



Italy as the Last Right-Wing Government in Europe?

Challenges Facing the Meloni Administration and the Future of European Sovereignism

Executive Summary

Following the change of government in Hungary and the resulting decline of the European right's most influential governing model, Italy has emerged as the only remaining major European state governed by a national-conservative coalition with a clear sovereigntist mandate. From the perspective of the Patriots for Europe political family, developments in Italy therefore carry significance far beyond domestic politics.

While Giorgia Meloni's Fratelli d'Italia (Fdi) remains the dominant force in Italian politics, growing segments of the right-wing electorate perceive an increasing gap between campaign promises and government performance. Many of the themes that brought the coalition to power—national sovereignty, migration control, cultural conservatism, and resistance to European centralization—appear stronger in political communication than in concrete policy outcomes. Consequently, the Italian case raises broader questions about the capacity of contemporary right-wing governments to implement transformative agendas within the constraints of the current European political and economic framework.

Structural Weaknesses Within the Governing Right

Despite its electoral dominance, the Italian centre-right coalition faces mounting internal challenges.

Forza Italia has increasingly evolved into a conventional pro-European centrist liberal party aligned with the mainstream positions of the European People's Party (EPP). In the eyes of many conservative voters, it has largely abandoned its distinct right-wing identity and become another advocate of the Brussels consensus.

The decline of the Lega has been even more pronounced. Once the dominant force of the Italian right, the party has suffered years of internal divisions and leadership disputes. Strategic disagreements and personal rivalries have weakened Matteo Salvini's authority and shrunked the party to a historic low 7%, while Futura Nazionale (ESN) led by general Roberto Vannacci increased quickly to 4% on the national polls.

As a result, the coalition's stability depends overwhelmingly on Fratelli d'Italia and Giorgia Meloni's personal leadership.

The Fratelli d'Italia Paradox

The central challenge facing the Meloni government is not electoral weakness but growing frustration among its own supporters.

The coalition entered office promising stronger national sovereignty, stricter migration control, opposition to further EU centralization, and the defence of traditional values. However, Italy's structural constraints have significantly limited the government's room for manoeuvre. High public debt, dependence on EU recovery funds, weak economic growth, and exposure to financial markets have encouraged continuity rather than confrontation with Brussels.

Consequently, many right-wing voters increasingly perceive a discrepancy between rhetoric and governance. While the language of sovereignty remains central to government communication, practical policymaking has often remained within the parameters established by European institutions and international economic realities.

This perception poses a long-term risk to the credibility of the governing coalition.

Migration, Cultural Issues and Sovereignty

Migration remains the defining issue of Italian politics. Although the government has pursued a tougher approach than its predecessors through external agreements, stricter border management, and efforts to curb irregular migration, Italy continues to face substantial migratory pressure due to its geographic position.

For many conservative voters, migration has become a symbol of a broader sovereignty problem. National governments are expected to control borders, yet their policy options are constrained by European legal frameworks, judicial decisions, and supranational obligations.

A similar dynamic exists in cultural policy. The government continues to emphasize family support, demographic renewal, and the protection of Christian cultural identity. Nevertheless, many on the right argue that these priorities have produced limited institutional change. Debates surrounding gender ideology, LGBTQ activism, and education policy increasingly reinforce the perception that value-based governance remains more visible in rhetoric than in policy implementation.

The European Dimension: The Last Man Standing

The importance of Italy extends well beyond its national borders. At a time when right-wing parties across Europe struggle either to gain power or to maintain it, the Meloni government has become the principal governing reference point for the broader sovereigntist movement.

At the same time, the Italian experience demonstrates the limitations facing national-conservative governments within the current European framework. Economic interdependence, EU institutional expansion, migration management, and financial constraints all narrow the range of politically feasible options. Even Europe's strongest right-wing government finds itself operating within boundaries largely shaped by external actors.

For the European right, Italy therefore represents both a success story and a cautionary example.

Conclusion

Italy has become the most important political laboratory for the contemporary European right. While Fratelli d'Italia remains electorally dominant, the weakening of its coalition partners and the growing perception of limited policy delivery have created new vulnerabilities for the government.

From a broader European perspective, the principal lesson is clear. The challenge facing right-wing movements is no longer primarily electoral. Across much of Europe, parties have demonstrated their ability to win elections and mobilize public support. The more difficult task is translating political mandates into durable policy outcomes under conditions of economic dependence, supranational governance, and increasing institutional centralization.

The Italian case suggests that future right-wing movements must devote greater attention not only to electoral strategy and political messaging, but also to the structural conditions of governance. Without the institutional capacity to implement their programmes, even successful conservative governments risk creating a widening gap between expectations and results. For Europe's sovereigntist forces, this may prove to be the defining strategic challenge of the coming decade.