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The Extreme-Right in Hungary after the 2010 Elections

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1. Introduction

As a result of the parliamentary elections held in April 2010, the extreme right – currently represented by the political party of Jobbik – has become part of the Hungarian Parliament again after an eight-year absence. It is very important to highlight, right at the beginning, that Jobbik is not (though the extreme right has never been) a major part of Parliament under the terms of Hungary's constitutional order due to the fact that the current power distribution in Parliament allows the opposition parties, Jobbik included, very little influence on the development of public matters. Nevertheless, the extreme right's return to Parliament is a major development in terms of Hungarian politics.

Indeed, with a particular eye toward long-term trends and the general political atmosphere of the nation at large, it is highly significant that a political formation more advanced than MIÉP (Hungarian Party of Truth and Life, voted out of Parliament in 2002) has been granted a place in Parliament for at least the next four years. After all, Jobbik has a potential for development similar to that of the extreme right in Western Europe, while at the same time being heavily anti-democratic. Moreover, despite the limited role the opposition can play in the current Parliament, Jobbik does have, as a parliamentary party, effective instruments which it can use to influence the political discussion and voters' perceptions, something it did not have as a par-

ty without representation in Parliament. As will be described in greater detail below, these tools are comprised primarily of first, the forum for political speech and national publicity afforded any party with representation in Parliament and, secondly, the potential to directly influence the legislative process.

Perhaps most significantly, these parliamentary activities, coupled with the extensive inroads Jobbik has made into municipal governments since local elections on 3 October 2010, could lay sufficient groundwork to allow Jobbik to become a stable party of the political center, and a long-term political presence in Hungary. To what extent the extreme right will be able to use this opportunity will depend to a great extent on Jobbik itself, but also significantly on its political rivals, the democratic parliamentary parties.

2. Jobbik in Parliament

Prior to the elections, most analysts focused their questions concerning Jobbik on what the party would do with the parliamentary gains expected to be won in the spring. Most projections focused on the following questions:

Whether the general national mood of dissatisfaction and protest, which itself had facilitated Jobbik's gains, would disappear under a right-wing government enjoying both a commanding two-thirds majority in Parliament and much greater social acceptance than the previous

government. In other words, would the second Orbán government enjoy an upswing in the electorate's mood and thus be able to take the wind out of Jobbik's sails? Whether day-to-day parliamentary politics would erode Jobbik's (and other parties') popularity, especially given the fact that their success was driven largely by waves of anti-elitism. Whether Jobbik would begin shedding its popularity (as did MIÉP) and lose its representation in Parliament, or instead adjust to the parliamentary framework by moderating itself to some extent (as did the Austrian FPÖ). Whether internal conflict would lead to the break up of the party. Whether Jobbik's parliamentary group would be capable of pursuing the details and vagaries, the ebb and flow, of standard parliamentary politics, or whether it would continue its public activities as a so-called single-issue party interested only in making 'Roma issues' and 'political corruption' a permanent part of the national agenda.

In terms of moderation, there is very little basis for talking about either Jobbik's adjustment to the standard rules of the parliamentary game, or about a change in the party's tone. It is simply the case that not enough time has passed, for even in politics four months is a rather short time for a complete change of profile. That said, even prior to the parliamentary elections there were some signs of movements and conflicts which indicated that there was, within Jobbik, some intention to adjust, or at least some openness to the idea. Several analysts noted the moderation of the public statements of party president Gábor Vona. There was also a tactically astute fine-tuning of the tone of the campaign of Gábor Staudt, Jobbik's mayoral nominee for Budapest, wherein the cultural diversity of Budapest (considered more liberal than the rest of the country) was recognized as a value in Staudt's program. The press also published information regarding internal dissent over Jobbik's paramilitary organization. The reports indicated that more and more people within the party were suggesting that it was high time to break away from this so-called Hungarian Guard, which was thought to be becoming an increasing burden for a party which had intentions to 'become more serious'.

However, certain signs point in the opposite direction. In July Lajos Pósz, Jobbik's deputy parliamentary group leader, granted an interview to a national daily paper in which he mentioned the party's thoughts regarding disassociating itself from the Hungarian Guard. Yet de-

spite his position, Pósz's statement was declared to be 'unacceptable' by the parliamentary group, and as a result he was removed as deputy leader with immediate effect. On a different front, Jobbik's continuing efforts to highlight the issue of Roma crimes in legislation, and their long-term plans to establish 'self-sustaining prisons' (or internment camps) especially for the Roma, do not point towards moderation, either.

To summarize, at the moment there is no sign of any severe internal discord. Yet the unified face the national party puts on for public consumption is clearly manufactured. For although the party leadership – and Gábor Vona in particular – takes every opportunity to stress the party's unity of action and purpose, Jobbik is nonetheless an internally divided political formation composed of several vying factions. Jobbik is an extreme party which rode its way to Parliament largely on waves of anti-Roma and anti-Semitic prejudice. At the same time, Jobbik burst into Parliament on the strength of its anti-political establishment stance and rhetoric which, has various but important roots within Hungarian society. So its racist and reductionist rhetoric, which describes the party as the only trustworthy group, attracted a large number of people who felt that the major parties had deceived them, and had actively swept their everyday problems under the rug in an effort to avoid dealing with them. So in terms of Jobbik as a whole, the five months since the establishment of the new Parliament have not allowed sufficient time to be able to discuss the development of true fault lines within the party. Yet certain contrasts can already be observed, micro-fractures which may potentially develop into future divides. Based on developments to date, two critical points need to be highlighted: first, the effort to politically tailor or partially moderate the image of the party; and second, the party's relationship with the Hungarian Guard.

The election of spring 2010 not only brought back into Parliament representatives of the extreme right, but it also brought into being in Hungary a completely new political style and rhetoric. Partly as a result of the media's news selection mechanisms (i.e., because extreme or scandalous events are frequently chosen to head the news, thus confirming the public's expectations of the extreme party), and partly because the new parliamentary opposition has very little political scope for movement against

the government's two-thirds majority, Jobbik is still covered in the daily news cycle primarily in terms of its ill-mannered statements and shocking proposals. The first such event took place in May during the inaugural session of the new Parliament when, in keeping with his previous promise, Jobbik party president Gábor Vona took his parliamentary oath wearing a so-called 'guard vest', i.e., the uniform of the Hungarian Guard, banned and dissolved by an act of Parliament.¹

Not much later the parliamentary group nominated Tamás Sneider as head of the Parliamentary Commission for Social, Family and Housing Matters, a man who began his public career as an emblematic figure of the Roma-skinhead war in Eger in the 1990s, and at one time wished to solve a family dispute by becoming his own parents' legal guardian. A range of similar, so-called scandals have involved Jobbik MP György Gyula Zagyva, familiar to the police earlier in life as an active skinhead. At one point he used vulgar language in Parliament in the process of threatening a Fidesz fellow MP whose opinion he disagreed with. He attracted attention again in August at an extreme right event when, holding a whip in his hand, he verbally assaulted and physically threatened a group of liberal journalists attempting to interview him.

Then, in October, in a cozy interview given to journalists at Mandiner, one of the better-known Hungarian right-wing blogs, Zagyva described Ferenc Szálasi as the last legitimate prime minister of Hungary, and went on to add that 98 percent of Hungarian journalists were 'queer'. The most outrageous comment may have been that of Márton Szegedi, Jobbik mayor of Miskolc, who suggested, during the local election campaign, that recidivist (i.e., habitual) 'Roma criminals' ought to be locked up in internment camps and deprived of their citizenship. Yet perhaps the most dust was kicked up when bargaining between the Socialists and the extreme right in Parliament nearly led to a Jobbik MP becoming chairman of the Parliamentary Commission for National Security.²

¹ The interesting twist to this event is that the only way Vona could do this was to claim immunity as a Member of Parliament, even while his party has been arguing for the need to abolish such immunity in order to fight political corruption.

² This caused great outcry due to the fact that, while the details of Jobbik's finances have not yet been

Although Jobbik may not have exhausted its growth potential quite yet, its two-year run of strong, steady growth seems to have come to a halt in the new environment. According to various public opinion surveys, the party's support reached its peak during the parliamentary elections in May 2010, when 15 to 17 percent of those intending to vote declared their support for the extreme-right party. (This corresponded well with Jobbik's election results, with the party list receiving 16.67 percent of the valid votes cast.)

3. Tracking support for Jobbik

Jobbik's popularity has not increased since the parliamentary elections; in fact, the party even lost 1 to 2 percent of its support over the summer, probably as a result of a general shift in the political atmosphere resulting from the end of the election campaign and the change of government. According to surveys, most voters were hopeful about the future when the new Parliament was established, and in its first few months the new government was judged mainly positively. It is also important to note that at the beginning of their governing cycle, the Fidesz-KDNP coalition, with its two-thirds majority, took pains to enact various, mainly symbolic, but decidedly populist measures in order to satisfy the demands of radical voters on the political right.³

The future course of Jobbik's popularity depends on several factors. It is obvious that in the long run the party will have to decide on its future development by resolving two issues: first, how it will deal with the latent contrast between its more radical and more moderate wings; and second, what its relationship with the Hungarian Guard will be. Yet what the government does and how those measures are perceived by the electorate are perhaps even more important questions. While in opposition Fidesz-KDNP strongly opposed the strict fiscal policies of the previous governments, constantly insisting that there was a painless way out of

clarified, rumors of financial relations between the party and Iran and Russia have long been circulating (though they lack factual support). For more details of the case, see below.

³ Such measures included changes in the criminal law with a hidden ethnic edge (referred to above), the amendment of the Act on Citizenship, and the introduction of 'National Cohesion Day' (practically identical with the anniversary of Trianon).

the economic crisis and the general economic problems of the country. In other words, Fidesz-KDNP claimed, while out of power, that they could grow the economy even without structural reforms or cuts in social expenditure, and therefore without damaging various vested interests.

However, it seems that the party alliance has fallen into its own trap, because although it managed to maintain its policy of silence until the local elections held on 3 October, and did not say anything about how it wished to keep the deficit below the 3 percent target undertaken for 2011, there are already strong indications that the government will not be able to avoid a fiscal disciplinary policy. For the time being, it has managed to avoid taxing the public directly in order to cut its expenses, yet the efforts made at increasing revenue may nonetheless be deemed indirect taxes despite the government's efforts to present the moves differently. Although the surtaxes imposed on banks and supermarket chains, the energy sector and the telecommunications companies were at first positively received by voters, it is obvious that at least some of these companies will seek to recover these costs from consumers, or pass them on to their suppliers, which again will have an adverse effect on economic growth. Thus voters will sooner or later feel the pain of these taxes in their own pocketbooks in the form of higher bank fees, increased utility rates, higher food prices and rising telephone or internet service fees.⁴

On the other hand, it seems that the government may have now reached the limits of its power. Even right-wing opinion formers exclaimed in protest when, at the end of October, the Fidesz parliamentary group leader announced plans to limit the scope of competence of the Constitutional Court. The move was a reaction to the Court's annulment of an act of Parliament, approved by the government majority, on the grounds that the measure was not in compliance with the Constitution. Fidesz announced that after taking measures to limit the Court's constitutional jurisdiction, the annulled bill would be presented and voted on again without any changes whatsoever.

⁴ This tendency was also confirmed in a private speech given by the Prime Minister in Kötöcsé, at the beginning of September, in which he admitted that the government will be forced to introduce restrictions of approximately one trillion HUF over the next few years.

There are several factors which may lead to the slow erosion of Fidesz-KDNP's voter base. They include the failure to meet the euphoric expectations raised among the electorate prior to the elections, the delayed but eventual impact on ordinary voters of the government's recently imposed surtaxes on several industries, the party's tin ear (that is, its seemingly total disregard for social dialogue), the violation of the basic principles of the rule of law, the arbitrary seizure of private pension funds, and finally the painful effects of various structural reforms (which have been implemented quite late, if at all). Yet all these factors are also likely to eventually lead to the disappointment of the masses in the currently overwhelmingly popular governing parties. The political group (or groups) to which disillusioned and migrating voters will turn for solace or support will depend on the degree of voter disappointment, the parliamentary moves made by those currently in opposition, and finally on the relative quality and success of the opposition's communication strategies, their public voice. Lastly, the strategy the democratic parties implement vis-à-vis Jobbik will also be a key factor. Clearly Jobbik's future prospects will improve if the mainstream parties cannot co-operate in a consistent manner. That is, if the democratic parties do not work together to quarantine this clearly extreme political formation, which opposes the basic values of the Constitution, but instead use Jobbik as a campaign instrument against one another, the extreme right will only gain in strength.

4. The opposition parties' relationship to Jobbik

- *MSZP*

The change in MSZP's relationship to Jobbik is striking. As is well-known, the Socialist's parliamentary campaign in 2010 had, as its central theme, the notion of struggle: the democratic struggle against anti-democratic tendencies, the fight against the threat of the two-thirds parliamentary majority, and the struggle against extremism in general. The Socialists described themselves as the guardians of democracy and constitutional values against an anti-democratic Fidesz and a Fascist Jobbik. Thus they demanded a clear separation from the extreme right of what was then the largest opposition party (i.e., Fidesz), and in turn urged cooperation on what democratic forces there were. After the elections, the strength of the Socialists' op-

position trailed off significantly, and turned primarily against the anti-democratic efforts of Fidesz. Yet there was not even the suggestion that MSZP would become the flag bearer of a movement aimed at isolating Jobbik and preventing the extreme right from stabilizing their position within Parliament. On the contrary, perhaps Jobbik adjusted too quickly to its entry into Parliament, maneuvering very well, for instance, in the round of bargaining over the distribution of commission places among the opposition parties. So then, there are three main reasons for MSZP's lack of action: first, the collapse of the left wing; second, the party's emerging internal strife; and third, the new division of power within Parliament.

During the previous two cycles in government, but especially between 2006 and 2010, MSZP and the left wing of the Hungarian political spectrum encountered serious problems. A series of mishaps, debacles and failures deprived the Socialists of so much credit that at its worst their popularity fell below 10 percent of the total population. This string of blunders included: Ferenc Gyurcsány's Őszöd speech, the general failure to institute reforms in government, a series of tax increases, the losses sustained in interim elections (the 2008 referendum and the 2009 European Parliamentary elections), and mainly a shocking series of cases involving corruption and abuses of power linked to the party. All of this was coupled with the effects of a permanent and well-executed campaign on the part of the opposition, such that for a time it was suggested that Jobbik might capture second place in the parliamentary elections instead of MSZP. Now in opposition and dealing with the loss of SZDSZ, which had always been a potential ally despite the sometimes rocky relationship between the two parties, MSZP is at this point largely isolated. It has not been able to overcome the effects of its epochal loss and is still looking for its place in the new Parliament. It is taking a great deal of energy for MSZP to find the right political posture, to criticize Fidesz, and to adjust itself to the very limited opportunities afforded the opposition against a two-thirds governing majority. Instead of fighting against the extreme right, the Socialists are trying to highlight the government's errors which, given the party's current status and its rather stale efforts at communication, seems a major task indeed.

There have always been centrifugal forces within MSZP, which were kept under the surface, in

order to maintain the stability of the government and to prevent early elections. Yet when MSZP lost the 2010 elections, the different centers of power within the party began competing with each other under the guise of renewing left-wing politics, primarily at first by distancing themselves from the Gyurcsány period and so criticizing the neo-liberalism of the governments in office between 2006 and 2010. As politicians close to the former Prime Minister, and then later Gyurcsány himself, have become more active, these developments have grown into a competition between these progressive, 'classic' left-wing politicians, on the one hand, as represented by the current party leadership, and on the other hand the side of MSZP even further to the left, all of which has led to various institutional changes and developments. For instance, former Speaker of Parliament Katalin Szili has left the party to create a new organization, while on 22 October Ferenc Gyurcsány indicated his political intentions by creating a new platform within MSZP. The hidden messages Attila Mesterházy and Ferenc Gyurcsány are sending to one another within their public statements indicate the depth of the contrast.

However, it is also important to note that Gyurcsány's new platform, the Democratic Coalition, is organizing its own demonstration against the curtailment of the scope of competence of the Constitutional Court, a constitutional change which is officially objected to by MSZP. It seems that, contrary to Szili's moves, Gyurcsány does not plan to break away from the party, a position which is motivated not only by his social-democratic outlook and his ambitions to reform MSZP, but also by the fact that establishing an entirely new party as a major player would cost billions of forints while offering only a fifty-fifty chance of success. So at least for the time being, the former Prime Minister would seem to be planning to once again take up a major role within MSZP, but until he does so, these intra-party struggles will consume a great deal of time and energy among these left-wing politicians, who would find it difficult to overcome their diminished position and their crises of the past few years even without such distractions.

The 2010 elections have created an entirely new political environment within Hungary's party system: they have broken apart the relatively predictable binary arrangement of Hungary's parliamentary structure. This state of affairs had, up until 2010, existed for the last twenty

years and had made relatively stable – perhaps even autonomic – the change management of Parliament. Thus the relatively balanced opposition of MDF and SZDSZ, followed by that of Fidesz and MSZP, created a rather straightforward contour of separation between the government and the opposition. Even the smaller parties which had always been present could be clearly classified on one side or the other, thus making fairly predictable the outcome of the conflicts inherent in the political landscape.

This clarity disappeared in April 2010 due to two major disappearances: that of the relative balance between the party system's two major players, and that of the parliamentary alliance systems on both the right and left wings of the political spectrum. Jobbik and LMP are not as easy to predict, either as partners or as opponents, as were SZDSZ, KDNP or MDF (the latter presenting a different face after 2006). All in all, this new arrangement is highly favorable for the two-thirds governing majority, and correspondingly disadvantageous for MSZP, and the opposition in general. Thus it is no surprise that there has been no consistent or effective opposition to any of the controversial steps taken by the Fidesz-KDNP government. Even MSZP and LMP have been able to sing the same tune only regarding the conflict between the government and the Constitutional Court, a dispute which raised especially serious democratic and constitutional concerns in October.

It is an urgent fact that some of Fidesz's measures – such as the establishment of a media supervisory board composed only of governing party politicians, the party's decisive control over the State Audit Office, or the curtailment of the rights of the Constitutional Court – justify such a concentration of forces. Moreover, any cooperation between LMP and MSZP may help ease the latter's isolation and may in turn help bring to life the Socialists' promise to defend democracy, which hitherto has been merely an empty campaign slogan. However, the question must be asked: what will become of the left wing, as it works on self-renewal, if active resistance against Jobbik decreases to the point where even the left wing looks at this extreme-right party as a marginal problem? Indeed, what will become of the political climate of the country as a whole, even in the medium-term, if such comes to pass? Although in the predominantly anti-liberal atmosphere currently prevalent in Hungary, resistance to Jobbik is often deemed a 'scare tactic', or an unwarranted case of 'cry-

ing wolf', unless an urgent need arises to take action against Jobbik's divisive and discriminatory rhetoric, and its hate-provoking politics, the presence of the extreme right in Hungarian politics will soon come to seem not only customary, but proper and natural besides.

- *LMP*

In terms of its relationship with the extreme right, LMP has a dual status. In the political environment that developed after the de facto liquidation of SZDSZ and MDF, the party undertook to continue the representation in Hungarian politics of humane liberalism, support for diversity, and a young, urban lifestyle; they hoped to gain the support of at least a portion of Hungary's liberal voters. On the other hand, LMP was forced to frequently defend itself against accusations, from both sides of the political spectrum, that it was simply either the 'reincarnation' of SZDSZ (which had been firmly rejected by the voters) or the refuge of failed liberal politicians.⁵ This had an impact on some of LMP's statements on human rights issues (especially those regarding ethnic and religious minorities), which were often published late, or with a clear moderation of their tone. Also, in its rhetoric LMP has tried to overcome the long shadow of SZDSZ by insisting it wishes to enforce and implement its values only in specific policy areas, instead of engaging in unproductive and ultimately merely symbolic disputes revolving *ad nauseam* around fixed ideological principles.

It is also significant that LMP owes its rapid rise, in part, to its anti-elitism and to the moderate character of its overall stance; that is, the party has been critical of the system, but has applied the principle of maintaining 'equal distance' from both the right and the left wings of the political spectrum. Given the fact that LMP chose its name (Politics Can Be Different) in order to indicate a fresh start and to reject the corruption and empty ideological bickering of the major political parties, it would be a huge threat to its

⁵ It should be noted that this discursive context is all the more uncomfortable for LMP because, with ecopolitics high on its agenda, the party theoretically opposes the economic liberalism represented by SZDSZ. Moreover, the latter party, unlike LMP, had at best only a moderate sensitivity for sustainable development. Regarding the second accusation, LMP would seem to be, based on its platform and its voice in parliamentary debates, the party furthest to the left in terms of economics, with the exception of Jobbik.

viability and credibility if it were to end up classified as belonging to one particular 'side' of the standard political continuum. Consequently one of the main features of its identity is its attempts to discredit corruption ('I rub your back, you rub mine') and 'finger-pointing'. Similar to Jobbik's approach, the LMP sees Fidesz and MSZP as 'each as bad as the other'. Of course LMP's policy positions do occasionally coincide with those of one of the major parties – though they would say this happens only 'on a theoretical basis'. For instance, LMP rejects Fidesz's manipulation of the election system; yet, switching sides of the spectrum, they also lobby for legal investigations into police violations during the turmoil in 2006, and subsequent punishment of those responsible.

Nevertheless, in terms of the questions that traditionally divide politics into right and left, LMP has attempted to develop a platform that is different from both of the major parties. Why has the LMP, given for instance its cultural liberalism, not adopted a more strident anti-Jobbik tone? The reason lies in part in the fact that if a political party in Hungary wants to adopt a fierce anti-fascist position, this party will be, in the public eye, clearly associated with the unpopular MSZP-SZDSZ partnership. This is due to the particular characteristics of the Hungarian political environment, wherein parties are placed on the left-right continuum more or less automatically based on their adoption or rejection of certain points of view. So this state of political affairs essentially compels LMP to mitigate its statements regarding Jobbik and to ease off on any actions it might otherwise prefer to take in order to politically exclude the extreme right. Indeed, they do so to such an extent that between the two rounds of the spring elections, Gábor Vágó, an incoming LMP MP, and Dóra Dúró, Jobbik's spokeswoman, jointly evaluated the results of the first round in a pleasant, almost warm video-taped interview which was published on a popular internet news portal. Of course the fact that such a sharing of the limelight had occurred at all created some ripples of criticism and discontent, as it was deemed to have strengthened Jobbik's claims to legitimacy.

In addition, for both ideological and institutional reasons, there are numerous other issues where Jobbik's and LMP's platforms coincide. One such issue was the governing parties' modification of the election system, which was detrimental for small parties. Common positions

are also taken in criticizing the government's surtax measures from a classic left-wing standpoint. The two parties almost compete with each other in terms of keeping environmental problems on the agenda, due to the fact that Jobbik included environmental issues in its election platform in an effort to offset the assumption that the party was a single-topic racist grouping. Also, even if LMP and Jobbik are driven by different underlying assumptions and values, they both actively criticize the apparently disproportionate and harmful influence of multinational companies in Hungary (an influence which, in their opinion, is supported by the current government, despite Fidesz-KDNP's anti-capitalist rhetoric). For example, during the parliamentary discussion of the Orbán government's second economic 'action plan' (the indirect surtax program), the leaders of these two parliamentary groups used more or less the same arguments to criticize the 61 billion HUF surtax slated to be imposed on telecommunications companies.

It is LMP's evaluation of previous governments that pushes it toward Jobbik while also preventing the development of a friendlier relationship between LMP and MSZP. In keeping with its principle of 'equal distance,' LMP not only draws attention to the mistakes of the current government, but also regularly blames the Socialist parliamentary group for serious errors made in the previous governing cycle, including: Ferenc Gyurcsány's Őszöd speech; the extreme behavior of the police in the autumn of 2006; the BKV corruption cases; the dubious Sukoró casino investment project (which is detrimental to the state); and finally the 'neoliberal' economic policies applied by the governments of Ferenc Gyurcsány and Gordon Bajnai. Thus a considerable portion of the first session of Parliament was spent criticizing MSZP for their mistakes during the previous government cycle, and this criticism was offered up not only by the parliamentary groups of Fidesz and KDNP, but also by those of Jobbik and LMP. Of course it may be the case that tensions between LMP and MSZP have eased somewhat now that they have identified some shared values and undertaken some joint action in opposing the government's anti-constitutional measures. Yet at the beginning of the current Parliament, an uninformed observer could easily have concluded that it was MSZP that was being quarantined rather than the extreme-right Jobbik.

So, the LMP clearly cannot be a driving force in building a *cordon sanitaire* around the extreme right, mainly due to its very cautious approach to establishing its character and identity. So, on the one hand, LMP can be expected to object strongly, on the basis of its cultural and ideological liberalism (still one of its dominant features), to the more severe of Jobbik's divisive and discriminatory statements. Yet on the other hand, given its current policy regarding its image, and its attempts to locate itself strategically within the current political landscape, LMP cannot be expected to develop a complex and consistent strategy against the extreme right in the near future.

To sum up, the democratic parties in the current Parliament have not so far performed too well in beating back the upsurge of the extreme right. Nor is taking steps to do so a priority for any of those groupings. MSZP is hindered by its own recent and resounding electoral failure, while LMP is prevented from taking action because of its uncertain identity and, partly, by its ideological inconsistency. Although Fidesz – making use of its safe majority in Parliament – has ex-

ploited several opportunities to make the position of Jobbik more difficult, and could contribute to a further weakening of the extreme right in similar ways, the senior partner in the governing coalition has never undertaken such efforts based on a set of values-driven priorities. (The objectives of the 'System of Nationwide Collaboration' fail to include a declaration on the importance of fighting the ideas of the extreme right).

On the contrary, they have taken a number of steps that have partially counteracted the moral impact of their actions against Jobbik. The most important problem is that the issue of the extreme right continues to be deployed as a tactic in the ongoing power struggles of domestic party politics. Jobbik's chances to solidify its presence in Parliament, or even to play the part of a governing coalition partner will only continue to grow until all democratic parties come around to the view that basic constitutional values are a supreme public asset to be protected jointly, irrespective of the various democratic parties' struggles for administrative power.

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