

Europe's Far-Right Mainstream with the Meloni-Von der Leyen Political Alliance

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There was a time in Europe when the slightest association with anything resembling Fascism (even if taken out of context) could ruin a politician's career.

Try to imagine a Prime Minister's own party's youth wing throwing literal Fascist salutes during a mass demonstration in a major European capital and nothing happening to this leader. Now imagine the same Prime Minister remains an ally of the incumbent European Commission President after that. Well, that's Meloni in a nutshell. With the Meloni-Von der Leyen political alliance, far-right politics and even neo-Fascism has now [officially become mainstream](#) in Europe - as long as it supports the European Union bloc itself and the Atlantic Alliance.

Anchal Vohra, a columnist at Foreign Policy, wrote last week on how Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni went from "fringe player" to "EU power broker". Unlike other European leaders who are often labeled as "far-right", she has vocally defended NATO against Moscow and, as Vohra describes it, she "even proved to be useful to the EU establishment when she convinced Hungarian President Viktor Orban to sign off on an aid package for Ukraine in February."

Meloni's government is in a coalition with Lega, the populist party led by Matteo Salvini, who is Italy's Vice-Premier. Today's Lega party is the informal successor of the far-right Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza della Padania. Meloni's [own party has openly Fascist connections](#), as seen in January, when members of it [publicly performed mass Roman salutes](#) in Rome during an event, which prompted indignation. Even so, she has thus far kept good relations with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who is the lead candidate of the European People's Party (EPP), the continent's largest conservative bloc.

Speaking at the Maastricht Debate, von der Leyen suggested she could cooperate with the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), who are known to be Eurosceptic, and are backed by Meloni. The next European Parliament could be the most “right-wing” in years, according to [polls](#), so von der Leyen’s statement is actually not so surprising. In this scenario, Meloni could become “a parallel power center in a right-leaning European Parliament and yield unmatched influence on the commission president to push the body’s policy further right”, writes Vohra.

If one remembers the September 2023 Yaroslav Hunka scandal, it is easy to see that the phenomenon goes beyond Europe and the West is ready to embrace, whitewash or normalize even Nazism, as incredible as it may sound. 98-year old Mr. Hunka fought in the SS, the military arm of the German Nazi party (SS Division Galicia for Ukrainians) and yet was [invited to speak](#) at the House of Commons of Canada as a hero, where he boasted of having fought communism and received a standing ovation. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Recently, Canada’s memorial to Waffen-SS “Galicia” Division Ukrainian soldiers was [removed](#) after protests.

For a decade now, the West has been aiding, funding and whitewashing the most violent and radicalized and often [openly neo-Nazi](#) armed groups in Ukraine, which became a [global hub](#) for the far-right and White nationalists, according to TIME magazine.

Ironically, I wrote in June last year on how a [Neo-Mccarthyist wave](#) in Europe (not just in [Poland](#)) was persecuting dissident political parties, not just the far-right, but within the so-called Populist camp as well – for alleged ties with Russia.

This closely mirrors post-Maidan developments in Ukraine: in the Eastern European country there has been a war [against part of the Orthodox Church](#), and [at least 11 political parties](#) have been banned so far over their “pro-Russia” stances. Volodymyr Ishchenko, a research associate at the Institute of East European Studies (Freie Universität Berlin), has [explained](#) that, since the 2014 Maidan revolution, “pro-Russia” has been in fact used as a label to marginalize “anyone calling for Ukraine’s neutrality” as well as “state-developmental, anti-Western, illiberal, populist, left-wing, and many other discourses.” In a similar manner, current anti-Russian feelings in the West also feed on the tradition of anti-communist speech and extremist nationalism.

There is in fact no contradiction between a European war against political “dissidents” and the mainstreamization of part of the far-right. Meloni, for instance, has changed her critical stance on the current European bloc, perhaps upon realizing that she needs it.

Rather than being part of a radical/populist takeover of Europe, Giorgia Meloni, who (as Anchal Vohra describes her) acts as a “bridge” between “mainstream conservatives” and the “far-right”, is part not just of the (real) “fascistification” of Europe: it is also about the co-opting and the domestication of populists, radicals, far-rightists and any currents that happen to oppose European alignment with US-led NATO (today, for a number of reason, those are found mainly in the European right). In other words, what we currently have is the Maidanization of Europe, and a radicalized [NATOized](#) continent.

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