the UK's most successful far-right party in terms of electoral performance. However, the country's "first-past-the-post" system marginalises smaller parties. If there had been proportional representation, it is possible that the BNP would have won seats in the House of Commons.

Alongside the BNP and NF, the England First Party, the Britain First Party, the New Nationalist Party, the Freedom Party and the British People's Party are currently active in Great Britain, but they are all marginalised in the political debate and have not achieved any electoral successes worth mentioning.



NICK GRIFFIN

Born on 01.03.1959 in Barnet. Law degree, MA (Hons.) from the University of Cambridge. Member of the British National Party (BNP), party spokesman (since 1995). Leader of the British National Party (since 1999). Member of the European Parliament since 2009. Non-attached. Committees: Industry, Research and Energy (substitute), Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (member)



ANDREW BRONS

Born on 16.07.1947 in London. Political studies at the University of York. Lecturer at Harrogate College. Member of the European Parliament since 2009. Non-attached. Committees: Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (substitute), Constitutional Affairs (member).

The BNP entered the European Parliament for the first time ever with two seats (6.5%). Nick Griffin and Andrew Henry William Brons have since been representing the BNP in the EP as non-attached members. They were elected above all on immigration-related issues and for their strong anti-EU stance. During the election campaign, the BNP sent its supporters to election rallies dressed as pigs wallowing in banknotes who were then beaten by people in bright waistcoats chanting the slogan “Punish the pigs!”.⁶⁹ Their slogan “British Jobs for British Workers” struck a chord with many voters in times of economic crisis. The BNP’s main gains were made in the strongholds of the Labour Party, which had been weakened by the expenses scandal in the British Parliament.

The BNP rejects the euro and advocates British withdrawal from the European Union. It demands a coexistence of states along the model of a “Europe of Fatherlands” with a free market but without economic integration.⁷⁰

Nick Griffin, leader of the BNP and member since 1995, was editor of the party newspaper “The Rune and Spearhead” between 1995 and 1997. In the articles he has published, he has never made any secret of his ideology:

“Mass alien immigration and suicidally low birthrate mean that the White Race is poised on the brink of a precipice of rapid and irreversible decline. If we do not step back now, we face political and then physical

extinction. A stark choice. UNITE OR DIE!”⁷¹

In 1998, he was charged with incitement to racial hatred because of an article in “The Rune” and ended up in court. Griffin responded to the accusations by stating that:

“I am well aware that the orthodox opinion is that 6 million Jews were gassed and cremated and turned into lampshades. Orthodox opinion also once held that the world is flat ... I have reached the conclusion that the ‘extermination’ tale is a mixture of Allied wartime propaganda, extremely profitable lie, and latter witch-hysteria.”⁷²

Griffin was sentenced to a two-year suspended sentence and ordered to pay a fine of £2,300.

Shortly after his election to the European Parliament, Griffin attracted attention with his comments that boats carrying refugees from North Africa to Europe should be sunk as a deterrent. The reason for his concern was that Europe would be flooded by the “third world”. When questioned by BBC journalists, Griffin stated that a life raft could be thrown to the refugees so that they would not drown and could swim back to Libya.

The Parliament’s decision to award the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought (also known as the EU Human Rights Prize) to activists in the Arab Spring

gave rise to the following tweet by Griffin: “Sakharov Prize this year going to “Arab Spring”. Sick joke as it neo-con scam that opens door to Islamist extremists.”⁷³

Andrew Henry William Brons began his political career in 1964 as a member of the National Socialist Movement (NSM), an organisation founded in 1962 by the well-known right-wing extremists Colin Jordan and John Tyndall. He was also quick to reveal his anti-Semitic ideology. In 1965 in a letter to Françoise Dior, Colin Jordan’s wife, he wrote:

“Also, however, he mentioned such activities as bombing synagogues. On this subject I have a dual view, in that although I realise he is well-intentioned, I feel that our public image may suffer considerable damage as a result of these activities. I am however open to correction on this point.”⁷⁴

Shortly afterwards, Brons moved to the British National Party and eventually to the National Front. He was elected NF Chairman in 1979. In 1983, as head of the policy department, he published the National Front’s election manifesto, which called for a worldwide system of apartheid. Later in the same document came the following statement:

“The National Front rejects the whole concept of multiracialism. We recognise inherent racial differences in Man. The races of Man are profoundly unequal in their charac-

teristics, potential and abilities [...] We believe the gradual dismantlement of the Apartheid system over the last 17 years to be retrograde ... The alternative to Apartheid, multi-racialism, envisages an extinction of the White man.”⁷⁵

In 2009, when asked about his life and, above all, his thoughts concerning attacks on synagogues, Brons replied: “People do silly things when they are 17.” However, in a letter to President Jerzy Buzek of September 2011, it becomes clear that Brons by no means distances himself, at the age of more than 60, from his racist, anti-Semitic and xenophobic attitudes of the past. Some MEPs from other parties made it clear during a memorial ceremony in plenary following the right-wing extremist attacks in Oslo in July 2011 that the far-right views of the perpetrator Anders Behring Breivik were the real motivation for his hate crimes. Brons commented:

“Martin Schulz, Guy Verhofstadt, Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Diana Dodds spoke as though Breivik’s real crime was being a racist, a xenophobe or a person on the ‘far right’ and not the appalling murder of seventy-six young persons [...] [Breivik] was not a Nationalist and his opposition to immigration would seem to be restricted to opposition to Muslim immigration. Breivik is a Zionist [...]”⁷⁶

Brons thus regards his explicitly racist and xenophobic views as “normal” and

at the same time denies that Breivik was a “true” nationalist, claiming that he had only acted out of opposition to Muslim immigration, and the attacks had been planned for Zionist motives. In this way, Brons is seeking to detract from the delegitimisation of racist and xenophobic views, distance himself from Breivik and, moreover, implicitly brand him the actual enemy of all true nationalists. Breivik did indeed turn out to be a Zion-

ist. Brons and the BNP were supported in his complaint about the conduct during the memorial ceremony in plenary by the Austrian FPÖ, the FN and the Greater Romania Party. BNP members are also happy to mix with other right-wing populists and extremists on other occasions. BNP representatives also took part in the trip to the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo (see the Country Report on France).





COUNTRY REPORT: FRANCE

Absolute majority voting with a run-off. A candidate who wins more than half of the vote cast in the first round automatically enters parliament. A run-off vote will take place in the other constituencies between all candidates who have achieved at least 12.5% of the vote. The candidate winning the relative majority then wins. Parties can agree between themselves who should run in the second round.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN FRANCE

In French politics, right-wing extremists were largely marginalised after 1945. The trauma of the Second World War,

the experiences of the Vichy Regime and, not least, the strong pulling power of Gaullism for nationalist and patriotic tendencies were the reasons for this. Nevertheless, far-right groups that were prepared to use violence did exist, and right-wing extremist parties did achieve some electoral successes in post-war France. In 1956, the Union de défense des commerçants et artisans (UDCA) [Union for the defence of small traders and artisans] entered the National Assembly for the first time with 52 members, including Jean-Marie Le Pen, but it soon disappeared into oblivion. 1969 saw the creation of the Ordre Nouveau [New Order], a movement whose leader went on to found the Front National in 1972 in order to overcome the fragmentation of the far-right camp. The leadership of Jean-Marie Le Pen was supposed to unite anti-republicans, conservative Catholics and racists.⁷⁸ However, the Parti des forces nouvelles (PFN) [Party of new forces] quickly split away in 1974 because of differences concerning the leadership of the FN under Le Pen. The FN also remained weak at the level of election successes: in National Assembly elections in 1973, the party won 0.5% of the vote, a share which fell further to 0.2% in 1981. At this time, the main issues championed by the FN were public order, moral values and Catholicism. Verbal attacks against immigrants tended to be the exception. Even though the FN's issues remained essentially the same, the party achieved a breakthrough in 1983 in local elections and in 1984 in European elections, gaining around 11% of

the vote. The reasons for this could be found in a growing dissatisfaction with the established parties, the growing feeling within the French population of impending crisis and the FN's flexible strategy for reacting to these problems. By this time, the party was advocating a liberal economic policy and focusing on the issues of internal security and immigration. A pro-European policy was also being pursued.⁷⁹ As early as 1986, the FN fielded candidates in all 22 regions of France and obtained around 10% of the vote (winning 137 of the 1,682 available seats). As a result, the FN was able to influence the formation of coalitions in twelve regions. Strategic agreements with the established parties and even five appointments for the FN marked the beginning of the party's rise. In 1986, following a change to the electoral system, the FN entered the National Assembly for the first time, taking 35 seats. However, the other parties refused to cooperate with it: of 9,152 motions for statutory amendments lodged by the FN in two years, only one was discussed and eventually adopted.⁸⁰ Up to the end of the 1990s, the FN was able to consolidate its position in elections to the National Assembly and in regional and presidential elections at up to 15% of the vote. This enabled it to continuously increase its influence, above all at regional level, and the party participated in coalitions for the first time. In 1998, the FN won a total of 275 seats in regional councils. In terms of issues, the party did not adapt its pro-European stance until the beginning of the 1990s with the Maastricht referendum.

During the Gulf War in 1990, the party also moved away from its pro-American stance and now combined two issues: the United States wanted to promote a capitalist “new world order”, while the EU was an instrument for achieving this Americanisation and the obliteration of national identities.⁸¹ At the beginning of 1999, the Mouvement national républicain (MNR) broke away from the FN, as a result of which the latter lost a large part of its leadership. This was prompted by the question of the strategic approach to other right-wing extremist parties and groups and the question of Le Pen’s leadership style. In 1997, Le Pen physically attacked a politician from the Socialist party after his daughter Marine le Pen had lost a mayoral election to the socialist candidate. As a result, Le Pen was banned from standing for election for one year. The MNR initially obtained only 2-3% of the vote at elections, and is now regularly achieves less than 1%. The FN again lost votes at national level between 2002 and 2007. The party also had to accept losses in terms of absolute results at regional level. At the 2002 presidential election, a right-wing extremist party managed to advance to the second round of voting for the first time. Le Pen achieved 16.9% (first round) and 17.8% (second round). In 2007, he was defeated in the first round with 10.4% of the vote. In the 2012 elections, his daughter was eliminated in the first round with 17.9% of the vote. After the elections to the National Assembly in June 2012, the FN took seats at national level for the first time since 1997. One of the two deputies is

Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, the niece of Jean-Marie Le Pen.

In January 2011, Marine Le Pen took over the leadership of the FN from her father. She won against Bruno Gollnich, a holocaust denier and representative of the classic neo-Nazi tendency within the party. She wants to give the party a modern image and refrains from the openly racist and anti-Semitic baiting that was usual under her father. Marine is in favour of women’s rights, does not agitate against homosexuals and supports abortion, while of course at the same time calling on France to defend itself against the supposed danger of Islam. The offensive hostility to Muslims and the EU, the postulating in favour of a strong national state and priority “for our compatriots” in social and economic policy have remained unchanged under Marine Le Pen.⁸² On these issues, the FN is successfully driving forward the established parties. The Union pour un mouvement populaire (UMP) [Union for a popular movement] and above all the former President Nicolas Sarkozy are trying to win back votes with their nationalistic speeches, their hard line on internal security and their racist attacks against Muslims and Roma. Sarkozy caused a sensation in 2010 with his policy on the Roma and, in so doing, gained sympathy from the right-wing extremist camp. After forced evictions at Roma settlements, he deported over 1,000 Roma.

In June 2008, the Nouvelle Droite Populaire (NDP) [New Popular Right] broke away from the FN, to be followed in

September 2008 by the Nouvelle Droite Républicaine (NDR) [New Republican Right]. While the NDP tends towards an openly far-right, anti-American and anti-Semitic position, the NDR is more pro-American and economically liberal.⁸³

Both parties are marginalised, apart from a few electoral successes at local level. The same is true for the Parti de la France (PDF), which broke away in 2009.

**MARINE LE PEN**

Born on 05.08.1968 in Neuilly-sur-Seine. Master's degree in law (1990). Postgraduate diploma (DEA) in criminal law (1991). Diploma to practise as a lawyer (1991). Lawyer practising in Paris (1992-1998). Director of the National Front legal service (1998-2004). Deputy chair of the Front National (FN) (since 2003). Member of Nord-Pas-de-Calais Regional Council (1998-2004). Member of the Île-de-France Regional Council (2004-2009). Member of the European Parliament since 2004. Non-attached. Committees: International Trade (substitute), Employment and Social Affairs (member).

**BRUNO GOLLNISCH**

Born on 28.01.1950 in Neuilly-sur-Seine. Degree in Japanese and Malay/Indonesian from the Institute of Oriental Languages (1971 and 1973). Graduate in politics of the Paris Institute of Political Studies (1973). Doctor of law (Paris, 1978). Lawyer practising before the Court of Appeal in Paris (since 1980). Professor of Japanese language and civilisation at the University of Lyons (since 1981). Member of the National Front policy bureau (since 1986); National Front Secretary-General (since 1995). Member of Lyons City Council (since 1996). Member of the Rhône-Alpes Regional Council (National Front Group chairman). Member of the National Assembly for Rhône (1986-1988). Member of the European Parliament since 1989. Non-attached. Committees: Budget (substitute), Transport and Tourism (member).

**JEAN-MARIE LE PEN**

Born on 20.06.1928 in La Trinité-sur-Mer (Morbihan). Law degree (licence). Higher degree (DES) in politics. Record publisher (1963-1985). Founder and chair of the Front National (FN). Member of the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur Regional Council (1992-2000). Member of the National Assembly (1956-1986). Chair of the National Front group in the National Assembly (1986). Rapporteur on the war budget (1958). Rapporteur on the defence budget at the Sénat de la Communauté (parliamentary assembly for the French colonies). Member of the European Parliament since 1984 (with interruptions). Non-attached. Committees: Agriculture and Rural Development (substitute), Fisheries (member).

In the 2009 European Parliament elections, the FN won a total of 6.3% of the vote, around 600,000 fewer than in 2004 (9.8%). Jean-Marie Le Pen, Marine Le Pen and Bruno Gollnisch sit in Parliament as non-attached members.

Jean-Marie Le Pen has been an MEP, apart from for a short period, since 1984. He has several criminal convictions, has called the holocaust “a detail of history”, believes in the “inequality of races” and was castigated for his statement that “once 25 million Muslims (lived) in the country, they would issue the orders and “thrash” the French”.⁸⁴ He has also been found guilty several times of assault, incitement to racial hatred, slander and other offences. This former member of the Foreign Legion and combatant in the war in Indochina, the Suez Crisis and the Algerian war is suspected of having tortured members of the Algerian National Liberation Front. He himself does not dispute the charge: “I have nothing to hide. I tortured because we had to”.⁸⁵ Jean-Marie Le Pen has repeatedly attracted attention in the past for his racist and anti-Semitic statements. He maintains close international contact with like-minded people. Under his leadership, and at the invitation of the extreme right-wing and nationalist Issuikai movement, representatives of the Hungarian Jobbik party, the Belgian Vlaams Belang, the British National Party and the Austrian FPÖ visited the Yasukuni shrine in Tokyo on 14.08.2010. It is there that the fallen soldiers of the Japanese military since 1868 are commemorated. The

wars, occupations and cruel war crimes that Japan inflicted on its neighbours are downplayed as “holy wars”, and the war criminals are honoured.⁸⁶

Marine Le Pen has been an MEP since 2004. Although, unlike her father, she refrains from crude racist and anti-Semitic statements in order to be electable by a more middle-class group of voters, she also makes no secret of her racist ideology. She has compared Muslim street prayers with the occupation of France during the Second World War.

“There may not be any tanks or soldiers, but occupation there is”.⁸⁷

Her subsequent charge of incitement to racial hatred is the price she paid for the support of those in the party who feel that the modernisation and swing towards being a right-wing populist party are going too far. The shift from an openly far-right party to a right-wing populist party is also apparent as regards its anti-Semitism. Although unthinkable to her father, in 2006 Marine wanted to visit Israel with a delegation of the European Party, but she was declared undesirable before the trip took place. A Jewish radio station in Paris invited her to an interview in March 2011, but it was eventually called off after violent protests. In reaction to the cancellation of the interview, Marine announced the reactivation of the “Cercle national des juifs français” [National circle of French Jews] in order to provide an “authentic” voice against the protests of Jewish organisations.⁸⁸ Even though her father’s

anti-Semitism has not entirely disappeared, it is nevertheless concealed behind an anti-Muslim racism. In contrast to her father, it is therefore possible for her to describe the holocaust as the “worst crime of the past”.⁸⁹ Politically she has been following the FN line since the mid-1990s. She complains of the danger of uncontrolled immigration, advocates the abolition of the euro and the suspension of the Schengen Agreement, and rants against globalisation and American multinationals.

Bruno Gollnisch, who has been in the European Parliament since 1989, represents the openly right-wing extremist wing of the party. He entered the FN in the 1980s, and as a Professor of Japanese language and culture he is one of the few outstanding “intellectuals” in the party. He was one of the key figures in and also chairman of the short-lived “Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty” (ITS) parliamentary group. Gollnisch has described anti-racism as “intellectual AIDS” and fought a legal battle extending over years for denial of crimes against humanity. In 2004, at a press conference concerning the so-called Rousso Report, which investigated the political views of academics at the University of Lyons, he declared that:

“No serious historian completely endorses the findings of the Nurem-

berg trials. I think that the tragedy of the concentration camps should continue to be discussed freely. Historians are entitled to discuss the number of people killed and how they died.”⁹⁰

In 2005, the University banned him from university activities for five years. In 2007, he received a prison sentence and was ordered to pay a fine. In 2009, the sentence was lifted by the Court of Appeal. The aim of making such statements bordering on the criminal is to attract attention in order to ensure that he is constantly in the media. This is also shown by his statements on the outbursts of Jean-Marie Le Pen on the “inequality of the races” and the massive media response to them:

“Anybody who forces his words on another also forces his values on him”.⁹¹

When Pope Benedict XVI indirectly criticised Sarkozy’s expulsion of Roma, Gollnisch adopted typical far-right arguments and publicly attacked the Vatican:

“If the Roma were to settle on Saint Peter’s Square [...], then we could continue the discussion.”⁹²

Bruno Gollnisch also took part in the trip to the Yasukuni shrine in Tokyo.



COUNTRY REPORT: GREECE

Proportional representation.
3% hurdle.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN GREECE

After the political changes of 1974 and the collapse of the military dictatorship, right-wing extremist parties again emerged on the political scene. For example, the Eniaio Ethnikistiko Kinima (ENEK) [United Nationalist Movement] was founded in 1979, but failed to play any significant role in elections up to its dissolution in 1989. Also largely politically marginalised was the Ethniki Poli-

tiki Enosis (EPEN) [National Political Union] which, despite holding a seat in the European Parliament between 1984 and 1999, regularly polled less than 1% of the vote and has not been active since 1996. The one EPEN MEP, Spyridon Zournatzis, created the first far-right political group in the European Parliament, known as the “Group of the European Right”, in 1984. The younger members of ENEK and EPEN tried to attract the Elliniko Metopo [Greek Front], founded in 1994. With its good contacts to the French Front National, Elliniko Metopo, repeatedly drew attention with its high-profile campaigns against immigrants but was unable to translate this attention into concrete electoral successes. A resolution by the party led to Elliniko Metopo being wound up in 2005 and merging with the Laikós Orthódoxos Synagermós (LAOS) [People’s Orthodox Rally], which had been founded in 2000. Its founder, the journalist Georgios Karatzaferis, who is still the party’s leader today, founded LAOS as a reaction to his exclusion from the liberal-conservative Nea Dimokratia (ND) [New Democracy] party. He had accused an ND party official of being homosexual and of having a relationship with ex-Prime Minister Karamanlis.⁹³ Karatzaferis, MEP from 2004 to 2007, had in the past drawn attention to himself with his anti-Semitic and revisionist statements. At the time of founding the party, Karatzaferis declared that:

“We are the only true Greeks. We are not any of those Jews, homosexuals or communists.”⁹⁴

Talking about the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center in September 2011, the then member of the Greek Parliament brought out the familiar conspiracy theories:

“4,000 Jews working in the Twin Towers did not go to work on the day of the attack.”⁹⁵

For Karatzaferis, who has also published a Greek translation of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion, the holocaust is merely a collection of “fairy tales from Auschwitz and Dachau.”⁹⁶ In an article in the party newspaper Alpha Ena in 2009, he also commented on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, claiming that the Jews had turned into murderers who were as heinous as the Nazis. On the possibility of a “possible coexistence” with Jews, he goes on to write that:

“With a little effort it would be possible to include them [the Jews] in a Society of Justice, solidarity and understanding. It is difficult to do such a thing with a race that CRUCIFIED God on the one and only time he came down to earth. And yet, we must try. They do not know the evil THEY DO. GOD, their GREATEST VICTIM is forever reminding us: “THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO” ”⁹⁷ (stress and insertion in the original)

Other LAOS politicians also regularly come out with xenophobic and anti-Semitic statements. Adonis Georgiadis, former Deputy Minister in the Ministry of

Development, believes that “the Jews” have brought the banks under their control and are now trying to conquer Greece, something which must be prevented.⁹⁸ LAOS is a racist, anti-socialist and homophobic party. It opposes globalisation and Turkish accession to the EU and espouses an ethnic nationalism. Immigrants - particularly those from Albania - are repeatedly the focus of its agitation. Because of its Orthodox ideology, it supports a Greek rapprochement with Serbia and Russia and rejects European integration.⁹⁹ In 2007, LAOS entered the Greek Parliament with 3.8% of the vote – the first far-right party to do so since the end of the military dictatorship. In the 2009 elections it was able to slightly improve on this result, taking 5.6% of the vote, and participated in the Papadimos government from 2011 as the fourth-largest political group, with control of four ministries. In February 2012, LAOS withdrew its support for the government because of the cuts resulting from the European financial crisis. In the subsequent elections, it was just unable to overcome the 3% hurdle, polling only 2.9% of the vote. Because of the European financial crisis and EU cuts, Greece is currently facing a deep economic and social crisis. The coalition negotiations following the May 2012 election failed, and in the fresh elections in June 2012 LAOS polled only 1.5% of the vote, falling well below the threshold needed to enter parliament.

One of the longest standing right-wing extremist parties in Greece is the openly neo-Nazi and racist Chrysi Avgi (CA)

[Golden Dawn]. Founded in 1985 and registered as a party in 1993, it follows a national-socialist tradition.¹⁰⁰ It opposes globalisation, supports a “Europe of Nations” and dreams of a Greater Greece stretching to the Adriatic in the west. To achieve this, it advocates the liquidation of Macedonia and Albania, which would be shared with a Greater Serbian empire.¹⁰¹ The CA’s nationalism is based on its Catholic/Orthodox faith. For example, the party’s manifesto states that:

“Only a 100% Orthodox Greece is worthy of the Greeks because they have “Spartan” blood in their veins. Our forefathers died for the Orthodox faith”.¹⁰² [stress in the original]

In the past, supporters of CA regularly clashed with political opponents, immigrants and ethnic minorities, using violence on a massive scale as well as armed attacks. In this respect, it was apparently able to rely on considerable sympathy within the police. In 2008, after a policeman shot a left-wing youth, fierce riots broke out throughout Greece. Video footage of the clashes show large groups of hooded right-wing extremists among the police and in attacks on young left-wingers.¹⁰³ CA supporters were also involved in the massive riots against immigrants that took place in Athens in 2011. For several weeks, neo-Nazis chased immigrants through the streets and looted immigrant businesses. A 21-year-old man was stabbed and died.¹⁰⁴ In elections to the Greek Parliament in May 2012, the CA broke through the 3% barrier for

the first time (winning 6.9% of the vote) and was able to enter the national parliament. It managed to repeat this result in the elections in June 2012. At local level, the party had been successful for some time: in local elections in Athens in 2010, the CA, using the slogan “Let’s make Athens Greek again”, took 5.3% of the vote, polling as much as almost 20% in some areas of the city. In contrast to previous years, in its campaign the party focused less on its familiar xenophobic rhetoric and more on attacking the political elite and the corrupt system of government. The fact that the CA is taken seriously by the established parties is shown by an initiative of the socialist Panellinio Sosialistiko Kinima (Pasok) [Pan-Hellenic Socialist Movement], which formed the government up to the elections at the beginning of 2012. Internal Affairs Minister Chrysochoidis had illegal immigrants rounded up throughout the country and put into newly-built detention camps. The CA commented mockingly on this new-found interest in the “problem of foreigners”:

“If we were to get into parliament, it might happen that the established parties will don Ku Klux Klan hoods and chase illegal immigrants.”¹⁰⁵

As in many other European countries,

the CA has managed solely through its electoral successes to put the government under pressure to step up its policy against immigrants. Instead of identifying the social and economic reasons for conflicts and crime and condemning the verbal attacks on immigrants, the government is shifting its position towards that of the CA in the hope of winning votes. The CA also has good international contacts with neo-Nazis, including with the German NPD. However, these have recently suffered as a result of anti-Greek statements by the NPD in light of the bail-out.¹⁰⁶

In February 2012, the right-wing populist Anexartiti Ellines (ANEL) [Independent Greeks] was founded. Exploiting anti-German sentiment, it opposes the austerity measures resulting from the financial crisis.¹⁰⁷ In the parliamentary elections held shortly after its formation, the Independent Greeks obtained 10.6% of the vote, making it the fourth-largest party in parliament. In the June elections, however, ANEL had clearly lost support and won only 7.5% of the vote.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Greece



NIKI TZAVELA

Born on 30.06.1947 in Lamia. Member of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy group, Vice-Chair/Member of the Bureau. Graduate in Industrial Psychology and Labour Economics. President and CEO of the Greek Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED) (1989-1993). Vice-Chair of the Foundation for the Rehabilitation of Albanians of Greek Origin. Vice-Chair of Intracom. Vice-Chair of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games Organising Committee. Vice-Chair of the Kokkalis Foundation. Adviser for International Development of the ANTENNA TV Group. Member of the Greek Parliament elected with New Democracy party (1994-1996). Member of the Dean's Council of Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Bos-

ton (1998-2009). Honorary Member of the Arab International Women's Forum (from 2004). Fellowships of the American Field Service, Eisenhower Foundation, OECD and the Adenauer Foundation. Committees: Development (substitute), Industry, Research and Energy (member), Policy Challenges Committee (member).



NIKOLAOS SALAVRAKOS

Born on 15.02.1946 in Kalamata. Graduate in Law. Lawyer and corporate legal adviser (1971). Legal adviser for LAOS (2003) Member of the EPt since 2009. European of Freedom and Democracy group. Committees: Fisheries (substitute), Foreign Affairs (members), Petitions (member)

In the elections to the European Parliament, LAOS polled 7.1% of the vote and was thus entitled to appoint two MEPs to Parliament. Niki Tzavela and Nikolaos Salavrakos are members of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy group (EFD).

Tzavela entered the European Parliament for the first time in 2009 and is Vice-Chair of the EFD. She was a rapporteur for the report on "European Broadband: investing in digitally driven growth", and is involved in science and fiscal policy.¹⁰⁸ Tzavela is currently rapporteur for the report on "industrial, energy and other aspects of shale gas and oil" and will shortly present her first draft to the Industry Committee. It is notable that Tzavela, as a representative of an anti-Semitic and xenophobic party, has so far worked in the European Parliament without any problems resulting from her political background. Although politicians of other parties have certainly been critical of her position on certain issues, for example concerning shale gas,¹⁰⁹ she has not yet faced any criticism based on the fact that she is a LAOS right-wing extremist. Representatives of other parties attended the brunch she organised in April 2011 with Phil Angelides, Chairman of the American "Financial Crisis Inquiry Commission" (FCIC). Its aim was to examine

the causes of the European financial crisis.¹¹⁰ The case of Tsavela illustrates a creeping normalisation process concerning the presence of far-right parties and MEPs in the European Parliament. She exploits the political stage which the Parliament offers her. In around two and half years, Tsavela has submitted more than 580 parliamentary questions to the Commission or the Council.

Salavrakos has been an MEP since 2009. Also very active, Salavrakos has submitted more than 500 parliamentary questions. Together with MEPs from the Danish People's Party, the FPÖ, Vlaams Belang and the Lega Nord, Salavrakos submitted a motion for a resolution on strengthening the EU Border Agency Frontex.¹¹¹ This called for the budget of Frontex to be increased so that the Agency could efficiently carry out its urgent tasks. A comment by Andreas Mölzer (FPÖ; see the country report for Austria) illustrates the priorities of the EFD members within the EU, as exemplified by the motion concerning Frontex:

"In order to strengthen Frontex, one of the few sensible EU agencies, the so-called Agency for Fundamental Rights could, for example, be closed. Its only job is to conduct left-wing snooping."¹¹²



COUNTRY REPORT: ITALY

Personalised proportional representation
4% hurdle.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN ITALY

The neo-fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano (MSI) [Italian Social Movement] was founded in Italy in 1946. Unlike in other European countries, this party was successful in elections and was represented in the Italian Parliament from the outset. The MSI was founded by fascists and former combatants of the Italian Social Republic. In 1948, the MSI obtained 2% of the vote in parliamentary elections and was subsequently able to stabilise its

results up to the 1990s at around 5%, with occasional spikes upwards. The MSI was represented in every parliamentary term up to the dissolution of the party and the formation of the Alleanza Nazionale (AN) [National Alliance] and Fiamma Tricolore (FT) [Tricolour Flame] in 1995.¹¹³ In southern Italy, the MSI won up to 15% of the vote. The party also included supporters of violent terrorist groups, such as Pino Rauti. Rauti was Chairman of the MSI from 1990-91. In 1995 he founded the FT, and in 2004 the Movimento Idea Sociale [Social Ideal Movement] party. In 1956 he had already founded the Ordine Nuovo [New Order], which was responsible for various bomb attacks between the 1960s and the 1980s. Giorgio Almirante – co-founder and long-standing Chairman of the MSI, publisher of the racist and anti-Semitic magazine “La difesa della razza” [the defence of the race] and representative of the more radical wing of the party – was an MEP from 1979 up to his death in 1988. Between 1957 and 1960, the MSI supported the minority government of the Catholic Democrazia Cristiana (DC) [Christian Democracy], but was thereafter always isolated in parliament until the 1980s. A certain change then came along in the way the other parties dealt with the MSI. Without having undergone any ideological transformation, the MSI was gradually brought out of political isolation and integrated by the other parties, though they still maintained a certain distance.¹¹⁴ After a brief spell in government between 1994 and 1995 in coalition with the Lega Nord and the Forza Italia party founded by media tycoon

and billionaire Silvio Berlusconi, the MSI collapsed as a result of disputes about the party’s direction. The Alleanza Nazionale (AN), which pursued a more moderate national-conservative course, and the neo-fascist Fiamma Tricolore were then founded in 1995. In 2009, the AN and Forza Italia merged to form the Popolo della Libertà (PdL) [People of Freedom], a party strongly influenced by Berlusconi.



The regionalist and right-wing populist Lega Nord per l'indipendenza della Padania [Northern League for the independence of Padania] was founded back in December 1989. The Lega North is mainly active in the north of Italy and advocates the break-away of, or at least

autonomy for, Northern Italy. Its ideology is based on the conviction that northern Italians are of a separate ethnic origin (Padanian nationalism) and are superior to southern Italians. Southern Italy and above all Rome are viewed as a hotbed of corruption and crime that wastes the money earned in the north. It opposes “the behemoth that is the Italian central state and the lazy southern Italians” and “throwing money down the drain”.¹¹⁵ Alongside criticism of the European Union, the party’s populist manifesto accordingly stresses a racist rejection of immigration and, in particular, northern Italian social protectionism. Politically, the regionally-rooted Lega Nord advocates the protection of the northern Italian culture, language and economy. It espouses a harsh crackdown on crime and rejects immigration into Italy, especially from non-western countries. It pursues frequent campaigns against the building of mosques in which pigs are regularly led across potential building sites in order to defile them in religious terms. The Lega opposes the further transfer of national powers to Europe and advocates a “Europe of the Regions”. It has been very successful in certain regional elections and, since the beginning of the 1990s, has regularly polled around 15-17% of the vote in Lombardy. Its best result so far was recorded in Veneto in 2010, when it won 35.2% of the vote. In national elections, the Lega fluctuated in the 1990s between 8% and 10%, and was able to repeat this result in 2010 (8.3% of the vote) after a brief drop between 2001 and 2006. When serving in the first Berlusconi government in 1995,

the Lega controlled a total of five ministries, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The coalition fell after only a few months. After the collapse of the government, the Lega went into opposition and did not serve in government again until Berlusconi’s second government between 2001 and 2006, and then again from 2008 to 2011. In national elections, it focuses above all on the fear of alienation and immigration, exploiting xenophobic feelings.¹¹⁶ The Lega currently sees Italy as being involved in a “European economic war” and hopes for a renegotiation of the European treaties and a geo-political restructuring as a result of the possible bankruptcy of the Italian State.

In 2011, the party head Umberto Bossi presented a map on which northern Italy formed an independent European macro-region together with Bavaria and Austria. Bossi is very clear:

“At the negotiating table, we Padanians will present ourselves as the victors because we have predicted for years that Europe, as it is currently constructed, would fail. However, Italy will sit at this table as a beaten nation.”¹¹⁷

In support, the two Lega MEPs Mara Bizotto and Mario Borghezio spread the rumour that Germany had already given up the euro and was having deutschmarks printed in Switzerland.

The successes of the right-wing extrem-

ist and populist parties and their normalisation in everyday political life has taken place against the backdrop of the transformation of Italy in the 1980s from a country from which people traditionally emigrated to being a country of immigration. At the same time, xenophobic, anti-Semitic and racist attitudes are widespread in Italy.¹¹⁸ The Berlusconi government in particular has toughened its stance in the political debate against Muslims and immigrants. Violence against immigrants and Roma

are not exceptional occurrences in Italy. Violence is particularly exercised by people from sub-cultural circles, such as the neo-fascist Casa Pound network. In December 2011, the right-wing extremist Gianluca Casseri killed two Senegalese traders and seriously injured three others in Florence. Casseri came from the milieu of Casa Pound. A Lega activist commented on the racist murders in Florence: "That's good, we'll have two mouths less to feed."¹¹⁹

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Italy



MARIO BORGHEZIO

Born on 03.12.1947 in Turin. Graduate in Law. Lawyer (1977). President of the 'Government of Padania' (1994-2004). President of the Piedmont section of the Lega Nord (2001). Member of the federal council of the Lega Nord (2001). Member of Turin City Council (1990-2001). Member of the Italian Parliament (1992-2001). Under-Secretary of State for Justice (1994). Treasurer of the Alliance of Independent Democrats in Europe (ADIE) (2007-2008). Member of the EP since 2001. European of Freedom and Democracy group. Committees: Internal Market and Consumer Protection (substitute), Special Committee on Organised Crime, Corruption and Money Laundering (member), Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (member).



MATTEO SALVINI

Born on 09.03.1973 in Milan. Secondary school-leaving certificate in classical subjects (1992). Journalist (since 1997). Secretary of Lega Nord, Milan (1998). Vice-Secretary of the Lega Lombarda (2007). Municipal councillor (since 1993). Member of Parliament (2008). Member of the Italian Parliament (2004-2006). European of Freedom and Democracy group. Committees: International Trade (substitute), Internal Market and Consumer Protection (member).



IORELLLO PROVERA

Born on 31.03.1946 in Vigevano. Doctor of medicine and surgery, specialising in paediatrics and child care, Pavia University. Honorary degree in political science from the University of Oradea. President of the Sondrio Provincial Council (2004-2009). Member of Parliament (1992-1996), special envoy of the President of the Chamber of Deputies to Rwanda (1995). Member of the Senate (1996-2006). Rapporteur for the Italian Senate of the law ratifying the treaty adopting a constitution for Europe. Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the OSCE (1992-1994). Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and of the Western European Union (WEU) (2000-2006). Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the Italian Senate (2001-2006). Rapporteur of the committee of inquiry into paedophilia and child trafficking at the Parlia-

mentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2001-2006). Founder and Chair of the COPAM voluntary organisation in the field of cooperation with developing countries. Grand Officer of the Order "Star of Romania". European of Freedom and Democracy group. Committees: Industry, Research and Energy (substitute), Subcommittee on Security and Defence (substitute), Committee on Foreign Affairs (vice-chair).

LORENZO FONTANA

Born on 10.04.1980 in Verona. Degree in political science from the University of Padua (2011). Worked at the Verona exhibition centre, providing agriculture, trade, exhibition management and public relations services (from 2000). Freelance journalist contributing to La Padania (from 2006). Federal vice-coordinator of the movement Giovani Padani [Padania Youth] (from 2002). Provincial vice-secretary of the Verona section of Lega Nord (since 2007). District councillor in Verona (2002-2007). Member of Verona municipal council European of Freedom and Democracy group. Committees: Foreign Affairs (substitute), Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (substitute), Culture and Education (vice-chair).

ORESTE ROSSI

Born on 24.03.1964 in Alessandria. Chemist at PPG Industries (1987-1990). Journalist and publicist (since 2000). Provincial Secretary for Alessandria of Piemonte Autonomia Regionale (1984-1987). Member of Piemont Autonomista (1987-1989) and of Lega Nord Piemont (1989-1994; 2002-2009). National Chair of Lega Nord Piemont (2000-2002); Federal Councillor for Lega Nord (1997-2000). Lega Nord representative for Italy (1993-2001). Member of Alessandria City Council (since 1990). Member of the Alessandria Provincial Council (1999-2004). Member of the Piedmont Regional Council (2000-2009). Group leader (since 2005); President of the Piedmont Regional Council (2005). Member of the Italian Parliament (1992-2000). Chair or vice-chair of parliamentary friendship committees between Italian MPs and those from other countries. Member of the European Parliament since 2009. European of Freedom and Democracy group. Committees: Internal Market and Consumer Protection (substitute), Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (member).

MARA BIZZOTTO

Born on 03.06.1972 in Bassano del Grappa (VI). Secondary school-leaving certificate from 'Luigi Einaudi' technical and commercial college, Bassano del Grappa. Co-author of two business consultancy studies in Bassano del Grappa and Cartigliano; currently self-employed. Joined the Lega Nord in 1993. Political secretary for the Bassano del Grappa constituency (since 2005). Member of the Lega Nord provincial executive for Vicenza (2005). Member of the national executive of the Liga Veneta section of the Lega Nord (2008); member of Rosà (Vicenza) Municipal Council. Member of the first Lega Nord-run municipal council in the province of Vicenza. The youngest municipal councillor in the Veneto Region at the age of 21 (1993). Leader of the Lega Nord in the municipality of Rosà (1997-2004) and in the municipality of Tezze sul Brenta (Vicenza) (2004-2009). Elected regional councillor for the Veneto Region (2000). Re-elected to the Veneto Regional Council (2005). Member of the European Parliament since 2009. European of Freedom and Democracy group. Committees: Transport and Tourism (substitute), Petitions (substitute), Employment and Social Affairs (member).

FRANCESCO ENRICO SPERONI

Born on 04.10.1946 in Busto Arsizio. Master's in political science and in law. Flight engineer (1970-1997). Chairman of the Association of Flight Engineers (1980-1981). Chairman of the Lega Lombarda (1991-1994). Member of the municipal councils of Albizzate (1987), Samarate (1988) and Busto Arsizio (since 1990). Chairman of the Busto Arsizio municipal council (1993-2011). Chairman of the Committee on Institutional Affairs (1990-1991). Member of Varese provincial council (1997-1999). Member of the Italian Senate (1992-1999). Minister for Institutional Reform (1994-1995). Member of the European Parliament (1989-1994 and since 1999). Italian Government representative to the European Convention (2002-2003). Member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and of the WEU (1994-1995 and 1996-2000). European of Freedom and Democracy group (vice-chair). Committees: Employment and Social Affairs (substitute); Legal Affairs (member)

CLAUDIO MORGANTI

Born on 14.04.1973 in Prato. Europe of Freedom and Democracy group. Committees: Economic and Monetary Affairs (substitute), Budgets (member).

GIANCARLO SCOTTÀ

Born on 11.04.1953 in Vittorio Veneto. Europe of Freedom and Democracy group. Committees: Development (substitute), Environment, Public Health and Food Safety (substitute) Regional Development (substitute), Agriculture and Rural Development (member).

The Lega Nord obtained 10.2% of the vote in the elections to the European Parliament and thus won 9 seats. This result was much better than in 2004 (5.0%). The European election campaign was tailored to the person of Umberto Bossi, the best-known face in the Lega and the Minister for Institutional Reform in the Berlusconi Cabinet in 2009. Bossi was placed at the top of the lists in all constituencies. It was clear before the elections that Bossi would not accept his mandate. But it enabled the Lega to save on fighting expensive campaigns to get their top European candidates known.¹²⁰ The party pursued a clearly euro-sceptic campaign and described the EU as a "creature" that would constantly usurp ever more power. It stressed the differences in Europe and rejected the idea of a common European identity. One of the central issues of its election campaign was the fight against immigration. Posters showing an American Indian with the slogan "They experienced immigration, and now they live in reservations", or a crowded refugee boat with the words "We have stopped the invasion"¹²¹ shaped the public image of the party. The Lega is now represented in the European Parliament by Mara Bizzotto, Mario Borghezio, Lorenzo Fontana, Claudio Morganti, Fiorello Provera, Oreste Rossi, Mateo Salvini, Giancarlo Scotta and Francesco Enrico Speroni, who all sit in the Europe of Freedom and Democracy group. In terms of the number of parliamentary questions to the EU Commission of the Council, Bizzotto, Rossi and Provera take top spot

among all other MEPs.¹²² In this way, the Lega seeks to present itself to its electorate as the monitors of European policy.

We will now take a more detailed look at the MEPs Borghezio, Provera and Salvini:

Mario Borghezio has been an MEP since 2001. A former member of the Italian Parliament and former Under-Secretary of State for Justice, he has been convicted several times of racially-motivated offences, including aiding and abetting arson. The Italian Supreme Court was satisfied with the evidence that in 2000 Borghezio, together with six other Lega Nord members, had set fire to the tents of some immigrants who were sleeping under a bridge in Turin.¹²³ In a plenary debate in April 2011 on migration flows from North Africa to Europe, and in particular to Italy, Borghezio spoke of an invasion taking place. The Italian people were entitled, he stated, "to maintain their identity" and "not to be invaded".¹²⁴ He made it clear a few months later what he meant by these rights in his comments on the Oslo attacks of July 2011. Borghezio attracted considerable media attention when he announced:

"Many of Anders Behring Breivik's ideas are good, some very good even. He has been instrumentalised. The fact that his ideas have led to violence is due to the immigrant invasion. [...] saying no to a multi-racial society, heavily criticis-

ing the cowardice of a Europe that seems to have capitulated before an Islamic invasion, the need for an identity-based and Christian answer in the style of the Knights Templar to the flood of globalist ideas are already a common legacy of the Europeans".¹²⁵

Although some of his fellow party members distanced themselves from Borghezio, others rallied around him. Francesco Speroni, for example, sees Breivik as being "in the service of the defence of western civilisation".¹²⁶

Fiorello Provera, a holder of two doctorates, has been a Member of Parliament since 2009 and is Vice-Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. He supports the introduction of a European policy on regulating migration that would "combine development cooperation measures with a more comprehensive political vision encompassing security, regional cooperation, bilateral agreements with countries of origin and transit countries, the safeguarding of human rights and democratisation".¹²⁷ These aims formulated and approved by the European Parliament in the "Report on migration flows arising from instability" were significantly shaped by Provera's role as rapporteur. Provera's role is an example of how representatives of right-wing extremist parties seek to influence the policy of the European Parliament and in so doing present themselves as serious and established politicians. Provera submits numerous motions and questions concerning the

protection of religious minorities (outside the EU), the rights of children and young people, protection against human rights violations and democratisation. Ideologically, he sees himself as being in a struggle against the power of the leftist parties that oppose religion, the family, tradition and the fatherland. "The people" has, in his view, been relegated to a mass of consumers whose purpose is to advance the destructive capitalist process stemming from the EU.¹²⁸ Lega initiatives are also regularly supported by MEPs of other parties. For example, at the end of 2009 Provera applied to put up a poster to commemorate Neda Agha-Soltan, who had been killed in protests in Iran, outside the Parliament building. The poster bore her photo and measured several metres. This initiative, which was ultimately unsuccessful, was supported by Hans-Gert Pöttering (CDU, former President of Parliament and Head of the Konrad-Adenauer Foundation), Guy Verhofstadt (Flemish liberal and democrat, former Prime Minister of Belgium), Adrian Severin (social democrat and former Foreign Minister of Romania), Alexander Alvaro (FDP) and Morten Messerschmidt (Danish People's Party). It seems there was no criticism of the applicant and his membership of a party that repeatedly comes out with racist statements and agitates against immigrants and Islam.

Matteo Salvini was a non-attached MEP from 2004 to 2006 and returned to the European Parliament in 2009 as part of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy group. Salvini is always attracting atten-

tion with his racist and populist statements. In 2004, for example, he stated that parts of Milan looked like Kabul with all the burkas and veils and that it was foolhardy in the face of possible terrorist attacks to allow people to move around in public in disguise.¹²⁹ In 2009, as head of the Lega group in Milan City Council, he demanded that the Milan transport companies introduce metro trains solely for citizens of Milan and for women:

"I have written to the local transport company asking it to reserve the first two carriages on the metro for women, who do not feel safe given

the rudeness of many foreigners. If it continues like this, we will have to demand seats solely for local citizens, who are in a minority and must accordingly be protected."¹³⁰

After serious riots between Egyptians and South Americans in Milan following the death of an Egyptian youth in 2010, Salvini demanded an "iron-fist" approach.

"Now we need controls and deportations - house by house, storey by storey."¹³¹



COUNTRY REPORT: NETHERLANDS

Outright proportional representation. No constituencies. The number of votes per party determines the allocation of seats in parliament. 0.67 % hurdle.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

The Dutch have long been seen as tolerant and open to the world, and after the Second World War right-wing extremist parties focused on defending collaborators and glorifying the Third Reich. They were socially isolated and had no appreciable influence on political opinion. As in other European countries, the first elec-

tion successes of far-right parties were recorded from the 1970s onwards. This trend of increasing election successes and the strengthening of sub-cultural right-wing extremist milieus continued through the 1980s, and by the end of the 1990s, right-wing populists were able to celebrate their first successes. Dutch politics countered this increased strength with repressive measures and a containment policy vis-à-vis right-wing extremists. This “banishment” by the democratic parties of right-wing extremist politicians at national and local level lasted for a long time, but despite this, in ideological terms they were rapidly moving closer to the demands of the right.¹³² Already in the 1990s, the liberal right-wing People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy launched a hard-fought debate on immigration and asylum policy. The right-wing extremist parties got into a quandary over this: on the one hand, the repressive policy against them demanded that they moderate their position and activities, while on the other hand the political players of other parties were trying to keep or win back votes by aligning themselves with or even outdoing them on certain issues. It now seems that the containment policy against the populist right-wing parties has been entirely eroded as a result of the strengthening of right-wing populist parties from 2001, the murder of Theo van Gogh in 2004 and the subsequent social conflicts.

One of the biggest electoral successes was achieved by Wilders in the elections to the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament in 2010. The PVV polled 15.5%

of the vote and thus recorded a gain of over 9% compared to the 2006 election. The right-wing liberal Peoples Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD) and the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) agreed on a coalition that was tolerated by the PVV. Its leader, Geert Wilders, managed to obtain a number of concessions in return for the party’s tolerance. For example, drastic measures to reduce immigration from non-western countries were planned. The political situation was ideal for Wilders: depending on the issue and public perception, Wilders was in a position to either criticise the government or portray himself as part of the government and therefore an “enabler”. The coalition fell apart in early 2012 and fresh elections were scheduled for September.

Geert Wilders owes his formidable political rise to the right-wing populist “spadework” of Pim Fortuyn, who placed the issues of anti-immigration and anti-Islam at the centre of his political agenda. As a result, right-wing extremist and populist ideas have permeated more deeply into the social mainstream and today barely provoke opposition – in stark contrast to the anti-racist norm of the post-war years in the Netherlands.¹³³ Fortuyn’s death prompted the rapid collapse of his party and, like virtually no other, Wilders understood how to fill the right-wing populist gap that ensued by being an undisputed leadership figure. He also represents an extremely anti-Islamist world view and has described the Koran as a fascist book. With his film “Fitna” (2008), Wilders provoked waves

of protests in Islamic countries, and recently during a visit to Berlin he accused German Chancellor Angela Merkel of inaction with regard to the increasing Islamisation of Germany. He opposes immigration, especially from non-western countries, has demanded an ethnic registration of the population and positions himself as a law-and-order politician who would take a hard line against crime. He views the Netherlands and all of Europe as being under threat from a political Islam that is seeking to subjugate European society and introduce Islamic traditions and laws. Established politicians and media are, according to Wilders, ignoring these problems or even encouraging them. Wilders' ideas are shaped by authoritarian and anti-pluralist beliefs, racist stereotypes and bogeymen. He is constructing the character of a Dutch nation, while at the same time denying parts of the population membership of it. Wilders is the only party member to control the PVV and he personally chooses his party's elected representatives. The advantage for Wilders and the PVV is obvious: Wilders does not have to fear that people who are prepared to use violence will join the PVV, and he is therefore able to maintain a clean image. He also does not risk large numbers of right-wing extremists joining his party, something that would put off society's middle ground. He also maintains good contacts with German right-wing populists. Whether it comes from the right-wing newspaper "Junge Freiheit" of the "Die Freiheit" party founded by former Berlin CDU politician René Stadtkewitz, the citizens' movement "pax europa" or the most

successful German right-wing populist medium and self-proclaimed critic of Islam "Politically Incorrect" (PI), Wilders can always count on the support of his German friends. The aim is to develop the "International Freedom Alliance" network of right-wing populists, which is currently mainly organised online, into an international association.¹³⁴ The fact that this international network has long been a reality is also apparent from a visit made by Wilders to the commemoration ceremony for the victims of 11 September in New York at the invitation of the American internet blog "Stop Islamization of America (SIOA). SIOA later commented on Wilders's appearance:

"But the highlights included Geert Wilders, who was greeted as the great hero that he is, and spoke about how a sharia mosque at Ground Zero would be the death of New York's proud tradition of Dutch tolerance."¹³⁵

In addition to the American blog, offshoots of SIOA exist in the UK, Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, Poland, Romania, Russia and Sweden. They are familiar with and appreciate each other's work. Wilders also owes his rise to the media. He is in the powerful position of being able to stage-manage his media presence through his actions and statements and can rely on his angst-fuelled discussions of crime and security being gratefully seized upon by the media and exploited in the quest for ratings.

The openly nationalist, anti-Semitic and

racist "Nederlandse Volksunie", comparable to the German NPD, has no influence on political opinion within the national parliament. It is nevertheless a melting pot for neo-Nazis of all colours and provides them with an infrastructure for their movements and communication, while also maintaining close contacts with various right-wing extremists in other countries, including Germany.

At sub-cultural level, far-right and racist attitudes and ideologies in the Netherlands tended to be only a marginal problem up until the 1980s, involving a few, albeit violent, right-wing extremists. Today, right-wing extremists are organ-

ised, for example, in the "Aktiefront Nationale Socialisten" (ANS) [Action Front of National Socialists] or the internationally active "Blood and Honour" organisation, which is banned in Germany. Alongside the many smaller groups and active right-wing extremists, the "Blood and Honour" network is one of the largest and most active in the Netherlands, with good contacts abroad. The so-called "Lonsdale Youth" has also played a role in inter-ethnic conflicts in recent years. Many members of this sub-cultural scene are xenophobic, racist and of a right-wing extremist persuasion. Many of them therefore end up after a few years in the "Blood and Honour" group.¹³⁶



LUCAS HARTONG

Born on 24.05.1963 in Dordrecht. Bachelor of Public Relations (1992). Bachelor of Theology (2006). Independent columnist/publicist for various magazines and newspapers. PVV candidate for the Second Chamber (2006). Member of the board, ANWB (Dutch automobile association) (since 2010). Accredited parliamentary assistant, PVV delegation in the European Parliament (since 2009). Member of the European Parliament for the PVV since 2010. Non-attached. Committees: Budgetary Control (substitute), Budgets (member).



BARRY MADLENER

Born on 06.01.1969 in Leiden. Broker and assessor (1990-2005). Member of the Second Chamber of the Dutch Parliament (2006-2009). Member of the European Parliament since 2009. Non-attached. Since the 2012 elections to the Dutch Parliament, Madlener has returned to serve as a national MP.



LAURENCE J.A.J. STASSEN

Born on 08.02.1971 in Sittard. European University (Antwerp) (1988-1991). Steinfabrik Nuth B.V., (1991-1995). Freelance presenter TV-Limburg (1999-2008). Member of the European Parliament since 2009. Non-attached. Committees: Industry, Research and Energy (substitute), Foreign Affairs (member).



AUKE ZIJLSTRA

Born on 01.11.1964 in Joure. Higher degree in economics, University of Groningen, Doctor of Economics. ICT project leader, British American Tobacco (1991). Policy worker, Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (2003). Member of the European Parliament since 2011. Non-attached. Committees: Economic and Monetary Affairs (substitute), Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (member).

One of the largest right-wing populist winners in the 2009 European elections was the “Freedom Party” of Geert Wilders, which took 17% of the vote in the Netherlands. As a result, it was able to send four MEPs to Brussels. Lucas Hartong, Barry Madlener, Laurence Stassen and Daniël van der Stoep have been representing the PVV since the last elections as non-attached members of the European Parliament. Van der Stoep resigned from Parliament with effect from 1 September 2011 after being convicted of drink-driving. He had previously attracted attention by firing his parliamentary assistant via Twitter. He was succeeded in Parliament by Auke Zijlstra, who had previously worked in the Dutch Ministry of the Interior. In the meantime, van der Stoep has returned to Parliament because the Netherlands was granted an additional seat after the Treaty of Lisbon was ratified.

However, he did not join the PVV delegation but instead sits as an independent and currently non-attached MEP.

The PVV fought the election campaign under the slogan “For the Netherlands”, stressing a supposedly impending Islamisation of Europe. Shortly after the election, Wilders announced that the focus of the work of the PVV’s MEPs would be on opposing further European integration and promoting a return to a simple economic and currency union. He also spoke out in favour of terminating the membership of Romania and Bulgaria and, at the same time, distanced himself from the French Front

National and the Romanian Tudor Party, which he claimed were right-wing extremists.¹³⁷ As already generally stated, such verbal distancing should not mislead us into thinking there are no personal, ideological and structural links. It should be seen merely as an attempt on Wilders’s part to distance himself publicly for the purposes of de-stigmatising the PVV as an electoral alternative. The PVV MEPs in the European Parliament nominated Geert Wilders for the Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought (also known as the EU Human Rights Prize), unsuccessfully canvassing the support of MEPs of other parties.

In the course of parliamentary business, the PVV members repeatedly draw attention to themselves with their inappropriate and racist questions to the President of the Parliament, the European Commission and the Council. In April 2011, van der Stoep indirectly stated in plenary that it was appropriate not to hand out water to refugees in reception camps.¹³⁸ Concerning Serbia, and with reference to the Member States of Romania and Bulgaria, Barry Madlener said in a question to the Commission:

“When will the Commission be willing to state that the EU has accepted into its ranks too many poor, corrupt countries which have a crime problem? When will the Commission decide that enough is enough and put its passion for enlargement behind it?”¹³⁹

In another written question to the Com-

mission, Van der Stoep and Madlener asked:

“Does the Commission agree that the Turkish Mavi Marmara delegation and Iranian President Ahmadinejad are perverse warmongers? If not, why not?”¹⁴⁰

After the Commission announced its decision to increase the number of delegated national experts from Turkey from two to eight on 29 September 2011, this was a welcome opportunity for the PVV to rail against the possibility of Turkish accession to the EU:¹⁴¹

“[...] The decision to allow wolves in sheep’s’ clothing to come amongst us is a sad low point in the negotiations, which currently have no chance of success in any case. The negotiations should finally be broken off, and this inane plan of the Commission should be withdrawn”. (Barry Madlener)

“Erdogan has removed his mask and shown himself in the past few months to be a quite ordinary warmonger. From the reaction of the European Union, one has the impression that the European Commission has lost its mind and has allowed this Trojan horse of Islam into its castle by granting Turkey the right to take part in the development

of EU laws, which of course are applicable to the Netherlands. It is high time that we close this puppet theatre down once and for all and say to the Turks that they are not welcome in the European Union. Not today, not tomorrow. Not ever!” (Geert Wilders)

In fact, there are in total 63 national experts from non-EU countries working in the Commission. National experts are allowed to remain at the Commission for a maximum of four years, and their salaries are paid for by the state that sends them. According to the Commission Decision of December 2008, “seconded national experts should enable the Commission to benefit from the high level of their professional knowledge and experience, in particular in areas where such expertise is not readily available.”¹⁴²

They are not allowed to perform middle or senior management duties, even when deputising. So on closer inspection, it cannot be said that “the Turks” have now been given the right to take part in the development of EU laws. On the contrary, Turkey has been subject to European economic law since 1996 and has thus surrendered part of its national sovereignty without at the same time being involved in the European decision-making process (“two-speed Europe”).



COUNTRY REPORT: AUSTRIA

Proportional representation with combined federal, provincial and regional lists. No constituencies. The number of votes per party determines the allocation of seats in parliament.
4 % hurdle.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN AUSTRIA

After 1945, no debate was conducted within Austrian society concerning the country's role in National Socialism and its involvement in the holocaust, despite an official denazification policy on the part of the Allies. About a third of Austrians were actively associated with

the Nazi regime.¹⁴³ Even though it was banned to re-form the Nazi Party and similar organisations, the denazification process adopted by the Allies was largely superficial and symbolic. The “Verband der Unabhängigen” (VdU) [Association of the Independent] was created as early as in 1948, serving as a repository for former members of the Nazi Party and displaced people. In the first post-war elections to the Austrian parliament in 1949, the majority of votes went to the Österreichische Volkspartei (ÖVP) [Austrian People’s Party] (44%), followed by the Sozialistischen Partei Österreichs (SPÖ) [Socialist Party of Austria], which later became the Sozialdemokratische Partei [Social-Democratic Party] (38.7%), with the VdU in third place (11.7%). Since a broad majority of the population had supported or at least sympathised with the annexation of Austria to the Nazi regime in 1938, the ÖVP and SPÖ played down the country’s role as perpetrator in election campaigns after the Second World War in order not to scare off potential voters.¹⁴⁴ Publicly, Austria was perceived at home and internationally as the first victim of the National Socialists (the so-called victim myth). In 1954, the Fourth Fraternity of the Waffen-SS (K IV) was founded consisting of former members of the Waffen-SS and their close allies, and this organisation continues to represent a clear right-wing extremist position today. Following internal quarrels and disputes about direction, the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ) [Freedom Party of Austria] emerged from the VdU. The first party leader

(chairman) Anton Reinthaller, a former SS brigade leader and member of the Reichstag up to 1945, represented the party’s decidedly German-nationalist tendency. He was succeeded as party leader by Friedrich Peter, a member of the First SS Infantry Brigade. He made no secret of his ideology:

“I cannot be counted as one of those who was allegedly forced to collaborate, but still acknowledge today that I joined the SS voluntarily because, for us youngsters from the Danube region, the Fatherland could only be Germany.”¹⁴⁵

Under Peter, the FPÖ had tried from 1960 onwards to portray a liberal image in order to be attractive to a broader section of the electorate. This liberalisation ultimately led to a number of resignations from the FPÖ and the founding of the Nationaldemokratischen Partei (NDP) [National Democratic Party], which was banned in 1988. At the beginning of the 1960s, the FPÖ polled between 7% and 8% in elections, but between 1966 and 1983 it was generally stuck at a level of between 5.5% and 6%. Despite its poor performance in the 1983 election (5.0%), the FPÖ for the first time entered into a coalition government with the ÖVP. The turning point did not come until Jörg Haider took over the party leadership, an appointment that was primarily forced through by fraternity members. Thereafter the FPÖ was able to continuously improve its ratings in elections: in 1986 it achieved 9.7%, and then improved on its successes un-

til 1999, when it polled 27% of the vote (winning 52 seats in the national parliament). From 1999 to 2002, it was the second-largest party in parliament and entered into a government coalition with the ÖVP, taking the post of Vice Chancellor. The election successes can largely be attributed to the person of Jörg Haider. With his election to party leader, the FPÖ moved away from its liberal programme and again represented a decidedly German-nationalist tendency, integrating the right-wing extremist wing. As a result, many NDP members returned to the FPÖ. These returns and the successes in general also impacted on the membership statistics: while in 1986 the party had around 37,000 members, by the year 2000 this figure had risen to 53,000.¹⁴⁶ In his election campaigns, Haider railed against “foreigners”, praised the “decent employment policy” of the Third Reich and openly sympathised with criminal organisations of the Nazi Party. For example, in 1995 he told former members of the Waffen-SS in Krumpendorf that:

“It is good that there are still decent people in the world, people with character, who stick to their convictions however strong the opposing wind and who have remained true to their convictions to this day.”

In 2000, Haider resigned as party leader. Internal strife within the FPÖ (the Knittelfelder Putsch) caused the government coalition to collapse. In the following elections, the FPÖ polled only 10% of the vote (18 seats in parlia-

ment). However, this was still enough to form a new coalition with the ÖVP. After internal disputes resulting from the lack of successes in regional elections in March 2005, a new party was formed, largely at the instigation of Haider. This was the Bündnis Zukunft Österreich (BZÖ) [Alliance for the future of Austria] party, of which Haider took over the leadership in 2006 (and again in 2008 for a month before his death). In the most recent national elections in 2008, the SPÖ won 29.3%, the ÖVP 26%, the FPÖ 17.5% and the BZÖ 10.7% of the vote. The SPÖ agreed with the ÖVP on the formation of a Grand Coalition.

Austrian nationalism focuses on Germany and a German national identity.¹⁴⁷ Unlike the situation in the post-war period, the annexation of Austria to Germany is no longer demanded and Jews are no longer openly harassed. Instead, they have been replaced by the bogeyman of “foreigners” (primarily Muslims). With their racist election campaigns and verbal lapses, the FPÖ and the BZÖ as right-wing populists move in a “grey area” of right-wing extremism. Above all, their relatively frequent involvement in government has left its traces on everyday political life, as the political scientist Pelinka stresses:

“But the government institutions are not really able to take care of the grey zone – because certain elements of the grey zone have become intermingled with the government. This is a result of alliances, but also the consequence of elec-

toral strategies which – in doubt – do not hesitate to pander to specific (e.g., anti-immigrant) prejudices.”¹⁴⁸

The FPÖ repeatedly finds itself the focus of attention because of its MPs’ links to the far-right scene. The student

organisation “Ring Freiheitlicher Studenten” [Free Student Ring], which is close to the FPÖ, also regularly attracts media attention with its right-wing extremist activities. Many FPÖ functionaries are members of right-wing extremist fraternities.¹⁴⁹

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Austria



FRANZ OBERMAYER

Born on 25.05.1952 in Linz. Member of the European Parliament since 2009. Non-attached. Committees: Employment and Social Affairs (substitute), Internal Market and Consumer Protection.



ANDREAS MÖLZER

Born on 02.12.1952 in Leoben. Studied law, history and sociology. Assistant at law institutes (1979-81). Editor-in-chief, Kärntner Nachrichten newspaper (1982-1990). Managing partner at the Institute for Socio-political Studies/Edition K3, Verlags- und Beratungs-GmbH. FPÖ policy officer (1991-1994).

Chairman, Freedom Academy (1991-1994). Member of the Austrian Parliament (1991-1994). Editor-in-chief and co-publisher of the weekly “Zur Zeit” (since 1997). Columnist on “Die Presse” and the “Neue Kronenzeitung”. Regional cultural officer, Carinthia (1999-2002). Author. Member of the European Parliament since 2004. Non-attached. Committees: Constitutional Affairs (substitute), Foreign Affairs (member).

The FPÖ obtained 13.1 % of the Austrian vote in the 2009 European Parliament elections. Since then, Andreas Mölzer and Franz Obermayer have been sitting as non-attached MEPs. The election campaign was fought with slogans such as “Genuine representatives of the people instead of EU traitors”, “Our course is clear: the western world is a Christian world”, or “There for Austria, and not for the EU and the financial mafia”.¹⁵⁰ Even though its own expectations were not met, the FPÖ was nevertheless able to double its vote compared to 2004.

Mölzer is on the German-nationalist wing of the FPÖ and has been an MEP since 2004. He is editor-in-chief and co-publisher of the weekly “Zur Zeit”. This right-wing conservative and German-nationalist newspaper is close to the FPÖ despite voicing occasional clear criticism of it. Mölzer is also the

publisher and author of several books, regularly writes newspaper columns and has been involved in various film productions. In 1987 he was fined following administrative proceedings for distributing Nazi ideology in his capacity as editor-in-chief of the “Kärntner Nachrichten”. Mölzer, known as the “motor of euro-rightist ideology”,¹⁵¹ maintains close contacts with other right-wing populist and extremist parties in Europe. He has organised international congresses with representatives of right-wing extremist and populist parties, played a significant role in setting up the “Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty” (ITS) parliamentary group in 2007, and was a member of the bureau of the right-wing populist European Alliance for Freedom (EAF) party.¹⁵² In 2005, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, Mölzer refused to vote in favour of a European Parliament Resolution against anti-Semitism and xenophobia. He justified his refusal by stating that present-day Austria was not responsible for these crimes.¹⁵³ In the European Parliament, the FPÖ has signed joint statements and questions to the Presidency with MEPs from the French Front National, the British National Party and the Greater Romania Party. It is not afraid of working together with representatives of the hard core of the right-wing extremist spectrum such as the BNP. Mölzer also maintains close links to the German right-wing extremist and populist scene.

A self-confessed fraternity member, Mölzer believes the western world is

caught in the throes of a defensive battle against Islamism. He believes the political and social fabric of the western countries needs to be defended. It therefore also makes sense when he interprets the flow of refugees across the Mediterranean towards Europe as a planned process: in his view, the refugees will wage a holy war for Islam that will be strategically planned, supported and armed by the highest religious and ideological bodies and national rulers.¹⁵⁴ The aim was, according to Mölzer, to change the nature of the people, a process which was already well under way, and thereby create a Muslim majority among the population of Europe. Mölzer works actively on spreading his world view in the European Parliament: in terms of the sheer number of questions, motions and speeches in plenary, he is one of the most active MEPs. In contrast to his Dutch colleagues in the PVV, he comes across as matter-of-fact and presents his ideology in a calm fashion. Mölzer took part in the visit to the Yasukuni shrine (see the country report for France).

Franz Obermayr has been an MEP since 2009. Obermayr, then Deputy Mayor of Linz, spoke on the occasion of the “remembrance of the dead” of 8 May 2002 in Vienna, at which numerous right-wing extremists and right-wing extremist fraternity members remembered the fallen soldiers of the Second World War.¹⁵⁵ The “total defeat” in the Second World War is commemorated each year by the fraternities within the Viennese Fraternities Ring, led by the right-wing

extremist and revisionist Olympia Fraternity. In its commemorative publication for 8 May, Olympia described the ban on Holocaust denial as a “return to a time when intellectual freedom was lacking, regarded as long-since overcome”. It goes on:

“If a German is able to speak and think about individual “sensitive” questions of history only along the lines dictated by the re-educators and their German helpers, this clearly constitutes a lack of freedom of opinion and speech and thus an absence of freedom for science and its teaching.”¹⁵⁶

The 8th of May is also marked in Germany by the mobilisation of the German right-wing extremist scene:

“The great battle for the freedom of our people ended with the capitulation of the German Wehrmacht. [...] The traitors of their own people deployed by the occupiers are mocking the victims of our people, are tainting the honour of our brave soldiers and ultimately destroying the soul of our people. This date of 8 May has now become the “Tag der Ehre” [Day of Honour]. If the traitors celebrate the defeat of the German people on 8 May, we will, with our service of honour, also inspire national resistance in our people on this same day!”¹⁵⁷

Apart from Obermayr, several other FPÖ MPs took part in the event, includ-

ing H. C. Strache and Jörg Haider. In the European Parliament, Obermayr particularly rails against refugees and asylum seekers and against the European Union in its entirety. In commenting on a ruling of the European Court of Human Rights that reversed an Italian law making it a criminal offence to remain in Italy illegally, he stated that:

“In this decision, the true face of those old 68ers who pass judgement in Strasbourg and Luxembourg was shown. Apparently the EU is to be gradually transformed into an immigrants’ paradise.”¹⁵⁸

The day-to-day reality for illegal residents (no legal rights, no health or social security insurance, etc.) is hushed up by the FPÖ in its campaign for votes in favour of right-wing populist agitation. The Court’s decision to maintain the possibility of voluntary departure for people without official papers within a certain period and without being imprisoned or fined was misinterpreted for populist purposes by the FPÖ.

Following the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, an MEP from the BZÖ, Ewald Stadler, has been sitting in the European Parliament since December 2011.



COUNTRY REPORT: ROMANIA

Proportional representation.
5 % hurdle.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN ROMANIA

After the end of the Ceaușescu era and the political and social upheavals in 1989, right-wing extremist and ultra-nationalist groups also re-emerged in Romania. The ultra-nationalist and anti-Hungarian Party of Romanian National Unity (PUNR) was founded in May 1990 and in the years that followed was the main right-wing extremist party in Romania.¹⁵⁹ In 1992, PUNR gained 7.9%

of the vote for the Chamber of Deputies, winning 30 seats, and 8.1% of the vote for the Senate, in which it won 14 seats. Between 1992 and 1996, the PUNR was a junior partner in government. During its service in government, many attacks on Roma took place. The police were in some cases directly involved, and in others they did not do enough to stop the attacks. The PUNR's popularity fell steadily from 1997. Since the elections in 2000, the party has no longer been represented in parliament and was ultimately taken over by the Conservative Party (PC) at the beginning of 2006.

The most successful right-wing extremist party to date is the Partidul România Mare (PRM) [Greater Romania Party], founded in 1991. The PRM, which arose from the magazine of the same name, is closely associated with its Chairman and founder Corneliu Vadim Tudor. Tudor, a pro-regime journalist and poet in the Ceaușescu era, was a member of the Romanian Senate from 1992 to 2008 and stood several times for election as President. The main goal of the PRM is to restore Greater Romania. Its bogeymen include Hungarians, Jews, homosexuals and Roma. In the 1990s, the party won between 4% and 4.5% of the vote in elections. Its breakthrough did not come until the parliamentary and presidential elections of 2000. With 21% (Senate) and 19.5% (Chamber of Deputies) of the vote, it became the second largest force in parliament. In the first round of the presidential election, Tudor gained 28.3% of the vote, followed by a spectacular 33.2% in the second round,

failing however to win the necessary majority against the social-democrat candidate. In its election campaign, the party declared that Hungarians were no longer the main danger to Romania but placed the Roma at the centre of their xenophobic agitation. In the previous year, the PRM played a significant role in an attempted coup involving 12,000 miners and violent clashes with the police.¹⁶⁰

Since this high point of electoral approval, the party's success has clearly waned in subsequent years. The PRM is not currently represented in the national parliament. Notable are its contacts with right-wing organisations such as the Liga Marshall Antonescu (LMA) [Marshall Antonescu League], which was founded in 1990 with the aim of rehabilitating Ion Antonescu. Under Antonescu's rule (1940-44), at least 150,000 Jews and tens of thousands of Roma died. Other ultra-nationalist parties, such as the Partidul Noua Generație (PNG) [Party of the New Generation], founded in 2000, have no appreciable parliamentary influence in Romania. Nevertheless, the PNG leader, George Becali, was elected to the European Parliament in 2009 (see below). In the 2004 election campaign, the PNG took over a slogan from the fascist and anti-Semitic "Iron Guard" of the 1930 and 1940s.¹⁶¹

There are also a number of organisations that do not take the form of a party, such as the ultra-nationalist Noua Dreaptă (ND) [New Right], which

speaks positively of the Iron Guard and maintains close contacts with the German NPD. The ND advocates the restoration of Greater Romania and fulminates against homosexuals, Roma and Jews. In one of its programmes, the ND states:

“We are witness to a national awakening. We no longer wish to hear of a Roma language, or see hooked noses or bluish lips.”¹⁶²

Violent attacks perpetrated by this milieu are commonplace, such as on the Gay Pride parade in Bucharest.

After 1989, there was hardly any reappraisal of Romania’s role in the holocaust in politics or among the public. A minute’s silence in honour of Antonescu was still practised in parliament up to 1991. It was only following the work of the International Commission on the Holocaust in Romania (also known as the Wiesel Commission), which, in its final report, found Romania guilty of involvement in the holocaust, that Romania’s guilt was officially acknowledged

by the state. Revisionist statements and attitudes are still widespread: in June 2006, Romanian President Basescu praised Romania’s participation in the German offensive against Russia in 1941;¹⁶³ and in March 2012, Dana Sovu, Senator and spokesperson for the Social Democratic Party (PSD) claimed that no Jew had suffered on Romanian territory and denied Romania’s involvement in the holocaust.¹⁶⁴ A striking aspect is the close entanglement of Romanian right-wing extremists with business:

“The most important sources of ultra-nationalist funding are the businesses of nationalists, who control financial, economic, and commercial activities directly benefiting from the high level of corruption.”¹⁶⁵

Right-wing extremists in Romania particularly focus on stirring up anti-Hungarian and anti-Roma feeling, revisionist nationalist nostalgia and the revival of right-wing extremist political traditions of the inter-war years, such as that of the Iron Guard.¹⁶⁶

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Romania



GEORGE BECALI

Born on 25.06.1958 in Braila. Manager of Steaua Bucharest FC (2000-2003). Owner of Steaua Bucharest FC (since 2003) Majority shareholder in various companies and property investor. President, New Generation - Christian Democratic Party (Since 2004). Candidate in Romanian presidential elections (2004). Candidate for New Generation - Christian Democratic Party in local elections (2007). Founder member and President of the Governing Board, Foundation ‘Pentru Dumneavoastra Doamna’ and the George Becali Christian Foundation. UN Commissioner for Romania (2008). Member of the European Parliament since 2009. Non-attached. Committees: Legal Affairs (substitute) International Trade (member)



CORNELIU VADIM TUDOR

Born on 28.11.1949 in Bucharest. Degree in Sociology from the University of Bucharest. Doctorate in History, University of Craiova, Romania (2003). President of the Greater Romania Party (from 1991). Senator, Romanian Parliament (1992-2008); Secretary of the Senate (1992-1996); Vice-President of the Senate (2004-2008). Author and Journalist. Member of the European Parliament since 2009. Non-attached. Committees: Foreign Affairs (substitute), Culture and Education (member).

In the elections to the European Parliament, the PRM obtained 8.7% of the vote and was thus able to appoint two MEPs, Corneliu Vadim Tudor and George Becali, both non-attached. Tudor – a Knight of the “Star of Romania”, the highest accolade in Romania – was a senator in the Romanian parliament from 1992-2008 and from 2004-2008 he was also Vice-President of the Senate. Tudor repeatedly makes remarks against Jews, Roma, Hungarians and journalists. In the past he even demanded the “liquidation of gypsies”, the setting up of camps for the Hungarian minority and the reintroduction of the death penalty.¹⁶⁷ In 1998, he proposed that:

“Gypsies who will not go to work (...) will be sent to work camps.”¹⁶⁸

After protests from Roma groups and NGOs, he added:

“We are not interested in the Gypsies. All [of them] should be sent to jail. There is no other solution.”¹⁶⁹

As stated, the 2000 elections gave Tudor and his party a political breakthrough. During the election campaign, he spoke on television about the “typology of the Roma mafia”

“They attack as a group, control the markets, and the only reason why they do not rape their children and parents is that they are too busy raping ours.”¹⁷⁰

In 2002, Tudor, together with the social-democratic senator Adrian Paunescu and the former Minister of Justice and Liberal, Quintus, stated that Romania had no guilt with regard to the holocaust and that somebody had an interest in the Romanian people being portrayed as criminals.¹⁷¹ In the same year, the licence of the TV channel OTV was withdrawn over an interview with Tudor that incited hate against Jews, Roma and sexual minorities. His anti-Semitic and anti-gypsy statements, which to greater or lesser extents always contain an open or coded message concerning an alleged Jewish conspiracy or the criminal character of the Roma, were followed in 2004 by a remarkable public distancing: Tudor had changed from being an anti-Semite to a Judeophile. Moreover, he hired an Israeli PR firm to organise his election campaign. Arad Communications, which also worked for the Yad Vashem Memorial in Jerusalem, later withdrew from the contract stating that the party was indeed anti-Semitic.¹⁷² The fact that this high-profile change from anti-Semite to Judeophile was simply a transparent ploy in the election campaign has been further proven by Tudor’s anti-Semitic writings in the newspaper România Mare. These appeared after his apparent reformation.¹⁷³

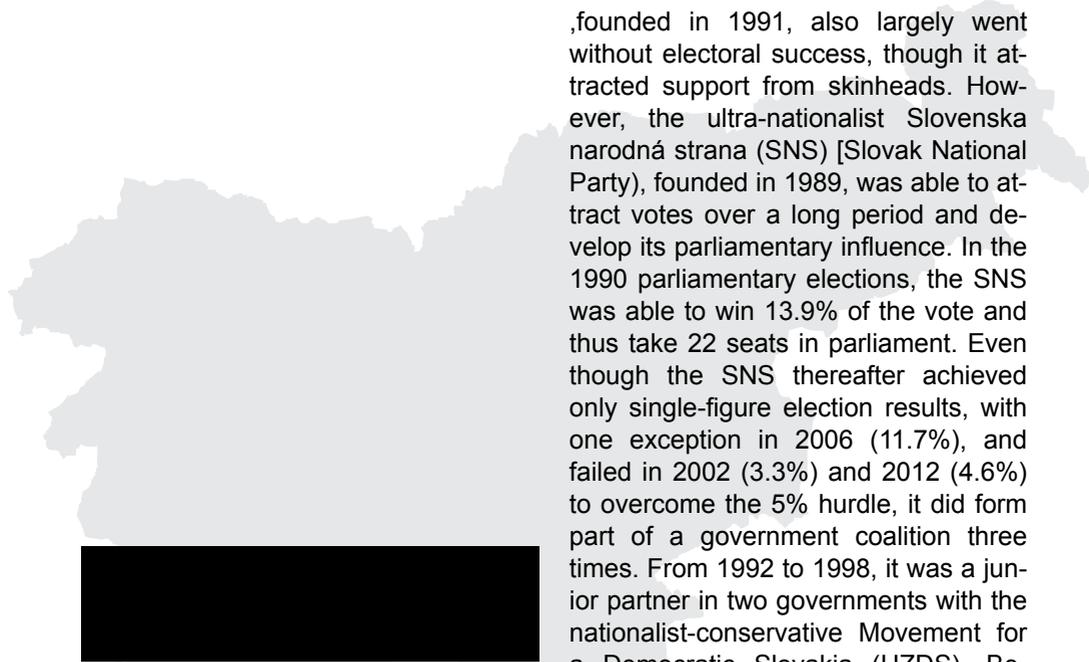
George Becali is a member of the ultra-conservative and nationalist PNG party and was elected to Parliament via the PRM list. In the presidential elections in the same year, Becali took 1.9% of the vote. This businessman, owner of

a football club and the “most bizarre politician that Romania has produced since Ceaușescu” (Deutschlandradio) became rich through his property dealings in the 1990s, though the public prosecutor later investigated him for some of these dealings.¹⁷⁴ In 2009 he was charged with aiding and abetting a kidnapping. After his car was stolen, his bodyguards mistreated the presumed perpetrators for hours in order to force a confession. During the two weeks he spent in custody awaiting trial, Becali was placed on the PRM candidates list but was not initially allowed to leave Romania after his election on the orders of a criminal court. After several failed appeals, he was again granted the freedom to travel, and shortly afterwards the charges against him were dropped.¹⁷⁵ In 2010 he was ordered to pay a punitive fine of €3.3 million for property transactions carried out between 2004 and 2008.¹⁷⁶ When asked in 2007 about his first candidacy to the European Parliament and his position on Europe, Becali replied:

“God made peoples, not a single people. We are Europeans, but one should say “Romanian citizen”, not “European citizen”. That is something holy that we cannot change, or else God will destroy us. I want to spread this message in Europe. And in the European Parliament in Brussels, I will ask the question: “Who created us?!”¹⁷⁷

Becali repeatedly manufactures ideological links to the fascist and anti-Semitic Iron Guard. For example, during his first election campaign for the PNG, he used the slogan “Everything for the Fatherland”. This was the name of the Iron Guard during its fight for power between 1935 and 1940. He also promised a “Romania like the sun in the sky”, and wanted to work “in the service of the cross and Romanian identity”.¹⁷⁸ Both slogans were taken almost verbatim from the Iron Guard. On Romanian television, he has called for the canonisation of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, the leader of the anti-Semitic Archangel Michael Legion, founded in 1927 and from which the Iron Guard later emerged. His ideology is pervaded by Christian ideas of redemption, and he sees himself as being on a mission to bring faith in God back into politics. Asked in 2008 by the German newspaper Tagespiegel why he believed in his political success, Becali replied:

“Because I am the strongest and most powerful man in Romania. In everything. Economically, politically, intellectually. My age and even my appearance, because I do after all look stronger than any other politician – taken together, these are the virtues that God has given me. I am in a position to sacrifice myself.”¹⁷⁹



COUNTRY REPORT: SLOVAKIA

Proportional representation.
5% hurdle.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN SLOVAKIA

After the political changes of 1989/90, right-wing extremist parties, such as the “Slovenska Ľudová Strana” (SL’S) [Slovak People’s Party] again came into being. The traditionalist (in terms of its activities) SL’S has remained without any notable election successes and was insignificant in parliamentary terms. The Slovenska Národná Jednota (SNJ) [Slovak National Union]

,founded in 1991, also largely went without electoral success, though it attracted support from skinheads. However, the ultra-nationalist Slovenska narodná strana (SNS) [Slovak National Party), founded in 1989, was able to attract votes over a long period and develop its parliamentary influence. In the 1990 parliamentary elections, the SNS was able to win 13.9% of the vote and thus take 22 seats in parliament. Even though the SNS thereafter achieved only single-figure election results, with one exception in 2006 (11.7%), and failed in 2002 (3.3%) and 2012 (4.6%) to overcome the 5% hurdle, it did form part of a government coalition three times. From 1992 to 1998, it was a junior partner in two governments with the nationalist-conservative Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS). Between 2006 and 2010, the SNS was in government with the social-democratic SMER party, as a result of which SMER was excluded from the pan-European Party of European Socialists (PES) for two years. The co-founder and current party chairman, Ján Slota, repeatedly falls back on fascist solutions and concepts and focuses his attacks on the Roma and Hungarian minorities. In the past he has called homosexuals “filth”. He also believes that “a small yard and a long whip” is needed to “deal with” Roma, and has threatened to “flatten Budapest with tanks”.¹⁸⁰ To Slota, the Hungarians in Slovakia are descendent of “ugly, bow-legged, mongoloid types on loathsome horses”¹⁸¹ and are a “cancer in the body of the Slovak nation”.¹⁸² Slota, who was Mayor of the north-west

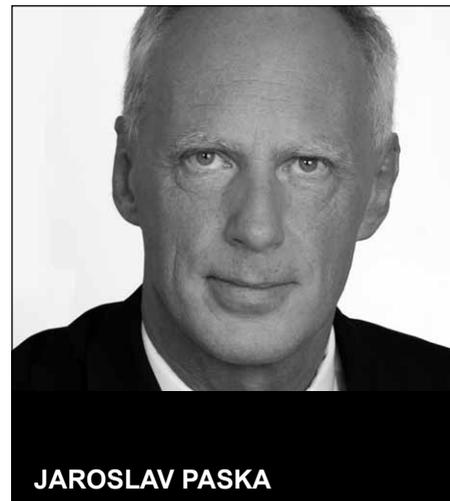
Slovak town of Zilina from 1990 to 2006, attracted considerable public attention when he had a plaque dedicated to the priest and politician Josef Tiso in Zilina. Between 1939 and 1945, Tiso was the President of the First Slovak Republic, allied with the German Reich, and was hanged in 1947 because of his involvement in Nazi crimes.¹⁸³ Ideologically, the SNS mixes elements of populism, corporatism and xenophobic nationalism.¹⁸⁴ Through its participation in government in the 1990s it prevented an extension of the rights of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia and tried to restrict the official use of the Hungarian language by means of language laws. In addition, the Parliament acting on an SNS motion declared the inviolability of the Bene Decree, which, amongst other things, provided for the confiscation of Hungarian property without compensation.¹⁸⁵ Although the party was in opposition in parliament between 2006 and 2010 with 9 seats, in the 2010 elections it was unable to overcome the 5% hurdle, polling only 4.6%. One reason for this was Slota's repeated drunken appearances in public, which are consid-

ered embarrassing by large sections of the public. In its election campaign, the party advertised itself using a large poster showing a tattooed, obese and half-naked Roma. Below was the slogan: "So that we don't carry on feeding those who do not wish to work."¹⁸⁶

Other right-wing extremist and populist parties are the populist Hnutie za demokraciu (HZD) [Movement for Democracy], which split away from the HZDS in 2002, and the national-socialist Slovenská pospolitost - národná strana [Slovak Community - National Party], which was founded in 1995 but was banned by the Supreme Court of Slovakia in 2006. The ban was preceded by brutal attacks on presumed political opponents. One victim who died was a 21-year-old philosophy student who was regarded by the perpetrators as "alternative" because of his long hair. In 2010, the party was reformed under the name of Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko (ĽSNS) [People's Party of our Slovakia]. Neither the HZD nor the ĽSNS have enjoyed any parliamentary success worth mentioning.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Slovakia



JAROSLAV PASKA

Born on 20.06.1954 in BanskáŠtiavnica. Studied architecture. Architect, designer, planner (1978-1985). Also university teacher (since 1985). Vice-Chair of the Slovak National Party (since 1999). Member of Bratislava - Petržalka municipal council (1998-2002). Member of Bratislava - Nové Mesto municipal council (since 2006). Member of the National Council of the Slovak Republic (1994-2002 and 2006-2009). Slovak Minister for Education and Science (1993-1994). Member of the EU-Slovak Republic Joint Parliamentary Committee (1998-2002). Vice-Chair of the European Democratic Union Group at the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2007-

2009). Member of the Permanent Delegation of the National Council of the Slovak Republic to the Inter-Parliamentary Union (1998-2002). Member of the European Parliament since 2009. European of Freedom and Democracy group. Committees: Budgets (substitute), Regional Development (substitute), Petitions (substitute). Industry, Research and Energy (member).

The SNS polled 5.5% of the vote in the elections to the European Parliament and was therefore able to nominate one MEP. Jaroslav Paška is a member and Deputy Chair of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy group. In the election campaign, the SNS particularly tried to attract support by tapping into the anti-Hungarian sentiment of voters. Given the low turnout (16.9%), however, the election results are not representative of the actual levels of support. In terms of European policy, the SNS works closely with the FPÖ. SNS party head Slota thus declared after a meeting with FPÖ Chairman Strache in March 2011 that:

“We have agreed future cooperation, not just at party level but also in the European Parliament.”¹⁸⁷

Policy overlaps exist on the need to combat uncontrolled immigration and on criticism of aid for Greece and Ireland in the context of the EU financial crisis.

Jaroslav Paka, former Slovak Minister for Education and Science, is one of the busiest speakers in the Parliament. He is currently in 30th position in the ranking posted on Votewatch.de (May 2012), having made 330 speeches in plenary. Even though purely quantitative statistics say nothing about the actual qualitative content and impact of such activities, the SNS was nevertheless already celebrating Paka's activities in July 2011:

“SNS has the most efficient rep-

resentation of all political parties of Slovakia in the European Parliament and that is MEP Jaroslav Paška. We are very proud of it. After his second year in the EP Jaroslav Paška with his activities is at the top of Slovak representatives in the EP.”¹⁸⁸

There then follows a description of meetings with ministers and high-ranking officials of the Hungarian and Polish States that makes clear what the tactics behind this are: Paka works for the Slovaks and is a player to be taken seriously in European politics. In so doing, he is fulfilling the promise made by SNS Chairman Slota before the election: “If I were to be elected by chance, you would see how lively it would be there.”¹⁸⁹ In the European Parliament the party wanted to: “to oxidise the muddy, rotten, milky waters [of the EP] by truth, and not by hypocrisy and lies.”¹⁹⁰ Paka's hostility to the amendment of the Hungarian Constitution under government head Orban is obvious. For example, he used the Hungarian Presidency of the Council to repeatedly criticise the policy of Slovakia's neighbour.¹⁹¹ Paka supports the death penalty and, in the plenary debate on the Second European Roma Summit, made his views known about the problems of Roma families:

“Children are neglected, hungry and often even do not go to school. Therefore, I am convinced that if we want to really help the Roma, we will have to endeavour first of all to

teach Roma children a civilised, cultured and decent way of life.”¹⁹²

It remains unsaid how, in Paka's racist view of the world, the Roma should be given a “civilised” and “decent way of life”. Slota's statements, coming one month after the Slovak elections in 2006, and thus shortly after the forma-

tion of a government coalition between SMER, SNS und ZRS, leave little scope for conjecture: he calls for “gypsies” to be beaten “with a rubber truncheon”, for Roma to be bundled off to “separate villages” and for their children to be taken away in order to be housed in boarding schools.¹⁹³



COUNTRY REPORT: HUNGARY

Mixed electoral system comprising majority voting and proportional representation.
5 % hurdle.

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN HUNGARY

After the Republic of Hungary was proclaimed and the Hungarian State restored in October 1989, right-wing extremist and nationalist groups also emerged and once again quickly formed part of the political landscape. 1989 immediately saw the formation of the paramilitary and neo-fascist Magyar Nemzeti Arcvonal (MNA) [Hungarian National Front], which still actively¹⁹⁴ fights against the “politics of Jewish vested in-

terests” pursued by the “effete Hungarian Government”.¹⁹⁵ The members of the MNA demand “decisive action against gypsies and the Jewish way of life”.¹⁹⁶ The MNA trains its members in the use of grenades and firearms and in close combat and regularly appears at violent riots involving the police. In 1993, the ultra-nationalist, anti-western and anti-Semitic Magyar Igazság és Élet Pártja (MIEP) [Hungarian Truth and Life Party] was founded with writer Istvan Csurka, a former member of the conservative Magyar Demokrata Fórum (MDF) [Hungarian Democratic Forum], at the helm. Csurka has repeatedly drawn attention to himself with anti-Semitic statements and insults against his critics. For example, he called the Frankfurt Book Fair the “holocaust of Hungarian literature” and made the following comment concerning bankers:

“[They are a] bunch of Jews who suck away little people’s money to distribute it among themselves, and help the communists remain in power”¹⁹⁷

The party agitates against Roma and homosexuals and demands a revision of the Peace Treaty of Trianon (1920), as a result of which the Kingdom of Hungary had to relinquish around two-thirds of its territory to its neighbours after the First World War. Even though the MIEP was able to mobilise up to 200,000 people at demonstrations, it remained marginalised in parliamentary terms and was only represented in parliament from 1998 to 2001, having won

5.5% of the vote. Nevertheless, Csurka played a major role in radicalising the political debate in terms of a Hungarian cultural struggle between “good” Hungarian people and “bad” foreign interests.¹⁹⁸ Csurka again became publicly active when he was appointed director of the “New Theatre” in Budapest in October 2011. He announced that no more “foreign rubbish” would be performed but only “national Hungarian drama”. Following national and international protests, however, his appointment was withdrawn at the beginning of 2012, and Csurka died shortly afterwards. The new director was György Dörner, a member of the MIEP, who declared in his application for the post that he wanted to take up the “struggle against the degenerate liberal hegemony” in Hungarian cultural life.¹⁹⁹

In 2003, the racist and ultra-nationalist party Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom (Jobbik) [Movement for a better Hungary] was founded by an anti-communist university community. Jobbik is directly and openly inspired by the fascist Hungarian Arrow Cross Party of the 1940s, which from 1944 to 1945 formed a national socialist government in the territory of Hungary which was not yet occupied by the Red Army. The party demanded the revision of the Treaty of Trianon and the restoration of “Greater Hungary”. Jobbik sees itself as the defender of Hungarian identity, which it claims is under threat from the “foreign-hearted” (Roma, Jews, communists, homosexuals). The party is openly anti-Semitic and anti-gypsy and rejects

the current Hungarian constitution as illegal. It advocates the withdrawal of Hungary from the EU and NATO, and in 2007 created the Magyar Gárda [Hungarian Guard] to protect its events and to serve as a rural force of order.²⁰⁰ This paramilitary group is led by the party chairman Gabor Vona, and its black uniforms carry the arrow-cross emblem. Its aim is to prevent the “spiritual, moral and physical decline of the Hungarian people”.²⁰¹ Even though the Hungarian Guard was banned by a ruling of the Budapest City Court in 2009, which also criminalised the wearing of its uniform, it reformed shortly after as the New Hungarian Guard and still appears in the old uniforms. The Guard regularly organises military-style marches, particularly in localities inhabited by Roma and other minorities, and trains its members in the use of weapons. In 2006, the MIEP and Jobbik formed an electoral alliance to fight the elections to the Hungarian parliament, but they failed to enter parliament. At the 2010 elections, Jobbik took 12.1% of the vote and has since been represented in parliament with 47 seats. The chairman of the party and the parliamentary group, Gabor Vona remains linked to the Hungarian Guard despite the ban: in 2011 he entered the assembly hall of parliament dressed in the uniform of the Hungarian Guard in order, as he himself claimed, to protest against the worsening of public security.²⁰² The Hungarian Guard is suspected by the police of having organised the series of attacks with Molotov cocktails and firearms against Roma in which six people died between January 2008 and

August 2009.²⁰³ Vona makes no secret of his dislike of Jews. For example, he stated at the beginning of 2010 in an interview with a major Hungarian web portal that:

“Perhaps it is a conspiracy theory that Israel’s situation is becoming more unstable [...] and I can imagine that they are now looking for ways and means of escape. Hungary offers great opportunities for Israeli flight because the conditions here are good: society is receptive and hospitable and the politicians are corrupt. I don’t know the Hungarian Jews but they are also a group that remains in the twilight. This is a taboo about which one should speak: what is the viewpoint of the Hungarian Jews, what is Hungary to them? Their home or just temporary accommodation? [...] I can see that the Hungarian Jewry is hiding. It does not adopt any position, it’s neither for or against. Those who do adopt a position such as the Mazsihisz [an association of Jewish religious communities in Hungary] send shivers down my spine”.²⁰⁴ [annotation in the original]

The actions of the Hungarian Guard are also tainted with anti-Semitism. On 18 April 2009, one day before the day of remembrance for the holocaust, the Guard marched in front of the German Embassy. The uniformed marchers were carrying a banner with the inscription “The truth will set you free!” and made speeches denying the holocaust.²⁰⁵

After Hungary entered the European Union with the broad backing of the population in 2004, the country’s economic position worsened, and nationalist positions once again gained considerable influence.²⁰⁶ Although openly neo-fascist parties have little chance of attracting broader support, ultra-nationalist positions are, on the other hand, well received. Hostility towards Roma, Jews and homosexuals is widespread in Hungary and provides fertile ground for Jobbik’s electoral successes and for the pogrom-like sentiments against Roma. The leading politicians of the governing nationalist-conservative Fidesz party contribute to the extremely intolerant mood of society. In its campaigns, it denounces all the “foreign-hearted” (Jews, Roma, homosexuals, left-wingers, bankers, liberals, speculators, etc.).²⁰⁷ In February 2012, Amnesty International reported that the Hungarian police are hesitant and sloppy about investigating anti-Roma demonstrations or other racist crimes, and that indeed the Hungarian Government verbally legitimises the climate of hatred towards Roma.²⁰⁸ The appointment of Csurka and, after him, Dárner as director of the Budapest theatre is hardly surprising given this backdrop. The Mayor of Budapest Istvan Tarlos, who has been in office as an independent Fidesz candidate since 2010, was responsible for this appointment. Anti-Roma sentiment in particular has assumed threatening proportions in Hungary. The right-wing parties deny the 600,000 or so Roma in the country their civil rights and rail against a supposedly innate “gypsy

criminality”. According to a study by the Central European University in Budapest, half of the Hungarian population now believes that the Roma are genetically inclined towards crime.²⁰⁹ In the 2010 elections, Fidesz won 52.7% of the vote and has since been governing with a two-thirds majority. The government of Prime Minister Orban is coming under massive criticism from the EU for its undemocratic reforms of the state apparatus. Inter alia, the independence of the judiciary and media freedom has been severely restricted, and the Constitutional Court has seen its powers reduced. The Fidesz government and MPs nevertheless play down criticism that Hungarian policies encourage racism and anti-Semitism. For example, Agnes Hankiss, Fidesz MEP, commented in an open letter to all members of the European Parliament that:

“It is a sad fact however that the left-liberal political community has been using the charge of anti-Semitism as pretext in the fight against the central-right and governments to regain or retain power. [...] Does anti-Semitism exist in Hungary? Sporadically and on the extreme right naturally it does. [...] Accusing the Hungarian government with racism is a serious and unjust charge. Politics uses different kinds of tools. However slandering with racism should not be part of the toolkit.”

But there are indeed sufficient grounds for concern about anti-Semitic activities in Hungary. Polls show that, between

2009 and 2011, the proportion of those who think Jews exercise too much power in business life rose by around 7% to encompass two-thirds of the population. About 40% of those questioned also believe that, for “the Jews”, the interests of Israel are more important than those of Hungary.²¹⁰

Other right-wing extremist parties do

exist in Hungary, such as the Hungarian National Front (MNF), the Party of Hungarian Interest (MEP) and the Hungarian Welfare Association (MNSZ; wound up in 2000). These have had partial success in elections but have failed to exert any significant influence in parliament. Other paramilitary groups exist alongside the New Hungarian Guard. These include the Hungarian National Guard and the Hungarian National Front.

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Hungary



BÉLA KOVÁCS

Born on 25.02.1960 in Budapest. Certified accountant (1978). International economist (1986). Specialist investment lawyer (2003). International trade broker (1986-1988). Leading functions in the financial sector (1990-2005). Chair, Foreign Affairs Committee of the Jobbik party (since 2005). Chair of Jobbik party, 13th District of Budapest (since 2006). Budapest Vice-President of Jobbik party (since 2008). Deputy Chair and Treasurer, Alliance of European National Movements (since 2010). Member of the European Parliament since 2010. Non-attached. Committees: Budgets (substitute) Industry, Research and Energy (member).



KRISZTINA MORVAI

Born on 22.06.1963 in Budapest. Member of the European Parliament since 2009. Non-attached. Committees: Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (substitute), Special Committee on Organised Crime, Corruption and Money Laundering (substitute); Women's Rights and Gender Equality (member).



CSANÁD SZEGEDI

Born on 22.09.1982 in Miskolc. Committees: Internal Market and Consumer Protection (substitute), Regional Development (member), non-attached.

filiated to any party, and who has now become one of the best-known and most popular politicians in Hungary, worked between 2003 and 2006 as a respected expert in the UN Commission on the Status of Women, and also advised the Hungarian Government, made up of socialists and liberals, as an expert on international law.²¹¹ In the 1990s, she worked for the European Commission on Human Rights. She above all promoted the rights of homosexuals and women. The change came with her candidacy for Jobbik: her election campaign opened with a motorbike convoy under the name of Goj (Hebrew for non-Jew), and T-shirts were sold carrying a picture of the Hitler ally Miklós Horthy. During Horthy's rule, 400,000 Hungarian Jews were deported to Auschwitz. In her speeches she consistently stressed that she wanted to put Hungary back in the hands of the Hungarians and to end the politics of foreign (in other words, Jewish) interests. The government, she stressed, was there to serve the needs of ordinary people. She also voiced fears that Hungarians might become Palestinians in their own country.²¹² In 2008, she recommended in a speech that "liberal-Bolshevik Zionists" should already think about where they would flee to and where they would hide.²¹³ In 2009 she wrote the following to Jewish critics in a forum:

"I would be greatly pleased if those who call themselves proud Hungarian Jews played in their leisure with their tiny circumcised dicks, instead of besmirching me. Your kind

of people are used to seeing all of our kind of people stand to attention and adjust to you every time you fart. Would you kindly acknowledge this is now OVER. We have raised our head up high and we shall no longer tolerate your kind of terror. We shall take back our country."²¹⁴

In an open letter to the Israeli Ambassador in Hungary, she wrote the following on the Middle East conflict:

"The only way to talk to people like you is by assuming the style of Hamas. I wish all of you lice-infested, dirty murderers will receive Hamas' kisses."²¹⁵

Csanád Szegedi has been an MEP since 2009 and was one of the co-founders of Jobbik and the Hungarian Guard. He remained attached to the Guard after it was banned. He attended the very first Parliament plenary session after the election dressed in the Guard's uniform. Szegedi is vehemently in favour of Hungary's withdrawal from the EU and burned the European flag in front of Jobbik supporters during an anti-EU demonstration in 2012.²¹⁶ At a press conference in 2010, he demanded the setting up of "special areas" for people who put public order at risk (meaning above all the Roma). The people who lived in those areas would, he announced, be under police supervision and would be able to leave the area after registration, except during night-time curfews. Szegedi referred in particular to the city of Miskolc, in the outskirts of

which there were illegal Roma settlements, and said their inhabitants could be the first to be moved to the "special areas" after forcible eviction by the local authorities. At the same press conference, Jobbik Party Chairman Vona stressed that further steps were necessary to solve the "problem" of the coexistence of Hungarians and Roma in the country. Since, in his opinion, the integration of the Roma had failed, it would be necessary to educate Roma children separately from their families in boarding schools.²¹⁷ In the press conference, Szegedi indirectly but bluntly demanded the setting-up of Roma ghettos and the compulsory withdrawal of their custody of Roma children. These "new solutions" were needed in order to prevent a civil war in Hungary.²¹⁸ In a speech he gave in 2012, Szegedi claimed that this was becoming ever more likely and advised Hungarians to stockpile food. He said the EU was consciously trying to colonise Hungary as a result of the fact that people were being forced by the current financial crisis to sell their property. The same had also happened as a result of the allegedly planned removal of Roma to residential areas in order to lower land prices there.²¹⁹ In June 2012, it was revealed that Szegedi himself had Jewish ancestors and that his grandmother is a holocaust survivor.²²⁰

Béla Kovács has been an MEP since 2010 and has since made a name for himself within his party as an expert on foreign relations. He worked on creating an international network of links with other parties. During an interview, Ko-

Jobbik was one of the big winners in the European Parliament elections of 2009. It won 14.8% of the Hungarian vote and so, as the third-largest Hungarian party, it was able to send Krisztina Morvai, Csanád Szegedi and Zoltan Balczo to Brussels as non-attached MEPs. After Balczo was elected to the Hungarian Parliament at the beginning of 2010, he was replaced by Béla Kovács. In its electoral campaign, Jobbik promoted the idea of a "Europe of Fatherlands" in which "cultural individualities" would be preserved. It argues that the EU, with its centralised and bureaucratic institutions, must be replaced by a new form of cooperation.

Morvai, who was previously not af-

vács summed up the significance that an election victory in the EP elections could have for right-wing extremist parties:

“Jobbik’s EP election breakthrough unleashed sizeable dynamics in terms of foreign relations. In addition, it is important to take note of the significance and weight of our newly attained parliamentary legitimacy. As a result, new opportunities present themselves that will advance future international exposure.”²²¹

In a joint interview with Nick Griffin of the BNP, Kovács justified the formation of the Hungarian Guard. For him the Guard was a self-defence unit intended to provide protection not against the Roma per se but against “Roma crime”. He said that in rural areas in particular, elderly people were being at-

tacked, robbed and sometimes killed by Roma. Entire fields of crops and agricultural equipment were, he claimed, being stolen from farmers.²²² Asked about his aims in the European Parliament, Kovács declared that half of his time was taken up with setting-up an office in Ukraine. There he would take care of the interests of the Hungarian minorities outside Hungary. He commented that his second aim had already progressed well with the recognition of the European Alliance of National Movements as a European party, since it was only by working together in a close network that the work of the European Parliament could be influenced. His personal political aim was also to be appointed rapporteur for the Parliament or a competent committee. In the same interview, Kovács and Griffin confirmed their close political affinity.





FOOTNOTES

⁰¹ Cf. Minkenberg, Die neue radikale Rechte im Vergleich, 1998; Decker, Parteien unter Druck, 2000; Ignazi, Extreme Right Parties in Western Europe, 2003

⁰² Cf. Minkenberg, 1998, pp. 29ff., especially pp. 33-35; Minkenberg/Perrineau, The Radical Right in the European Elections 2004, 2007, p. 30; Minkenberg, Die radikale Rechte in Europa heute, 2011, p. 113; Kowalsky/Schroeder, Rechtsextremismus - Begriff, Methode, Analyse, 1994, pp. 15ff.; Mudde, Populist radical right parties in Europe, 2007, pp. 25f.; Heinisch, Success in Opposition – Failure in Government, 2003, p. 95

⁰³ Cf. Ignazi, 2003, p. 33; Betz, Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe, 1994, pp. 29f; Minkenberg/ Perrineau, 2007, p. 30; Heinisch, 2003, pp. 96f.; Kritisch zum Populismusbegriff Decker, 2000a, pp. 25-53

⁰⁴ Cf. Schellenberg, Dispersion and Differentiation: The Structures and Trends of the Radical Right in Europe, 2009, p. 540

⁰⁵ Cf. Schellenberg, 2009, pp. 532ff.

⁰⁶ Cf. Grumke, Die transnationale Infrastruktur der extremistischen Rechten, 2006, p. 155

⁰⁷ Cf. Schellenberg, 2009, pp. 541f.

⁰⁸ Cf. Schellenberg, 2009, p. 542

⁰⁹ Cf. Scharenberg, 2006, pp. 76f.

¹⁰ Cf. Scharenberg, 2006, pp. 84ff.

¹¹ Cf. Camus, 2006, pp. 42f. Cf. also: Bühl, Islamophobie und Antisemitismus, 2010

¹² Cf. Zeisser, "Islamkritik" und rassistische Anfeindung von MuslimInnen, 2010

¹³ Segert, Zur Lage des rechten Extremismus in Osteuropa und den Bedingungen seines zukünftigen Erfolgs, 2006, p. 67

¹⁴ Cf. Schellenberg, 2009, p. 537; on the question of influence cf. Minkenberg, The Radical Right in Public Office, 2001; Schain, The Impact of the French National Front on the French Political System, 2002; Williams, The Impact of Radical Right-Wing Parties in West European Democracies, 2006

¹⁵ Cf. Schellenberg, 2009, p. 538

¹⁶ Cf. http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/grants/grant_amounts_parties.pdf

¹⁷ Unlike with the other European parties, EAF members are classified as individual persons.

¹⁸ Cf. Swyngedouw, Country Report Belgium, 2009, p. 61

¹⁹ Cf. Mudde, The ideology of the extreme right, 2000, pp. 82f.

²⁰ Cf. Swyngedouw, Country Report Belgium, 2009, p. 59; Mudde, 2000, p. 83

²¹ Cf. Mudde, 2000, pp. 84f.

²² Cf. Mudde, 2000, p. 88

²³ Cf. Mudde, 2000, pp. 96-114

²⁴ Heiliger Krieg in Antwerpen, Die Zeit dated 18.11.2004, see: <http://www.zeit.de/2004/48/Flandern>

²⁵ Further results: Mouvement Réformateur (MR) 9.2 %, Flemish Socialists (SP-A) 9,2 %, the liberal Open VLD 8.6%, the Walloon Christian-democratic party (CDH) 5.5 %, the green Ecolo party 4.8 %, the green Groen! party 4.3 %, Lijst Dedecker (LDD) 2.3%, Parti Populaire (PP) 1.2 %

²⁶ Gewezen VB-voorzitter Vanhecke: "Stem op N-VA", DeMorgen of 16.11.2011, see: <http://www.demorgen.be/dm/nl/989/Binnenland/article/detail/1348938/2011/11/16/Gewezen-VB-voorzitter-Vanhecke-Stem-op-N-VA.dhtml>

²⁷ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+REPORT+A6-2008-0421+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>; <http://eur-law.eu/DE/Rechtssache-T-14-09-Klage-eingereicht-16-,460811,d>

²⁸ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20100309+ITEM-005+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN&query=INTERV&detail=2-072>; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20100224+ITEM-013+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN&query=INTERV&detail=3-049>; <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20091008+ITEM-005+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN&query=INTERV&detail=4-035>

²⁹ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20090423+ITEM-005+DOC+XML+V0//EN&query=INTERV&detail=4-098>

³⁰ <http://www.burschenschaftliche-gemeinschaft.de/aktuell.html>

³¹ Cf. Widerstand gegen Rechtsextremisten in der Hofburg, Die Welt dated 28.01.2012, see: <http://www.welt.de/politik/ausland/article13838113/Widerstand-gegen-Rechtsextremisten-in-der-Hofburg.html>

³² VCf. Ivanov/ Ilieva, Bulgaria, 2005, p. 3

³³ Cf. Ivanov/ Ilieva, 2005, pp. 4f.

³⁴ Cf. Grigorova, Hoffähiger Rechtsextremismus in Bulgarien, DW of 03.12.2011, see: <http://www.dw.de/dw/article/0,,6671758,00.html>

³⁵ Cf. Bauer, Rechtsextreme und rechtspopulistische Parteien in Europa, 2011, p. 39

³⁶ Poster in the Ataka office in Sofia on ethnic Bulgaria, cf, Bauer, Rechtsextreme und rechtspopulistische Parteien in Europa, 2011, pp. 39f.

³⁷ Cf. Grigorova, 2011

³⁸ McLaughlin, Bulgaria's EU joy tainted by MP's racist jibe, The Guardian dated 04.10.2006, see: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2006/oct/04/eu.politics>

³⁹ Waterfield, Right-wing activist becomes youngest MEP, The Telegraph dated 11.01.2007, see: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/1539195/Right-wing-activist-becomes-youngest-MEP.html>

⁴⁰ Waterfield, 2007

⁴¹ Waterfield, 2007

⁴² <http://www.slavibinev.com>

⁴³ Cf. <http://www.slavibinev.com/index.php?lang=en&cont=data&page=6325>

⁴⁴ Cf. <http://www.slavibinev.com/index.php?lang=en&cont=data&page=6303>

⁴⁵ Cf. Meret, Country Report Denmark, 2009, p. 81

⁴⁶ Cf. Meret, 2009, pp. 83f.

⁴⁷ Cf. Jessen, Dänemark den Dänen, in: Der Rechte Rand, 135/April 2012, p. 28

⁴⁸ Jessen, 2012, p. 28

⁴⁹ Cf. Meret, 2009, pp. 84f.

⁵⁰ Cf. Neuber, Utoya 2.0, heise dated 13.08.2011, see: <http://www.heise.de/tp/artikel/35/35301/1.htm>

⁵¹ Cf. Meret, 2009, pp. 90f.

⁵² Cf. Jessen, 2012, p. 28

⁵³ Rust, Licht und Dunkel. Die Islamdebatte und der Rechtspopulismus. In: iz3w, 323, March/April 2011, p. 25

⁵⁴ http://danskfolkeparti.dk/F%E5_indvandrerer_%F8del%E6gger_det_for_de_mange.asp

⁵⁵ <http://www.dnsb.info/politik/ns/docs/deutsch.php>

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⁵⁷ Messerschmidt, Europe and Turkey need each other, but not in an EU context, Hürriyet dated 10.02.2011, see: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=europe-and-turkey-need-each-other-8211-but-not-in-an-eu-context-2011-10-02>

⁵⁸ <http://www.studjur.com/portrat/Morten%20Messerschmidt.pdf>

⁵⁹ Broder, Adieu Europa, Die Achse des Guten dated 15.05.2006, see: http://www.achgut.de/dadgd/view_article.php?aid=2424

⁶⁰ Broder, 2006

⁶¹ Broder, 2006

⁶² Bittner, Das beste Land der Welt, Zeit Online dated 21.05.2011, see: <http://www.zeit.de/2011/21/Daenemark/komplettansicht>

⁶³ Bürgerbegehren gegen EU-Beitritt der Türkei, Focus dated 23.10.2010, see: http://www.focus.de/politik/weitere-meldungen/europaeische-union-buergerbegehren-gegen-eu-beitritt-der-tuerkei_aid_565068.html

⁶⁴ Emerged from the White Defence League and the National Labour Party; not to be confused with the current British National Party founded in 1982.

⁶⁵ Husbands, Country Report Great Britain, 2009, pp. 252ff.

⁶⁶ Both quotations: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/programmes/2001/bnp_special/roots/1984.stm

⁶⁷ Husbands, 2009, p. 255

⁶⁸ EUMC 2004:11; quoted from Minkenberg, The Radical Right in Europe: An Overview, 2008, p. 97

⁶⁹ König, "Bestraft die Schweine!", Süddeutsche Zeitung dated 21.05.2009, see: <http://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/grossbritannien-spesenaffaere-bestraft-die-schweine-1.467013>

⁷⁰ <http://www.bnp.org.uk/policies/foreign-affairs>

⁷¹ http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/programmes/2001/bnp_special/the_leader/beliefs.stm

⁷² http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/static/in_depth/programmes/2001/bnp_special/roots/1998.stm

⁷³ <http://twitter.com/nickgriffinmep>, 13.12.2011

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⁷⁶ http://www.andrewbrons.eu/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=344:andrew-brons--a-letter-to-the-president

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⁷⁹ Cf. Minkenberg/Schain, 2006, p. 104f.

⁸⁰ Cf. Minkenberg/Schain, 2006, pp. 119, 120f.

⁸¹ Cf. Minkenberg/Schain, 2006, pp. 106f.

⁸² Cf. Lang, Marine Le Pen – das populäre Gesicht an der Spitze der französischen Rechtsextremen, *Netz gegen Nazis* dated 19.01.2011, see: <http://www.netz-gegen-nazis.de/artikel/marine-le-pen-das-populaere-gesicht-6235>

⁸³ Cf. Schmid, *Der Auf- und Abstieg von Frankreichs Front National*, 2009a, unpagged.

⁸⁴ Minkenberg/Schain, 2006, p. 108; <http://www.taz.de/1/archiv/archiv/?dig=2004/04/03/a0075>

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⁸⁶ Cf. <http://www.stopptierechten.at/2010/08/15/japan-fpo-vertreter-obermayr-trauert-am-yasukuni-schrein/>

⁸⁷ Cf. Lang, 2011

⁸⁸ Cf. Vogt, Schneidige Blondine, *Jüdische Allgemeine* dated 24.03.2011, see: <http://www.juedische-allgemeine.de/article/view/id/9998>

⁸⁹ Cf. Simonis, Madame hetzt höflicher als der Papa, *Der Spiegel* dated 13.03.2011, see <http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/0,1518,750324,00.html>

⁹⁰ <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?objRefId=103832&language=EN>

⁹¹ *Der Spiegel*, Eine Schwalbe für Le Pen, 8/1997, p. 154

⁹² Lennert, Minderheiten zu Sündenböcken, *Dom Radio* dated 27.08.2010, see: <http://www.domradio.de/aktuell/66976/wat.html>

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⁹⁴ Cf. Maegerle, *Aufwind für griechische Rechtsextremisten*, 2012; see www.bnr.de

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⁹⁷ Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece, *Tandis* dated 26.02.2009, see: <http://tandis.odhr.pl/documents/05793.pdf>

⁹⁸ Cf. Maegerle, 2012

⁹⁹ Cf. Hübner, 2008, p. 77

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Adam, *Rechtsextremismus in Europa: Heute Griechenland*, 2009, *Endstation Rechts* dated 09.04.2009. see: http://www.endstation-rechts.de/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=1425:rechtsextremismus-in-europa-heute-griechenland&Itemid=840&Itemid=761

¹⁰¹ Cf. Hübner, 2008, p. 78

¹⁰² Cf. Hübner, 2008, p. 78

¹⁰³ Cf. Hübner, 2008, p. 78

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Maegerle, 2012; see www.bnr.de

¹⁰⁵ Zacharakis, Von der Nazi-Truppe zur Partei der Unzufriedenen, *Die Zeit* dated 04.05.2012; see: <http://www.zeit.de/politik/ausland/2012-05/griechenland-rechtsextreme>

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¹⁰⁷ Cf. *Aufwind für Griechenlands Gegner der Austeritätspolitik*, *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* dated 16.04.2012, see: http://www.nzz.ch/aktuell/wirtschaft/uebersicht/aufwind-fuer-griechenlands-gegner-der-austeritaetspolitik_1.16461009.html

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¹¹³ Cf. Wetzel, *Country Report Italy*, 2009, p. 332; Grimm, *Die Alleanza Nazionale*, 2009, p. 18

¹¹⁴ Cf. Wetzel, 2009, p. 333

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