



## DONALD TRUMP REFERRED TO VIKTOR ORBÁN MORE THAN 100 TIMES

**Of all European leaders, Donald Trump referred to Viktor Orbán the most frequently in the year leading up to the US presidential election, a total of 109 times, according to a (quantitative and qualitative) content analysis by the Center for Fundamental Rights. The president-elect mentioned the Hungarian prime minister on average every 3 days during the period analysed, and always in a positive context, much more often than the French President Emmanuel Macron or the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.**

Since Donald Trump's election victory, speculation has been rife all over Europe as to who the 47th President of the United States' most important contact on the continent might be. Instead of speculation, let the facts speak for themselves: the returning US President to the White House spoke more about Viktor Orbán in the final year of the campaign than the leaders of the major European Union nation states.

Our analysis shows that Donald Trump has treated Viktor Orbán as a key figure, and the unquestionable victory of the Republican president, in addition to the upgrading of the Hungarian-American relations, also indicates that Hungary's role in the global space has been strengthened to an unprecedented extent. Of the politicians we analysed, the most frequently cited leader was Viktor Orbán, as he was the only one to be included in the "Very often cited" category with 109 mentions. This means that on average, he was cited every third day by Donald Trump, and every time as a positive example. Among the most frequent adjectives were "strong", "smart", "powerful", all attributes associated with the ideal of a competent leader. The Hungarian Prime Minister is followed on the virtual podium of the citation list by Emmanuel Macron and Volodymyr Zelensky with 30-30 mentions in the "Most cited" group. The French President has also repeatedly served as a positive example, and in his case, the image of a strong statesman is also emerging from Trump's statements. The Ukrainian president was slightly less often positively mentioned, mostly as a good negotiator and a reliable ally of the US defence industry. At the same time, the Republican leader, who has made ending the war a priority, has on several occasions expressed his disapproval of the substantial US resources devoted to arming Ukraine.

Giorgia Meloni is the only person in the "rather not mentioned" category, but the Italian Prime Minister has been mentioned in a positive context, as a highly respected leader by Trump. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz were placed in the "Not at all cited" category, their role and person in the president's speeches we examined was negligible.

Based on the data taken into consideration, Donald Trump's reference map in Europe is dominated by Viktor Orban, but Emmanuel Macron is also a positive example. In the case of Zelensky, it is a business partnership, and it is clear that the new US President wants to end the war in Ukraine as soon as possible, rather than fomenting it. The figures for Olaf Scholz and Ursula von der Leyen show a complete lack of weight.

It is no coincidence that in the run-up to the election, in March and July of this year, Trump twice personally consulted Viktor Orbán, who had already backed him before his previous election. The prime minister has become a point of reference for the Republican presidential candidate's campaign since he praised Trump's foreign policy and expressed hope for his peace-building efforts in an interview with Tucker Carlson last August. In contrast, most European leaders will at best be forced to cooperate with

the president-elect, many of whom were very close to the Democratic administration and willing to do as it pleased with the war between Russia and Ukraine, regardless of the continent's interests.

Politicians such as Ursula von der Leyen are scrambling to find a link with the Trump team, having essentially lost their point of orientation as a result of the political turnaround under way in the United States. In contrast, the Hungarian Prime Minister has always been a stable ally for the Republican leader, based on the fact that both see the traditional values that make the West great and prosperous as a guiding thread, and as a common opponent to the forces that attack them, and therefore respect each other's basic principle: "America first", or "Hungary first".

This relationship is certainly an advantage for Hungary, not only because Donald Trump's efforts to end the conflict in neighbouring Ukraine are in themselves a significant step forward for Hungary. The new president has most often referred to Viktor Orbán as an important ally in the context of the war, and sees him as a key player in the peace process, and has himself made efforts to achieve this goal.

*Research methodology: in this research, the unit of analysis is public and relevant press coverage, i.e. speeches, interviews and public addresses. The content of the texts was analysed through a word-space model, whereby the set of keywords in our units of analysis was categorised, i.e. (deductively) coded. The pre-defined terms represent, on the one hand, a total of 6 European politicians<sup>1</sup> (their names, their positions, clear references to them) and, on the other hand, inductively defined topics in which the leaders under study were mentioned. The result is a set of variables with countable values that can be analysed using simple descriptive statistics. However, this is not yet interpretative and does not reveal anything about the qualitative content of the mentions. References and explicit references have been manually coded into "neutral" and "positive" categories. This allowed us to establish a reference order showing who Donald Trump referred to as a positive example in Europe and on which topics. Our data were registered between 16 October 2023 and 2 November 2024.*

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<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel Macron, Georgia Meloni, Viktor Orbán, Volodimir Zelensky, Ursula von der Leyen, Olaf Scholtz



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