

MIGRATION STUDIES

DOI: 10.46340/eppd.2024.11.5.5

CONTEMPORARY MIGRATION IN THE TIMES OF FAR-RIGHT

Iryna Matsyshyna¹, D.Sc. in Political Science

¹Vasyl' Stus Donetsk National University, Ukraine

Email: i.matsyshyna@donnu.edu.ua

Citation: Matsyshyna, I. (2024). Contemporary Migration in the Times of Far-Right. *Evropský politický a právní diskurz*, 11, 5, 43-52. <https://doi.org/10.46340/eppd.2024.11.5.5>

Abstract

The modern trend of the emergence of far-right movements is related not only to countries with totalitarian regimes. Recent elections have demonstrated that countries with democratic systems today have a demand for the radicalization of politics. Socio-economic factors in the context of migration policy are not fully implemented by liberal tools, which have proven inadequate in regulating social development in countries open to migrants. This creates a values gap regarding equality between the status of the local population and that of state-supported migrants.

On the other hand, Russia's information policy deliberately creates a negative image of Ukrainian refugees, exporting a culture of hatred towards national minorities and migrants. This article examines how this impacts the formulation of a unified European policy strategy. The research hypothesis posits that the threat posed by the trend towards far-right movements is not primarily a result of migration policy, which has been reloaded following Russia's large-scale war against Ukraine. Rather, it is a reaction to the formation of a geopolitical international order through liberal tools that have proven incapable of addressing the challenges of racism and nationalism in European countries.

Issues of social protection from poverty and unemployment, the devaluation of multiculturalism, the artificiality of inclusivity, political corruption, and populism have prompted a reevaluation of liberal ideas, which have taken on new, decisive characteristics in neoliberalism. However, this has not stopped racist, national, and religious intolerance, which, under migration policies aimed at supporting and protecting migrants, has merely become a matter of time before open far-right calls erupt.

Analysis of resolutions and votes in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) has allowed for the establishment of a certain voting logic on migration issues in relation to the internal political climate of countries that refrain from integrating migrants into their national space. This may indicate that with the rise of far-right sentiments, such trends could increase.

Keywords: far-right, migrants, migration policy, PACE, resolutions, war of Russia against Ukraine.

Introduction

The large-scale war of Russia against Ukraine has posed a challenge to the migration policy of European Union countries. It became clear that a reboot of the overall strategy for migration inclusivity was necessary, as European countries were unprepared for the large influx of forcibly displaced refugees due to Russia's aggression.

In March 2022, a 10-point plan was presented to enhance European coordination regarding the reception of people fleeing the war in Ukraine. Among the proposed solutions were the creation of an EU

© Matsyshyna, I. 2024. This is an Open Access article, distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International. It gives an opportunity to read, to load, to copy out, to expand, to print, to search, to quote or to refer to the full text of the article in this Journal

platform for registration, coordination of transport and information hubs, development of national emergency plans, and the establishment of unified guidelines for the reception of unaccompanied minors (European Commission, 2022).

According to official EU data, among the countries that have officially provided support to Ukrainian citizens on their territory are Germany and Poland. By mid-2024, the support policies of these countries not only continued but also strengthened. For example, in September 2023, Germany granted asylum to 1,156,225 Ukrainians, and by June 2024, this number increased to 1,306,505 Ukrainians. Similarly, Poland also increased its assistance to Ukrainians from 955,355 to 961,180 (Eurostat, 2024). In comparison, Denmark, Estonia, France, Austria, Bulgaria, and Sweden reduced the amount of assistance to Ukrainians, while Norway, Finland, Portugal, the Netherlands, and Belgium increased their support in accordance with each country's internal policies (see Fig. 1).

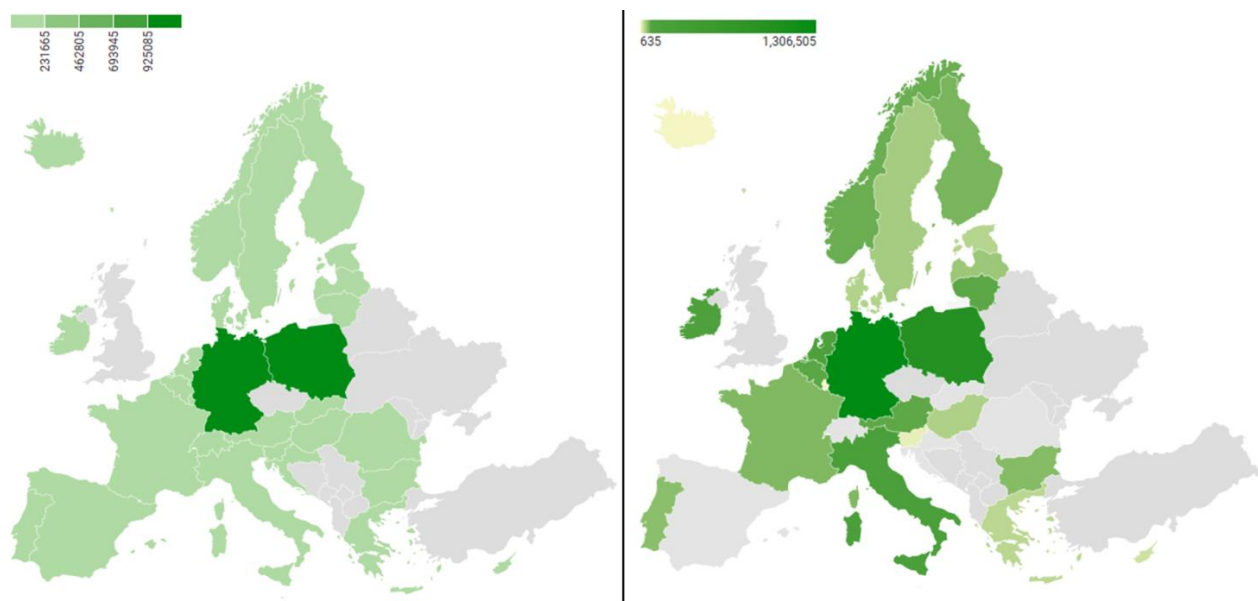


Fig. 1. Comparative Visualization of European Countries Providing Support to Ukrainians in 2023 and 2024

To investigate the changes in migration policy attitudes in European countries and to establish the rhetoric of hate towards migrants that has emerged amid changing globalization processes, sessions and reports from the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe were analyzed, focusing on migration policy issues from 2022 to 2024. This analysis helped identify countries that are quite cautious about integrating migrants into state policy and to establish a political logic related to the rise of far-right sentiments in these countries.

Methodology

The research is based on the analysis of sessions of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), which addressed issues related to the causes of external and internal migration, child migrants who were forced to migrate without parents, protection and safety standards, local attitudes towards migrants, and threats leading to the escalation of conflicts. These conflicts can occur both within countries and at the international level, potentially triggering a new wave of migration processes.

The document analysis helped establish the context of discussions and voting, which, until 2023, occurred solely within the socio-economic sphere. The large-scale war of Russia against Ukraine, along with Russia's informational interference in the domestic politics of countries that provided support to Ukrainians, shifted the focus of migration policy to the political context.

It was found that from 2022 to 2024, the issue of refugees was raised in the context of migration and integration policies in European countries, critiques of antisemitism and Islamism, the involvement of third

countries in providing protection, healthcare, labor, and rights for migrants, as well as the role of media and society in combating hate speech in the public sphere. However, starting in 2023, the topic of migrants began to acquire a political context, primarily due to the electoral process.

Mapping the work of PACE sessions allowed for the visualization of geographical patterns in attitudes towards migrants, as well as tracking changes in policies supporting or opposing the integration of migrants against the backdrop of electoral processes occurring in European countries. It can be a tool for analyzing and predicting political decision-making mechanisms in future migration processes.

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)

The functioning principle of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) is based on key tasks that involve balancing the power of representatives from European countries. This body consists of 306 parliamentarians from 46 member states, serving as an advisory body to the Council of Europe. However, the issues discussed and the decisions made reflect the overall attitude towards international problems. While resolutions and recommendations may be ignored by the international community, they carry political weight in the development of a unified strategy for promoting democracy.

As stated on the official website, in the Parliamentary Assembly, the number of representatives and, accordingly, votes is determined by the size of the country. The largest number is 18, while the smallest is 2. Ukraine and Poland each have 12 representatives, Monaco and Liechtenstein each have 2 representatives, Bulgaria has 6, and Lithuania has 4. The meetings also include 18 observers from the parliaments of Canada, Mexico, and Israel. Similarly, 2 representatives from the Turkish community in Cyprus (Northern Cyprus) have the same rights, although they formally belong to the delegation of the Republic of Cyprus.

Currently, PACE has 9 committees, including the Committee on Migration, Refugees, and Displaced Persons. As noted on the official PACE website, "the committee shall consider all relevant matters related to migration, asylum, and displacement, in Europe and other relevant parts of the world, focusing in particular on the persons affected and their rights" (PACE, 2024a). In January 2022, Ukrainian Member of Parliament Oleksii Honcharenko was elected as the chair of the Committee.

One of the important functions of this body is monitoring the fulfillment of commitments. The oversight of member states' compliance with their obligations in the field of human rights and democratic standards transforms this body into «a watchdog of democracy» (a phrase previously associated with journalism). PACE can establish committees and missions to assess situations in countries and provide recommendations for improvement. Additionally, PACE actively collaborates with other institutions of the Council of Europe, such as the Committee of Ministers, as well as with international organizations to ensure a comprehensive approach to addressing issues. During public debates and hearings, PACE is capable of drawing attention to and shaping the agenda on important matters.

For example, on January 25, 2022, a vote took place regarding the challenges to the credentials of the Russian parliamentary delegation on significant grounds, initiated by Ukraine. This concerned the deprivation of Russia's voting rights due to violations of rights and freedoms within Russia itself. Despite the Commission's conclusions reiterating position on the non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea and expressing "deep concern about the escalating tensions which threaten security in Europe and the Russian Federation's build-up of troops along the border with Ukraine" (PACE, 2022, 2422/2), the ratification to revoke Russia's voting rights did not occur. However, nearly a month later, on February 24, when Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the beginning of the invasion of Ukraine, the stance towards Russia began to change.

On March 15, during an extraordinary session, a conclusion titled "Consequences of the Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine" was adopted. As a result of this conclusion, Russia was expelled from the Council of Europe. This was supported by 216 delegates, with 0 against and three abstentions (Poland, Germany, Bulgaria).

PACE migration policy and social policy

Since the beginning of the full-scale war in Ukraine, debates have taken place, and Resolution 2448 was adopted in June 2022, titled "Humanitarian consequences and internal and external displacement in connection with the aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine" (77 votes in favor, 0 against, 1 abstention (Switzerland)). The discussion focused on humanitarian assistance and the protection of the rights and needs of Ukrainian citizens in Council of Europe countries that require support. At the level of European support, the Assembly strongly condemned the forced deportation by the Russian

Federation of over 1 million Ukrainians from temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to its own territory under the guise of "humanitarian evacuation," noting with alarm that among them were 183,000 children (PACE, 2022b, 2448/2).

The Assembly urged member states to develop action plans to address the humanitarian crisis in order to avoid the misunderstandings and chaos that were observed in the early days of the war. Recommendations were made for those states that do not have a tradition of receiving migrants to reflect on their recent experiences to anticipate a paradigm shift (PACE, 2022b, 2448/14). It was also suggested to develop an integrated approach to assessing the humanitarian needs of Ukraine. In this context, support from international organizations, particularly the UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), is extremely important (PACE, 2022b, 2448/15).

Thus, a call was made for joint cooperation and the unification of efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian migrants. However, this was only the beginning of significant work, as the realities of the war demonstrated the imperfection of European countries in responding to mass population migration within a short timeframe.

During 2022-2024, PACE discussed issues related to the humanitarian crisis caused by the war, access to housing, educational and medical services, as well as strategies for promoting tolerance and mutual respect for migrants in European society. Recommendations were proposed to strengthen cooperation, along with suggestions for financial, psychological, and integration support (e.g., see PACE, 2023c, 2503). Vulnerable population groups were also identified, for which a support strategy was developed. This can be illustrated by the issue of Ukrainian children who were forced to arrive in European countries unaccompanied by adults.

In June 2022, Resolution 2449 was adopted, titled "Protection and alternative care for unaccompanied and separated migrant and refugee children" (77 votes in favor, 0 against, 2 abstentions – Switzerland and Austria). The main issue addressed the priority of ensuring the safety of children who have been forced to remain abroad without their parents. It was noted that the ongoing aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has resulted in horrific consequences for the mass displacement of migrant children or refugee children, many of whom are unaccompanied or separated from their families (PACE, 2022c, 2449/3).

It was emphasized that in the context of the emergency concerning the rights and safety of Ukrainian children, there is a constant need for member states to strengthen a coordinated approach at the European level among countries of first arrival, transit countries, and host countries to ensure the safety of children. This should occur through the immediate identification, registration, and provision of all protection guarantees in quality alternative care facilities (PACE, 2022c, 2449/13.).

The forced migration of the Ukrainian population, occurring both to European countries and Russia, automatically placed Ukrainian children in unequal rights situations. Russia has repeatedly deliberately substituted the term "deportation" with "migration". The illegal forced deportation of Ukrainian children from temporarily occupied territories became the focus of attention at the UN Security Council meeting on April 5, 2023. Over 50 countries issued a joint statement regarding these illegal actions by Russian authorities. The joint statement highlighted certain facts: "The Russian authorities have detained and forcibly deported over 19,500 Ukrainian children from their homes in Ukraine to Russia. This included the deliberate separation of children from their parents and the abduction of children from orphanages before sending these children to the Russian Federation" (Suspilne. Novyny, 2023).

On April 27, 2023, the Parliamentary Assembly unanimously adopted Resolution 2495, titled "Deportations and forcible transfers of Ukrainian children and other civilians to Russian Federation or to Ukrainian territories temporarily occupied: create conditions for their safe return, stop these crimes and punish the perpetrators." The resolution states that the forced displacement of the civilian population of Ukraine, particularly children under the age of 17, to the Russian Federation or to temporarily occupied Ukrainian territories is a particularly serious indication of this aggression (PACE, 2023a, 2495/1).

The practice of illegal deportation of Ukrainians to the Russian Federation from the temporarily occupied territories in Donetsk and Luhansk regions was initiated even before the full-scale aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, in the form of deportation to the Russian Federation. This included children from orphanages and children with disabilities from specialized institutions. Since then, this practice has intensified and evolved, and it is clearly planned and systematically organized as part of state policy (PACE, 2023a, 2495/4).

In May 2023, during a joint briefing in Rome with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky emphasized that the abduction of Ukrainian children by Russia is a particularly sensitive issue for him and all Ukrainians. "Thousands of Ukrainian children have been forcibly

taken to the territory of the aggressor state. There is complete analytical evidence – it is known that 19,393 children have been taken, with specific names, surnames, and dates of their abduction. They have been stolen by Russia" (UNIAN, 2023).

In January 2024, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, Dunja Mijatović, highlighted in her annual report during the winter session of PACE: "Some Ukrainian children have received Russian citizenship and have been adopted by Russian families. This practice appears to be supported by Russian officials at the highest level. Children who have been separated from their parents during an emergency humanitarian situation cannot be considered orphans and, therefore, cannot be adopted" (Ukrinform, 2024).

Thus, the EU migration policy to protect the rights, safety and integration of Ukrainian children was aimed at protecting and preserving identity, while the Russian policy of separating children and propaganda around their adoption is aimed at destroying Ukrainian identity. While Europeans discussed procedures for the rapid identification and registration of Ukrainian children who were forced to migrate, in Russia these children were forcibly removed, leaving them in a vulnerable position without a homeland, without parents, and without a biographical history. By separating children from their relatives and implementing a program of adoption of Ukrainian children, Russia has not only rejected the possibility of returning these children home but has openly demonstrated a forced policy of assimilation into Russian culture.

PACE Migration Policy and Political Elections

Since the fall of 2023, the rhetoric of PACE sessions regarding migration policy has begun to acquire a political context. Issues of xenophobia, intolerance, and aggressive actions towards migrants, which have arisen as a consequence of electoral campaigns, are being raised. At the 21st session of the PACE Assembly on October 10, 2023, dedicated to the challenge of far-right ideology to democracy and human rights in Europe, debates took place regarding the threats to democratic institutions posed by far-right extremists. The draft resolution emphasizes that politicians and political parties must be at the forefront of responding to far-right extremism, both in publicly defending human rights and democratic principles and in unequivocally rejecting all forms of racism and intolerance, hate speech, incitement to racial hatred, and aggressive actions.

In the explanatory note by Samad Seyidov, "far-right extremist ideology" is defined as follows: "There is not a universally agreed definition of far-right extremism. As an umbrella term, it can encompass a heterogeneous set of ideologies, beliefs and narratives. For the purposes of this report, three defining characteristics are outlined, that are to all be present to fulfil classification as far-right extremism. First, a belief in some form of natural inequality or hierarchy between peoples or groups of people, which may include nationalism, nativism, racism, xenophobia, antisemitism, Islamophobia, and homophobia. Second, a belief in authoritarianism. Third, an implicit or explicit aim to destroy the democratic system" (PACE, 2023e, 15826/9).

According to his remarks, the difference between right-wing radicals and far-right extremists is that the former recognize parliamentary democracy, are hostile to liberal democracy, and publicly condemn violence. Far-right extremists legitimize violence, have sympathizers, but lack official membership, a central headquarters, or a single leader. "Neo-Nazism and skinhead culture being overtaken in certain States by anti-Islam and anti-migrant activism as the most prevalent topics of far-right extremism" (PACE, 2023e, 15826/18).

On October 15, 2023, parliamentary elections were held in Poland, where the ruling party "Law and Justice" (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość), led by Jarosław Kaczyński, received the majority of votes (35.4%). The second place was taken by the "Civic Coalition" (Koalicja Obywatelska) of former Prime Minister Donald Tusk (30.7%). Three other political forces also won seats: the "Third Way" Coalition (Trzecia Droga), the "New Left Party" (Nowa Lewica) (or "Lewica"), and the "Confederation of Freedom and Independence" (Konfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość).

Simultaneously with the parliamentary elections, a referendum was held, with the last of four questions addressing the admission of thousands of illegal immigrants from the Middle East and Africa to Poland under the EU's forced relocation mechanism. In contrast to the parliamentary elections, which saw a participation rate of 73%, the referendum demonstrated a low turnout (40%). Holding the referendum on the same day as the parliamentary elections allowed the ruling party to use the referendum campaign to promote the party's image.

Just a month later, the PACE report on the observation of the parliamentary elections noted that "the referendum was intended to mobilise voters sympathetic to the ruling party, to polarise electoral

discourse on issues that do not constitute a real social problem and to circumvent campaign financing regulations and other restrictive measures applied to the parliamentary elections" (PACE, 2023d, 15861/34).

The report also stated that during the electoral campaign, "PiS [Prawo i Sprawiedliwość] and Confederation used anti-migrant narratives, some of which were highly negative and at times xenophobic and misogynistic. Personal verbal attacks against the main party leaders were widespread" (PACE, 2023d, 15861/60).

Thus, the topic of migration in the parliamentary elections in Poland was one of the main themes, consciously polarizing Polish society. In the same PACE report, it was noted in paragraph 62 that "the Confederation's main messages revolved around limiting the country's welfare system and restricting aid to Ukraine and refugees, while Third Way focused on reinstating national unity and breaking the PiS-KO [Prawo i Sprawiedliwość-Koalicja Obywatelska], dual polar political spectrum, and the New Left on social issues and women's rights. Some members of the Roman Catholic clergy campaigned for the ruling party, which, although not prohibited, was seen by many as a clear advantage" (PACE, 2023d, 15861/62).

On January 23, 2024, a discussion took place regarding the report by Pierre-Alain Friedez on migration and asylum in electoral campaigns and its implications for the reception of migrants and their rights. It was noted that "the Assembly is concerned at the intensification of a partial and biased treatment of the issue of migration and asylum in election campaigns which legitimises political proposals aimed at blocking access to rights of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, in contravention of the Council of Europe's standards" (PACE, 2024b, 2525/2).

The use of migration issues during electoral campaigns has recently taken the form of hate speech, posing a threat to the safety of people of foreign descent. It was suggested "to develop a code of conduct for electoral candidates and/or for the media to combat narratives which run counter to the European Court of Human Rights case law on regulating freedom of expression and the prohibition of hate speech" (PACE, 2024b, 2525/8.1).

Referring to a number of recommendations of the European Parliament and the Council (e.g., CM/Rec(2022)16[1]) from the Committee of Ministers to Member States on the fight against hate speech (European Commission, 2022b, 3), the need for self-regulation of private and online media regarding the presence migrants and refugees in the media and refraining from spreading false information.

"The Assembly calls for greater pan-European co-operation against hate speech and discrimination covering, *inter alia*, the treatment of the theme of migration and asylum during election campaigns" (PACE, 2024b, 2525/14). In the recommendation of the Council of Ministers of the EU, paragraph 41 emphasizes that "the media and journalists should, in their efforts to provide accurate and reliable information, avoid derogatory stereotypical depiction of individuals, groups and communities and give voice to diverse groups and communities in society, especially when reporting on matters of particular public interest and during election periods" (European Commission, 2022b, 41). Resolution 2525, which expresses concern about biased treatment of migrants during election campaigns, was supported by 68 deputies (53 votes "for", 7 "against", 9 "abstentions"). It is interesting that Germany gave 3 votes "for" and 2 "against", France – 5 votes "for" and 2 "against"; Italy 5 votes "for", 6 "abstentions". The Czech Republic, Finland and Sweden cast one vote "against". Countries with an ambiguous position on this resolution were highlighted in yellow on the map (Fig. 2).

Despite the condemnation of hate speech during electoral campaigns, the commitment to ensuring the rights and freedoms of migrants, and the call for enhanced international cooperation among European countries, the Resolution remains advisory in nature. The explanatory memorandum by Pierre-Alain Friedez to this Resolution indicates that political calls have shifted towards the center-right sector of the political landscape. Examples include "Alternative für Deutschland" in Germany, "UKIP" in the United Kingdom, "ZP" in Turkey, and "Reconquête" in France. Friedez also noted that "the major crises and high insecurity suffered by certain countries provide fertile ground for exploiting migratory movements at election time, causing major risks to the rights and lives of men, women and children in border areas, as is currently the case between Poland and Belarus" (PACE, 2023b, 15832/23).

Friedez reminded that the topic of migration during electoral campaigns is often used more as a tool for political struggle rather than as a genuine political proposal from political forces, referencing the history of the Brexit vote. "In fact, the rhetoric and political proposals that follow this pattern rarely tackle the problems they are supposed to resolve, one regrettable example being Brexit which does not appear to have resolved the problem of unemployment for the British people" (PACE, 2023b, 15832/33). He cited the 2022 electoral campaign in France, where the electoral program included calls to revoke the right to education for children whose parents are illegal migrants.

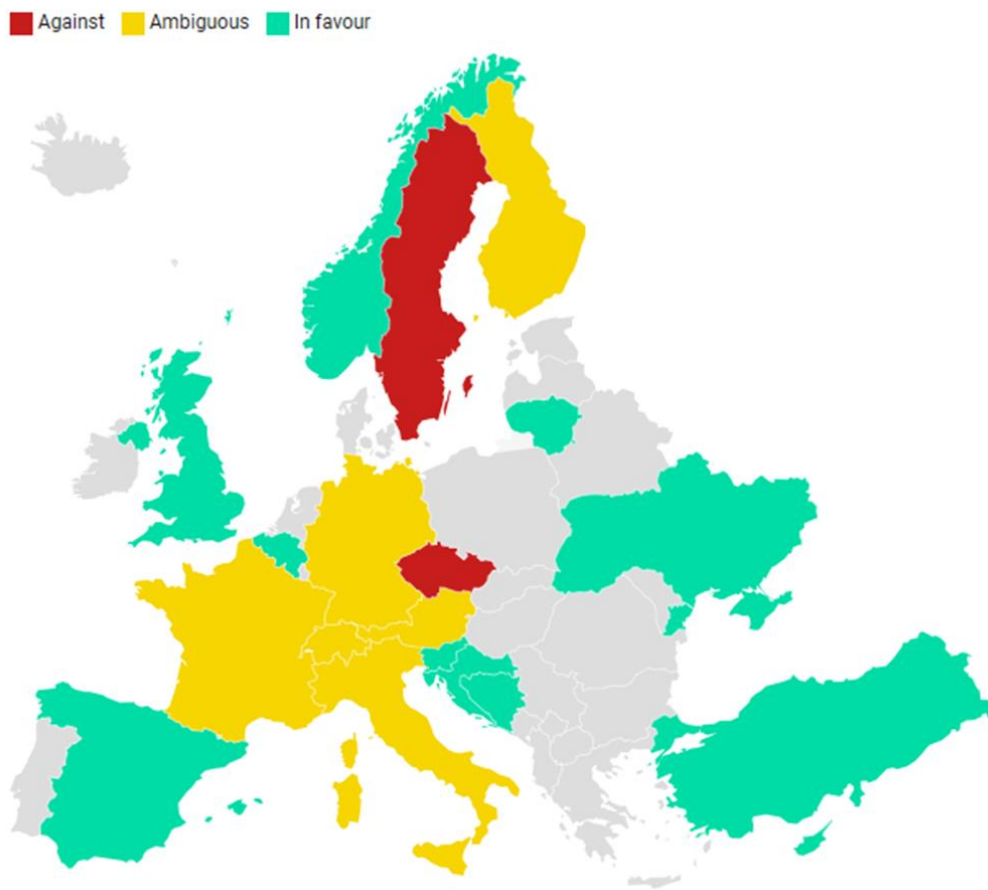


Fig. 2. Voting in PACE on the Resolution 2525 "The Topic of Migration and Asylum in Electoral Campaigns and Its Consequences for the Reception of Migrants and Their Rights"

The importance of Pierre-Alain Friedezs' report lies not only in highlighting the electoral context as a significant issue of intolerance towards migrants but also in identifying another vulnerable group in migration policy – local organizations and communities that facilitate the reception of migrants.

Undoubtedly, the trend of using hate speech during the electoral process began long before the war in Ukraine. The events of the "Arab Spring" and the war in Syria prompted European Union countries to implement policies to protect migrants. As it turned out, migration policy became not only a new vector for the development of European multiculturalism but also a new challenge. Uncontrolled migration exacerbated internal conflicts and led to the victory of right-wing parties in parliamentary elections, whose electoral platforms relied on restricting or completely banning the reception of migrants.

Still, in October 2020, PACE adopted a resolution to raise awareness and combat Islamophobia in Europe (PACE, 2020, 15169). In the same month, the Venice Commission presented a report on the study of electoral law and the organization of elections in Europe, highlighting several issues related to voting transparency, political party and candidate financing mechanisms, media independence in electoral processes, and the accessibility of the electoral political process for all population groups, as well as negative campaigning.

For example, paragraph 156 states: "Negative campaigning is a worrying trend of electoral campaigns worldwide. Also in a number of CoE member states, the campaign atmosphere has been lately dominated by political polarisation, defamation or denigration of political opponents and negative campaigning. Extreme examples recently include Georgia, Hungary, Poland, and Serbia. Some political parties even used inflammatory and racist rhetoric, targeting ethnic, religious or other minorities in the respective country. Hate speech against political opponents and national minorities is especially grave and reprehensible" (Venice Commission, 2020, P. 25). This refers to the presidential elections in Poland, where Andrzej Duda was elected in July 2020.

In September 2022, this issue was revisited. During a speech at the Committee on Equality and Non-Discrimination, Momodou Malcolm Jallow noted that Islamophobia is used both in individual attitudes and in political discourse. "In a political landscape characterised by the rise of racist and xenophobic movements, such misconceptions are often instrumentalised to trigger division within society and sow the seeds of hate for political gain. Furthermore, this kind of discourse tends to spread from extremist movements to mainstream political parties, which is a reason for serious concern, considering that countering intolerance and promoting peaceful living together should be a top priority for all forces across the political spectrum" (PACE, 2022e, 15616/4). On March 15, 2022, a resolution was adopted declaring March 15 as International Day Against Islamophobia.

Conclusions

However, concerns about the use of migration issues during elections, which could lead to the victory of far-right parties, have long been raised in PACE. On June 8, 2012, the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons heard a report by Daphne Dumery titled "The portrayal of migrants and refugees during election campaigns" (PACE, 2012, 12953). In her report, Ms. Dumery noted that the topic of migrants and refugees had become a key issue in the electoral campaigns of political parties, significantly influencing the development of xenophobia. "During election campaigns, some candidates and political parties habitually present migrants and refugees as a threat and a burden on society, which increases negative reactions among the public to immigration and immigrants" (PACE, 2012, 12953/4).

This trend indicates a lack of strategy to protect democratic institutions and the rise of xenophobic populist parties. The media, social networks, and biased public opinion polls contribute to the spread of xenophobic rhetoric. The financial and economic crisis, which led to a decline in the labor market, as well as the rise of terrorism, fostered a pathological fear of foreigners. Political parties exploit this fear, promoting xenophobic thinking to win political elections. "Through ambitious demonstrations and campaigns focusing on freedom of speech, the far right increasingly portrays itself as a keen champion of democracy, playing on the fears of European citizens in order to promote their "cause" by offering simple answers to social challenges that are complex" (PACE, 2012, 12953/16).

An example of such phenomena occurred in Norway in July 2011, when a member of the far-right anti-Muslim organization "Knights Templar," Anders Breivik, committed two terrorist acts resulting in the deaths of 77 people. Additionally, skinhead movements in Russia and Hungary led to the creation of the Alliance of European National Movements (AENM), which included far-right parties from Hungary ("Jobbik"), France ("Front National"), Italy ("Fiamma Tricolore"), Sweden ("NationalDemokraterna"), and Belgium ("Front national"). By 2011, Muslims, Roma, and Jews had become the focal point of hostility. Furthermore, parliamentary systems in Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Italy were formed alongside center-right parties.

The portrayal of migrants and refugees during election campaigns. Rapporteur: Ms Daphne Dumery. 08.06.2012



The theme of migration and asylum in election campaigns and its consequences on the reception of migrants and their rights. Rapporteur: Mr Pierre-Alain Fridez. 25.09.2023



Fig. 3. Comparative visualization of European countries with a high risk of xenophobia towards migrants (explanatory memoranda of 2012 and 2023)

Thus, the rise of populist political parties and their influence on the political design of parliamentarism through calls to restrict the rights of migrants has been a trend in electoral campaigns for over 10 years. Figure 3 shows the countries that have been included in the explanatory memoranda of two speakers regarding the topic of migrants in electoral campaigns. Countries such as Hungary, Sweden, Denmark, and Switzerland are still under the influence of anti-migrant discourse today. Moreover, over the past decade, new countries have emerged where European politicians use hate speech in electoral campaigns. In the context of information influences from Russia, which deliberately demonizes the image of migrants as a destructive group in European society, there are risks of revising refugee and migrant admission policies. The rhetoric of defending national interests may lead to an increase in populism in political discourse.

Acknowledgements. The publication was prepared within the framework of the scholarship program of the Julius Mieroszewski Dialogue Center.

Conflict of Interest. None.

References:

- Eurostat (2024). *Beneficiaries of Temporary Protection at the End of the Month by Citizenship, Age and sex – Monthly Data*. https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/migr_asytpsm__custom_12326430/default/table?lang=en
- European Commission (2022). *Home Affairs Council: 10-Point Plan on stronger European coordination on welcoming people fleeing the war against Ukraine*. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_2152
- European Commission (2022). *Recommendation CM/Rec(2022)16 of the Committee of Ministers to Member States on Combating Hate Speech*. [https://search.coe.int/cm/#{%22CoEIdentifier%22:\[%220900001680a67955%22\],%22sort%22:\[%22CoEValidationDate%20Descending%22\]}](https://search.coe.int/cm/#{%22CoEIdentifier%22:[%220900001680a67955%22],%22sort%22:[%22CoEValidationDate%20Descending%22]})
- Halperin, S. (2023). The Far-Right in Modern World History. *Globalizations*, 20(5), 731-751. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2021.1984734>
- Le Monde [The World] (2022). *La Suède lance la chasse aux sans-papiers* [Sweden Launches Hunt for Undocumented Immigrants]. https://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2022/12/07/la-suede-lance-la-chasse-aux-sans-papiers_6153409_3210.html
- PACE (2012). *The Portrayal of Migrants and Refugees During Election Campaigns*. <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/18946/html>
- PACE (2020). *Raising Awareness of and Countering Islamophobia in Europe*. <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/28779/html>
- PACE (2022a). *Challenge, on Substantive Grounds, of the Still Unratified Credentials of the Parliamentary Delegation of the Russian Federation*. <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/29794/html>
- PACE (2022b). *Humanitarian Consequences and Internal and External Displacement in Connection with the Aggression of the Russian Federation Against Ukraine*. <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/29794/html>
- PACE (2022c). *Protection and Alternative Care for Unaccompanied and Separated Migrant and Refugee Children*. <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/30192/html>
- PACE (2022d). *Safe Third Countries for Asylum Seekers*. <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/31373/html>
- PACE (2022e). *Raising Awareness of and Countering Islamophobia, or Anti-Muslim Racism, in Europe*. <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/30259/html>
- PACE (2023a). *Deportations and Forcible Transfers of Ukrainian Children and Other Civilians to Russian Federation or to Ukrainian Territories Temporarily Occupied: Create Conditions for their Safe Return, Stop These Crimes and Punish the Perpetrators*. <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/31776/html>
- PACE (2023b). *Integration of Migrants and Refugees: Benefits for All Parties Involved. Report Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons*. <https://rm.coe.int/integration-of-migrants-and-refugees-benefits-for-all-parties-involved/1680aa9038>
- PACE (2023c). *Social Inclusion of Migrants, Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons Through Sport*. <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/32985/html>
- PACE (2023d). *Observation of the Parliamentary Elections in Poland*. <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/33177/html>
- PACE (2023e). *The Challenge of Far-Right Ideology to Democracy and Human Rights in Europe*. <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/33019/html>
- PACE (2023f). *The Theme of Migration and Asylum in Election Campaigns and its Consequences on the Reception of Migrants and Their Rights*. <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/33029/html>
- PACE (2024a). *Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons*. <https://pace.coe.int/en/pages/committee-27/AS-MIG>
- PACE (2024b). *The Theme of Migration and Asylum in Election Campaigns and its Consequences on the Reception of Migrants and their Rights*. <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/33220/html>

- Venice Commission (2020). *Report on Electoral Law and Electoral Administration in Europe*.
[https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD\(2020\)023-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL-AD(2020)023-e)
- True.UA (2018). *U 2018 rotsi v Seredzemnomu mori potonuly abo propaly bezvisty 2 275 cholovik* [In 2018, 2,275 People Drowned or Went Missing in the Mediterranean Sea] <https://trueua.info/news/u-2018-roci-v-seredzemnomu-mori-potonuli-abo-propali-bezvisti-2-275-cholovik-> [in Ukrainian].
- Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine (2002). *Konventsia pro status bizhentsiv* [Convention on the Status of Refugees] https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/995_011?lang=en#Text [in Ukrainian].
- Postiyne predstavnytstvo Ukrainy pry Radi Yevropy [Permanent Representation of Ukraine at the Council of Europe] (2023). *Ukrayina i Parlamentska Asambleya Rady Yevropy* [Ukraine and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe] <https://coe.mfa.gov.ua/spivrobotnictvo/ukrayina-v-parye> [in Ukrainian].
- Suspilne. Novyny [Public. News] (2023). *Mayzhe 50 krayin svitu zasudyly RF za deportatsiyu ukrayinskykh ditey* [Almost 50 Countries of the World Condemned the Russian Federation for the Deportation of Ukrainian Children]. <https://suspilne.media/436617-majze-50-krajin-svitu-zasudili-rf-za-deportaciu-ukrainskih-ditej/> [in Ukrainian].
- Ukrinform (2024). *Rosiyany nezakonno vsynovlyuyut ukrayinskykh ditey – komisar Rady Yevropy* [Russians Illegally Adopt Ukrainian Children – Commissioner of the Council of Europe]. <https://www.ukrinform.ua/rubric-society/3816911-rosiani-nezakonno-vsinovluut-ukrainskih-ditej-komisar-radi-evropi.html> [in Ukrainian].
- UNIAN (2023). *Skilky ukrayinskykh ditey deportovano v Rosiyu: Zelenskyy rozkryv motoroshni dani* [How Many Ukrainian Children have been Deported to Russia: Zelenskyi Disclosed the Scary Data]. <https://www.unian.ua/society/skilki-ukrajinskih-ditey-deportovano-v-rosiyu-zelenskiy-rozkryv-motoroshni-dani-12255303.html> [in Ukrainian].