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## **THE RISE OF RIGHT-WING EXTREMISM IN EUROPEAN UNION**

**ABSTRACT:** It is a fact that in the European Union there is a strengthening of right-wing extremism, radical right movement, populism and nationalism. The consequences of the economic crisis, such as a decline in living standards, losing of jobs, rising unemployment especially among young people, undoubtedly goes in favor of strengthening the right-wing extremism. In the research, forms of manifestation will be covered of this dangerous phenomenon and response of the institutions. Western Balkan countries, as a result of right-wing extremism, are especially sensitive region on possible consequences that might occur, since there are several unresolved political problems, which can very easily turn into a new cycle of conflicts, if European integration processes get delayed indefinitely.

**KEY WORDS:** Right-wing extremism, European Union, Western Balkan, European enlargement process.

### **The Right-wing Extremism in the European Union-political and Security Aspects**

The first chapter of the research will deal with the reasons for right-wing extremism occurrence and forms and methods of manifestation in different countries. According to the Office for the Protection of the Constitution of Germany, right-wing extremism is an ideology that has its roots in nationalism and racism. This means that the ethnicity of a nation or race is an essential matter for the individual (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz). All other interests and values, including civil and human rights are

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subordinate to this ideology. This ideology is closely linked with the emergence of xenophobia and in that direction with acts of violence against minorities just because of their ethnic origin (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz). In scientific theory the notion of right-wing extremism often associated to neo-Nazism, neo-fascism, racism and similar categories. Rob Riemen in his book "Eternal return to fascism" (2011) seeks reasons of appearance of fascism through "cultural and moral emptiness of man in mass society." According to Riemen, the phenomenon of right-wing extremism or fascism is a political demagoguery which aims winning and maintaining power through manipulation of human emotions, exploiting the anger and helplessness of man in mass society (57). In fact, this thesis set to the conclusion that the appearance of right-wing extremism is a psychological category that occurred as a result of tendentious indoctrination of the population in the past. So, one way to explain the reasons of appearance of this phenomenon is through the tools of political culture. Such attitudes confirmation today we can find in any group, political party or right-wing extremist movement, in the sense that "we are not fascists, we are party that fights for freedom," or "we are not fascists, but Islam is fascist." As confirmation of these views often can be heard sentences how those right-wing members fought for defense of "the Jewish, Christian, humanistic, or anti-communist traditions." Breivik is a classic example of an extremist who did not hide his mindset drawing on previous "values." Such views expressed the Dutch Party for Freedom, as well. Their action, although it is not expressed through physical violence, is based on a verbalism by using psychological methods of expression of hate speech, as a civilization discourse (61). Through analyses of this party, Riemen actually confirms the thesis that these movements, which are associated with populism and right-wing extremism is a logical consequence of the level of development of a society, to which actually we all bear responsibility. Namely, responsibility rests in all the instruments of political socialization in one society: political parties, the family, the mass media, educational institutions, devising a way for everyday struggle to acquire more material wealth, etc. In the context of explaining the thesis, it certainly has to be taken into account the social circumstances that undoubtedly affect the occurrence of these phenomena. Once again it has to be recalled that the members of right-wing extremism are basically feeling "un-free." The question is whom are they threatened of, who is banning their motion, and finally what lies behind the alleged non-freedom. As a result of economic crisis we've got increased

unemployment, falling living standards, poverty, increased corruption, fear of the future and so on. Assessment is that these consequences have an immediate impact on strengthening the right-wing extremism in the EU, and recruitment of young generations in their ranks. Young people are especially vulnerable category. Namely, according to a survey of Eurostat, youth unemployment in the EU each year is rapidly growing. On the other hand, unemployment and low living standard gives space on nationalists and populists, to exposure their ideas of right-wing extremism. It makes sense to carry out recruitment of people who have lost their jobs, or from young people who are waiting to be employed. These circumstances affects in seeking culprit for this situation. Usually, history has shown that the culprit is either a foreign ideology or foreigners who live and work in their neighborhood. In this case it has been seen a tightening of anti-immigrant policy, but also attacks on foreigners working in the EU, who belong to Islamic religion.

The development of the negative tendencies associated with right-wing extremism repose on many stereotypes that exist in the EU, as a result of the cultural differences of different ethnic groups and religions. In Germany, according to statistics data in the period 1990-2006, right-wing extremism, racism and violence has been constantly rising. In 2005, according to data of the Ministry of Interior, in the province of Brandenburg, registered are 97 attacks of right-wing extremists, and one third of those were committed against foreigners. The structure of the right-wing extremist groups was mainly younger people (Ripenberger). It is indicative that the rise of right-wing extremism was much higher in East Germany, the former DDR. Namely, in towns and villages in the east of Germany right-wing extremism became a dominant culture of the youth where there were frequent cases of beatings of foreigners. The town *Gräfenberg*, in the district of Forchheim, since 1999 there was tradition to march on Nazis and since 2006 they were marching down almost every month. Bavaria is housing the leadership of the radical right party National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD), where often could be seen "Nazi" symbols (Colik: *Novac za Kosovo 'završio' u mračnim kanalima?...*). Financing of the NPD was by the state, since it was legally a registered party. Political scientist Andrea Repke claims that there were opportunities for its funding from donations of the old Nazis, private loans, their own companies and from other chains of economic entities. According to research done by organization *Mobit*, reportedly 14-15% citizens of Thuringia had right-wing extremist beliefs,

and the situation was not better in percentage of results obtained in the western Germany provinces (Beše and Bašić: *Samouvereni neonacisti*). In their campaigns, NPD advocated for social issues such as providing additional cash benefits for German mothers, with aim of gaining better election results, at the same time were registered hostile and racist statements against foreigners, notably in the province of Thuringia, where 1.5% foreigners are living (Beše and Bašić: *Samouvereni neonacisti*). The conclusion, to which the German Office for the protection of the constitution in its report of 2006 came, was that right-wing extremism in Germany has increased. Increasing in violent acts with right-extremist background, according to Interior Minister Wolfgang Schaueble, was worrying. In 2006 there was 9.3% more such cases than in 2005, or precisely 1,115 delicts (Firstenau *Пораст на насилствата на ...*).

As a result on the unification of Germany, it was thought that right-wing extremism is more dominated in eastern part of the state. But lately it has been registered growth on neo-Nazis in western Germany, too. Since 2007, vice President of the European Commission Franco Fratini when asked about this phenomenon said that “Germany, Belgium, Denmark and Italy,” are EU members where right-wing extremism is a big problem (*Komisija EU za zabranu NPD*). Uwe Karsten Heje from the association “*Show your face*” indicates the fact that best illustrates the current gloomy situation. Specifically, since the reunification of Germany 20 years ago, right-wing extremists killed about 150 people. Official data, however, does not exist. Heje believes that the “fight against right-wing extremism has to be taken by entire German society and thus right-wing extremists will not easily be able to infiltrate among young people” (Firstenau, Bašić Savić). Statistics show that every 26 minutes in Germany right-wing extremists do a criminal act. Uwe Karsten Heje considers it necessary to invest in higher education. In fact, around 100,000 young people each year are leaving school before graduation. Young people with no prospects are easier subject to right-wing extremist propaganda (Firstenau, Bašić Savić).

As a result of the economic crisis, in Hungary Jobbik party, whose slogan is “Hungary to the Hungarians,” noted a growth in popularity. According to the philosopher Gaspar Miklos Tamas, the reason for the growth of right-wing extremism, as a movement of the middle class is its “panic” fear of the future, since its position and prestige depend on the position of the state, which is considered quite uncertain (Ferzak, Briski).

In fact during the economic crises one feature marks all right-wing extremists: the attempt to use the fear of the citizens. They rely on the dissatisfaction of the citizens from the current social and political situation; they offer simple answers for complex problems derived from the economic crisis, unemployment and the social insecurity. That is their terrain, and hence the right-wing extremists blame foreigners or “others,” who are different from them, for all these injustices, using measures of violence, expulsion or return of “the culprits” back where they came from. These parties usually remain relatively marginal political phenomena that never go out from the shadow of protests parties and are not capable of a coalition in governmental alliances. But even then they performed adequate impact on conservative parties in government, shifting their positions more to the right range, fearing for their electoral potential. Sociologists (Nasar, Modood 34-40) already have been talking about anti-Islamic racism, because the aim ideology of these parties is spreading fear and trying to profile the Muslims as easily recognizable enemy of the society.

Indicative findings are published in the annual report for 2009 by the German Federal Office for the Protection of the constitution. They found a decreasing number of violent acts of right-wing extremists, and increased violence on the far left inspired by political motives. Commenter of the “*Frankfurter rundsau*” cynically notes “it seems that in Germany a single revolutionary block is formed, that works all together to abolish the democratic order in the country” (Briski). Livelier than this comment to me is the manner of the treatment of extremism by a powerful German state institution, unless this way of presenting problems is not part of the manipulation by the political elites in order to blur the actual security situation through the left-right scheme.

As a form of promotion, right-wing extremists are using more the Internet. The number of neo-Nazi networks in just one year, have more than tripled in 2010. NGO “Jugendschutz.net,” formed in 1997 to protect the youth from the influence of right-wing extremists, registered 1900 websites dealing with the ideas of Nazism. Around ten thousand users’ daily read neo-Nazi blogs and are visiting Internet platforms with such content (Firstenau, Kine Veljkovic). According the German Counter intelligence service estimations there are around 22.500 neo-Nazis in Germany and many of them use Internet to gain attention beyond local areas (Firstenau *The many faces of neo-Nazism*).

## Political parties and neo-Nazi discourse

Massacres and the attacks of Breivik in Norway initiated a debate about how dangerous are the radical ideas that advocate individual parties in Europe, because they have significant support among citizens in many EU states. For example in 2006 Breivik was in the leadership of the youth union of the Norwegian Progress Party. Although the President of this Party Siv Jensen publicly distanced herself from the crime of Breivik, outstanding fact is that this is a nationalist party with program for fight the immigration of foreigners in Norway (Riegert, Bojić). In the parliamentary life of Norway its importance stems from the fact that since 2005 it has the second-largest parliamentary club in the Norwegian Parliament, however it is in opposition. Hajo Funke, from the Free University of Berlin, which has practiced with the study of right-wing extremism, expressed surprise of such attacks in Norway due to the fact that right-wing extremists in Sweden have been more numerous, more powerful and ready to commit violence (Riegert, Bojić).

Right-wing extremist Party of the Swedes, at the election in 2010 got 5.7% of votes and had 20 parliamentary mandates. Its program was drastically limited to the immigration and reintroduction of measures of border control. Interesting fact is the monitoring of right-wing extremist Party of real Finns, which on elections in 2012 got 19% of votes and had fourfold increased their number of seats in the parliament. This party is in opposition, but its activities are based on Euro skepticism and xenophobia. Unlike the situation of extreme right parties in the previous states where they are out of power in Denmark, the National Party is part of the ruling coalition and in 2012 they succeeded to push forward its proposal for introduction of customs control at the border, regardless the fact Denmark has signed the Schengen Agreement (Riegert, Bojić). In this context, the National Party, as opponents of the immigration, managed to incorporate their proposals in new legislation, which provided the strictest regulations in Europe about immigration and asylum. Similar ideas can be found in the Dutch Party for Freedom. Its leader Geert Wilders is seen as a proven enemy of Islam and from 2010 the party is third highest in the Dutch parliament (Wilders). All above mentioned right-wing extremist parties have condemned the crimes of Breivik.

Progress in the political life experienced extreme right-wing National Front, led by Marine Le Pen, which in 2011, on the local elections, was just a point less than the winning party of Sarkozy. It

is interesting that Le Pen won 18 percent of votes in the 2012 presidential election. National Front as a party is a great opponent of Islam and immigration in the EU. Similar parties with right-wing extremist orientations and programs exist in Austria, Switzerland, Italy, Belgium and part of them are represented by its members in the ruling coalition.

In Germany, at the federal level, these parties do not have more success, but locally are present with politics based on anti-Islamic program, by declaring foreigners, especially the members of Islam, as a main problem of the society. At the local level right-wing extremists are usually members of the parties that have the prefix "for," for instance "Pro Cologne," "Pro NRW" and so on. Such protests organized by the "Pro NRW" were organized in Bonn on May 05, 2012 followed by provoking the Muslims who at the same time scheduled a peaceful protest, and as a result the police had to intervene to avoid serious conflict between the two opponent sides (Tanjug Švajcarci *ograničavaju imigracije?*). Minister of Interior of North Rhine Westphalia, Ralf Jeger, blamed the right-wing extremists for their intentions of causing violence. The far-right party Pro-Deutschland on August 16, 2012 won a case at the Administrative Court in Berlin, which allowed them to use publicly provocative cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad. Berlin court rejected the appeal of three Islamic communities and stressed that the cartoons are protected as "freedom of art" and by that law it cannot be considered as an abuse by a certain religious group. Pro-Deutschland planned to carry cartoons of Muhammad during their protests against the Muslims under the slogan "Islam does not belong to Germany - stop the islamization" (Metodijev).

In Hungary, country member of EU, the parties Fides and Jobik are considered as nationalist and right-wing party, even in the case for Jobik it is claimed to be a Nazi Party, are both in power (Riebert, Bojić). Lately, prominent members of the right-wing extremist groups are involved in sports. They are active in establishing sport clubs or are involved as referees of sports matches (Omerašević). Their aim is to spread neo-Nazi ideas in the amateur leagues, especially among the younger generation, where recruitment is very easy. In that sense, fan groups are infiltrated by extremist right members. Right-wing extremists are often leaders of fan groups and are also nominated for local elections. In addition certain numbers of shirts were preferred, as is the number 88, and if we know that the eighth letter in the alphabet is H, and then the number 88 in translation would mean "Hail Hitler" (Velicki 70-71). Core

values of fans groups were: honor, community, loyalty and motherland (Fric, Vranković).

Interestingly, these values could be heard in the statements of the leaders of the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD). German Interior Minister Hans-Peter Fridrich, at the end of 2011 acknowledges that the extreme right in Germany applies terrorist methods. The statement was regarding revealed group of neo-Nazis that in the period 2000-2007, killed ten people among which eight were of Turkish origin, one Greek and one policeman. The arrested perpetrators belonged to the illegal group called the National Socialist Underground (NSU) (2011). Almost at the same time, the Danish Intelligence service-PET, in its annual report, in section on political extremism stated that “a small group of right-wing extremists members are actively working on compiling an inventory of political enemies and have carried out armed training to its members.” Assessment of PET was that in Denmark, part of the members of right-wing extremist organizations are preparing for racial war and were ready even to apply violence (B92 *Bez uhapšenih huligana iz Srbije*).

Every year on November 11, during the National day, on the streets of Warsaw in Poland, a real war happens between the young radical nationalists on one side and anti-fascists on the other. In 2011 the number of these radicals was over 7,000 young people, some of whom came from Serbia, Montenegro, Ukraine, Russia, Slovakia and Croatia. The reason for these protests was the growing number of unemployed among the young people in Poland, as well as the negative consequences of the economic crisis in the EU (Beta *Bez uhapšenih huligana iz Srbije*). Marcin Kornak, in its “*Brown Book*” has recorded crimes motivated by right-wing extremism in the period from 1987 to 2009 (1-25). A website was registered owned by a neo-Nazi group in which were posted photographs and addresses, for so called enemies of the “*white race*” (21).

Violence motivated by racial motives, according to sociologist Rafal Pankowski, was a real phenomenon in Poland, and based on this occasion he wrote a book “*Populist Radical Right in Poland: Patriots*.” Objectives of the right-wing extremist attacks in Poland were not only national minorities but also feminists, the homeless and others. According to his assessment the line between patriotism and legal political parties operating in Poland and associations of the extreme right is very thin (Maciol, Metodijev). Few weeks later in Spain, in front of the Royal Palace in Madrid were several hundred citizens gathered in order to pay a tribute to the fascist



General Franco. It was conducted by the famous fascist salute. At the beginning of December 2011, according to police sources, about 400 right-wing extremists participated in protests against immigrants in Stockholm (Tanjug Švedska: *Osujećen marš desničara*).

On December 13, 2011 the Italian right-winger Djanluka Kaseri in Florence, killed two and injured three hawkers of African origin, then committed suicide. British agency Reuters claims that the attack was racially motivated (Tanjug Švedska: *Osujećen marš desničara*). How would the news on April 28, 2012 be interpreted, that the members of the Association of Italian fascist veterans found a memorial plaque in front of the house where in April 28, 1945 Mussolini was executed, and this act was attended by the President of the municipality, having that the earlier municipal council voted for this act (Tanjug Švajcarci *ograničavaju imigracije?*).

Austria also faces the problem of right-wing extremism. Each year in January in Vienna a ball of right-wing student organizations is being held, which usually ends with protests and clashes with the police. The most visitors the ball has had, was in the period 2000-2005, when the right-wing Freedom Party (FPÖ) participated in the Government of Austria. Besides this ball, other events were organized, such as “gathering of the patriots,” which mustered representatives of right-wing parties from all over Europe (Tanjug Švajcarci *ograničavaju imigracije?*). “Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of Occident,” in the German original “Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes” (PEGIDA), from mid-October 2014, every Monday evening they demonstrated in Dresden, the capital of Saxony, against everything they considered Islamic, exploiting asylum or threat to German culture. In this context, given are the results of the newest poll, conducted by the Bertelsmann Foundation according to which 57% of non-Muslims Citizens of Germany has perceived Islam as a threat (Dege). Luc Bachmann has publicly addressed as speaker in front of the PEGIDA protesters. Bachmann is owner of “photo and PR agency.” The research of the *Sächsische Zeitung* showed that Bachman have been convicted already and currently is on probation for drug trafficking. According to the aforementioned list, criminal records of Bachman includes: burglary and other thefts, false suspicion, incitement to false statements, violation of abstinence, Driving under influence of alcohol and causing bodily harm. This raises the question of what good we can expect in the future from such profile of a man. (Denis).

## **Way of Counter the Right-wing Extremism Threat in the European Union**

The answer must always be multifunctional and to cover not only political and security measures but broader measures of social, educational and cultural discourse. But the dilemma arises from the system, in which we live, from the constitutional principles, in ensuring freedom of speech, protection of human rights and so on. We will take the German example of the response, due to their seriousness attached to this threat. In German society, there is a dilemma whether taking measures in initiating a criminal charge to right-wing extremists would be an act of violation of the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the constitution? The question that arise is whether the marches with neo-Nazi symbols and verbal threats or insults to the “other” on a personal, ethnic, racial or religious grounds, is an act of freedom expression as part of the democratic system, or perhaps is it an act of abuse of democracy. Not knowing how to fight back, a lot of people thinking not to endanger the democratic rights and freedoms that right-wing extremists are called upon, as a counter measure they are expressing disagreement that often ends in conflicts (Wolfgang).

How was it possible, members of National Socialist Underground to remain undetected, and committed ten murders in the period 2000-2010, in five federal states in Germany, all done with the same weapon. First, investigation was pointing towards Kurdish population, than later on it was discovered that it is a three far-right terrorists of the National Socialist Underground (NSU). How was it possible, 36 Security Services on different levels in Germany to make such a mistake in the assessment for the perpetrators? Experts say the problem is in the minds of the officials and the politicians. Failure is associated with the information they had or in their desire to have them dispatched to the right addresses. Bielefeld University professor Christopher Gusy is not convinced and doubts that all information about NSU were stored and processed in the database (Pfeifer). Violence cannot be prevented if the information or data is not analyzed from the very beginning at one place and by one center. If so, the mosaic is impossible to be completed, and it means the conclusion would be wrong and counter measures will be applied in the wrong direction.

The fault is even greater if it is known that the intelligence strategy could not have become operational, due to the fact that right-wing extremists have managed to infiltrate themselves in the

state's security structures in Thuringia, region of their origin. In this sense, what is worrying is the knowledge that Helmut Rever, the former head of the Security Service in the province Thuringia, "had no great affinity" to monitor the activities of right-wing extremists. Just imagine in the period from 1994 to 2000 he was a boss in this area (Wolfgang, Cutanoski). Responsibility for illegal operation of National Socialist Underground was asked by the Commission, established by the Parliament of Germany. In their research the Commission was faced with errors, omissions and negligence, even with surprising ignorance of this threat by a part of the intelligence officers. They wondered whether domestic counterintelligence services maybe intentionally cover their blind eye to the violence of right-wing extremists. Sebastian Edathy, a member of the opposition Social Democratic Party, chaired a parliamentary inquiry into the NSU, called the botched police and secret service investigations a "historically unprecedented disaster" (Kiesel). According *Amadeu Antonio Foundation*, the German authorities regularly considered the violence of right-wing extremists' as trivial and less dangerous (2012). Different investigations on conducted murders have been variously interpreted since the results of the inquiries were not analyzed in one place. As it has been said, the version that possible perpetrators of the killings could be members of right-wing extremist organizations was not even considered. Bernard Falk, former vice president of the Federal Criminal Police (BKA), said to the Commission that the investigations were conducted superficially and in an amateurish way.

Moreover, at all levels problem was the coordination between securities agencies. The key question is why after the terrorist network of NSU was finally discovered, in November 2011, the Office for the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz) destroyed an important files pertaining to the NSU (Werkhäuser). Regardless of the officials' justification that in this way the informants embedded in this right-wing extremist structure were protected. This issue, even after the completion of the investigation, will continue to dominate. The Commission, in the end of 2013 in its report issued recommendations for urgent reforms in the security sector in Germany (Kiesel). Meanwhile German government in its fight against right-wing extremism approved creation of a central database in which all relevant authorities will have access to. In this context the Bundesrat, Germany's upper house of parliament, approved the "Act to Improve the Fight against Right-Wing Extremism."

Moreover, the government Committee found that if German society wants properly to fight right-wing extremism, it must not involve taking only security measures, but also to influence the younger generation primarily through education, because they are the main recruitment contingent of right-wing extremist organizations. In this context, in Germany numerous non-governmental organizations have been established with an idea to recruit mostly young people and to become their members, in order to protect them from joining right-wing organizations. The fight takes place via the Internet and social networks. Within the wider activities of the state in the fight against extreme right, Interior Minister of Germany called Muslims in Germany, for more intensive cooperation with the security services in the efforts for dealing with extremism, radicalism and violence. On the other hand Ayman Maziek, *General Secretary of the Central Council of Muslims in Germany* claims that although a lot of discussions occur regarding integration, there is no effect, because so far all undertaken measures had security character. He estimates the integration cannot be achieved only with security measures or with exclusive focus on the so-called Islamic extremism, without paying attention to growth of right-wing extremism (Kaufmann). In Norway, after the massacre of Breivik, an independent commission was established which reported that few months before the attack, that intelligence was able, to learn more about the plans of Breivik, when the perpetrator bought the components for making bombs and police had enough information to stop him from the moment while he was in move between the site of a bomb attack and the youth camp (Atanasovska).

### **Conclusion**

The threat of right-wing extremism is only seemingly low. The economic crisis is impacting on the following aspects: decline of living standard and increased youth unemployment; creation of psychological situation conducive to “witch hunt” phenomenon.

The members of right-wing extremism have already marked “the others” as main culprits for the economic and social decline. Political elites obviously have no courage to call on problems using \real dictionary. The reality of European society is that institutions that are paid for monitoring this type of threat are keeping their eyes shut. The measures that are taken to counter the right-wing extremist threats are limited and are mainly of a repressive character. The political elites and the major political parties are either

firting or are coupling with right-wing extremists, just to maintain their power. If the economic crisis continues further on, we may certainly expect further growth of right-wing extremism and populism, as well as a feedback reaction from “the others.” As a consequence, such a development, with great probability will bring tightening of the security situation in the EU on multiple levels. In regards to the Balkans, there is where the problems arise. Balkans is still burdened with numerous conflicts by the past, with various programs for normalization of the relations between the Balkan states, as well as the threat of recurrence of national and ethnic tensions, due to the implications from the economic crisis. The assessment is that nationalist platforms with neo-Nazi or right-wing extremist platforms are yet to come to the fore if social problems deepen (Bartlett, Prica 4-8). It seems that European integration is a unique remedy for all of us, without an alternative. In this regard, the statement of the previous President of the European Council Herman Van Rompuy was that “the entry of the Western Balkan countries in EU will end a history filled with constant conflicts” (Beta W. *Balkans’ EU accession will mark end of conflicts*).

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