

# Focus on Hungary: Refugees, Asylum and Migration

Attila Juhász, Bulcsú Hunyadi, Edit Zgut



HEINRICH-BÖLL-STIFTUNG

## **Focus on Hungary: Refugees, Asylum and Migration**

**Attila Juhász, Bulcsú Hunyadi, Edit Zgut**

**Commissioned by the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung**

# Contents

<b>5</b>	<b>Foreword</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Summary</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Disclaimer</b>
<b>9</b>	<b>Facts and trends</b>
9	Migration trends
9	<i>The refugee crisis</i>
14	<i>Hungary's unique position</i>
15	The effect of the refugee crisis on political attitudes and preferences related to migration
15	<i>Public perception</i>
17	<i>Xenophobia</i>
18	<i>Policymaking</i>
20	<i>Party politics</i>
21	<i>The political system</i>
<b>23</b>	<b>Politics</b>
23	Discursive framework
23	Short historical background
24	The refugee crisis
24	<i>Government</i>
27	<i>Opposition</i>
27	<i>NGOs</i>
28	<i>The far right</i>
28	Migration and asylum in far-right Kremlin-friendly propaganda
29	<i>The relationship between pro-Kremlin propaganda and Hungarian political actors</i>
30	<i>Conspiracy theories</i>
<b>34</b>	<b>Policies</b>
34	Institutional and legislative migration frameworks: An historical overview
34	Asylum policy
35	Asylum policy amendments in 2015
36	Discriminatory practices against asylum seekers
<b>38</b>	<b>Regional outlook</b>
38	The effect of the refugee crisis on the V4 countries
38	The dangers of isolationism in the V4 countries
<b>41</b>	<b>Bibliography</b>

## Focus on Hungary: Refugees, Asylum and Migration

Commissioned by the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung | Prague 2015

Authors: Attila Juhász, Bulcsú Hunyadi, Edit Zgut  
Publishers: Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Political Capital Kft.  
Copy editing: Gwendolyn Albert and Veszna Wessenauer  
Layout editor: Kateřina Kubánková  
ISBN: 978-80-906270-3-1

This material is licensed under Creative Commons "Attribution-ShareAlike 3.0 Unported" (CC BY-SA 3.0).  
For the licence agreement, see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/legalcode>,  
and a summary (not a substitute) at <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en>.



Cover photo: Zdeňka Lammelová/Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung  
Refugees at Budapest Keleti Railway Station – 3 September 2015



The findings and opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung.

ISBN:  
978-80-906270-3-1 (Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Opatovická 28, Praha 1, 110 00, Czech Republic)  
978-963-9607-11-8 (Political Capital Kft., Futó utca 47-53, 1082 Budapest, Hungary)

## Foreword

During the Fidesz party congress at the end of 2015, Viktor Orbán stated the following: “Today the European spirit and its people believe in superficial and secondary things: in human rights, progress, openness, new kinds of family and tolerance. These are nice things, but are in fact only secondary, because they are merely derivative. Yes, Europe today believes in secondary things, but does not believe in the source of those things. It does not believe in Christianity, it does not believe in common sense, it does not believe in military virtues, and it does not believe in national pride.”<sup>1</sup>

All this was articulated by the head of government in connection with the so-called ‘refugee crisis’, but the scope of the statement is not limited to that. It is just another announcement for, according to Viktor Orbán’s own definition, building an ‘illiberal democracy’ which renders basic human rights secondary to the interests of the ‘national community’ as constructed by the wishes of those in power. Today the human rights of refugees and asylum seekers are the ones questioned in the name of illiberal thoughts, but tomorrow it could be those of another group. The illiberal understanding of ‘democracy’ always refers to the opinions and beliefs of the majority taking precedence over those of the minority.

The ‘refugee crisis’ poses major challenges to the EU and its citizens. It is clear that solutions based on solidarity and responsibility sharing must be developed and implemented on the EU level in order to face these challenges. At the same time it is important to analyse the responses by governments and state officials because they tell us a lot about the state of the EU.

The example of Hungary is extreme in many ways. We have not yet seen such a systemic, ideological, and programmatic attempt to close the EU’s external borders by building a fence in order to keep refugees out, to deny basic European values, including human rights, and to refuse to fulfil humanitarian obligations. On the other hand, Orbán’s approach and the Hungarian

way of handling the ‘refugee crisis’ have unfortunately become a model in other EU Member States.

In view of these developments, the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung commissioned a study by Political Capital in order to provide the reader with important background information, facts and data. The authors of the study analyse the Orbán Government’s rhetoric and policy measures with regard to refugee, asylum and migration issues. They describe the historical context, supply valuable data, and ask in what way the Government has influenced public discourse. The study shows how democratic opposition parties, the far-right, and civil society actors have responded to the Government’s anti-refugee policies. The authors also discuss the question how the ‘refugee crisis’ has affected regional cooperation.

We would like to express our gratitude to the publication’s authors and copy editors for their efforts and commitment. We hope the publication will contribute to future critical debate on refugee, asylum and migration policies in Hungary and the EU.

Budapest and Prague, December 2015

**Péter Krekó**

Director  
Political Capital

**Eva van de Rakt**

Director  
Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Prague office

---

<sup>1</sup> Government of Hungary. “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s Speech at the 26th Congress of the Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Union,” December 17, 2015. <http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-26th-congress-of-the-fidesz-hungarian-civic-union>.

## Summary

Looking at the refugee crisis from Hungary, it can be seen to have two dimensions, one involving domestic politics and one involving international politics. This paper examines these two mutually-connected levels in the context of political risks that pose a threat to European integration.

At the domestic political level, the Orbán Government, which was on the defensive at the end of 2014 and in early 2015, has regained political initiative by essentially promising “zero admission” to asylum seekers and increased protection for both the Hungarian and EU external borders due to increased arrival rates. Nagging corruption cases, governance failures, and conflicts within the governing party have been relegated to the back burner of the Hungarian public discourse, and since spring the political agenda has essentially been dominated by the refugee and migration issue. With respect to refugees and migration, those right-wing media which are owned by Lajos Simicska, Orbán’s erstwhile ally turned enemy, have now lined up behind the Government despite their harsh criticism of the Cabinet following the row between the two men. This position is also shared by Hungarian society generally, which – as in other Eastern European countries – is essentially hostile to both migrants and refugees.

Due to this widespread thinking, many opposition parties and media that criticize the Government are now cautious when it comes to openly criticizing its refugee and migration policy; in fact, the Government’s radical rhetoric leaves even the far-right Jobbik little room for manoeuvre. The Government is not facing strong criticism except from some opinion-makers, smaller parties, and civil society organizations that are doing a great deal to help refugees. Moreover, there are no signs of any politically mature, alternative ideas on this issue able to attract any significant support. This cannot just be explained by Hungarian society’s seemingly irreversible xenophobic attitude; instead, this is the result of a well-planned, manipulative propaganda campaign at times verging on inciting public hysteria, such as the Orbán cabinet’s springtime “national consultation”, i.e., its letters with anti-immigrant messages sent to each household, and its billboard campaign launched in the early summer. Both measures increased xenophobia in a country with hardly any actual immigrant presence. Most people in Hungary have no experience living with foreigners and fears fed by lack of information about them are easily reinforced.

This is more than a communications coup for the Government. The political environment as a whole has shifted, benefiting the governing side; returning to the proven strategy he has applied since 2002, Orbán has again managed to divide the political arena into ‘pro-national’ and ‘anti-national’ (or ‘aliens’, ‘traitors’). In his view, all those attacking the Government belong in the latter category. Moreover, the Government has managed to flex its muscle at the domestic and international level alike: It has presented itself at both levels as “problem-solver” while simultaneously rejecting cooperation within the European Union. The Government managed to achieve this by first, aggravating the refugee reception problem, then found it important to

sustain tension around the issue, and finally managed the refugee crisis at a slow pace. This is demonstrated by the fact that the Government had information early in 2015 about increased refugee numbers, but concrete steps such as revamping asylum procedures or increasing immigration agency staff levels were not taken until summer. Constructing the border fence was seen by Orbán as a perfect solution both at a symbolic and a practical level, but that was started only when summer was almost over.

As of this writing, the public’s perception of the Orbán cabinet has improved in Hungary. According to surveys, support for Fidesz has increased substantially by 4-5 % compared to early summer, and the Prime Minister’s popularity has increased even more. Concurrently, support for Jobbik and other opposition parties has stagnated. It has to be stressed that Fidesz has acquired new sympathizers not at Jobbik’s expense, but among those who were previously unable to choose a party (i.e., presumably former Fidesz voters returning). However, one-fifth of Fidesz voters would cast their ballots for Jobbik as a second option. In the future, the far-right Jobbik will have a better chance to attract sympathizers away from Fidesz than the other way around.

All these signal the political risk repeatedly emphasized by the Dutch political scientist Cas Mudde, namely, that in Europe the far right is not the only source of danger. Governing parties adopting far-right policies are also liable to radicalize their own societies and reshape their respective political systems.

The Orbán Government is a case in point; it pursues the same strategy at the European level and in its foreign policy as it does in Hungary. Just as domestically the Orbán Government presents itself as the ‘protector of the Hungarian nation’, at the international level it is also usurping the role of ‘defender of European nations’ against immigrants (for the most part, against Muslims) and against the bureaucracy in Brussels. The latest statement by Antal Rogán, the Prime Minister’s recently-appointed cabinet minister and former Fidesz faction head, is a good example. As he puts it, “pro-migration liberals disagree with Hungary’s decision to protect the borders of Europe and Hungary but, in opposition to the majority of the political and intellectual elite in Europe, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán hears the voices and understands the thinking of European citizens on the issue of immigration.”<sup>1</sup>

In other words, the Hungarian government calculates that in the wake of the refugee crisis, voices opposing immigration will become louder, and anti-immigration, far-right populist parties will gain ascendancy. It has to be said that most such parties are supported by Russia and bent on destabilizing the European Union. The Government also believes current developments may even improve the Hungarian Prime Minister’s international standing.

Current trends suggest that the Hungarian Government’s expectations are not without foundation. Following the recent economic crisis and the current refugee crisis, European integration is facing its biggest challenge to date. There is the impression

that the European Union lacks the tools to resolve the refugee crisis, and the conflict within the European Union has reached an unprecedented level between those countries that accept and those that reject a European refugee and migration policy based on solidarity. The Member States’ behaviour has caused this paralysis in many instances. Indecisive, nationalist governments are pointing the finger at the EU and failing to cooperate with one another while their national agencies push the refugees from one country to the next. In short, the EU cannot solve the refugee crisis unless the Member States grant it the power to do so, which means less power would remain in their own hands. Those Member States that reject granting such power and reject political union are, paradoxically, those criticizing the EU’s response to the crisis, i.e., they are holding the EU accountable for issues they would like to be handling themselves, issues for which they have consistently refused to grant the European community the necessary powers.

Situations like these can easily inflame culturally-based conflicts. It is evident that past stereotypical thinking is not simply returning, but is rising to the political level. Related to this phenomenon (and clearly not only to this) we have seen radical right-wing forces resurging over the past few years in many European countries (e.g., Greece, France, Sweden and Hungary), and these parties also build on prejudice. In short, it is not simply that cultural aversion is on the rise against non-European (predominantly Muslim) immigrants, but also that cultural differences between current EU Member States are intensifying, a potentially explosive situation, especially for the post-socialist Visegrad countries.

1 Fidesz. “Bevándorláspárti Politika Megbukott - The Immigration Policy Has Failed,” October 4, 2015. <http://www.fidesz.hu/hirek/2015-10-04/a-bevandorlasparti-europai-politika-megbukott/>.

## Disclaimer

Since this study does not intend to give more space to or propagate extreme and/or illegal views and websites, the authors have decided upon a certain referencing principle regarding far-right websites and materials used in the analysis. Links are only provided to expert analyses, databases and mainstream press articles. Contents on the official website of Jobbik are also referred to by links since the party is represented in the Hungarian Parliament. All other far-right, extreme or illegal contents and sites mentioned or quoted in the study are referred to by the name and date of the source in the text. The exact references, with screenshots for the latter sources, are stored in a separate document at the authoring institute, Political Capital Kft., and may be requested for academic use.

## Facts and trends

### Migration trends

Hungary cannot be considered a country into which non-Hungarians immigrate. With the exception of a relatively large Chinese diaspora, most immigrants settling in the country since the regime change have been ethnic Hungarians from neighbouring countries, mainly from Romania, Slovakia, Serbia and Ukraine (see below for data).

#### The refugee crisis

From the start of 2015, through several campaigns, the Orbán cabinet has created the impression that Hungary's place in global migration patterns has fundamentally shifted. The terms used in Government communications ('immigrant' and 'migrant'), have sent the message that Hungary, as a 'destination country', must now face a migrant 'wave' coming from outside Europe. However, this is far from reality; migrations follow massive, historically-developed patterns, and this fact has not been changed by recent events. Hungary has not become a 'destination country' for migrants coming from outside Europe, primarily due to its geographic position.

Eurostat data show that the refugee crisis has brought about major change in one area in Hungary: The number of submitted asylum applications. Hungary is now the first in Europe for asylum applications per 100,000 citizens.

Indeed, Hungary has never experienced a refugee flow on the scale seen in 2015. To illustrate the magnitude, one should consider that between 1990 and 2014 the number of refugees travelling through Hungary never matched the number produced by Hungary alone after 1956. In this context, the shift seen in 2015 is momentous indeed. Moreover, compared to previous years, both the number of asylum seekers from outside Europe and their arrival rates have increased considerably, which is also creating a new situation.

Asylum applicants per 100,000 citizens, January-September 2015

Source: Eurostat

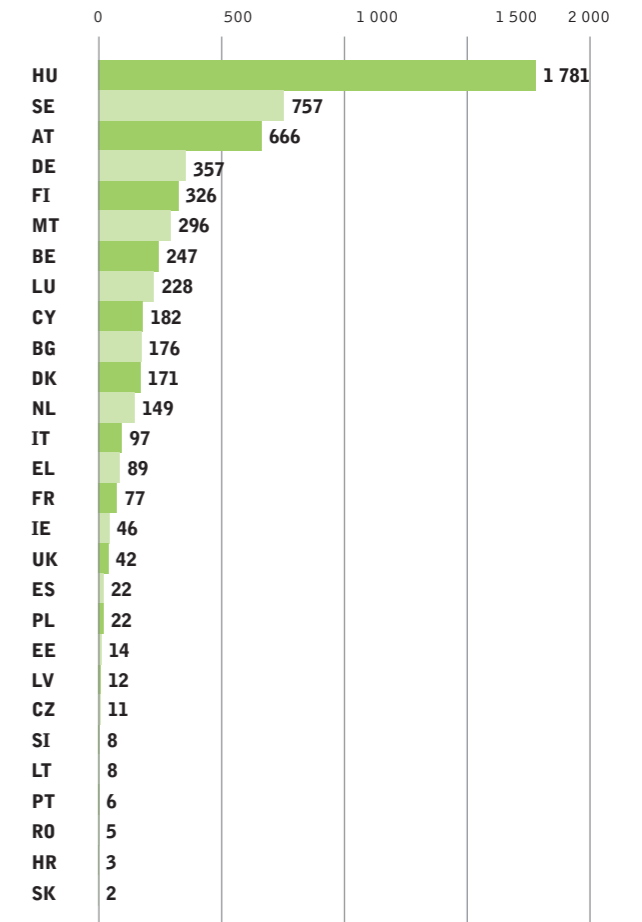


Table 1: Number of asylum seekers arriving in Hungary

Source: Office of Immigration and Nationality

	I-XI, 2014	I-XI, 2015	Change	Change in %
<b>Total number of registered asylum seekers</b>	<b>28,702</b>	<b>176,903</b>	<b>148,201</b>	<b>516%</b>
European	11,560	25,170	13,610	118%
Non-European	17,142	151,733	134,591	785%
Total number of European asylum seekers as a percentage of all asylum seekers	40%	14%		
Total number of non-European asylum seekers as a percentage of all asylum seekers	60%	86%		

However, it is also true that these asylum seekers submitted applications in Hungary only for formal reasons and, almost without exception, then all moved on to Western Europe, Germany being their primary destination. In the early 1990s during the Balkan wars there were more genuine asylum seekers in Hungary staying for an extended period (tens of thousands of people). In 2015 only a few thousand asylum seekers have remained in Hungary despite almost 180,000 registering. According to Hungarian Helsinki Committee figures, by the end of the year the number of those staying in the country has dropped to 900-1,000; approximately 450-500 are being subjected to detention, while immigration procedures are already underway for the other 450-500 people.

A radical increase in asylum seeker numbers does not mean that, compared to previous years, significantly more applicants have received refugee status. In fact, by year-end it had become virtually impossible to receive asylum protection in Hungary due to new restrictions. Compared to the previous year, the approval numbers decreased and stayed below 0.5 % in 2015. The rejection rate is around 2 %; typically, 98 % are dropped, indicating that the asylum seekers leave Hungary before a decision can be handed down in their cases.

It is unknown how many people may have travelled through the country during 2015 without having been registered. While the Government denies it, this must have been a large number prior to the border fence construction. The Government is right to claim that the Hungarian authorities made much more serious efforts at registration than their Greek counterparts or the authorities in the non-EU Balkan states did. This is also indicated by the asylum applications submitted, a large number even compared to international standards.

During 2015 there have been major shifts with respect to asylum seekers' countries of origin. In the first two months of the year, migrants from Kosovo were in the majority, but starting in the spring the number arriving from Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan increased dramatically.

All this is important because, in the first half of 2015, Orbán cabinet officials claimed that most arrivals to Hungary were not escaping war and thus qualified as 'economic migrants'. By mid-year this argument had become untenable; from then on, the Hungarian Government reasoned that before reaching Hungary the asylum seekers had passed through safe countries, i.e., they should not be considered refugees for that reason. By year-end, following the Paris terror attack, such discussions disappeared from public discourse and terrorism became increasingly conflated with the refugees. Looking at the year as a whole, the data show that most refugees arriving in Hungary came from two countries, Afghanistan and Syria.

Concerning the dynamics, the Kosovars arriving in the first two months of 2015 presented the first major challenge for the Hungarian authorities. Subsequently, illegal border crossings decreased until the summer; in June the numbers started to rise again and those coming from war zones became the majority, peaking in September and early October, and eventually subsiding at the end of October after the fence closed the southern border with Croatia and Serbia. The table below, however, clearly shows that this Government measure and those preceding it had all but no effect on the migration process. In fact, the fence along Hungary's southern border with Serbia temporarily increased the refugee flow, and the border was effectively closed only once the fence along the Croatian border was completed. The abrupt

Table 2: Number of decisions issued by the immigration authority and proportion of applications granted each status

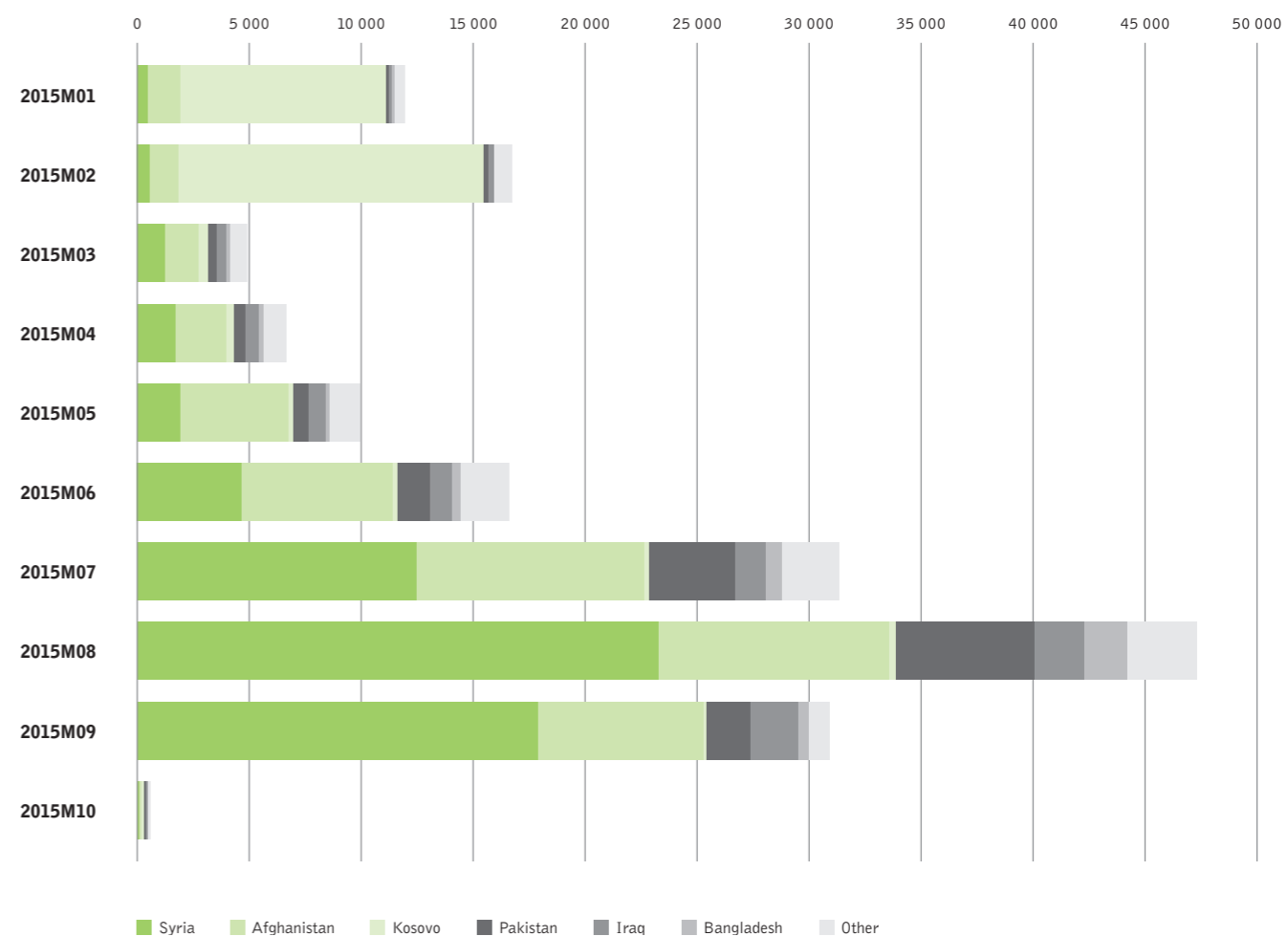
Source: Office of Immigration and Nationality

Kinds of decisions issued (in numbers)	I-XI, 2014	I-XI, 2015	Change	Change in %
Recognized refugee	232	132	-100	-43%
Recognized subsidiary protected person	205	318	113	55%
Independent determination of non-refoulement	4	5	1	25%
Cancellation	17,473	135,963	118,490	678%
Rejection	3,965	2,579	-1,386	-35%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>21,879</b>	<b>138,997</b>		

Kinds of decisions issued (percentage of all applications)	I-XI, 2014	I-XI, 2015
Recognized refugee	1.1%	0.1%
Recognized subsidiary protected person	0.9%	0.2%
Independent determination of non-refoulement	0.0%	0.0%
Cancellation	79.9%	97.8%
Rejection	18.1%	1.9%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

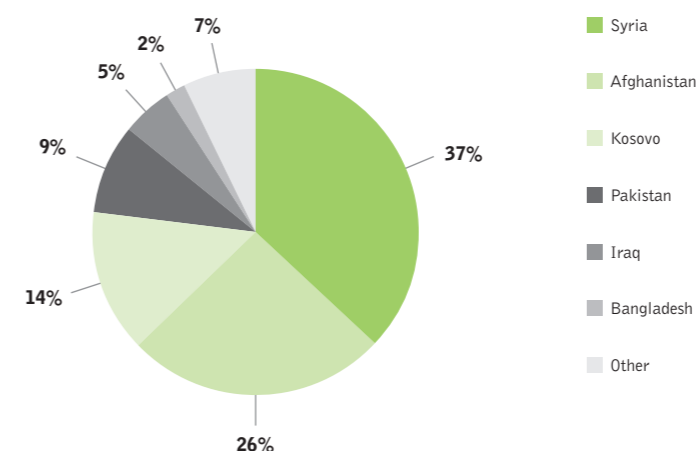
Asylum applicants in Hungary between January-October, 2015, by citizenship

Source: Eurostat



Asylum applicants in Hungary in January-October, 2015, by citizenship (in percent)

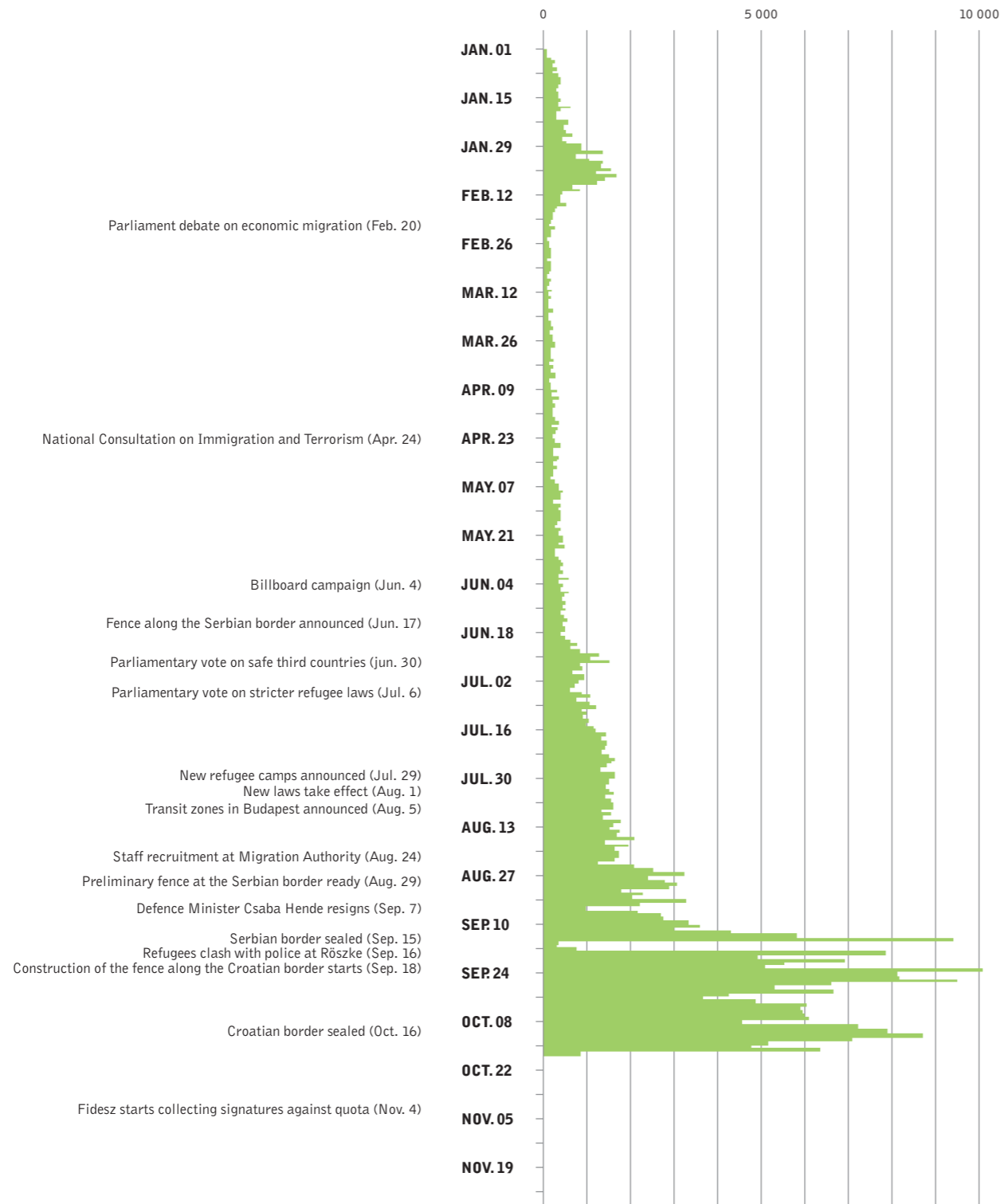
Source: Eurostat



**Governmental measures: Political Capital. Illegal border crossings**  
Source: Police.hu

Governmental Measures

Illegal Border Crossing



end to the flow clearly shows that Hungary never was a 'destination'. Had it been one, the border closing would never have been so effective. The move only worked because it was possible for the refugees to plan routes that avoided the country altogether.

That Hungary is not a 'destination country' is also well-illustrated by additional data. With respect to legal immigration, in 2015 there were no significant developments compared to previous years. Less than 200,000 people resided in Hungary with permission from the Immigration Authority; 3,000 have refugee status. In other words, neither number indicates a major shift compared to the previous years.

In respect to foreign nationals residing in Hungary, the National Statistical Office (KSH) data published in early 2015 are still considered valid: 1.5 % of the population falls into that category, of whom 70 % are European, many resettled Hungarian-minority citizens coming from neighbouring countries.

Based on the latest census, aside from foreign citizens and accounting for all those who have acquired Hungarian citizenship in the meantime, there were 392,000 foreign-born persons settled in Hungary for more than three months in 2011, and this number has not significantly increased since. It is also important to note that this group includes many people who arrived before 1989 and ethnic Hungarians arriving from across the borders.

In other words, Hungary has not become a 'host country' during the current refugee crisis. In fact it could never have become one, because it has simply functioned as a way station along an established migration route leading to Western Europe. With respect to longer-term trends, Hungary's appeal as a 'destination country' is actually declining. In the 1990s the migration balance was clearly positive: At that time there was intense immigration primarily involving ethnic Hungarians coming from just

**Table 3: Number of immigrated and settled persons staying longer than three months**  
Source: Office of Immigration and Nationality

Type of status	As of November 30, 2014	As of November 30, 2015	Change	Change in %
Immigration Permit	5,632	5,092	-540	-10%
Permanent Residence Permit**	3,026	2,739	-287	-9%
Residence Permit	38,731	44,993	6,262	16%
National Residence Permit	406	247	-159	-39%
Registration Certificate	100,846	112,093	11,247	11%
Permanent Residence Card	18,849	18,954	105	1%
Residence Card for Third Country National Family Member of a Hungarian Citizen	5,212	4,022	-1,190	-23%
Residence Card for Third Country National Family Member of an EEA Citizen	555	442	-113	-20%
EC Permanent Residence Permit	496	567	71	14%
National Settlement Permit	6,614	10,096	3,482	53%
Temporary Settlement Permit	2	6	4	200%
Holding an ID card as Refugee*	1,642	1,763	121	7%
Holding an ID card as Subsidiary Protected Person*	1,052	1,253	201	19%
Persons authorized to stay**	105	57	-48	-46%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>183,168</b>	<b>202,324</b>	<b>19,156</b>	<b>10%</b>

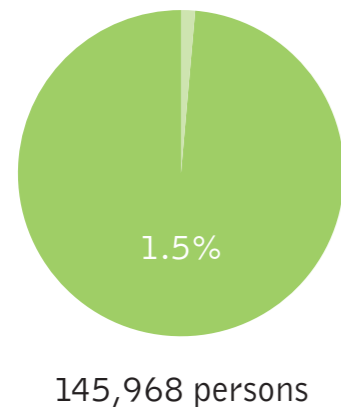
\*Data from the Central Office for Administrative and Electronic Public Services (as of June 30).

\*\*As of June 30.



**Foreign citizens residing in Hungary (as of January 1, 2015)**

Source: Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH)



	Number	Proportion
<b>Europe</b>	<b>100 501</b>	<b>69%</b>
Romania	28 641	20%
Germany	18 773	13%
Slovakia	8 744	6%
Ukraine	6 906	5%
Russia	4 341	3%
Austria	3 990	3%
Serbia	2 430	2%
Poland	1 964	1%
Croatia	831	1%
<b>Asia</b>	<b>33 868</b>	<b>23%</b>
China	16 467	11%
<b>America</b>	<b>6 008</b>	<b>4%</b>
<b>Africa</b>	<b>4 985</b>	<b>3%</b>
<b>Australia and Oceania</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>0%</b>

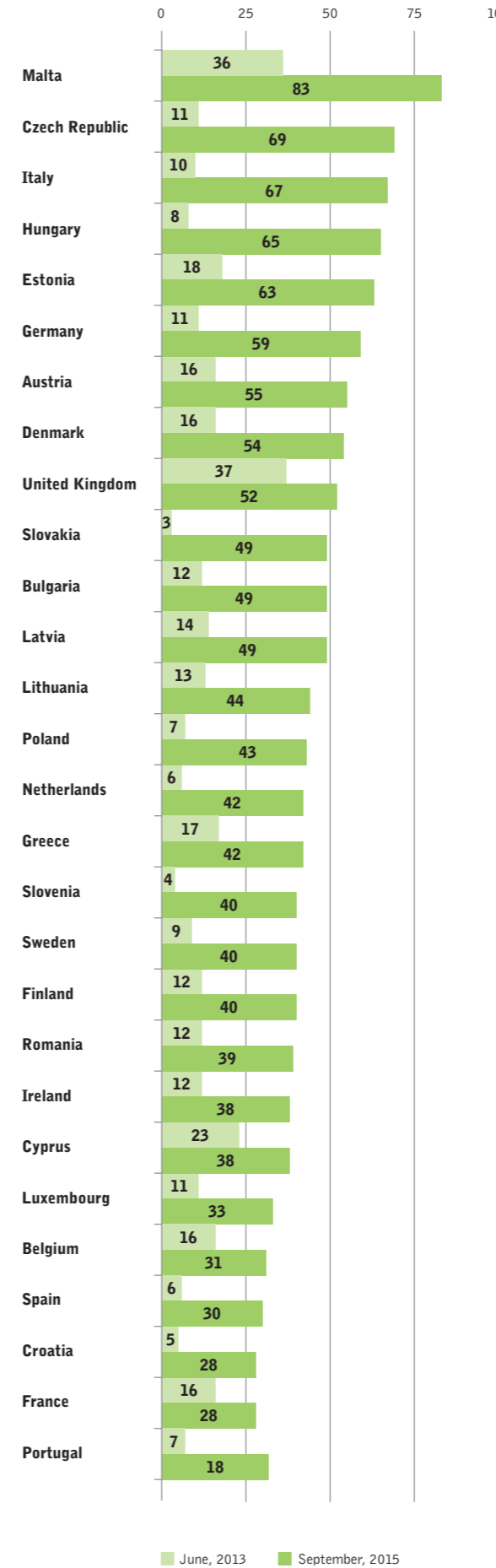
across the border, and emigration either stagnated or increased (albeit temporarily). Since the mid-2000s, based on the SEEMIG project<sup>1</sup> and mirror statistics, the migration balance is becoming increasingly negative, due in part to a drop/stagnation in immigration and in part to higher emigration.<sup>2</sup> With respect to global migration, the biggest problem facing the country is not immigration but a steady rise in emigration. In early 2013 at least 350,000 Hungarian citizens were living abroad worldwide who had left Hungary between 1989 and 2012.<sup>3</sup> Today, Hungarian citizens living abroad are estimated at 500,000 minimum. This indicates that with respect to migration, Hungary is engaged in unequal trading. Immigrants are far from replacing emigrants number-wise. With this persistently deteriorating migration balance, Hungary's population loss may accelerate, the elderly may increase their proportions (as young people are most likely to migrate), and social security systems may experience further severe dysfunction.<sup>4</sup>

**Hungary's unique position**

With respect to the refugee crisis, compared to other European Union countries, Hungary occupies a unique place in the sense that while it was heavily involved in the 2015 refugee crisis, this has in no way compensated for the migration trends that have been evolving over many years. Hungary became a frontline country without adding immigrants; its exposure was comparable to Greece's and Italy's even though, with respect to all other migration indicators, it remained similar to the Eastern European Member States that have not been much affected by refugees number-wise. This unique, intermediate situation has led to some important consequences:

1. The refugee arrivals did not correspond to the migration patterns previously experienced by the Hungarian public. Presumably one can trace the political hysteria whipped up by the refugee crisis and its larger-than-expected impact and explanatory power to the xenophobic government campaigns appealing to public apprehensions that preceded it.

2. The Machiavellian nature of the Orbán cabinet's campaigns, their far-right style, and their extremist messages were made possible among other factors by the fact that Hungary actually has no immigrants in significant numbers. Consequently, Hungarian society has no realistic picture of immigrants and no first-hand experience with them, and the government did not have to face punishment by immigrant voters. Furthermore, the Orbán cabinet had no difficulty declaring war on "political correctness" due to Hungary's weak political culture. Because the immigrant population is insignificant, the Government does not have to count on the risks of re-election that immigrant voters might pose.
3. Within global migration patterns, various European countries are attached to distinct, historically evolved subsystems. Within these, in genuine 'destination countries' there are migration networks that those successively arriving can join. In some places these networks are based on the country's colonial past (e.g., France), in others on a well-established guest worker system (e.g., Germany) and in others they are based on seaborne refugee routes, which are better-established than land routes. Hungary is unique in this respect, so the Orbán cabinet could come up with measures (e.g., border closings) that would have worked with less effectiveness in other places.
4. Due to Hungary's unique position, the Orbán cabinet's refugee and migration policy has become relevant in the international arena as well. The Hungarian Government was right to point out that, for a long time, EU officials paid exclusive attention to Italy and Greece receiving refugees through maritime routes and ignored that Hungary was also exposed to severe pressure from those using land routes. This has been acknowledged by the EU and core country leaders and, as a result, the European Commission recommended in late September that Hungary also receive preferential treatment along with Greece and Italy such that it would not be required to admit anyone and that other Member States would take in 54,000 refugees currently in Hungary.



**Mention of immigration among the three main challenges facing the EU (in per cent)**

Source: Eurobarometer/ European Parliament EB/EP 84.1

However, also due to its unique position, and despite its preferential status in the EU, the Hungarian Government rejected the EU's mandatory refugee redistribution quota system. In a country where 98 % of immigration procedures are dropped because the applicant leaves the country, easing other Member States' burdens through the quota system offered Hungary few lasting benefits. This also explains why Hungary (which, along with the other Eastern European countries, was not severely affected by the refugee crisis) rejected the quota system.

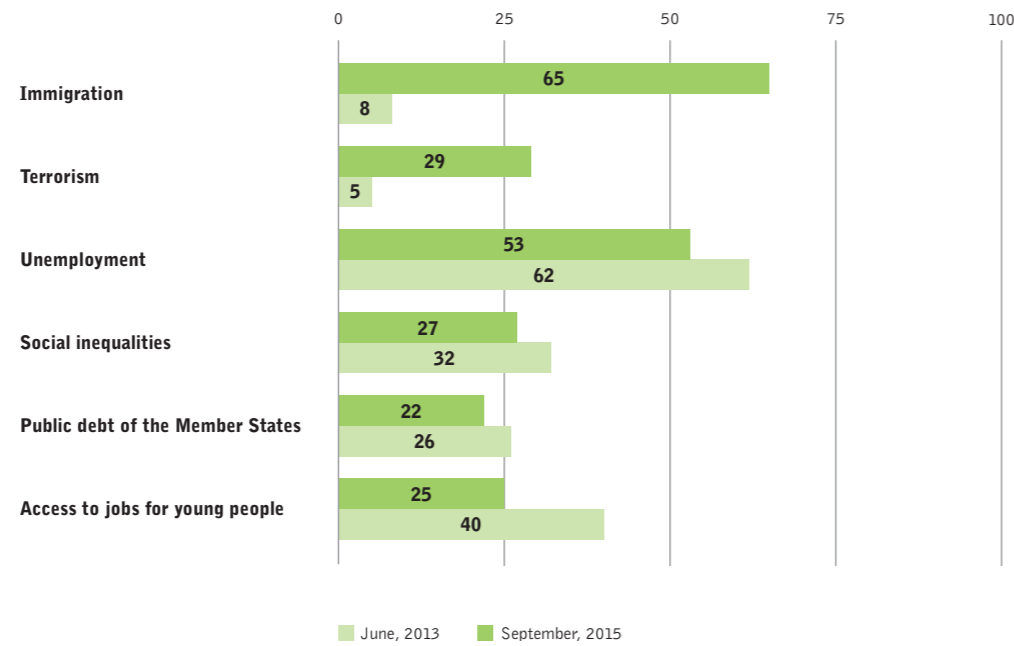
**The effect of the refugee crisis on political attitudes and preferences related to migration**

Migration patterns and politics mutually interact, and this was also the case with the 2015 refugee crisis. In Hungary the public discourse interpreting the refugee crisis was strongly shaped by politics, especially by targeted Government campaigns. Below we shall study five aspects of these shifting political attitudes and preferences related to migration: (1) public perception, (2) xenophobia, (3) policymaking, (4) party politics and (5) the political system.

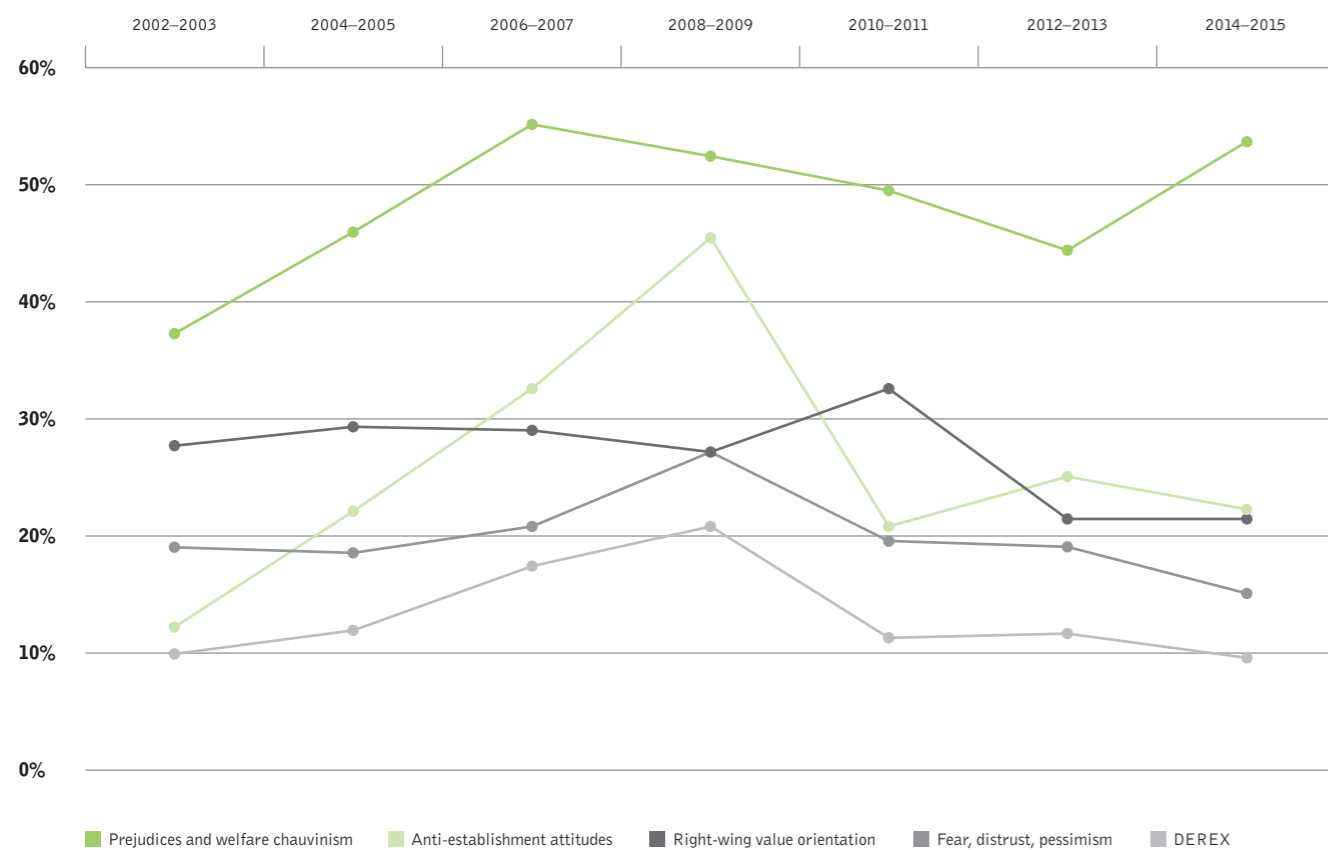
**Public perception**

Increasingly, migration is seen as a major challenge throughout Europe. According to the May 2015 Eurobarometer survey, it is already considered on average the most important topic in Europe, while in 2014 it was only in fourth place (behind economic issues). Respondents considered immigration an urgent issue in only four EU Member States previously, but by now the topic has moved to the top in 20 Member States. Compared to the European average, there has been an even more significant shift in Hungary. While in 2013 only 3 % said immigration is among the top three challenges facing Europe, today that number has reached 65 %.

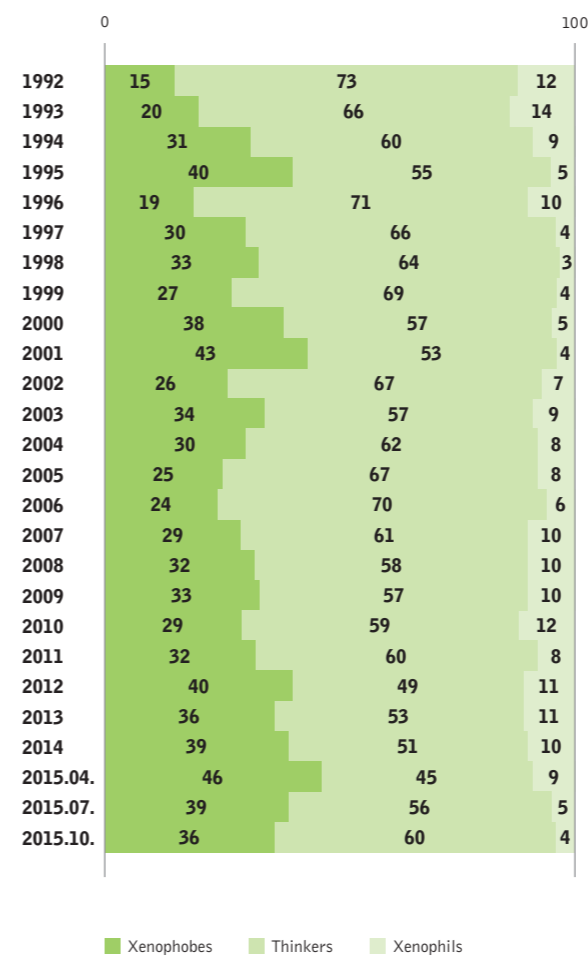
**Main challenges facing the EU and its Member States (in percent, maximum three answers were possible)**  
Source: European Parliament



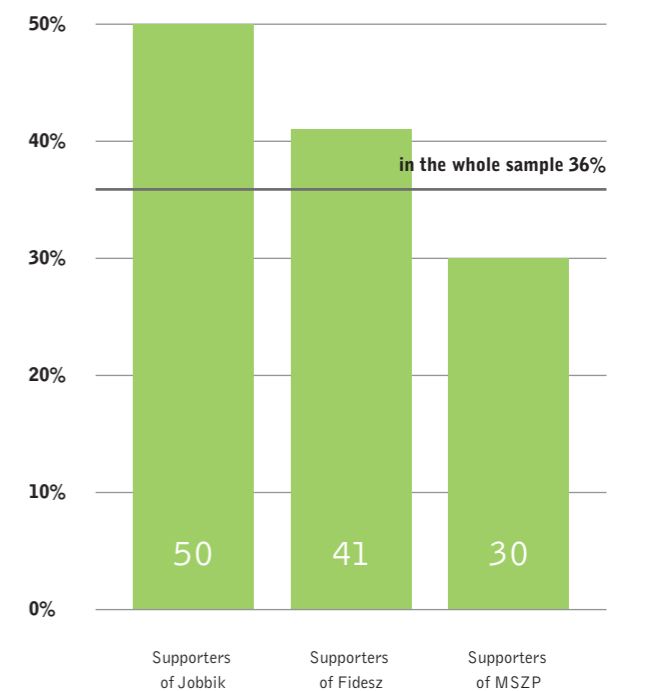
**DEREX scores – Hungary**  
Source: Political Capital



**Ratio of xenophobes, xenophiles and thinkers, 1992-2015 (in percent)**  
Source: Tárki



**Ratio of xenophobes among the supporters of Fidesz, Jobbik and MSZP in October 2015 (in percent)**  
Source: Tárki



Moreover, this dramatic shift in Hungary took place over a short time. According to Eurobarometer figures published in May 2015,<sup>5</sup> in the spring respondents considered unemployment to be the most urgent problem in Hungary, and only 13 % placed immigration as among the top three most important problems. However, in the fall that number had already jumped to 65 %, and with respect to terrorism as a problem, the corresponding figure in Hungary increased from 5 % to 29 %, while traditionally-important economic and social issues did not show a similar shift.

This shows that in Hungary the biggest change with respect to public attitudes on immigration occurred at the level of perception. No doubt the Hungarian Government's summer anti-immigrant campaign, the rising refugee numbers, and asylum seeker visibility all played a major role in this shift.

**Xenophobia**

According to all domestic and international studies, strong prejudice against minority groups is a significant trend in the Hungarian population. One major lesson from the systematic studies

conducted since the regime change is that Hungarians are very intolerant (in line with other Central and Eastern European countries). This is closely tied to a strong sense of existential threat. In general, human beings do not tolerate groups perceived as threat. Accordingly, it was a foregone conclusion that a campaign built on anti-immigrant sentiment would gain relatively wide support in Hungary.

In the long term, based on European Social Survey (ESS) data, the Demand for Right-Wing Extremism (DEREX) index's prejudice sub-index measuring demand for the far right has started to rise again after a few years' decline in Hungary. Today it almost matches 2006 levels.

The refugee crisis has transformed the nature of xenophobia in Hungary as follows:

- General fear and distrust of the unknown have been replaced by a specific enemy image: the asylum seeker.
- This tangible enemy image has become associated with even more specific fears, i.e., the threat of terrorism and crime.
- In the past, distrust has been aimed at future potential arrivals, but by now xenophobia has a present, tangible focus.

Xenophobia and prejudice guided by fear are socially understandable phenomena, especially in Hungary, where the population has scant experience of immigration. Citizens can hardly be blamed for having developed negative social attitudes on this issue; responsibility rests primarily with the politicians exploiting the current situation.

Looking at short-term data, according to a recent research report by the Hungarian polling institute Tárki, the level of xenophobia in Hungary has dropped significantly since spring 2015. While in their April survey xenophobia was at 46 per cent (reaching an all-time high), by July it decreased to 39 per cent, and by October a further significant decrease occurred (to 36 per cent, or 2013 levels). Since the same decreasing trend characterizes 'xenophiles', the period between April and October 2015 accounts for a significant increase in the proportion of 'thinkers' in Hungary.<sup>6</sup>

Party preferences play an important role in both xenophobic and xenophile attitudes. Among xenophobes, Jobbik voters are heavily overrepresented, FIDESZ voters are moderately overrepresented, and MSZP voters are underrepresented.

It is also very important that latent xenophobes are also proportionately high here. They are 'thinkers', but when asked about certain groups, they rejected seven of the eight groups mentioned (Hungarians from Ukraine, Syrians, Afghanis, Iraqis, Pakistanis, Somalis, Albanians from Kosovo, and a fictional group, the Pirezians). If we add them to the open xenophobes, the cumulative xenophobia is 51 % in the total population.

### Policymaking

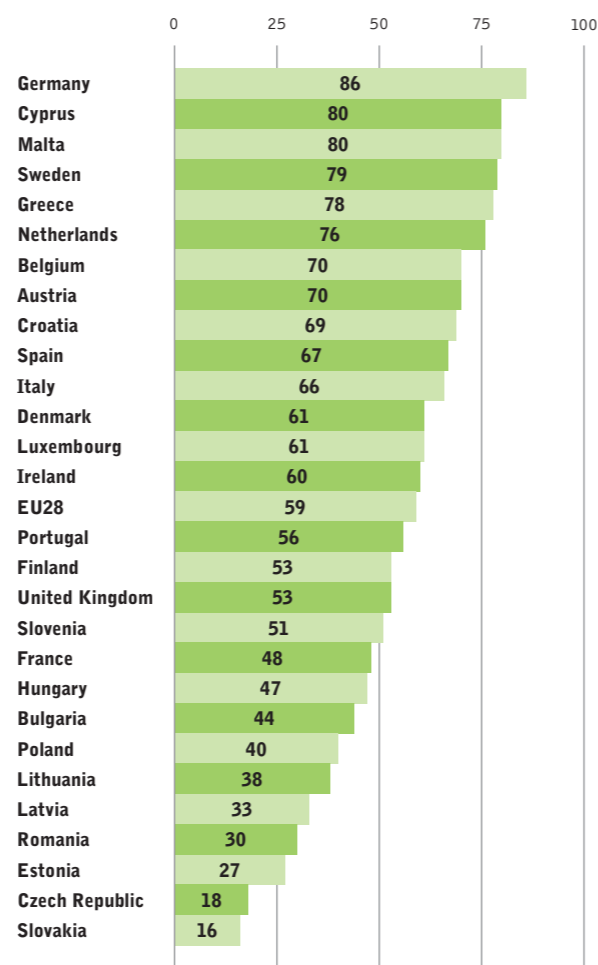
At the level of policymaking there are major differences in Europe between Eastern and Western European countries. Western European countries are divided when it comes to managing the refugee crisis: In many places, large blocs have emerged in public opinion criticizing governments' activities. Measures are seen as too soft or too harsh, including measures taken by the Hungarian Government.<sup>7</sup> The EU's Eastern Member States take a more unified stance against receiving refugees and against certain solutions proposed by the European Commission.

In Hungary support for binding quotas came to 47 %, the ninth-lowest figure. Of the 53 % opposed to binding quotas, only 45 % can be considered firmly opposed, as close to 8 % were unable to take a clear position. This shows that a majority of the Hungarian public is rather divided on the issue and is not categorically opposed to the quota system (at least this was the case at the end of September).

Public opinion poll outcomes may be significantly influenced by the way the questions are posed. This is well-illustrated by a poll conducted by a Hungarian think tank with close relations to the government, Századvég, in early November, where – in contrast to the European Parliament survey presented above – a single question was used to assess public opinion ("Do you tend to agree or disagree with a plan to distribute migrants arriving in the European Union based on a mandatory quota system?"). Close to two-thirds (65 %) tended to disagree, while those in agreement were significantly fewer (30 %). In short, in the two

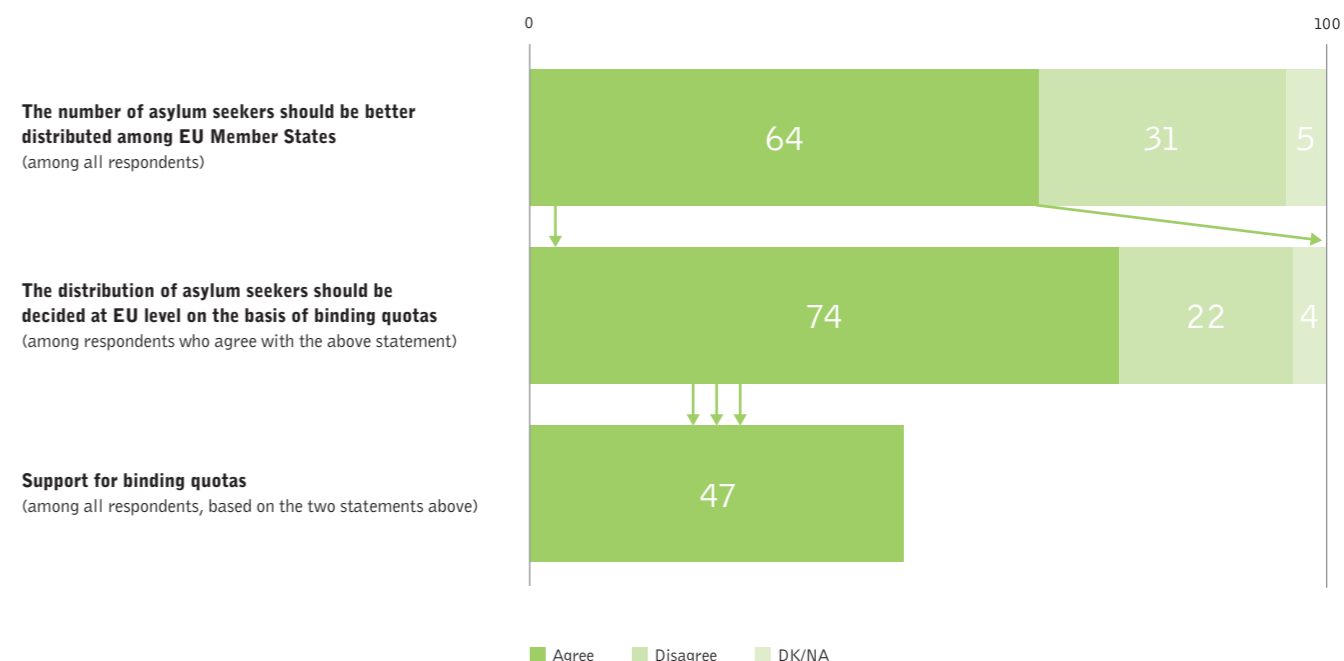
### Support for binding quotas (in per cent)

Source: European Parliament Eurobarometer EB/EP 84.1



### Opinions on the distribution of asylum seekers in Hungary

Source: European Parliament Eurobarometer EB/EP 84.1

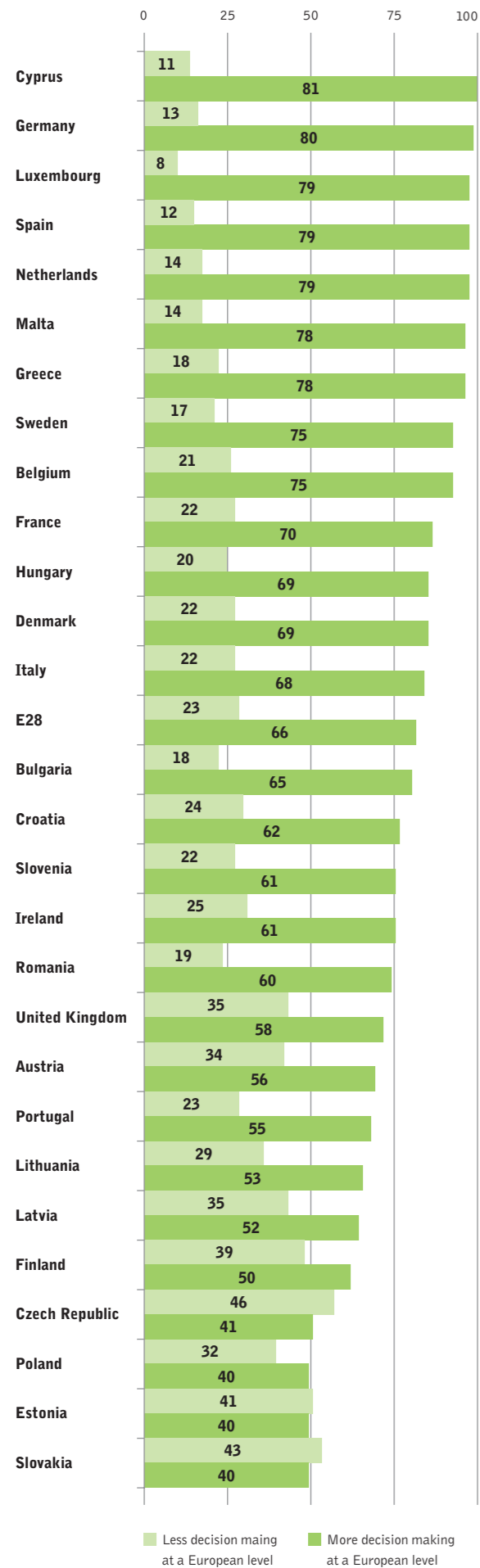


studies the support rates for quotas show a significant gap, i.e., 47 % support in the first study and 30 % support in the second study. Following the events in Paris, fear over migrants is expected to increase in Hungary, i.e., support for the quota system in the country is expected to decline further.

Hungary does not stand out among Eastern European countries and the Hungarian public is even somewhat less vehement than other Eastern Europeans in rejecting EU recommendations. In other words, in this context the Hungarian Government is more hostile to the solutions proposed by the European Commission than the Hungarian public is. With its fall anti-quota campaign, the Government was not simply trying to benefit from an already-existing opposition, but apparently wished to see the public take an even more defiant position on this issue.

Looking at domestic studies, according to a July survey by the government-friendly Századvég, 86 % of those defining themselves as right-wingers, 32 % of self-defined left-wingers

and 53 % of self-defined centrists supported the fence along the Hungarian-Serbian border. According to a survey conducted in late September 2015 asking about the planned fence construction along the Croatian border, 66 % supported the plan (86 % on the right, 39 % on the left and 63 % in the middle). According to a survey published on 24 September 2015 by Nézőpont (another Hungarian think tank close to the Government), 87 % were opposed to illegal immigration, 55 % supported the border fence, and 28 % supported the EU's quota system. According to an Ipsos survey, between June-July and September 2015 there was a slight increase in the perception that migrants pose a threat to Hungary and thus should not be allowed to enter the country (from 64 % to 67 %); 53 % believe the current arrivals are motivated by war and 28 % think that economic and financial considerations are more dominant motivations for the arrivals, with the latter position enjoying a majority only in the Jobbik camp.

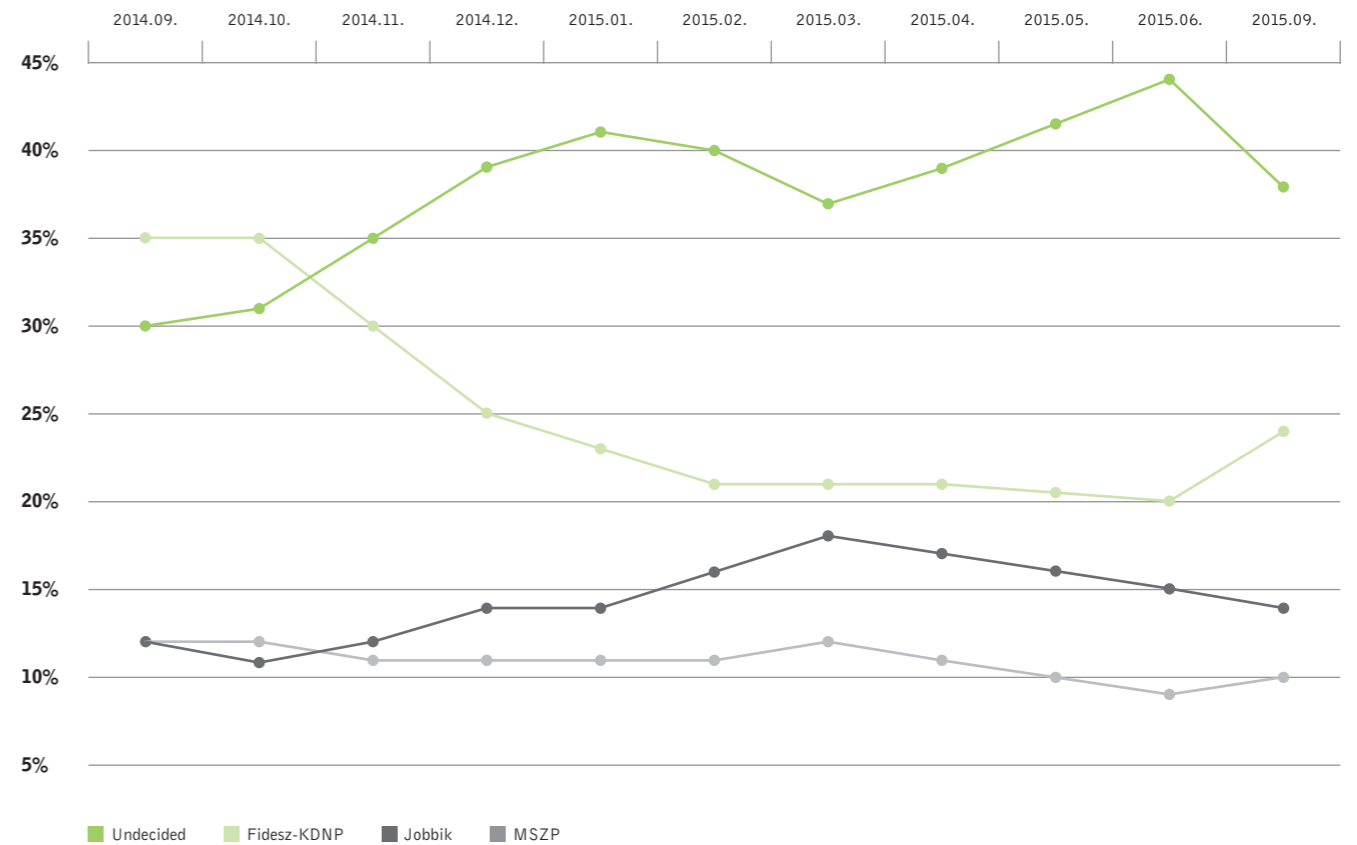


When it comes to the migration issue, should more or less decision-making take place at a European level? (In per cent)  
Source: European Parliament Eurobarometer

**Party politics**

Experience in Europe over the past 40 to 50 years shows that governments have all but no influence on migration patterns, be they driven by refugees or labour migrants. Consequently, more politicians see an excellent opportunity to exploit the problems accompanying increased arrivals in order to reap short-term political gains for themselves. Since the 1970s, parties opposing all immigration have emerged in all European countries. While their agenda has mostly been adopted by mainstream political forces, the problems accompanying increased arrivals have not dissipated by any appreciable measure. Tightening immigration regulations over the decades has proven ineffective and there is no evidence that, on their own, the European nation-states can regulate global migration patterns at all, so political competition with the anti-immigration parties continually demands ever-tighter, ever more visible controls. Among other measures, governments prefer to pass the buck to the EU system. The short-term objective is to occupy a popular position while not actually managing these problems. The Hungarian ruling party is well aware of this and, not oblivious to its own political interest, launched its communication campaign using increased arrivals to Hungary as a pretext. Fidesz, forced onto the defensive in fall 2014, used this method

Support for Fidesz-KDNP, Jobbik and MSZP (in percent, among all adults)  
Source: IPSOS



in an effort to regain the political upper hand, to recapture the political initiative, and to eliminate from public discourse all other issues that may hurt the party's interests.

However, from the party politics perspective, current developments point beyond competition with Jobbik and involve a broader objective. Viktor Orbán and his party have a well-tested strategy of dividing the political arena into the 'pro-national' and 'anti-national' fields and insist on treating all issues along this fault line. Anyone questioning a position taken by Fidesz is automatically and without argument relegated to the 'anti-national' camp and considered a 'foreign agent'. By the end of 2014, domestic party politics had turned its back on this fault line that had been so convenient for Fidesz; it became less and less credible that the Orbán cabinet was indeed the sole representative of the 'national interest'. This is why the governing parties seized on the refugee crisis, for with a campaign built on this topic, the entire opposition on the left as well as civil society and right-wing activists criticizing the Government could be defined as 'pro-foreigner'.

Fidesz's effort paid off inasmuch as it managed to increase its support base by 5 or 6 %, while its major challenger from the right, Jobbik, could not exploit the migration issue and in fact lost some supporters. The fragmented leftist opposition was forced into an unpopular, reactive role and its popularity has essentially stagnated.

**The political system**

Viewed from the political establishment's perspective, the refugee crisis and its fallout clearly pose a challenge for European liberal democracies. With increasing numbers of arrivals, protection for minorities, minority opinions, and unconditional recognition for human rights may come into conflict with the will of those political communities controlling the majority. The Orbán cabinet, bent on building an illiberal state, openly states (and the Hungarian Prime Minister takes every opportunity to emphasize) that the "European elite has failed" because, by his logic, most European governments have come into conflict with the popular majority on this issue.

In some countries the conflict between the agenda represented by the central government and local policymakers' agendas creates additional systemic problems. While keeping EU considerations, security policy, and tactical considerations in mind, governments can decide to admit and resettle refugees, which then often runs into opposition at the local political level. Even though we cannot talk about extremist parties breaking through nationally or at European level, such trends are perceptible at the local or regional level.<sup>8</sup>

### Support for Fidesz among those eligible to vote (in percent)

Source: Medián, Társki, Századvég, Publicus, Nézőpont Intézet, IPSOS



1 SEEMIG is a strategic project funded by the European Union's South-East Europe Programme aiming to better understand and address longer-term migratory, human capital and demographic processes of South-East Europe, as well as their effects on labour markets, national and regional economies. The main goal of the project is to empower public administrations to develop and implement policies and strategies by using enhanced datasets and empirical evidence.

2 Földházi, Erzsébet, Branislav Bleha, Branislav Sprocha, and Boris Vanos. "Population Projections for Hungary and Slovakia at National, Regional and Local Levels." SEEMIG project, 2014. www.seemig.eu.

3 SEEMIG. "A Press Conference Was Organised at the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (H-1024 Budapest, Keleti Károly Utca 5-7.) on Wednesday, 15 October 2014 about Emigration from Hungary." October 15, 2014. <http://www.seemig.eu/downloads/pressroom/SEEMIGpressmaterialBudapest15October2014.pdf>

4 Melegh, Attila. "Hungary in the Context of Global Migration." *Eszmélet*, June 16, 2015. <http://eszmelet.hu/melegh-attila-magyarorszag-a-nemzet-kozi-migracio-rendszerben/>.

5 European Commission – Directorate-General for Communication. "Public Opinion in the European Union – First Results," 2015. [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb83/eb83\\_first\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb83/eb83_first_en.pdf).

6 Xenophobes are respondents who would let in no refugees, while xenophiles would accept all refugees. Thinkers are those who select the item: 'it depends...' i.e., they express a need for more information before making their decision and are inclined to evaluate the pros and cons.

7 Gyulai, Attila, Márton Bene, and Veronika Patkós. "Politics and Migration." Budapest: MTA, 2015. [http://mta.hu/data/cikk/13/70/8/cikk\\_137008/\\_gyulai.pdf](http://mta.hu/data/cikk/13/70/8/cikk_137008/_gyulai.pdf).

8 Gyulai, Attila, Márton Bene, and Veronika Patkós. "Politics and Migration." Budapest: MTA, 2015. [http://mta.hu/data/cikk/13/70/8/cikk\\_137008/\\_gyulai.pdf](http://mta.hu/data/cikk/13/70/8/cikk_137008/_gyulai.pdf).

## Politics

### Discursive framework

While in traditional countries based on immigration (primarily the United States, Canada and Australia) widely-accepted migration narratives have positive connotations, as exemplified by myths such as 'the American dream' or 'rags to riches' stories, in Europe, and especially in Eastern Europe (including Hungary), the term 'migration' is more often associated with threats, losses, failures and enemy images that, understandably, generate negative perceptions. In essence, the Hungarian tradition lacks a positive migration story. This is based on a Hungarian migration narrative where public thinking is defined by the stages and trends briefly described above, comprising a large emigration at the end of the 19th century and early 20th century, the forced emigrations following both World Wars, the emigration following 1956, and then both emigration and immigration after 1990.

**Threats:** Hungarian thinking about migration has been shaped by the migration-images and immigrant-images that, over the past two decades, have led to widespread prejudice against immigrants across Europe, where interpreting migration as a threat and subsequently tightening refugee and immigration regulations have become legitimate political demands.

**Losses:** Essentially, Hungarian public thinking has shaped the Hungarian migration narrative around the concept of loss. Emigrant Nobel laureates of Hungarian descent, those forcibly resettled following the First World War, political refugees emigrating after 1956, and the current trend of young people leaving the country are all seen as losses. When ethnic Hungarians depart neighbouring countries and resettle in Hungary, this is not seen as a gain, but as completing the slow process of abandoning what were formerly Hungarian territories and is therefore also seen in terms of 'loss'.

**Failures:** Hungarian public thinking tends to define both emigrants and immigrants as unsuccessful, marginalised individuals. This negative attitude is not shaken by stories of successful Hungarians abroad, as their success abroad is seen as proof of failure in Hungary, which explains why they left the country in the first place.

**Enemy images:** Finally, we should mention the discursive framework most conducive for stoking prejudices. After 1990, no immigrant group arriving in Hungary could avoid 'enemy' labelling, not even Hungarians arriving from neighbouring countries who, despite their Hungarian ethnic background, were regularly referred to as nothing but 'Romanians' or 'Yugoslavs'. However, this attitude has even older and deeper roots in public discourse. It is sufficient to refer to the classic anti-Semitic 'enemy' concept in the current far-right rhetoric, which blames mainly Galician Jews immigrating to Hungary in the 19th century for the tragedies befalling Hungary throughout its history. In another peculiar migration-narrative based in part on this concept, in its

rhetoric the Hungarian far right prefers to establish a correlation between migration and the pervasive, adverse consequences of globalization. For the most part, the far right views immigrants as the enemy but not the arch-enemy; immigrants in general are described as stooges of (Jewish) groups controlling the country's political and economic life. Through a deliberate strategy to inundate the country with migrants, these groups are said to have conspired to break the 'Hungarian nation's spirit' and to 'dilute' its population.<sup>1</sup>

All this and the Hungarian population's xenophobia, which is extreme even by international comparison, are explained in part by the fact that, as shown by a 2011 Hungarian Helsinki Committee survey, the Hungarian media paints migrants in a negative light. In most cases, the local media cover foreigners in the crime section, describing migrants and refugees essentially as criminals posing a national security threat. On the other hand, 'human interest' stories about migrants, their successful integration, or their difficulties are regularly ignored.<sup>2</sup>

### Short historical background

Within the discursive framework described above, migration as a political issue first emerged in the Hungarian public discourse in the early 2000s, initially in connection with local interpretations of what were mainly foreign political developments and related media reports. This is all the more intriguing as the migration developments in the early 1990s seem as if they would have offered more justification for such reactions. That was a time when Hungary encountered Yugoslav refugees fleeing the war, rising resettlement efforts by ethnic Hungarians from the region, and the first Chinese immigrants. While these migration topics received regular coverage in the Hungarian media at the time, they never moved to the centre of the political discourse.

The Hungarian political elite still actually consider migration a marginal issue. Compared to the older EU Member States, the problems associated with immigration appear to be a distant threat for now, but recent emigration leading to increasing labour and social problems may yet make that a campaign issue along the lines of 'How to bring our young people home.'

At the same time, sooner or later, in response to the increasingly evident need to replace the working-age adults lost to emigration, politicians will have to take a political stance on immigration as well. In this context, positions opposing immigration are all but certain to dominate. Recent developments have also pointed in that direction, for in the past few years political actors have regularly appealed to popular fears over immigration. The first major political move aimed at generating anti-immigrant sentiment came in 2002, when the Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP), in opposition at the time, envisioned '23 million' Romanian jobseekers arriving in the country, and in 2004 the same party, by then a governing party, campaigned against foreign workers once more in connection with the double referendum

concept.<sup>3</sup> For some time the right wing was in the habit of scaring the population with reference to non-European (primarily Chinese) immigrants, but in the past few years this rhetoric has all but disappeared, only to be replaced by the far right's more aggressive, conspiracy-inspired theory envisioning primarily Jewish immigration to Hungary.

Therefore, it is not surprising that most Hungarians are biased against migrants when it comes to public safety, labour and cultural issues. A 2011 survey based on personal interviews clearly shows that (aside from some socio-demographic factors such as education) political preferences play a crucial role in reinforcing prejudices. Fears of mass immigration (wholly unjustified by actual migration trends) are rampant in Hungarian society: Over 50 per cent of the voting-age population expects to see mass immigration primarily involving the Chinese and Jews, as well as Africans and Arabs. This anticipation is accompanied by a stronger aversion for Chinese and Jewish people and political actors reinforce fears related to their expected increase in numbers. Here again, we see major differences with respect to party preferences. In contrast to other parties' supporters, an overwhelming majority of far-right Jobbik voters anticipate Israeli Jewish migrants arriving in Hungary, a fear fed by Jobbik's political anti-Semitism, which promises its members both identity formation and universal answers to all questions. That the Chinese and Jews are being assessed similarly with respect to mass immigration is also noteworthy. An hypothesis worthy of further research is that this may be related to the analogous prejudices associated with the two groups, which are described as 'imperialistic' and 'envious', essentially claiming that these 'cunning' and 'calculating' people 'keep pushing' in and are bent on 'buying up everything'.

With regard to support for authoritarian policies, we can say that such policies are popular among respondents: 69 per cent agreed with at least two restrictions mentioned in a survey (i.e., stricter migration rules and including perpetrators' ethnicities in criminal records). The more one fears mass immigration, the more one supports these ideas. This fear is fed by the widely-shared migrant-criminal stereotype and by the view that immigrants take away jobs from Hungarians. The most tolerant cohort is the young adults' group (24-29 years old).<sup>4</sup>

## The refugee crisis<sup>5</sup>

During 2015 the public discourse in Hungary was dominated by the refugee crisis. The topic was politically used by the Government, the governing party Fidesz, and the far-right party Jobbik to capitalize on xenophobic, anti-immigration sentiments. The authorities responsible for asylum seekers (e.g., the Office of Immigration and Nationality), and for ethnic and religious minorities (e.g., the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights) made no xenophobic or hate-inciting statements during the period in question, but statements by leading government officials and politicians pushed the political discourse in a more xenophobic, radical direction.

### Government

The Government intended to frame migration and refugees as a topic in the context of debates on terrorism, high immigrant numbers, and the extra cost of processing the arrivals. The opposition and civil society groups could not offer any resistance to the schedule for these debates, which was dictated by the Government and the governing parties. The Government achieved this result by launching three wide-reaching campaigns: The national consultation in the spring, during which a letter was sent to every household including a manipulative questionnaire, a billboard campaign during the summer, and the campaign opposing the EU quota system at year-end. Besides that, the Government's viewpoint became the predominant one in both privately-owned and public broadcast media outlets.<sup>6</sup>

Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and his right-wing populist party, Fidesz, initiated this radicalizing course in January 2015. When referring to asylum seekers coming to Hungary, Government officials and Fidesz politicians deliberately, consistently used the terms 'subsistence immigrants', 'economic immigrants' and 'illegal immigrants',<sup>7</sup> suggesting that all these people had left their homelands for economic reasons and were only pretending to be refugees. Fidesz politicians made no distinction between people coming from war zones potentially deserving asylum status and people who do not come from crisis areas whose chance to receive asylum status is, therefore, rather low. The Government had political motives for doing this, as Political Capital<sup>8</sup> presented in many analyses: To stabilize its electoral support and regain momentum in domestic politics by setting the tone, stealing the topic from Jobbik, and presenting the Hungarian population with a 'common enemy' against which the Government was taking a determined stance in order to 'defend the nation'.<sup>9</sup> In order to dominate the public discourse, the Government aimed at splitting the political spectrum into two conflicting camps: Those who serve the 'national interest' and therefore oppose immigration and reject accepting any refugees in Hungary, and those who support immigration and therefore 'betray Hungarian interests'.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, Fidesz intended to completely monopolize the anti-immigration position to the exclusion of other political actors.<sup>11</sup>

The anti-immigration course taken by the Government and the governing party Fidesz was launched by PM Orbán in January 2015 when he took part in the march to commemorate the victims of the Charlie Hebdo attack in Paris. He stated to the Hungarian News Agency (MTI) that immigration is a bad thing in Europe, since it only brings trouble and danger to the peoples of Europe.

According to PM Orbán, We [Hungarians] do not want to see significantly-sized minorities with different cultural characteristics and backgrounds among us. We want to keep Hungary as Hungary.<sup>12</sup> The very next day, Antal Rogán, leader of Fidesz's parliamentary group, made anti-Muslim and anti-immigrant statements, saying that Muslim communities are already 'demolishing' the internal order of 'Christian' countries in Western Europe and that it is not in Hungary's interest to accept 'economic migrants' with traditions completely different from Hungarian ones.<sup>13</sup>

At the initiative of Fidesz, the Parliament held a debate on the refugee crisis on 20 February. During the debate, entitled "Hungary does not need subsistence immigrants", Fidesz MPs used harsh anti-immigrant argumentation that included the most popular, widespread prejudices against refugees: They used coarse terms to describe the refugees and to demonize them. Fidesz lawmakers asserted that immigrants pretending to be refugees were exploiting international law, spreading diseases, committing arson (as they had allegedly set the streets on fire in Sweden), and committing theft and violent crimes.<sup>14</sup>

Following this harsh rhetoric, the Government turned to action and launched the so-called "National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism" in April 2015.<sup>15</sup> According to the Government, the consultation (a questionnaire with 12 questions sent by post to every citizen over 18, more than eight million questionnaires total) aimed at designing stricter rules on immigration.<sup>16</sup> The letter accompanying the questionnaire, signed by PM Orbán, labels asylum seekers "economic migrants" and says that "economic migrants cross the border illegally pretending to be refugees, while in reality they seek social allowances and jobs". According to the PM, increasing "economic migrant" numbers pose a new threat to Hungary that "we need to stop". "Since Brussels has failed in handling immigration, Hungary has to follow its own way. [...] We will not let economic migrants endanger Hungarian people's jobs and livelihoods," the letter reads. After this biased introduction, citizens were asked to answer questions and to return the questionnaire to the Government. While the consultation pretended to be a survey, in reality most questions were preceded by a statement echoing the Government's anti-immigration rhetoric and PM Orbán's statements in the letter (e.g., Question 3: "According to some, immigration, which is badly handled by Brussels, is connected with expanding terrorism. Do you agree with this opinion?", Question 12: "Do you agree with the Hungarian Government that support is needed for Hungarian babies and families, not for immigrants?").<sup>17</sup> Altogether, the 'consultation' was just some biased questions linking immigration to threats to security and income; it did not aim, in reality, at revealing the public's opinion on immigration, but rather aimed at manipulating it.<sup>18</sup>

The consultation therefore earned much criticism both domestically (e.g., from opposition parties and NGOs) and internationally (e.g., from the European Commission, various MEPs, the Council of Europe, and the UNHCR). During the plenary debate on the situation in Hungary at the European Parliament on 19 May, First Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans said that "a public consultation based on bias, on leading and even misleading questions, on prejudice about immigrants can hardly be considered a fair and objective basis for designing sound policies. Framing immigration in the context of terrorism, depicting migrants as a threat to jobs and the livelihood of people, is malicious and simply wrong – it will only feed misconceptions and prejudice."<sup>19</sup> The Council of Europe's Human Rights Commissioner, Nils Muižnieks, said the questionnaire's content was "unacceptable" because it fed "intolerance against migrants". He urged the Government to take a "more human rights-oriented approach to migration issues."<sup>20</sup>

On 8 May, UNHCR Regional Representative for Central Europe Montserrat Feixas Vihé spoke out against rising xenophobia in Hungary and expressed concern over the questionnaire's wording, stating that "the questions intentionally attempt to confuse refugees and asylum-seekers with so-called 'economic migrants' and wrongly blame refugees for a number of purported threats to Hungary and Europe."<sup>21</sup>

In general, the anti-immigration campaign by the Government has been using a populist, xenophobic rhetoric that resembles far-right messages elsewhere in Europe. The Hungarian Government has linked migration to terrorism, crime and unemployment. Government officials have accused migrants of spreading diseases, committing crimes, and stealing jobs from Hungarians. A very good example was presented by László Pószán, a Fidesz MP who, during a press conference in April, stated that political correctness is only suitable for suppressing real problems and who, before listing crimes allegedly committed by those detained in the refugee camp in Debrecen, posed this rhetorical question: Would anyone be happy if his/her child was surrounded by "six black Africans making threatening motions and tones" while taking the bus home?<sup>22</sup>

The Government's anti-immigration campaign next involved a billboard campaign launched in June. The billboards appeared across the whole country and ran three types of messages: 1) "If you come to Hungary, you have to respect our culture." 2) "If you come to Hungary, you have to respect our laws." 3) "If you come to Hungary, you cannot take away Hungarians' jobs."<sup>23</sup>

While Government officials insisted that the campaign targeted immigrants and human traffickers alike, the billboards only appeared in the Hungarian language and in Hungary. This fact leads to the evident conclusion that in reality the campaign targeted the domestic audience and served solely domestic political goals.

Despite Fidesz politicians and the Government using harsh anti-immigration rhetoric, the state authorities dealing with refugees maintained their professionalism for the most part and stuck to their expertise and official terminology. However, at the beginning of the year, just a few days after PM Orbán's anti-immigration messages in Paris, the Director-General of the Office of Immigration and Nationality, Zsuzsanna Végh, made statements that echoed the Government's rhetoric. Ms. Végh stated at a press conference that those who leave their homes for economic reasons were exploiting the long case-handling times and letting Hungary take care of them while they waited.<sup>24</sup>

The public broadcast media, which has in many cases proven to be the Government's mouthpiece, reported on the refugee crisis in a biased, one-dimensional way that was suitable for inciting hatred and xenophobic sentiments. The Hungarian Helsinki Committee objected to this practice in a letter addressed to public broadcast media chairpersons in June. According to the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, the public broadcast media were scapegoating refugees and presenting them as obnoxious, scary people who are harming Hungary.<sup>25</sup>

Besides the Government's anti-immigration campaign, which was suitable for stimulating xenophobic views and anti-Muslim

sentiments, no hatred-inciting statements against other ethnic or religious minorities were explicitly made by Government officials or authorities during the time period in question. However, Government officials often used Roma integration as an excuse for why Hungary is not able to accept any 'economic migrants'. A clear example was the comment made by Hungarian Justice Minister László Trócsányi, who, while attacking the European Union's proposed refugee redistribution quota system, said to Inforádió in May that Hungary was not able to accept any more 'economic migrants' because integrating 800,000 Roma already posed a huge burden for the country.<sup>26</sup> Mayor Béla Lakatos (Fidesz) of Ács settlement, who is Romani, called Mr Trócsányi's comment unacceptable; in his view, Mr Trócsányi's statement did not express the Government's commitment towards Roma integration but was inciting anti-Roma sentiments by suggesting that, due to funds spent on Roma integration, the country was unable to cope with other challenges and finance other aims.<sup>27</sup> Opposition parties (except Jobbik) called on Mr. Trócsányi to resign. In response to these calls, the minister said he outright rejects the outrageous and baseless accusations against him by the opposition parties. Trócsányi said that caring for the Roma population was a priority and a moral obligation. He also said he was proud that Hungary had adopted the European Union's Roma Strategy during its EU presidency.<sup>28</sup>

Due to the government's harsh anti-immigration campaign, which has been happening in phases all year, and because the Government and Fidesz politicians have deliberately made strong statements against refugees, no statements by Government representatives or leading ruling party members have been made against xenophobia or radical nationalism during that same time period. On the contrary, for the domestic political reasons presented in the previous chapter, the ruling party and the Government have taken a radical position regarding the refugee crisis, and all their actions and statements are aimed at demonstrating their determined, unconditional opposition to immigration. Therefore, Government officials and leading Fidesz politicians have uniformly and almost without exception used harsh rhetoric against refugees. There has been no deviation from this communications strategy.

A slight difference, however, could be observed in early June, when Human Resources Minister Zoltán Balog, a former Calvinist pastor, expressed his displeasure with the billboard campaign launched in June. During a lecture in London, Mr Balog admitted that the billboard campaign was not his style. However, according to him, social integration was a duty that applied mainly to those who have been living "with us together [in Hungary] for 500 years". As he explained, he was referring not only to the Roma, but to disadvantaged people in Hungary in general. In his view, immigration is a global problem and Hungary is not ready to integrate people from many different ethnic, religious and political groups.<sup>29</sup>

Despite their harsh, simplifying rhetoric labelling all asylum seekers as 'subsistence', 'economic' or 'illegal' immigrants, when they are criticized for this incitement against refugees, Fidesz politicians claim that while Hungary does not accept 'economic' or 'illegal' immigrants, the country does respect international

laws and European values and provides aid and protection for refugees and asylum seekers. However, at the same time, Fidesz politicians always add that most immigrants arriving in Hungary are not refugees but 'economic migrants' seeking better economic circumstances. According to Fidesz Deputy Chair Lajos Kósa, 'economic migrants' can be recognized by the fact that they pay smugglers, which is very expensive, and do not arrive by plane. In his view, if those people who pretend to be refugees had honest intentions and really sought political asylum, they would come in a straightforward way (e.g., by plane) because they would be sure to be granted asylum status. Therefore, those who pay smugglers thousands of Euros know very well that they are not entitled to receive asylum status.<sup>30</sup> According to another explanation, the refugees coming to Hungary were not political refugees but 'subsistence immigrants' because they had crossed through many safe countries (e.g., Greece, Serbia) before they entered Hungary and their lives had not been endangered in those countries.<sup>31</sup>

In their communications tailored to the international audience, leading state and Government officials underlined Hungary's commitment and duty to protect political asylum seekers and those being persecuted in their home countries. At the same time, however, they claimed that this right would not apply to 'economic migrants'. After stating that Hungary provides protection for political refugees, President of Hungary and former Fidesz politician János Áder claimed in early June while on a visit to Italy that those who come to Europe only for economic reasons should rather stay home.<sup>32</sup> The Speaker of the Hungarian Parliament stated at the second Summit of Speakers of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Union for the Mediterranean in May that Hungary felt obliged to help those who are persecuted. However, according to him, one should not confuse this issue with the fact that an unprecedented 'illegal migration' had been going on for years from countries where people were just unsatisfied with their economic prospects.

During the summer, lawmakers from the governing parties started to speak frequently about asylum seekers becoming more and more aggressive. This reached its peak in August-September, when refugees heading west were not permitted to board trains and many started to walk towards Vienna on the motorway. In this situation, the Government could justify the need to close the country's southern border and introduce tougher legislation about immigrants. After that, events in Hungary mostly happened along the closed southern border. The most significant conflict occurred at Röszke on 16 September, when a crowd gathered on the Serbian side, tore down the gate closing the border, and then proceeded to fight Hungarian Police. The opposition and some media thought the Hungarian authorities deliberately provoked those actions, hoping to prove the Government's communications about 'aggressive refugees' true, and also to prove the Government capable of keeping the border closed. Because this incident was never investigated, that opinion cannot be verified. What can be known for sure is that the Hungarian Police reacted aggressively to the desperate refugees' actions, and it can be concluded from the injuries recorded that the police overreacted in this case.

By year-end the debates about the border closure disappeared in light of the 13 November terror attacks in Paris. The government saw every one of its steps as validated and started to identify immigrants with terrorists in its communications. Orbán declared that introducing the EU's mandatory refugee redistribution quota system would spread terrorism in Europe. This was put into the spotlight by a third large Government campaign strengthened by Fidesz, which collected signatures for a petition against the quota system. The Government deliberately used incorrect facts again in this campaign, claiming that 160,000 refugees would be relocated to Hungary, even though that was the number to be redistributed throughout the whole EU over five years. Moreover, the EU's proposal in September would have seen other Member States remove 54,000 refugees already in Hungary, but the proposal was turned down by the Government, which created a campaign video against the quota system and published it on its Facebook page. In the video, a narrator says an immigrant enters the EU every 12 seconds without being checked and that it can never be known how many immigrants are terrorists in disguise. The film then declares that Hungary says "no" to the EU's mandatory quotas.

The Government's communications dominated the public discourse throughout the year. The refugees themselves barely got a chance to speak to the media, especially on news programmes. Whenever such persons were shown, the media predominantly used silent visual depictions only. That the Government deliberately took over the discourse is also shown by the experts featured on TV shows. During this debate, many migration researchers (not dealing with security policy) protested what was being said early on. At the same time 'analysts' began showing up in the public broadcast media who had never previously researched migration but who justified the Government's views based on public security issues. The analysts from the Alapjogért Központ (Centre for Fundamental Rights) fit this bill. Investigative reporters discovered they were linked to the Government and the Fidesz party's foundation through personal connections and finances. Another example is György Nógrádi, an expert on homeland security and security policy who the public broadcaster preferred to ask to appear in connection with immigration issues even though his main expertise is war and conflict and he had never been involved in immigration issues before. No organisation or expert was ever featured by the public broadcast media who had dealt with immigration research for decades or published in this field, even though such persons do exist in Hungary.

### Opposition

Due to the harsh anti-immigrant rhetoric of the Government and Fidesz politicians, statements against xenophobia and radical nationalism were exclusively made by opposition politicians and NGO representatives during the period in question. With the exception of Jobbik, all opposition parties condemned the Government's anti-refugee rhetoric. During the parliamentary debate on 'subsistence immigration' on 20 February, speakers from the social democratic party MSZP (Hungarian Socialist

Party, *Magyar Szocialista Párt*), the co-chairs of the green party LMP (Politics Can be Different, *Lehet más a politika*) and the small green-leftist party PM (Dialogue for Hungary, *Párbeszéd Magyarorszáért*) criticised the Government's rhetoric. Tamás Harangozó, deputy chair of MSZP's parliamentary group, accused Fidesz of exploiting the current situation to incite xenophobia and raise fear and suspicion among the public. According to him, Fidesz was using the darkest, lowest political propaganda and uninhibited manipulation, confusing real figures with public fears based on semi-truths and obvious, crude lies. LMP co-chair András Schiffer said Fidesz had deliberately and unscrupulously conflated terrorism with immigration. He called for a distinction between asylum seekers and other immigrants, and claimed that immigrants who had settled in Hungary had better economic activity rates than native Hungarians.<sup>33</sup> When referring to the Government's anti-immigrant rhetoric in January, Schiffer accused the Government of inciting xenophobic hatred in order to gain an advantage over Jobbik.<sup>34</sup>

Regarding the national consultation, MSZP claimed that the questionnaire was an undercover xenophobic campaign against refugees. According to them, the campaign incited hatred and, therefore, was degrading to every decent and honest Hungarian. The new party of the former socialist Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsány, Democratic Coalition, claimed Fidesz had created tensions and scapegoats through the consultation and the billboard campaign. The party called the billboard campaign disgraceful and shameful and distanced itself from it, saying that Hungary's strength lies in the country's diversity and that Hungary was strong when it accepted foreigners. The party Együtt (Together) called the campaign inflammatory and accused Fidesz and the Government of inciting hatred.<sup>35</sup>

### NGOs

Besides opposition parties, human rights NGOs, social groups and movements also raised their voices against the Government's rhetoric. In many cases, their protest was more visible than the opposition parties' reactions were. One day before the parliamentary debate on immigration, six NGOs dealing with topics related to immigration published an open letter addressing Parliament. The letter, signed by the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, the *Menedék* (Asylum) Hungarian Association for Migrants, the Migrant Solidarity Group, the Artemisszió Foundation, the Cordelia Foundation and Terre des Hommes, aimed at protesting the Government's refugee and migration policy. The organizations condemned the Government's rhetoric labelling asylum seekers 'subsistence immigrants'. As the signatories explained, most asylum seekers had been forced to leave their home countries. The organizations argued that even if immigration procedures would eventually prove that some now seeking asylum were not actually entitled to such status, the stigmatization and scapegoating of people in need is still unfair, inhuman, socially harmful, and bolsters xenophobia.<sup>36</sup>

Hungary's spoof political party, the Hungarian Two-Tailed Dog Party (*Magyar Kétfarkú KutyaPárt*, MKKP) protested

against the Government's billboard campaign in a unique way. Together with the political blog site *Vastagbőr* (Thick Skin), on 8 June MKKP announced it was organizing a "counter-campaign" to mock the Government's anti-immigration propaganda and offer resistance to the Government's demagoguery and xenophobic messages. Although MKKP and *Vastagbőr* originally intended to raise only 3 million Forints (around 9,500 Euros) for this effort, within about a week 33 million Forints (around 105,000 Euros) had been donated by individuals. Instead of the 50 billboards that were originally planned by MKKP and *Vastagbőr*, altogether 900 billboards appeared on the streets in two phases, with the first starting on 1 July.<sup>37</sup> While the Government's billboards only displayed three different messages, the MKKP and *Vastagbőr* billboards offered 10 different messages.

Many referred to corruption scandals related to the Government (e.g., the billboards that were posted in PM Orbán's home village did this), while others referred to unpopular Government measures (e.g., retail stores being required to close on Sundays, or the Paks nuclear power plant extension). Many ironically emphasized emigration from Hungary (e.g., "Feel free to come to Hungary, we already work in England") and many contained anti-xenophobic messages (e.g., "Immigrants do not work and take our jobs"), or the Hungarian legal definition of hate speech, or quotes from the Bible about accepting foreigners, etc.<sup>38</sup>

The Hungarian Helsinki Committee was the most active NGO and "has been protesting from the beginning against spuriously raising this uproar against asylum seekers, immigrants and foreigners in general".<sup>39</sup> According to the organization, the Government's propaganda incited hatred and, besides being illegitimate, was absurd from a professional point of view too. Among their many critical comments, the Hungarian Helsinki Committee also condemned PM Orbán's announcement that he would close the refugee camp in Debrecen, accusing the PM of inciting xenophobia for his own personal political interests.<sup>40</sup>

### The far right

Regarding the erupting refugee crisis, Jobbik's position has been similar to Fidesz's: The far-right party has been talking about 'economic immigrants', not asylum seekers, threatening the 'perishing of Christian Europe', and identifying refugees with criminals and terrorists. Therefore, Jobbik has been insisting on taking a harsh stance against refugees by closing the borders, deploying the army, creating a separate border patrol, turning the open refugee camps into closed facilities, and speeding up asylum procedures. A month before the Government's consultation on immigration and terrorism started, Jobbik launched a petition campaign to re-establish the border patrol and opposing state expenditures on refugees. In the first half of 2015 the movement did not undertake any major activities against refugees, only turning to refugees as an issue from May on, even though Mr Toroczkai, an iconic figure of the Hungarian far-right scene, is Mayor of Ásotthalom (on the border of Hungary and Serbia) which was among those settlements most affected by the refugee arrivals. Jobbik's first major action

against refugees in 2015 was a demonstration in Budapest that took place only on 10 July. Further actions took place later that year.

Regarding the time period in question, Jobbik's influence on the Government has been the most visible with respect to the refugee crisis as a topic. As discussed above, both the anti-immigration rhetoric and the refugee and migration policy measures proposed by Fidesz have been very similar to the far-right party's argumentation and its refugee and migration policy solutions (e.g., referring to refugees as 'economic immigrants', linking refugees with terrorism and disease, closing refugee camps, etc.). Even the border fence idea came from the above-mentioned Toroczkai. Concerning the Government's harsh campaign against 'economic immigrants', it was most probably aimed at stealing that topic from Jobbik and preventing the far-right party from setting the tone on that issue and dominating the discourse.

## Migration and asylum in far-right Kremlin-friendly propaganda

Since the Crimean crisis erupted, the Russian Government has created a robust propaganda machine in the Eastern European region, including Hungary. The Kremlin has abandoned centralized propaganda distribution focused exclusively on traditional media platforms. The Hungarian-language version of what were previously Voice of Russia publications<sup>41</sup> has been replaced by a dozen, mostly anonymous,<sup>42</sup> pro-Russian Facebook pages in the Hungarian language that have emerged over the past 18 to 24 months. Focusing on social media offers advantages such as eliminating the need to maintain expensive editorial offices and regularly report on global developments. Social networking sites can adjust to promote needs with more flexibility, can focus on priority topics without time limitations, are not required to separate facts from opinion and, in fact, may broadcast pure propaganda without ever revealing their sources.

Propaganda sites can be identified primarily through their topics and titles. In many cases one sees single-issue sites assigned to specific geopolitical objectives. These include the South Front HU site covering the war in Ukraine, the Eurasian League of Nations (Евразийский Лига) or "300,000 against NATO". Sites such as "KárpátHír", "Hídfő" and "Orientalista" follow the more acceptable 'news agency' format. Aside from what a close look at their contents reveals, there are other signs indicating that these media are under Moscow's control. For one thing, in many cases the sites often sample each other's content. For another, on 23 September 2015 several sites dealing with Russian topics (see the boldfaced sites in Table 4) set up a joint editorial board.<sup>43</sup> Index.hu investigative reporter András Dezső found out about hidfo.ru, which is behind the Hídfő Net Facebook page; this portal, formerly established by the neo-Nazi Hungarian National Frontline group, has presumably been operated by the Russian Secret Service since 2014.<sup>44</sup>

**Table 4 – Specific pro-Russian propaganda sites (the core group managed by the joint editorial board is in boldface)**

Source: Political Capital

Page	Topic	Likes	Established
Titkolt Hírek	Conspiracy	55,666	01. 01. 2010
KárpátHír	General	14,729	13. 09. 2014
South Front Hu	War in Ukraine	13,110	15. 06. 2014
Hídfő	General	9,391	07. 03. 2014
Orientalista.hu	General / Middle East	8,193	02. 10. 2014
Kiállunk Oroszország mellett	General	7,828	03. 03. 2014
Orosz Hírek	General	6,669	13. 08. 2010
Eurázsiai Népszövetség, Евразийский Лига	Eurasian Economic Union	1,798	26. 04. 2014
300.000-en a NATO Ellen	NATO	1,419	17. 06. 2015
Hawk News Hungary	General	80	02. 08. 2014
Szabad Magyarország Platform	General	55	01. 06. 2015

The "Hídfő Net", "KárpátHír" and "Orientalista" propaganda sites primarily focus on asylum and migration issues and the Ukrainian battlefield. On these sites, the refugee arrivals in Europe are increasingly tied to Russian propaganda supporting Bashar el-Assad, the Syrian President.

Two features greatly contribute to this pro-Kremlin propaganda's success when it comes to disseminating 'information' about the refugee arrivals into the Hungarian public discourse. First, the sheer number and variety of media reports on this issue allows for false reports to be conflated with genuine ones, disorienting media consumers who are already confused by the fast-moving news. Second, the pro-Russian sites attack the EU's approach to the situation by pointing to the Member States' often inconsistent, mutually-contradictory domestic and foreign policy decisions and communications blunders.

The pro-Kremlin propaganda depicts an unstoppable 'migration onslaught' that not only poses a terrorist threat to Europe, but by its very urgency demands firm border defence and enforcement measures. A central message is that the EU and German Chancellor Angela Merkel (the EU's putative leader) have failed to grasp the situation, which means that attempts by Member States to come up with their own solutions are not only legitimate, but fully justified. Consequently, the EU is not just a victim of the 'migration onslaught' but has also contributed to the current crisis developing as it has.

With respect to timing, while immigration topics had appeared on the pro-Kremlin propaganda sites under review already in the first half of 2015, the issue really took off in August, and by September it had come to top the political agenda. In other words, the Hungarian public discussing the refugee situation did not

immediately follow the Hungarian Government's anti-immigrant campaign targeting the domestic audience; instead, that discussion came to the forefront as the European refugee crisis escalated and Russia intervened in Syria militarily.

The pro-Kremlin propaganda attempts to exaggerate the impact the refugees are having, and describes them in terms of 'terrorism', or as an unstoppable 'flow of people' to which some countries react by adopting security policy measures, government measures that make this massive migration appear to be fraught with danger. For instance, "Hídfő" presents the 'migration wave' and various attempts to stop it as a cause of terrorism. In connection with Spanish Government measures preventing an Islamist terrorist attack planned in Madrid, the portal mentions European youth fighting in the Middle East who have "started to return to Europe with the current wave of migrants".<sup>45</sup> By contrast, when explaining the January attack against Charlie Hebdo in Paris, the portal also reported a connection between efforts to stop migration and a rising terrorist threat, predicting that Muslims living in France will commit further terrorist acts because there is no "family reunification" for them.<sup>46</sup>

Such catchy headlines as "Macedonia has announced a state of emergency: The military is stemming the migration flow",<sup>47</sup> "Great Britain locks up illegal migrants for six months",<sup>48</sup> "Bulgaria ready to defend its borders with soldiers and tanks"<sup>49</sup> are meant to undermine the Hungarian public's sense of security. Consequently, migration is becoming militarized in the propaganda discourse so as to make it seem like a military threat to which (apparently) Europe is responding in many instances by applying law enforcement/military procedures. Clearly, these 'reports' of an "Afghan wave of migration",<sup>50</sup> the proposed resettlement of 500,000 refugees currently in Turkey to Europe,<sup>51</sup> and an additional three million refugees forecast to arrive in 2016 are also meant to spark panic among the Hungarian population.<sup>52</sup>

### The relationship between pro-Kremlin propaganda and Hungarian political actors

When it comes to this issue, the pro-Russian websites primarily follow the governing Fidesz party's agenda and pay little attention to Jobbik in this context. Jobbik has only been mentioned in connection with its law enforcement proposals calling for the "deployment of the military" along the southern border<sup>53</sup> and a domestic "civil defence force" to resolve the crisis.<sup>54</sup>

For instance, on one occasion "Hídfő" reported on 'majority' objection to migration in reference to a regular Friday morning interview given by Prime Minister Orbán.<sup>55</sup> "KárpátHír" reported on the border fence construction along the Hungarian/Serbian border,<sup>56</sup> the Hungarian Government's dissident stance in the EU rejecting mandatory refugee redistribution quotas,<sup>57</sup> and the 'rightful' denial of political asylum to persons arriving from 'safe countries' (as defined by the Hungarian Parliament).<sup>58</sup>

Like the Government communications, stigmatizing organizations assisting refugees is also a staple item in the pro-Kremlin propaganda. "Hídfő" described a critical Human Rights Watch report on the Röske refugee camp as an attempt to oust the Hungarian government: "*All this points beyond the individual*



refugees' conditions. *International criticism like this may tip the political balance in Hungary. (...) The goal is far from making sure that refugees receive sufficient medication and food. The objective is to help the party supporting a 'United States of Europe' to gain power.*<sup>59</sup> In another article, organizations helping refugees were described as 'liberal extremists' preventing effective action against terrorism.

This strong criticism of the European Union puts the Hungarian Government and the pro-Kremlin propaganda on the same footing. This can be grasped most clearly in the false juxtaposition of nation-state interests with EU interests (national border defence versus refugee redistribution quotas). Pro-Russian propaganda defines the European Union and the United States as being responsible overall, as they are allegedly engaged in efforts to undermine geopolitical stability.<sup>60</sup> In September 2015, "KárpátHír" quoted Russian President Putin directly describing what trying to overthrow authoritarian Arab regimes would cost: "*Russia has repeatedly warned its Western partners about the potential for a crisis, as recently as early this year, when 340,000 refugees arrived at Europe's borders in one wave. We pointed out that the chaos in North Africa and the Middle East, due to ill-advised political and military action, may inevitably spread to the European continent.*"<sup>61</sup> The criticism stands on two legs: Responsibility for the refugee crisis in Hungary is put onto the European Union and its major Member States<sup>62</sup> while simultaneously mentioning that the EU itself is suffering from the USA's botched intervention in the Middle East and its consequences.<sup>63</sup>

An interesting aspect here are attacks on Chancellor Merkel's refugee and migration policy; such critiques in Hungarian may be simply interpreted as for the domestic audience, since a personal, direct attack on Merkel does not quite suit the Hungarian Government's balancing act between Berlin and Moscow. The October and November pieces in "KárpátHír" talk about an "ultimatum" demanding a "stop to migration" being issued by the CSU, the Bavarian sister party to the CDU,<sup>64</sup> to Merkel's allegedly tenuous hold on her post,<sup>65</sup> and even go as far as to describe Merkel as a "traitor".<sup>66</sup>

Criticisms levelled against the European Union aim to turn the countries in the CEE region against European-centre countries, as well as to amplify European extremists' anti-immigrant statements. Pro-Russian sites have no difficulty reporting on the CEE region's opposition to the European centre, for the news is delivered by the countries involved. After some fine-tuning, the propaganda machine simply presents readers with Eastern European countries' concerns about border protection and opposition to the planned quotas in the right dosage. These media outlets list the Central and Eastern European or Baltic states that either reject the quotas proposed by the centre, or connect accepting the quotas to the Schengen system.<sup>67</sup> Fine-tuning the propaganda only aggravates already-existing conflicts and/or attaches false conclusions to the CEE politicians' actual arguments. For instance, when Manfred Schmidt, the head of the German Migration and Refugee Office, resigned, that was attributed by these websites to Hungarian Government policies; likewise, a purported plan for eliminating Schengen is somehow deduced from the proposed EU

quota system: "*(...) The European Union is also interested in seeing the Member States surround themselves with fences, for without fences, migrants assigned to the Member States could not be stopped from moving to other countries. The free movement made possible by the Schengen area allows migrants to return to Germany in a single day from any corner of the Union. However, this opportunity would be foreclosed as soon as the Member States rebuild their internal borders within the Schengen area.*"<sup>68</sup>

### Conspiracy theories

The purest pro-Assad, pro-Iran and pro-Russian position is represented by "Orientalista", although the website's editorial pieces are essentially indistinguishable from a wide variety of conspiracy theories. As the site would have it, the Western intervention against Assad is just another 'colour revolution' devised by the CIA, a scenario that is extended to include Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria and Ukraine, not to mention meddling in Russia and Hungary. A key contributor to the site, Dr Balázs Mihálffy (Sheikh Abdel Rahman), a Muslim convert and founder of the Hungarian Muslim Community, claims that Western action against Syria is actually an Israeli-American attack aimed at Syria and Iran: "*Since Israel cannot take action against Iran on its own, for years it has tried to drag Obama into an anti-Iran offensive. (...) Should the inquisitors, presented to the public as Syrian resistance fighters, get the upper hand, the last secular Arab state will disappear in the Middle East. (...) In reality, this meat grinder may turn into an anti-Shia bloodthirsty horde, posing a real threat to Iran. By creating this Obama would not risk any American or Israeli lives.*"<sup>69</sup>

While attending an international Islamic conference in Iran on 7-9 January 2015, Dr Mihálffy described the 7 January attack against Charlie Hebdo in Paris as a premeditated provocation by Israel and the USA.<sup>70</sup> Aside from working for "Orientalista", Dr Mihálffy is a main contributor to the conspiracy site leleplezo.eu and Editor-in-Chief of the "Közel-Kelet Jelene" web portal. That website was an organizer of and participant in the pro-Assad rally held on 31 August 2013 in front of the US Embassy in Budapest protesting "Western intervention in Syria".<sup>71</sup> In addition, Mihálffy is a regular contributor to Jobbik's anti-Semitic weekly, "Barikád".<sup>72</sup> "Orientalista" has also posted a "Hungária Televízió" interview with Dr Bchara Joul, the president of the Forum for Syria Association in Hungary, who claims that the refugees are being "dumped" on Europe *en masse* by Turkey because the USA has denied Turkey the opportunity to annex part of Syria. In fact, Bchara believes the so-called Islamic State is a CIA creation.<sup>73</sup> Conspiracy theories like this proliferate freely, as Dr Mihálffy is respected both in the Hungarian Muslim community and by the devotees of various conspiracy theories. Intermix Budapest Kft., which publishes leleplezo.eu, also publishes books by one of Hungary's most renowned far-right conspiracy-theory authors, János Drábik.<sup>74</sup> Mihálffy and Drábik were the invited guests on the Fidesz-affiliated Echo TV channel's "Világpanoráma", a program promoting conspiracy theories, where the discussion centred on how the so-called Islamic State is supported by the United States and Israel.<sup>75</sup>

"Orientalista" was also among the first websites to organize a pro-Russian rally to coincide with the 17 February 2015 visit by President Putin to Budapest. The website was established in 2013 by a 35-year-old journalist, István Kassab Adonis Habib, Jobbik's IXth District representative, a Hungarian Guard member, and the party's former Vice-Chair. Kassab is also considered a member of the circle led by Jahroumi Ali, a businessman who owns the Iranian restaurant Shiraz (and who in the past has presented himself as an advisor at the Iranian Embassy) and who is also a key figure in shaping Jobbik's Middle Eastern policies. The rally was also joined by the Free Nation Association, led by Csörsz T. Elszaszer, also a former Jobbik politician. After the online news service index.hu revealed that the organizers had also invited Albert Szabó (a notorious far-right leader in the 1990s) to attend, the event was taken over by the anonymous "We Stand by Russia" website.<sup>76</sup> More recently, the pro-Russian leftist "Organization of Hungarian Youth Standing for Collectivism" (MIKSZ) announced a "Rally in support of the Russian intervention in Syria" held on 10 October 2015 in front of the Russian Embassy in Budapest.<sup>77</sup> The event promoted by the "We Stand by Russia" website was such a resounding success that it was later also reported on by Russia 24 television.<sup>78</sup>

### On the whole, this pro-Russian propaganda about refugees serves the Kremlin's anti-EU objectives:

- The refugee crisis divides the Member States and diverts attention away from the Ukrainian-Russian war.
- Moreover, because of the Russian intervention in Syria, Russia is being presented as a potentially stabilizing force. This may lead to a rapprochement between the EU and Russia and sanctions on Russia being eased.
- Supporting the CEE region's separatist ambitions helps Russia further open a rift between the EU centre and the EU periphery, i.e., promoting the EU's destabilization and 'disintegration'.
- The positions taken by far-right media organizations may help the Member States where Russia wishes to interfere to adopt more nationalist policies, and may strengthen extremist voices in Europe in order to gain support for Russia's policies in the Crimea.

- 1 Medved, Felicita. "Proliferation of Migration Transition. Selected New EU Member Member States." European Liberal Forum, 2014.
- 2 Prischetzky, Réka, and Elvira Szabó. "Migránsok a Magyar Médiaában Avagy a Bevándorlás és a Külföldiek 2011-Ben a Sajtó Szemével - Migrants in the Hungarian Media, Immigration and Foreigners from the Press's Perspective in 2011." Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 2011. [http://www.helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/Migransok\\_a\\_magyar\\_mediban\\_HelsinkiBiz\\_2011.pdf](http://www.helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/Migransok_a_magyar_mediban_HelsinkiBiz_2011.pdf).
- 3 In winter 2004, the Hungarian Workers Party collected signatures for a referendum against the privatization of the public health service in Hungary. Half a year later, the Hungarian World Union (Magyarok Világ-szövetsége) also initiated a referendum to decide whether ethnic Hungarians in neighbouring countries could apply for Hungarian citizenship through a simplified procedure. The two issues were presented together in a double referendum on 5 December 2004. Despite the fierce political campaign that evolved around the citizenship issue, the public was, in general, confused as to whether granting Hungarian citizenship to ethnic Hungarians was desirable or not. Finally, due to low participation rates, the results of both referendums were declared invalid.
- 4 Krekó, Péter, and Attila Juhász. "Honnan Jönnek, Hányan Vannak, Mit Csináljunk Velük? - Where Do They Come From, How Many Are They, and What Shall We Do With Them?" *In Abena, Sára, Chen és Ali Esélyei Magyarországon. Migráns Esélyek és Tapasztalatok - Chances of Abena, Sarah, Chen and Ali in Hungary. Chances and Experiences of Migrants*, edited by Endre Sík and Bori Simonovits. TÁRKI, 2011. [http://www.tarki.hu/hu/research/migrans/tarki\\_eia\\_tanulmanyok\\_2011.pdf](http://www.tarki.hu/hu/research/migrans/tarki_eia_tanulmanyok_2011.pdf).
- 5 Hunyadi, Bulcsú, and Ildikó Barna. "Report on Xenophobia and Radical Nationalism in Hungary." European Center for Democracy Development, 2015.
- 6 Messing, Vera, and Gábor Bernáth. "Bedarálva - A Menekültekkel Kapcsolatos Kormányzati Kampány és a Tőle Független Megszólalás Terepei." *Médiakutató* winter (2015). . [http://www.mediakutato.hu/cikk/2015\\_04\\_tel/01\\_menekultek\\_moralis\\_panic.pdf](http://www.mediakutato.hu/cikk/2015_04_tel/01_menekultek_moralis_panic.pdf).
- 7 During his visit to Hungary's second-largest city, Debrecen, where there is a refugee camp, PM Orbán corrected the terminology used by the mayor, who referred to the camp as a refugee camp. Orbán said he would rather use the term 'immigrant camp'. According to him, the distinction is important because refugees are accepted in Hungary, while immigrants are asked to leave: "We want them not to come. And we want those who are already here to go home." Dull, Szabolcs. "Index - Belföld - Orbán Eltökélte, Bezáratja a Debreceni Menekülttábor - Orbán Is Determined to Close the Refugee Camp in Debrecen," May 18, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/05/18/orban\\_eltokelte\\_bezaratja\\_a\\_debreceni\\_menekulttabort](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/05/18/orban_eltokelte_bezaratja_a_debreceni_menekulttabort).
- 8 Political Capital Institute. "Analyses," 2015. <http://www.politicalcapital.hu/elemzeseink/nyilatkozatok/>
- 9 Lajos Kósa, deputy chair of Fidesz, said in a video interview in June 2015 that 99 per cent of migrants entering Hungary are not refugees, but illegal immigrants. Szabó, Péter, and Tamás Szilli. "Akik Itt Élősködnek, Azok a Plakátokat Is Megértik - Parasites Who Are in Hungary Surely Understand the Billboards, Too," June 8, 2015. [http://index.hu/video/2015/06/08/plakat\\_korkerdes\\_parlament/](http://index.hu/video/2015/06/08/plakat_korkerdes_parlament/). However, statistical data do not support Kósa's assertion. According to numbers from the Office of Immigration and Nationality, around 70 per cent of those seeking asylum status in Hungary come from Afghanistan, Syria and Iraq. Still, only 9.4 per cent of asylum seekers were granted asylum status in Hungary in 2014. Halmos, Máté. "60 Milliós Vannak, és Mind Ide Tartanak? - Are They 60 Million and Are They All Coming Here?," June 13, 2015. [http://index.hu/gazdasag/2015/06/19/menekult\\_statisztika\\_menedek/](http://index.hu/gazdasag/2015/06/19/menekult_statisztika_menedek/).
- 10 In his Baile Tusnad speech in July 2015, PM Orbán claimed that the Hungarian Left was welcoming illegal immigrants and greeting them. According to him, "these people, these politicians, do not like the Hungarian people – and they do not like them because they are Hungarians". "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Presentation at the 26th Bálványos Summer

- Open University and Student Camp." *Government*, July 25, 2015. <http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-presentation-at-the-26th-balvanyos-summer-open-university-and-student-camp>.
- 11 For further information on the political motives of the Government's anti-immigration stance, see: Krekó, Péter, and Attila Juhász. "Desperate Search for the Lost Popularity Governmental Campaign against Refugees and Migrants in Hungary." Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Budapest, 2015.
- 12 Rettman, Andrew. "Orban Demonises Immigrants at Paris March," January 12, 2015. <https://euobserver.com/justice/127172>.
- 13 Tóth, Gergely. "Ki Mondta? Rogán Antal Vagy Vona Gábor? - Who Said That, Antal Rogán or Gábor Vona?," January 12, 2015. [http://index.hu/mindekozben/poszt/2015/01/12/ki\\_mondta\\_rogan\\_antal\\_vagy\\_vona\\_gabor/](http://index.hu/mindekozben/poszt/2015/01/12/ki_mondta_rogan_antal_vagy_vona_gabor/).
- 14 Dull, Szabolcs. "Gyűlöletheadjárát Indított a Fidesz a Menekültek Ellen - Fidesz Launched a Hated Campaign against Refugees," February 20, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/02/20/gyuloletheadjaratot\\_inditott\\_a\\_fidesz\\_a\\_menekultek\\_ellen/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/02/20/gyuloletheadjaratot_inditott_a_fidesz_a_menekultek_ellen/).
- 15 The consultation was announced by Fidesz's parliamentary group leader, Antal Rogán, after a faction meeting in February. Rogán explained that the governing party had developed several proposals on "subsistence immigration". According to the party, the people had to be asked whether they supported arresting and immediately expelling illegal immigrants arriving from third countries. Index. "Jön Az Újabb Nemzeti Konzultáció, Rogán Százezer Menekülttel Riogat - A New National Consultation Is Coming; Rogán Is Threatening 100,000 Refugees," February 6, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/02/06/fidesz\\_sajtotajekoztato/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/02/06/fidesz_sajtotajekoztato/).
- 16 HZS. "Nemzeti Konzultáció: Tizenkét Kérdés a Bevándorlásról - National Consultation: Twelve Questions on Immigration," April 24, 2015. <http://mno.hu/belfold/nemzeti-konzultacio-tizenket-kerdes-a-bevandorlasrol-1283414>.
- 17 Government of Hungary. "National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism," 2015. [http://www.kormany.hu/download/7/e2/50000/nemzeti\\_konzultacio\\_bevandorlas\\_2015.pdf](http://www.kormany.hu/download/7/e2/50000/nemzeti_konzultacio_bevandorlas_2015.pdf)
- 18 In a radio interview in June, PM Orbán described the questionnaire as "correct, open and fair". However, he admitted it was not immigration-friendly. Then he asked, "But why on earth should we like immigrants?" HVG.hu. "Orbán: 'Mire Magyarországra érkezik, Már Mind Megélhetési Bevándorló' - Orbán: "By the Time They Arrive to Hungary, They Have All Become Subsistence Immigrants," June 15, 2015. [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150605\\_Orban\\_penteki\\_interju](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150605_Orban_penteki_interju).
- 19 European Commission. "European Parliament Plenary – Commission Statement on the Situation in Hungary First Vice-President Timmermans Strasbourg, 19 May 2015." May 19, 2015. [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_SPEECH-15-5010\\_en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-15-5010_en.htm?locale=en).
- 20 Daily News. "CoE Ombudsman Chides Orban for Hungary's "populist Trends," May 2, 2015. <http://dailynewshungary.com/coe-ombudsman-chides-orban-for-hungarys-populist-trends/>.
- 21 UNHCR. "UNHCR Calls on Hungary to Protect, Not Persecute, Refugees," May 8, 2015. <http://www.unhcr-centraleurope.org/en/news/2015/unhcr-calls-on-hungary-to-protect-not-persecute-refugees.html>
- 22 MTI. "A Fidesz Szerint Konfliktusokhoz Vezet a Sok Illegális Bevándorló - According to Fidesz, Too Many Illegal Migrants Lead to Conflicts," April 27, 2015. [http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20150427\\_a\\_fidesz\\_szerint\\_konfliktusokhoz\\_vezet\\_a\\_sok\\_illegalis\\_bevandorlo](http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20150427_a_fidesz_szerint_konfliktusokhoz_vezet_a_sok_illegalis_bevandorlo).
- 23 AFP. "Hungary's Anti-Immigration Campaign Sparks Controversy," June 8, 2015. <http://news.yahoo.com/hungarys-anti-immigration-campaign-sparks-controversy-174317745.html>
- 24 Munkácsy, Márton. "A Bevándorlási Hivatal Megtalálta Orbán Gazdasági Menekültjeit - The Immigration Office Has Found Orbán's Economic Migrants," January 14, 2014. <http://vs.hu/kozelet/osszes/a-bevandorlasi-hivatal-megtalalta-orban-gazdasagi-menekultjeit-0114#!s1>.
- 25 Hungarian Helsinki Committee. "Migrációs Pánik: A Kormány Szócsové a Közmedia - Migration Panic: Public Broadcast Media Have Been the Government's Mouthpiece," 26 2015. <http://helsinki.hu/migracios-panik-a-kormany-szocsove-lett-a-kozmedia>.
- 26 Hungarian Free Press. "Hungarian Justice Minister Says No to Immigrants Because Gypsies Already Pose Huge Burden," May 22, 2015. <http://hungarianfreepress.com/2015/05/22/hungarian-justice-minister-says-no-to-immigrants-because-gypsies-already-pose-huge-burden/>.
- 27 Német, Tamás. "A Roma Polgármesterek Számfóttak Rá, Hogy Cigányozás Lesz a Bevándorlózásból - Roma Mayors Were Prepared That Anti-Migrant Rhetoric Would Turn into Anti-Roma Messages," May 22, 2015. <http://index.hu/belfold/2015/05/22/lakatos/>.
- 28 Op. cit., note 35. and Hungary Today. "Justice Minister under Fire from Opposition over Remarks on Migrants and Roma People," 2015.05.26., <http://hungarytoday.hu/news/justice-minister-fire-opposition-remarks-migrants-roma-people-52965>.
- 29 Panyi, Szabolcs. "Balog Zoltán Elmondta: Nem Jönnek Be Neki Saját Kormány Plakátjai - Zoltán Balog Admitted His Own Government's Billboards Are Not His Style," June 10, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/06/10/balog\\_zoltan\\_elmondta\\_nem\\_jonnek\\_be\\_neki\\_sajat\\_kormanya\\_plakatajai/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/06/10/balog_zoltan_elmondta_nem_jonnek_be_neki_sajat_kormanya_plakatajai/).
- 30 Lengyel, Tibor. "Kósa Nem érti, Miért Nem Repülővel, Első Osztályon Jönnek a Menekültek - Kósa Does Not Understand Why Refugees Do Not Fly First Class," June 29, 2015. <http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20150629-kosa-nem-erti-miert-nem-repuloval-első-osztalyon-jonnek-a-menekultek.html>.
- 31 Medvegy, Gábor. "Ismerje Meg Rogán Antal és Kósa Lajos Csavaros észjárását a Menekültekről! - Let Us Introduce You the Twisted Reasoning of Antal Rogán and Lajos Kósa about Refugees," June 9, 2015. <http://24.hu/belfold/2015/06/09/ismerje-meg-rogan-antal-es-kosa-lajos-csavaros-eszjarasat-a-menekultekrol/>.
- 32 Index. "Áder: Politikai Menekültek Jöhetnek, Gazdasági Bevándorlók Nem. - Áder: Political Refugees Are Allowed to Come, Economic Immigrants Are Not," June 4, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/06/04/ader\\_kulonbseget\\_kell\\_tenni\\_a\\_bevandorlok\\_kozott/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/06/04/ader_kulonbseget_kell_tenni_a_bevandorlok_kozott/).
- 33 Op cit., note 23.
- 34 MTI. "Schiffer: A Habony-Művekben Gyártották a Menekültellenes Panelt - Schiffer: Xenophobic Campaign Has Been Invented by Habony & Co," February 25, 2015. [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150125\\_Schiffer\\_a\\_Habonymuvekben\\_gyartottak\\_a\\_m](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150125_Schiffer_a_Habonymuvekben_gyartottak_a_m).
- 35 MTI. "MSZP: Hatalmas Bukás Az Idegengyűlölő Konzultáció - MSZP: Xenophobic Consultation Is a Total Failure," June 6, 2015. <http://mno.hu/belfold/mszp-hatalmas-bukas-az-idegengyulolo-konzultacio-1289599>.
- 36 TH.B. "Hat Emberi Jogi Szervezet Tiltakozik a Menekültek Megbélyegzése Ellen - Six Human Rights NGOs Protest against Stigmatization of Refugees," February 5, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/02/19/hat\\_emberi\\_jogi\\_szervezet\\_tiltakozik\\_a\\_menekultek\\_megbelyegzese\\_ellen/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/02/19/hat_emberi_jogi_szervezet_tiltakozik_a_menekultek_megbelyegzese_ellen/).
- 37 Vastagbőr. "Ellenplakátokra Gyűjtünk, Adakozz! - We Collect Money for Counter-Billboards," June 8, 2015. <http://vastagbor.atlatszoz.hu/2015/06/08/ellenplakatokra-gyujtunk-adakozz/>.
- 38 HVG.hu. "Fotó: Kikerültek a Kétfarkú Kutya Plakátjai - Pictures: Billboards of the Two-Tailed Dog Party Are out," June 1, 2015. [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150701\\_Foto\\_Kikerultek\\_a\\_Ketfarku\\_Kutya\\_plakataja](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150701_Foto_Kikerultek_a_Ketfarku_Kutya_plakataja).
- 39 Hungarian Helsinki Committee. "Úres Borítékkal Tiltakozunk a „nemzeti Konzultáció” Ellen - We Protest the "national Consultation" by Returning an Empty Envelope," May 14, 2015. <http://www.helsinki.hu/ures-boritekkal-tiltakozunk-a-%E2%80%9Enemzeti-konzultacio%E2%80%9D-ellen/>
- 40 Hungarian Helsinki Committee. "Facebook Comment of HHC," May 18, 2015. <https://www.facebook.com/helsinkibizottsag/photos/a.148536888500904.23887.122159141138679/914870978534154/?type=1&theater>.
- 41 "Az Oroszország Hangja Nevet Változtatott és Beolvadt a Sputnik Nemzetközi Orosz Hírügynökségbe - The Voice of Russia Has Changed Its Name and Merged into the International News Agency, Sputnik," n.d. <http://sputniknews.com/voiceofrussia/>.
- 42 The identity of these sites' operators, editors and 'journalists' is unknown.
- 43 News center Hungary. "Egységes Hírközpont - Unified News Centre," n.d. <https://newscenterhungary.wordpress.com/2015/09/>.
- 44 Juhász, Attila, Péter Krekó, Lóránt Győri, and András Dezső. "I Am Eurasian", the Kremlin Connections of the Hungarian Far-Right." Political Capital Institute and Social Development Institute, 2015. [http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/PC\\_SDI\\_Boll\\_study\\_IamEurasian.pdf](http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/PC_SDI_Boll_study_IamEurasian.pdf).
- 45 Hídfő.ru. "Attack Was about to Be Committed in Madrid," 2015.
- 46 Hídfő.ru. "Older Migrant Generations Are Hindering the European Crisis Management," 2015.
- 47 Hídfő.ru. "Macedonia Has Announced the States of Emergency and the Army Is Restricting the Immigration," 2015.
- 48 Hídfő.ru. "England Imprisons Illegal Immigrants for Half a Year," 2015.
- 49 KárpátHír.com. "Bulgaria Is Going to Protect Its Borders with Soldiers and Tanks," 2015.
- 50 KárpátHír.com. "Berlin Is Afraid of Afghani Refugee Wave," 2015.
- 51 KárpátHír.com. "There Will Three Million More Refugees by the End of next Year," 2015.
- 52 Ibid.
- 53 Hídfő.ru. "Jobbik: The Army Should Be Deployed," 2015.
- 54 Hídfő.ru. "Jobbik Recommends to Set up a Civilian Protection Service in Respond to the Migration Crisis," 2015.
- 55 Hídfő.ru. "The Majority of the Population Is against the Migration," 2015.
- 56 KárpátHír.com. "The Hungarian-Serbian Border Might Be Closed down by a Four Meter High Fence," 2015.
- 57 KárpátHír.com. "EU Summit: Hungary Belongs to a Separate Category," 2015.
- 58 KárpátHír.com. "Those Coming from These Countries Are Not Entitled to Apply for Political Asylum Status," 2015.
- 59 Hídfő.ru. "The Activities of the Rights Defenders Are Dehumanizing the Refugees," 2015
- 60 Hídfő.ru. "Berlusconi: Tens of Millions of Africans Are Heading towards Europe," 2015.
- 61 KárpátHír.com. "Putin: The Refugee Crisis Is the Result of America's Flawed Policies," 2015.
- 62 Hídfő.ru. "The Two- Sided Stand Is Over, the Government Provides Buses to the Austrian Border," 2015.
- 63 Hídfő.ru. "Refugees Should Be Directed to the American Embassy," 2015.
- 64 KárpátHír.com. "Merkel Was given and Ultimatum, She Has to Stop Migration," 2015.
- 65 KárpátHír.com. "Merkel Was Openly Threatened," 2015.
- 66 This is a good example of the foreign policy exploitation of allegedly flawed German domestic policies, which are said to be full of contradictions, as well as the conflation of genuine news with false news, as Merkel is accused of being a 'traitor' by anonymous detractors, not by the German public as the reporting implies. KárpátHír.com. "Merkel Is Accused of Being a Traitor," 2015.
- 67 "Hídfő" announced: "A consensus appears to emerge among the Visegrad Group countries on refusing to accept an unlimited number of refugees in the future", while "KárpátHír" reports on a Macedonian-Serbian-Hungarian-Austrian border protection agreement. Hídfő.ru. "The Czech Republic Also Refused the Migrant Quota System," 2015.; KárpátHír.com. "A Macedonian-Serbian- Hungarian Joint Resolution Was Signed about the Common Border Protection," 2014.
- 68 Hídfő.ru. "By Elimination of Schengen They Want to Distribute the Migrants in Europe," 2015.
- 69 Orientalista.hu. "Thoughts from Sheikh Abdul Rahman," 2015.
- 70 "ACTA (Resistance to America) learned that the CIA's European bureau was behind the terrorist attack in France. Commissioned by Mossad! It was a planned diversionary action. According to ACTA, the [murdered] staff members of Charlie Hebdo are actually well and alive, resettled on a small island in French Polynesia with their families! The two masked 'terrorists' are also alive, currently staying in Ukraine.", "Leleplezo.eu,"
- 71 Közel-Kelet Jelene. "Demonstrations in Budapest against the West's- Syrian Intervention," 2013.
- 72 Jobbik. "Another War under the Pretext of Terrorism, Naturally Hungarian, Bilderbergs: Broken Europe and Disgusting Banks," 2015.
- 73 Orientalista.hu. "Video Footage about the Presentation - Syria in Focus," 2015.
- 74 Leleplezö.eu. "János Drabik's and Péter Tókes' New Book about the Self-Defence against Migrants and the Caliphate," 2015.
- 75 Echo TV. *The Islamic State World-View: What's behind the Scenes*, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hv2qnA00jDg>.
- 76 Dezső, András. "Albert Szabó's relationship with Russian propagandists are revealed," February 10, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/02/10/putyin\\_erkezese\\_szabo\\_albert\\_ujra\\_aktiv/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/02/10/putyin_erkezese_szabo_albert_ujra_aktiv/).
- 77 "Support Demonstration with the Russian Military Actions in Syria! - Facebook Event by MIKSZ," 2015. <https://www.facebook.com/events/953757314689602/>
- 78 Rossia24. *Hungarians Supported the Struggle of Russians in Syria*, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvpiTpmDKfM>.

## Policies

Global migration requires long-term public policy decisions; governments thinking in four-year election cycles are rarely able to make such decisions. In this respect, there are risks due to the fact that, except for a parliamentary draft resolution approved in 2004, Hungarian governments have been unable to develop a long-term migration strategy since the regime change. This lack has not been remedied by accelerated mandatory migration legislation being adopted (due primarily to EU legal harmonization). At the public policy level, besides not having a comprehensive strategy, there are serious law enforcement problems as well, especially with migration and refugee policy. In this context, Hungary has been censured repeatedly by the international community.

### Institutional and legislative migration frameworks: An historical overview

Hungary's migration regulations (which have never been supported sufficiently by clear policies) and their case histories may be divided into roughly five major phases, separated by often overlapping lines. The first phase is represented by partial regulation for ethnic Hungarians coming from Transylvania (and other Romanian regions), for other Hungarians arriving from neighbouring countries, and for Chinese immigrants; opening the state borders; and the country's accession to the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. This regulation was in force from the late 1980s through 1993/94, when new citizenship and immigration acts were passed.

The second phase involved consolidating the lessons learned from the first phase and from the Balkan conflicts' repercussions for Hungary. This phase lasted through 1997 until the first comprehensive refugee regulations were enacted.

The third phase, running through 2004, involved preparing Hungary's accession to the European Union. In that period, Hungary gradually became incorporated into global migration trends, while the growing pressure on the country to adjust to the European Union's standards forced repeated amendments to its migration regulations and reforms to its institutional structures. The Office of Immigration and Nationality (OIN) was established on 1 January 2000 as an autonomous national agency under the Ministry of Justice and Law Enforcement and this has created an opportunity to develop an integrated migration structure throughout the country. OIN's local institutions and regional directorates opened on 1 January 2002 and are responsible for issuing residence permits and (some) visas, as well as processing naturalization and asylum claims in Hungary.

The phase starting in 2004 involves a dichotomy. On the one hand, it involved legal harmonization within the European Union and preparations for Hungary joining the Schengen Area. On the other hand, following the 2004 referendum on granting citizenship to ethnic Hungarians under eased terms (which eventually failed due to a low turnout), Hungary fell into a downward spiral leading to national isolation, where migration policies became subservient to an ethnicity-based national strategy and naturalization policy.

The fifth phase, starting in 2010, represents these concepts being integrated into Hungary's refugee and migration policy. The right-wing Government, enjoying a two-thirds majority in Parliament, has fully subjected its migration regulations to the ethnicity-based nation-building concept. The Act on Aliens was tightened further and the Government reiterated that immigration is not an option for solving population decline. At the same time, naturalizing Hungarians living outside the country has become considerably easier and, with the election system reform, the right to vote has also been extended to non-resident Hungarians. These measures should not be seen as merely symbolic gestures, but belong to a refugee and migration policy concept hoping to remedy Hungary's demographic problems through immigration by ethnic Hungarians from neighbouring countries while simultaneously making every effort to keep non-Hungarian ethnic groups out.

### Asylum Policy

Hungary's asylum policy has been criticised by international human rights organizations and intergovernmental bodies in charge of human rights such as the UN Refugee Agency, the Council of Europe and ODIHR – the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.<sup>1</sup> This criticism has concerned prolonged detention periods on the one hand and insufficient social integration measures for refugees on the other.

Current Hungarian asylum law makes it possible to detain asylum seekers together with other migrants in detention centres for as long as 12 months while the asylum claimants' cases are pending in the courts.<sup>2</sup> These detention centres were originally designed for criminals or for people who had illegally entered or exited a country. However, many asylum seekers do not have valid visas and documents upon their arrival in Hungary, because they have had to flee under duress or in a hurry and were not able to leave their countries legally in the first place. Despite this, most asylum seekers in Hungary are placed in prison-like detention centres because Hungary does not invest sufficiently into expanding and refurbishing reception centres (the facilities conventionally maintained for asylum seekers). According to the UNHCR, in 2011 some 1,102 asylum seekers were reported to have applied for asylum in Hungary while in detention (two-thirds of all applicants).<sup>3</sup> The study also highlights the humiliating conditions asylum seekers endure while detained, such as systematic verbal and physical abuse from prison guards, or being handcuffed and escorted on leashes while on outings (such as to the post office or bank), equipment normally used for the accused in a criminal proceedings.

Concerning social integration, the biggest problem is that the Government has so far failed to work out a planned integration strategy to equip refugees with the skills and competences required. Since Hungary has, for years now, had a double-digit unemployment rate<sup>4</sup> and high poverty rates,<sup>5</sup> many recognized refugees try to move on from Hungary to other European countries. If they are returned to Hungary they often become home-

less and particularly vulnerable to deprivation and violence. The UNHCR reports that Somali refugees who become homeless in Hungary choose to return to Somalia despite facing persecution and torture because their living conditions were deficient and their life and dignity were at immediate risk in Hungary.<sup>6</sup> Recent developments have done little to change these prospects. Budapest, home to the largest immigrant community, passed legislation in 2011 that criminalizes homelessness by imposing fines on people 'living rough' on the streets.

Acquiring Hungarian language skills is a major barrier to immigrant integration. Language-training opportunities are offered for asylum seekers only after they have been granted international protection. By then, however, the time it takes to learn Hungarian competes with the time it takes to find work and receive training. After spending six months at the Bicske Integration Centre, many refugees leave without sufficient Hungarian language skills or detailed knowledge about employment conditions. Since there is no planned Government policy for migrant integration, the service gap is filled by under-funded, project-based NGOs such as Artemisszió, which offers, e.g., language training, career counselling, and opportunities for immigrants in Budapest to obtain a Hungarian secondary school diploma.

### Asylum policy amendments in 2015

Even though the first thing the governing party Fidesz asked the Government in January to do was to tighten the laws on refugees, only one law regarding refugees (Act LXXX of 2007 on Asylum) was amended by the Hungarian Parliament within the first half of 2015. That vote did not take place until 30 June and the law took effect on 1 August.<sup>7</sup> According to the modified law, the government is entitled to issue a decree with a national list of countries considered 'safe' by the Hungarian authorities. The regulation aims to make it easier to expel immigrants. According to the new law, those asylum seekers who crossed a country considered safe by the Hungarian authorities on their way to Hungary would be obliged to prove that they did not have the possibility to apply for asylum there. If they fail to do so, their application will be rejected within 30 days.<sup>8</sup>

In line with European Union legislative changes, the Hungarian Interior Ministry had already prepared a draft amendment to Hungarian refugee law at the end of 2014. The draft went beyond the original EU goal (accelerating asylum application procedures) and included further measures to tighten the rules. According to the Hungarian Helsinki Committee, the new procedures would have lacked essential safeguards that applicants had previously been granted, and therefore the new rules would breach UN regulations on refugees.<sup>9</sup> The plan to issue a national safe countries list had already been included in that draft.

A few weeks after PM Orbán's first anti-immigration statements in early January, Fidesz Vice-Chair Lajos Kósa called for the Parliament to speed up asylum application procedures and, therefore, to provide the legal basis on which to issue the national safe countries list.<sup>10</sup> The Fidesz-KDNP parliamentary group also

proposed various possible legislative measures to tighten refugee laws in order to stop 'economic immigrants' from abusing political asylum laws to gain entry to the country, as stated by Antal Rogán, the Fidesz parliamentary group's chair, in February. Mr Rogán stated that some proposed measures were going to cause conflicts with Brussels because Brussels backs immigration. The group proposed detaining 'illegal immigrants' during the asylum application procedure and immediately expelling them once they are not granted asylum.<sup>11</sup>

Besides the topics proposed by the Fidesz parliamentary group, the national consultation launched in April included one more policy measure affecting asylum seekers. Question number 10 referred to the possibility that 'economic immigrants', while in Hungary, should be entirely responsible for their own living expenses.<sup>12</sup>

All the policy proposals mentioned above were later included in the legislative package amending the law on asylum (Act LXXX of 2007) and the Government Decree implementing the law on asylum (No. 301/2007 (XI.9.)). The package, as mentioned above, was passed by the Parliament on 6 July and took effect on August 1.

In mid-June Hungary unveiled plans to build a fence along its border with Serbia. As Hungarian Foreign Minister Péter Szijjártó announced, the Government "has instructed the Interior Ministry to physically close the border with Serbia". There was no consultation with the Serbian authorities before the announcement, which "surprised and shocked" Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić.<sup>13</sup> The fence's legal framework was provided by the Parliament in the package voted upon on 6 July.

In a statement by the Interior Ministry on 23 June, the Hungarian Government announced it would indefinitely suspend the Dublin III regulations, which require asylum claims to be processed in the first EU country to which an asylum seeker arrives. According to a European Commission spokeswoman, Hungary informed the other Member States that the indefinite suspension was for technical reasons. The Hungarian Government justified the decision with the statement that "the boat is full".<sup>14</sup> However, the very next day, the Hungarian Foreign Ministry issued a statement saying that the Government was not suspending any EU rules and had merely requested a grace period to deal with asylum seekers.<sup>15</sup>

After further changes to the immigration laws were accepted during the autumn and the fence was completed along the borders with Croatia and Serbia, it has become almost impossible for anyone to gain refugee status in Hungary. Anyone who arrives from Serbia can be sent back there. The Hungarian Helsinki Committee's evaluation concluded that after 15 September, refugee rights ceased to exist in Hungary, because starting from that time Hungary not only refuses to grant asylum to those who apply for it and need protection, but also does not even let such persons enter its territory, and those who do manage to enter Hungary are rejected and punished according to the rules of the state of emergency imposed by the Government in the counties at the southern border. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the European Commission first communicated its concerns in October to the Government about the new immigration laws

introduced in August and September, and then sent the Hungarian Government a letter in December indicating that the measures are contradictory to EU legislation, because refugees' rights to appeal court decisions are restricted and because in cases connected with illegal border crossings, the suspects do not receive documentation in their mother tongue. An infringement proceeding will probably be launched in this case because the Hungarian Government will not be willing to change the law.

## Discriminatory practices against asylum seekers

Reception centres in Hungary were clearly overburdened during the first half of 2015. As of 30 June, twice as many people stayed in reception centres as had ever been planned for. Therefore, officials continuously extended the centres' capacity by adding tents and container housing. Asylum seekers were also accommodated in sports halls.<sup>16</sup> The situation in the reception centres was criticised by the Council of Europe's anti-racism commission, the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI), in a report published on 9 June.<sup>17</sup> The report describes bad circumstances, hygienic problems, coarse treatment and insufficient legal assistance in the detention centres. According to ECRI, 22 per cent of asylum seekers are limited in their personal freedom. The report claims that families with small children are also accommodated in closed reception facilities, and that the decision as to which facility someone will be accommodated in is made arbitrarily. Physical and verbal aggression against refugees often happens at the closed reception centres, according to ECRI.<sup>18</sup>

After investigating the situation at one detention centre in January 2015, Hungarian Commissioner for Fundamental Rights László Székely reported serious breaches of law and the detainees' fundamental human rights (e.g., constant surveillance and escort by armed guards, overcrowded rooms despite there being enough free space available at the facility, medical mistreatment, female detainees being body-searched by male guards, etc.).<sup>19</sup> Clear signs proving that the authorities were overwhelmed by asylum seeker numbers were the media reports about the documents and information materials asylum seekers received from the authorities at the preliminary reception centres on the border. Maps that merely showed country borders, train schedules, route descriptions and documents stating that an application had been filed by the asylum seeker and appointing the reception centre where the applicant would be accommodated were handed out to refugees in the Hungarian language only. However, the Interior Ministry stated in response to a media enquiry that the Office of Immigration and Nationality provides information for asylum seekers either in their native language or in a language that they speak and understand. The ministry further explained that "asylum seekers, after being registered, receive verbal information and information materials, including the train schedule and two kinds of maps, both in English and Hungarian (or in a language that they know)".<sup>20</sup>

Regarding discrimination against immigrants, only a few cases were publicized in the first half of 2015. A citizen from Szeged in southern Hungary reported in June on a case when a police car rushed at high speed with sirens blaring towards asylum seekers who had just crossed the border. After the car stopped, the police jumped out of it, laughing.<sup>21</sup> A similar picture was painted by a report describing an undercover journalist's personal experience after joining asylum seekers and undergoing immigration procedures in Hungary. The report described police and immigration officers behaving in contradictory ways. According to the journalist, officers ridiculed the asylum seekers by speaking to them in tough language but were otherwise helpful and fair toward them.<sup>22</sup>

However, reports by the police have contradicted such claims. A piece published on the Hungarian Police Force's official website quotes asylum seekers stating that they have had a good experience with Hungarian officers, who respected their human dignity.<sup>23</sup>

At the end of June several police raids took place in Budapest against refugees who were passing through the capital. According to an anonymous police source, the police were ordered to take measures against as many immigrants as possible and to look for reasons to prosecute them for non-compliance with the law. According to a media source, a manual was prepared and handed out to police officers in late March to ensure the raids would be uniform (e.g., should a person lack documents). According to the sources, the measures aimed at making it easier to expel asylum seekers due to complaints about them.<sup>24</sup> This phenomenon is a further indication that the refugee crisis has been approached by the Hungarian Government as a political issue and that the authorities' actions have been decided based on political considerations, taking into account the Government's current political interests and communications goals.

- 1 UNHCR. "Hungary Urged to Refrain from Policies and Practices That Promote Intolerance and Hatred," n.d. <http://www.unhcr.org/5677cf666.html>.
- 2 Parliament of Hungary. *Act CXXXV of 2010 on the Legal Harmonization of Certain Migration-Related Laws Was Adopted by Parliament on 22 November 2010 and Was Supplemented by Government Decree 290/2010 (XII.21.)*, 2010. <http://mkogy.jogtar.hu/?page=show&docid=a1000135.TV>
- 3 UNHCR. "Hungary as a Country of Asylum. Observations on the Situation of Asylum-Seekers and Refugees in Hungary." *Refworld*, 2012. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4f9167db2.html>.
- 4 Central Statistical Office. "In January 2013 the Unemployment Rate in Hungary Was 10.7 per Cent," 2013. [www.ksh.hu](http://www.ksh.hu).
- 5 According to Eurostat, as much as 30 per cent of people were at risk of poverty or social exclusion in Hungary in 2010. , Eurostat. "People at Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion, EU-27 and EU-28," 2015. [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:People\\_at\\_risk\\_of\\_poverty\\_or\\_social\\_exclusion,\\_EU-27\\_and\\_EU-28\\_Fig\\_2.PNG](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:People_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion,_EU-27_and_EU-28_Fig_2.PNG).
- 6 *Op cit.* note 90
- 7 The vote on further amendments to migration laws took place on 6 July. All amendments took effect on 1 August.
- 8 Kovács, Áron. "Hamarosan Visszafordíthatják a Menekülteket Szerbiába - Refugees Can Be Turned back to Serbia Soon," June 30, 2015. <http://vs.hu/kozelet/osszes/hamarosan-visszafordithatjak-a-menekulteket-szerbiaba-0630>.
- 9 Hungarian Helsinki Committee. "Észrevételek a Menekültügyi Joganyag Módosításának Tervezetére - Comments on the Draft Amendment to the Refugee Laws," December 30, 2014. <http://www.helsinki.hu/eszrevetelek-a-menekultugyi-joganyag-modositasanak-tervezetere-2014-december/>.
- 10 HVG.hu. "Magyarország Lehet a Kitoloncolók Országá - Hungary Might Be the Country of Expulsion," January 26, 2015. [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150126\\_Magyarorszag\\_lehet\\_a\\_kitoloncolok\\_orzaga](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150126_Magyarorszag_lehet_a_kitoloncolok_orzaga).
- 11 MTI. "A Fidesz Azonnal Hazaküldené a Menekülteket - Fidesz Would Immediately Send Refugees Back Home," January 25, 2015. [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150125\\_A\\_Fidesz\\_azonnal\\_hazakuldene\\_a\\_menekultek](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150125_A_Fidesz_azonnal_hazakuldene_a_menekultek).
- 12 MTI. "Fidesz-KDNP-Frakcióülés – Rogán: Induljon Nemzeti Konzultáció a Bevándorlásról! - Meeting of Fidesz-KDNP Parliamentary Group – Rogán: Let's Launch a National Consultation on Immigration," February 6, 2015. <http://szegedma.hu/hir/szeged/2015/02/fidesz-kdnp-frakcioules-rogan-induljon-nemzeti-konzultacio-a-bevandorlasrol.html>.
- 13 Government of Hungary. "National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism," 2015. [http://www.kormany.hu/download/7/e2/50000/nemzeti\\_konzultacio\\_bevandorlas\\_2015.pdf](http://www.kormany.hu/download/7/e2/50000/nemzeti_konzultacio_bevandorlas_2015.pdf).
- 14 Nolan, Daniel. "Hungary Orders 100-Mile Serbia Border Fence to Keep out Migrants," June 17, 2015. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/hungary/11680840/Hungary-orders-100-mile-Serbia-border-fence-to-keep-out-migrants.html>.
- 15 EuroActiv.com. "Hungary Suspends EU Asylum Rules," June 24, 2015. <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/justice-home-affairs/hungary-suspends-application-eu-asylum-rules-315681>.
- 16 Agencies. "Hungary Reverses Decision over Suspension of EU Rule on Taking Back Asylum Seekers," June 24, 2015. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/hungary/11695376/Hungary-defies-EU-over-migrants-and-suspends-taking-back-asylum-seekers.html>.
- 17 "Windisch, Judit. "A Befogadóállomás Rosszabb, Mint a Legtöbb Börtön - Detention Centres Are Worse than Most Prisons," June 30, 2015. <http://vs.hu/kozelet/osszes/a-befogadoallomas-rosszabb-mint-a-legtobb-borton-0630#!s2>.

- 17 Even though the report was prepared following ECRI's visit to Hungary in June 2014 and takes account of developments up to 2014 it is very unlikely that the situation would have subsequently improved due to the increase in asylum seekers. ECRI Secretariat, Council of Europe. "ECRI Report on Hungary (Fifth Monitoring Cycle)," 2015. <https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Hungary/HUN-CbC-V-2015-19-ENG.pdf>.
- 18 MTI. "Európa Tanács: Túlszűfoltak a Magyar Menekültbefogadó Állomások - European Council: Detention Centres in Hungary Are Overcrowded," June 9, 2015. [http://mandiner.hu/nyomtatas/20150609\\_europa\\_tanacs\\_tulszufoltak\\_a\\_magyar\\_menekultbefogado\\_allomasok](http://mandiner.hu/nyomtatas/20150609_europa_tanacs_tulszufoltak_a_magyar_menekultbefogado_allomasok).
- 19 Földes, András. "Vetkőztetés, Fegyveres Órök a Játsszóházban, Szívbj Ellen Tetűirtás - Undressing, Armed Guards in the Play Room, Lice-Killing for Heart Problems," May 22, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/05/22/debrecen\\_menekulttabor\\_alapveto\\_jogok\\_biztosajelentes\\_bevandorlok/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/05/22/debrecen_menekulttabor_alapveto_jogok_biztosajelentes_bevandorlok/)
- 20 Földes, András. "Ez a Különbség, Ha a Minisztérium, Vagy Az önkéntesek Tájékoztatják a Menekülteket - This Is the Difference between the Ministry Providing Information for the Refugees and Volunteers Providing It," June 21, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/07/21/bm\\_plakat/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/07/21/bm_plakat/).
- 21 HVG.hu. "Boldogan Áláztak Meg Menekülteket a Rendőrök - Police Officers Humiliated Asylum Seekers with Joy," June 27, 2015. [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150627\\_Boldogan\\_alaztak\\_meg\\_menekulteket\\_a\\_rendo](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150627_Boldogan_alaztak_meg_menekulteket_a_rendo).
- 22 Nyilas, Gergely. "Elfogattam Magamat Az Ásotthalmi úton - [I Got Myself Caught on the Road to Ásotthalmom]," August 17, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/08/17/menekult\\_tabor\\_bentrol/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/08/17/menekult_tabor_bentrol/).
- 23 Zsaru Magazin. "Fokozódó Határhelyzet - Intensifying Situation at the Border," February 4, 2015. <http://www.police.hu/hirek-es-informaciok/legfrissebb-hireink/zsaru-magazin/fokozodo-hatarhelyzet>.
- 24 Csikász, Brigitta. "Kisokossal a Kezükben Szállnak Rá a Rendőrök a Menekültekre - Police Officers Raid Refugees with Help of a Manual," July 7, 2015. [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150707\\_kisokos\\_rendor\\_menekult](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150707_kisokos_rendor_menekult).

## Regional Outlook

### The effect of the refugee crisis on the V4 countries

The united and so far all but unprecedented actions by the V4 countries in their opposition to Germany and to other western EU Member States during the current refugee crisis lend a special urgency to the present study. The Visegrad countries categorically reject a mandatory EU refugee relocation scheme (even though Poland voted for the redistribution of 120,000 refugees based on mandatory quotas during the meeting of EU interior ministers in Brussels in September 2015), and their policies suggest that they hope to be excused from any common EU refugee relocation strategy. Reflecting official optimism, the Hungarian Government interprets recent developments as proof that cooperation among the V4 has never been so strong and that the group may become the dominant political force on the European stage.<sup>2</sup> No doubt the EU's most severe crisis to date affecting European achievements and fundamental principles has turned the V4 countries into an 'effective' political force (even though three of the V4 countries were outvoted on this issue, the Hungarian Government has communicated that the Visegrad Group was effective). It remains to be seen, however, whether these states, which have hitherto followed their own separate agendas, will be able to sustain well-coordinated lobbying, or whether they constitute merely a single-issue, provisional, mutual-defence alliance.

Orbán's tough stance against asylum seekers, immigrants and refugees has become a model in the region. "Brussels can't tell us who we should live with"; no one in Brussels should have the power to settle people in the country "with whom we have no desire to coexist", the Hungarian Prime Minister said on 4 December, referring to the EU's proposed mandatory refugee redistribution quota system, a position consistent with that expressed by other Visegrad countries. At best, Hungary would consider sharing the common burden by making a financial contribution, Orbán said following the EU-Turkey summit held at the end of November, but it would resist mandatory resettlement.<sup>3</sup>

The V4 countries opposed the quota system from the very start. At the group's meeting on 19 June, Slovak President Robert Fico declared: "We reject the mandatory quota because we believe that the European Commission's proposal contradicts the European Council's principle on sovereign action."<sup>4</sup> The Slovak Prime Minister has enthusiastically supported Orbán's fence policy, and their respective parties, Smer and Fidesz, question the legitimacy of the Council's decision on quotas with equal passion: Taking a cue from the Slovaks, the Hungarian Government has also decided to challenge the decision at the European Court.<sup>5</sup> Czech Prime Minister Bohuslav Sobotka also came out in support of unified action by the Visegrad Group in opposition to the quota system, as did the recently-elected (2015) Polish government. While after long negotiations the previous Polish government voted in September 2015 in favour of the relocation of 120,000 refugees based on a mandatory quota system, the recently elected PiS (*Law and Justice*) party has already argued for asylum applications to be assessed on an individual basis, and Poland joined the V4 position without reservation following the

13 November Paris terror attack. Moreover, the V4 countries have also reached a border-protection agreement among themselves and today a joint V4 task force is defending Hungary's Schengen border.<sup>6</sup> Also, V4 governments have established the 'Friends of Schengen' group with the stated mission of taking organized action to preserve the Schengen area.<sup>7</sup>

### The dangers of isolationism in the V4 countries

The European refugee crisis has spawned a new expression: After the 'Brexit' and 'Grexit' terms referring to the potential exits of Great Britain and Greece from the EU, there is now 'Vrexit', referring to the Visegrad states' potential exit now that they have developed a unified V4 position on the refugee relocation scheme. According to sources in Brussels, Orbán and Fico have exchanged jovial remarks on how successfully the V4 managed to distance themselves from Europe's open-arm refugee and migration policy, led by Germany.<sup>8</sup> Orbán's consistently anti-asylum seeker, anti-immigrant, anti-refugee and pro-authoritarian strategy has come to fruition and Fidesz has managed to increase its support base,<sup>9</sup> while Fico pursues a similar strategy in the run-up to the 2016 elections in Slovakia. At first blush it appears that V4 consensus in the European arena has never been so strong.

However, it is also patently clear that the current crisis may crack the EU's foundations along several points: V4 opposition to the mandatory quota system has led to a situation where, at the 29 November EU-Turkey summit, Germany discussed mandatory redistribution separately with the Benelux states, Austria, Finland and Sweden, establishing a "coalition of the willing" on this issue.<sup>10</sup> The 13 November Paris terror attack definitely represents a psychological watershed for how this issue has been dealt with at both the EU-institutions and Member State level (although disintegration was already evident when Schengen was *de facto* suspended). Luxembourg's Foreign Minister Jean Asselborn started to sound the alarm bell after both Austria and Slovenia decided to build border fences and Sweden reintroduced border controls. He emphasized: "The refugee crisis raises the spectre of the European Union's disintegration, especially if 'ill-advised nationalism' prevents the development of joint solutions." His fear is not unfounded, for temporarily suspending such a European achievement poses a real threat to integration. Currently, all Member States support preserving Schengen in its original form, although it is quite indicative that, prior to the 4 December foreign ministers' meeting, the Luxembourg Presidency offered a solution that would suspend Schengen for up to two years in order to protect common interests.<sup>11</sup>

A Dutch concept goes even further, calling for the creation of a permanent limited Schengen area that would include only Germany, the Benelux states, Austria and possibly France. In a sense, this proposal implies that if at both the EU-28 level and at the Schengen members' level there is no collective will for burden-sharing on this issue, then those countries bearing the burden disproportionately will protect their interests

within a more limited area. According to Dutch Finance Minister Jeroen Dijsselbloem there is a need to shrink the Schengen area because the peripheral countries have failed to defend the EU's borders and have declined to participate in a fair redistribution of asylum seekers.<sup>12</sup> Understanding that this message was clearly addressed to the V4 countries, at their 3 December meeting in Prague the prime ministers of Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia took a unified stance against implementing a mini-Schengen concept<sup>13</sup> and continued to demand the EU's external borders be strengthened. The Dutch example demonstrates that, through their special pleading, the Visegrad Group has not only managed to provoke Merkel's scorn, as she has expressed herself according to fundamentally different principles concerning this issue, but they have also managed to provoke other net contributors to the EU to respond angrily.<sup>14</sup>

At the 4 December foreign ministers' meeting, an open confrontation between the 'Friends of Schengen' and those supporting the so-called mini-Schengen concept was ultimately averted, and the ministers pledged their full support for Schengen area integrity.<sup>15</sup> This does not mean, however, that come spring some Member States might not attempt to extend their temporary internal border controls. The fact that Greece eventually accepted EU funds to guard the EU's external borders has definitely contributed to developing a constructive atmosphere: Ironically, the idea to expel Athens and thus shatter Schengen unity was openly promoted at the meeting by Fico (who represents a Visegrad country in the Schengen area), claiming that Greece had proven itself unable to defend Europe's external borders. Be that as it may, Bratislava and Budapest, which are challenging the EU refugee relocation scheme at the European Court, can expect to face further political clashes with Luxembourg and other countries supporting mandatory quotas. This was confirmed by Asselborn following the foreign ministers' meeting: "If the Member States start to undermine solidarity, with time it may suffer", Luxembourg's Foreign Minister emphasized.<sup>16</sup>

Even if one ignores 'Vrexit' as a viable political option, the V4 countries' stubborn aloofness may make them pariahs, even though to date the net EU contributors have not said they intend to withhold cohesion transfers from them. Efforts by liberal and green factions within the European Parliament aimed at sanctioning Hungary also proved feeble: The Article 7 'nuclear option' was eventually prevented by coordinators from the European People's Party working with the Socialists and Democrats (S&D), the second-largest EP faction.<sup>17</sup>

Officially, under the constitutional framework and Section 2 thereof, the European Commission did not see sufficient reason to implement Article 7 either,<sup>18</sup> although eventually it did officially register the Brussels-based European Humanist Federation's civic initiative demanding that the Commission review democracy and the rule of law in Hungary. Hungarian Foreign Trade and Foreign Affairs Minister Péter Szijjártó described the Commission's decision to do so (which was not attended by Hungary's EU Commissioner, Tibor Navracsics, who was away on official business) as Brussels' "revenge" on Hungary. Based on past experiences involving civic initiatives<sup>19</sup> it is not that easy

to collect one million signatures in seven Member States, not to mention that even if the drive were successful, EU institutions would not automatically be obligated to pass legislation on it, i.e., in all likelihood, the initiative will amount to nothing more than a symbolic political gesture.

However, there is a real danger if the Visegrad countries were to see their ability to influence decisions diminished because of their conduct on this issue. This is particularly true for Poland, a key player due to its regional weight and strong economy, where, with its constructive attitude, the centre-right Civic Platform previously acted as a counterweight to the Orbán model. Thanks to Civic Platform policies, today Donald Tusk is the European Council President, one of the most influential positions in the European Union. Slovakia, too, (which is in the euro zone) obviously wishes to have a seat at the most important forums (unless, to paraphrase Orbán, "it wants to be served for dinner"). Incidentally, at the EU level, the V4 countries typically vote together on climate and energy policy issues,<sup>20</sup> where they share very similar objectives. Because of their weight, the V4 greatly need the allies that, in the double-majority policymaking system to become prevalent in 2017, will acquire increased relevance. Under the new system, adopting resolutions will require 55 % support from the Member States and 65 % support from the EU population. Although the Treaty of Lisbon provides the opportunity for four Member States to establish a blocking minority, those states must represent 35 % of the total EU population, a criterion the V4 countries do not now meet. A decision related to climate change requiring the Member States' approval was met with coordinated V4 action: With assistance from Bulgaria and Romania, the V4 countries managed to have their way on that issue.<sup>21</sup>

From an economic standpoint, isolation would make little sense for a group that, with respect to exports to EU-28 markets, outperforms other Member States by a wide margin (i.e., due to their economic and geographic position these countries' exports are essentially all part of EU-internal trade). Cohesion funds facilitating economic and social development must be mentioned as well: For instance, 97 % of the developments completed in Hungary have been achieved with European Union co-financing.<sup>22</sup> It remains to be seen how these Member States will behave after 2020, when these funds will be severely cut. For years, the Hungarian Prime Minister has been testing the limits of a European arena bounded by the EU's fundamental human rights and freedoms. The EU system contributes in economic terms to his regime's survival. His attempts are well-illustrated by the frivolous debate that he provoked over reintroducing the death penalty, where under EU pressure he was eventually forced to back-track.<sup>23</sup> However, the refugee crisis has given a fresh impetus to his illiberal state-building project, not only in Hungary, but elsewhere in the region as well.

- The Visegrad Group (also known as the "Visegrad Four" or simply "V4") is an association of four Central European countries: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. See [www.visegradgroup.eu](http://www.visegradgroup.eu) for more information.
- Német, Zsolt. "The Visegrád Cooperation May Become a European Factor," October 10, 2015. <http://inforadio.hu/hir/belfold/nemeth-zsolt-europai-tenyezove-valhat-a-visegrad-egyuttmukodes-764722>.
- MTI. "Hungary Will Also Pay, but It Won't Have to Admit Refugees," November 29, 2015. <http://www.vg.hu/kozelet/politika/magyarorszag-is-fizet-de-nem-kell-menekulteket-befogadnia-461702>.
- ATV. *Orbán: Nem Várunk Európai Válaszra a Menekültválság Kezelésében - Orbán: We Are Not Waiting for Europe to Manage the Refugee Crisis*, 2015. <http://www.atv.hu/belfold/20150619-orban-nem-varunk-europai-valaszra-a-menekultvalsag-kezeleseben>.
- Sigmond, Árpád. "Orbán: Today, We Are Submitting a Petition against Mandatory Quotas to the European Court," December 3, 2015. <http://inforadio.hu/hir/belfold/orban-ma-nyujtjuk-be-a-kotelezo-kvotak-elleni-keresetet-az-europai-birosagra-779856>.
- MTI. "Fidesz: Visegrád Cooperation May Become a Decisive Factor in Europe," October 10, 2015. [http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/37590/Fidesz\\_europai\\_tenyezove\\_valhat\\_a\\_visegrad\\_i\\_egyuttmukodes](http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/37590/Fidesz_europai_tenyezove_valhat_a_visegrad_i_egyuttmukodes).
- MTI. "'Friends of Schengen' Enter the Stage," December 3, 2015. <http://www.inforadio.hu/hir/kulfold/schengen-baratai-szinre-lepnek-780111>.
- Kósa, András. "We Are Bound to Become the Black Sheep of the European Union," November 3, 2015. <http://vs.hu/kozelet/osszes/uton-vagyunk-afele-hogy-az-europai-unio-fekete-baranyai-legyunk-1103#!s3>.
- TÁRKI. "Fidesz on the Rebound, MSZP in the Trough," October 28, 2015. [http://www.tarki.hu/hu/news/2015/kitekint/20151028\\_valasztas.html](http://www.tarki.hu/hu/news/2015/kitekint/20151028_valasztas.html).
- Traynor, Ian. "Europe Split over Refugee Deals as Germany Leads Breakaway Coalition," November 20, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/29/germanys-plan-to-strike-eu-wide-refugee-sharing-deal-stalls>.
- BruxInfo. "Europe May Move in the Direction of a Tighter Schengen," December 3, 2015. <http://bruxinfo.hu/cikk/20151203-zartabb-schengen-fele-mozdulhat-el-az-eu.html>.
- InfoRádió. "The Dutch Finance Minister Sees the Coming of Mini-Schengen," November 27, 2015.
- "The Visegrad Group: The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia | Joint Statement of the Visegrad Group Countries." Text, December 3, 2015. <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2015/joint-statement-of-the-151204>.
- See, for instance, Italian Prime Minister Matteo Renzi's statement on how Central and Eastern European countries, which have benefited to the greatest extent from their EU accessions through large-scale cohesion transfers, are now refusing to act in solidarity with the countries most affected by the asylum seeker/migrant/refugee crisis.
- Bargiazzi, Jacopo. "Schengen Survives, for Now," December 4, 2015. <http://www.politico.eu/article/schengen-survives-for-now/>
- BruxInfo. "Schengen to Remain Intact for Now," December 4, 2015. <http://www.bruxinfo.hu/cikk/20151204-egylore-nem-szedik-szet-schengent.html>.

- BruxInfo. "Liberals Campaigning against Orbán Derailed," October 6, 2015. <http://www.bruxinfo.hu/cikk/20151006-lesre-futtattak-az-orban-ellen-akciozo-liberalisokat.html>
- BruxInfo. "The Commission Sees No Reason to Sanction Hungary," November 12, 2015. <http://www.bruxinfo.hu/cikk/20151112-nem-lat-okot-magyarorszag-fegyelmezesere-a-bizottsag.html>.
- So far, 50 such initiatives have been tried, but 20 never made it through the Commission's pre-screening process, 11 were withdrawn and, in 16 cases, not enough signatures were collected. While the body has dealt with three initiatives, it made no concrete proposals regarding them.
- Van Renssen, Sonja. "East European Countries Place Bombshell under EU Climate Policy," May 13, 2015. <http://www.energypost.eu/east-european-countries-place-bombshell-eu-climate-policy/>.
- CEE Bankwatch. "Visegrad Countries Pose Fresh Threat to 2030 Targets," October 1, 2015. <http://bankwatch.org/news-media/for-journalists/press-releases/visegrad-countries-pose-fresh-threat-2030-targets>.
- Eurologus. "The Dough Has Been Flowing for the Past 10 Years," February 12, 2015. [http://index.hu/gazdasag/2014/02/12/tiz\\_eve\\_dol\\_a\\_le/](http://index.hu/gazdasag/2014/02/12/tiz_eve_dol_a_le/).
- 168 óra online. "No to the Death Penalty: Orbán Took Hungarians for a Crazy Spin Again," April 30, 2015. <http://www.168ora.hu/itthon/quaestor-inkabb-beszeljunk-halalbuntetesrol-135529.html>.

## Bibliography


- 168 óra online. "No to the Death Penalty: Orbán Took Hungarians for a Crazy Spin Again," April 30, 2015. <http://www.168ora.hu/itthon/quaestor-inkabb-beszeljunk-halalbuntetesrol-135529.html>.
- AFP. "Hungary's Anti-Immigration Campaign Sparks Controversy," June 8, 2015. <http://news.yahoo.com/hungarys-anti-immigration-campaign-sparks-controversy-174317745.html>.
- Agencies. "Hungary Reverses Decision over Suspension of EU Rule on Taking Back Asylum Seekers," June 24, 2015. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/hungary/11695376/Hungary-defies-EU-over-migrants-and-suspends-taking-back-asylum-seekers.html>.
- ATV. *Orbán: Nem Várunk Európai Válaszra a Menekültválság Kezelésében - Orbán: We Are Not Waiting for Europe to Manage the Refugee Crisis*, 2015. <http://www.atv.hu/belfold/20150619-orban-nem-varunk-europai-valaszra-a-menekultvalsag-kezeleseben>.
- "Az Oroszország Hangja Nevet Változtatott és Beolvadt a Sputnik Nemzetközi Orosz Hírügynökségbe - The Voice of Russia Has Changed Its Name and Merged into the International News Agency, Sputnik," n.d. <http://sputniknews.com/voiceofrussia/>.
- Bargiazzi, Jacopo. "Schengen Survives, for Now," December 4, 2015. <http://www.politico.eu/article/schengen-survives-for-now/>.
- BruxInfo. "Europe May Move in the Direction of a Tighter Schengen," December 3, 2015. <http://bruxinfo.hu/cikk/20151203-zartabb-schengen-fele-mozdulhat-el-az-eu.html>.
- . "Liberals Campaigning against Orbán Derailed," October 6, 2015.
- . "Schengen to Remain Intact for Now," December 4, 2015. <http://www.bruxinfo.hu/cikk/20151204-egylore-nem-szedik-szet-schengent.html>.
- . "The Commission Sees No Reason to Sanction Hungary," November 12, 2015. <http://www.bruxinfo.hu/cikk/20151112-nem-lat-okot-magyarorszag-fegyelmezesere-a-bizottsag.html>.
- CEE Bankwatch. "Visegrád Countries Pose Fresh Threat to 2030 Targets," October 1, 2015. <http://bankwatch.org/news-media/for-journalists/press-releases/visegrad-countries-pose-fresh-threat-2030-targets>.
- Central Statistical Office. "In January 2013 the Unemployment Rate in Hungary Was 10.7 per Cent," 2013. [www.ksh.hu](http://www.ksh.hu).
- Csikász, Brigitta. "Kisokossal a Kezükben Szállnak Rá a Rendőrök a Menekültekre - Police Officers Raid Refugees with Help of a Manual," July 7, 2015. [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150707\\_kisokos\\_rendor\\_menekult](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150707_kisokos_rendor_menekult).
- Daily News. "CoE Ombudsman Chides Orban for Hungary's "populist Trends," May 2, 2015. <http://dailynewshungary.com/coe-ombudsman-chides-orban-for-hungarys-populist-trends/>.
- Dull, Szabolcs. "Gyűlöletheadjáratot Indított a Fidesz a Menekültek Ellen - Fidesz Launched a Hated Campaign against Refugees," February 20, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/02/20/gyuloletheadjaratot\\_inditott\\_a\\_fidesz\\_a\\_menekultek\\_ellen/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/02/20/gyuloletheadjaratot_inditott_a_fidesz_a_menekultek_ellen/).

- . "Index - Belföld - Orbán Eltökélte, Bezáratja a Debreceni Menekülttábor - Orbán Is Determined to Close the Refugee Camp in Debrecen," May 18, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/05/18/orban\\_eltokelte\\_bezaratja\\_a\\_debreceni\\_menekulttabort](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/05/18/orban_eltokelte_bezaratja_a_debreceni_menekulttabort).
- ECRI Secretariat, Council of Europe. "ECRI Report on Hungary (Fifth Monitoring Cycle)," 2015. <https://www.coe.int/t/dghl/monitoring/ecri/Country-by-country/Hungary/HUN-CbC-V-2015-19-ENG.pdf>.
- EuroActiv.com. "Hungary Suspends EU Asylum Rules," June 24, 2015. <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/justice-home-affairs/hungary-suspends-application-eu-asylum-rules-315681>.
- Eurologus. "The Dough Has Been Flowing for the Past 10 Years," February 12, 2015. [http://index.hu/gazdasag/2014/02/12/tiz\\_eve\\_dol\\_a\\_le/](http://index.hu/gazdasag/2014/02/12/tiz_eve_dol_a_le/).
- European Commission. "European Parliament Plenary – Commission Statement on the Situation in Hungary First Vice-President Timmermans Strasbourg, 19 May 2015." May 19, 2015. [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_SPEECH-15-5010\\_en.htm?locale=en](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-15-5010_en.htm?locale=en).
- European Commission – Directorate-General for Communication. "Public Opinion in the European Union – First Results," 2015. [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb83/eb83\\_first\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb83/eb83_first_en.pdf).
- Eurostat. "People at Risk of Poverty or Social Exclusion, EU-27 and EU-28," 2015. [http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:People\\_at\\_risk\\_of\\_poverty\\_or\\_social\\_exclusion\\_EU-27\\_and\\_EU-28\\_Fig\\_2.PNG](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:People_at_risk_of_poverty_or_social_exclusion_EU-27_and_EU-28_Fig_2.PNG).
- Fidesz. "Bevándorlópárti Politika Megbukott - The Immigration Policy Has Failed," October 4, 2015. <http://www.fidesz.hu/hirek/2015-10-04/a-bevandorlasparti-europai-politika-megbukott/>.
- Földes, András. "Ez a Különbség, Ha a Minisztérium, Vagy Az önkéntesek Tájékoztatják a Menekülteket - His Is the Difference between the Ministry Providing Information for the Refugees and Volunteers Providing It," June 21, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/07/21/bm\\_plakat/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/07/21/bm_plakat/).
- . "Vetkőztetés, Fegyveres őrök a Játsszóházban, Szívba J Ellen Tetűirtás - Undressing, Armed Guards in the Play Room, Lice-Killing for Heart Problems," May 22, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/05/22/debrecen\\_menekulttabor\\_alapveto\\_jogok\\_biztosa\\_jelentes\\_bevandorlok/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/05/22/debrecen_menekulttabor_alapveto_jogok_biztosa_jelentes_bevandorlok/).
- Földházi, Erzsébet, Branislav Bleha, Branislav Sprocha, and Boris Vanos. "Population Projections for Hungary and Slovakia at National, Regional and Local Levels." SEEMIG project, 2014. [www.seemig.eu](http://www.seemig.eu).
- Government of Hungary. "National Consultation on Immigration and Terrorism," 2015. [http://www.kormany.hu/download/7/e2/50000/nemzeti\\_konzultacio\\_bevandorlas\\_2015.pdf](http://www.kormany.hu/download/7/e2/50000/nemzeti_konzultacio_bevandorlas_2015.pdf).
- . "Prime Minister Viktor Orban's Speech at the 26th Congress of the Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Union," December 17, 2015. <http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-26th-congress-of-the-fidesz-hungarian-civic-union>.

- Gyulai, Attila, Márton Bene, and Veronika Patkós. "Politics and Migration." Budapest: MTA, 20115. [http://mta.hu/data/cikk/13/70/8/cikk\\_137008/\\_gyulai.pdf](http://mta.hu/data/cikk/13/70/8/cikk_137008/_gyulai.pdf).
- Halmos, Máté. "60 Millián Vannak, és Mind Ide Tartanak? - Are They 60 Million and Are They All Coming Here?," June 13, 2015. [http://index.hu/gazdasag/2015/06/19/menekult\\_statistika\\_menedek/](http://index.hu/gazdasag/2015/06/19/menekult_statistika_menedek/).
- Hídfő.ru. "Attack Was about to Be Committed in Madrid," 2015.
- . "Berlusconi: Tens of Millions of Africans Are Heading towards Europe," 2015.
- . "By Eliminating of Schengen They Want to Distribute the Migrants in Europe," 2015.
- . "England Imprisons Illegal Immigrants for Half an Year," 2015.
- . "Jobbik Recommends to Set up a Civilian Protection Service in Respond to the Migration Crisis," 2015.
- . "Jobbik: The Army Should Be Deployed," 2015.
- . "Macedonia Has Announced the States of Emergency and the Army Is Restricting the Immigration," 2015.
- . "Older Migrant Generations Are Hindering the European Crisis Management," 2015.
- . "Refugees Should Be Directed to the American Embassy," 2015.
- . "The Activities of the Rights Defenders Are Dehumanizing the Refugees," 2015.
- . "The Czech Republic Also Refused the Migrant Quota System," 2015.
- . "The Majority of the Population Is against the Migration," 2015.
- . "The Two- Sided Stand Is Over, the Government Provides Buses to the Austrian Border," 2015. <http://www.bruxinfo.hu/cikk/20151006-lesre-futtattak-az-orban-ellen-akciozo-liberalisokat.html>.
- Hungarian Free Press. "Hungarian Justice Minister Says No to Immigrants Because Gypsies Already Pose Huge Burden," May 22, 2015. <http://hungarianfreepress.com/2015/05/22/hungarian-justice-minister-says-no-to-immigrants-because-gypsies-already-pose-huge-burden/>.
- Hungarian Helsinki Committee. "Észrevételek a Menekültügyi Joganyag Módosításának Tervezetére - Comments on the Draft Amendment to the Refugee Laws," December 30, 2014. <http://www.helsinki.hu/eszrevetelek-a-menekultugyi-joganyag-modositasanak-tervezetere-2014-december/>.
- . "Facebook Comment of HHC," May 18, 2015. <https://www.facebook.com/helsinkibizottsag/photos/a.148536888500904.23887.122159141138679/914870978534154/?type=1&theater>.
- . "Migrációs Pánik: A Kormány Szócsöve a Közmedia - Migration Panic: Public Broadcast Media Have Been the Government's Mouthpiece," 26 2015. <http://helsinki.hu/migracios-panik-a-kormany-szocsove-lett-a-kozmedia>.
- . "Üres Borítékkal Tiltakozunk a „nemzeti Konzultáció” Ellen - We Protest the "national Consultation" by Returning an Empty Envelope," May 14, 2015. <http://www.helsinki.hu/ures-boritekkal-tiltakozunk-a-%E2%80%9Emzeti-konzultacio%E2%80%9D-ellen/>.
- Hungary Today. "Justice Minister under Fire from Opposition over Remarks on Migrants and Roma People," 20115.05.26,. <http://hungarytoday.hu/news/justice-minister-fire-opposition-remarks-migrants-roma-people-52965>.
- Hunyadi, Bulcsú, and Ildikó Barna. "Report on Xenophobia and Radical Nationalism in Hungary." European Center for Democracy Development, 2015.
- HVG.hu. "Boldogan Aláztak Meg Menekülteket a Rendőrök - Police Officers Humiliated Asylum Seekers with Joy," June 27, 2015. [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150627\\_Boldogan\\_alaztak\\_meg\\_menekulteket\\_a\\_rendo](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150627_Boldogan_alaztak_meg_menekulteket_a_rendo).
- . "Fotó: Kikerültek a Kétfarkú Kutya Plakátjai - Pictures: Billboards of the Two-Tailed Dog Party Are out," June 1, 2015. [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150701\\_Foto\\_Kikerultek\\_a\\_Ketfarku\\_Kutya\\_plakatja](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150701_Foto_Kikerultek_a_Ketfarku_Kutya_plakatja).
- . "Magyarország Lehet a Kitoloncolók Országá - Hungary Might Be the Country of Expulsion," January 26, 2015. [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150126\\_Magyarorszag\\_lehet\\_a\\_kitoloncolok\\_orzaga](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150126_Magyarorszag_lehet_a_kitoloncolok_orzaga).
- . "Orbán: 'Mire Magyarországra érkezik, Már Mind Megélhetősi Bevándorló' - Orbán: "By the Time They Arrive to Hungary, They Have All Become Subsistence Immigrants," June 15, 2015. [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150605\\_Orban\\_penteki\\_interju](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150605_Orban_penteki_interju).
- HZS. "Nemzeti Konzultáció: Tizenkét Kérdés a Bevándorlásról - National Consultation: Twelve Questions on Immigration," April 24, 2015. <http://mno.hu/belfold/nemzeti-konzultacio-tizenket-kerdes-a-bevandorlasrol-1283414>.
- Index. "Áder: Politikai Menekültek Jöhetnek, Gazdasági Bevándorlók Nem. - Áder: Political Refugees Are Allowed to Come, Economic Immigrants Are Not," June 4, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/06/04/ader\\_kulonbseget\\_kell\\_tenni\\_a-bevandorlok\\_kozott/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/06/04/ader_kulonbseget_kell_tenni_a-bevandorlok_kozott/).
- . "Jön Az újabb Nemzeti Konzultáció, Rogán Százezer Menekülttel Riogat - A New National Consultation Is Coming; Rogán Is Threatening 100,000 Refugees," February 6, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/02/06/fidesz\\_sajtotajekoztato/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/02/06/fidesz_sajtotajekoztato/).
- InfoRádió. "The Dutch Finance Minister Sees the Coming of Mini-Schengen," November 27, 2015.
- Juhász, Attila, Péter Kerekó, Lóránt Győri, and András Dezső. "'I Am Eurasian'", the Kremlin Connections of the Hungarian Far-Right." Political Capital Institute and Social Development Institute, 2015. [http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/PC\\_SDI\\_Boll\\_study\\_IamEurasian.pdf](http://www.politicalcapital.hu/wp-content/uploads/PC_SDI_Boll_study_IamEurasian.pdf).
- Kardos, Gábor. "LMP, Jobbik and Fidesz Come up with Completely New Concepts for the Future," October 6, 2015. [http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20151106\\_kardos\\_gabor\\_egesz\\_uj\\_jovokeppel\\_allt\\_elo\\_a\\_jobbik\\_az\\_lmp\\_es\\_a\\_fidesz](http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20151106_kardos_gabor_egesz_uj_jovokeppel_allt_elo_a_jobbik_az_lmp_es_a_fidesz).
- Kárpáthír.com. "A Macedonian-Serbian- Hungarian Joint Resolution Was Signed about the Common Border Protection," 2014.
- . "Berlin Is Afraid of Afghani Refugee Wave," 2015.
- . "Bulgaria Is Going to Protect Its Borders with Soldiers and Tanks," 2015.
- . "EU Summit: Hungary Belongs to a Separate Category," 2015.
- . "Merkel Was given and Ultimatum, She Has to Stop Migration," 2015.
- . "Merkel Was Openly Threatened," 2015.
- . "Merkely Is Accused of Being a Traitor," 2015.
- . "Putin: The Refugee Crisis Is the Result of America's Untrue Politics," 2015.
- . "The Hungarian-Serbian Border Might Be Closed down by a Four Meter High Fence," 2015.
- . "There Will Three Million More Refugees by the End of next Year," 2015.
- . "Those Coming from These Countries Are Not Entitled to Apply for Political Asylum Status," 2015.
- Kósa, András. "We Are Bound to Become the Black Sheep of the European Union," November 3, 2015. <http://vs.hu/kozelet/osszes/uton-vagyunk-afele-hogy-az-europai-unio-fekete-baranyai-legyunk-1103#!s3>.
- Kovács, Áron. "Hamarosan Visszafordíthatják a Menekülteket Szerbiába - Refugees Can Be Turned back to Serbia Soon," June 30, 2015. <http://vs.hu/kozelet/osszes/hamarosan-visszafordithatjak-a-menekulteket-szerbiaba-0630>.
- Közel-Kelet Jelene. "Demonstrations in Budapest against the West's- Syrian Intervention," 2013.
- Krekó, Péter, and Attila Juhász. "Desperate Search for the Lost Popularity Governmental Campaign against Refugees and Migrants in Hungary." Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Budapest, 2015.
- . "Honnan Jönnek, Hányan Vannak, Mit Csináljunk Velük? - Where Do They Come From, How Many Are They, and What Shall We Do With Them?" In *Abena, Sára, Chen és Ali Esélyei Magyarországon. Migráns Esélyek és Tapasztalatok - Chances of Abena, Sarah, Chen and Ali in Hungary. Chances and Experiences of Migrants*, edited by Endre Sík and Bori Simonovits. TÁRKI, 2011. [http://www.tarki.hu/hu/research/migrants/tarki\\_eia\\_tanulmányok\\_2011.pdf](http://www.tarki.hu/hu/research/migrants/tarki_eia_tanulmányok_2011.pdf).
- "Leleplezo.eu," n.d. <http://leleplezo.eu/>.
- Lengyel, Tibor. "Kósa Nem érti, Miért Nem Repülövel, Első Osztályon Jönnek a Menekültek - Kósa Does Not Understand Why Refugees Do Not Fly First Class," June 29, 2015. <http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20150629-kosa-nem-erti-miert-nem-repulovel-elso-osztalyon-jonnek-a-menekultek.html>.
- Maurice, Eric. "Visegrad States Meet on Refusal of Refugee Quotas," September 4, 2015. <https://euobserver.com/migration/130115>.
- Medved, Felicitá. "Proliferation of Migration Transition. Selected New EU Member Member States." European Liberal Forum, 2014.
- Medvegy, Gábor. "Ismerje Meg Rogán Antal és Kósa Lajos Csavaros észjárását a Menekültekről! - Let Us Introduce You the Twisted Reasoning of Antal Rogán and Lajos Kósa about Refugees," June 9, 2015. <http://24.hu/belfold/2015/06/09/ismerje-meg-rogan-antal-es-kosa-lajos-csavaros-eszjarasata-menekultekról/>.
- Melegh, Attila. "Hungary in the Context of Global Migration." *Eszmélet*, June 16, 2015. <http://eszmelet.hu/melegh-attila-magyarorszag-a-nemzetkozi-migracio-rendszereben/>.
- Messing, Vera, and Gábor Bernáth. "Bedarálva - A Menekültekkel Kapcsolatos Kormányzati Kampány és a Tőle Független Megszólalás Terepei." *Médiakutató* winter (2015). ,. [http://www.mediakutato.hu/cikk/2015\\_04\\_tel/01\\_menekultek\\_moralis\\_panic.pdf](http://www.mediakutato.hu/cikk/2015_04_tel/01_menekultek_moralis_panic.pdf).
- MTI. "A Fidesz Azonnal Hazaküldené a Menekülteket - Fidesz Would Immediately Send Refugees Back Home," January 25, 2015. [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150125\\_A\\_Fidesz\\_azonnal\\_hazakuldene\\_a\\_menekultek](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150125_A_Fidesz_azonnal_hazakuldene_a_menekultek).
- . "A Fidesz Szerint Konfliktusokhoz Vezet a Sok Illegális Bevándorló - According to Fidesz, Too Many Illegal Migrants Lead to Conflicts," April 27, 2015. [http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20150427\\_a\\_fidesz\\_szerint\\_konfliktusokhoz\\_vezet\\_a\\_sok\\_illegalis\\_bevandorlo](http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20150427_a_fidesz_szerint_konfliktusokhoz_vezet_a_sok_illegalis_bevandorlo).
- . "Európa Tanács: Túlszűfoltak a Magyar Menekültbefogadó állomások - European Council: Detention Centres in Hungary Are Overcrowded," June 9, 2015. [http://mandiner.hu/nyomtatas/20150609\\_europa\\_tanacs\\_tulszufoltak\\_a\\_magyar\\_menekultbefogado\\_allomasok](http://mandiner.hu/nyomtatas/20150609_europa_tanacs_tulszufoltak_a_magyar_menekultbefogado_allomasok).
- . "Fidesz-KDNP-Frakcióülés – Rogán: Induljon Nemzeti Konzultáció a Bevándorlásról! - Meeting of Fidesz-KDNP Parliamentary Group – Rogán: Let's Launch a National Consultation on Immigration," February 6, 2015. <http://szegedma.hu/hir/szeged/2015/02/fidesz-kdnp-frakcioules-rogan-induljon-nemzeti-konzultacio-a-bevandorlasrol.html>.
- . "Fidesz: Visegrád Cooperation May Become a Decisive Factor in Europe," October 10, 2015. [http://magyarhirnap.hu/cikk/37590/Fidesz\\_europai\\_tenyezove\\_valhat\\_a\\_visegrad\\_egyuttmkodes](http://magyarhirnap.hu/cikk/37590/Fidesz_europai_tenyezove_valhat_a_visegrad_egyuttmkodes).
- . "'Friends of Schengen' Enter the Stage," December 3, 2015. <http://www.inforadio.hu/hir/kulfold/schengen-baratai-szinre-lepnek-780111>.
- . "Hungary Will Also Pay, but It Won't Have to Admit Refugees," November 29, 2015. <http://www.vg.hu/kozelet/politika/magyarorszag-is-fizet-de-nem-kell-menekulteket-befogadnia-461702>.
- . "MSZP: Hatalmas Bukás Az Idegennyűlő Konzultáció - MSZP: Xenophobic Consultation Is a Total Failure," June 6, 2015. <http://mno.hu/belfold/mszp-hatalmas-bukas-az-idegennyulolo-konzultacio-1289599>.
- . "Schiffer: A Habony-Művekben Gyártották a Menekültellenes Panelt - Schiffer: Xenophobic Campaign Has Been Invented by Habony & Co," February 25, 2015. [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150125\\_Schiffer\\_a\\_Habonymuvekben\\_gyartottak\\_a\\_m](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150125_Schiffer_a_Habonymuvekben_gyartottak_a_m).
- Munkácsy, Márton. "A Bevándorlási Hivatal Megtalálta Orbán Gazdasági Menekültjeit - The Immigration Office Has Found Orbán's Economic Migrants," January 14, 2014. <http://vs.hu/kozelet/osszes/a-bevandorlasi-hivatal-megtalalta-orban-gazdasagi-menekultjeit-0114#!s1>.
- Német, Tamás. "A Roma Polgármesterek Számítottak Rá, Hogy Cigányozás Lesz a Bevándorlózásból - Roma Mayors Were Prepared That Anti-Migrant Rhetoric Would Turn into Anti-Roma Messages," May 22, 2015. <http://index.hu/belfold/2015/05/22/lakatos/>.
- Német, Zsolt. "The Visegrád Cooperation May Become a European Factor," October 10, 2015. <http://inforadio.hu/hir/>

- belfold/nemeth-zsolt-europai-tenyezove-valhat-a-visegrad-egyuttmukodes-764722.
- Newscenterhungary. "Egységes Hírközpont - Unified News Centre," n.d. <https://newscenterhungary.wordpress.com/2015/09/>.
- Nolan, Daniel. "Hungary Orders 100-Mile Serbia Border Fence to Keep out Migrants," June 17, 2015. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/hungary/11680840/Hungary-orders-100-mile-Serbia-border-fence-to-keep-out-migrants.html>.
- Nyilas, Gergely. "Elfogattam Magamat Az ásoththalmi úton - [I Got Myself Caught on the Road to Ásoththalom]," August 17, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/08/17/menekult\\_tabor\\_bentrol/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/08/17/menekult_tabor_bentrol/).
- Orientalista.hu. "Thoughts from Sheikh Abdul Rahman," 2015.
- Pányi, Szabolcs. "Balog Zoltán Elmondta: Nem Jönnek Be Neki Saját Kormány Plakátjai - Zoltán Balog Admitted His Own Government's Billboards Are Not His Style," June 10, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/06/10/balog\\_zoltan\\_elmondta\\_nem\\_jonnek\\_be\\_neki\\_sajat\\_kormanya\\_plakatjai/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/06/10/balog_zoltan_elmondta_nem_jonnek_be_neki_sajat_kormanya_plakatjai/).
- Parliament of Hungary. *Act CXXXV of 2010 on the Legal Harmonization of Certain Migration-Related Laws Was Adopted by Parliament on 22 November 2010 and Was Supplemented by Government Decree 290/2010 (XII.21.)*, 2010. <http://mkogy.jogtar.hu/?page=show&docid=a1000135.TV>.
- Political Capital Institute. "Analyses," 2015. <http://www.politicalcapital.hu/elemzeseink/nyilatkozatok/>.
- "Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's Presentation at the 26th Bálványos Summer Open University and Student Camp." *Government*, July 25, 2015. <http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-presentation-at-the-26th-balvanyos-summer-open-university-and-student-camp>.
- Prisichetzky, Réka, and Elvira Szabó. "Migránsok a Magyar Médiaiban Avagy a Bevándorlás és a Külföldiek 2011-Ben a Sajtó Szemével - Migrants in the Hungarian Media, Immigration and Foreigners from the Press's Perspective in 2011." Hungarian Helsinki Committee, 2011. [http://www.helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/Migransok\\_a\\_magyar\\_mediaban\\_HelsinkiBiz\\_2011.pdf](http://www.helsinki.hu/wp-content/uploads/Migransok_a_magyar_mediaban_HelsinkiBiz_2011.pdf).
- Publicus research. "Refugees Situation: Divided Country," 2015. [http://www.publicus.hu/blog/refugee\\_crisis\\_hungary\\_a\\_divided\\_country/](http://www.publicus.hu/blog/refugee_crisis_hungary_a_divided_country/).
- Rettman, Andrew. "Orban Demonises Immigrants at Paris March," January 12, 2015. <https://euobserver.com/justice/127172>.
- SEEMIG. "A Press Conference Was Organised at the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (H-1024 Budapest, Keleti Károly Utca 5-7.) on Wednesday, 15 October 2014 about Emigration from Hungary." October 15, 2014. <http://www.seemig.eu/downloads/pressroom/SEEMIGpressmaterialBudapest15October2014.pdf>.
- Sigmond, Árpád. "Orbán: Today, We Are Submitting a Petition against Mandatory Quotas to the European Court," December 3, 2015. <http://inforadio.hu/hir/belfold/orban-ma-nyujtjuk-be-a-kotelezo-kvotak-elleni-keresetet-az-europai-birosagra-779856>.
- Szabó, Péter, and Tamás Szilli. "Akik Itt élőködnek, Azok a Plakátokat Is Megértik - Parasites Who Are in Hungary Surely Understand the Billboards, Too," June 8, 2015. [http://index.hu/video/2015/06/08/plakat\\_korkerdes\\_parlament/](http://index.hu/video/2015/06/08/plakat_korkerdes_parlament/).
- TÁRKI. "Fidesz on the Rebound, MSZP in the Trough," October 28, 2015. [http://www.tarki.hu/hu/news/2015/kitekint/20151028\\_valasztas.html](http://www.tarki.hu/hu/news/2015/kitekint/20151028_valasztas.html).
- TH.B. "Hat Emberi Jogi Szervezet Tiltakozik a Menekültek Megbélyegzése Ellen - Six Human Rights NGOs Protest against Stigmatization of Refugees," February 5, 2015. [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/02/19/hat\\_emberi\\_jogi\\_szervezet\\_tiltakozik\\_a\\_menekultek\\_megbelyegzese\\_ellen/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/02/19/hat_emberi_jogi_szervezet_tiltakozik_a_menekultek_megbelyegzese_ellen/).
- "The Visegrad Group: The Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia | Joint Statement of the Visegrad Group Countries." Text, December 3, 2015. <http://www.visegradgroup.eu/calendar/2015/joint-statement-of-the-151204>.
- Tóth, Gergely. "Ki Mondta? Rogán Antal Vagy Vona Gábor? - Who Said That, Antal Rogán or Gábor Vona?," January 12, 2015. [http://index.hu/mindekozben/poszt/2015/01/12/ki\\_mondta\\_rogan\\_antal\\_vagy\\_vona\\_gabor/](http://index.hu/mindekozben/poszt/2015/01/12/ki_mondta_rogan_antal_vagy_vona_gabor/).
- Traynor, Ian. "Europe Split over Refugee Deals as Germany Leads Breakaway Coalition," November 20, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/29/germanys-plan-to-strike-eu-wide-refugee-sharing-deal-stalls>.
- UNHCR. "Hungary as a Country of Asylum. Observations on the Situation of Asylum-Seekers and Refugees in Hungary." *Ref-world*, 2012. <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4f9167db2.html>.
- . "Hungary Urged to Refrain from Policies and Practices That Promote Intolerance and Hatred," n.d. <http://www.unhcr.org/5677cf666.html>.
- . "UNHCR Calls on Hungary to Protect, Not Persecute, Refugees," May 8, 2015. <http://www.unhcr-centraleurope.org/en/news/2015/unhcr-calls-on-hungary-to-protect-not-persecute-refugees.html>.
- Van Renssen, Sonja. "East European Countries Place Bombshell under EU Climate Policy," May 13, 2015. <http://www.energypost.eu/east-european-countries-place-bombshell-eu-climate-policy/>.
- Vastagbőr. "Ellenplakátokra Gyűjtünk, Adakozz! - We Collect Money for Counter-Billboards," June 8, 2015. <http://vastagbor.atlatszo.hu/2015/06/08/ellenplakatokra-gyujtunk-adakozz/>.
- Windisch, Judit. "A Befogadóállomás Rosszabb, Mint a Legtöbb Börtön - Detention Centres Are Worse than Most Prisons," June 30, 2015. <http://vs.hu/kozelet/osszes/a-befogadoallomas-rosszabb-mint-a-legtobb-borton-0630#!s2>.
- Zsaru Magazin. "Fokozódó Határhelyzet - Intensifying Situation at the Border," February 4, 2015. <http://www.police.hu/hirek-es-informaciok/legfrissebb-hireink/zsaru-magazin/fokozodo-hatarhelyzet>.





The authors of this study analyse the Hungarian Government's rhetoric and policy measures with regard to refugee, asylum and migration issues. They describe the historical context, supply valuable data, and ask in what way the Government has influenced public discourse. The study shows how democratic opposition parties, the far-right, and civil society actors have responded to the Government's anti-refugee policies. The authors also discuss the question how the so-called 'refugee crisis' has affected regional cooperation.

