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# HOW TO TACKLE THE FAR RIGHT?

## Delusions and new proposals



**POLITICAL CAPITAL**  
POLICY RESEARCH & CONSULTING INSTITUTE

Research and Conference  
Summary  
October 11, 2012

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Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Budapest and Political Capital Institute organized a conference on strategies against right-wing extremism in Budapest, Hungary on October 11, 2012 with the participation of leading international and Hungarian experts and intellectuals. The following paper summarizes the findings of the paper presented at the event, as well as the summary of the speakers' most important messages and the consensual points reached at the roundtables.



The study reposes on the findings of the two-year program carried out by Political Capital Institute and its partners, supported by Open Society Institute, the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research and Visegrad Fund. This is a program for research, advocacy and education focusing on the role conspiracy theorising plays in shaping populist and radical politics. Read more here: <http://deconspirator.com>.



## Summary of Political Capital's study<sup>1</sup>

European societies underwent momentous changes in the past few decades. In response to far-reaching social upheavals related to integration and immigration, and as a backlash of the ideology of tolerance and multiculturalism that supported them, the idea of an ethnically homogenous community has gained new currency in public imagination. For the most part, resurgent populist (far-)right organizations have managed to turn this popular demand to their own advantage. According to their interpretation, the concept of nations has come under threat. There is clear evidence that European Union membership, instead of eroding it, has reinforced the identity bound to the nation state by providing a 'safe haven'. Turning its back on social discourse promoting multi-culturalism and political correctness, the far-right's grossly generalizing and anti-establishment discourse has made so-called 'truth telling' about the minorities widely acceptable.

Throughout Europe, populist (far-)right forces showing great diversity in their ideologies and perceived enemies, have forged their policies around three major issues. These are as follows:

1. the increasing size of ethnic minorities<sup>2</sup>;
2. lost confidence in the political elites of representative democracies;
3. increasing resentment about the European Union.

**The far right deserves special attention due to the fact that they pose a threat to representative democracy and some of its fundamental principles, not to mention that their possible impact on political violence and their influence in shaping social and political attitudes in general appear to be on the rise across Europe.** The viability of democratic systems hinges on some 'defense reflexes'; their defenders must stand up to threats aimed at the democratic system and its values in time and in proportion to the risks involved.

However, it is extremely important not to overreact and overestimate the threats generated by the far right<sup>3</sup>. While some European countries (Hungary, France, Greece, Sweden) have seen the rapid rise of the political far right, in other countries (Belgium, Italy) it has lost steam during the crisis period. Just as there are no universal trends, there are no generally applicable recipes to counter far right forces. The world of politics is changeable and contingent, which means that unwavering attention and analysis are needed to find the right answers to the challenges facing democracies. In short however, one should not draw the conclusion that the far right is on a march across Europe.

1 You can find the overall study here (in Hungarian). Attila Juhasz – Peter Kreko – Robert Laszlo- Csaba Molnar: Political Strategies Against the far right. [http://politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/politikai\\_strategiak\\_a\\_szelsojobboldallal\\_szemben](http://politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/politikai_strategiak_a_szelsojobboldallal_szemben)

2 Even if radical right forces are not always most popular in the areas where the ratio of immigrants is highest (e.g. capitals).

3 For a concise overview of the radical right landscape in Europe, see Matthew Goodwin - Vidhya Ramalingam- Rachel Briggs: The New Radical Right: Violent and Non-Violent Movements in Europe. Institute for Strategic Dialogue. <http://www.strategicdialogue.org/ISD%20Far%20Right%20Feb2012.pdf>

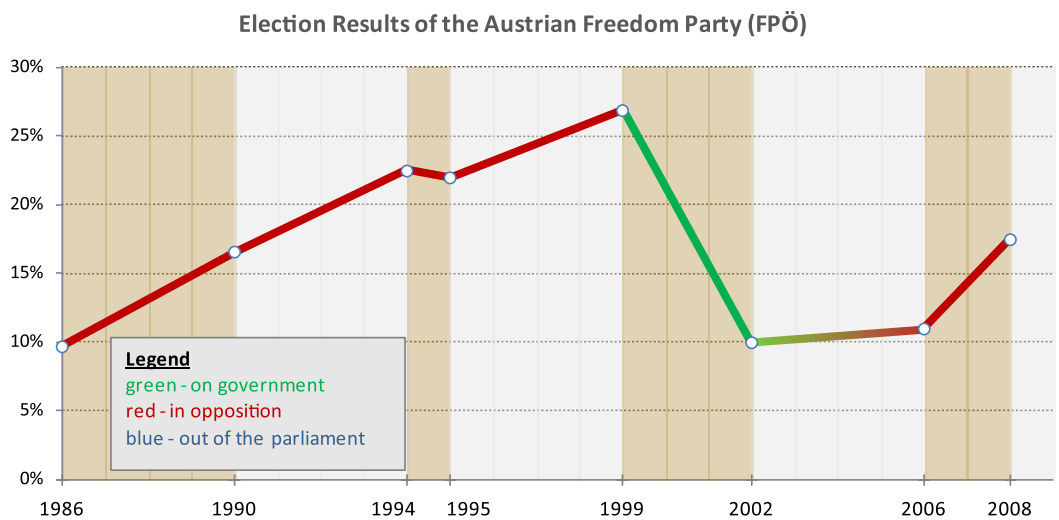
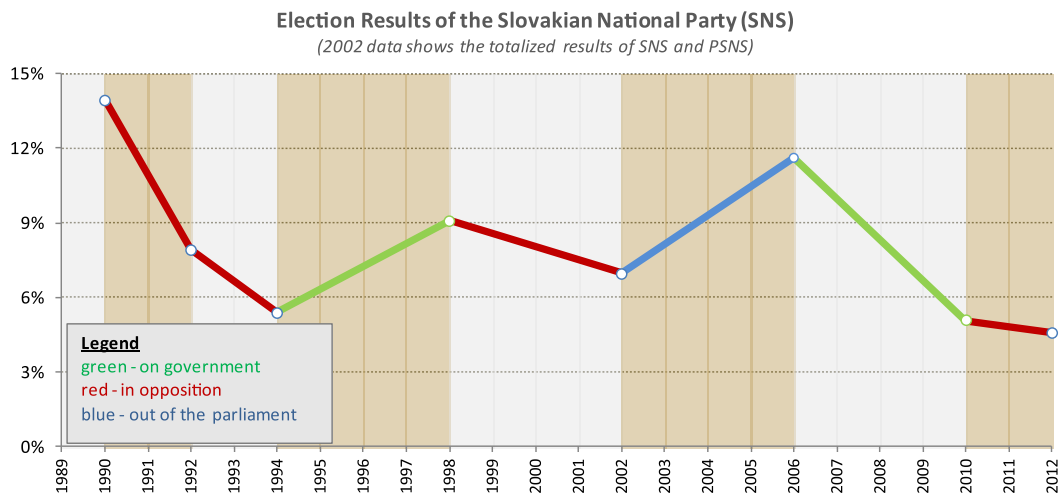
## Delusions on the far right

In respect to the far right and potential responses to its proliferation, the following four misconceptions have become prevalent:

**1. “The 1930s are back.”** This political discourse over the far right is limited almost exclusively to the notion that the radicalization of society is an exclusive consequence of the current crisis. While this interpretation is tempting, it is wrong. It cannot be stated that as a result of the crisis social demand for the far right has increased significantly and uniformly across Europe over the past few years<sup>4</sup>, or that support for far right parties has grown in all countries. Wherever the far right managed to gain a foothold one finds that, instead of the economy, the underlying causes have more to do with politics and culture. The materialistic approach claiming that the far right can be pushed back by offering welfare benefits and direct transfers does not stand up to close scrutiny either, for typically the majority of far right voters do not represent the most destitute segment of society. While it can be claimed that the political relevance of the issues favoured by populist rightist parties (e.g., hostility to immigrants, the minorities, the political elite and the European Union), along with the attention surrounding them are both on the rise, a crisis rhetoric envisioning the return of a 1930s-type fascism is simplistic and counter-productive. Today’s far right is not identical to its forerunner from the 1930s. Rightist radicals in Western and Northern Europe have moved far from historical fascism. On the other hand, the alternative examples of Eastern and Southern Europe ‘producing’ more robust versions of extremism and cultivating authoritarian traditions are more remarkable: the country that has been hit hardest by the current economic crisis, Greece is the first country in the history of the European Union where the electorate sent a genuinely neo-Nazi party to parliament.

**2. Once in power, the far right collapses.** It is a widely embraced yet mistaken idea that once the far right becomes a part of the political system, its support base cracks automatically. Aside from the fact that this notion may lead to rather bizarre counter-strategies, (help the far right enter mainstream politics in all countries!) there are examples for the opposite as well. Nonetheless, once in power, the far right has indeed become weaker in Poland, Austria (if only briefly) and Holland, whereas in Slovakia and Italy they increased their support in some administrative terms, while in Latvia and Denmark they managed to stabilize their base. Indeed, once in Parliament, far right parties consolidate or stabilize their popular appeal for the most part.

<sup>4</sup> Political Capital: Attitude- radicals in Hungary – in an international context. [http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/2012/derex\\_ess5\\_english.pdf](http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/2012/derex_ess5_english.pdf)



**3. The far right can be driven back through the electoral system.** Another misconception – in a way contradicting the previous one - holds that the far right can be easily kept away from power by tweaking the electoral system, taking care of the problem once and for all. However, as demonstrated by the Hungarian and the French example, manipulating the electoral system may not be sufficient to keep the far right from power or minimize its social impact, not to mention that a system tailored to the needs of specific players violates the concept of the rule of law and generates unnecessary tension.

**4. Everything can be solved by legal tools.** An approach based on “legal fetishism”, prevalent in Eastern Europe hopes to resolve all problems generated by the far right through legislation and stronger action taken by the authorities. Aside from the fact that this approach has resulted in unqualified failures in Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia<sup>5</sup>, it completely ignores the fact that the far right is kept alive by a supportive social environment that is impervious to legislative and law enforcement measures.

<sup>5</sup> In Hungary the Hungarian Guard was dissolved only in name, in Slovakia the interior minister's ban of the Slovak Brotherhood was eventually overruled by the High Court and in the Czech Republic, the Workers Party banned after a lot of wrangling, was reborn following the 2010 election.

This is particularly the case in post-socialist countries where the conduct of law enforcement organizations is typically devoid of strategy, inconsistent and divided<sup>6</sup>. In turn, this helps the radical camp that, in many cases, can turn a climate of chaos and ambiguity to its own advantage and mock the constitutional order. In these countries, instead of more and more legislation, effective action against the far right requires just, consistent and rigorously implemented law enforcement. However, the method applied must point beyond the world of law: while obviously official legal action against violent or potentially violent organizations is extremely important, the identification of adequate political and social tools is a far more urgent task.

## Recommendations and counter-strategies

The seasonal rise and fall of far-right populist parties in the political arena is part and parcel of the democratic process. It is not realistic and, if we take the principles of political pluralism seriously, it is far from desirable that the state apply excessively repressive measures (e.g., banning) against political forces playing by the basic rules of democracy and enjoying widespread popular support.

Accordingly, the political, media and social strategies marshalled against the far right may follow three objectives:

- the policies of the far right and its electorate must be brought into the democratic mainstream<sup>7</sup>;
- ethnocentric and anti-minority positions and rhetoric must be localised to prevent their spread to the wider political community;
- ensure that rhetoric based on prejudice and hatred is not translated into violent action.

However, in its topics, organisational structure and radicalism, the far right is extremely heterogeneous all across Europe and shows major variations in various social contexts. This also means that there is no 'panacea' to be applied in all countries. Below we list four general principles that may offer viable solutions in all settings:

**1. Emphasis on reducing demand.** In respect to the radical right, the standard repressive approach tends to strangle the supply side through legal means (banning extremist movements and rigorous law-enforcement), a tactic the efficiency of which is highly questionable. On the one hand, it is far from evident that a repressive legal environment achieves more than simply pushing the problem 'underground' as to make it invisible (see

<sup>6</sup> Thanks to the fact that law enforcement organizations operate without established standards and practices and there are no consistent legal interpretations, and also to the lack of a deliberate strategic choice between various concepts of democracy (liberal vs. repressive approaches), i.e., laws are applied haphazardly, balancing between the two rival concepts.

<sup>7</sup> Read more about „recapturing the reluctant radicals“ In Counterpoint’s Report: Catherine Fieschi, Marley Morris, Lila Caballero: Recapturing the Reluctant Radical: how to win back Europe’s populist vote. [http://counterpoint.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Counterpoint\\_Recapturing-the-Reluctant-Radical-2012.pdf](http://counterpoint.uk.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Counterpoint_Recapturing-the-Reluctant-Radical-2012.pdf)

the German terrorist cell, the Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund<sup>8</sup>) and, on the other hand, in the lack of sufficient resources, the state cannot perform all the duties required to suppress extremists. Effective demand-reduction strategies, involving the cooperation of state and civic organizations, and the development of counter-narratives<sup>9</sup>, along with education and community building offer more than a palliative and, instead, may prevent the perpetuation of extremist attitudes. Particularly in Eastern Europe, the development of democracy-education and the stimulation of the debating culture are extremely important, for without these the public will become more receptive to far right arguments and democracy will lose its immunity for a rhetoric aimed at undermining its institutional framework.

**2. Ridiculing instead of stigmatization and fear-mongering.** The far right lives and dies by provocation. As demonstrated by a number of examples (that of Jobbik in Hungary, the Front National in France or the Freedom Party in Holland) fear-mongering and diabolising the far right may often backfire and could in fact increase the relevance and reach of these political organizations. For the far right gains its strength from the dual claim that they are the sole ‘champions’ of truth and, in contrast to the mainstream political elite, they have the courage ‘to say it as it is’, which also explains all the anger aimed at them. Moreover, some far right organizations (such as the Hungarian Jobbik, British EDL and the Greek Golden Dawn) become attractive in the eyes of young people thanks to their mobilizing subculture and the fads they generate. The ‘frightful’ image of the far right painted by the political establishment also adds to the appeal of these organizations. Therefore, making their ideas the subject of ridicule (the far right’s simplistic, bombastic and single-minded ideology offer an excellent target) may be a much more effective strategy than all the efforts to sow fear. And here, along with mainstream politicians, investigative journalism also has a major role to play. Obviously, political forces are not expected to stand by idly as the written and unwritten rules of democracy are violated, although an appeal to such an attitude may be effective only in countries with strong democratic traditions. It is also essential that politicians and the media refrain from stigmatizing radical forces and radical voters (“Nazis”) for this generic label usually makes it more difficult for these voters to return to the political mainstream.

**3. Close engagement with the electorate.** Extremist forces set up their own political base in opposition to a corrupt political elite alienated from the electorate. Typically they do this through strong grassroots movements and intense personal contact with their voters. This lends them a huge advantage over hide-bound political parties. A spreading aversion to representative democracies sweeping across Europe can only be checked if the electorate is made to feel that politics is about them and here personal contact plays a crucial role.

**4. The political mobilization of first voters.** Far right parties are often blamed for their ‘populism’, although in many cases this simply hides an envy of their rhetorical and political resourcefulness. Thus an appeal to emotions and political discourse based on simple and direct language are features of a broadly interpreted populism that should be acquired by all democratic political forces.

8 Between 2000 and 2006 members of the organization committed 10 murders and 14 bank robberies. German authorities “got to the” organization only in 2011.

9 The European Commission’s Radicalisation Awareness Network is built on this principle.

If centrist parties could play 'populist' politics in this sense (i.e. less technocratic) it would limit the appeal of far-right populism among the general population and young people alike. In a number of countries, such as Great Britain, Hungary, Italy and Greece, new far-right movements appear to be well positioned to address politically passive or undecided youngsters and first voters with no or scarcely any political opinion. They use highly effective mobilizing techniques, clear and stunning symbols, loud campaigns drowning out all rivals, as well as easily understood and provocative messages simplified to the extreme. To make themselves attractive to young voters, traditional political parties must develop innovative organizational structures, communication platforms (with a strong emphasis on Social Media<sup>10</sup>) and a new style of discourse.

## The impact of the parliamentary and governmental presence on the success of far right parties

	Diminishing support	Increasing support	Stabilising support
after getting into the parliament in opposition (with the year of getting into the parliament in brackets)	Hungary (MIÉP, 1998), Belgium (Vlaams Belang, 2007), Slovakia (SNS, 1990)	Bulgaria (Ataka, 2005), Greece(LAOS, 2007), Netherlands(PVV, 2006), Romania (PRM, 1992), Belgium (VlaamsBlok, 1981) , Finland (True Finns, 1999), Norway (Progress Party, 1981), Italy (Lega Nord, 1992)	Poland (Polish League of Families-LPR, 2001)
after becoming a governmental party	Austria (FPÖ, 1999-2002), Greece (LAOS, 2011-2012), Netherlands (PVV, 2010-2012), Slovakia (SNS, 2006-2010), Poland (LPR, 2005-2007) Estonia (ERSP, 1992-1995)	Slovakia (SNS, 1994-1998) Italy (Lega Nord, 2001-2006) Romania (Greater Romania Party, 1995)	Denmark (DF, 2001-2011) Latvia (TB/LNNK)

<sup>10</sup> Read more about the role of Social Media (especially the Facebook) in radical mobilisation in Demos's Report: Jamie Bartlett, Jonathan Birdwell, Mark Littler- The New Face of Digital Populism <http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/thenewfaceofdigitalpopulism>



## Main Findings of the Conference

### Common findings

- Humour can be a more efficient tool in discrediting the players of the radical right and in taking away its “trendy” appeal than diabolisation.
- The reason while the youth is in most cases more receptive to the ideas of the radical right is the lack of systemic education of democratic norms and values in schools, as well as the lack of fostering a debating culture in primary schools, high schools and universities alike (especially in Eastern Europe)
- Stigmatization can be a two-sided weapon against the radical right that can easily backlash, especially in the case of radical right parties that have softened their agenda and while moving closer to the mainstream.
- Mainstream parties should build stronger ties with voters if they are to narrow down the opportunities for anti-elite political mobilization.

### The following paragraphs summarize the speakers' points

**Heinz-Albert Hutmacher, the director of the Budapest office of Friedrich Ebert Stiftung** delivered an opening speech in which he pointed out a number of general ideas regarding the topic of the conference. Firstly, he argued that in during the past decade, anti-democratic attitudes, policies and thinking have turned into a growing factor of political and social life in Europe. He noted that more



*Heinz Albert Huthmacher, Head of Representation, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*

public support and political sympathy for right-wing populism, nationalism and even more so right-wing extremism are a real threat to democracy and thus have to be taken very seriously. He also warned that such attitudes were gaining ground in not only the fringes, but in the centre of society as well, adding that these tendencies were even more worrying for the young democracies of Central- and Eastern Europe. He pointed out that identifying the reasons behind the rise in the support of right-wing extremism was a crucial first step. He then called for a broader public debate and a joint effort with a view to exchange best practices against right-wing extremism in European countries. Not only policy proposals, but ways for society to better protect itself against the rise of the far right was needed. He concluded by stating that the fight against right-wing extremism was a fight for freedom and democracy.

**Krisztián Szabados, founder of Political Capital (PC)**, noted that PC could predict the steep surge of the Hungarian far-right back in the time when nothing was visible in the polls, thanks to a special approach that focuses on demand rather than supply, thus does not analyse far-right organizations in the first place, but the social tendencies that lead to the rise in the support of these organizations. The comparative dimension with PC Bulgaria was also very useful in learning details about the far-right in Hungary, as there is a strong internationalist feature in right-wing organizations around Europe. Extremist groups form the minority, not the majority, yet it is pivotal to not only examine radicalization from the majority standpoint, but from the minority point of view, to reveal internal dynamics and get a more precise picture. He went on to discuss the two strategies against the far right so far, both of which have failed: firstly, the right attempted to court far-right voters by integrating some of the far-right agenda into their own program, yet this strategy merely legitimized the far right; secondly, the left had hoped that the presence of the far right would work to their benefit as it would divide and weaken the entire right wing, another strategy which has since been proven wrong emphatically. He concluded by noting that a universal strategy against the far right was not yet feasible because of country-specific differences, which need to be identified in the first place to develop a strategy in the future.



*Krisztián Szabados, Founder of Political Capital, Péter Krekó, director of Political Capital*

**Péter Krekó, the director of Political Capital**, presented the latest study performed by the Institute on the European tendencies of right-wing extremism (see the main findings above). Mr. Krekó put forward four proposals as potential elements of an integrated strategy in Europe against the far right: firstly, strategies should concentrate more on demand side of right-wing extremism instead of the supply side, i.e. overcome the reasons why people are attracted to the far right e.g. by means of education instead of focusing on right-wing extremist organizations only. Secondly, he argued that instead of stigmatizing them, far-right organizations should be ridiculed; thirdly, he stressed that however unusual this sounds, democratic mainstream forces had a number of strategies to learn from the far right, such as maintaining direct contact with the electorate more frequently and more efficiently; and finally, he put forward another provocative proposal by

saying that the term “populism” should be redefined, stripped of its unambiguously pejorative significance whereas a number of practices currently labelled as populist should be applied by the political mainstream as well, such as emotional mobilization and formulating messages that are more efficient in addressing the general electorate.

**Ulrich Dörmann of the *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung* (Federal Center for Political Education)** noted that following a series of disappointments and failures, they had to implement a massive strategic shift in their activities aimed at countering radicalism. The essential difference in the new strategy had to be that it was no longer directed from the high ranks of politics, but from the other way around, with the involvement of the civil society, the churches, the media, the world of sport, and society in general. He also highlighted the importance of gathering valid information and data on right-wing extremism for fine-tuning counter strategies. He highlighted two further aspects, firstly the need for political education in order to present the advantages and the overall experience of democratic life and participation to as many as possible along with the advancement of civil society; and secondly the importance to learn how to communicate with those involved in or endangered by the far right scene with a view to help them more efficiently.

**Britta Schellenberg of the Centre of Applied Policy Research of the University of Munich** highlighted that violence and readiness for violence is a central feature of the far right scene in Germany, with 182 murders with racist or right-wing extremist motivation having been perpetrated in the country since 1990. Germany's self-image as a well-fortified democracy (“wehrhafte Demokratie”) is the starting point for extensive legislation against actions with affinity to National Socialism. Whereas the regressive approach against (Neo-)Nazi activities is strong, protection against discrimination and a broader look at right-wing extremism are only very recent: She named legislative developments as the application of the *ius soli* principle in the German law determining citizenship, along with the declaration of Germany being a country of immigration. She emphasized that a proper legal frame doesn't help when personal of security authorities fail to implement it or have problems with recognizing group focused enmity (as in the case of the NSU). Plain repression might also lead to a radicalization or innovative change of the organizations targeted. Finally she stressed, that repressive measures in tackling right-wing radicalism needed to be complemented by preventive measures, warning that not only the state and the rule of law are endangered by the far-right, but the members of society as well.



*Panelists of the first roundtable. From left to the right: György Baló, moderator, Ulrich Dovermann, Britta Schellenberg, Michal Bilewicz*

**Michal Bilewicz of the Center for Research on Prejudice at University of Warsaw** offered a short account of the nature of the far-right scene in Poland, stressing that even though radical forces suffered significant setbacks on the national parliamentary level since 2007, the issue is not to be treated with complacency as radicalism is still present in Polish society in many ways. With regard to relevant practices against the far right, he noted that jurisdiction was rather passive in many cases where far-right perpetrators were charged. He added that education was a pivotal dimension in countering radicalization, noting that he was also involved in developing curricula on various levels of education with a view to address the roots of potentially derailed political socialization. As to the latency in support for radicalism in Poland, he warned that as the economic crisis has not yet struck in Poland, with a potential deterioration of the economic situation support for the far-right may suddenly become far more visible in the country.

**Vidhya Ramalingam from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue** introduced the state of far-right in Sweden with a focus on the evolution of the dominant right-wing populist force in the country, the Sweden Democrats. She highlighted that before 2010, Sweden was unique in that for many years it was an exception to the trend of radical right successes in Europe. The Sweden Democrats originated from a movement called 'Keep Sweden Swedish' in 1988, and many of its early leaders were involved in openly neo-Nazi and white supremacist networks. The party openly denounced Nazism only in 1999. She highlighted the process the party underwent to transform its image, recruiting politically sound leaders and replacing earlier leaders with extremist ties, phasing out violence from party propaganda, and mirroring the ideologies of the French Front National and the Danish People's Party. The Sweden Democrats were thus able to transform from a street movement with ties to the neo-Nazism into a parliamentary party attracting working class and lower middle class voters, demonstrating both the mobility and dynamics of radical forces, and the ways in which they adopt practices from European role models to raise their own profile. However, she added that the Swedish political community successfully maintained a cordon sanitaire against the party, with politicians denouncing the Sweden Democrats with both pragmatic and symbolic liberal messages. The political mainstream in Sweden also argues that racism and the Sweden Democrats are a foreign, un-Swedish phenomenon. Strategies to counter the Sweden Democrats are also reinforced by the media and the civil society.

**Kiril Avramov of Political Capital Bulgaria** discussed the phenomenon of the far right and its relation to the political mainstream with a special focus on the changing features and perception of traditional liberal democracies and the role of populism as a political tool in the hands of far-right forces, focusing on the often difficult distinction between “hard” and “soft” populism. He noted that populism was not necessarily a transient phenomenon and consequently not only a result of disillusionment with the political establishment and the European Union, however such systematic mistrust with political institutions provides fertile ground for radicalization. With a focus on Bulgaria, he revealed that the radical party in the country which recorded great successes in the past decade, ATAKA, managed to break out of the “stigma” which labeled it a marginal organization and became attractive to urban, middle-class voters, a worrying sign in the Eastern European dynamics of the perception of political forces. He concluded by stating that the civic society by itself was unable to counter this trajectory, whereas a more comprehensive approach was necessary.

**András Bozóki**, Professor of Political Science at the Central European University delivered an opening address ahead of the second panel, in which he discussed a number of theoretic issues as to offer a framework to the debate that followed. Firstly, he highlighted the alternative interpretations of the term populism, which in some cases does not necessarily convey an ultimately pejorative or like with regard to the European far-right, exclusive and even racist - message, as for instance in South America, the term is applied to describe politicians who are able to connect with the public effectively. Subsequently, he discussed the relationship between the radical poles of political life and the democratic mainstream. He argued that no clear distinction between the corps of democracy and radicalism can be made in the case of Hungary, as the radical right in Hungary is ambiguous in being partially and procedurally loyal to democracy, i.e. abiding to a range of democratic rules, yet being an essentially antidemocratic force in its core as their messages are contrary to the principles of liberal democracy. Furthermore, the impact of the radical right on the mainstream of democracy ? by adding and abundance of radical, anti-democratic content to political discourse ? is another reason why a clear, analytic distinction is no longer possible. He stressed that there was no clear line between dictatorship and democracy, the differences may rather be expressed as a continuum of subtle shades ranging between the two poles. And thirdly, he argued that the conciliatory framework of democracy in Hungary has eroded to a great extent as a result of the current two-thirds governance, as the distinction between the far-right and the moderate right has become vague, especially on the level of political discourse.



*Panelists of the second roundtable. From left to the right: György Baló (moderator), András Bíró, Attila Juhász, András Stumpf, Pál Závada, András Bozóki, József Bayer*

**András Bíró, an esteemed journalist and human rights activist**, stated that the phenomenon of “anti-Tsiganism” in Hungary is based on a broad consensus. It is not its presence, but its political exploitation that has changed significantly in its dynamics in recent years in line with the emergence of a potent far-right force in the country. He argued that this phenomenon was rooted in a biologically deterministic, racist discourse, which has not been really challenged in the last twenty or so years neither. The politically correct discourse could never really take roots as no genuine consensus has been formed around it, leaving it to the lingo of a restricted group of “paternalistic pro-Roma” intellectuals and politicians. Mentioning the example of the dramatic lack of empathy of the majority society with regard to the series of murders against Roma a few years ago, the Roma community itself also failed to demonstrate any sense of self-defense following the murders. He highlighted that even though the Roma are represented through their minority governments, the community is far from being organized politically, as minority governments are patronized by the state and therefore the Roma minority has no real voice in political life.

**Attila Juhász of Political Capital Institute** reinstated that one of the major risks about the emergence of the far-right is that their arguments and the nature of their language in general may infiltrate the centre of political discourse and thereby change politics substantially in a country. He mentioned discourse about the Roma as a prime example for this tendency: by the introduction of the term “Gypsy crime”, Jobbik managed to change the framework of discourse about the Roma. On the separation of populism from extremism, he argued that populism was closely linked to denouncing the elites, which is one of the major features of Jobbik’s rhetoric, clearly tangible in the conspiracy theories they voice and promote as explanations to various political and economic issues, such as the economic crisis. In response to the notion of András Stumpf about Jobbik not being a right-wing organization, he argued that both its anti-elite stance, nationalism and ethnocentrism are arguments to label Jobbik as clearly right-wing. Furthermore, their populism is visible in their practice of braking down their messages to the level of everyday experiences, and their strong push to present themselves as the saviours of truth.

**András Stumpf, a journalist of the Hungarian Weekly *Heti Válasz*** addressed the issue of the language applied by the far-right in political discourse. He argued that Jobbik, with regard to its voter base, is far from homogenous, as the party is supported by the mostly Budapest-based group of former MIÉP-voters who are attracted by anti-Semitic discourse, whereas voters outside the capital came close to Jobbik after the party stepped up its anti-Roma rhetoric with the re-introduction of the term “Gypsy crime”. He also highlighted that the majority of Jobbik’s voters in 2010 had presumably voted for the Socialists in earlier elections. In response to the statement of András Bozóki on populism, he argued that it is not Jobbik, but Fidesz which is labeled populist in political discourse with regard to Hungary. He went on to express his opinion about Jobbik not being a right-wing party, as besides their strong national stance, there are no elements in their politics which could be related to the right.

**Pál Závada, a writer and essayist** pointed out the importance of language as both a tool in the hands of the far right to alter political discourse radically, and in general as a means to transform thinking or the way people formulate their thoughts about society, economy, politics or any other segment of reality. Concerning strategies against the far right, he cited the related works of Lajos Parti-Nagy, stressing that humour may be an efficient tool against radicals and radical discourses, as ridiculing the far-right may lead to better results than diabolizing them, which may even turn out to be counter-productive.

**József Bayer, a professor of political science at ELTE University**, stressed the importance of deep social difficulties and a lack of perspective among many in the youth as underlying factors behind the emergence of Jobbik, as “social resentment” behind right-wing radicalism. He added that dialogue with radicals was also pivotal: he bemoaned the fact that there is no institutional opportunity for political debate in universities, which he personally attempted to change on multiple occasions yet ultimately failed. Furthermore, he stressed the importance of the education of politics at least in secondary schools. He cited foreign examples where students boards are composed of fractions which engage in political processes and thereby learn the essentials of politics as a process. In Hungary however, the law forbids genuine political practices in universities. As a consequence of this, he argued that it was no wonder that Jobbik as a political movement was initially organized in university campuses.