The Next Stage: Migration & the Futuro Nazionale

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Protester marching for their right to protest.

"We do not have an immigration program, but a remigration program."

Roberto Vannacci opened the launch of Futuro Nazionale (FN) with this striking declaration, marking the emergence of one of the most controversial political actors in Italy (Balmer, 2026).

On 13 June 2026, thousands marched through the streets of Rome in support of remigration, a practice involving the mass deportation of immigrants, refugees, and their children, with fascist salutes and chants referencing Mussolini (Lucisano, 2026). Similar developments have unfolded across Europe. European governments have progressively securitised migration, framing it as an existential threat to public order and the "European identity" and have demanded emergency measures that have laid the groundwork for the current migration and asylum system (Huysmans, 2000). Futuro Nazionale's emergence marks a broader shift in migration politics in Europe.



Far-right demonstrators marching with a banner during a rally in Rome. From "Far-right demo in Italy calls for 'remigration' of foreigners," by F. Fotia / Reuters, 2026, *The Straits Times*. (straitstimes.com).

While existing literature has examined how migration became securitised and mainstreamed, less attention has been paid to what happens after this process succeeds. This brief argues that Futuro Nazionale represents a new stage in the political consequences of migration securitisation and explores how competition shifts from establishing migration as a threat, a claim that has already been widely normalised across mainstream right-wing parties, to demonstrating who can most credibly implement restrictive responses.

Theoretical Framework: Understanding Securitisation in Language and Policy

The Copenhagen School conceptualises security not as an objective condition but as a political construction. Through securitisation, political actors transform issues into "existential" threats by persuading relevant audiences that exceptional action is necessary and just (Buzan et al., 1998). In doing so, rights, norms, and humanitarian responsibilities can be reframed as restraints to state action, becoming negotiable. This is how securitisation can be understood: not as a response to a threat, but as the construction of one.

Applied to migration, this approach demonstrates how security framings can lead to the erosion of refugee and asylum rights in Europe and how securitisation extends beyond political rhetoric into institutional practice. Jef Huysmans (2000) expanded this framework and argued that migration in the EU has shown how institutional and legal mechanisms such as the Schengen Agreements, the Dublin Convention, and the EU Third Pillar on

Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) have systemically securitised migration and made it possible for migration to become a "societal security" issue instead of a humanitarian one. Crucially, securitisation policies "do not appear out of the blue, but are part of a continuous and gradual process, pre-structured by previous developments" (Huysmans, 2006). Through this process of accretion, the phenomenon of remigration becomes understandable not as a break with liberal democratic principles, but as a gradual erosion of them and as the result of incremental institutional change. The normalisation of such narratives changed not just migration policies themselves but also the limits of politically acceptable responses to migration.

Futuro Nazionale in Italy

Vannacci presented Futuro Nazionale as "the only political novelty of the last 15 years", a claim that says more about the political space he is trying to occupy than about the party itself. FN draws its energy from voters who feel betrayed by Lega Nord (right-wing populist party led by Matteo Salvini and currently part of Italy's governing coalition) and Fratelli d'Italia (ruling right-wing nationalist party whose leader Giorgia Meloni has served as Prime Minister since 2022), people who were promised a transformation of Italy's approach to migration and received, instead, administration (Becchi, 2026). The party's programme centres on national identity, tradition, border defence, and opposition to what it calls "single thought."

In Vannacci's framing, the threats to Italy extend well beyond migration, since gender ideology, woke culture, and cancel culture all appear explicitly in the party statute. Still, it is remigration that sits at the centre of everything FN proposes (Lucisano, 2026). The concept itself is not new. Remigration originated in French far-right circles in the 1990s and was later revived in German and Austrian extremist networks before entering mainstream political discourse. In its political usage, it reduces most of Europe's social, demographic, and economic problems to the presence of immigrants. It proposes their removal, legal residents and so-called second-generation citizens included, as the solution (Lucisano, 2026). What distinguishes Vannacci is not that he invented this agenda, but that he is positioning FN as the party willing to go where Fratelli d'Italia and Lega didn't dare to go. As Lega MEP Ceccardi admitted at a party council, Vannacci "says what we can no longer say", not because the mainstream right disagrees on the content, but because governing responsibilities impose limits that opposition doesn't face (Il Post, 2026).

The centrepiece of FN's platform makes this concrete. Vannacci wants to abolish the Decreto Flussi regulating legal migration flows, introduce a maximum cap on foreign residents, and implement remigration through three steps: building more detention centres, activating existing bilateral agreements with countries of origin, and using the new European Pact on Migration and Asylum to transfer migrants to third countries before repa-

triation (Lucisano, 2026). Presented on television, it sounds straightforward, yet in 2025, the Meloni government repatriated just 6,772 people, which amounts to roughly 2% of the estimated 339,000 irregular migrants in Italy, even though it was operating under exactly this logic (Fioravanti, 2026). The reason is that deportations depend on the willingness of countries of origin to cooperate. When a consulate refuses to recognise a person as its citizen, or declines to issue a re-entry permit, or simply caps the number of readmissions it will accept, the expulsion order stays on paper regardless of what the government decides (Fioravanti, 2026). Even Lega minister Valditara felt compelled to call this kind of politics "cheap demagoguery" built on measures often incompatible with the Constitution and Italy's treaty obligations, a striking admission, given that Lega spent years using precisely this rhetoric before the responsibilities of government imposed restraint (Il Post, 2026). The new European Pact on Migration and Asylum does not resolve this either, because even where accelerated processing applies, the fundamental problem remains: to remove someone, you need a state that is willing and legally able to take them back (Fioravanti, 2026).

What FN is proposing, then, is not a more effective version of existing policy but a platform built on promises that are structurally impossible to keep, and that impossibility has not gone unnoticed inside the government. Meloni has been conspicuously silent on the term "remigration," carefully avoiding it in official discourse. The silence is not neutrality but a calculated distancing, since the PM understands that openly endorsing remigration would expose her government to legal challenges from EU institutions and undermine the image of governing credibility she has spent three years building. At the same time, she cannot afford to condemn it outright without alienating the part of her electorate that finds Vannacci's message compelling. So the result is a visible crack between two parties that share the same political soil but are pulling in different directions, one toward the constraints of power, the other toward the freedom of permanent opposition (Becchi, 2026).

This crack matters because it is not accidental but the direct consequence of what securitisation produces when it reaches the limits of what a government within the EU can actually deliver. Remigration, as FN proposes, is not only logistically impossible but also fundamentally incompatible with EU law, the European Convention on Human Rights, and the non-refoulement principle, which prohibits returning people to places where they face serious harm. But without the burden of governing, Vannacci is free to make promises that sound decisive while knowing he will never have to face the reality of implementing them (Fioravanti, 2026).

Futuro Nazionale in the European Context

The party's importance does not lie in the originality of the remigration agenda; ideas surrounding forced deportation and redefinition of national

belonging have circulated in European far-right networks for years. Rather, its significance lies in the political environment into which it has emerged: one in which far-right migration narratives have already been absorbed into government discourse. Unlike earlier radical-right movements that sought to establish migration as a security issue, Futuro Nazionale emerged by arguing that the existing political response to migration is inadequate, thus redefining its limits.

This political environment points towards what can be described as the post-mainstreaming dilemma: a shift in political competition from establishing issue legitimacy to demonstrating political authenticity. Existing literature has examined how mainstream parties respond to niche competitors by adopting their issue positions, as well as how radical-right ideas become normalised within mainstream parties over time (Meguid, 2005; Saldivia Gonzatti & Völker, 2026). When a conservative government adopts the radical right's migration agenda, the distinction between the two erodes, and the far right can no longer differentiate itself by claiming migration is a threat; that argument has already won. The competition here was never about whether migration should be securitised; it was about who gets to own the securitised position.

The implications of this development extend beyond Italy's borders. Similar dynamics can be seen across Europe: established right-wing parties are increasingly challenged by actors positioned further to their right. France offers a particularly close parallel: Éric Zemmour's split from the Rassemblement National to found Reconquête was understood as a more radical response to what Le Pen's strategy of "de-demonisation" had left vacant, thereby reclaiming the authenticity that Le Pen had allegedly abandoned (Ivaldi, 2023). Securitisation, therefore, is not only a tool for putting certain issues on the agenda but also a way of creating a political arena in which actors compete over the responses. This suggests a significant shift from the largely vertical process of securitisation, in which elites construct a threat for public acceptance (Buzan et al., 1998). This brief conceptualises it as a horizontal dynamic, structurally comparable to ethnic outbidding dynamics, in which parties that already share a premise compete by adopting increasingly radical positions (Rabushka & Shepsle, 1972). As policy ownership shifts to the primary competitive dynamic, political elites have incentives to propose more restrictive policies to distinguish themselves ideologically from their competitors. Futuro Nazionale is not just another far-right party. It provides evidence of a potential transformation in European migration politics: the success of securitisation may not represent the endpoint of radical-right influence, but the starting point of a new phase of competition over how far it can go.

For human rights, the significance lies not in whether migration is a security problem, but in the debate shifting to how far restrictive migration policies can be pushed in the competition among political actors. This is why the case of Italy is indicative of the European dilemma in general:

dealing with the effects of securitised migration politics needs to take into account the political processes that lead to these policies. When political competition moves from a vertical axis to a horizontal one, international human rights law changes from a legal boundary into a political target. In this environment, a party's proposals challenging established protections can become the ultimate proof of their commitment.

Conclusion

Futuro Nazionale is the product of decades of Italian migration politics that kept pushing the demand for a harder line. What this brief has traced is a political logic reaching its next stage, where framing migration as an existential threat for long enough means the debate stops being about whether to respond and becomes about how far the response should go. That kind of competition has no natural stopping point. Vannacci did not create this dynamic but inherited it; France's Reconquête followed the same logic, signalling that this is no longer a series of isolated national developments but a coordinated European shift. The spiral can be stopped, but only if governments are willing to pay the short-term political cost of not feeding it. Every escalation produces someone new who is ready to push even further. When principles like non-refoulement and the right to asylum become objects of electoral competition rather than legal certainties, the consequences of that accumulate not in political discourse but in the lives of people crossing the Mediterranean.

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