



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on September 30, 2016

Hungary to Vote on EU Refugee Plan; Anti-migration Sentiment Grows in Europe

Reports from the Paris-based AFP and London-based Reuters news agencies on September 29 analyzed what has been described as growing “populist,” anti-immigrant sentiment across Europe. These reports were looked at against the backdrop of Hungary’s October 2 referendum on whether that nation should be able to reject the EU’s mandatory settlement of refugees in Hungary. The wording of the referendum says: “Do you want the European Union to be able to prescribe the mandatory settlement of non-Hungarian citizens in Hungary even without the consent of Parliament?”



Hungary’s Prime Minister Viktor Orbán (shown), who a year ago publicly [criticized efforts by EU leaders](#) to impose immigration quotas before the continent’s borders are made secure, is supporting a “no” vote on the referendum, saying that it will show support for Hungary’s sovereignty and independence.

An AP report carried by Fox News said that at least 50 percent plus one of Hungary’s 8.27 million voters need to cast valid ballots for the referendum to be valid.

After nearly 400,000 migrants — mostly refugees fleeing violent upheavals in Syria and adjacent areas — passed through Hungary last year, the nation enacted measures that reduced migration into the country to almost nothing. Among the deterrents was a 110-mile-long fence Hungary built along its border with Serbia, its southern neighbor. During the first four weeks of last September, after the fence was built and tougher laws against migrants entering the country were imposed, authorities reported either zero or just one migrant breaching the border area on 12 different days.

Much has been reported about Europe’s refugee crisis. This magazine [noted a year ago](#) that at the request of European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, heads of government from the European Union approved a plan to distribute across Europe 120,000 migrants fleeing turmoil in the Middle East.

Orbán was one of the earliest and most vocal of European national leaders to oppose the plan, but when he spoke last year, his principal objection to allowing large numbers of immigrants to enter Europe was based on the potential impact that the new immigrants would have on the historically Christian culture of Europe, noting that they “are mostly not Christians, but Muslims.”

Then came a series of terrorist attacks in Europe, with attacks in Paris on November 13 killing 129 people and wounding more than 350 others; bombings in Brussels on March 22 killing 32; and a radicalized truck driver killing another 84 people in Nice, France, on July 14.

All of these attacks involved migrants from the Middle East or Muslim countries in North Africa, where



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ISIS has a presence. With attacks being conducted by actual ISIS operatives or radicalized fanatics sympathetic to ISIS, all of whom came to Europe as migrants or the sons of migrants, Orban's words became quite credible.

While previous opposition to the massive refugee migration was based mostly on cultural or economic grounds, the terrorist attacks in Europe during 2015 and 2016 changed the focus — and the intensity — of the opposition. *The New American* noted in [an article in August](#) that more than 1,300 people gathered in Berlin on July 30 for a demonstration against German Chancellor Angela Merkel's open-door immigration policy, with many shouting, "Merkel must go!"

Many of those protesting blamed Merkel's liberal immigration policies for multiple terrorist attacks that left 13 people dead during the previous month. A report in Britain's *Daily Mail* observed that three of the four attackers were asylum seekers, with two of the attacks being claimed by ISIS.

As this magazine noted in an article a year ago, Germany had recently made a change in policy and decided to restrict the flow of migrants across its borders, with the nation's Interior Minister Thomas de Mazière announcing the change in policy on September 13, 2015.

De Mazière explained that the new restrictions were partly necessary for security reasons and added: "This step has become necessary. The great readiness to help that Germany has shown in recent weeks ... must not be overstretched."

In its report about what it described as "populist wave" across Europe, AFP summarized the trend on a country-by-country basis. Among its findings were:

GERMANY: Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union (CDU) suffered a stinging setback in state elections in Berlin on September 18 in a backlash against her "open-door" refugee policy....

SLOVAKIA: In March, the People's Party Our Slovakia won 14 seats in the country's 150-seat parliament, four years after it was founded on a platform hostile to the Roma minority, the EU and NATO....

Populism has spread into mainstream parties too, with Prime Minister Robert Fico taking one of the EU's tougher stances on immigration. He has branded the migrant crisis an "onslaught" and called EU migrant policy "ritual suicide."

HUNGARY: Orban, head of the right-wing Fidesz party, has organized the October 2 referendum on migrant relocation under an EU quota plan.

In late 2015, Hungary built fences along its borders with Serbia and Croatia to stem the massive tide of migrants. Other countries in the Balkans then followed suit.

Those migrants who do sneak through into Hungary suffer illegal border pushbacks and unlawful detention, Amnesty International said Tuesday.

Orban has called immigration "poison" and has said that "every single migrant poses a public security and terror risk." ...

BRITAIN: A historic vote on June 23 to leave the EU was the biggest success to date of populist movements since the bloc was founded.

The "Leave" victory was driven in large part by worries about immigration, economic uncertainty, and a perception that an out-of-touch Brussels elite was making the rules.



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FRANCE: The National Front (FN) has notched up several local electoral successes since 2012. The FN's Marine Le Pen has likened the migrant influx to the "barbarian invasions" of the fourth century.

Boosted by the succession of Islamist "terror" attacks in France, polls consistently tip Le Pen to reach the second round of France's presidential election in 2017.

Regarding Amnesty International's assertion, we wonder how Hungary's enforcement of its own immigration laws can be considered "illegal" or "unlawful." As a sovereign nation, Hungary has the right to establish its own immigration laws and to determine how those laws are to be enforced. Unless Amnesty International is suggesting that national sovereignty of EU member nations is subservient to some "supranational" EU law, which is a good argument for other EU members to initiate their own versions of "Brexit."

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