



By: Tomorrow's Affairs Staff

# Eastern Europeans counterbalance the rise of the far right in the EU's west



The rise of the extreme right and the **decline** of moderate pro-EU forces in Western Europe have cast a deep shadow over the results for the European Parliament in the eastern part of the continent, causing despair.

This year, the "young" member states region is celebrating two decades since joining the EU in a great wave of enlargement towards the east.

However, it is still often seen as a suspect within the EU, as a zone where destructive political escapades take place under the onslaught of Eurosceptics and nationalists.

On the contrary, Eastern Europeans convincingly reaffirmed their loyalty to the bloc in the last European Parliament elections, punishing "sovereignists," nationalists, Eurosceptics, anti-migrant, and pro-Russian forces.

Over the weekend, the axis that has been influencing the cohesion of the EU has clearly shifted from the east (if it existed there at all) to the west, where nationalists and far-right parties have gained considerable momentum.

## Pro-EU forces' dominance

However, in the east of the EU, the left or right centrist parties, which form the backbone of the stable political mainstream and unquestionably support the strong Union and its policies, have gained the upper hand.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, the leader of the euro-sceptics not only in Eastern Europe, fell below 50% of the vote for the first time in the European elections (he received 44%, or 8% less than in 2022).

"This is the Waterloo of the Orbán power factory, the beginning of the end," said Peter Magyar, until recently Orbán's party colleague, but now his most important political **opponent**, whose newly founded Tisza party received 30% of the vote.

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk's pro-

European liberals came first in the European elections with 37%, confirming their victory over the Eurosceptic conservatives of the Law and Justice party, which they ousted in last year's national elections.



*"This is the Waterloo of the Orbán power factory, the beginning of the end" - Peter Magyar*

There has been a shift in Slovakia towards stronger support for the EU after the recent assassination attempt on the conservative, nationalist Prime Minister Robert Fico. His pro-Russian SMER party finished behind the socially liberal Progressive Slovakia just nine months after its victory in the national parliamentary elections.

After the assassination attempt, the Slovaks were obviously **fed up** with the unbearably harsh rhetoric of PM Fico, as well as with ultra-right-wing conspiracy theories against political opponents, whom they blamed for the assassination attempt.

Romania's governing coalition of social democrats and liberals confirmed their dominance in the European Parliament elections with 54% of the vote, keeping the country on a strong pro-EU course.

In Romania, the expected upswing of the pro-Russian right and opponents of the aid to Ukraine from the Union of Romanians' (AUR) failed to materialise. With 14%, they landed well below the pre-election polls.

The ruling pro-European moderate conservatives from the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) were able to maintain their leading position in the newest EU member

state. Similar events occurred in Bulgaria, where the centre-right GERB party of former Prime Minister Boyko Borisov secured the most votes in simultaneous extraordinary parliamentary elections.

The only exception to the Eastern European trend was the Czech Republic, where former Prime Minister Andrej Babis' right-wing Action of Dissatisfied Citizens, which is politically close to the right-wing Eurosceptic bloc of Eastern Europeans, came out on top.

## Neglected potential

The East European election results will reflect a counterbalance to the increased strength of the far-right in the future composition of the European Parliament, where Eastern Europeans have slightly more than 200 out of a total of 720 seats.

In addition, a very pronounced trend of trust in pro-EU parties from the moderate centre is an important feature of past elections to the EU Parliament.

At a time when the rise of the far right is posing a threat to several significant democracies in the West, these forces will serve as the foundation of internal cohesion in the years to come.

**The confirmed stability of the pro-EU orientation in all eastern members of the bloc can serve as a powerful resource for maintaining internal political cohesion**

The political turmoil that has followed the European elections has already led to the fall of governments in France and Belgium, as well as a sharp loss of confidence in the three-party ruling bloc in Germany, which will inevitably turn into a government crisis by next year's parliamentary elections.

There is no doubt that events in the most

influential EU member states will also affect the stability of the EU as a whole, including its key institutions. Despite its often-underestimated strength, the confirmed stability of the pro-EU orientation in all eastern members of the bloc can serve as a powerful resource for maintaining internal political cohesion.