

# Spain's PSOE-Sumar government honors Italian fascist Prime Minister Meloni

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The Spanish government, led by the Socialist Party (PSOE) and its pseudo-left partner Sumar—a split from Podemos, the PSOE's former government partner—has announced that it will grant the fascist Giorgia Meloni one of the highest honors of the Spanish state: the Grand Cross of the Order of Isabella the Catholic. The award was approved by the Council of Ministers, which includes five ministers from Sumar.

Meloni's party, Brothers of Italy, won the largest number of votes in a September 2022 election. She now heads a three-party right-wing coalition government, including Forza Italia, the party founded by the late billionaire Silvio Berlusconi as his personal instrument, and the Liga (League), headed by Matteo Salvini, an advocate of maximum repression against immigrants and strikers.

Members of Forza Italia will also be awarded with the Grand Cross of the Order of Isabella the Catholic. This includes the Undersecretary for Foreign Affairs, Maria Tripodi, and the Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Antonio Tajani, who served as the spokesperson for Silvio Berlusconi's government during the 1990s.

Meloni's Brothers of Italy was founded by former supporters of the various parties that emerged out of the fascist party of Mussolini. It was formed amid Italy's defeat and occupation by the United States and Britain in World War II when Mussolini was allied with Hitler. Meloni's ultra-right politics are all but indistinguishable from those of Marine Le Pen in France or incoming US president Donald Trump.

The Cross of the Order of Isabella the Catholic recognises extraordinary civil merit in individuals who contribute to friendly relations with Spain—that is, with the Spanish capitalist class. Indeed, the award of this Order to this fascist reflects the strong alignment between the reactionary policies implemented by Meloni's government and those implemented by the current PSOE-

Sumar government, and its predecessor, the PSOE-Podemos government.

During her tenure, Meloni has led Europe's anti-immigration policies through a strategy of paying the governments of Tunisia and Libya to act as a violent border police, using torture, murder, and other abuses to prevent desperate migrants from reaching Europe. This is complemented by criminalising NGOs engaged in rescue missions in the Mediterranean, imposing all kinds of obstacles to keep them from saving boats carrying migrants. For Meloni, it is preferable that they drown at sea rather than arrive in Italy.

The PSOE and its pseudo-left allies have been key supporters of this criminal and murderous policy. In 2022, the Foreign Minister of the PSOE-Podemos government called at NATO's Madrid summit for NATO to recognize “that there are also serious threats coming from the southern flank,” including migration, which they defined as a “hybrid threat.” This opened the door to justify the brutal repression of migrants carried out by Meloni and to future interventions in Africa to plunder its resources.

Both governments are also aligned in implementing record increases in military spending, following NATO's directives amid its war with Ukraine and its support for Israel's offensive in the Middle East and its genocide in Gaza. This is financed by social cuts and greater exploitation of workers, with minimal wage increases far below inflation.

The collaboration of the Spanish government with the European far right has become rather routine. In November, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez agreed with Meloni and the Hungarian far-right leader Viktor Orbán to have their fascist candidates, Raffaele Fitto and Olivér Várhelyi, appointed to the European Commission.

In addition to Pedro Sánchez, Meloni maintains a strong relationship with European social democratic leaders. She regularly meets with German Chancellor Scholz of the

Social Democratic Party; in September, they agreed to “strengthen policies related to partnerships with countries of origin and transit of migrants,” as well as on “returns and combating human traffickers” and promoting “legal migration.” In other words, Scholz approved the repression and killing of migrants carried out by Meloni and hailed it as a model.

In the same vein, Starmer described his September meeting with Meloni as “fantastic,” highlighting her role in fighting against immigrants and refugees on behalf of the European Union and her commitment to NATO’s involvement in the war in Ukraine.

The entire political establishment is shifting violently to the right, whatever political coloration one or other government may give itself. Pedro Sánchez, Starmer, and Scholz are examples of this. European leaders imposed only one condition on the far right: that they support NATO’s war against Russia. Once that hurdle was cleared, they not only accepted the fascists but have adopted ever larger portions of their program.

Meanwhile, the pseudo-left has shown no opposition either to the fascists or to implementing their policies. After approving the honor alongside PSOE, Sumar has maintained a shameful silence. Neither its leaders, nor its ministers, nor anyone from Sumar or its affiliated parties has had the decency to issue a statement to attempt to explain what happened.

For years, all of them—first within Podemos and now with Sumar—Spain’s Left Populists have been implementing measures similar to those defended by Meloni. Their silence is just another demonstration of the right-wing, imperialist, and anti-worker nature of Sumar and its leaders, as well as their political cowardice.

Likewise, Sumar’s former colleagues in Podemos—who are not currently in government but support it from the outside—are also cynical and hypocritical. Their co-spokesperson Isa Serra stated:

“Yesterday, Sánchez announced that, for the 50th anniversary of Franco’s death, the government will hold more than one hundred commemorative events. Today, that same government honors the fascist Meloni. It would be better if all the public money to be spent on those events, aimed at bolstering their antifascist image, were instead used to protect the migrants whom Meloni leaves to die at sea.”

For her part, the most well-known public face of Podemos, MEP and former Equality Minister under the PSOE-Podemos government (2020-2023), Irene Montero, declared: “The PSOE honors a fascist with whom it

already governs in Europe after having voted in favor of Meloni and Orbán’s candidates.”

Both conveniently forget that in June 2022, when Podemos was in government and Montero was a minister, more than 100 migrants were killed at the fence separating the Spanish city of Melilla from Morocco. Trapped between the Spanish and Moroccan police, who attacked them from all sides using riot control weapons, including tear gas, they were slaughtered.

Two days later, during a government press conference, Montero issued a cowardly statement agreeing with the PSOE on the massacre. Asked five times by journalists about Podemos’ position on the massacre, she remained completely silent. Later, Podemos refused to request a commission of inquiry or even demand the disapproval of any minister.

In this way, Podemos endorsed that massacre—something previously only seen in far-right regimes. However, supporting those fascist actions had a deeper strategic meaning: the incident was used by the PSOE-Podemos government, as mentioned earlier, to ensure that the NATO summit held two weeks later would classify migration as a “hybrid threat.” Thus, Podemos also helped legitimise the criminal methods of governments like Meloni’s.

The decoration of Meloni once again highlights how PSOE, Podemos, and Sumar have shifted towards reactionary positions, implementing policies all but indistinguishable from those of the far right. They do not fight against fascism; they pave the way for it. The true antifascist left is represented by the WSWs and the International Committee of the Fourth International, with its program to build an international workers’ movement that defends democratic rights through the struggle for socialism.



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