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## **Don't be fooled — ‘mellow’ Meloni could still Orban-ise Italy** 30 Sep 2022

Far-right strongwoman Giorgia Meloni has emerged as the undisputed winner of Italy's general election held last Sunday. She is likely to become the next prime minister, and her government will probably get the confidence of parliament.

Given her credentials and her party's links to neofascist movements, two questions are particularly pressing. Has Meloni been moderating her positions, as many Italian and international media accounts seem to suggest? Or is there a serious risk that Italy under her government could follow in the footsteps of Viktor Orban's Hungary, with serious attacks on civil rights and an increase of hate and violence against migrants, refugees, people of colour and LGBTQ+ people?

The idea that Meloni is a respectable option for Italy and internationally tends to focus on the fact that she has firmly sided with NATO on the Russia-Ukraine war, and has given repeated reassurances that she does not want to break European Union budget rules. Of course, she has asked for adjustments to former Prime Minister Mario Draghi's plan for EU recovery funds. It is true that Meloni and her Brothers of Italy party have gone through some mainstreaming in TV appearances, whether it's the almost mandatory suit-and-tie look for the – Meloni aside – male-dominated party leadership or a generally conciliatory tone on strategic matters.

Yet when it comes to how Meloni communicates with her supporters, there is little evidence of a significant shift. A distinctive high-decibel pitch style has been a hallmark of her campaign rallies. Her speeches have been filled with far-right and populist tropes. Her main target has been what she calls “the left”, by which she really means the centre-left Democratic Party. “They” allegedly have so much power that if you are “one of them” or their friend, it is much easier to get ahead in life and find a job. The

few policy points that have made her palatable to moderate actors – for instance, the adherence to EU budget rules – are mentioned in passing to the crowds, only to be quickly drowned in emotive language.

The most disturbing parts are reserved for migrants and refugees – whom she often derogatorily refers to as *clandestini* (“illegals”). For her, it is a “fact” that undocumented migrants in Italy end up as drug dealers or sex workers. Building on years of anti-immigration propaganda, she has proposed a naval blockade of the Mediterranean.

The attacks on LGBTQ+ communities are more veiled but no less obvious, as one of the priorities of her campaign has been to support the “traditional family” and Italians who want to have children. With an inversion of leftist tropes, she has used the language of equality and rights to emphasise women’s “right not to abort”.

**Referring to the country’s demographic decline, she has made the dramatic claim that Italy could soon “disappear”. The implication is that Meloni’s economic nationalism, where Italian-owned companies and Italian workers will be protected at the expense of everybody else, can reverse that trend. Showing parallels with Trumpian thinking, Meloni mixes extreme protectionism with a free-market discourse favouring tax cuts and an economy allegedly run on merit, unlike the “corrupt” system of the left.**

Meloni’s speeches provide Italians with a range of scapegoats for the country’s ills. This could lead to an explosive situation if, in the next few months, people’s frustrations and social tensions increase, as economic circumstances worsen because of the intensifying energy crisis. Intimidation and violence against migrants, refugees, people of colour and sexual minorities could rise, in an already deteriorating environment marred by the culture wars of populist propaganda that brought the post-ideological Five Star Movement and the far-right League into power in 2018.

Source: <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2022/9/30/dont-be-fooled-mellow-meloni-could-still-orban-ise>

**Questão 1.** De acordo com o autor, o que explica a ideia de que Meloni é uma opção digna para a Itália e internacionalmente? (2.5 pontos)

**Questão 2.** Qual estilo Meloni adota em seus comícios? Como ela tem atacado comunidades LGBTQ+? (2.5 pontos)

**Questão 3.** De acordo com o autor, quais as possíveis consequências das falas de Meloni e do efeito destas entre a população italiana? (2.5 pontos).

**Questão 4.** Proponha uma tradução para o português do trecho **destacado em negrito**. (2.5 pontos).