

Analysis

The rebirth of the European right can be a success

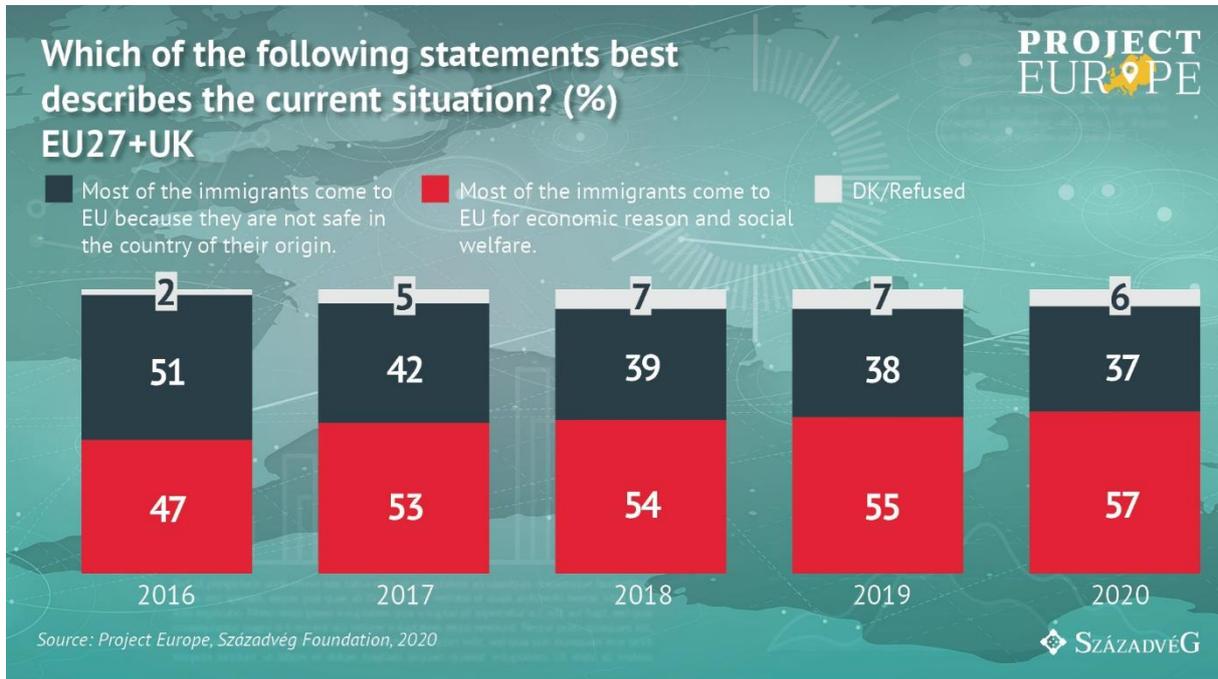
Recently, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán held talks with Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki and Matteo Salvini, President of the Italian League, on the future of Europe and possible cooperation between right-wing forces. As a result of the meeting, Fidesz, Morawiecki-led Law and Justice (PiS) and Salvini's party, the League, decided to draw up a joint program in which, among other things, the protection of national sovereignty, the support of families and the preservation of Europe's Christian roots, as well as the rejection of illegal migration and anti-Semitism play a central role. Based on the results of the research of Project Europe, Századvég examined how the European public thinks about these values and objectives, and whether there is a place for politics based on these principles on our continent.

Europeans rather support families instead of illegal migration

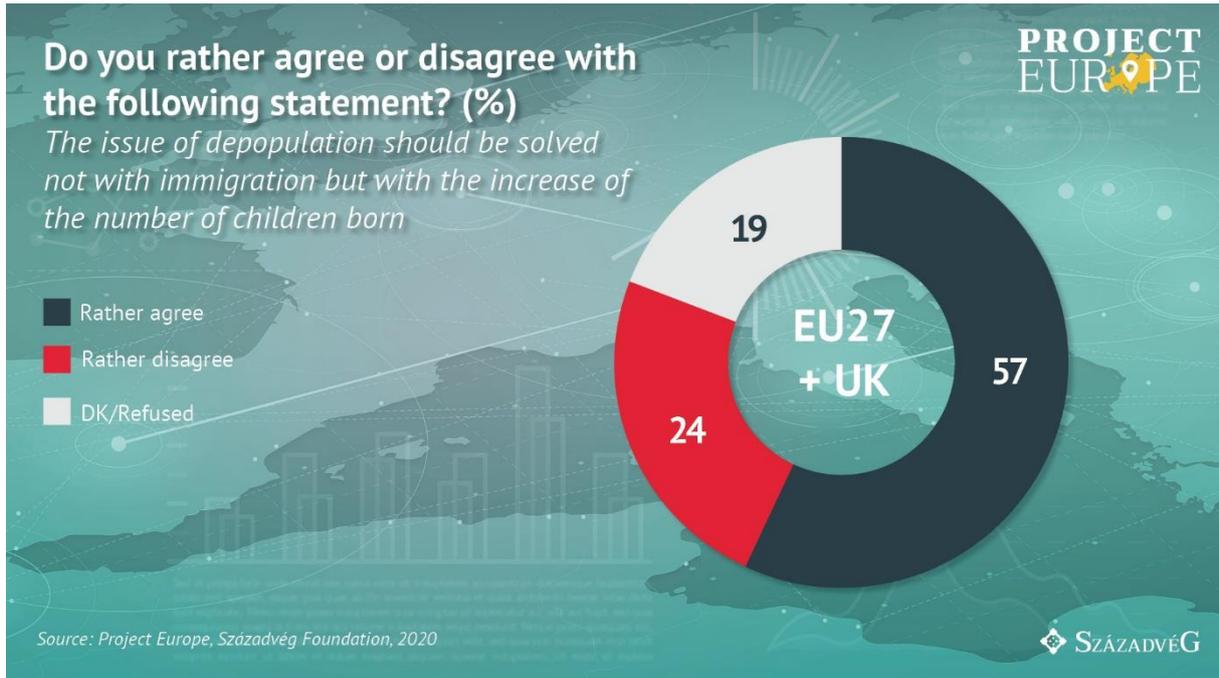
Since 2015, the challenges posed by illegal migration have been given greater prominence in European public discourse. Across the continent, left-liberal forces and right-wing parties shifting to the left – expecting potential future voters in the masses flowing into Europe – have had pro-immigration rhetoric for years.

At the same time, a survey of *Project Europe* conducted by Századvég covering the 27 Member States and the United Kingdom reveals that **three-quarters (75 percent) of European citizens are concerned about the influx of illegal migrants**. Between 2016 and 2020, the proportion of those who say that most migrants come to Europe for economic purposes and in the hope of social benefits increased from 47 to 57 percent. It is questionable to what extent the

Brussels elite, articulating pro-immigration political interests, takes into account these reservations of Europeans in the context of illegal migration.

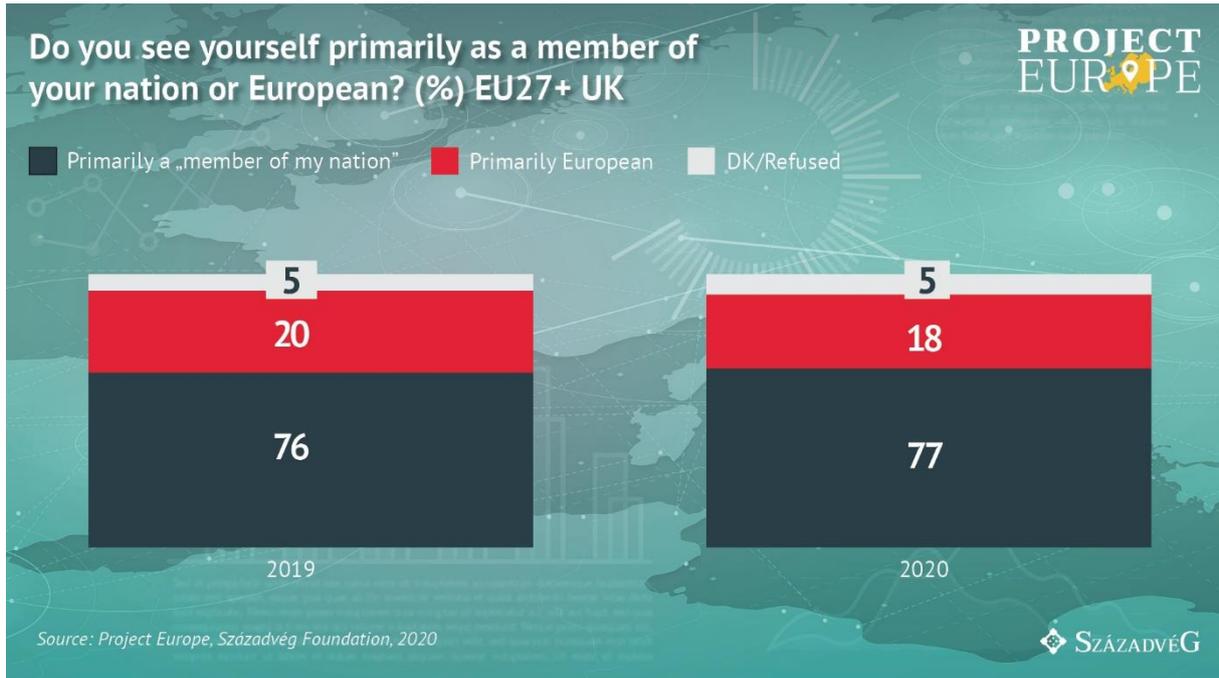


For decades, supporting and protecting families played a prominent role in the politics of European Christian democratic parties. However, it can be observed that parallel with the dynamic growth of voters with immigrant background, the institution of the family has devalued in the eyes of many right-wing politicians in Western Europe, and, like the left, they believe that migration is a means of halting population decline. However, according to the survey of Századvég, more than two-thirds (69 percent) of EU and UK respondents prefer to rely on internal resources and support local families rather than encourage immigration. Looking specifically at demographic change, **57 percent of Europeans believe that population decline should be halted not by facilitating migration but by encouraging childbearing.** While there is a clear electoral demand for consistent representation of family-friendly policies across Europe, support for migration will play a more significant role in the policies of the European Commission and the European Parliament.

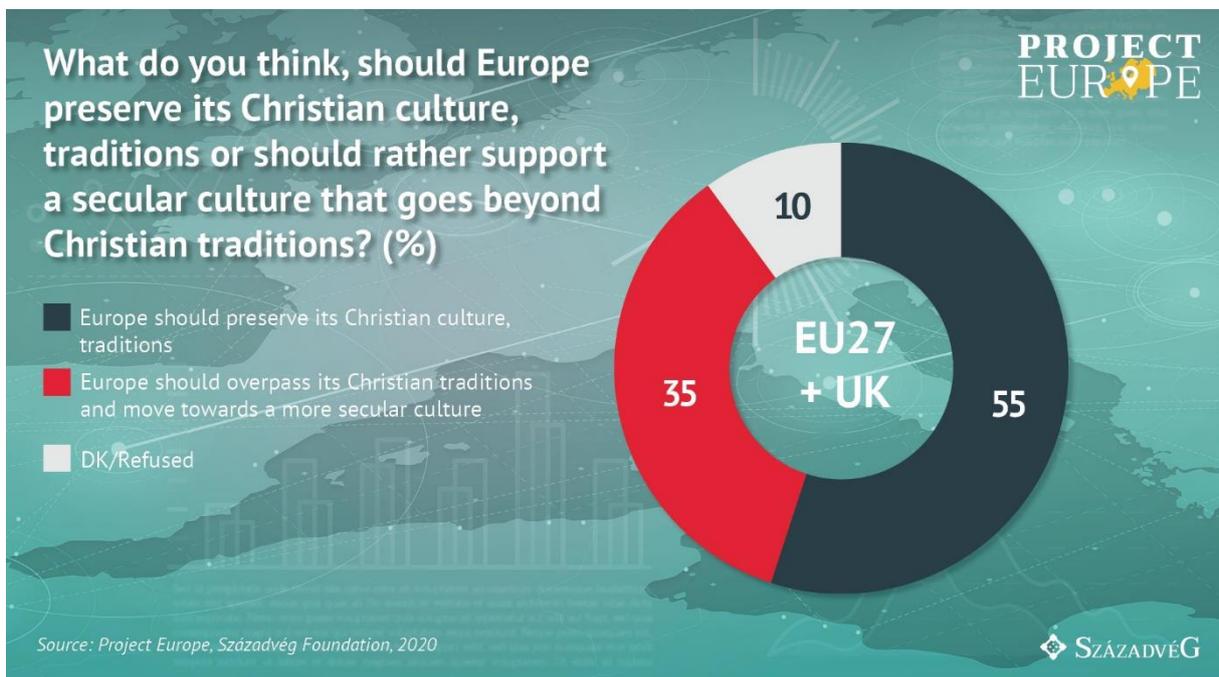


The pillars of Europe: strong nation-states and Christianity

Left-liberal voices aiming at delegating additional powers to the bodies of Brussels (and at the expense of nation states) in order to realize the concept of the “United States of Europe) appeared – also in Hungary – especially in the campaign of the 2019 European Parliament elections. Research by Századvég points out that a relative majority of European citizens (49 percent) would give more power to Member States over Brussels, and between 2019 and 2020 the proportion of those who consider themselves primarily European rather than belonging to their own country fell from 20 percent to 18 percent. With more than three-quarters (77 percent) of EU and British respondents prioritising national commitment, it can be stated that **no European identity has been developed that would override the importance of national identity**, even though this would be a fundamental condition for a “European superstate”.



In addition to strong nation-states, the preservation of Christian roots is a key element of Europe’s traditional image. According to a survey of Századvég, **the majority of European respondents (55 percent) would preserve Europe’s Christian culture and traditions**, while the proportion of those who support going beyond Christianity is estimated at 35 percent. The right-wing forces shifting to the left in Western Europe, the encouragement of Muslim-based migration, inevitably led to a weakening of commitment to Christianity in Europe and reversing this process could become a priority for the emerging Hungarian-Polish-Italian right-wing alliance.



Fight against anti-Semitism

Historically, both left and right in Europe treated Jewish communities as natural allies and considered the rejection of anti-Semitic manifestations as a political principle. However, the development of current political interests and the need to meet the often-anti-Semitic masses arriving in Europe have also brought changes in this area. In light of this, it is less surprising that, according to the poll conducted by Századvég, 24 percent of Europeans agree that they do not feel or would not feel safe as a Jew. In addition, one in four Europeans (25 percent of respondents) considers that there is discrimination between Jewish and non-Jewish people. It is easy to see that **a new European right-wing community could open up new perspectives for guaranteeing the security of Jews, and for a more effective fight against anti-Semitism in Europe**. Nor should it be forgotten that the Hungarian Jews have been experiencing a renaissance since 2010, indicating that consistent implementation of declared values leads to success.

Based on all this, it can be stated that the European Commission and the European Parliament are not aware of several explicit electoral demands. **Since the formerly significant Christian democratic, centre-right forces started to comply with the wishes of the left-liberal wing, a wide segment of electorates has been left without party representation** at European level, as they have not fully adjusted to the shift in party structures. The emerging right-wing community of values thus has a realistic chance of reaching out to voters who continue to consider the preservation of Europe's traditional image to be important.

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Századvég Foundation