

EAST CENTRAL EUROPE WITHIN THE  
INTERNATIONAL WORLD ORDER

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HUNGARY AND  
EUROPE

## WHY DID HUNGARY WANT TO JOIN THE EU?

- ▶ For financial and ideological reasons
- ▶ For the idea of belonging to the West (rejoining the West?)
- ▶ To free itself from the influence of Soviet-block
- ▶ For financial reasons - Western debt
- ▶ The promise of a better lifestyle



## TIMELINE FOR ACCESSION

- ▶ 1994 - Hungary submitted its request to join the EU
- ▶ 1998 - Accession negotiations started
- ▶ 2002 - Accession negotiations ended
- ▶ 2003 - Referendum in Hungary on EU accession (84% of people who voted supported the accession)
- ▶ 2004 May - Hungary joins the EU
- ▶ 2007 - Hungary joins the Schengen zone

## WHAT HAPPENED AFTER THE ACCESSION?

- ▶ 2004 July - Excessive deficit procedure launched against Hungary
- ▶ 2008 - IMF and the World Bank provide a 20 billion Euro bailout package for Hungary
- ▶ Hungary hit by the 2008 financial crisis but also because of the spending on a so called “social change of regime” that was aimed at increasing the standard of living
- ▶ 2011 - Hungary held the presidency of the European Council for the first time

# THE CONFLICT OF VIKTOR ORBÁN AND THE EU

- ▶ From 2010 Viktor Orbán is Prime Minister - leader of right wing party Fidesz
- ▶ The government has a 2/3 majority
- ▶ 2011 March 15 - He compared Brussels to Moscow for the first time
- ▶ 2013 - Excessive deficit procedure ended, Hungary repaid the 2008 bailout to IMF
- ▶ 2014 - Orbán introduced the idea of Hungary being an illiberal democracy (meaning non-liberal)

# VIKTOR ORBÁN'S 2014 BAILLE TUSNAD SPEECH

- ▶ ...there is a race underway today to find the method of community organization, the state, which is most capable of making a nation and a community internationally competitive. This, Ladies and Gentlemen, is the explanation for the fact that the most popular topic in thinking today is trying to understand how systems that are not Western, not liberal, not liberal democracies and perhaps not even democracies, can nevertheless make their nations successful. The stars of the international analysts today are Singapore, China, India, Russia and Turkey. ...
- ▶ ... The Hungarian nation is not simply a group of individuals but a community that must be organised, reinforced and in fact constructed. And so in this sense the new state that we are constructing in Hungary is an illiberal state, a non-liberal state. It does not reject the fundamental principles of liberalism such as freedom, and I could list a few more, but it does not make this ideology the central element of state organization, but instead a different, special, national approach.

## CONFLICT WITH BRUSSELS CONTINUED

- ▶ Fidesz is not eurosceptic, it wants to reform the EU
- ▶ Wants a Europe of nations, not a federal Europe
- ▶ Less centralization
- ▶ Hungarians are very much in favor of EU membership - but sceptic of the EU elite
- ▶ 2015 - started building a border wall against migrants on the Serbian border, the Council voted with a qualified majority for a relocation of 120000 migrants from Greece and Italy. This was contested by Hungary and other countries that did not have the infrastructure for this - infringement procedure for not complying
- ▶ 2016 - referendum in Hungary about the relocation plans 98% voted against but only 44% of voters participated
- ▶ 2017 - Hungarian government started “Let’s stop Brussels” campaign

## FURTHER ESCALATION OF THE CONFLICT

- ▶ 2018 - The European Parliament initiated Article 7 against Hungary for persistently going against EU founding values
- ▶ 2019 - Ahead of the EP elections another anti-Brussels campaign was launched
- ▶ 2019 - European People's Party suspends Fidesz's membership
- ▶ 2020 - The European Council linked the EU budget to rule of law conditionality
- ▶ 2021 - The Hungarian parliament passed a law banning the discussion of LGBTQ topics in schools etc. this led to infringement procedures and freezing of EU funds