

# **Position of the Hungarian Government and of the Hungarian parties in the EP on symbolic European issues**





# Key positions

— of the —  
Hungarian government  
&  
Hungarian parties in the  
European Parliament

Stop sanctions against Russia							
Association Agreement with Ukraine							
Juncker must resign							
Quick integration of refugees into the labour market							
Introducing refugee's quota							
Welcome opening of infringement procedure by the Commission against Hungary							
Calling on Poland to respect the rulings of the Constitutional Tribunal							
Turkey has to fulfill its obligations before new chapters for accession are opened							
More spending in the defense sector							
Establishing permanent EU military headquarters							
Moratorium and gradual abolition of death penalty							
More access to abortion							



\*In these cases, the Hungarian party voted differently from its EP political group

## Executive Summary

The purpose of this joint study of **VoteWatch** and **Policy Solutions** is to examine the voting patterns of Hungarian Members of the European Parliament in order to figure out whether Hungarian political parties have the same positions on key issues in both Brussels and Budapest.

For this reason, we explored how Hungarian MEPs voted in the European Parliament using [VoteWatch.eu](https://www.vote-watch.eu) and compared it to their respective national party's position by using **Policy Solutions**. On the website [Képviselőfigyelő](https://kepviselofigyelo.hu) you can check the votes by the Members of the Hungarian Parliament as well as the speeches delivered by leaders of the Hungarian parties in question.

We narrowed down our scope of analysis to a number of symbolic and politically relevant topics, which included foreign policy, the refugee crisis, as well as the rule of law and human rights. Not only does this methodology allow us to explore various voting patterns, but also to observe if these patterns are valid indicators of certain descriptions of Hungarian political parties or not.

With respect to Hungary's governing **Fidesz**, in the majority of cases its MEPs voted in line with the European People's Party. However, by doing so, in some cases this led to discrepancies with **Fidesz's** official position in Hungary. Interesting cases included Russia, in which despite the Hungarian Prime Minister **Viktor Orbán** urged to end the sanctions regime, **Fidesz** MEPs endorsed a tougher European stance against **Putin**. Similarly, while government officials have continuously expressed their support for Turkey's accession, **Fidesz** MEPs voted for obstructing the country's path to the EU. It was also surprising to see that, despite **Fidesz's** long history of political animosity with **Jean-Claude Juncker**, all **Fidesz** MEPs ended up supporting him in the EP. Furthermore, while Prime Minister **Viktor Orbán** was considering the reintroduction of death penalty in Hungary, his party members supported the European Parliament's call for the worldwide abolition of the capital punishment.

However, **Fidesz** MEPs were not afraid to go against their own political group's position in a number of symbolically important cases for their national party. One was the Commission's proposal for the relocation of refugees throughout the EU that was unanimously rejected by the MEPs. This came as no surprise considering

**Viktor Orbán's opinion on the refugee crisis and Brussels' policies on handling it. Fidesz MEPs also rejected a resolution calling on the Polish government to respect the rulings of its constitutional court – this voting behaviour shows well that when it comes to the struggles between the EU and the Member States over the rule of law, Fidesz is at odds with the positions of the rest of its parliamentary group.**

**Hungary's opposition groups also exhibit some interesting patterns in their voting behaviour. In the case of the Hungarian Socialist Party, despite its frequent criticism of PM Orbán for being overly accommodative towards Putin, it called for ending the EU sanctions against Russia, putting pragmatic economic considerations over political animosity. Similarly, while MSZP officials have often compared Viktor Orbán to Recep Tayyip Erdogan, claiming that both leaders turn their respective countries to illiberal democracies, it was surprising to see that their MEPs voted in favour of easing the demands on Turkey's accession.**

**It was also unexpected that while the far right Jobbik harshly denounced the Ukrainian association agreement, some of its leading officials voted in favour of its ratification in the Hungarian National Assembly. The issue of Turkish accession also highlighted internal gaps in the radical party's position - while its leader Gábor Vona could image Turkey as an EU member state, the majority of his party, as well as its MEPs are decisively against it. Interestingly, Jobbik also tends to voice more toned-down positions in the EP than at home, as it was in case of capital punishment.**

# 1. RELATIONS WITH UKRAINE AND RUSSIA

On 16 September 2014, the European Parliament voted on **whether the EP should give its consent to the EU/Ukraine Association Agreement**.<sup>1</sup> On the following year, the European Parliament voted on an amendment tabled by the GUE-NGL group<sup>2</sup> which called on **the EU to put an end to the policy of sanctions against Russia**. Although not legally binding, this latter vote had a strong political value as it highlighted the positions of several European parties on this controversial issue.

The Hungarian ruling party **Fidesz** and one of the opposition parties, the far right **Jobbik**, are **usually described as pro-Russia parties**, while the **left wing and green parties** (MSZP, DK, LMP and Párbeszéd) **are described as anti-Putin**. Both the voting on Ukraine's association agreement and the voting to put an end to the sanctions against Russia are **good indicators to see if these descriptions are valid with regards to these issues or not**.

## POSITION OF HUNGARIAN PARTIES IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Overall, 77% of all MEPs supported the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, with very few defections within the main political groups. Therefore, despite the often-heated debate about the stance the EU should take on the recent political developments in Ukraine (also considering the recent result of the Dutch referendum), only the fringe groups in the EP (far left and far right) actually opposed the new agreement.

In this case, the **Hungarian parties followed their group's lines** in supporting the strengthening of relations between the EU and Ukraine. Moreover, **Fidesz also voted in favor of the proposal**. Among the Hungarian parties, **only Jobbik was unsupportive of the EU-Ukraine pact**, denouncing its **signing by the Orbán's government as "treasonous"**. **Interestingly, in the Hungarian National Assembly, three key figures of the far-right party - including its leader Gábor Vona - supported the Association Agreement, together with the parliamentary group of Fidesz, MSZP and LMP.**<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A8-2014-0002&language=EN>

<sup>2</sup> *"Urges the EU to put an end to the policy of sanctions against Russia, which has resulted in a trade war with a negative impact in particular for SMEs and for farmers and consumers in Russia, the EU and the countries of the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood, including Ukraine."* - <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+PV+20150312+RES-RCV+DOC+PDF+V0//EN&language=EN>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.kepviselofigyelo.hu/torveny/7830/1700>

**In the case of the amendment that suggested the end of the sanctions against Russia,** both the S&D group and the far right ENF supported the proposal of GUE-NGL. The Greens and other political groups voted for keeping the sanctions (57% of MEPs overall opposed it). **Hungarian parties followed their respective political groups: Fidesz’s MEPs endorsed the tough line of the EPP on Russia and the Greens members (LMP and Párbeszéd) also voted against the amendment. However, S&D members (MSZP and DK) and Jobbik voted in favour of ending the sanctions.**

As for the left, we can notice an interesting development concerning **Hungarian S&D MEPs (MSZP and DK)** that put pragmatic economic considerations over political animosity and **called for an end to the sanctions**, especially considering **the party’s frequent criticism of PM Orbán for being overly accommodative towards Putin**. MEP Tibor Szanyi expressed his hopes for a revitalized dialogue between the EU and Moscow<sup>4</sup> while MEP István Ujhelyi vowed to turn to the European Commission for remedies concerning the Hungarian agrarian sector which suffered a crippling blow due to the sanctions.<sup>5</sup> However, following the voting on the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, the **four Hungarian left wing MEPs expressed their satisfaction with Europe for acting bravely against the nationalist-authoritarian aspirations** pouring in from the East while also **criticizing PM Orbán for acting as Putin’s European “accommodator.”**<sup>6</sup>

## POSITION OF THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

**Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán expressed a positive attitude towards Ukraine**, saying “as the EU is struggling with its internal problems the number of countries supporting Ukraine’s accession has diminished [...] however, the V4 countries [including Hungary] have remained friends of Ukraine.”<sup>7</sup> **Both the Fidesz-EPP Members of the European Parliament and the Fidesz MPs in the Hungarian National Assembly**<sup>8</sup> were in line with Mr Orbán’s position as none of them voted against the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement.

---

<sup>4</sup> [http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/14629/Az\\_EP\\_tovabbra\\_is\\_az\\_orsz\\_szankciok\\_mellett\\_van](http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/14629/Az_EP_tovabbra_is_az_orsz_szankciok_mellett_van)

<sup>5</sup> [http://webradio.hu/hirek/belfold/ukran\\_valsgag\\_-\\_](http://webradio.hu/hirek/belfold/ukran_valsgag_-_)

[az\\_mszp\\_az\\_europai\\_bizottsagtol\\_ker\\_kompenzaciott\\_az\\_orsz\\_szankciok\\_miatt](http://www.mszp.hu/az_europai_bizottsagtol_ker_kompenzaciott_az_orsz_szankciok_miatt)

<sup>6</sup> [http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/5066/Magyar\\_partok\\_EPkepviselei\\_az\\_EUukran\\_tarsulasi\\_megallapodasrol](http://magyarhirlap.hu/cikk/5066/Magyar_partok_EPkepviselei_az_EUukran_tarsulasi_megallapodasrol)

<sup>7</sup> <http://24.hu/belfold/2016/09/06/orban-szerint-az-unio-hozta-a-fejunkre-a-bajt/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.kepviselofigyelo.hu/torveny/7830/1700>

However, the **Hungarian Government**, in calling for a more pragmatic approach based on dialogue, **expressed its anxieties over the sanction regime** as it “does not contribute to solving the conflict but instead cripples not only the Russian, but also the Ukrainian and the European economies.”<sup>9</sup> **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán equaled the sanctions to being “shot in the leg” and vowed to find partners to change the EU’s position.**<sup>10</sup> Having exchanged a number of visits with Putin, Orbán has been seeking to gain economic concessions from Russia in return for lobbying for a more accommodative EU approach towards Russia’s presence on the continent. However, despite the warm bilateral relations, Péter Szijjártó, Hungary’s Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, promised that Hungary would not break ranks with the EU’s position.<sup>11</sup> Thus, **despite Mr Orbán’s harsh criticism of the sanctions against Russia, Fidesz MEPs did support these measures in the European Parliament.**

## 2. RESIGNATION OF JUNCKER

After the outcome of the Brexit referendum, some members of Visegrad’s governments (from Czechia and Poland) **called on Juncker to resign**, blaming the victory of the Brexit’s side on his poor handling of the negotiations with the UK.<sup>12</sup> Despite that, an amendment to a non-legislative resolution on Brexit (tabled by the far-right ENF), calling on Juncker to resign, was rejected by more than 70% of MEPs. Only Eurosceptic groups and a part of the Conservatives (ECR) wanted the resignation of the President of the European Commission, whereas every other group in the EP supported him.

### POSITION OF HUNGARIAN PARTIES IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Among the Hungarian parties, **only Jobbik called for the departure of Juncker**, whereas all the other parties defended the status quo. **MEPs of Fidesz, the left wing and green parties voted against the proposal** on removing Juncker from the top of the European Commission. While the green **LMP and Párbeszéd had not supported the Juncker Commission back in 2014**, the **Hungarian Green parties did not call for his resignation this time**. With respect to other Hungarian political parties, there were no surprises: the **Hungarian Socialist Party remained supportive of Juncker**, as it has always been.

---

<sup>9</sup> <http://nepszava.hu/cikk/1084025-orbanputyin-napirenden-a-szankciok>

<sup>10</sup> [http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20140815\\_orban\\_az\\_orszorszag\\_elleni\\_szankciokkal\\_labon\\_lottuk\\_magunkat](http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20140815_orban_az_orszorszag_elleni_szankciokkal_labon_lottuk_magunkat)

<sup>11</sup> [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150505\\_Szijasarto\\_tartjuk\\_magunkat\\_az\\_orszokkal](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150505_Szijasarto_tartjuk_magunkat_az_orszokkal)

<sup>12</sup> See the vote here: <http://www.votewatch.eu/en/term8-outcome-of-the-referendum-in-the-united-kingdom-motion-for-resolution-paragraph-14-amendment-10.html>

## POSITION OF THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

Back in 2014, **Prime Minister Viktor Orbán was staunchly opposed to electing Juncker as President of the European Commission**, arguing that Juncker's federalist tendencies were against Hungary's national interests. Having promised his domestic electorate that he would "obstruct" Juncker,<sup>13</sup> Orbán was one of the only two EU-leaders who did not support him in the European Council. Later, in November 2015, **head of the Fidesz parliamentary group, Lajos Kósa called Juncker to resign** during a debate in the Hungarian National Assembly.<sup>14</sup> **Despite Fidesz's history of political hostility towards Juncker, on the 2016 vote all Fidesz-EPP MEPs ended up defending him.**

## 3. REFUGEE CRISIS

On 9 September 2015, **the European Parliament supported the Commission's proposal for the relocation of refugees throughout the Union** (the plan is also usually labelled as "refugees quota"). Left wing and centrist parties voted in favour of the initiative and, ultimately, more than 70% of MEPs gave their approval.<sup>15</sup>

## POSITION OF HUNGARIAN PARTIES IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

In this case, **Fidesz defected from the EPP and voted against the proposal**. This confirms that the right wing party is at odds with its political group on the management of the refugee's crisis. Instead, **MSZP** has regularly expressed its disapproval with the government's propaganda by defining it as political theatre, and **supported publicly - in line with their MEP's voting in the EP - the Commission's proposal** as a temporary solution. **Jobbik's stance was of no surprise either** - while strongly critical of Fidesz's political games, they have **unequivocally denounced the Commission's proposal both domestically and in the EP**.

## POSITION OF THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

---

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.atv.hu/belfold/20140628-orban-az-atv-nek-juncker-megvalasztasa-nem-a-nemzet-erdeke>  
<http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20140617-orban-megigertem-a-valasztoimnak-hogy-juncker-utjat-allom.html>

<sup>14</sup> <http://nepszava.hu/cikk/1076604-orban-a-gyaszt-is-uszitasra-hasznalta>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.votewatch.eu/en/term8-migration-and-refugees-in-europe-joint-motion-for-resolution-paragraph-9.html#/>



From the outset, **Fidesz's position has been openly hostile on the Commission's plan on the refugee quota system.** Key government officials have denounced it as "crazy", "senseless" and "inhumane", while PM Orbán said that **Brussels' plan** was not only filled with empty promises for the refugees but, if implemented, **could lead to a European "civilization catastrophe"**<sup>16</sup>. The Hungarian government has been running a massive communication campaign to convince the electorate of the threats the refugees and Brussels poses to the country. Thus, **the strong statements by the Hungarian Government on the mismanagement of the refugee crisis by the EU are mirrored by the voting behavior of Fidesz's MEPs,** who, differently from other policy issues, such as the regime of sanctions against Russia, are not afraid of being outvoted in their own political group.

## 4. RULE OF LAW AND NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY

The debate over the rule of law in Poland and, in particular, the struggle between the Polish government and the constitutional court has hit a few headlines over the last few months. The **EP took a strong stance on this issue, as almost 75% of MEPs called on the Polish government to respect the rulings of the constitutional court.**<sup>17</sup> GUE-NGL, the Greens, S&D, ALDE and EPP voted in favour of this key paragraph.

### POSITION OF HUNGARIAN PARTIES IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

While the **centre-left Hungarian parties followed their group lines** and sided against the Polish government, **Fidesz voted against the paragraph, together with Jobbik.** In a joint statement, **all Fidesz-EPP MEPs denounced the resolution,** saying "The European Parliament cannot interfere with the constitutional order of a member state."<sup>18</sup> This voting pattern **mirrors the previous vote on the infringement procedure against Hungary** and it shows that, when it comes to the struggles between the EU and the Member States over the rule of law, **Fidesz is at odds with the positions of the rest of its parliamentary group. MSZP-S&D delegates voted according to their known position** on this question, while Jobbik-NI MEPs, similarly to Fidesz-EPP, rejected the resolution as expected.

---

<sup>16</sup> [http://index.hu/belfold/2016/09/12/orban\\_viktor\\_beinditja\\_a\\_politikai\\_oszt/](http://index.hu/belfold/2016/09/12/orban_viktor_beinditja_a_politikai_oszt/)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.votewatch.eu/en/term8-situation-in-poland-motion-for-resolution-vote-resolution.html>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.eppgroup.eu/press-release/Elutas%C3%ADtjuk-a-Lengyelorsz%C3%A1ggal-szembeni-kett%C5%91s-m%C3%A9rc%C3%A9t>

## POSITION OF THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

**Viktor Orbán** has frequently defended the new Polish Government, once claiming the European Union was applying “double standards” against Poland: “if we criticize states that regulate the mandate of their Constitutional Court, we should also criticize states that have no Constitutional Court at all.”<sup>19</sup>

## 5. TURKEY’S ACCESSION TO THE EU

An amendment, tabled by GUE-NGL, pointed out that **the frozen chapters for the Turkish accession to the EU (23 and 24) shall be opened only after Turkey will fulfil its obligations under the negotiating framework** (e.g. recognize the republic of Cyprus), **rather than right after the satisfaction of the official benchmarks**. Overall, the adoption of this amendment would have expressed a strong support for further slowing down Turkey’s accession process. Despite the support from the largest group in the EP (EPP) and the abstention of the Eurosceptic groups, **the amendment did not pass** and the final text included a more nuanced statement on Turkish accession to the EU.

## POSITION OF HUNGARIAN PARTIES IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Some pro-Turkish and anti-Turkish factions within the largest political groups voted differently from their group’s lines, but this was not the case of Hungarian parties: **centre-left parties (MSZP and DK) voted for the opening of the chapters, whereas Fidesz and Jobbik opposed it.**

Leaders of **Hungarian Socialist Party (MSZP) and the Democratic Coalition (DK) often compares Viktor Orbán to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** claiming that both leaders turn their respective countries to illiberal democracies.<sup>20</sup> Therefore, the position of these parties’ MEPs concerning Turkey’s accession to the EU is **hardly in accordance with the rhetoric of their party’s leaders back in Hungary.**

---

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.atv.hu/kulfold/20160318-letamadtak-az-eu-csucs-elott-a-lengyel-kormanyfot-orban-vedte-meg>

<sup>20</sup> For example: <http://mszp.hu/nyomtatas/10534> and <http://web.dkp.hu/dk-szijjarto-orban-illiberalis-tanulmanyutjat-keszitetten-elo-torokorszagban/>

Jobbik-NI MEPs voted against opening the chapters with Turkey. The radical party exhibits **internal division on the issue**, as it has no official position on it. While party leader **Gábor Vona has expressed that he was “not afraid” of the possibility of Turkey becoming a member state**, his view is not shared by his party, as all Jobbik-NI MEPs opposed this issue in the EP.<sup>21</sup>

## POSITION OF THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

**Fidesz’s-EPP MEPs decision to slow down Turkey’s path to the EU came as a surprise** as in Hungary **most high-level Fidesz officials have repeatedly expressed their support for Turkey’s accession to the EU**, albeit with some reservations since the eruption of the migrant crisis. Before 2015, both the Prime Minister, as well as the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade expressed their support for Turkey’s accession to the EU.<sup>22</sup> In the wake of the migrant crisis and the 2016 coup attempt, while the Hungarian government has remained supportive of Erdogan, it has expressed its dislike with the EU-Turkey visa-liberalization plans and has toughened its demands on Turkey’s accession.<sup>23</sup>

## 6. EUROPEAN ARMY

A resolution in the European Parliament, regarding how to address the current global challenges, **clearly supported the principle that EU Member States should commit to using at least 2 % of their GDP for defense expenditure by 2024.**<sup>24</sup> This paragraph was backed by ECR, S&D, EPP and ALDE, and it was adopted by 65% of 697 MEPs.

## POSITION OF HUNGARIAN PARTIES IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

---

<sup>21</sup>

[https://jobbik.hu/rovatok/rolunk/irtak/vona\\_gabor\\_senki\\_masnak\\_nem\\_tartozom\\_felelosseggel\\_csak\\_a\\_magyar\\_embereknek](https://jobbik.hu/rovatok/rolunk/irtak/vona_gabor_senki_masnak_nem_tartozom_felelosseggel_csak_a_magyar_embereknek)

<sup>22</sup> [http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20130205\\_orban\\_tamogatjuk\\_a\\_torok\\_eu\\_csatlakozast](http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20130205_orban_tamogatjuk_a_torok_eu_csatlakozast)

<http://magyaridok.hu/kulfold/szijasrtorok-magyarorszag-tamogatasarol-biztositja-torokorszagot-64335/>

<sup>23</sup> [http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20160504\\_szijasrtorok\\_az\\_eu\\_hitelet\\_rontana\\_a\\_torok\\_vizummentesseg](http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20160504_szijasrtorok_az_eu_hitelet_rontana_a_torok_vizummentesseg)

<sup>24</sup> See the voting here: <http://www.votewatch.eu/en/term8-the-eu-in-a-changing-global-environment-a-more-connected-contested-and-complex-world-motion-for-reso-14.html>

Among the Hungarian parties, **only Dialogue for Hungary voted against**, whereas the other party in the Greens, **LMP, defected from the group's line and abstained**. While **Fidesz in EPP, the Hungarian Socialists and DK in S&D supported** more military spending, the far right **Jobbik abstained**. While **Jobbik decisively rejects the idea of a single European army**, they call for the strengthening of the Hungarian military.<sup>25</sup>

## POSITION OF THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

The Franco-German proposal on further **integrating the EU's defence policy enjoys a broad support among the V4 countries including Hungary**. PM Orbán has repeatedly called on the EU to put a greater emphasis on security considerations and urged the establishment of a single continental military force, without which “there can be no European Union.”<sup>26</sup> **MSZP accused Orbán of plagiarism**, saying they recommended the setting-up of a single European army already back in **2015, however, at that time it was swept off the table by Fidesz**, claiming Europe had already had a single military: NATO.<sup>27</sup>

## 7. HUMAN RIGHTS: ABORTION AND ABOLITION OF DEATH PENALTY

Despite its non-legislative nature, a motion tabled by MEP Marc Tarabella allows us to map the positions of MEPs on **abortion**. According to the vote on an amendment, **60% of MEPs are supporting further measures aiming at making abortion more accessible**. Support came from GUE-NGL, Greens, S&D and ALDE groups, whereas EPP and ECR were divided, although most of the members of EPP voted against it.<sup>28</sup>

In the case of another human right issue, **the large majority of MEPs (86%) expressed their support for a global moratorium on the death penalty** and its gradual abolition worldwide.<sup>29</sup> However, most MEPs of the ENF group voted against the resolution, and many from the EFDD abstained.

---

<sup>25</sup> <https://jobbik.hu/hireink/nem-ker-jobbik-kozos-europai-hadseregbol>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.origo.hu/itthon/percrolpercre/20160722-orban-viktor-tusnadfurdo-beszed.html>

<sup>27</sup> [http://mszp.hu/hir/tusvanyosi\\_beszed\\_orban\\_az\\_mszp-to\\_l\\_nyulta\\_le\\_a\\_kozos\\_europai\\_hadsereg\\_es\\_titkosszolgalat\\_gondolatot](http://mszp.hu/hir/tusvanyosi_beszed_orban_az_mszp-to_l_nyulta_le_a_kozos_europai_hadsereg_es_titkosszolgalat_gondolatot)

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.votewatch.eu/en/term8-progress-on-equality-between-women-and-men-in-the-eu-in-2013-motion-for-resolution-paragraph-45-2.html#/>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.votewatch.eu/en/term8-the-death-penalty-joint-motion-for-resolution-vote-resolution.html>

## POSITION OF HUNGARIAN PARTIES IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

Concerning the motion on abortion, **Fidesz voted with the majority of the group and opposed enhancing access to abortion, together with Jobbik.** Instead, **all the centre-left and green Hungarian parties endorsed the call for more accessible abortion practices. MSZP usually advocates for more emphasis to be put on sex education and the support of contraceptive measures,<sup>30</sup> while Jobbik has called for stricter abortion laws.** The far-right party supports abortion only in the case in which there is a medical reason or if the pregnancy resulted from a criminal act.<sup>31</sup>

In the case of death penalty, **Hungarian parties did not stand out, as they followed their respective groups in supporting the initiative on worldwide abolition.** However, **this paragraph was not supported by Jobbik** (its MEPs abstained), which was a rather isolated standpoint in the EP. **The Hungarian Socialist Party has been consistently against the death penalty.** However, the **far-right Jobbik advocates for the reintroduction of the capital punishment.** The party's leader said it has to be decided what is more important, "a few international treaties or the life of Hungarian people."<sup>32</sup> Despite Jobbik's clear position, **its MEP's did not cast their votes against the EP's proposal and merely abstained.**

## POSITION OF THE HUNGARIAN GOVERNMENT

**The issue of abortion rights has received relatively little discourse in Hungarian domestic politics.** Ruling Fidesz's coalition partner, the **Christian-Democratic People's Party ideologically rejects abortion and, with the 2011 Fundamental Law (drafted by the coalition government), human life is protected since the moment of conception.** While this statement could have paved way for restrictive measures, government officials have repeatedly stated that no such changes are planned to be done.<sup>33</sup>

However, **while Fidesz-EPP members voted unanimously in favour of abolishing death penalty, Prime Minister Viktor Orbán's opinion on the issue had not always been so decided.** In 2015, Viktor Orbán **said he wanted to debate the possibility of reintroducing**

---

<sup>30</sup> [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20110512\\_mszp\\_helyteleniti\\_kormny\\_politika](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20110512_mszp_helyteleniti_kormny_politika)

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.politics.hu/20110214/jobik-calls-for-stricter-abortion-law/>

<sup>32</sup> [http://index.hu/belfold/2015/04/28/halalbuntetes\\_fidesz\\_rogan\\_antal\\_nemzeti\\_dohanybolt\\_trafik/](http://index.hu/belfold/2015/04/28/halalbuntetes_fidesz_rogan_antal_nemzeti_dohanybolt_trafik/)

<sup>33</sup> <http://nepszava.com/2012/09/magyarorszag/fidesz-nem-lesz-valtozas-az-abortusz-szabalyozasaban.html>

**the death penalty with the EU.**<sup>34</sup> Nonetheless, after having aroused a major international and domestic controversy, Orbán conceded, saying “the EU is right with regards to the death penalty, nobody can bring it back.”<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>34</sup> [http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150508\\_Orban\\_Viktor](http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150508_Orban_Viktor)

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20150602-orban-viktor-halalbuntetes-jean-claude-juncker-helmut-kohl.html>