

# Transboundary Symbiosis over the Danube: III

Re-thinking the meaning  
of Symbiosis -Past,  
Present and Future

Edited by

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and

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Waseda University Press

**Transboundary Symbiosis over the Danube: III**  
Re-thinking the meaning of Symbiosis—Past, Present and Future

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# Another Referendum in 2016 on Migration in Hungary

## —A New Europe from East?

Osamu Ieda  
(Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan)

### Introduction

Hungary and its Prime Minister Viktor Orbán were criticized by the international mass media for no humanism and no tolerance in the refugee treatment when the massive refugees arrived in Hungary in 2015. However, the Hungarian government objected that Hungary just kept the Schengen border control regulations as usual. What happened in reality is the sudden and vast influx of so-called Syrian refugees, which was of a magnitude far beyond the country's capability to handle in a physical sense (see Figures One and Two).

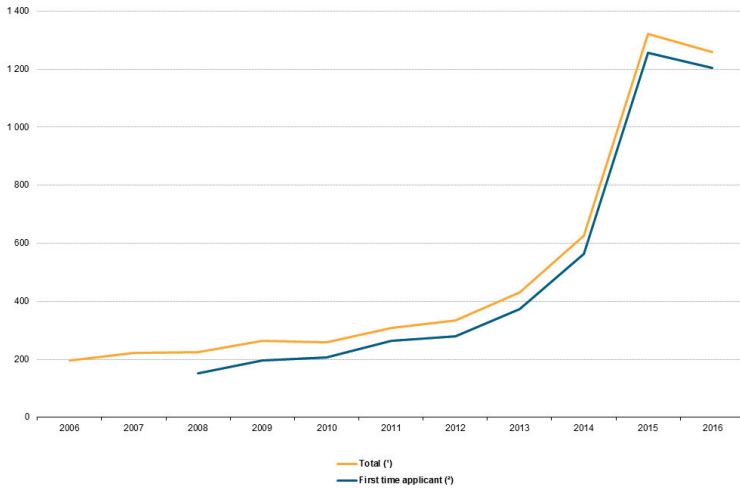
The sudden increase of Middle Eastern refugees, in fact, simply followed the new German migration policy issued in the middle of August, 2015, according to which all Syrian refugees would be accepted as asylum seekers by the German government unconditionally; or, at least, Syrian refugees understood the German message in that way. Non Syrian refugees such as Afghan refugees, for instance, followed the Syrians' move to Europe. Further more, Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, stated. "Europe as a whole needs to move on how to deal with refugees and migrants arriving in the EU. If Europe fails on the question of refugees, then it won't be the Europe we wished for"<sup>1</sup>. The statement made the refugees convinced in their understanding of the message and in their certain status as asylum seekers in Germany and the EU in general.

The new German policy, however, brought serious chaos at the Schengen borders, such as the Hungarian-Serbian border at the end of August, 2015 due to

1 <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-34108224>

no consensus and no pre-notice among Schengen member countries about the new German policy.

Figure One: Application for Refugee Status in the EU, 2006-2016



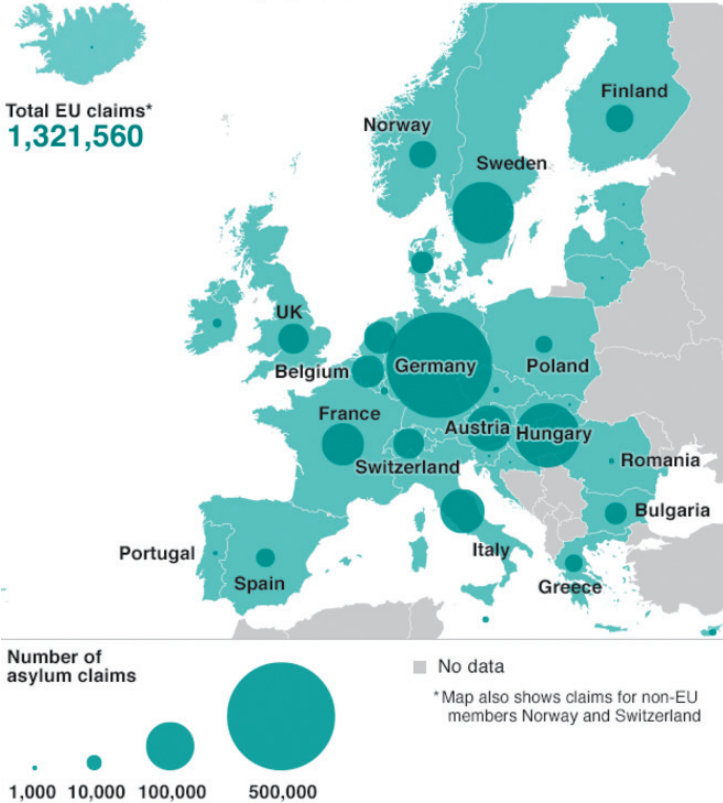
(\*) 2006 and 2007: EU-27 and extra-EU-27.

(\*) 2006 and 2007: not available.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: migr\_asyczt; and migr\_asyapctza)

[http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/f/ff/Asylum\\_applications\\_%28non-EU%29\\_in\\_the\\_EU-28\\_Member\\_States%2C\\_2006%E2%80%932016\\_%28thousands%29\\_YB17.png](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/f/ff/Asylum_applications_%28non-EU%29_in_the_EU-28_Member_States%2C_2006%E2%80%932016_%28thousands%29_YB17.png)

### Asylum claims in Europe, 2015



Source: Eurostat



Source: BBC web news

Figure Two: Refugee Influx Routes into Europe, 2015



<http://uk.businessinsider.com/map-refugees-europe-migrants-2016-2>

In my paper, I examine the migration crisis in the EU through investigating two referenda held in 2016; One in the UK, and the other in Hungary. Both referenda focused on Eastern Europe, although in the opposite way. Namely, Eastern Europe is the object, the immigrants to be accepted, in the UK referendum, and Eastern Europe is the subject, accepting the immigrants, in Hungary.

## I. British Referendum over Brexit

In 2016, following the hot year over the issue of Middle Eastern migration/refugees, coincidentally, two national referenda took place, and both referenda deeply divided the nationals between Yes and No. The British referendum on Brexit provoked international opinions world-wide, the other referendum in Hungary did not receive international attention.

The result of the British referendum was in favor of Brexit by 51.9% against non-Brexit polls of 48.1%. This result caused a big surprise for a while after the referendum. However, it was gradually accepted as a not so irrational alternative. Now, especially after the American presidential election in 2016, the British choice is more widely recognized as the new global phenomenon.

The issue of migration/refugee was not the only question in the Brexit referendum, though the issue was very symbolic when we consider the meaning of



Brexit. Namely, the majority in the UK wanted no more control from Brussels. Besides, we have to understand the voice of Brexit not only as a “nationalist voice”, but also the “voice of the people”, who demonstrated distrust in politics in general, including the British politicians.

The migration/refugee issue in the UK rose not because of Syrian refugees, but because of migration from the new member states of the European Union (EU), namely, Eastern Europe. The focus of the referendum was Polish immigrants.

The Polish immigrants to the UK grew so rapidly that the Polish-born people became the largest sources of the UK’s foreign-born groups in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, instead of Indian-born immigrants before. In the last decade, 831, 000 people came to the UK from Poland, contra 795,000 from India.<sup>2</sup>

Figure Three clearly demonstrates that the UK had two influx waves in the last two decades; one is from 1998 to 2004, and the other is from 2004 to the present. The first wave is non-EU immigrants, and the second one is EU immigrants. The correlation between the two waves is obvious: EU immigration replaced the non-EU immigration. 2004 is the turning point, the year East European joined the EU<sup>3</sup>, and the major part of the second wave consists of Polish immigrants (see Figure Four)<sup>4</sup>.

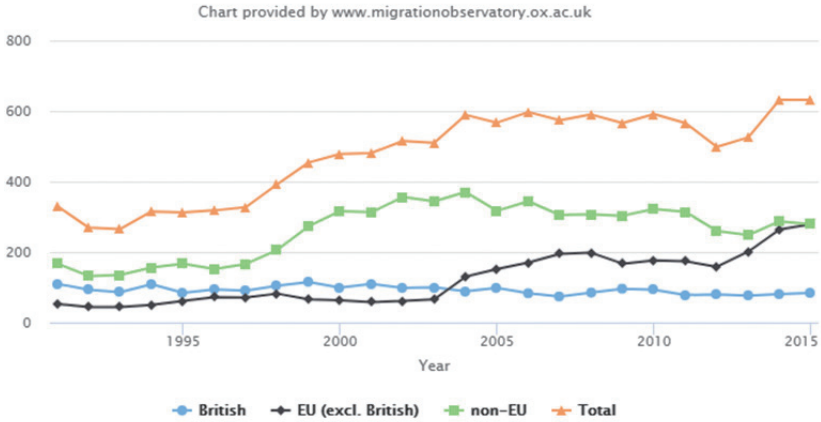
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2 <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/>; (30/9/2016)

3 Richard Black et.al. ed., *Continent moving West?* Amsterdam University Press, 2010.

4 Kathy Burrell ed., *Polish migration to the UK in the new European Union after 2004*, Loutledge, 2016.

Figure Three: Migration to the UK by nationality, 1991-2015  
Migration to the UK by nationality, 1991-2015



Source: ONS, Table 2.01aa LTIM

(Source: <http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/resources/briefings/immigration-by-category-workers-students-family-members-asylum-applicants/#kp1>) (5/1/2017)

Polish people rushed to the West after the EU accession, due to serious unemployment after the collapse of the socialist system at the end of the 1980s and the 1990s. Thanks to massive emigration to western European countries, unemployment in Poland has drastically diminished (see Figure Five). The Polish Central Statistical Office gave the numbers of Polish migration from 2004 to 2013, reinforcing the UK's statistics, that is, more than half a million people moved to the UK within a decade.

Figure Four: Polish-born people in Employment in the UK

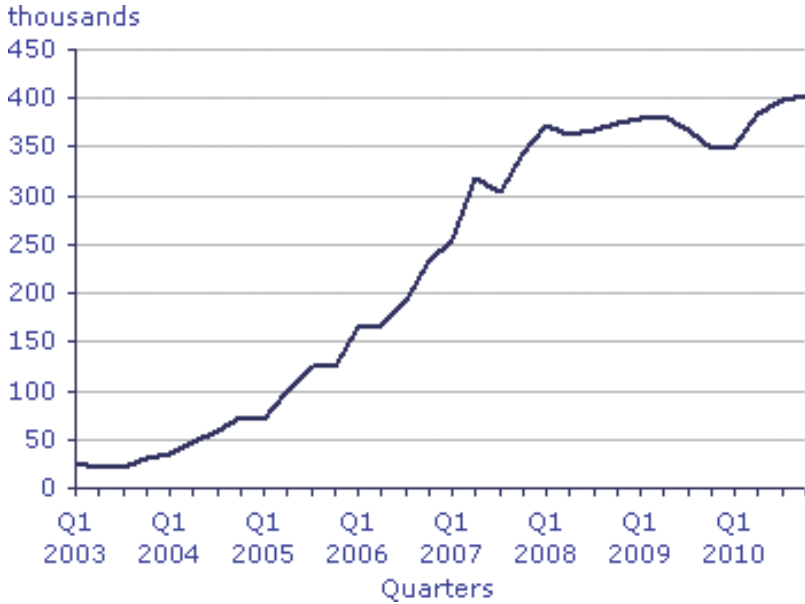


Figure Five



Figure Six: Polish emmigration from 2004 to 2013

| Kraj przebywania                                   | NSP 2002 <sup>a</sup> | 2004         | 2005         | 2006         | 2007         | 2008         | 2009         | 2010         | NSP 2011 <sup>c</sup> | 2011         | 2012        | 2013         |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| <b>Ogółem</b>                                      | <b>786</b>            | <b>1 000</b> | <b>1 450</b> | <b>1 950</b> | <b>2 270</b> | <b>2 210</b> | <b>2 100</b> | <b>2 000</b> | <b>2 018</b>          | <b>2 060</b> | <b>2130</b> | <b>2 196</b> |
| <b>Europa</b>                                      | <b>461</b>            | <b>770</b>   | <b>1 200</b> | <b>1 610</b> | <b>1 925</b> | <b>1 887</b> | <b>1 765</b> | <b>1 685</b> | <b>1 718</b>          | <b>1 754</b> | <b>1816</b> | <b>1 891</b> |
| <b>Unia Europejska<br/>(27 krajów)<sup>d</sup></b> | <b>451</b>            | <b>750</b>   | <b>1 170</b> | <b>1 550</b> | <b>1 860</b> | <b>1 820</b> | <b>1 690</b> | <b>1 607</b> | <b>1 644</b>          | <b>1 670</b> | <b>1720</b> | <b>1789</b>  |
| Austria  | 11                    | 15           | 25           | 34           | 39           | 40           | 36           | 29           | 24                    | 25           | 28          | 31           |
| Belgia   | 14                    | 13           | 21           | 28           | 31           | 33           | 34           | 45           | 49                    | 47           | 48          | 49           |
| Cypr   | -                     | -            | -            | -            | 4            | 4            | 3            | 3            | 3                     | 3            | 2           | 1            |
| Dania  | -                     | -            | -            | -            | 17           | 19           | 20           | 19           | 19                    | 21           | 23          | 25           |
| Finlandia  | 0,3                   | 0,4          | 0,7          | 3            | 4            | 4            | 3            | 3            | 2                     | 2            | 2           | 3            |
| Francja  | 21                    | 30           | 44           | 49           | 55           | 56           | 60           | 60           | 61                    | 62           | 63          | 63           |
| Grecja   | 10                    | 13           | 17           | 20           | 20           | 20           | 16           | 16           | 16                    | 15           | 14          | 12           |
| Holandia   | 10                    | 23           | 43           | 55           | 98           | 108          | 98           | 92           | 106                   | 95           | 97          | 103          |
| Hiszpania  | 14                    | 26           | 37           | 44           | 80           | 83           | 84           | 48           | 44                    | 40           | 37          | 34           |
| Irlandia   | 2                     | 15           | 76           | 120          | 200          | 180          | 140          | 133          | 129                   | 120          | 118         | 115          |
| Niemcy   | 294                   | 385          | 430          | 450          | 490          | 490          | 465          | 440          | 435                   | 470          | 500         | 560          |
| Portugalia   | 0,3                   | 0,5          | 0,6          | 1            | 1            | 1            | 1            | 1            | 2                     | 1            | 1           | 1            |
| Czechy   | -                     | -            | -            | -            | 8            | 10           | 9            | 7            | 7                     | 7            | 8           | 8            |
| Szwecja  | 6                     | 11           | 17           | 25           | 27           | 29           | 31           | 33           | 35                    | 36           | 38          | 40           |
| Wielka Brytania                                    | 24                    | 150          | 340          | 580          | 690          | 650          | 595          | 580          | 612                   | 625          | 637         | 642          |
| Włochy   | 39                    | 59           | 70           | 85           | 87           | 88           | 88           | 92           | 92                    | 94           | 97          | 96           |
| <b>Kraje spoza<br/>Unii Europejskiej</b>           | <b>10</b>             | <b>20</b>    | <b>30</b>    | <b>60</b>    | <b>65</b>    | <b>67</b>    | <b>75</b>    | <b>78</b>    | <b>74</b>             | <b>85</b>    | <b>96</b>   | <b>102</b>   |
| w tym:   |                       |              |              |              |              |              |              |              |                       |              |             |              |
| Norwegia   | -                     | -            | -            | -            | 36           | 38           | 45           | 50           | 46                    | 56           | 65          | 71           |

Source: [http://stat.gov.pl/files/gfx/portalinformacyjny/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5471/2/7/1/informacja\\_o\\_rozmiarach\\_i\\_kierunkach\\_emigracji\\_z\\_polski\\_w\\_latach\\_2004-2013.pdf](http://stat.gov.pl/files/gfx/portalinformacyjny/pl/defaultaktualnosci/5471/2/7/1/informacja_o_rozmiarach_i_kierunkach_emigracji_z_polski_w_latach_2004-2013.pdf)

Due to the sudden influx of Polish immigrants, British people faced with the uncontrollable and unforeseeable migration from the new EU members. The UK has no means to regulate EU migration by itself. Needless to say, huge migration from new member states of the EU is another side of the coin of the EU's Eastern enlargement. Namely, the new member states of the EU accepted the free market systems with their EU membership, including influx of West European products and investments. In turn, the East European people looked for workplaces in the West, losing their income resources in their homelands.

The idea of free market is the basis of EU integration, and the EU promised free movement of goods, money, and labor force for the new member countries. The East European markets have been integrated into the EU markets. Why not for the free market of labor force in Britain as well? This is the logic of the East European perception. There is no room for the UK to reject free EU immigration if she remains in the EU.

The issue of the labor market is, however, very sensitive, and it is understandable for the UK to take the decision to regulate the labor market by itself,

instead of by Brussels. Brexit means introduction of national regulation instead of the regional trans-border free market system. For Britain which has so far claimed the border-free market system to the whole world for centuries, and has taken benefits from the system, Brexit was the turning point.

## II. Hungarian referendum

The question of the referendum in Hungary was: "Do you want to allow the EU to mandate the resettlement of non-Hungarian citizens to Hungary without the approval of the Hungarian National Assembly?"

The question seems complicated, but the essence is basically the same as the British referendum; the focus of the referendum is whether to accept or to reject Brussels' control over the national decision-making process on the issue of migration.

A tremendous number of signs of the referendum campaign were to be seen everywhere in Hungary. A picture of the signs shown below was taken in Sarospatak, a small town in the northern periphery of Hungary, in September 2016. Thousands of signs were prepared by the Orbán government by using the state budget. It is doubtful, however, that the signs all over the country worked effectively in terms of giving additional polls for "No" in the referendum. Nevertheless, the signs induced a sentiment among the residents to have a collective preconception against the influx of the unknown immigrants.



"Did you know? Last year one and a half million illegal immigrants arrived in Europe" (photo by the author, Sarospatak, 9/2016)



“Did you know? From only Libya, about one million immigrants want to come to Europe.”



“Did you know? Immigrants committed the murder in Paris.”



“Did you know? Last year one and a half million illegal migrants arrived in Europe.”

Among the signs we found catchphrases mentioning gender harassment, like “Since the migration crisis began, harassment against women is dramatically increasing in Europe”. The message of the signs is very simple. The immigrants are mass evils, and they are out of control, although the dominant residents of the country did not know who the Syrian immigrants were.<sup>5</sup>

These signs show clearly that the agenda of the referendum was not the

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5 In the original paper which was presented at the workshop in Komarno in 2016, I began with the case of Melina Hedvig in order to invite the audience to pay attention to a biased perception even between the neighbors.

immigrants in general, but the Middle Eastern migration. The way of the discourse in the campaign signs, especially the same phrase at the beginning, “Did you know?” obviously illustrates the negative campaign of the government against the immigrants.

The message of Premier Orbán in the last moments of the referendum campaign seemed to work very effectively in the end. He said that if the polls of “Yes” would be the majority in the referendum, the immigrants would be sent to those municipalities where the “Yes” was majority in the voting.

### III. Orbán insisting “New order”

Beyond the political propaganda in the referendum campaign in Hungary, Viktor Orbán intended to provoke a public opinion concerning the deepening “disorder” in EU politics due to the migration crisis, and thus he wanted to make the people perceive Brussels less effective in managing the common issues of the EU.



Orbán’s speech before the new police officers: “Today, Hungary represents the order in Europe, which is becoming more and more disordered.”<sup>6</sup>

The Hungarian PM said at the ceremony of the Police academy in Budapest on 26 June 2016, that “Many European leaders do not take a battle against the modern “Great Barbarian Invasion” and the influx of immigrants which is illegal and unlawful. The consequence is the decline of public order, threat of violence, and general complaint.” Orbán also declared that “Hungary has started politics in the opposit direction, thus millions of Hungarians had got back the

6 <http://www.magyarutadat.com/magyarorszag-a-rendet-kepviseli-az-egyre-ink-abb-rendetlenne-valo-europaban/> (4/5/2017).

trust. They would be able to live in the country with safety.” ”Europe has no order. Europe is not capable of finding solutions to tasks such as the immigrants sieging the borders, the rampant smuggling of human beings, and terrorism. In future, those countries, that remain in order and are able to ensure safety and law, will stand in an advantageous position. No order, no economic development, no investment, and no good life.”

The Hungarian Premier has emphasized the same kind of message to the European Council.



Viktor Orbán Representing the European peoples in Brussels.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2015 in Brussels, just following the sudden influx of the Middle Eastern migration, Orbán met the president of the European Council, Donald Tusk, and said: ”I would like to translate the voices of the European peoples: Europe is full of fear, and they are not satisfied with what the European leaders have been doing”<sup>7</sup>.

Orbán further demonstrated the role of Hungary: Hungary protects Europe! Namely, he said, “The Hungarian authorities protect not only the Hungarian border regions but the European borders as well.” ”Hungary has an obligation to protect the borders, and the country is sticking firmly to the provisions of the Schengen Agreement and we will keep the agreement.” The PM objected to the criticism levered against him, stating, “So many people criticize us concern-

7 Op.cit.

8 <http://szegedma.hu/hir/szeged/2015/09/orban-brusszelben-schulz-kozos-europai-megoldast-szorgalmaz.html> (4/5/2017).



ing the border fences which were constructed along the Hungarian border. However, we ask the European leaders: How is it possible, otherwise, to keep the 175 kilometer long border under control in order to observe the Schengen agreement?”

President Tusk replied, “Not everyone supports the disputed solutions, which Viktor Orbán supports. I understand why they do not support. However, one thing is obvious: Prime Minister Viktor Orbán took steps for to strengthen the European borders.”

#### **IV. Viktor Orbán: Man of the Year in Poland**

“The last years could mean great steps for the self-discovery and Renaissance of Central Europe. The Central European peoples should keep their faithful, national, historic identity. ... Rebuilding the European spirit can start from Central Europe“<sup>9</sup>, said Viktor Orbán at the ceremony of the “Man of the Year” prize in Poland, which Orbán was given.



V.Orbán and B. Szydło, Polish Prime Minister.

Viktor Orbán continued his speech at the ceremony, mentioning various topics concerning the crisis and identity in Europe, as follows: he mentioned Brexit: “The British people said: What is going on in the EU is not good. We have to consider what is wrong in the EU. The European decision makers and the leading media people make you believe that Europe progresses in the right

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9 <http://24.hu/kozelet/2016/09/07/orban-viktor-az-ev-embere/> (3/3/2017).

direction, because the traditional identities are disappearing; the traditional identities are out of date; instead, a new identity is necessary; the former identities, losing significance, will be dissolved into the European identity. The British people, however, want to remain British.” “No European identity exists. European identity cannot replace the national and faithful identities.”

Orbán continues: “We should not lose self-consciousness in our running of the national economy. The national influence is the important target in the key industries. The representatives of the international capitals insist that money has no smell. This is true. However, the owner of the money has smell. The stronger the traditional identity is, the more successful we will be in the coming years.”

About foreign capital, he said: “When the financial crisis took place, almost the entire total bank system in Hungary was under the control of the foreign banks, and they were not single. We have been taught that this was fine. However, when the crisis happened, the banks stopped credits first of all in Hungary. From this we learnt that it mattered who is the owner of the money. In the four sectors the national capitals should get significant as much as possible; media, banking sector, energy, and detail industry. Now the situation is in order except the last one.”

Orbán put an emphasize on identity: “We are now arriving at the great moment, because no European identity exists. We cannot replace national and religious identities. So I have to say that nation and Christianity are values, and these identities are important. We have to foster and protect them. The migration crisis strengthens this conviction, too, since the identity of those who come here is stronger than that of the Europeans in general. This is the reason why the immigrants are shaping the enlarging islands in society.” He continues: “Central Europe is successful, thanks to its identity. Therefore, rebuilding the European spirit can start from here in Central Europe in order to make entire Europe successful and competitive in the end. Hungary is, however, a country of just ten million inhabitants, therefore we try to obtain Poland and the Visegrad Four, so that we can start the process together.”

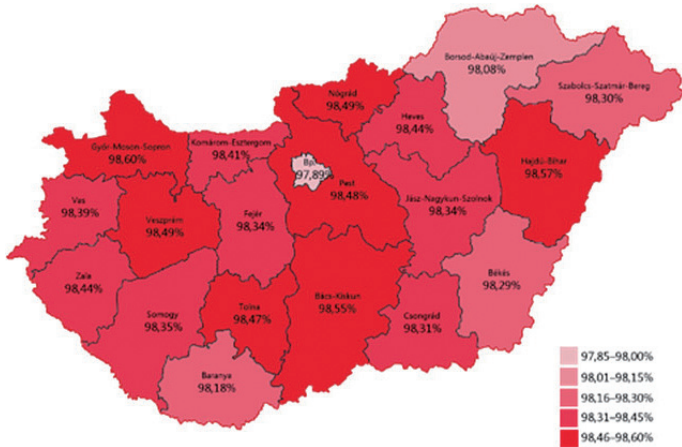
Orbán’s “new Europe” reminds us of the Europeanization or the EU-nazation which was required East European candidate countries from Brussels in the process of their joining EU. Namely, the candidate countries were obligated to accept the EU standards, the “Aquis communautaire”. The East European countries felt again the inferiority just as in the previous globalization process in the

Eastern part of Europe half a century before, the introduction of migration of the communist regime forced by Moscow.

The main issue of the two referenda in 2016 is clear, that is, “no more Brussels.” The British government is looking for a new relationship with the Europe out of the EU, and the Hungarian government is seeking a position against Brussels within the EU, running a new propaganda, “Rebuilding the order in the EU”. “New Europe” is demonstration of “national resistance” in the Europeanization led by Brussels.

## V. The result of the referendum in Hungary

The poles of the Referendum on 4<sup>th</sup> October 2016, seemingly, fully supported the Orbán government, showing 98% of the votes in favor of “No”, that is against Brussels. The map suggests that all of the counties in Hungary said “No” with the absolute majority.

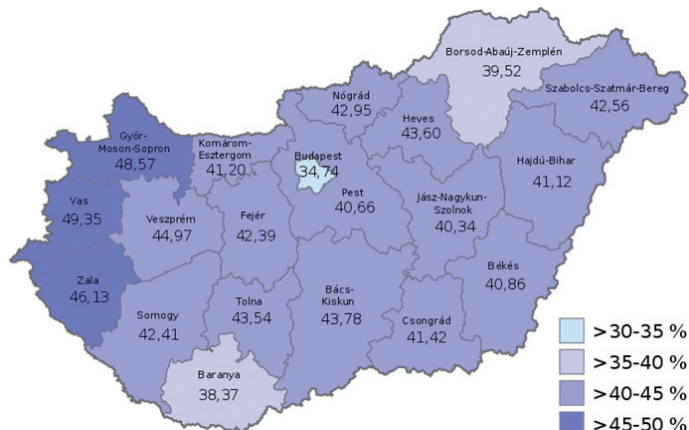


The lowest figure is 97.9 in the capital, Budapest, and the highest is 98.6 % in Győr-Moson-Sopron. The Hungarian PM, Viktor Orbán declared the victory in the referendum on the EU migration policy: The Hungarians do not “want to allow the EU to mandate the resettlement of non-Hungarian citizens to Hungary without the approval of the Hungarian National Assembly.”

However, the absolute majority of the poles does not equal the majority of

the society. The turnout of voting in the referendum was less than half, 44%. So the referendum was not effective, legally speaking. The opposite parties' tactics, boycott of voting, was successful. In this context, objectively Orbán was not supported by the society's majority.

Map of the turnout of poles in the referendum



Considering the divided result of the Hungarian referendum, we may suggest that the Hungarian residents just followed their usual political preference or loyalty to their favorite parties. The turnouts of the referendum were almost as much as the poles for Orbán's party in the last general elections (44.87%).<sup>10</sup>

## VI. Remarks on the migration issue from the East European perspective

### 1) No xenophobia

The result of the Hungarian referendum shows simply that half of the nationals does not want Brussels direct their decision-making process, and that the other half does not support the Orbán government. In spite of the tremendous number of signs in the anti-migration campaign, public opinion does not show xenophobia.

<sup>10</sup> The sources of the referendum in 2016 are; [http://www.valasztas.hu/dyn/onepsz201610/szavossz/en/eredind\\_e.html](http://www.valasztas.hu/dyn/onepsz201610/szavossz/en/eredind_e.html) (2017/12/20)

## 2) Sophistication in wording

PM Orbán has changed, still not fully, his word usage from Christianity to faithfulness in order to make his message acceptable to anyone who is not a Christian. The main issue for Viktor Orbán is not whether to accept the migrants or not, but whether to keep the identity or not. The Premier even evaluates the immigrants in Europe because of their strong identity.

## 3) Europeanization from the East

Orbán's new discourse is concerned with the term "Europeanization." Originally Europeanization meant global and common values over national values, however, the Hungarian Premier initiated to convert the contents of Europeanization from transnational values to the national, faithful, and historical values. This could be a diplomatic strategy of the minor nations in Eastern Europe to realize their national and regional (for example, Visegrad Four) interests. East European states are not mono-ethnic nations. "Nation states" are the new creation in Eastern Europe and in the Middle East as well by the European and global powers after the first and second world wars. From this point of view, no reason exists for the East Europeans to have Islamic xenophobia, and in reality no serious basis for the Middle Eastern foreigners.

## 4) Coexistence in history

Concerning with xenophobia, Eastern Europe, historically speaking, has been functioning rather as an asylum, accepting various peoples such as Romas, Jews, Russians, and others for centuries. These peoples had been discriminated, excluded, and oppressed. Consequently, the majority of the Roma and Jewish population lived in Eastern parts of Europe. In 1900, for instance, out of 9 million Jewish people, 6 million lived in Eastern parts of Europe: 4 million in Russia, 1.3 million in Poland, 0.8 million in Hungary, 0.3 million in Romania, 0.2 million in Austria, contra 1.5 million in the US and 0.25 million in the UK. As for Romas, the same is true.<sup>11</sup>

Therefore, it has no foundation to insist that Eastern Europe has ever been a region of xenophobia against others.

## 5) Ethnic Melting Pot

Budapest has many synagogues with significant Jewish intellectuals. This is also the case in local cities. Jewish theaters developed in Yiddish language in the region. Eastern parts of Europe have been an ethnic melting pot where dif-

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11 <https://afoldgomb.hu/foldgomb/terkepen-ciganyok-romak-europaban> (2018/3/9)

ferent peoples lived together, and co-existing philosophies of reintegration of peoples were born, such as Coudenhove's United States of Europe, Herzl's Zionism, and Masaryk's Self-determination. The Holocaust was not a universal phenomenon in the region.