How does populism affect and influence EU policy?

Miriam Ajayi
What I will talk about

• Core elements of right wing populism

• EU elections 2014: RWP in the European Parliament

• Possible effects in the EP

• Reactions to RWP in the EP

• Monitoring tool regarding hate speech in the EU election
Core elements of right wing populism

- Populist radical right parties can be a threat to fundamental values of liberal democracies

- 1) Assume the existence of two antagonistic groups of the 'pure people' and a corrupt elite

- 2) Put the general will of the people first even if it clashes with human rights and constitutional safeguards

- 3) Have a nativistic core that combines xenophobic and nationalistic ideas
EU elections 2014: RWP in the European Parliament

- A record number of racist and xenophobic populist parties: 144 RWP MEP’s out of 751 MEP’s (15.2%)
- They are gaining momentum in all Member States
- Efforts to join forces and to be more active within the EP
- Fragmented group of xenophobic populists with national differences
Possible effects in the EP I

• EP can **block and influence EU legislation, funding and resolutions** by:

  • 1) Shaping voter attitudes and public opinion
  • 2) Pressuring mainstream parties to adopt more xenophobic rhetoric
  • 3) Obstructing and slowing down parliamentary proceedings
  • 4) Fragmenting the right and by pulling some center-right MEP’s
Possible effects in the EP II

- 5) Attacking the protective infrastructure for vulnerable groups
- 6) Newly formed political group: increases each MEP’s individual funding allowance, more influence in speaking time and committee roles
Reactions in the EP to RWP

• The use of grand coalition (EPP-S&D-ALDE)

• Fringe groups have not yet been able to impose their own views in key EP decisions

• Their tools: parliamentary questions, written and oral statements

• Increase in MEP’s voting activity
Reaction from civil society

- #NoHateEP2014 by ILGA Europe and ENAR

- 42 reported incidents: 2/3 have implicit incitement to hatred, prejudice or discrimination

- Targets: migrants, foreigners and asylum-seekers, LGBTI people, Muslims, Roma people, Black people

- Mostly perpetrated by politicians whose party did not make it to the EP, 10 incidents perpetrated by politicians whose party sits as Non-attached MEPs, 10 incidents by politicians whose party sits in the EFD group, 5 perpetrators now sit in the EP