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A LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP
FAR-RIGHT PARTIES
AND THE EUROPEAN UNION



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SUMMARY

1. The term far right describes the political spectrum to the right of the European People's Party (EPP).
2. The far-right parties are stronger than ever and are benefiting from the severe political crises of the EU. In the 2014 European election, they increased their share of the vote to around 22 percent, which set a new record.
3. The far-right spectrum in the European Parliament consists of three political groups and a number of non-attached Members.
 - > The European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR) is made up of the UK Conservative Party, the Polish PiS, the German AfD, the Danish People's Party, the True Finns and several other parties.
 - > The Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group (EFDD) comprises parties including Nigel Farage's UKIP, the Italian Five Star Movement (M5S), the Sweden Democrats (SD) and others.
 - > The Europe of Nations and Freedom Group (ENF) is Marine Le Pen's political group. It consists of the Front National (FN), Geert Wilders' PVV, the FPÖ (Freedom Party of Austria), the Italian Lega Nord, Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest) and others.
 - > Non-Inscrits (NI): extreme right-wing representatives are in the majority amongst the non-attached Members. They include members of JOBBIK, the NPD and the Golden Dawn. FN dissidents Jean-Marie Le Pen and Bruno Gollnisch are also non-attached.
4. To date the far-right parties have only rarely succeeded in jointly exploiting their strength of just under a quarter of seats in the European Parliament. The three right-wing populist European election victors, namely FN, UKIP and DF, are divided among rival political groups. It is above all the extremism of others, which manifests itself in anti-Semitic, racist or misogynist scandals that so far has prevented the far-right parties from establishing a broad front.

5. To date the greatest joint success of an alliance of far-right parties spanning political groups has been the motion of censure against Jean-Claude Juncker's European Commission in November 2014. The motion put Le Pen and associates in the headlines, although it was voted down by the grand coalition centred around the EPP and the S&D. Far-right parties are politically effective above all when they succeed in influencing national governments or are themselves part of government. The chief danger lies in a possible election victory of Marine Le Pen in the 2017 French presidential elections.
6. Regional comparison shows that far-right parties are chiefly successful in the economically strong north and west of the EU. That success is rooted in welfare chauvinism – a collective defence mechanism that gains traction in times of crisis. It is directed, for example, against poorer immigrants or financial transfers to EU Member States that have been hit harder by the crisis.
7. The far-right parties present the EU as the root of all evil – they blame it for a decline in prosperity, decrease in democracy and domination of foreign cultural influences (cf. Decker 2006). Yet the far right also benefits significantly from the EU. Among the far-right parties' most prominent politicians and party leaders are a striking number of MEPs, including Marine Le Pen and Jean-Marie Le Pen, Nigel Farage, Matteo Salvini, Bernd Lucke, Janusz Korwin-Mikke, Morten Messerschmidt, Udo Voigt, Rolandas Paksas and Petr Mach. They take advantage of the media infrastructure of the European Parliament, make a show of their appearances in the plenary assembly and make use of multimillion-euro EU funding.
8. In geostrategic terms, the right-wing populist and extreme right-wing parties are striving to replace the EU and NATO with a Europe of nations. The right-wing conservative political establishment in Russia is viewed as an important partner by the parties of the ENF political group centred around the FN, PVV, LN, FPÖ and VB and the neo-fascists of JOBBIK, ATAKA, CA and NPD. Russia is seen as a conservative power that is taking on the USA, the EU and the cultural freedoms of liberalism. There are regular meetings, conferences and officially announced alliances between right-wing populists from the EU and representatives of the Russian parties United Russia (ER) and Motherland-National Patriotic Union (Rodina).

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

AECR	Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists	Official political party at European level
AENM	Alliance of European National Movements	Official political party at European level
AfD	Alternative for Germany	Germany
ALDE	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe	Political group in the EU Parliament
ALFA	Alliance for Progress and Renewal	Germany
ANEL	Independent Greeks	Greece
AS	Social Action with Alessandra Mussolini	Italy
ATAKA	Attack	Bulgaria
BNP	British National Party	United Kingdom
CA	Golden Dawn	Greece
CON	Conservative Party	United Kingdom
CSU	Christian Social Union	Germany
DF	Danish People's Party	Denmark
EAF	European Alliance for Freedom	Official political party at European level
EFD	Europe of Freedom and Democracy	Political group in the EU Parliament (09–14)
EFDD	Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy	Political group in the EU Parliament
EFF	European Foundation for Freedom	European foundation (affiliated with EAF)
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists	Political group in the EU Parliament
ENF	Europe of Nations and Freedom	Political group in the EU Parliament
ENF	European National Front	European alliance
EODE	Eurasian Observatory for Democracy and Elections	Belgium
ER	United Russia	Russia
EuroNat	European Nationalists - For a Europe of Nations	Party at European level 1997–2010
EPP	European People's Party	Political group in the EU Parliament
FI	Forza Italia (Forward Italy)	Italy
FIDESZ	Hungarian Civic Alliance	Hungary
FN	Front National (National Front)	France
FPÖ	Freedom Party of Austria	Austria
FT	Social Movement – Tricolour Flame	Italy
GREENS	Greens	Political group in the EU Parliament
GUE/NGL	European United Left/Nordic Green Left	Political group in the EU Parliament
ITS	Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty	Political group in the EU Parliament
JOBBIK	Movement for a Better Hungary	Hungary
KKE	Communist Party of Greece	Greece
KNP	Congress of the New Right	Poland
KORWIN	Coalition for the Renewal of the Republic – Liberty and Hope	Poland
LN	Lega Nord (North League)	Italy
LZS	Latvian Farmers' Union	Latvia
M5S	Five Star Movement	Italy
MENF	Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom	Party at European level
ND	New Direction – The Foundation for European Reform	European foundation (affiliated with AECR)
NI	Non-Inscrits (non-attached Members)	EU Parliament
NPD	National Democratic Party of Germany	Germany
N-VA	New Flemish Alliance	Belgium
ODS	Civic Democratic Party	Czech Republic
PdL	The People of Freedom	Italy
PEGIDA	Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident	Germany
PIS	Law and Justice	Poland
PRM	Greater Romania Party	Romania
PS	True Finns	Finland
PSD	Social Democratic Party	Romania
PVV	Party for Freedom	Netherlands
S&D	Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats	Political group in the EU Parliament
SD	Sweden Democrats	Sweden
SNS	Slovak National Party	Slovakia
SNS	Slovenian National Party	Slovenia
SSO	Party of Free Citizens	Czech Republic
SV	All-Ukrainian Union "Freedom"	Ukraine
SYRIZA	Coalition of the Radical Left	Greece
TT	Order and Justice	Lithuania
UKIP	UK Independence Party	United Kingdom
UMP	Union for a Popular Movement	France
VB	Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest)	Belgium
YEAH	European Alliance for Freedom	European youth association

SUCCESS: THE RISE OF RIGHT-WING EUROSCEPTICS

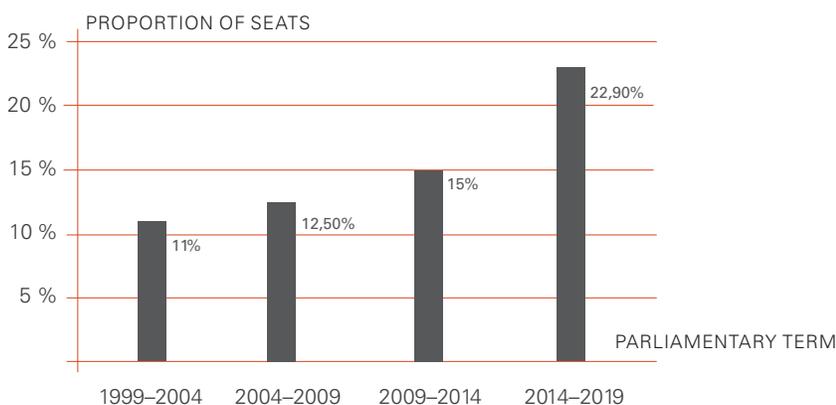
The success of right-wing populist parties is commonly considered to be a political consequence of crisis-ridden modernisation processes. (Cf. Spier 2006) Indeed, if we consider *“the disaster of the Democrats in the US midterms, Erdoğan’s ‘castling’ move from Prime Minister to President in Turkey, the ‘Orbanisation’ of Hungary, the election victory of Shinzo Abe in Japan and the triumph of the Hindu nationalist Modi in India”*, we can see that far-right parties and movements are on the offensive in many countries worldwide in the wake of the global financial crisis. (Bröning 2015) In Europe too, the *“national question”* (Baier 2015) is on the agenda again, and not just in Hungary, Poland and the UK. That is shown by developments as varied as the protracted government crisis in Belgium, the referendum on Scotland’s national independence, the war over eastern Ukraine and the Dresden-based PEGIDA with its rallying anti-immigrant cry of *“Wir sind das Volk”* (*“We are the people”*) and the successes of the right-wing populist parties in the 2014 European election. (Cf. Hildebrandt 2015)

That has boosted the confidence of the far-right parties in the EU. *“National Front tops the poll in France – the system is in panic!”*¹ was how Steeve Briois, Secretary General of the Front National (FN) saw the victory of his party in the European election in France. In the UK, the triumph of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) in the European election was hailed by party leader Nigel Farage^A as a *“political earthquake”*.² In Denmark too, the right-wing populist Danish People’s Party (DF) came first. The DF’s young lead candidate, Morten Messerschmidt set a new national record with 465,758 direct votes for his person.³

A In the May 2015 UK general election, UKIP secured 12.6 percent of votes, which was up 9.5 percent compared to the previous general election. That, however, only resulted in one seat in Parliament owing to the UK’s non-proportional, first-past-the-post election system.

The 2014 European election was the most successful to date for the far-right parties in the EU. In total, the Eurosceptic to Euro-hostile parties in political groups and alliances to the right of the Christian-conservative European People’s Party (EPP) secured 172 seats in the European Parliament. That corresponds to just under 23 percent of the seats.⁴ The parties within that spectrum held 15 percent of seats in the 2009–2014 parliamentary term, and 12.5 percent in 2004 to 2009. Right-wing populist parties in the EU are persistently on the rise, which in some Member States has taken them to the brink of obtaining a majority in parliamentary elections.⁵

PROPORTION OF SEATS OF EUROSCEPTIC PARTIES IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT TO THE RIGHT OF THE EPP BETWEEN 1999 AND 2014



Source: own calculation

^B Although the European election serves as the best snapshot for comparing the underlying political moods and power relations in the EU Member States, it remains an election of secondary importance. Voter turnout in the European election is consistently lower than in national parliamentary elections. Average turnout in the EU was 43.09 percent, but it ranges wildly between Member States with compulsory voting like Belgium (90 percent) and then Slovakia which brings up the rear (13 percent). On average, voter turnout is significantly lower in Eastern Europe, than in Western Europe, where Portugal has the lowest proportion of voters casting their ballots at 34.5 percent. Comparing countries, low turnout does not seem to be the reason for the success of the far-right parties. For example, if we consider the three EU Member States where right-wing populist parties came out on top in the 2014 European election, the picture is as follows. Voter turnout in France was average for the EU at 43.5 percent. The FN won 24.95 percent of votes there, an increase of 18.65 percent, with turnout having risen slightly by 2.87 percent compared with 2009. In Denmark, voter turnout is significantly above the EU average at 56.4 percent; it decreased slightly by three percent compared to 2009. The DF secured 26.6 percent of votes, which represented an increase of 11.4 percent. The UK is below average in terms of turnout at 36 percent; 1.3 percent more electors cast their ballots in 2014 than in 2009. The UKIP received 26.77 percent of votes, which marked an increase of 10.68 percent.

SPECTRUM: FAR-RIGHT PARTIES IN THE EU

The term “far-right parties” is used here to describe the broad spectrum of parties to the right of the conservative group of the European People’s Party (EPP). It includes national-conservative parties such as the Polish PiS, right-wing populist parties like the British UKIP, extreme right-wing parties like Marine Le Pen’s FN and neo-Nazi parties such as the German NPD.

According to that approach, the **UK Conservative Party (CON)**, which is moving further to the right ahead of the May 2015 general election in response to UKIP’s successes, also qualifies as a far-right party. Kietz and Ondarza (2014:3) write that “moderate Eurosceptics have drifted” towards the far right: EU membership is openly questioned, immigrants from EU Member States and third countries are blamed for problems and right-wing populists are being brought into the fold of the ECR group in the European Parliament (see Chapter 3).

The **highly heterogeneous Italian Five Star Movement (M5S) protest party** with its charismatic leader Beppe Grillo is difficult to categorise. Its political style is populist, but it cannot be placed according to the conventional left-right paradigm. All partner parties in the EFDD group are from the right-wing populist spectrum. The M5S’s decision to join the EFDD was made by an online poll of its members; party chairman Grillo gave them a choice of just two political groups: the national-conservative-right-wing-populist ECR and the right-wing-populist EFDD. Yet the M5S Members of the European Parliament have drawn attention with left-liberal demands for liberal civil liberties, worker protection and a stop to the EU-US TTIP free trade agreement. In the meantime Beppe Grillo repeatedly caused controversy with outbursts against immigrants and the Roma both verbally and in writing on his blog. In 2013 he reprimanded two M5S Members in the Italian Senate who had set out a motion on decriminalising immigration.

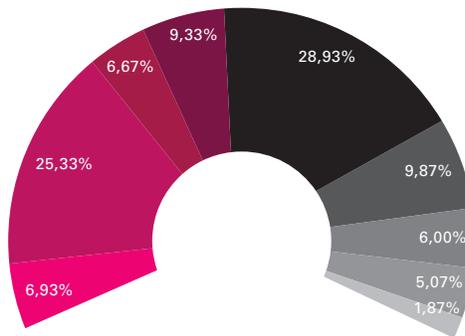
Other **parties that can clearly be categorised under right-wing populism are sitting in the EPP group, rather than on the far right in the European Parliament.**

That applies, for example, to Hungary's FIDESZ led by Viktor Orbán. Recently, his government demonstratively violated international humanitarian standards when large numbers of refugees wished to travel to Austria and Germany via Hungary. In September 2015 the FIDESZ government passed laws allowing crossing of the new border fence to be punished as a criminal act and deployment of the military to prevent the entry of refugees. Parts of the Italian Forza Italia (FI) are also from the extreme right-wing spectrum. The FI is represented in the European Parliament by Members including Alessandra Mussolini. The granddaughter of the fascist dictator was a co-founder of the extreme right-wing *Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty* (ITS) political group in 2007 with her neo-fascist party Azione Sociale (AS), before the AS merged into Berlusconi's Il Popolo della Libertà (Pdl) and then into the re-established FI. The Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU) regional party, whose delegate Manfred Weber has been chairman of the EPP group since 2014, agitated during the election campaign leading up to the German general election in 2013 and the European election in 2014 with slogans against refugees and immigrants such as "Cheat and you're out" and a toll for foreign motorists. The CSU demonstratively invited Prime Minister Orbán to a closed party meeting in Bavaria, thereby signalling that it supports his non-humanitarian, isolationist policy against refugees.

POLITICAL GROUPS: HOW THE FAR-RIGHT PARTIES ARE ORGANISED IN THE EU PARLIAMENT

Following the 2014 election, at first the European Parliament continued to have seven political groups and a group of non-attached Members (just as in 2009).^C There were initially two right-wing groups to the right of the EPP, as in 2009. Those were joined by an additional far-right group in June 2015 when Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders founded their *Europe of Nations and Freedom Group* (ENF) after a year in the European Parliament. In addition, extreme right-wing Members continue to dominate the small group of non-attached Members (NI). Besides the number of political groups and their dimensions, the composition of the political groups on the far right has also changed.

COMPOSITION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, AUGUST 2015



Political group	Seats
European United Left/Nordic Green Left	52
Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats	190
The Greens/European Free Alliance	50
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe	70
European People's Party	217
European Conservatives and Reformists	74
Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy	45
Europe of Nations and Freedom	38
Non-Insrits (non-attached Members)	14

Source: European Parliament, 17/08/2015

^C According to Rule 30 (2) of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament, a political group has to comprise a minimum of 25 Members elected in at least one-quarter of the Member States. Following Croatia's accession to the EU as the 28th Member State, that means that they must be elected in at least seven Member States.

SHIFT TO THE RIGHT: THE EUROPEAN CONSERVATIVES AND REFORMISTS GROUP (ECR).

The ECR group has risen to the third largest force in the European Parliament. That was not foreseeable ahead of the European election, since eleven of the 17 parties in the ECR first joined its ranks in May 2014. The group continues to be dominated by the UK Conservatives (CON) with 21 seats and the Polish Law and Justice (PiS) party of former prime minister Jarosław Kaczyński with 19 seats. The Civic Democratic Party (ODS), which was founded by former Czech president Václav Klaus and played a leading role in the group from 2009 to 2014, lost seven of nine seats in the wake of corruption scandals. The third largest party in the group until its split was Alternative for Germany (AfD), whose offshoot Alliance for Progress and Renewal (ALFA) with four MEPS now has more seats in the group than AfD with its two remaining seats.^D The Danish People's Party (DF), which was also successful in the Danish general elections in June 2015 – its 21-percent share of the vote made it the second largest party in the Folketing for the first time – has four seats.

The group has not only grown in size. It also made a major shift towards the far right when it decided to accept such decidedly right-wing populist parties as AfD, DF, the True Finns (PS) and the Independent Greeks (ANEL). Political group cohesion – which measures the extent to which the Members in a political group vote the same way – was 77.66 percent from July 2014 to January 2015, which is nine percent below the figure for the 2009–2014 parliamentary term. (Cf. Votewatch.eu)

The leader of the ECR group is the British Syed Kamall (CON) from London, who is seeking to protect London's financial services industry against politicians in France and Germany who "envy" London's success.⁵

D Following internal power struggles, establishment of closer links with the nationalist-racist Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident (PEGIDA) movement, and the separation of Bernd Lucke's ALFA, AfD is now definitively establishing itself in the right-wing populist party spectrum. (Cf. Häusler/Roeser 2015; Werner 2015; Behrmann 2015) It remains to be seen what political profile ALFA, which was formed as recently as 19 July 2015 under the leadership of former AfD chairman and MEP Lucke, will take on. Its manifesto, which was passed in Kassel at the time of the party being established, suggests a national-neo-liberal approach to economic policy with tendencies towards welfare chauvinism against poor immigrants. (Cf. ALFA manifesto: <http://www.sport-id.de/files/mediaFiles/79436.pdf>)

THE EUROPEAN CONSERVATIVES AND REFORMISTS GROUP (ECR)

EU MEMBER	PARTY	2014 RESULTS	2014 MEPs	2009 RESULTS	2009-2014 POL. GROUP
GB	Conservative Party	23.31	21 (-4)	27.00	ECR
PL	Law and Justice	31.78	19 (+4)	27.4	ECR
D	Alternative for Germany	7.00	2	---	---
	Alliance for Progress and Renewal	---	4	---	---
	Independent	---	1	---	---
DK	Danish People's Party	26.60	4 (+2)	14.8	EFD
B	New Flemish Alliance	16.35	4 (+3)	6.13	Greens/EFA
FIN	True Finns	12.09	2 (+1)	9.8	EFD
CS	Civic Democratic Party	7.65	2 (-7)	31.45	ECR
NL	ChristianUnion/ Reformed Political Party	7.67	2 (+/-)	6.82	ECR/EFD
BUL	Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organisation – Bulgarian National Movement	10.66	2	---	---
GR	Independent Greeks	3.47	1	---	---
KRO	Croatian Party of Rights Dr.Starčević	41.42*	1	---	---
LETT	National Alliance "All for Latvia!" – "For Fatherland and Freedom/ Latvian National Independence Movement"	14.25	1 (+/-)	7.45	ECR
LIT	Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania	8.05	1 (+/-)	8.42	ECR
D	Family Party	0.70	1	---	---
SLO	Ordinary People and Independent Personalities	7.64	1	---	---
SLO	NOVA	6.83	1	---	---
IR	Fianna Fáil	22.30	1 (-2)	24.08	ALDE

* Election result of an alliance; two additional elected candidates joined the EPP group.

THE EUROPE OF FREEDOM AND DIRECT DEMOCRACY GROUP (EFDD)

The right-wing populist *Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group* (EFDD) consists of seven delegations, of which only two – UKIP and the Lithuanian Law and Order (TT) party – were members of the predecessor, EFD. It was joined by the Five Star Movement (MS5) from Italy, the Sweden Democrats (SD), the Czech Party of Free Citizens (SSO), a defected FN member and a sole representative of the Congress of the New Right (KNP) from Poland, who joined the EFDD after a member of the Latvian Farmer’s Union (LZS) left the group in October 2014, leading to a temporary loss of political group status.

The political group is co-chaired by former investment banker Nigel Farage (UKIP) and the previously unknown Italian David Borelli (M5S). The M5S largely performs the work of the EFDD in organisational processes within the Parliament, for instance in parliamentary committees or the Conference of Presidents. UKIP primarily uses the group as a stage for its charismatic party leader, Nigel Farage.

In numbers, the EFDD is overwhelmingly dominated by UKIP (22 Members) and M5S (17 Members). The third largest delegation is SD with two Members. The TT’s only representative is Rolandas Paksas, former mayor of Vilnius and former Lithuanian president. The SSO is solely represented by its chairman Petr Mach – he was earlier chairman of the youth organisation of the ODS and former adviser to Václav Klaus, but defected from the ODS. The group has adopted the “people’s voice” slogan of its predecessor group: *Europe of Freedom and Democracy* (EFD). That also recalls UKIP’s references to itself as the “people’s army”, i.e. the army of everyday people taking on the political elites. On the request of M5S, the term “direct” was added to the group’s name in front of “democracy”.

The EFDD political group is largely of a technical nature. The parties share their rejection of the EU and almost all the parties present themselves as national anti-elitist movements. Beyond that, however, the platforms of the parties have little in common. Group cohesion in votes between July 2014 and January 2015 was correspondingly low at 51.59 percent. (Votewatch.eu)

The existence of the EFDD is always at threat since it only just meets the conditions for political group status – it has seven delegations, four of which have just one Member.

THE EUROPE OF FREEDOM AND DIRECT DEMOCRACY GROUP (EFDD)

EU MEMBER	PARTY	2014 RESULTS	2014 MEPS	2009 RESULTS	POL.GROUP until 2014
UK	UK Independence Party	26.77	22 (+9)	16.09	EFDD
I	Five Star Movement	21.15	17	–	–
LIT	Order and Justice	14.25	1 (+/-)	12.22	EFDD
S	Sweden Democrats	9.70	2	–	–
CS	Party of Free Citizens	5.24	1	–	–
F	Independent (formerly FN)*	24.95 (FN)	1	6.3 (FN)	NI (FN)
PL	KNP (sole representative)**	7.15 (KNP)	1	–	–

* Joëlle Bergeron left the FN after the European election and joined the EFDD as an independent MEP.

** KNP Member Robert Iwaszkiewicz subsequently joined the EFDD.

THE EUROPE OF NATIONS AND FREEDOM GROUP (ENF)

The *Europe of Nations and Freedom Group* (ENF) was not founded until a year after the European election. In an election campaign that caused a stir across Europe, Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders stood in 2014 as the first joint lead candidates of the extreme right for a political group in the European Parliament. That was a new phenomenon and shows that the extreme right wing has itself become more European in its fight against the EU and for closed national societies. The establishment of the extreme right-wing group was apparently well prepared. As early as 2010, a joint European party called European Alliance for Freedom (EAF) was founded with an affiliated think tank (European Foundation for Freedom), both of which receive EU funding. (Cf. Janssen 2013)

During the 2014 European election campaign, the youth associations of some EAF parties also founded a joint European youth association called “Young European Alliance for Hope” (YEAH), whose manifesto makes the case for a “Europe of nations”. The youth organisations of the FPÖ, FN, VB and SD were involved in the establishment of the far-right European youth alliance.

Following the election, the potential group had sufficient MEPs, but not the required seven delegations to form an official political group in the European Parliament. Marine Le Pen’s FN (24 MEPs), Geert Wilders’ Party for Freedom (PVV) (four MEPs), Matteo Salvini’s Lega Nord (LN) (four MEPs), Heinz-Christian Strache’s Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) (four MEPs) and Vlaams Belang (VB) (one MEP) were initially non-attached. One reason for that was that two former partners were no longer available – the Slovakian nationalists (SNS) failed in the election and the Sweden Democrats (SD) left the alliance

in the middle of the election campaign owing to scandal-inducing remarks made by the FPÖ candidate that were racist and trivialised Nazism.

However, the FN continued to work on the project of establishing its own extreme right-wing group in the European Parliament. In October 2014 Aymeric Chauprade announced in his then capacity as delegation leader of the FN in the European Parliament that a new party at European level called Movement for a *Europe of Nations and Freedom* (MENF) had been founded under the leadership of the FN.^E He noted that the PVV was not a member, but would continue to be part of the effort to establish a new right-wing political group in the European Parliament. Chauprade initially rejected rumours that Korwin-Mikke's KNP was involved.⁶ Finally, on 15 June 2015, at a press conference in the Paul-Henri Spaak building in Brussels, Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders announced that there were now sufficient members to form a political group in the European Parliament. Le Pen and Wilders had managed to persuade two members of the Polish KNP and defected UKIP member Janice Atkinson to join the group.⁷ In the meantime, the Romanian MEP Laurențiu Rebegea has left the S&D group and joined the ENF as the eighth delegation.⁸

The group is led by Marine Le Pen, whose FN with 22 seats accounts for more than half of the 38-member political group. Marine Le Pen's father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, and the former chairman of the ITS group, Bruno Gollnisch, remained non-attached in protest at Marine Le Pen's modernisation of the FN. The co-chair of the ENF is Marcel de Graaf from the PVV. The delegation of the Dutch right-wing populists has four seats, as does that of the FPÖ.

E In February 2015 Chauprade had to stand down as delegation head and chairman of MENF under pressure from Le Pen, over a scandal over a video recording in which Chauprade spoke of France being "at war with Muslims". (Cf. Le Lab Europe 1: L'eurodéputé FN Aymeric Chauprade affiche sa tentative de rabibochage avec Marine Le Pen – <http://lelab.europe1.fr/L-eurodepute-FN-Aymeric-Chauprade-affiche-sa-tentative-de-rabibochage-avec-Marine-Le-Pen-21168>) Date of retrieval: 10/11/2015

THE EUROPE OF NATIONS AND FREEDOM GROUP (ENF)

EU MEMBER	PARTY	2014 RESULTS	2014 MEPS	2009 RESULTS	2009-2014 POL. GROUP
F	FN - National Front	24.95	24 (+21)	6.3	NI
NL	Party for Freedom	13.32	4 (-1)	16.97	NI
A	Freedom Party of Austria	19.72	4 (+2)	12.71	NI
I	Lega Nord (North League)	6.15	4 (-5)	10.2	EFD
B	Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest)	4.14	1 (-1)	9.85	NI
PL	KNP *	7.15	2	–	–
GB	UKIP (sole representative)**	26.77	24 (+11)	16.09	EFD
RUM	United Romania Party (formerly PC/S&D)***	–	–	–	–

* After the KNP Members Michał Marusik and Stanisław Żótek joined the ENF, of the four-member KNP delegation, only the now former party chairman Korwin-Mikke is non-attached.

** The British UKIP Member Janice Atkinson left the EFDD group and joined the ENF group.

*** The Romanian MEP Laurențiu Rebegea left the Conservative Party (PC) and the S&D group in 2015, and joined the PRO party and the ENF as the PRO's sole MEP.

THE NON-ATTACHED MEMBERS OF THE EXTREME RIGHT WING

Following the establishment of ENF, ten of the 14 non-attached Members still belong to right-wing populist to extreme right-wing parties. The spectrum of the non-attached right in turn consists of parties from two alliances ranging from right-wing populist to neo-Nazi.

In 2009, the extreme right-wing EuroNat alliance became the official, and therefore EU-financed **Alliance of European National Movements (AENM) party at European level**. (Cf. Janssen 2013) JOBBIK, whose MEP Béla Kovács was elected president of the AENM for four years in 2013, cooperates via the AENM with parties currently not represented in the European Parliament such as the British National Party (BNP). The BNP's former chairman and ex-MEP Nick Griffin is vice president of the AENM. He failed to be re-elected to the European Parliament in 2014. Valerio Cignetti from the Italian Fiamma Tricolore (FT), MEP between 2004 and 2009, is secretary general. A representative of the Slovenian nationalists (SNS) is on the AENM's board. Jean-Marie Le Pen and Bruno Gollnisch, chairman of the ITS group in 2007 and president of the AENM until 2013, were actively involved in the European party until shortly before the 2014 European election. Marine Le Pen then forced both to leave the AENM in order not to jeopardise the election victory of the EAF, to prevent negative media reports and avoid frightening off potential partners.



The Greek Golden Dawn (CA) party and the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) have been partners since 2004 in the non-EU-financed **European National Front (ENF)**. NPD has been represented in the European Parliament by its former chairman Udo Voigt since May 2014. After the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany annulled the threshold applicable to European elections, the NPD received a 1.00-percent share of the vote, allowing it to enter the European Parliament for the first time. The CA is under investigation as a criminal organisation in Greece. One of the ways in which the NPD supports the CA from the European Parliament is by submitting motions for resolutions and questions to the Commission⁹.

The former KNP chairman **Janusz Korwin-Mikke** has not yet joined any alliance. After standing down as chairman of the KNP, of which he is now a honorary member, he founded a new party called *Coalition for the Renewal of the Republic – Liberty and Hope* (with the Polish acronym KORWiN).

THE NON-ATTACHED PARTIES: JOBBIK, GOLDEN DAWN, NPD AND KNP

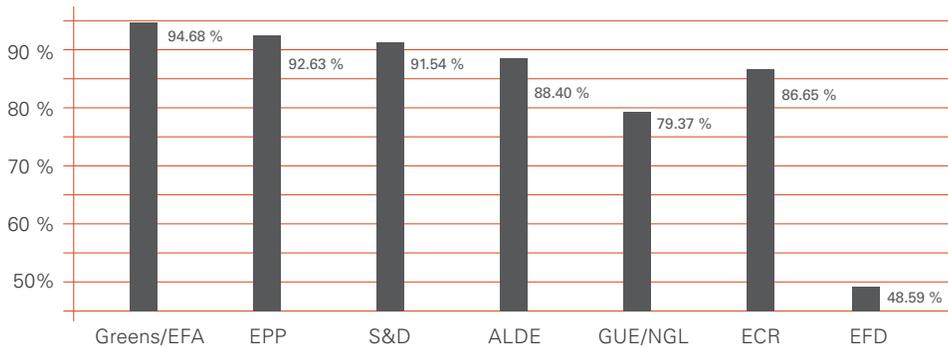
EU MEMBER	PARTY	2014 RESULTS	MEPS 2014	RESULTS 2009	2009-2014 POL. GROUP
PL	Coalition for the Renewal of the Republic – Liberty and Hope	7.15 (KNP)	1	–	–
H	Movement for a Better Hungary	14.67	3 (+/-)	14.77	NI
GR	Golden Dawn	9.38	3	–	–
D	National Democratic Party of Germany	1.00	1	–	–

WEAKNESSES: DIFFICULTIES OF THE FAR-RIGHT PARTIES IN FORMING STABLE ALLIANCES

If we consider the composition of the European Parliament, it is striking that the European United Left–Nordic Green Left (NGL) has managed to unite almost the entire party spectrum to the left of the Socialists & Democrats (S&D) (with the exception of the Communist Party of Greece (KKE)). However to the right of the Christian-conservative EPP there is anything but unity, despite shared nationalist Euroscepticism. The three right-wing populist to extreme right-wing national election victors of the European election, namely FN, UKIP and DP did not form an alliance, but instead joined competing far-right political groups and European parties. Why, given the potential power of almost a quarter of seats in the European Parliament, is there no comprehensive strategic far-right alliance against the EU?

First, there are relatively big differences between the positions held by far-right parties in the EU in the various policy fields, ranging from economics and welfare to the environment, trade and foreign affairs. There are no equivalent figures for the non-attached far-right parties, but a comparison of the positions taken by those parties in the European Parliament indicates that their heterogeneity is comparable with that of the EFD between 2009 and 2014.

COHESION OF THE GROUPS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT FROM 2009 TO 2014



Source: Votewatch.eu

Differences of content are, however, not the real obstacle to far-right parties joining forces in a political group at the European level. As shown by the EFD group in 2009 to 2014 and its successor, the EFDD group, a single common position such as euroscepticism can be a sufficient basis for working together as a political group. The difficulty instead consists of the balancing act performed by all far-right parties. National conservatism that is accepted as democratic by the national political and media mainstream stands opposed to extremism that is not tolerated and manifests itself in blatant group-focused enmity, whether it be anti-Semitism, racism, islamophobia, homophobia or misogyny. The divide between those two fields of discourse is constantly shifting and is dependent on time, place and situation. The scandals stirred up by the media and political opponents over extremist remarks is welcome in the sense that far-right players want to show that only they dare to address certain topics or break taboos. That communications strategy is reflected in right-wing slurs such as “left-wing dogmatists”, “do-gooders” and “political correctness”. (Cf. Auer 2002)

Modern right-wing populists, however, no longer wish to be seen as extremist, i.e. anti-democratic and inhumane, per se. They want to be electable by a broader base of voters in the long term, and have actual aspirations to come to power. That is exemplified by Marine Le Pen’s “detoxification” of the FN and her “republican shift” to a “people’s protest party”, which marks a clear attempt to distance the FN from the hard, extreme right-wing line taken by her father and predecessor Jean-Marie Le Pen. (Cf. Betz 2013)

But what happens when political alliance partners take up extremist positions? That **extremism of others** is beyond the strategic control of the partner parties and impacts negatively on their own civic guise. In the worst-case scenario, a party's own supporters are offended by an alliance partner inveighing, for example, against immigrants or national minorities. The following examples illustrate that problem faced by the far-right parties.

- > Racist remarks by the Italian neo-fascist Alessandra Mussolini, today a member of EPP, about Romanian immigrants in 2007 led to the extreme right-wing *Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty* group collapsing after just ten months. The Romanian nationalists of the Greater Romania Party (PRM) left the group in protest.
- > In the 2014 European Parliament campaign, the lead FPÖ candidate Andreas Mölzer had to pull out after making extremist remarks. He had called the EU a “conglomerate of niggers” and likened it to the Third Reich. The scandal prompted the SD to withdraw from the EAF alliance in order not to jeopardise its performance in the European election and the Swedish parliamentary election in September 2014 (in which the SD received 12.86 of votes, an increase of 7 percent).¹⁰
- > Anti-Semitism in the FN is one of the declared reasons why UKIP and the DF have to date been unwilling to join forces with Marine Le Pen and her FN in a political group in the European Parliament. As though to vindicate that approach, shortly before the election, the then honorary chairman of the FN, Jean-Marie Le Pen made an anti-Semitic statement about the Jewish singer Patrick Bruel, threatening to make an “ovenload” of him.¹¹ Jean-Marie Le Pen was expelled from the FN in August 2015 after he again expressed the view that the Holocaust was just a “detail of history”.¹²
- > According to media reports, Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders rejected cooperation with Janusz Korwin-Mikke and his KNP because they found Korwin-Mikke's remarks on matters such as abolishing women's suffrage and the Holocaust too extreme. Two KNP Members only joined the ENF group after Korwin-Mikke had stood down as chairman and founded his new party named KORWiN.
- > The KNP in turn is reported to have had reservations owing to Geert Wilders' “Reporting Centre on Central and East Europeans”, a website that solicits complaints by the Dutch about East and Central European immigrants.



- > In 2014 JOBBIK branded the FN and the FPÖ “Zionist parties” after those two parties rejected closer cooperation with JOBBIK, the NPD and the CA in the European Parliament on the grounds that they are too extreme.¹³
- > In December 2014, the German NPD railed against an alleged “Israel connection” of the FPÖ, FN, UKIP and PVV.¹⁴ With the focus on Islam as an alleged threat to the West, modern right-wing populists such as Geert Wilders regard Israel as a potential ally. Parties with anti-Semitic roots such as the FN or the FPÖ are now seeking to follow that course, or at least that is the impression they give. How deep the argument about anti-Semitism runs is illustrated by a remark made by Nick Griffin (until May 2014 MEP and chairman of the British BNP): he described the conflict between the traditional anti-Semitic right-wing extremism and the new allegedly pro-Israeli right-wing extremism as a “battle for the soul of nationalism”. (Cf. Janssen 2013)
- > As early as after the 2009 European election, the Hungarian JOBBIK MEP Zoltán Balczó, who was re-elected to the European Parliament in 2014, declared that his party would never cooperate with the nationalist parties of the neighbouring countries, namely PRM in Romania and SNS in Slovakia, on the grounds that they were “chauvinist”.¹⁵ The reason for the incompatibility of JOBBIK with SNS and PRM is their rabble-rousing against the minorities of the respective other nationalities and JOBBIK’s ideology of a Greater Hungary.
- > JOBBIK’s links to Russian parties and conflicts about the Hungarian minority in Ukraine led to the Ukrainian nationalist party Svoboda (SV) losing its observer status in the European AENM party. (cf. Shekhovtsov 2014)

IMPACT: EFFECTIVENESS OF FAR-RIGHT PARTIES AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL

Despite the difficulties of the far-right parties in forming broad and stable alliances, there is occasionally **cooperation among political groups and alliances** (concerning the 2009–2014 parliamentary term cf. Janssen 2013). In view of a grand coalition of the EPP and S&D, often with the inclusion of the Liberals and Greens, the possibility of right-wing populists being able to directly influence EU legislation from the European Parliament is almost ruled out. Even if all far-right parties were to join forces, a right-wing alliance with the EPP would be necessary for a right-wing voting majority in the European Parliament.

Right-wing populists, however, can improve their performance in elections in the medium term by influencing the social mood through media coverage. To date, the biggest joint initiative of the right-wing populists at the EU level has been the **vote of censure against the European Commission under Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker** on the grounds of the so-called “Lux leaks affair”, which revealed how large enterprises such as Amazon and Fiat had been granted tax privileges by the Duchy of Luxembourg under the then prime minister Juncker. The European Parliament voted on the motion of censure on 27 November 2014. In order to attain the necessary number of signatures to have the motion voted on in the plenary of the European Parliament, the then still non-attached right-wing populists of today’s ENF, the EFDD group and parts of the ECR group cooperated with one another. Finally 101 MEPs voted in favour. Eighty-eight abstained (including most of the MEPs from the left-wing GUE/NGL group^F), while a grand coalition consisting of the EPP, S&D, the liberal ALDE and the Greens/EFA supported the Juncker Commission with 461 votes.¹⁶ The ECR political group, whose largest delegation, CON, the British governing party, is represented on the Commission by the Commissioner for Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, Lord Jonathan Hill, announced that it would abstain. A minority of the political group – consisting of the German AfD, the Finnish PS, the Greek ANEL and MEPs of the Polish PiS – supported the motion, however. While the jointly enforced vote on the motion of censure was only a symbolic success for the far-right parties of the EU, it shows that even the right-wing populist and extreme right-wing parties can be effective if they manage to cooperate strategically.

F A total of six left-wing Members – from the Netherlands, Denmark and Czech Republic – voted with the far-right parties. The GUE/NGL left-wing group had tabled a motion of censure against Juncker ahead of the right-wing populists. However, since the left-wing group was unwilling to accept the signatures of right-wing populists and the other political groups were not interested, the motion failed for lack of the required number of signatures.



How broad far-right alliances can be in individual cases and how few reservations there are towards cooperating with the extreme right away from the media spotlight is made clear by the example of a parliamentary oral question to the European Commission on the subject of the “TTIP free trade agreement between Europe and the United States and risks to European designations of origin ...”.¹⁷ Members of the EFDD (M5S) and the later ENF (LN, FN, FPÖ, PVV) cooperated here with neo-fascist and neo-Nazi parties of the AENM (JOBBIK) and the German NPD. The motion also shows that far-right parties are keen to take up the TTIP topic and address public concerns. The question concerned protection of the designations of regional food products in the EU, i.e. regional and national identity on a globalised market.

MEPs from the ENF and EFDD political groups remain marginalised within the **internal structures of the European Parliament**. They do not hold important positions within the Parliament, such as chairing one of the committees. ECR Members, by contrast, chair the powerful Internal Market Committee (Vicky Ford, CON) and the Subcommittee on Security and Defence (Anna Elżbieta Fotyga, PiS). The candidacy of former AfD co-chairman Bernd Lucke to be deputy chair of the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs failed. In his place, however, another ECR Member, the Belgian Sander Loones of Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie (N-VA) was elected. That indicates that the various parties in the right-wing groups are assessed differently by the other groups in terms of their political respectability.

Right-wing populist parties can chiefly be politically effective at the national level. That does not always require direct participation in the government or toleration of the government. The pressure of successes of far-right parties in opinion polls can sometimes be sufficient to shift politics to the right overall. “Adoption strategies” – i.e. when conservative and social democratic parties adopt right-wing populist positions – provide additional legitimacy to the platforms and discourse of the right-wing populists. The right-wing populist original is highly likely to increase in popularity as a result. (Cf. Goodwin 2011: 24)

CURRENT EXAMPLES OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FAR-RIGHT PARTIES AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL:

- The election victory of the PiS in Poland with 37.58 percent of votes and 242 of 460 seats in the Sejm gives the new Prime Minister Beata Szydło an absolute majority. **The PiS won the election owing, among other things, to the anti-refugee and anti-Muslim rhetoric of party chairman Jarosław Kaczyński.**¹⁸ We will soon see what line the PiS government takes with respect to EU refugee policy or the question of Poland joining the euro area.
- The tightening of asylum law in Denmark, after the DF came second in the 2015 parliamentary election with 21.1 percent. During the election campaign the lead candidate of the Social Democrats, Helle Thorning-Schmidt, and the candidate of the centre-right alliance, Lars Løkke Rasmussen, had already made use of right-wing populist slogans to prevent the DF from being even more successful in the election.¹⁹ After the election, the first official act of the new minority government under Prime Minister Rasmussen was to submit a bill on tightening asylum law.²⁰
- The in-out referendum on Great Britain's membership of the EU, which the Conservative British Prime Minister David Cameron (CON) has pledged to hold by the end of 2017, in order to win back right-wing UKIP voters.
- The ECR governments in the UK (CON) and the Czech Republic (ODS) refused to sign the Fiscal Compact⁹ in 2012 on the grounds that it intervenes excessively in national sovereignty. All other governments of the EU agreed to sign it.
- The tightened controls at the Danish borders with Germany and Sweden in the 2011, which the DF successfully pushed for and were granted as a concession by the then right-wing-liberal minority government in Denmark.
- ANEL chairman Panos Kammenos' post as defence minister in the Greek government since January 2015. However, given the political weakness of the ANEL and the Syriza's majority within the coalition, the party does not have a perceptible influence on government policy in Greece.

The FN in France has the greatest chances of coming to power. **Marine le Pen is striving for victory in the 2017 presidential election.** Unlike her father, the daughter of the FN founder is pursuing a strategy geared to actually coming to power (cf. Servettaz 2014). According to polls of the French Ifop Institute she stands a chance of making it through the first round of the presidential election with 27 percent of votes and entering the run-off (as at August 2015).²¹

POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY: RIGHT-WING POPULISM AS WELFARE CHAUVINISM

Looking at the election map of the EU in 2014, it is striking that right-wing populist parties are not equally popular in all EU Member States. **In May 2014, no right-wing populist parties were elected to the European Parliament in the southern Member States of Spain, Portugal and Cyprus**, although they are all having to tackle dire social consequences of the financial crisis. However, there are two far-right parties in Greece that do well in elections, namely the neo-Nazi CA and the right-wing populist party ANEL.

The picture is mixed in Central and South-Eastern Europe. The situation in Hungary should be highlighted here – in addition to the right-wing populist FIDESZ (51.48 percent share of the votes in the 2014 European election, giving it 12 seats) with its hegemonic style to date, the neo-Nazi party JOBBIK has a stable potential voting share of around 14 to 20 percent. The large Eurosceptic, national-conservative parties from Poland (PiS) and the Czech Republic (ODS) also face competition from even further right – in Poland from the KNP, which is represented in the European Parliament for the first time, and in the Czech Republic from the SSO. Both the KNP and the SSO advocate neo-liberal economic programmes, in contrast, for example, to the national-protectionist JOBBIK. At the same time, the extreme right-wing parties in Central and South-Eastern Europe that had long been the most significant disappeared from the picture in the 2014 European election. Volen Siderov's ATAKA from Bulgaria, the Greater Romania Party (PRM) of former Ceaușescu supporter Vadim Tudor and the Slovakian nationalists of the SNS, who had been part of government several times in the past, failed to hold their seats in the European Parliament in 2014.

The numerical **strength of the far-right parties in the European Parliament is chiefly due to successes in the economically strong Member States in the north and west of the EU:** in the UK (UKIP), France (FN), Denmark (DF), Germany (AfD, FAMILIE and NPD), the Netherlands (PVV), Austria (FPÖ), Sweden (SD), Finland (PS) and Belgium (VB, N-VA). The northern Italian LN, which under its young chairman Matteo Salvini is gradually being shaped into an all-Italian party, and – at least in part – Beppe Grillo's M5S should be included here. The far-right parties of northern and western Europe make use of populist resentments (based on welfare chauvinism and the notion of vested rights)



against immigrants' presence on labour markets and access to benefits or against financial transfers to poorer countries of the EU. (Cf. also Rydgren 2006)

- > The slogans used by the German far-right parties AfD, NPD and CSU alike in the election campaign of "we aren't the world's welfare office" (NPD), "the global welfare office" (AfD) and "welfare office for the whole world" (CSU) are typical of welfare chauvinism in northern and western Europe.
- > In its statement of principles, UKIP calls for "benefits only for those who have lived here [in the UK] for over five years" and for welfare to be a safety net for the needy, "not a bed for the lazy". Following the exit from the EU, "British workers will be given first crack at the 800,000 jobs we currently advertise to EU workers".²²
- > While parties like UKIP, AfD, DF and PS combine the demand for closed labour markets and welfare systems with neo-liberal economic policy, the French FN blends right-wing chauvinism with an economic policy that qualifies as "left-wing" in socio-economic terms. Marine Le Pen claims that France as the "second largest net contributor to the EU budget" is one of the "most afflicted countries of the European Union", "afflicted by the forced opening of its borders owing to the Schengen Agreement", as a result of which the French welfare system acts like a "suction pump" for the French welfare state.²³

A LOVE-HATE RELATIONSHIP: THE EU AS A RESOURCE OF THE RIGHT-WING POPULISTS

The EU as a “machine for the destruction of nations” (Marine Le Pen)²⁴: as a counter to the crises of neo-liberal globalisation, far-right parties present the closed nation state as a haven for the given “people” that is deemed autochthonous. The supranational EU and its “elites” are considered by right-wing populist parties to be the antithesis of the people, which is defined as culturally homogeneous. That narrowly defined people is declared the sole political subject. The term “people” is not understood as inclusive of everyone; instead it is reserved for people with certain ethnic, cultural and social characteristics. **The EU, by contrast, is presented as the embodiment as everything politically negative and as such has become the chief reference framework of right-wing populism.** According to Decker, the EU “*is seen as representing all repercussions actually or allegedly associated with the process of modernisation: loss of material prosperity, domination by foreign cultural influences and the crisis of political representation. It serves as the specific culprit for globalisation, which is otherwise a highly abstract concept.*” (Decker 2006: 15). That simple explanation of how the world works has come to hold greater sway as a result of the economic, political and humanitarian crises of the EU since 2007. That is shown not least by the successes of the far-right parties in the 2014 European election.

The joint battle against the EU has become the most important point of common reference for right-wing populist parties at the European level. The following are examples of the specific topics through which the right-wing populists cast the EU as the root of all evil:



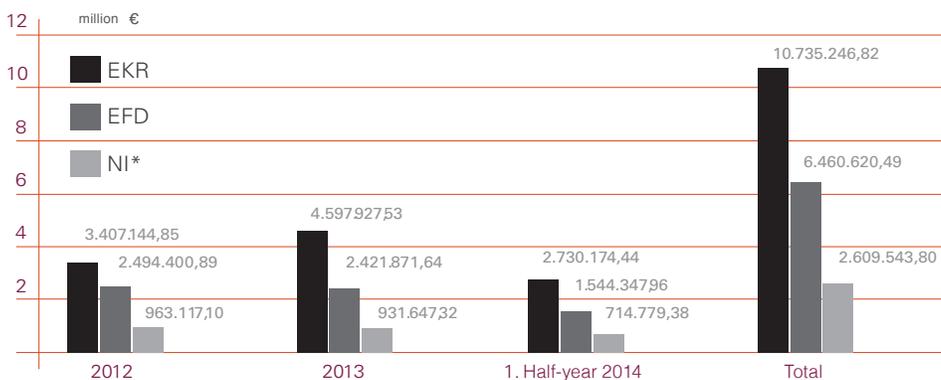
TOPIC	RIGHT-WING POPULIST ARGUMENTS AND SLOGANS	EU POLICY
Protection of the national welfare system	Wage dumping caused by immigrants, welfare tourism, wastefulness of the EU	Free movement of workers, de-facto deregulation and liberalisation EU budget, Euro bail-out packages and liability for debts under the ESM
Protection of national culture/values/families	Islamisation through immigration, multiculturalism, crime committed by foreigners, political correctness, gender madness, homo-dictatorship	Schengen Area, common immigration and asylum policy, Charter of Fundamental Rights, EU Anti-Discrimination Directive
Protection of national sovereignty/democracy/freedom	Over-regulation, Eurocrats, cosmopolitan elites, EU dictates, EU prison of nations, EUSSR	European Commission as initiator of legislation and watchdog over the treaties, ECB, troika programmes EU directives and regulations

The nationalist opponents of the EU are themselves becoming more European.

The EAF European party, which was founded in 2010, should be highlighted here – it was developed into the ENF group of the European Parliament and now comprises eight national delegations. European cooperation between right-wing populist parties has taken on a new dimension with the EAF and the ENF. For the European election campaign a “Political Party Manifesto” with common aims concerning institutions, economy, welfare and immigration was drawn up.²⁵ More significant, however, is the fact that the EAF or today’s ENF, at the press conference of Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders on 13 November 2014 at the Hague, presented politicians who are well-known figures throughout Europe as lead European candidates for a new right-wing populist political group calling for all far-right parties to wage a battle against “the monster of Brussels” (Wilders). It is the most high-profile, media-friendly collaboration of right-wing populist parties at the EU level to date.

The EU is not only the key political reference framework for modern right-wing populism. **It has also become an important material resource for right-wing parties and politicians.** The seat of a MEP provides an income for career politicians beyond national and regional parliaments, as well as infrastructure and the possibility to appoint staff. Moreover, as part of a political group, significant financial resources are available for staff, public relations, Internet presence, events and publications. In 2012, 2013 and the first half of 2014 alone, the EU funds available to the far-right political groups and parties in the European Parliament totalled over EUR 19 million – not including MEP salaries and flat fees for political work, office equipment and staff of the individual Members.

EXPENDITURE OF EU FUNDS BY FAR-RIGHT EUROPEAN POLITICAL GROUPS FROM 2012 TO THE END OF JUNE 2014 (IN EUR)²⁶



Expenditure of the far-right political groups 2nd half of the 2009–2014 parliamentary term: EUR 19,805,411.11

* Between 2012 and June 2014, the overwhelming majority, but not all non-attached Members (NI) were members of far-right parties.

The new secretary general of the FN, Nicolas Bay, wrote that establishment of the political group would mean that the French would “be better protected” against the EU than ever before.²⁷ The chairwoman of the group, Marine Le Pen, now has the privilege and PR boost of directly confronting leading EU representatives – the presidents of the European Commission and the European Council and national heads of government – from the front row in plenary debates. Nigel Farage (UKIP), chairman of today’s EFDD and the earlier EFD group, has long been a master of that art. That is exemplified by Farage’s verbal attack on European Council President Hermann Van Rompuy in March 2010, for which he was fined on the grounds of insulting behaviour. Farage described the Belgian, among other things, as having the “charisma of a damp rag” and called the officially trilingual Belgium a “non-country” - a deliberately provoked scandal that gained him media attention in the UK and well beyond. The video of the plenary address on UKIP’s video

channel had received over 430,000 views by January 2015; similar tirades by Farage in the plenary of the European Parliament, for instance against the former British prime minister Gordon Brown or the German Chancellor Angela Merkel likewise attracted hundreds of thousands of views.²⁸ Farage skilfully casts himself as the champion of the people who takes on the EU elites: further videos with some 100,000 views on the video platform YouTube are titled “Nigel Farage destroys the French president” and “Nigel Farage, exposing Eurocrat annoying nonsense and propaganda”.

Right-wing populist parties also make use of EU funds outside the European Parliament. Since 2009 several alliances of far-right parties have been registered with the European Parliament as official parties at European level:

The **Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists (AECR)** is the European party corresponding to the ECR political group. The *New Direction* (ND) foundation, which is likewise EU-financed, is affiliated with it. Additional EU funding of EUR 5,459,220.00 was available to the AECR in the period of 2010 to 2014.

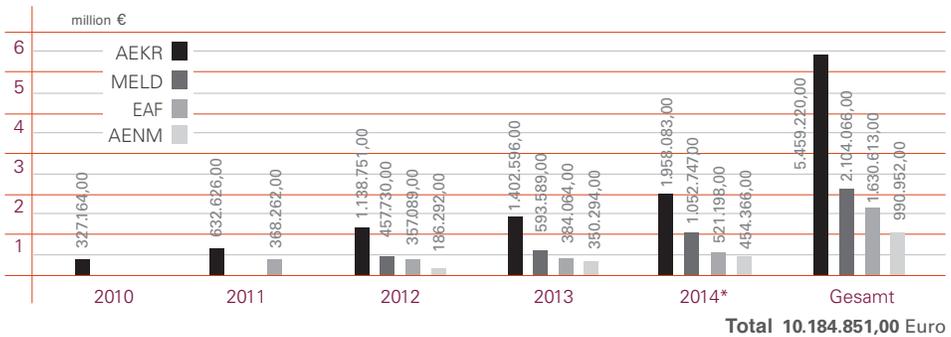
The **European Alliance for Freedom (EAF)**, from which the ENF group of the European Parliament was created in July 2015, was founded by individual MEPs and a number of national politicians including Godfrey Bloom (UKIP), Marine Le Pen (FN), Franz Obermayr and Andreas Mölzer (FPÖ), Philip Claes (VB) and Kent Ekeröth (SD). The parties concerned ran on a joint platform in the 2014 European election with the exception of UKIP, and with the inclusion of PVV, LN and the Slovakian SNS. EU funding of EUR 1,630,613.00 was at the disposal of the EAF between 2010 and 2014. The EU-financed *European Foundation for Freedom* (EFF) think tank is also affiliated with the EAF.

The **Alliance of European National Movements (AENM)** is an extreme right-wing project founded in 2009 by the old, radical wing of the FN (Bruno Gollnisch and Jean-Marie Le Pen), the British National Party (BNP), JOBBIK, the Italian Fiamma Tricolore (FT) and some other parties that do not currently do well in elections. EU funding of EUR 990,952.00 was available to the AENM.

The **Movement for a Europe of Liberties and Democracy (MELD)** comprised all right-wing populist parties in the old EFD political group (including LN, DF and PS) with the exception of UKIP. Additional EU funding of EUR 2,104,066.00 was available to it between 2010 and 2014.

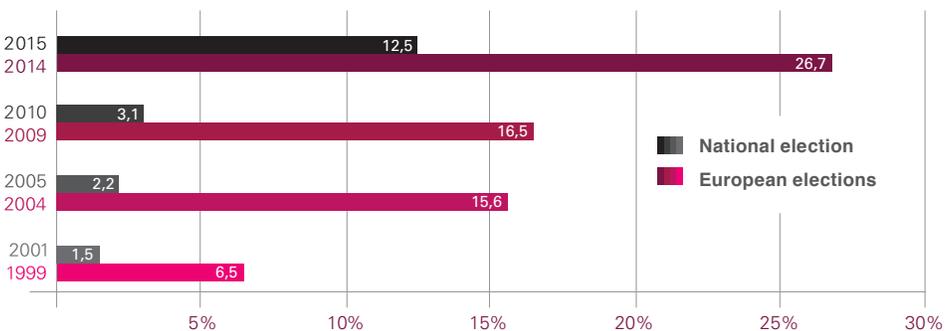
In total, the far-right parties could use additional EU funds totalling approx. EUR 10 million via officially registered European parties between 2010 and 2014.

EU FUNDS AVAILABLE TO FAR-RIGHT EUROPEAN PARTIES BETWEEN 2010 AND 2014 (EUR)²⁹



* Maximum amounts available; data has not yet been published on the actual amounts disbursed

The European Parliament, moreover, serves as the personal political base for leading figures of far-right populist parties in the EU. In some EU countries, national election law poses a problem for right-wing populist parties, such as the two-round system in France or the first-past-the-post system in the UK. Such systems make it more difficult for emerging parties to gain seats in the national parliament. Proportional voting is used in European elections in those countries. That leads to considerably different results, as the **example of UKIP** shows:



THE FOLLOWING PROMINENT RIGHT-WING POPULISTS, AMONGST OTHERS, CURRENTLY HOLD SEATS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT:

- Nigel Farage, chairman of UKIP and the EFDD group, has led various right-wing populist political groups in the European Parliament since 1999. He has used the European Parliament as a platform to build his political career.
- Marine Le Pen, chairwoman of the FN, and her father and party founder Jean-Marie Le Pen, honorary chairman of the FN until his expulsion from the party in August 2015, have been MEPs since 2009. In 2011 Marine Le Pen took over leadership of the party from her father and has repeatedly been the frontrunner in opinion polls for the 2017 French presidential election since early 2015.
- The German AfD failed to cross the five-percent threshold in the 2013 German parliamentary election after receiving 4.8 percent of votes, but secured seven percent in the 2014 European election nationwide and delegated members including the popular party speaker Bernd Lucke and the prominent former BDI (Federation of German Industries) president Hans-Olaf Henkel to the European Parliament. Following the separation of the Lucke wing, the ultra-conservative family politician and MEP Beatrix von Storch joined the federal board of the AfD as one of the four deputies of the new AfD chairwoman Frauke Petry. (Cf. Behrmann 2015: 103ff.)
- The young star of the DF, Morten Messerschmidt, has been establishing his political career from the European Parliament since 2009. In the 2014 European election, in which voters in Denmark could cast preference votes for individual candidates, he collected the highest ever number of personal votes in a Danish election.
- Matteo Salvini, MEP since 2009, took over leadership of LN, which had plunged in polls, in December 2013 and managed to hold his seat in the European Parliament. Salvini's goal is to turn the party of the northern Italian "Padanian" separatists into an all-Italian party. The LN has since reached up to 16% in opinion polls in Italy.³⁰ Salvini is spoken of in the media as the new leader of the Italian right and a future challenger to Matteo Renzi.³¹
- The maverick Janusz Korwin-Mikke, still chairman of the Polish KNP at the time of the European election, celebrated his first political success when he gained a seat in the European Parliament in 2014, after having stood in the Polish presidential elections four times between 1995 and 2010, but never having collected more than 2.5 percent of votes.
- Udo Voigt, chairman from 1996 to 2011 and well-known figure of the neo-Nazi NPD, has been the sole MEP of the German extreme right since 2014.

A COSY RELATIONSHIP: RIGHT-WING POPULISTS FROM THE EU AND THE RUSSIAN ESTABLISHMENT

Right-wing populist parties from the EU and representatives of the Russian United Russia (ER) and Motherland-National Patriotic Union (Rodina) parties cooperated increasingly closely ahead of the 2014 European election and during the escalating conflict in eastern Ukraine. The far-right parties in the EU seeking close ties with members of the Russian establishment in the ER are chiefly parties belonging to ENF, namely the FN, LN, FPÖ and VB. JOBBIK, NPD, CA and the Bulgarian ATAKA work together more closely with Rodina, the party of Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin (cf. also Political Capital 2014).

As early as May 2013, JOBBIK chairman Gábor Vona travelled to Moscow, where he met with MPs and the heads of Duma committees. He also spoke at Lomonosov University on the invitation of Alexander Dugin, an extreme right-wing ideologist and propagandist of a Eurasian alliance against the USA and liberalism. Vona referred in his speech there to the USA as “Europe’s deformed offspring” and to the EU as the “traitor of our continent”. According to a report by JOBBIK, Vona said that “Russia represents Europe much better than either of the two above, as it preserves its traditions and does not follow the culture of money and the masses”.³²

As one of several trips to Russia, Marine Le Pen visited Moscow in June 2013, where she was received by Duma Speaker Sergey Naryshkin (ER) and Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin (Rodina). She also gave a speech at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), which belongs to the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.³³

At a press conference on the sidelines of a Lega Nord party congress in December 2013, Duma Member Victor Zubarev (ER) addressed journalists together with the EAF party leaders Heinz-Christian Strache (FPÖ), Matteo Salvini (LN) and Geert Wilders (PVV) and the MEPs Gerolf Annemans (VB) and Lorenzo Fontana (LN). FPÖ leader Strache subsequently reported that “*ahead of the European election, joint cooperation for a free Europe of the fatherlands and the regions*” had been officially decided.³⁴



In March 2014 the Russian government invited far-right politicians to observe the referendum in the Russian-annexed Crimea. That mission was organised via a Belgian non-governmental organisation called the *Eurasian Observatory for Democracy & Elections* (EODE), a project of the Belgium right-wing extremist Luc Michel. Among those who took up the invitation were the later delegation leader of the FN in the European Parliament, Aymeric Chauprade, and representatives of VB, FPÖ, JOBBIK and ATAKA.

In April 2014 the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the European Union in Brussels³⁵, together with Lorenzo Fontana (LN) and Vienna City Councillor David Lasar (FPÖ) held a conference in the European Parliament on “EU-Russia: De-Escalating the Crisis - Roadmap for Peace in Europe.”³⁶

To mark the 200th anniversary of the Congress of Vienna, in June 2014 the Russian oligarch Konstantin Malofeev organised a conference in Liechtenstein, at which Marion Maréchal-Le Pen (FN), Aymeric Chauprade (FN), Heinz-Christian Strache (FPÖ) and ATAKA chairman Volen Siderov spoke with Alexander Dugin and others about the conservative restoration of Europe.³⁷

On the fringes of a Europe-Asia summit in Milan in October 2014, LN chairman Matteo Salvini had a 20-minute meeting with President Vladimir Putin. Salvini reported having talked about topics such as “*the absurd sanctions against Russia, implemented by a timid European Union, not protecting the interests of its own citizens, but the interests of economic oligarchs and the lobbying by the representatives of world power*”. According to Salvini, joint interests such as “*the protection of national autonomy in the fight against illegal immigration, and the protection of traditional values*”³⁸ were discussed.

In November 2014 Salvini visited the Russian-annexed Crimea and Moscow together with a delegation of LN MEPs. Salvini reported that a cooperation agreement was signed between the LN and the ER. During his visit to the occupied Crimea, the LN chairman met with the new Prime Minister of Crimea and the President of the Crimean parliament, and also paid a visit to the Russian Black Sea fleet, according to Salvini’s account. In Moscow Salvini met Duma Speaker Sergey Naryshkin (ER) and the chair of the Duma foreign affairs committee, Alexei Pushkov.³⁹

FPÖ party chairman Heinz-Christian Strache also travelled in November 2014 to Moscow, where he met Members of the Duma and took part in an international round table on “Ways of overcoming the crisis of confidence in Europe”.⁴⁰

Likewise in November 2014, it became known that the FN had been granted a loan of over EUR 9 million by the Russian First Czech-Russian Bank. According to the French online investigative journal Mediapart, FN requested loans of EUR 40 million for the period leading up to the French presidential election. That, however, is denied by Marine Le Pen.⁴¹

In March 2015 the MEP Jean-Luc Schaffhauser organised a press conference in the European Parliament titled “Freedom and unity in Europe” on the crisis in Ukraine. Among those on the podium was the German journalist Manual Ochsenreiter, former sub-editor at “*Junge Freiheit*” and editor-in-chief today of the extreme right-wing monthly “*Zuerst!*”. At the conference Schaffhauser announced that a further conference would be held in Donetsk titled “Donbass: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow”. Other right-wing populist MEPs were present, including the Italian Mario Borghezio from the LN.⁴²

Likewise in March 2015, the Rodina party held a conference in Saint Petersburg titled “International Russian Conservative Forum”, which was attended by neo-fascists and right-wing extremists from Russia, the EU and the USA. The final declaration was signed, among others, by Udo Voigt (NPD), a representative of the CA and former MEP Nick Griffin (BNP). The Conservative Forum serves as a permanent cooperation structure of “conservative forces” opposed to the USA and the EU; an executive committee has been set up that is to coordinate joint work in the future.⁴³

The following two quotes show the **ideological overlaps between some of the right-wing populists in the EU and representatives of the Russian establishment**^H.

The first quote comes from a speech given by Vladimir Putin on 16 September 2013 at the Valdai International Discussion Club in Novgorod. The Russian President spoke on the topic of “Russian Diversity for the Modern World”. An extract of the speech is quoted as a slogan on the website of the International Russian Conservative Forum. Putin spoke about current challenges for Russian society:

H Translated from French: T.J.

[...] *"Another serious challenge to Russia's identity is linked to events taking place in the world. Here there are both foreign policy and moral aspects. We can see how many of the Euro-Atlantic countries are actually rejecting their roots, including the Christian values that constitute the basis of Western civilisation. They are denying moral principles and all traditional identities: national, cultural, religious and even sexual. They are implementing policies that equate large families with same-sex partnerships, belief in God with the belief in Satan. The excesses of political correctness have reached the point where people are seriously talking about registering political parties whose aim is to promote paedophilia. [...] In Europe and some other countries so-called multiculturalism has been implanted [...] It is no accident that today European politicians and public figures are increasingly talking about the failures of multiculturalism, and that they are not able to integrate foreign languages or foreign cultural elements into their societies. [...]*

The second quote comes from a speech made on 13 July 2013 in the Duma by the geopolitical adviser to the FN party leadership and later leader of the FN delegation in the European Parliament. He spoke about a *"war of the American financial oligarchy against the free people"* and continued:

"... However, the geopolitical war waged by that oligarchy against Russia and against the independence of the Europeans is matched by an ideological war. Yesterday the 'colourful' revolutions in Georgia and the Ukraine, and today FEMEN, 'Pussy Riot' and gay marriage in France – those are simply expressions of one and the same phenomenon: the alliance of western globalism with anarchistic nihilism, that destructive ideology that in various forms in history has never ceased attacking the foundations of civilisation, the dignity of the person, the family national sovereignty. [...] The patriots of the whole world, who are committed both [emphasis in the original] to the independence of peoples and the foundations of our civilisation are today looking to Moscow." ⁴⁴

Some European right-wing populists see Russia as the last refuge of a traditional, patriarchal, authoritarian social structure. In the eyes of the Russian government, right-wing populist parties are ideologically compatible partners in the geostrategic conflict with the transatlantic West. According to the FN's platform, that partnership would merely be the first step towards a new world order without NATO and the EU, but with a conservative "trilateral alliance of Paris, Berlin and Moscow".⁴⁵

In the eyes of many right-wing populist parties in the EU, the Russian government under President Vladimir Putin is an attractive strategic ally for several reasons.

- > Geopolitics: Both right-wing populist parties and the Russian government see the EU and NATO as the extended arm of the US superpower. In geopolitical terms, both aim to replace the EU and NATO and with a conservative alliance of sovereign nation states as a "Europe of nations" or "Eurasian Union" with the involvement or even leadership of Russia.
- > Social policy: Both reject western-pluralist societies allowing for individual, non-traditional lifestyles that deviate from the majority (think of the "Putin, help us!" posters at PEGIDA demonstrations).
- > Leadership style: Right-wing populist leaders from Marine Le Pen to Nigel Farage "admire" the political assertiveness and leadership style of the autocrat Vladimir Putin.
- > Nationalist policy: The annexation of the predominantly Russian-speaking Crimea and the support for separatists in eastern Ukrainian regions with Russian minorities (termed "New Russia"⁴⁶ by President Putin) are reference points for expansionist nationalists as JOBBIK (with its claim to regions that have Hungarian-speaking minorities in Serbia, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine) as well as for separatist parties such as LN and VB.



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EU 2016: the political crisis follows the financial and economic crisis. Right-wing populists have taken over the government in Hungary and Poland. In France the far right Front National is making gradual inroads towards power; Member of the European Parliament Marine Le Pen wants to become president in 2017. In the European Parliament parties on the extreme right managed to secure almost a quarter of the seats in the 2014 European election and set up three factions. This study traces the dangerous success of extreme right parties in the EU. Who is working with whom? What are the strengths and where are the weaknesses in the collaboration by nationalists at a European level? What significance does the EU itself have for right-wing opponents to European integration? How do right-wing populists from the EU cooperate with representatives of the Russian establishment?