

The EU will survive

analysis on the outcomes of the European Parliamentary elections

Key findings

- The strengthening of extremism is an important signal, but the EU-committed “mainstream” remains strong. If the notion of the crisis becomes stronger within the EU, the prediction of “Europe will fall” can fulfill itself.
- Since the Eurosceptic parties often admit their Russian commitment, it is an open secret that their larger proportion of mandates can definitely strengthen Russian influence in Europe. Besides the Russian world power and regional issues, these parties are staunch proponents of key Russian energy industry interests too.
- The votes of the 12 Fidesz MEPs can be decisive in certain cases not only in the election of the EC President. Fidesz can use the narrow majority of the EPP for political blackmailing in the future too.
- Despite the result of Együtt-PM and DK, which is better than expected, there is no significant realignment in the Hungarian right-left dichotomy. Fidesz still faces no challenger.
- The second place of Jobbik is only a big success at one glance: it did manage to overtake MSZP, but the reason is that although the supporters of the left are a bigger group, their votes were distributed among three parties.
- The race for the leading position on the left has inevitably started. It will greatly make the preparation for the municipal elections harder, because on several levels the only chance for them is to cooperate in order to win.

European Union

1) It is not the end of the world – the EU will survive

Although mistrust towards the integration has grown, and based on this, anti-EU forces are gaining strength, according to the Eurobarometer research, the majority of EU citizens are still committed to the basic values of the Union (peace, liberty, democracy, human rights). Only the citizens of the United Kingdom and Cyprus are giving a definite yes to seceding from the Union. The strengthening of extremism is an important signal, but at the same time, its extent should not be overvalued: the EU-committed “mainstream” remains strong. If the notion of the crisis and the apocalyptic mood becomes stronger within the EU, and thus strengthens the extremes that build on these notions, this way the prediction of “Europe will fall” can fulfill itself.

Due to the heterogeneous anti-EU/Eurosceptic supply, it is now uncertain how many groups they can form. Despite the differences in values and interests, unlike the earlier extreme right factions, the present processes seem to be more organized and self-conscious, so the factions can live longer, as well. The extreme right, while it is fighting with globalization and the EU, is becoming spectacularly more and more “pan-European”. Although the parties of Eastern-Europe are not part of the forces involved in the cooperation, the willingness to cooperate on the European level, at least in the West, is stronger than before. However, since the conditions are hard (in order to create a Group, 25 MEPs of 7 member states have to come to an agreement), it is not so certain that both Nigel Farage and Marine Le Pen will be able to form a faction.

ECR (European Conservatives and Reformists), spearheaded by David Cameron, will practically be reestablished, but the fate of EFD (European Freedom and Democracy) is somewhat more unsure. The success of the EAF (European Alliance for Freedom), which is to be organized by Marine Le Pen, depends primarily on whether or not the potential partners will choose EFD instead of EAF.

Most formations have the tendency to move towards the more moderate groups, so whoever will be welcome by Cameron’s ECR, will happily find a home. The next option for most formations is the EFD, and then comes helping out Le Pen as an option. Besides EAF, the UKIP led EFD will struggle to retain the group, as right now they can rely on the members of five different countries: from the far-right, the Danish People’s Party, the Finnish Party and the Lithuanian Order and Justice Party; and also the Christian fundamentalist, Protestant Dutch Reformed Political Party, and of course the pro-independence British UKIP.

This basic rule can be overshadowed by the seeming commitment towards Le Pen by such players as the Italian North League and the Belgian Flemish Interest, who have been sitting in Farage’s group so far. The future of the EAF Group led by Le Pen has become doubtful as the Slovakian National Party has dropped out and thus it has only 6 of the 7 countries it needs for certain. On the other side, the resetting of the leftist Eurosceptic formation (GUE/NGL) is sure.

Besides the mentioned parties, there are nine old-new Eurosceptic formations that do not belong to a faction. Some of them are rather conservative or leftist, slightly far-right, and also there are some that even Le Pen finds racist. Of the latter “pariah” group, one can mention the Greek Golden Dawn, the Hungarian Jobbik and the German NPD. Consequently, the majority of the Eurosceptic parties with a “free valent”, including the anti-Europe Alternative Germany which has the most influence in Parliament and the Italian leftist Five Star Movement, will first want to join the ECR or EFD which are closer to the political center. Besides the “pariahs”, EAF and EFD can most probably count on the nationalist Polish Congress of the New Right (KNP) or the Independent Greeks (Anexartitoi Ellines) who oppose migration and multiculturalism.

GUE/NGL		EAF (Le Pen)		EFD (Farage)		ECR (Cameron)		Not yet affiliated	
Total mandates	42	Total mandates	40	Total mandates	33	Total mandates	45	Total mandates	45
EL (SY.RIZ.A)	7	FR (FN)	24	UK (UKIP)	24	UK (Cons.)	19	IT (Mov. a 5 Stelle)	17
DE (DIE LINKE)	7	IT (LN)	5	DK (DF)	4	PL (PiS)	19	DE (AfD)	7
ES (IU-ICV-EUIA-BA)	5	AT (FPÖ)	4	FI (PS)	2	CZ (ODS)	2	BE (N-VA)	4
CZ (KSČM)	3	NL (PVV)	4	LT (TT)	2	LV (TB/LNKK)	1	PL (KNP)	4
FR (FG)	3	SE (SD)	2	NL (SGP)	1	LT (LLRA)	1	HU (Jobbik)	3
NL (SP)	3	BE (VB)	1			HR (HSP)	1	IT (LE – CT)	3
IE (SF)	3					NL (CU)	1	EL (XA)	2
PT (CDU)	3					SK (NOVA)	1	EL (AE)	1
CY (AKEL)	2							HR (HČSP)	1
DK (Folkebev. mod EU)	1							LT (LVZS)	1
FI (VAS)	1							SK (OL'aNO)	1
FR (AOM)	1							DE (NPD)	1
EL (KKE)	1								
PT (BE)	1								
SE (Vänsterpartiet)	1								

The approximately 27% anti-EU/Eurosceptic block can seem to be frightening, but if we turn the figure around, we can see that 73% of the EP mandates are dominantly pro-EU: the People’s Party, the Social Democrats, the Liberals and the Greens and a few independents.

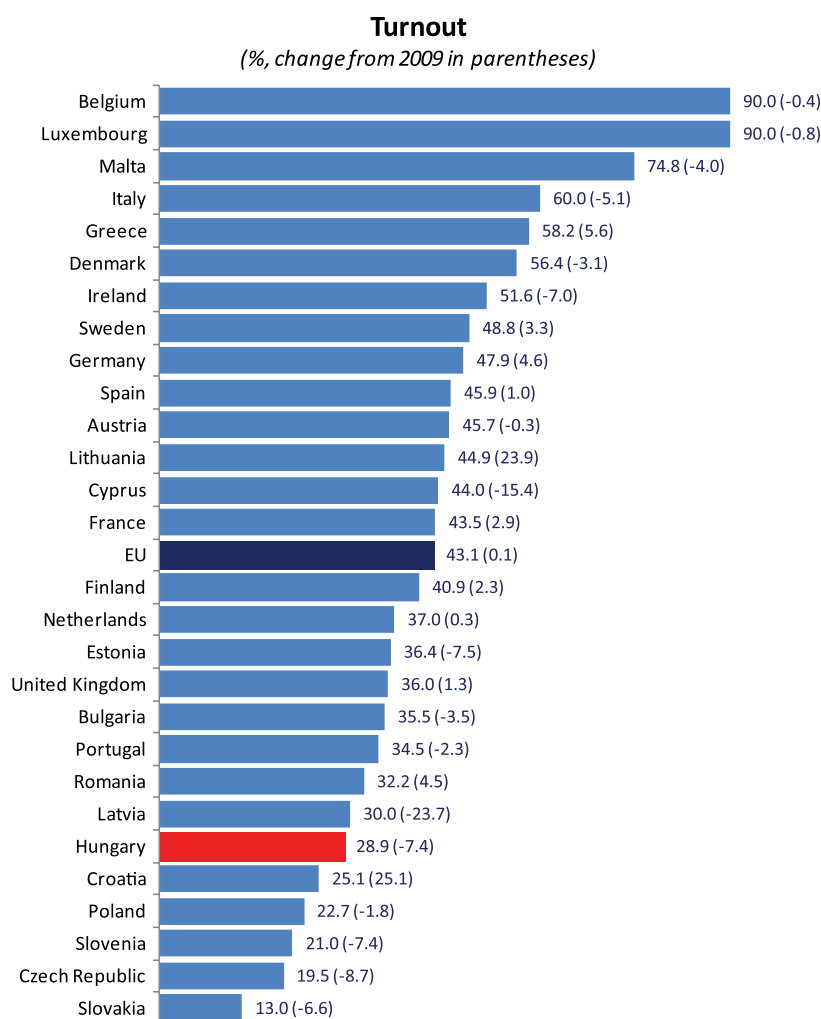
2) Russia is closer

Although it is not clear how many groups that are more or less critical with the EU can be formed, but since these parties often admit their Russian commitment (like Marine Le Pen who has recently visited Moscow), it is an open secret that their larger proportion of mandates can definitely strengthen Russian influence in Europe. Besides the Russian world power and regional issues, these parties are staunch proponents of key Russian energy industry interests too. The strengthening of the extreme parties will also make it hard for the European endeavors to resolve the Ukrainian crisis. Parties that are attracted by EAF, GUE-NGL and EFD have already voted in the European Parliament against the proposition to condemn Russia because of the aggression in the Crimea.

See our earlier analysis titled *The Russian Connection*: http://www.riskandforecast.com/useruploads/files/pc_flash_report_russian_connection.pdf

3) Europe has become “politicized” – the fall in the turnout has stopped

For the first time since 1979, the turnout was not lower than 5 years earlier. Even if it is a small margin (from 43% to 43.11%), but proportionally more people went to the polls than in 2009. This minimal increase in the turnout is mainly due to the fact that despite the commonplace, which states that the EP election is never about Europe, this election was in fact about Europe.



It is not obvious though who could profit from the higher turnout. It is an unfavorable sign that where the turnout was higher (France, UK), anti-Europe parties did considerably well.

If we look at the whole pattern of the EU states, then similarly to 2009, it is true for this election as well that there is no strong correlation between turnout and trust towards the EU. Not counting the countries where voting is compulsory (BE, CY, EL, LU) and the especially high turnout in Malta, there is a 0.3 negative correlation between the turnout and those trusting the EU. So the lower the turnout, the higher the trust is towards the EU, although this correlation is not strong. **Based on this, it seems that it is a pity to expect the strengthening of the legitimacy of the EU only due to the turnout.**

4) It can lead to a democratic deficit if the top candidate of the EPP is not elected the President of the European Commission

Although many people have made it clear that the next President will not necessarily be selected from the top candidates of the party families, it would discredit the first personalized debate and the whole EP if a sixth candidate was chosen – as wished by Viktor Orbán and David Cameron among others. This would provide a stronger ground to the charge against the EU claiming its “democratic deficit”, and in the future, it can bring about scepticism in connection with forward-pointing actions. It can also fire up anti-Europe voices who can rightly say that the EU was only “fooling” with the voters when it made them believe that the leader of the Commission can come from the top candidates.

5) In Europe, in the future big coalitions can operate

Although the party groups sharply criticized each other throughout the campaign, it is expected in the European Parliament, even more than before, that decisions in the European Parliament will be made along big coalition lines (mainly People’s Party-Social Democrat-Liberal). The socialist, the liberal and the green Groups even together are far from the majority, and the EPP will not be able to make a lasting majority that could govern. With the growing of the EU-sceptic formations, pro-Europe groups will have to depend on each other more than ever.

Hungary

1) Despite the result of Együtt-PM and DK, which is better than expected, there is no significant realignment in the right-left dichotomy.

2009		2014			
1 632 309	56.36%	Fidesz-KDNP		1 191 163	51.49%
427 773	14.77%	Jobbik		339 501	14.68%
503 140	17.37%	MSZP		252 494	10.92%
75 522	2.61%	LMP		115 957	5.01%
153 660	5.31%	MDF	DK	225 762	9.76%
62 527	2.16%	SZDSZ	Együtt-PM	167 012	7.22%
41 248	1.42%	Other		21 370	0.92%
2 896 179		Sum		2 313 259	

Fidesz has lost 5 percent, while Jobbik, having gained a lot of strength in the past five years, has almost dropped back to its performance in 2009. Leftist formations have gained five percent more than five years ago.

Regarding the left vs. right power struggle, the results show no real difference compared to the elections in April. The parties of the then called “Összefogás” have gained 28% instead 26 in April and the (domestic) proportion of votes of Fidesz and Jobbik together was 64% in April and 66% now. It refers to the fact that although there was some realignment within the left and the right, there has been little movement between the two big groups.

2) Fidesz will use its power in the European scene too

Fidesz still faces no challenger. As it has received 51.5%, it can claim to have the support of the majority of voters. Because of the low turnout, obviously this interpretation is also rather questionable, but while the party could not get over 50% at the parliamentary elections, this time they managed to do it. Looking at the whole of Europe, Fidesz received the second biggest proportion of votes (after the Maltese Labour Party's 53%), which is a big feat of arms both in Budapest and Brussels. Fidesz will use this power in the European scene as well, the first sign of it is that Viktor Orbán has openly declared that the party would not support the nomination of the Jean-Claude Juncker (the party and political ally of Viviane Reding) by the European People's Party (EPP) to head the European Commission. The votes of the 12 Fidesz MEPs can be decisive in certain cases not only in the election of the EC President. Fidesz can use the narrow majority of the EPP for political blackmailing in the future too.

3) The winning streak of Jobbik has been broken, but party has not snapped.

Fidesz managed to take 56% of its voters to go to the polls, the leftist parties took 50% of theirs, LMP had 43% of its voters. At the same time, Jobbik performed much worse: it managed to mobilize only one third of its voter base. The second place of Jobbik is only a big success at one glance: it did manage to overtake MSZP, but the reason is that although the supporters of the left are a bigger group, their votes were distributed among three parties. The only chance for Jobbik to become the challenger of the governing party is if the left breaks up into smaller pieces due to its inner struggles.

The Béla Kovács case could also play a role in the bad performance of the party, and besides the lower turnout, Jobbik has a hard time mobilizing its 'attenuated' voter base. Plus the more moderate line and the debates taken up by the leftist opponents also make it hard to mobilize the core voters.

National election results (April 6, 2014, parliamentary elections, May 25, 2014 European Parliament election [without the votes from the consulates and embassies]) and the rate of mobilization

Hungarian Parliament			European Parliament				Rate of mobilization (May / April)
	Votes	%		Votes	%		
Fidesz-KDNP	2 142 142	43.55%	Fidesz-KDNP	1 191 163	51.49%		55.61%
MSZP-Együtt-DK-PM-MLP	1 289 311	26.21%	MSZP	252 494	645 268	10.92%	27.9%
			DK	225 762		9.76%	
			Együtt-PM	167 012		7.22%	
Jobbik	1 017 550	20.69%	Jobbik	339 501	14.68%		33.36%
LMP	268 840	5.47%	LMP	115 957	5.01%		43.13%
Other	201 091	4.08%	Other	21 370	0.92%		
4 918 934			2 313 259				

4) *The realignment of the left is irreversible*

The race for the leading position on the left has inevitably started. It will greatly make the preparation for the municipal elections harder, because on several levels (mayors, lord mayor) the only chance for them is to cooperate in order to win.

Results in Budapest (April 6, 2014, parliamentary elections, May 25, 2014 European Parliament election [without the votes from the consulates and embassies]) **and the rate of mobilization**

Hungarian Parliament			European Parliament				Rate of mobilization (May / April)
	Votes	%		Votes		%	
Fidesz-KDNP	354 408	38.52%	Fidesz-KDNP	228 856		43.75%	64.57%
MSZP-Együtt-DK-PM-MLP	338 431	36.78%	DK	68 519	197 079	13.10%	37.67%
			Együtt-PM	68 389		13.07%	
			MSZP	60 171		11.50%	
Jobbik	111 129	12.08%	Jobbik	51 995		9.94%	46.79%
LMP	82 150	8.93%	LMP	41 485		7.93%	50.50%
Other	181 548	3.69%	Other	3 741		0.71%	
1 067 666			523 156				

Especially in the capital can we expect a significant realignment, where MSZP came in fourth after DK and Együtt-PM which came in neck-and-neck. It is interesting that in the capital, the three groups seem to be at farther from Fidesz than in April, which is mainly the result of the different mobilizing potential of the parties.

However, it is seen that the limit to this realignment on the left is the common nomination of the lord mayor. If they manage to nominate a consensual candidate, still there is no guarantee for success as they still cannot expect to have the support of LMP.

Ferenc Gyurcsány is ineludible again on the left, and he is very likely to become the engine of the realignment. He will soon find himself in a conflict of interests with Együtt-PM which declares a new era in politics, and which came in second in 11 Budapest constituencies (DK has 9, MSZP 2 and Jobbik 1 second place).