

## CHAPTER II

# Background of Parties and their Impact on the 2009 Elections

## 1. Traditional positions of the parties

### *1.1. Are the radical right and left comparable?*

As has been noted by various analysts, from the TEU of 1992 positions challenging the process of European integration have continually increased, which has ended the previous situation of permissive tacit consensus held by citizens. This worked without any significant problems between 1957 and the SEA in 1987, the text which marked the beginning of separation. On the one hand, there appears an increasing Europeanisation of protests against the current EU, and on the other, a radicalisation towards the ends of the political spectrum on this *issue*. Although deeper motivations of the radical right and left are not the same, the fact is that in both persuasions, the rejection of the community *establishment* is politically and electorally profitable. In any case, the highest level of challenge comes from the radical right – who are benefiting most today from the *impasse* of the EU, although the radical left have, in turn, an average effect not as insignificant as is often assumed in comparison to it. The appearance of substantial political forces contrary to the “Community method” reflects the crystallisation of a new *cleavage* in the European political scene<sup>1</sup>. In the sixth Legislature of the EP (2004-2009), these were the percentages of rejection of the current process of European integration in the eurogroups that included the largest number of opponents: 1) *Independence and Democracy* (radical right), 92.3% of its MEPs, and 2) GUE/NGL, 79.1%; if – in addition – the Union for Europe of the Nations is considered (conservative right), in this Eurogroup, the percentage was 47.7%<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Poirer, 2007, p. 42 and 53; Heine, 2009, p. 164; Van Eijk, Franklin, 1996; Lacroix, Coman, 2007; Balme, Chabanet, 2008; Neumayer, Roger, Zalewski, 2008; Mc Donnell, Newell, 2011, p. 443.

<sup>2</sup> Brack, 2009, p. 187. The UEN should be included more in the field of the conservative right rather than in the radical right (notwithstanding certain reactionary

A proper distinction is not always made between the rejection of the current process of European integration and the negation of any form of supranational linkage. Consequently, it is not academically relevant to amalgamate any criticism of the EU, however radical it may be, with the opposition to the very idea of European integration. It is therefore essential to distinguish the different types of opposition to the EU as the most radical is opposed to the very principle of integration itself, while another may just challenge the existing operating and institutional framework. This means there is one type of “antisystem” opposition to the EU (rejecting all it represents in substance and form) and another that essentially refers to its policies. The first is a global opposition, of principles, which fully affects the project of European integration; the second – in contrast – affects its functional dimension. *Structural* opposition is very small in the EU (even among the radical right), while the *functional* opposition large in these political areas<sup>3</sup>. Indeed, direct rejection of the EU is defended only by a minority of radical parties that represent an *irresponsible* opposition in sartorian terms. By contrast, the critical judgment of the institutions and policies is the norm with the majority of the radical right and almost all of the radical left. In any case, criticism of aspects of European integration has a negative variant, typical of populist eurosceptical parties (the vast majority of the radical right) and a positive one, common in *progressive* groups (not without some exceptions in this field). In the latter case, the radical left tends to focus their criticism on the *current* ongoing process and on its leading actors, not on the idea of integration per se. While anti-European impulses are more common with the radical right (for their usual ethnic nationalism), with the radical left they are much less frequent (because of their theoretical doctrinal internationalism), criticising *this* EU and asserting that they want “another” Europe<sup>4</sup>.

The process of European construction affects the traditional bases of the nation state and this favours the exacerbation of narcissistic nationalism in significant sectors of public opinion, which, in part, are captured by radical organisations. On the one hand, the absence of a governing majority and an opposition in the European Parliament merely reinforces those who challenge the EU, and on the other, the complexity

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impulses of some of its members) for its composition and programmes. The UEN has been partially replaced in the seventh Legislature (since 2009) by *European Conservatives and Reformists* that group, among others, the British *Tories* (formerly “observers” in the PPE/DE) and the Polish and Czech conservatives of the PiS and ODS respectively.

<sup>3</sup> Mair, 2007, p. 3-4, 10 and 12; Brack, 2009, p. 185; Heine, 2009, p. 9-10.

<sup>4</sup> Crespy, Petithomme, 2009, p. 26 (Introduction) and p. 336 (Conclusions); Heine, 2009, p. 11 and 149.

of the distribution of competences (to know “who does what”) and the usual institutional opacity of the Community have increased feelings of uncertainty and questions about the future. In addition, the technocratic language of the community elites and tough economic targets that subordinate social rights favour radical parties. The construction of the EU counts minimally on citizens, is top-down and elitist, working through barely transparent or controllable consociative agreements.

In this way, the radical parties of the right and left gather part of the social discontent generated by some negative consequences of the current process of European integration and are able to mobilise – for different reasons – part of the anti-EU civic sentiment<sup>5</sup>. *Eurocepticism* (and, often, Europhobia) is one of the reasons for the electoral success of the radical right who present globalisation and Europeanisation as two sides of same denationalising coin. The radical left also rallies concerns about the uncertainties of the current process and particularly as economic integration (from the EU Treaty of Maastricht) and police cooperation (Schengen) advance, the hostility of this political spectre increases against the Community *establishment*. In both cases, the fact of not being parties in government (with some very few exceptions), the tendency to accentuate criticism of the EU is greater<sup>6</sup>.

In addition to these reasons, other factors also contribute to explain the greater or lesser degrees of rejection/criticism of the EU in various EU countries. The degree of public support for European integration is, for example, relevant: in France this has ranged between 50% and 70% depending on the period in question (which leaves ample room for potential challenge), whereas in Italy and Spain it has fluctuated between 60%-80% in the first case and 70%-80% in the second (with much less room for manoeuvre for the anti-EU opposition)<sup>7</sup>. The institutional system and the national party system also affect this dimension and do or do not accentuate opposition to the EU: for example, if the electoral system encourages partnerships, it is more likely to attenuate eurosceptical impulses. Finally, strong, long term partisan bureaucratic leadership explains the persistence of more or less favourable attitudes to integration (the radical right have contrasted the anti-Europeanism of Le Pen and the possibilism of Haider, in the radical left the Eurocepticism of Cunhal and strong support for integration of Carrillo).

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<sup>5</sup> Brack, 2009, p. 182; De Vries, Edwards, 2009, p. 6.

<sup>6</sup> Cosserson, 2007, p. 136; Frölich-Steffen, Rensmann, 2007, p. 124; Heine, 2009, p. 161-162.

<sup>7</sup> Benedetto, Quaglia, 2007, p. 487-488.

The interrelationship between the radical right and the left in the European system of parties is a complex issue because although a strong ideological antagonism exists (with occasional agreement in certain cases), to some extent all compete for a relatively similar popular electorate<sup>8</sup>. So in theory there is no relationship as they are at odds (“particularism” of the right versus “universalism” of the left), but both reject the “system” (from different perspectives) and dispute similar electoral margins (the discontent, the losers). Indeed, it is still striking the not insignificant space where an objective coincidence is produced: anti-system, anti-globalisation, anti-US, against the “powerful”, for national sovereignty (with degrees, differences and nuances), in favour of those marginalised by the community *establishment* and all with a vision – at times – politicist (politics in “command”, politics *must* decide everything)<sup>9</sup>.

However, notable differences are also evident: 1) those on the right are nativist and ethnocentric, xenophobic and obsessed with “security”, favourable (with overtones according to parties) to the market economy, elitist and hierarchical (with an instrumental/functional concept of democracy) and conservative and conformist in the social order, 2) the left are internationalist/cosmopolitan (with conditions in some cases), favourable to open multicultural societies, advocates of strong public intervention in the market (for the sake of solid *Welfare States*), supportive of base democracy, being equitable and showing solidarity in the social order. Perhaps one of the most contradictory elements (for the radical left) is that of national sovereignty: their rejection of any ethnic concept of the same being evident, there are many example of parties of this type strongly advocating “national interests” against *Brussels*. In this case, such a policy is defended with the argument that the EU is an agent of capitalist globalisation, harmful to people in general and workers in particular and also with political workings of poor democratic quality. Although the radical left believes in principle that the nation-state is an anachronism destined to disappear in the process of global

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<sup>8</sup> Backes, Moreau, 2008 (Conclusions), p. 601; Brack, 2009, p. 189; Hooghe, Marks, Wilson, 2002, p. 965-989.

<sup>9</sup> Chirumbolo, Mayer, De Witte, 2006, p. 255-258 and 266-267. An interesting recent study emphasises the *nationalism* of the radical right and left as the main axis of challenge to the EU from both spectra. Although the authors recognise the differences between the exclusive ethnic nationalism of the first and the civic linked to popular classes of the second, they affirm that it is the principal common element that explains *Eurosepticism* in both ideological groups of parties. Although true that the Orthodox CPs are now in effect, *nationalist*, it is much less evident in the case of several postcommunist parties and the New Left: Halikiopoulou, Nanou, Vasilopoulou, 2012, p. 1-2, 5 and 29.

transformation, its conception of European politics remains essentially national. In rejecting the EU, the radical left objectively coincided with the extreme europhobic right, fanatical defender of the Nation-State<sup>10</sup>.

Even in the economic area differences are not always as great because significant sectors of the radical right criticise neoliberalism for harming “ordinary people”. In this sense, the two spectra are benefiting from the erosion of social democracy and from the serious decline of its traditional hegemony with the classic working class<sup>11</sup>. Some authors have coined the expression *gaucho-lepenisme* (left wing “LePenism”) to highlight the populist use of denunciation of the “powerful” in the ambit of the working class. Indeed, radical right and left compete – sometimes intensively – for an electorate affected by economic globalisation: the radical right benefits from the vote of the “chauvinists” of the *Welfare State* itself and the radical left from the discontent and protest of the losers. Therefore, the two spectra capture sectors of an electorate disenchanted with traditional *establishment* parties<sup>12</sup>.

In short, the radical left is theoretically in favour of supranational integration, but rejects the economic values of the model existing in the EU, while the radical right rejects the whole idea of a Europe superior to nation-states. While the radical left focuses its criticism on the EU neoliberalism that is mining the Welfare State, the radical right emphasises national sovereignty and ethnic identity. The radical left benefits from popular fears of the loss and decline of social rights and the radical right exploits feelings of insecurity regarding extra-community immigration from abroad and the uncertainty and opacity of the decision taking mechanisms of *Brussels*. These strategies tend to favour a general process of withdrawal, mistrust and fear that “infects” the moderate centre right much more given that the radical left reject the issue of xenophobia outright. This does not mean that a sector of social democracy is partially *sensitive* to *extremist* pressures in these issues

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<sup>10</sup> In the French debate on the occasion of the referendum of 2005, virtually all radical left formations were united in their rejection of the CTEU (the “nonists”) in contrast to minority theses of well known advanced activists and intellectuals, such as Cohn-Bendit or Negri, who favoured the text – aware of its limitations – as a first step to overcoming the anachronistic nation-state. Cosseron, 2007, p. 135 and 218; Crespy, 2008, p. 589-603.

<sup>11</sup> Backes, Moreau, 2008 (Conclusions), p. 603; Van der Brug, Fennema, 2010, p. 61; De Vries, Edwards, 2009, p. 19-22.

<sup>12</sup> Backes, Moreau, 2008 (Conclusions), p. 603-604. On the crisis of traditional social democracy: Lavelle, 2008, p. 7-45. The term *gaucho-lepenisme* left wing “left wing LePenism” is from P. Perrineau.

(the traditional support of the Left in general for the model of a multicultural society has fallen)<sup>13</sup>.

### **1.2. The arguments of the radical right**

The radical right's negative valuation of the EU is nearly unanimous, while there are varying degrees of rejection and even challenge (leave it, eliminate it, reduce it to just a forum for intergovernmental cooperation without supranational concessions). In any case, right wing party coincidence in opposition to every advance in integration is also complete, hence their systematic rejection of any treaty reform moving in that direction<sup>14</sup>.

The radical right is against the current EU supposedly because it would lead to a super-European federal state, but, – from this point on – national positions are not always coincident. Some parties of this spectrum (fewer in number) propose to abandon or even eliminate it, but others suggest reforming it thoroughly to “slim it down” and remove powers that should then be renationalised. In this sense, most radical right-wing parties could support some form of loose economic cooperation between sovereign states that would create a large European free trade area. To choose any of the three strategies mentioned (opt out, liquidate, reformulate) depends on if, in defending the “national interest” it is more beneficial (at the end of the day, for each party) to choose one of these, on the understanding that all are against increasing the supranationality of the current EU, especially politically. In this way, some radical right-wing parties are more flexible than others in relation to the EU either because they need funds from the same and/or because their voters are not totally hostile to it<sup>15</sup>. Consequently, there are gradations from lesser to greater opposition, largely correlated to varying degrees of authoritarianism in every party this ideological family: 1) Europragmatics. The PRM, for example, was highly critical of the EU, but, – for instrumental reasons – it has softened its position because it expects material *benefits* (funds) from the same, 2) Eurosceptics. Not openly advocating leaving the EU or liquidating it, but rejecting almost

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<sup>13</sup> Brack, 2009, p. 188; De Vries, Edwards, 2009, p. 6 and 9; Van Spanje, 2010, p. 569 and 579. The effect of the thesis of the radical right in the moderate right: Raniolo, 2000, p. 261-266; Brustier, Huelin, 2011, p. 240-246.

<sup>14</sup> Mudde, 2007, p. 159. On the general typologies of the radical right, beyond their specific positions on the EU, see: Various, 1998; Ignazi, 2000, p. 35-57 and *id.*, 2003; Schain, Zolberg, Hossay, 2002; Betz 2002; Betz, 2004; Carter, 2005, p. 50 et seq. netjes, Edwards, 2005; Williams, 2006; Ivarsflaton, 2008, p. 3-23.

<sup>15</sup> Mudde, 2007, p. 165-166 and 182; Hanley, 2008, p. 198-199; Vasilopoulou, 2009, p. 4.

all policies regarded as “intrusive” (VB, LN), 3) Eurorejectors. For these the EU would be an intolerable and grave threat to national sovereignty and they would advise abandoning, even liquidating it (UKIP, BNP)<sup>16</sup>.

The radical right politically exploits some of the negative consequences of globalisation and European integration, hence their hostility towards the EU is connected with this its discourse and populist strategy (against the *establishment*, against the elites, against party politics, against immigrants and so on). The truth is that one of the main paradoxes of such parties is that their electoral successes force them to act within an institution – the EP – which they doctrinally reject<sup>17</sup>. For the radical right the EU is an instrument of leftist strategy to negate the values of the “silent majority” and, beyond that, “the idea of the EU is in many ways similar to the ideology of Communism” for their alleged “denationalisatory” and even “totalising” pretensions<sup>18</sup>. From this point of view, the radical right affirms that the EU would lead irreversibly to the European federal super-state, centralising, hyper-regulatory and a deadly threat to national sovereignty. Indeed, for these parties the EU has already established intrusive supranational body, with an intolerable expansive interventionism which is mining nation states, national economies and cultures<sup>19</sup>.

The radical right, in its absolutism of the idea of nation, condemns Europeanisation as a process attacking the ethnic identities and sovereignty of peoples. Consequently, the EU contradicts the basic *nature* of each country in being an *artificial* device. The EU also favours the crystallisation of a multicultural society, which would mean the end of the native cultures of Europe. For a Hungarian radical rightist, the increasing integration of the EU would lead to “cosmopolitan homogenisation” and would convert European nations into simple provinces to serve the “powerful”<sup>20</sup>. In line with its traditional *conspiratorial* view of the world, for the radical right Europeanisation is nothing more than a further manifestation of globalisation led by the United States and international financial corporations, which is why the EU becomes an instrument at the service of supranational power elites. Consequently, the radical right rejects the *Eurocrats* in Brussels and all the “political

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<sup>16</sup> Mudde, 2007, p. 162-164; Vasilopoulou, 2009, p. 18.

<sup>17</sup> Simón, 2007, p. 14; Brack, 2009, p. 179-180.

<sup>18</sup> The quotation is from a radical right-wing Czech, in Mudde, 2007, p. 160; Poirer, 2007, p. 44-45.

<sup>19</sup> Mudde, 2007, p. 159; Hanley, 2008, p. 192; Hanley, 2008b.

<sup>20</sup> The affirmation is from Csurka, in Mudde, 2007, p. 193-194; Klandermands, Mayer (Conclusions), 2006, p. 271; Poirer, 2007, p. 57-58; Hanley, 2008, p. 197; Gibson, 2002; Vasilopoulou, 2009, p. 8.

class” of the *establishment*. These parties reject the “Europe of merchants”, one of whose alleged denationalising strategies is a permissiveness to non-EU immigration which is only in the selfish interests of “stateless bankers”<sup>21</sup>.

Although the radical right is in favour of market economy, it expresses this with close minded nationalist mentality and is therefore critical of the EU for affecting the competitiveness of national economies with its invasive and hyper-regulatory policies of supranational character. Consequently, the radical right criticises cross border EU *neoliberalism* and calls for, in all cases, a *Welfare chauvinism* against the same<sup>22</sup>.

In general, a large sector of the radical right advocates the renationalisation of the policies ceded to the community and the strengthening of “red lines” with more exclusions that impede the continued expansion of the competences of the EU. The list is extensive and covers all areas, not only supranational (which are rejected), but even many of an intergovernmental kind. What the radical right is clear about is its opposition to any federal scenario for the EU: “We reject any kind of European community state”<sup>23</sup>. The radical right only supports greater European intergovernmental cooperation in the face of the pressure from the United States and the “threat” [*sic*] from the Muslim world<sup>24</sup>. These parties have embodied (mostly) their principal objectives with respect to the “Vienna Declaration of parties and patriotic movements in Europe”, 2005, which proclaim: 1) the acceptance, at the most, of a European confederation of sovereign and independent states, 2) the total rejection of the creation of a European super state, 3) the rejection of eventually incorporating countries from outside Europe (Turkey) into the EU, 4) cooperation against terrorism, Islamic fundamentalism and imperialism (of the United States), 5) the paralysis of migratory movements, 6) the support for policies encouraging increased birth rates and family development in the interests of ethnic homogeneity of European nations, 7) the rejection of globalisation and 8) justice for European ethnic communities<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Le Pen’s thesis, in Poirer, 2007, p. 57; Van der Brug, Fennema, Tillie, 2000, p. 77-102; Klandermans, Mayer (Conclusions), 2006, p. 274; Mudde, 2007, p. 185.

<sup>22</sup> Carchi, 2002, p. 272; Poirer (Conclusiones, en Delwit, Poirer), 2007, p. 311; Simón, 2007, p. 14; Mudde, 2007, p. 186.

<sup>23</sup> The quote is from a German neo-nazi, Deckert (NPD), in Simón, 2007, p. 272; Mudde, 2007, p. 168; Hanley, 2008, p. 190.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180-181.

In short, the radical right rejects supranationalism and clings to an ethnic/territorial communitarianism, nativist and essentialist in character and this is what explains the firm defence of the nation state or, in the case of regionalist parties with this group ideology, of the community (in the case of VB or LN, for example). These parties offer malcontents and the losers from European integration a different identity (of an ethnically exclusive type) and *those responsible* for the main problems (the elites of the *establishment* and Brussels)<sup>26</sup>. Yet, despite his hypernationalism, the radical right supports a certain idea of Europe (neither pluralistic nor liberal, i.e. unenlightened) because it assumes the thesis, completely respectful to national sovereignty, of the “Europe of nations” (with certain Gaullists resonances). This formulation presents gradations according to national parties: 1) Europe of the nations, without going into detail (UKIP), 2) Ethnic European (“white” and “Christian”) against multiculturalism and the continued influx of non-EU immigrants (VB, LN) and 3) imperial Europe (this is now a minority thesis, only defended by small, rather irrelevant extremist groups)<sup>27</sup>.

After 1945 the radical right manifested a rejection of the dual hegemony that the United States and the USSR (who had colonised, divided and subordinated the continent that had been a former world power) had over the whole of Europe, albeit with a resounding non-symmetric difference given its traditional anti-communism. The truth is that the radical right claims a certain “differentiation” of Europe in the world, hence its references to the mythical nature of this place as an ethnic community and as the mother of all *civilized* nations. There is, therefore, a certain myth about Europe existing with the contemporary radical right that has its origins in the classic fascisms that aspired to a “new European order.” These parties admit a certain global cultural pan-European reference linked to the idea of “Western Christian civilization”, whose main practical effect is xenophobic and – today – especially Islamophobic. Indeed, the current emphasis of the radical right on “Christian roots” (all things considered, it is surprising that some parties in this ideological group have reservations about orthodox Christianity, such as the BNP) is explained by the net rejection of Islam. This has a double projection: internally – directed against Muslim immigrants residing in the EU (these would be “inintegratable” and potentially dangerous) and the externally – against the candidacy of Turkey. According to the radical right, this country should be totally excluded under any circumstances, not only for not being “European”, but even

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<sup>26</sup> Poirer, 2007, p. 42; Rodríguez Jiménez, 2008, p. 343-344.

<sup>27</sup> Tarchi, 2002, p. 273; Minkenberg, 2000, p. 170-188; Simón, 2007, p. 249-250; Liang, 2007.

more accurately for being “anti-European” (historically the Ottoman Empire came about to oppose Europe and today there are radical islamist elements that could endanger the West). The least important is that these theories are weak or inconsistent because the key is to tune into the fears of a significant section of European voters<sup>28</sup>.

Given the *structural* ultranationalism of the radical right its significant difficulties for coordination at a European level can not be a surprise. Initially, the radical right had quite clear leadership from the FN and the MSI, but successive EU enlargements and the transformation of Italian neo-fascists into a non-*extreme* conservative party (AN) diluted such prominence. Despite several attempts to create a single parliamentary group in the EP this has never come about, hence the fragmentation of this sector. In the 2004-2009 Legislature one part of the radical right was in the *Independence and Democracy* Eurogroup and the other part not signed up. The ephemeral Eurogroup *Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty* created in 2007 barely lasted a year and, apart from that, the creation of this Eurogroup did not mean the incorporation of *Independence and Democracy*. In the Legislature inaugurated in 2009 the Eurogroup changed its name (with some changes in the participating parties) and it is the one that groups more parties of the radical right (the EFD) others being among those not signed up. In short, the radical right is against creating Europarties as have other European ideological groups because, in its opinion, it would only serve the thesis of pro-European Federalists. Therefore, only for instrumental and operational reasons various parties in this sector have agreed to converge in the EFD<sup>29</sup>.

### ***1.3. Specific parties of the radical right***

There are several EU countries with radical right parties whose election results exceed 10% of votes: France, Belgium, Italy, Denmark, Austria, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria<sup>30</sup>.

First, within the Western European countries, Le Pen, the principal leader of the FN, said that the EU is “similar to the Soviet Union, cosmopolitan, detached from its Christian roots and swamped by Islam”<sup>31</sup>. The FN is therefore hostile to the European integration process because, in his opinion, it would have very negative consequences for France. The FN is opposed to any deal that limits national sovereignty,

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<sup>28</sup> Simón, 2007, p. 251, 255, 259 and 267; Mudde, 2007, p. 167 and 170-171.

<sup>29</sup> Mudde, 2007, p. 172-179; Hanley, 2008, p. 179, 187 and 196.

<sup>30</sup> Norris, 2009, p. 81. Although referring only to the EU-15, see the list of both right and left wing parties in de Vries, Edwards, 2009, p. 12; Kitschelt, McGann, 1995; Blaise, Moreau, 2004; Harrison, 2005a, p. 288; Hainsworth, 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Mudde, 2007, p. 161.

for example, the Schengen system. Subsequently, the French radical right has accepted the free movement of people, but only of Europeans in the *strict* sense to avoid loopholes for illegal immigration. Meanwhile, freedom of movement of capital represents an attack on national financial interests. In summary, for the FN Community institutions are not any more than an instrument in the service of secretive bureaucratic *lobbies*, hence in the face of such an artificial, anti-national and anti-popular device, you should fight for another alternative, for the “Europe of homelands”<sup>32</sup>. At the end of the day, the FN is opposed to increasing European integration for cultural, political and economic reasons: among the first, for its rejection of immigration, its closed nationalism and xenophobia, among the second for its direct criticism that the Community institutions already weaken the nation-state, among the third, for its critique of *worldwide* neoliberalism (in its jargon) that limits national sovereignty<sup>33</sup>. For his part, Mégret (who split from the FN with very little electoral success) said the EU would aim to copy the United States, since its increasing integration would increasingly degenerate into a federal super-state, a policy which – basically – is nothing more than the strategy of the American empire, with which the EU would be its “Trojan horse” on the continent.

For the FPÖ, Europe is a community assigned to history, hence their reservations regarding Austria’s integration into the EU. Additionally, for this party, the EU has an ungovernable negative supranational political vocation for the interests of the country itself – it also favours the model of a multi-cultural society that affects Austrian “spiritual values”. The populist radicalisation of the FPÖ’s discourse is what has led it to become increasingly critical of the current EU, although the party could accept a loose European confederation submitted to the principle of national subsidiarity, accepting that the common market, collective security and the defence of certain principles could justify its existence<sup>34</sup>.

Unlike the French radical right, its German namesake has not achieved national representation (among other factors, because of its fragmentation in – at least – three options), one of whose parties that evidently emerged in the 1990s (the *Republikaner*) defining the Maastricht Treaty as a “Versailles without arms”, though it has never openly advocated leaving the EU<sup>35</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Fotia, 1995, p. 176-177; Simmons, 1996, p. 183; Hainsworth, Brian, Mitchell, 2004, p. 37-58; Sauger, 2005, p. 103-126; Vasiliopoulou, 2009, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> Neller, Thaidigsmann, 2009, p. 217-218; Evans, 2007, p. 133.

<sup>34</sup> Leconte, 2005, p. 65, 68, 75, 77 and 79-80; Barnschie, 2005, p. 429; Virchow, 2007, p. 60-61.

<sup>35</sup> Mudde, 2007, p. 160.

Finally, within the three principal EU states, the case of UKIP is different, since this party has neither had a neo-fascist past (in contrast to the FN or the German neo-Nazis), nor defended an ethnocentric programme (unlike the BNP). The UKIP is clearly a populist right party with a monothematic policy, reduced almost exclusively to the firm advocacy of the withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the EU, with its fame for harming British national interests<sup>36</sup>.

In the case of some small European countries there clearly is – if anything – a strict defence of *national sovereignty*, which has a double projection: against further transfers of powers to the EU and against immigration proceeding from outside the EU. Consequently, parties like the DF, the PVV or LAOS declare themselves openly anti-federalist – although they may accept eventual mutually beneficial forms of inter-governmental economic cooperation – and advocate a drastic closure of borders against immigration.

Secondly, in the case regional parties, the radical right takes particular interest in the positions of the VB and the LN.

The Flemish radical right is against the solid and broadly pro-EU consensus of almost all the Belgian “political class” and so denounces the alleged “attacks” on national sovereignty, emanating also from a clear democratic deficit due to the “Eurocracy” of *Brussels*. The VB opposes the ongoing process of European integration since this – from its perspective – would lead to federalisation, fatal for “natural” national identity. The VB could accept – in its case – a loose economic confederation, mutually profitable, respectful of European ethnic identities. In any case, it entirely rejects the idea of giving the EU social, redistributive, educational or cultural powers. On the one hand, it should both limit itself to the role of the Commission and strengthen the Union Council (formerly Council of Ministers) and on the other, relaunch many community focused policies. All this accompanied by strict restrictions on successive expansions, reinforcement of protectionism, elimination of “European citizenship” and a return to national currencies. In contrast, the VB maintains a very significant exception to the rejection of supranational policies: security against the “threat” of Islam in general (which, of course, leads it to reject Turkey’s presence in the EU)<sup>37</sup>. For this, the party maintains a certain ambivalent discourse regarding the EU: a strong desire for certain policies, but advocating the disappearance of others. So the VB is in favour of economic integration (with a dose of national protectionism, of course), of effective cooperation on defence

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<sup>36</sup> Norris, 2009, p. 294.

<sup>37</sup> De Winter, 2005, p. 107; Vassilopoulos, 2009, p. 9.

and security, strong common policies on migration, asylum and the fight against terrorism. However, it is radically opposed to the interference of the EU – not even indirectly – in educational and cultural affairs, social security or “law and order.” In its view, a federal EU is not only totally unnecessary but is dangerous and harmful to its peoples, hence the VB’s rejection of the notion of “European citizenship”, which is deemed empty and even absurd. Finally, it should be noted that the party has relatively “Europeanised” its program in order to give – at least in theory – a possible route for the Flemish secessionist strategy (“independence in Europe”), a strategic adaptation of an instrumental character<sup>38</sup>.

The LN, increasingly critical of the EU, rejects a federalising scenario of the same and constantly calls for a limit to the expansion of its powers. Bossi believes that the EU is the “Soviet Union of Europe”, sponsored by “communist freemasons and co-bankers” [*sic*] and that “Europe is the new fascism and we will carry out civil resistance against it” according to the usual demagogic rhetoric of the leaguist leader<sup>39</sup>. In the early 1990s this group seemed to opt for a tactical instrumental Europeanism of internal confrontation (“against more Europe, less Rome”), to abandon this view later. The LN does not advocate the exit of Italy from the EU, but rejects its expansion (especially the candidacy of Turkey) and its “interference” in local interests. The LN, apart from not encouraging the notion of “European citizenship” has continued to emphasise “Christian roots” – having accentuated its xenophobic strategy since the early twenty-first century. The LN accepts neoliberal economic integration as it is (although with the criteria of *Welfare chauvinism*), but refuses to extend this to more political areas. In summary, one can conditionally accept economic cooperation for the predicted material benefits, but reject almost any other link<sup>40</sup>.

Finally, a third specified block of parties is represented by those of the CEE area in which a constrained Euroscepticism manifests itself under the assumption that no alternatives exist to the presence of the same in the EU.

For the Hungarian radical right (JMM), the EU threatens the continuity of the Magyar ethnic group as an independent entity, given that – from this point of view – it would be the modern version of the USSR: “The European Constitution is a new Soviet system of centralisation which has been prepared in the west” and whose inspiration

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<sup>38</sup> Swingedow y otros, 2007, p. 85-86; Laible, 2008, p. 121 and 147-148.

<sup>39</sup> The first quote is from Bossi in Mudde, 2007, p. 161, and the second from the newspaper *La Libre Belgique*, 5-3-02.

<sup>40</sup> Rodríguez-Aguilera, 2009, p. 26-28; Vasiliopoulou, 2009, p. 10; Tarchi, 2007, p. 189 and 193-194.

reminds us of the infamous breznevist theory of “limited sovereignty”<sup>41</sup>. Precisely in the case of the Hungarian radical right we should mention that there are certain neofascist features given that the JMM has recovered part of the ideological heritage of the national right wing of the interwar period and even the sinister “Arrowed Cross” from the final phase of World War II. This explains why its traditional anti-communism is ever recurring in the post-Soviet world even today. The Hungarian far right rejected Hungary’s integration into the EU (the predecessor of JMM, the *Truth and Life Party* Itsvan Gurka) from the beginning, although it is not currently recommending its abandonment, it is in favour of the renegotiation of the terms of entry<sup>42</sup>.

With relatively similar though attenuated tones, the NSA has taken on more characteristics of the contemporary radical populist right and focused its criticism on the supposed denationalising “dangers” for Bulgaria resulting from its EU membership, in addition to rejecting “influences” of *Brussels* regarding the rights of the Turkish minority. The party exploits the sense of insecurity and desires for internal order and has been able to capitalise on diffuse social unrest against the EU<sup>43</sup>.

Meanwhile, the PRM captures, in part, the discontent of social margins affected by European integration and although as an ultra-nationalist party it is critical with respect to the transfer of sovereign powers to the EU, it has pragmatically attenuated its initial opposition to the same for financial benefits (funds) that the country receives. Doctrinally the PRM would prefer to be further from the EU, but it limits itself to criticism of some of its sectorial policies (for example, those related to the primary sector in Romania are still very relevant). This combination of nationalism, populism and pragmatism explains the PRM’s peculiar kind of relative opposition and ambiguous Euroscepticism to the EU<sup>44</sup>.

#### ***1.4. The arguments of the radical left***

Historically CPs were decidedly against the EC during the “Cold War” and “field” political ideologies. The EC was seen as an instrument of big capital and imperialism of the United States, and NATO the army of the Western block against the USSR. Therefore, the EC and NATO are two sides of the same coin reflecting capitalist transnationalisation.

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<sup>41</sup> Mudde, 2007, p. 160.

<sup>42</sup> Beckett, 2007, p. 178-182.

<sup>43</sup> Nedelcheva, 2009, p. 248.

<sup>44</sup> Papadmitriou, Phinnemore, 2008, p. 73-75, 82-83 and 88-90; Gallagher, 2008, p. 301-302; Nedelcheva, 2009, p. 247.

Since the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 several Western European CPs not only distanced themselves from the model of *real socialism*, but became increasingly favourable of autonomous European integration, the case of Italian communism being the most obvious. However, still at the beginning of the seventies, Marchais (General Secretary of the PCF) went on to state that the EC was essentially a network of big business detrimental to national sovereignty and not even Gorbachev's *perestroika* in the mid-1980s helped change – in essence – such a discourse. But the easing of international tensions had an impact on some CPs: Although the PCF (like the PCP or KKE) continued to cling to an orthodox position, the ICP would end up considering the EC and the PCE-PSUC in a positive light with their struggle to oppose the Franco dictatorship, viewing them favourably for the process of internal change. Therefore, the degrees of reservation to, rejection of or qualified support for European integration varied according to national parties and the historical moment<sup>45</sup>. The move of some Western CPs to gain independence from the USSR would highlight the phenomenon of “Eurocommunism” as an attempt (ultimately abortive) at a “third way” between the Soviet system and classical social democracy. The main “Eurocommunist” parties, with the PCB leading (which the PCE-PSUC and the interior part of the KKE immediately joined), saw in the EC not a manoeuvre of big business, but an opportunity for workers and the peoples of Europe. Since the early seventies the PCI had opted for the strategy of “historical commitment” which emphasised its acceptance of the EC and even NATO to try become a reliable partner in government. Over time, most of the PCs evolved from outright rejection of European integration to the acceptance of its inevitability. After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and the postcommunist restructuring of several of these parties there has been a clear shift in relation to European integration: for the majority, you should take not even a single step back, integration should be strengthened and above all, reverse the current dominant logic excessively favouring neoliberalism<sup>46</sup>.

Currently, almost all of the radical left (with varying degrees within this sector) is integrated into the Eurogroup GUE/NGL (and a number of the same parties in the PIE europarty) and can be classified into three categories for its ideological and programme postulates: 1) post-communist and renovated CPs open to critically accept European integration (PRC, DL, IU), 2) “orthodox” CPs that are very reluctant and even hostile to the process (PCP, KKE, KSCM) and 3) renovated postcommunist eurojectionist parties (Nordic green Left). This implies

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<sup>45</sup> Benedetto, Quaglia, 2007, p. 479, 482-483 and 485-486.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 484-485, 490-491 and 496; Hanley, 2008, p. 143.

the existence of two principal positions: 1) that of the parties that “critically” accept the EU and 2) that of those who have very serious reservations and even advocate the abandonment or dismantling of the EU, deeming efforts to change it useless. The vast majority of the GDP is favourable to keeping the EU, but reversing the current direction: they support the principle of integration, but demand the elimination of the neo-liberal model.

Instead, the “observer” parties of the PIE are mainly eurorejectionist, like those of the NGL, tinged with accentuated populism<sup>47</sup>. One explanation for the different European strategies for this group of parties is as much to do with their situation in each national political system as with their alliances and perspectives to influence the government. So parties that need to ally with social democracy and/or green parties should temper their rejection of the EU, while those who have few possibilities or expectations of access to government are often much more critical. This would seem to confirm Panebianco’s thesis of the incidence of these factors on the characteristics and strategies of the parties (parties with a vocation for government/standing opposition parties).

One of the major alterglobalist groups, ATTAC (Association for Taxation of Financial Transactions for the Aid of Citizens ATFTAC) has popularised the main arguments against the EU in the radical left media: the principle of greater supranational integration is accepted, but the effective modalities of the current EU for this are totally rejected. So the ATFTAC does not accept the logic of the community *establishment* that discriminates between pro and anti-European according to whether or not their criteria and policies are shared. From this perspective, to criticise – even in depth – the current EU is not to be “anti-European” or “euroseptical”, it is to be against the hegemony of neoliberalism that sacrifices “social” Europe<sup>48</sup>.

The radical left has always had an ambivalent attitude towards European integration: while acknowledging its positive aspects (supranational values, eradication of war in the “old continent”) it criticises some very negative aspects (the hegemony of capital, the “democratic deficit”). This ambivalence is apparent in the PIE, since it admits that the EU is a useful space for common political action, while rejecting its capitalist nature. The criticism of the current EU focuses on three dimensions: 1) the neoliberal drift, 2) the democratic deficit and

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<sup>47</sup> March, Mudde, 2005, p. 42-43; Harrison, 2005b, p. 293; Backes, Moreau, 2008, p. 577, 581, 584 and 592 (Conclusions); Hanley, 2008, p. 153-155; Heine, 2009, p. 158.

<sup>48</sup> Crespy, Petithomme, 2009, p. 332 (Conclusions).

3) the risk of mining national identities<sup>49</sup>. In general, the radical left believes that neoliberal Europe makes people compete with one another and emphasises nationalist limitations, which would require a deepening of democracy and an advance in social rights in counterbalance. Thus the radical left advocates an employment policy at a European level, a new political economic policy focused on enhancing public services and other development models. As a result of this, existing EU treaties should be repealed and a real “popular democratic process” should be opened to replace them<sup>50</sup>.

### ***1.5. Specific parties of the radical left***

There are several EU countries where radical left parties have a not insignificant presence in their various manifestations (predominantly postcommunist conversions and electoral coalitions, with the orthodox CPs being the fewer)<sup>51</sup>. Unlike the radical right, the radical left has been far more operative when coordinating supranationally: in 1994 the Eurogroup GUE was founded and was expanded the following year with the postcommunist Scandinavian (NGL). This offset the abandonment of the former communist Italians, formerly the largest contingent of the predecessor Eurogroup in the GUE, to become the PDS, which was then integrated into the PSE. In the GUE/NGL postcommunist parties mutually exist, platforms fuelled by Communists and some classic CPs and their reasonably smooth and continuous collaboration led to the majority founding the PIE<sup>52</sup>.

In 1991 the Forum of the New Left (on the initiative of IU) was created to exchange information and experiences and out of this came the idea of forming the PIE – which subsequently happened in 2004, driven by the DL and the PRC. In this Europarty two organic groups have come about: fully formed members and observers, quite critical of the former, but sharing a Eurogroup in the EP. In effect, the more radical parties (Scandinavia postcommunists and Orthodox CPs) reject the “moderation” and “reformism” of the PIE and consider that making excessive concessions to the EU system sometimes verges on Europhobia (KKE KSCM, PCP). This makes the PIE, as such, take an ambivalent position with regard to the EU: assuming it to be an

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<sup>49</sup> Dunphy, 2004; March, Mudde, 2005, p. 41-42; Cossieron, 2007, p. 136; Backes, Moreau, 2008, p. 576 (Conclusions); Van Hüllen, 2008, p. 464 and 471; Heine, 2009, p. 15.

<sup>50</sup> Cossieron, 2007, p. 136-137.

<sup>51</sup> March/Mudde, 2005, p. 24-25 and 27; Kitschelt, 1999; Hudson, 2000.

<sup>52</sup> March/Mudde, 2005, p. 42; Hanley, 2008, p. 138, 144 and 148. Sobre GUE/NGL: Bell, 1998, p. 134-150.

important space for common political action, but severely criticising its clear neoliberal leanings<sup>53</sup>.

Although in general there are two main attitudes of the parties of the GUE/NGL to the EU (critical acceptance, deep reservations/rejection), it is preferable to distinguish three internal areas given the somewhat different ideological characteristics of each: 1) eurocritical post-communist and renovated communists in favour of taking the greatest benefit from the EU possible and pressuring for the reversal of its present course, 2) Scandinavian postcommunists, whose ideological message is renewed, advocating the renationalisation of community policies and – in some cases – an exit from the EU, and 3) orthodox communists, very doctrinaire and traditionalist, which – however – objectively coincide with those of the second block in their type of opposition to the EU.

Within the first block the PCF, DL, IU, the radical Dutch left and AKEL deserve specific consideration

Historically, the PCF has always maintained an *orthodox* (pro-Soviet) approach to the EC, presented as an instrument of large scale monopolistic capital and as a product of the “Cold War”. The French Communists were staunch defenders of national sovereignty and opposed supranational policy, criteria that – indeed – were not at odds with a “tactical” and pragmatic acceptance of the community framework. On the one hand, the PCF consistently opposed all integrationist advances, deemed by definition as capitalist and imperialist manoeuvres, but on the other, it never advocated the exit of France from the EC, which should have been the logical corollary of its extremely negative assessment of the same. From the alternation of the left in 1981 the decline of the PCF was unstoppable, its policy towards the EU remaining the same: the rejection of the supranational policy and protesting against the capitalist character of community reforms. Having to ally with other leftist groups in order to survive (GFR), the PCF has modulated its direct and unobtrusive criticism of the EU, while maintaining alternative proposals<sup>54</sup>.

PCF currently holds that the EU has focused on promoting and facilitating free trade and furthering the interests of big business over national and popular needs, being insufficiently democratic. Its criticisms are directed against neo-liberalism and community elitism affecting national sovereignty (the traditional nationalism of the PCF is long standing and has only dimmed in recent times), its alternative proposal

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<sup>53</sup> Hanley, 2008, p. 148 (list of members to 2007); Van Hüllen, 2008, p. 466-473 (list of members to 2007, p. 469); De Waele/Vieira, 2012, p. 63-67 and 80-81 (in these two last pages a list of members and and observers in 2009 are listed).

<sup>54</sup> Dunphy, 2004, p. 91-103.

being the “other” Europe with a “participatory” social economy respectful of “identities”. The PCF aims to gradually combine French nationalism and Europeanism, with a Keynesian economy and representative democracy at the community level: a program deemed “reformist” by groups located to its left (the Trotskyists variants, in particular) who argue for a rigorous “quality” internationalism, socialism and base democracy with revolutionary tints (although with very few practical consequences). In any case, the radical French left as a whole decisively contributed to the failure of the CTEU in the 2005 referendum, especially as they managed to accentuate the internal divisions of the Socialists. It was precisely this opposing campaign that allowed the FCP to recover certain visibility in an increasingly declining phase of its influence and project their arguments criticising the social and democratic inadequacies of the CTEU<sup>55</sup>.

The DL, a party critical of the EU, assumes this to be irreversible today and therefore, it tries to promote core social policies to break the current dominant logic that is entirely favourable to “markets”. This party is in favour of the principle of integration, but is opposed to the dominant neo-liberalism and the democratic deficit of EU institutions. To these two criticisms, the DL adds the *submission* of the EU to the United States because the CFSP/ESDP are part of NATO, an instrument to serve the strategic interests of the superpower<sup>56</sup>.

In the case of IU, it should be remembered that the SCP was clearly favourable to the EC as one of the fundamental elements of its strategy against Franco and that after the transition, it gave its full support for the integration of Spain into this body. A change in attitude was seen in the IU led by Anguita which derided the TEU or, later, the CTEU. Indeed, since then there has been intensified criticism of the neo-liberal policies of the EU and the direction taken by the CFSP/ESDP, being increasingly linked to the strategic interests of NATO. A minority of IU did not share this political reorientation and after a very intense and divisive internal debate, it left this collective (the group of the Democratic Party of the New Left)<sup>57</sup>.

The Dutch Socialist Party, which proceeds from the former extreme Maoist left and has today adopted more a moderate position, is

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<sup>55</sup> Milner, 2004, p. 59-81; Benedetto, Quaglia, 2007, p. 489; Cosserson, 2007, p. 57; Courtois, Andolfatto, 2008, p. 107; Heine, 2009, p. 55-56, 58, 60, 66, 70, 72, 75, 80-81, 84, 88, 94-96, 98-100, 106, 151-152, 154 and 156; Seidendorf, 2010, p. 429 and 431; Alexander, 2001.

<sup>56</sup> Landwehrlen, 2010, p. 21; Landwehrlen, 2012, p. 142.

<sup>57</sup> Hanley, 2008, p. 151; Benedetto, Quaglia, 2007, p. 492-493; Dunphy, 2004, p. 121-130.

nevertheless critical of the EU for its neo-liberalism and democratic deficit. So it campaigned successfully against the CTEU in the referendum of 2005<sup>58</sup>.

Also within this first block, it is interesting to note the change in position of AKEL with regard European integration: initially an outright rejection of the view that the EU was “an instrument of capitalism and imperialism” to a full acceptance of the same – from there its support for the accession of Cyprus to the EU, although it rejected the CTEU<sup>59</sup>.

Finally, mention should be made of a party that does not sit easily in this ideological sector, the SF, given its very singular characteristics. Despite its very severe criticisms of the EU, this group – in the end – has ceased its direct antagonistic opposition of the same and no longer calls for the exit of the Republic of Ireland (or Northern Ireland integrated in the UK). In particular, the acceptance of the Stormont Agreement has contributed to relativise the traditional opposition to the EU of the SF<sup>60</sup>.

The second block is represented by the Scandinavian radical left – extremely critical of the EU in countries where European integration is usually a very mobilising issue.

The VP defends the exit of Sweden from the EU, a thesis not advocated by the Danish radical left. In any case, both parties benefit electorally from widespread electoral social Euroscepticism, though this does not make them partners in government<sup>61</sup>. The VP opposed the entry of Sweden in the EC and has always voted against any further integration in *ad hoc* referendums (1994 and 2003) and is against the ECB and the Euro. The Swedish radical left argues that the EU would be detrimental to Sweden on issues such as employment, *welfare*, ecology and democracy, which a large part of public opinion is in tune with.

For its part, the Danish radical left, which initially took the same position (rejection of EU incorporation, the TEU, of the subsequent reforms of the same, or the EMU, almost always appealing for “No” in every referendum) has toned down its direct opposition to the EU recently. Today, the party accepts the EU as an unavoidable reality and understands that the EU can be a useful instrument of cooperation, provided that there is a complete change in policies and that it does not intend to supplant nation states – as it is against an undesirable

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<sup>58</sup> Lucardie, Voerman, 2003, p. 172; Voerman, 2008, p. 30-31.

<sup>59</sup> Steorgiu, 2008, p. 262-263; Charalambous, 2012, p. 258.

<sup>60</sup> Hayward, 2009, p. 243.

<sup>61</sup> Ersson, 2008, p. 158-162; Lucardie, Voerman, 2003, p. 218-221; Dunphy, 2004, p. 152; Hastings, 2012, p. 96-97.

European federal super-state<sup>62</sup>. There is a perceptible double division on European affairs – internal and external – activists and voters exhibit contradictory posperceptiblerding this (ranging from Europhobia Europragmatism). The same phenomenon of initial outright rejection and pragmatic acceptance after the country’s accession to the EU has also been seen with the Finnish radical left.

Finally, the block of orthodox communism is the most rooted in very traditional doctrinal positions, linked to the ideological heritage of the “Cold War”.

To begin with, the PCP opposed the entry of Portugal in the EC in 1986, but then did not advocate its exit. This opposition was due to the fact that entry would threaten the “gains of the April revolution,” which was yet another reason which prevented unified action with the Socialists. Only in 1988, the PCP accepted Portugal’s presence in the EC as a “fact of reality”, then trying to “benefit” from it. For the PCP for the bulk of EU policies would be harmful to Portugal: the CAP, the Stability Pact or employment, which is why this party opposes further steps of integration. In fact, the PCP has always rejected all reforms of EU Treaties precisely because they meant further deepening of the logic of integration. The official argument is that the gradual federalisation of the EU is no more than the other face of neoliberalism, mining inalienable national sovereignty and benefitting only large capital interests<sup>63</sup>.

The KKE has a strong tradition of nationalism and has always opposed to the entry of Greece into the EC. Among other factors because they would support Turkish interests against Greece. In its view, the EU would be as “imperialist” [*sic*] as the United States – populism is one of the hallmarks of this party, the type of opposition effected by SYRIZA (which comes in part from the former KKE Interior) being different. For Greek Communists, the EU is a *reactionary* institution in the service of big business, anti-democratic and anti-national. Consequently, not only the KKE has opposed all reform of EU Treaties, but also considers that there is no possible remedy for the EU given its “class nature”, advocating then the exit of Greece from the same<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>62</sup> The SF voted “no” in the Maastricht referéndum (1992), Amsterdam (1998) and the UEM (2000): Ersson, 2008, p. 157.

<sup>63</sup> Bosco, 2000, p. 66, 78-79 and 202; Dunphy, 2004, p. 115-120; Cunha, 2008, p. 197-198 and 208; Jalali, Lisi, 2012, p. 205.

<sup>64</sup> Kalyvas, Marantzidis, 2003, p. 16 and 22; Dunphy, 2004, p. 104-108; Marantzidis, 2008, p. 252 and 258; Backes, Moreau, 2008, p. 574 (Conclusions); Verney, 2011, p. 68-69.

Portuguese and Greek Communists must compete electorally in their countries with other more modernised radical groups of the left (the BE and SYRIZA respectively), which has led them to emphasise their criticism of the EU to differentiate themselves and capture the citizens unhappy with the policies of *Brussels*. Indeed, the BE and SYRIZA have succeeded in opening a path between classic social democratic parties and the classic “orthodox” CPs, – in European affairs, they hold rather critical positions, but favourable to supranationality (with conditions). This kind of “third option” between the center-left Social Democrats and the Communists obliges them to maintain a certain ambivalent European discourse: they reject the negative aspects of the EU (neoliberalism and “democratic deficit”), but it aims to overcome these from *within* the community.

Finally, it is interesting to note that although in almost all the CEECs the old CP rulers were converted into social democrats, some maintained their Orthodox identity: this is the case of the KSČM, which opposed the entry of the Czech Republic into the EU campaigning against on the occasion of the referendum. Once the country entered, the Czech Communists accepted this popular decision, but remain among the most critical of the EU and have always opposed any further integration (completely rejecting the CTEU)<sup>65</sup>.

## **2. The elections to the European Parliament of 2009**

### ***2.1. Context and variables***

The elections held between 4 and 7 June 2009 were called after the failure of the CTEU (in the 2005 referendum in France and Holland) and before the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty (rejected by Ireland in its first 2008 referendum, then approved in a second with some opt-out clauses and finally ratified by all States in the autumn 2009). In these elections 375 million voters in the 27 states were called to choose the 736 MEPs for the VI Legislature, from 2009 to 2014. Contested by some 9,000 candidates, grouped in more than 300 political parties, and achieving

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<sup>65</sup> So anachronistically orthodox is Czech communism that it has refused to enter the PIE as a full member (it is an “observer”), not only for deeming it “reformist” and too close to the capitalist EU, but also by not taking the Statutes of this europarty which rejects Stalinism without hesitation: see Mares, 2008, p. 297 and 300; Hlovšek, Pšejka, 2001, p. 110-111; March, Mudde, 2005, p. 28-29; Hanley, 2008, p. 149; Ishiyama, 1998, p. 61-85; Nedelcheva, 2009, p. 241-246; Bozóki, Ishiyama, 2002; Grzymala-Busse, 2002; Perottino, 2012, p. 269.

representation for 170 national parties represented (about six per state) to be subsequently integrated into seven parliamentary Eurogroups<sup>66</sup>.

Again, traditional elements of the European elections have been accentuated and confirmed: the character of “second class” (or even “third”) of the same and the inability of the EP to communicate and, even more, convince. It emphasises the paradox that the steady increase in powers of the EP discourages citizens and at the same time, it is clear that parties carry out low-profile campaigns (of a *domestic* character) and the *mass media* pays little attention to such events. However, in this latter dimension a surge of media interest has been seen, but this has not helped to increase civic attention. Again, specifically European matters have occupied very little space (sometimes zero) in national campaigns and reiterated the widespread popular ignorance of European political protagonists<sup>67</sup>.

The serious deterioration with the economic crisis revived the materialistic preoccupations of citizens, hence the traditional left/right axis superimposed supranationalism/intergovernmentalism. In the 2009 campaign the challenge to specific EU policies related to employment and immigration dominated for example and this fact benefited parties of the right that managed to tune in better than the left with fears and concerns of many voters. Indeed, the rightist parties used more “postmodern” campaign resources than the left and had more resources and better election professionals at their disposal, which contributed to their victory at the polls. Moreover, it is also true that national peculiarities and specificities of each party system and more particularly, of the respective election modalities had an impact both on the modulation of the campaign in each country, and the results segregated there<sup>68</sup>.

The previous legislature of the EP was marked by important debates about the nature of European integration (French and Dutch referendums in 2005 and Ireland in 2008), but the worse economic crisis since 2008

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<sup>66</sup> Upon entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009 the number of MEPs increased from 736 to 754. The figure of 170 national parties in the EP is from Bardi *et al.*, 2010, p. 15-16. Trechsel reduces this to 168, *id.*, 2011, p. 6. In contrast, Giebler and Wüst increase this to 216, *id.*, 2011, p. 53; Caravita, 2009, p. vii; Coosemans, 2009a, p. 5; Gagatsek, Trechsel, Breuer, 2010, p. XI. On the attention of the *mass media*: Jalai, Silva, 2011, p. 111-124.

<sup>67</sup> Gagatsek, Trechsel, Breuer, 2010, p. XI; Schuck, 2011, p. 42-43 and 46; Hobot, Spoon, Tilly, 2009, p. 93-115; OSCE, 2009; Sigalas *et al.*, 2010. On the classic thesis of “second class” European elections: Reif, Schmitt, 1980, p. 3-44; Bellucci, Garzia, Rubal, 2012, p. 26.

<sup>68</sup> Dupoirer, 2009, p. 536; De Wilde, Trenz, Michailidov, 2010, p. 17; Giebler, Wüst, 2011, p. 54 and 64.

has meant that this is the primary concern citizens have. Consequently, the almost absolute predominance of economic and financial issues may not come as a surprise, followed by immigration and – to a lesser extent – environmental protection.

In any case, given the indisputable nature of the usual overwhelming dominance of national dynamics, the important problems of States (uncontrollable economic crisis, rising insecurity, environmental degradation) can not be overlooked and are at the same time European problems. The fact that groups especially critical of the current direction of the EU such as the radical parties of the right and left have obtained significant results highlights, on the one hand, how artificial it is to divide the national from the European and on the other, that the question of the *nature* and scope of European integration itself has political significance, at least in several countries<sup>69</sup>.

At the same time, an increasing debilitation of conventional politics is evident and this phenomenon is accentuated even within the institutions of the EU, far more anonymous than national institutions for citizens. This fact has greatly benefitted protest parties – especially some groups of the populist right – though the base rejection and/or criticism of the EU is a cross-political phenomenon. Even countries with traditionally favourable public opinion showing majority support for European integration, saw growing disaffection in 2009 (Belgium, France, Germany), although others commonly labelled as *eurosceptical* the phenomenon has remained stable without developing more (Czech Republic, Sweden, United Kingdom)<sup>70</sup>.

**Figure 1**

<b>Attitudes regarding the EU in the elections of 2009</b>	<b>Parties</b>	<b>Citizens</b>	<b>Combined average</b>
Currently Pro-UE	35.1	19.1	25.9
Eurocritical (“altereuropean”)	11.0	9.6	10.0
Diverse Eurosceptical	53.9	71.2	64.0

Source: Percentages from De Wilde, Trezn, Michailidou, 2010, p. 13.  
Personal adaptation.

If the *establishment* parties could contain the opposition to the EU, then this factor would have little weight in the political system, but when a certain threshold has been passed then it is not possible to

<sup>69</sup> The 2008 Eurobarometer shows that 71% of European citizens expressed pessimism both about the eventual outcome of the economic crisis and the ineffectiveness of EU institutions: Coosemans, 2009a, p. 7; Ridola, 2009, p. 2; Schuck *et al.*, 2011, p. 43, 47 and 50.

<sup>70</sup> Costa/Brack, 2009, p. 255; Ridola, 2009, p. 3-5; Spanje, de Vreese, 2011, p. 423-425.

marginalise it and it enters the agenda. It is true that overall the *Eurosceptics* obtained significant results in 2009, but not as large as predicted. The best results were achieved by the UKIP and the Martin list from Austria – progress was also made by the FPÖ DF, LN, LAOS, VB (very few), PRM, BNP, PVV and JMM, while the NSA and FN receded and the Polish LPR disappeared. Considering the rest, it was not without considerable interest to note the failure of the *Libertas* Project of the Irish millionaire Declan Ganley, a well known Eurosceptic, who tried to present common candidatures in the 27 community members: he only managed 12 and obtained a single member of the European Parliament (the Frenchman Philippe de Villiers). *Libertas* focused its campaign on the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty, but citizens turned their backs and when it came to protesting against the EU, they put their trust in traditional national parties critical of the EU<sup>71</sup>.

While abstention has varied according to the States, the significantly lower participation (the lowest since 1979) is undoubtedly one of the most striking points of the 2009 elections. Indeed, the trend of electoral disaffection has continued and so, on average, only 43.2% of citizens entitled to vote did so (in 2004 the number was 45.5%), a phenomenon accentuated in most CEECs. The fact that participation seems to be in continuous decline has to do with the fact that the EP is not comparable to national parliaments and that despite its increased powers, it lacks legislative initiative, is not a genuine European government and, indeed, is a *colegislating* institution, not *the* exclusive Legislative organ<sup>72</sup>.

Figure 2

Participation in elections to the EP	2009	2004
Western Europe	54.3	(-1.3)
Eastern Europe	32.2	(+1.4)

Source: Treschel, 2010, p. 5.

<sup>71</sup> Gagatsek, 2010b, p. 19; Coosemans, 2009a, p. 52; Coosemans, 2010, p. 99-100; Schuck *et al.*, 2011, p. 50.

<sup>72</sup> Table 2 should be qualified when national results are analysed since, for example, in the west there have been increases in participation in Denmark, Sweden, Austria and Luxembourg, with decreases in Italy, Spain and Greece. In the east there are increases in Latvia, Estonia, Poland and Slovenia, but decreases in Hungary and Lithuania. Germany 43.3 (+0.3), Austria 45.9 (+3.5), Belgium 90.3 (-0.4), Bulgaria 38.9 (+9.7), Czech Republic 28.2 (-0.1) 59.4 Cyprus (-11.79), Denmark 59.5 (+11.6), Spain 44.9 (-0.2), France 40.6 (-2.1), Greece 52.6 (-10.6), Hungary 36.3 (-2.1), Italy 65.1 (-8.0), Netherlands 36.7 (-2.5), Portugal 36.7 (-1.8) Romania 27.6 (-1.8), UK 34.7 (-4.1), Sweden 45.5 (+7.7). The figure in brackets indicates electoral participation in 2004: Coosemans, 2009a, p. 8. Jones, 2011, p. 25.

The second remarkable fact of the 2009 elections is the global victory of the right, from the radical (to a lesser extent), to the center-right (the principal winner): the PPE (which confirmed its character as a primary force) and the new parliamentary eurogroups of the CRE (which in part comes from the old UEN) and the EFD (ex ID) going from 36.7% in 2004 to 48% in 2009 and this does not include unregistered members of extreme right parties. Consequently, the European Parliament elected in 2009 is the most right leaning since the first direct elections in 1979, with the very negative results for the Social-democrats, discrete results from the radical left and slightly better results than in 2004 for the Greens. The economic crisis and the feeling of insecurity led to this conservative retraction and the strengthened protest vote capitalised by the radical right. It was precisely the pressure of ultranationalist and sovereigntist groups that dented the moderate right, tending to emphasise the reservations about any further progress in deepening European integration, hardening and restricting legal guarantees. Although the radical right are present in 21 of the 27 states, it did not reach 10% in 9 of them, but exceeded this figure in 12. Its most significant support was concentrated in 7 states, in the west, The Netherlands (PVV, 17.0), Belgium (VB, 15.9), Denmark (DF, 15.3), Austria (FPÖ, 12.7) and Italy (LN, 10.2), and in the east, Hungary (JMM, 14.8) and Bulgaria (NSA, 12.0)<sup>73</sup>.

**Table 1**

<b>Sanction vote</b>	
<b>Opposition wins</b>	<b>Government wins</b>
Bulgaria	France
Cyprus	Italy
Spain	Czech Republic
Greece	
Hungary	
Portugal	
United Kingdom	

Source: Frank, Isnard, 2009, p. 607-621.

The third interesting fact of the 2009 elections is the sanction vote, as it is known that the European elections intensified the extension of the same: in 2009 governing parties lost in 23 states (85%), even more than in 2004. However, in the 11 States where the right and center-right parties were in power, these received the most votes in the election (the

<sup>73</sup> Dupoirer, 2009, p. 540; Alexandre-Collier, Jardin, 2009, p. 583-590; Sterpa, Scoppola, 2009, p. 21; Coosemans, 2010, p. 98; Gagateg, Treschel, Breuer, 2010, p. XI; Deloy, Reynié, 2010, p. 479, 488 and 494; Treschel, 2010, p. 6-7. Mc Elroy/Benoit, 2012, p. 152-153.

only exceptions being those of Nea Demokratia Greek and Maltese National Party), while social democratic parties suffered a severe setback (with the exception of Slovakia). Indeed, the crisis of reformist left governments made the right wing a far more effective electoral option: social democracy was unable to present itself as a real European alternative and in the 8 European countries where they governed (alone or in coalition), the right won<sup>74</sup>.

## 2.2. The radical parliamentary eurogroups

To analyse the incidence of selected parties in this study, both the percentage of voting and representation reached in the EP should be taken into account – above all in terms of the *ranking* achieved in each country, as this last piece of information is one of the most significant when calibrating the political *weight* of each in its respective system.

Figure 3

Country	Party	Votes	%	Seats	National Electoral Ranking	Parliamentary Eurogroup
Germany	DL	1,969,239	7.5	8	5	GUE/NGL
Austria	FPÖ	364,207	12.7	2	4	NI
Belgium	VB	647,170	15.9	2	3	NI
Bulgaria	NSA	308,052	12.0	2	4	NI
Czech Republic	KSČM	334,577	14.2	4	3	GUE/NGL
Cyprus	AKEL	106,922	34.9	2	2	GUE/NGL
Denmark	DF	357,942	15.3	2	4	EFD
Spain	IU/ICV	583,708	3.8	2	4	GUE/NGL V/ALE
France	FN	1,091,691	6.3	3	6	NI
	FG	1,115,021	6.5	5	5	GUE/NGL
Greece	LAOS	366,637	7.2	2	4	EFD
	KKE	428,282	8.4	2	3	GUE/NGL
	SYRIZA	240,930	4.7	1	5	GUE/NGL
Holland	PVV	772,746	17.0	4	2	NI
Hungary	JMM	427,773	14.8	3	3	NI
Italy	LN	3,126,922	10.2	9	3	EFD
Portugal	BE	382,011	11.5	3	3	GUE/NGL
	CDU-PCP	397,707	11.4	2	4	GUE/NGL
United Kingdom	UKIP	2,498,226	16.5	13	2	EFD
	SF	126,184	26.0	1	1 (NI)	GUE/NGL
Romania	PRM	419,094	8.7	3	5	NI
Sweden	VP	179,182	5.7	1	6	GUE/NGL

Source: Chiche, Boissieu, 2009, p. 737-776. With personal expansion and selection.

<sup>74</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 50-51; Coosemans, 2010, p. 98-99; Dupoirer, 2009, 2009, p. 537-538; Treschel, 2010, p. 11.

As a result of this data the following descending scales of greater to lesser in both ideological groups of parties is obtained. With the radical right the downward progression is as follows: PVP, UKIP, VB, JMM, LN, DF, FPÖ, NSA, LAOS, PRM and FN. With the radical left: SF, AKEL, KSČM, BE, KKE, CDU-PCP, IU, DL, FG, SYRIZA and VP. Additionally, it is interesting to note the degree of generic Euro-scepticism of national public opinions in the 2009 elections as a whole because sometimes, the results of parties situated in this spectrum exceed the percentage of the euro-sceptical population, while on other occasions the opposite occurs.

Anyway, it is unnatural to mechanically extrapolate and in block the election results of radical parties and relate them directly to public opinion polls as the motivations of these and civic attitudes are always more nuanced.

**Figure 4. Eurobarometer question:  
“Generally speaking do you think your country being in the EU is a bad thing?” The percentages are reproduced from citizens who think so.**

Germany: 11%	Denmark: 13%	Italy: 16%
Austria: 19%	Spain: 9%	Portugal: 16%
Belgium: 11%	France: 17%	United Kingdom: 32%
Bulgaria: 7%	Greece: 15%	Romania: 6%
Czech Republic: 13%	Holland: 7%	Sweden: 19%
Cyprus: 18%	Hungary: 23%	

Source: Eurobarometer 71. June-July 2009

<[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb717eb713\\_annexes.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb717eb713_annexes.pdf)>, p. 38.

In the previous legislature (2004-2009), the *Euro-sceptics* of the radical right were basically in two parliamentary eurogroups, the UEN and ID, apart from several in the NI. The UEN had a very conservative ideological inspiration accepting intereuropean economic cooperation, but rejected supranational policy, while the ID – even more right leaning – included openly europhobic groups. In 2009 a new parliamentary Eurogroup, EFD was created, which – partly – follows the old thinking of the UEN and above all, the ID (its primary origin) and comprises 32 MEPs, just under the 37 the ID had in the previous parliament<sup>75</sup>. The strongest parties of the EFD are the UKIP, LN, DF and LAOS and this parliamentary eurogroup has accumulated a greater percentage of votes than the UEN and ID together (from 6.0% to 7.6%), although not in numbers of MEPs. It is a rather heterogeneous parliamentary Eurogroup of various specific political dimensions, but united by a strong

<sup>75</sup> Bardi *et al.*, 2010, p. 57; Coosemans, 2010, p. 108; Mc Elroy/Benoit, 2012, p. 153-154.

*Eurosceptical* rhetoric. All members are staunch defenders of national sovereignty and are against the policy of supranationality, strongly criticising the Community institutions (for their “democratic deficit”) and their policies (harmful to national interests)<sup>76</sup>.

The change in regulations of the EP in 2008 hampered the formation of parliamentary Eurogroups and this has once again harmed the classic extreme right-wing (25 MEPs are needed from at least 7 states). Indeed, this sector has had chronic difficulties in structuring and of its members, only the FN and VB enjoy a long standing presence in the EP. In the previous legislature, the ephemeral attempt to regroup (*Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty*) failed, only lasting eleven months due to the disagreements between the Romanian extremists and Alessandra Mussolini – this leading to the former leaving the parliamentary Eurogroup, then losing the *quorum*. This means that the vast majority of classic *extremists* are in the EP as NI: this is the case of the Martin List and FPÖ (Austria), BV (Belgium), NSA (Bulgaria), FN (France), JMM (Hungary), the PVV (Netherlands), PRM (Romania) and BNP (UK)<sup>77</sup>.

The radical left is relatively stable – with a downward tendency – in seats (41 in 2004 to 35 in 2009) and variable in votes according to the twelve countries where it is present (not an average because the decrease is only 0.4%).

There is a significant advance in Portugal (CDU-BE and PCP), less so in France (FG) and Greece (SYRIZA), and slight decreases in Greece (KKE), Sweden (VP), Germany (DL) and Cyprus (AKEL), with the surprising disappearance of the Italian Communists. Remember that the internal structure of the parliamentary Eurogroup of this ideological group (GUE/NGL) is complex because it includes various categories. In this parliamentary Eurogroup the principal political forces are the DL, the GFR and the KSČM, being the basic common axis of demands for a strong *Welfare State* and the defence of an active and dynamic role in the economy<sup>78</sup>.

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<sup>76</sup> Coosemans, 2009b, p. 21-22 and 33; Bardi *et al.*, 2010, p. 18, 26-28 and 104. Braun *et al.*, 2010. Gagatsek, 2010c, p. 37. Corbett, Jacobs, Shackleton, 2011, p. 106-108.

<sup>77</sup> Altogether there are 28 MEPs from the NI, the vast majority (23) of the extreme right. It is surprising that, present in eight countries and in the absence of only two MEPs, it has been unable to group them together to make a Eurogroup, as this gives it a much better chance in the political arena: Corbett, Jacobs, Shackleton, 2011, p. 110; Coosemans, 2009b, p. 23-24; Coosemans, 2010, p. 107; Ennsner, 2012, p. 154-155.

<sup>78</sup> GUE/NGL includes the PIE, a Europarty made up of six national parties (PCF, the *Parti de Gauche*, DL, SYRIZA, BE and IU), two “observers” of the same (AKEL, KSČM), a party of NGL (the VP) and eight assigned generically to the Eurogroup (KKE, PCP, SF and others): Corbett, Jacobs, Shackleton, 2011, p. 103. However, De

In the two-dimensional space of European policy (the left/right wing horizontal axis and the supranational/intergovernmental vertical axis) – apart from the NI – the EFD occupies the rightmost position on the horizontal axis and less integrative on the vertical axis, while the GUE/NGL occupy the positions more of the left on the first axis and intermediate positions on the second (usually adopting the *principle* of integration, but criticises the current *direction* of EU policy with respect to this).

**Figure 5**

	Scale right/left	Supranational scale / Intergovernmentalism
GUE/NGL	4.5 (2)	9.5 (1)
EFD	11.1 (2.6)	4 (4)

Source: Bardi, 2010, p. 25.

	National sovereignty	Critics of neoliberalism	Democratic deficit	Negative assessment of the EU
EFD	30.5	4.4	7.6	12.7
GUE/NGL	3.2	14.5	5.9	5.1

Source: Bardi, 2010, p. 19.

In conclusion, the EFD is against the project of European integration and emphasises the critique of “permissiveness” of the Community authorities on migration. At the same time, the GUE/NGL is highly critical of the current EU, but not opposed, in general, to the principle of integration and focuses its policies on the defence of the *Welfare State*.

### **2.3. Campaigns and national results of the radical parties**

**Germany:** European affairs did have an impact on the election campaign in this country and, therefore, the Lisbon Treaty, the European economic crisis, climate protection and the Turkish candidacy were discussed. The DL, which is often characterised even in academic circles as a soft eurosceptical party – defined itself with respect to this as “eurocritical”: in its view, the current EU should be completely restructured (but not abandoned or, worse, dissolved) as the neoliberal course would have very negative social effects. In addition, for this party, the EU would give up their old pacifist inspiration on actually joining with and subordinating themselves to the CFSP/ESDP and

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Waele, Vieira, 2012, provided other figures: 23 national member parties and 11 observers (also included in both categories to parties from countries outside the EU), p. 80-81; Coosemans, 2009a, p. 53; Coosemans, 2009b, p. 19; Alexandre-Collier, Jardin, 2009, p. 602, Coosemans, 2010, p. 100 and 104, Gagatsek, 2010c, p. 37.

NATO, also they would suffer a severe democratic deficit. In sum, the DL requires the introduction of the referendum on European issues in Germany and a complete change of political perspective. The truth is that, beyond its strong direct criticism, the DL has not developed a credible alternative program for “their” Europe<sup>79</sup>.

**Austria:** both major governmental parties lost ground (there is civic fatigue of the traditional consociational model) and the novelty in radical circles was the struggle between three groups for a very similar space (the Martin List obtaining 17.7%, the FPÖ with 12.7% and the BZÖ, founded by Haider, with 4.6% did not attain representation. Notice that all three radical right groups combined obtained no less than 35%). The FPÖ carried out a strong xenophobic campaign (anti-immigrant, anti-Turkey), with a maximum emphasis on national sovereignty and the denouncing of the EU “mafia”. It has therefore proved electorally profitable in Austria to maintain a hermetic defence of national identity against the alleged hyperbureaucratic “centralism” of Brussels. As a novelty – since the FPÖ party had always been very pro-market – some neoliberal policies of the EU are criticised, especially those negatively affecting Austrian workers<sup>80</sup>.

**Belgium:** despite being not only a founder, but the base for the main EU institutions (Brussels is the de facto capital of a sort of “federal” Europe), European affairs were almost entirely absent during the 2009 election campaign. For the first time in European elections, the VBs political power stopped growing due to the intense competition with the N-VA and, especially, the Dedecker List (in general, the Belgian right, especially the Flemish community, increased their power and hegemony in the nationalist discourse of identity). The VB emphasised national sovereignty, rejected an eventual European superstate, criticised the “Eurocrats” for being opaque, inefficient and corrupt and stoked fears towards “uncontrolled” immigration and the Turkish candidacy<sup>81</sup>.

**Bulgaria:** national and European elections almost coincided (they subsequently did a month later) and it made the electorate lose interest. Indeed, they did not operate in the manner of mobilising “primaries”, but quite the opposite, as if citizens were “reserving” themselves for the important elections to follow. In any case, European affairs did not count at all and, therefore, the European elections were simply a preparation for the national elections. After a few early years of civic hope in the EU

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<sup>79</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 11; Liberati, 2009, p. 108; Brunsbach, John, Werner, 2010, p. 90-93; Packham, Klepatz, 2010, p. 5, 13, 19, 20 and 22.

<sup>80</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 13; Zei, 2009, p. 38; Kuhn *et al.*, 2010, p. 41-43.

<sup>81</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 15; Togna, 2009, p. 46-47; Crespy, 2010, p. 9 and 13. Smets, Van Berendencks, Van Hecke, 2010, p. 47-49.

(Bulgaria joined the EU in 2007) disenchantment and disinterest grew (in parallel with a profound ignorance) of Community institutions. In this election there was a general success for populists (the winner was the GERB of Boyko Berisov, the mayor of Sofia, a center-right party and member of the EPP). The NSA, which appeared in 2005, benefited from its strong populist style and mobilised the sector of public opinion that considered the transition process a failure and reflected a desire for revenge. This party emphasised national sovereignty opposed to the EU, manipulating the nationalist *cleavage* versus Europeanism and it did this by radicalising extremist positions with an aggressive campaign against Brussels and also against Turkey, the eternal target of Bulgarian ultranationalism<sup>82</sup>.

**Czech Republic:** from the outset one can not ignore the weight of vague Eurosepticism in this country, fuelled by none other than the President of the Republic, Vaclav Klaus. For this leader of the conservative right, the EU is a “germanocentric, centralising, collectivist and fanatically environmentalist” entity and although at a social level there is more diversity, such opinions cut across almost every party. The 2009 election campaign was carried out in a climate of strong demotivation after the fall of the government following a no-confidence motion (in March 2009) and the disappointing results of the rotating Presidency of the EU in the case of the Czech Republic. The KSČM, despite a slight decline, confirmed the existence of their stable and loyal electorate<sup>83</sup>.

**Cyprus:** 2009 European elections were held with Demetris Christofias as President, the first time a leader of AKEL had held this position. Though by a small margin, they suffered a punishment vote and finished second. In Cyprus all politics revolves around the division of the island and this has a European overtone, since only the south of the island is an EU member as representative of the *whole* island. The conservative opposition accused AKEL of converting itself into a euro-phobic group, something that this party denies because – in its opinion – the key is to preserve the rights of Cypriot workers in the EU, the object of the criticism of this party being its neoliberal policies, not the integration of the island into the community. In any case, AKEL opposes any agreement regarding the collaboration of Cyprus with NATO and demands the withdrawal of Turkish troops from the island. Because of this, the debate on the issue of reunification and the Turkish question

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<sup>82</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 15; Vannucci, 2009a, p. 53 and 56; Todorov, 2009, p. 702-704; Lyubenov, 2010, p. 54-55; Raycheva, Róka, 2011, p. 62.

<sup>83</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 42; Sawicki, 2009, p. 219-221 (the quote from Klaus comes from here); Kárníková, 2010, p. 66-69; Negrine, Stetka, Fialová, 2011, p. 79 and 86.

(the military presence in Cyprus, not the Turkish candidacy to the EU to which AKEL has no objection) monopolised the entire campaign<sup>84</sup>.

**Denmark:** The election campaign was dominated by the economic crisis and the debate about the possible entry of Denmark into the Euro – a very divisive issue. The DF gave its parliamentary support to the center-right to govern, especially on those issues in which they coincided with regard to the EU (Danish Euroscepticism is not only expanding, but it is very ideologically transverse). The DF scored a remarkable result that helped change internal balances of government coalitions and especially benefitted its anti-immigration policy<sup>85</sup>.

**Spain:** the campaign was absolutely dominated by the usual harsh confrontation between the PSOE and the PP and entirely focused on domestic issues. For the PP in opposition, the European elections would serve as “dry run” (that is, a kind of “primary”) to the general election, paving the way for their return to power. The IU focused on socio-economic issues with leftist solutions to attract voters disenchanted with the socialist government of Zapatero. Its proposal was to transform the EU with a strongly accentuated social redistribution and correction<sup>86</sup>.

**France:** in a context of economic crisis and increasingly important debilitation of President Sarkozy, the European debate was dominated by the classical *issues* in the country: loss of national sovereignty, negative impact of neoliberalism, the cost of the assimilation of the CEECs, foreign immigrants and Turkey. The FN, always faithful to its populist, ultranationalist discourse, obtained a negative result because it had to compete with other groups of the reactionary right that affected its electorate (the *Mouvement pour la France* of Philippe de Villiers *Libertas* – linked to the *Libertas* operation – and *Chasse, Pêche, Nature et Traditions*). The FN has repeatedly tried to lead the European far right as a whole, but it has never succeeded. By the mid-1980s of the last century Le Pen stated: “nationalists of all countries, unite”. The failure of this strategy has been structural as it has been impossible so far to link supranational solidarity to ultranationalist parties. In any case, the EU considers that FN is a failed venture being contrary to national interests, which is why this party requires a reappropriation of national sovereignty and strong socio-economic protectionism, maintaining an

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<sup>84</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 18; Fabrizio, 2009, p. 61-63; Christophorou, 2010, p. 59-62.

<sup>85</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 19; Rodomonte, 2009, p. 68-71; Munkøe, 2010, p. 71-75.

<sup>86</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 21; Frosina, 2009, p. 251-254; Casal, Ferrín, Pardos-Prado, 2010, p. 167-169.

aggressive intolerance of non-EU immigration (especially Muslim) and completely rejecting Turkey's candidacy<sup>87</sup>.

The PCF, which has been in constant decline since the 1980s, has managed to arrest the fall that was leading to its disappearance thanks to the coalition of the FG (on allying with Jean Luc Mélanchon's *Parti de Gauche*, proceeding from the socialist left) that renewed a somewhat old and very tired discourse. This group initially feared competition from the Trotskyists of the *Nouveau Parti Anticapitaliste* that, ultimately, had no impact. For the FG, the key would be "to change Europe" by protecting public services and ensuring the rights of workers across the EU. However, the voters of the FG are not motivated by "another" Europe because 65% of them are *only* interested in France's problems<sup>88</sup>.

**Greece:** the highlight of this election was the reversal of the two major national parties and the gains of the three minor parties. The LAOS radical right criticises the EU from an ultranationalist perspective: this party does not advocate the exit of Greece from the community, but the strengthening of national interest in the same. Furthermore, LAOS is very unhappy with the EU for failing to resolve two key foreign policy issues for Greece: FYROM and Cyprus. With regard to another issue, the Greek radical right is against Turkey joining the EU. With the Greek radical left, there is a relatively balanced competition between the orthodox communism of the KKE (usually the majority here) and the renovated postcommunism of SYRIZA that, this time (occasionally alternating leading positions from one election to another), benefited the first (although declining somewhat compared to 2004, with some relative advance for the second). The KKE's opposition to the EU is direct, bordering on Europhobia and unmitigated: in its opinion, the EU is an expression of large scale capitalist monopolies, a focus for worker exploitation and part of the new post-bipolar imperialist order – hence it can not come as a surprise its request for Greece's exit. In contrast, SYRIZA declares itself pro-European, although it criticises the current EU for its neoliberal policies<sup>89</sup>.

**Netherlands:** the most significant outcome of these elections were the reverse of the three main traditional parties of the country and the substantial increase of the PVV radical right, which became the second political force at a national level. The campaign was dominated by fears

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<sup>87</sup> Allegri, 2009, p. 92-93; Boissieu, 2009, p. 733; Coosemans, 2009a, p. 25; Perrineau, 2009, p. 662; Crespy, 2009, p. 7; Petithomme, 2010, p. 84.

<sup>88</sup> Allegri, 2009, p. 91; Boissieu, 2009, p. 732; Perrineau, 2009, p. 669 (the cited statistic is his); Crespy, 2009, p. 8; Halikiopoulou, Nanou, Vasilopoulou, 2012, p. 15-17.

<sup>89</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 26; Sterpa, 2009, p. 118-119; Vasilopoulou, 2010, p. 95-98; Halikiopoulou, Nanou, Vasilopoulou, 2012, p. 15-17.

and civil unrest due to the economic crisis and the increasingly negative social perception of non-EU immigrants. On the one hand, *Euro-scepticism* is a rather recent phenomenon in Holland (mid-1990s), and on the other, the memory of the murders of Pim Fortuyn (2002) and Van Gogh (2008) influenced the rise of the *extremists*, the PVV of Geert Wilders. This party has successfully capitalised on fears of globalisation, enlargement of the EU to the east, immigration and Turkey's candidacy. Moreover, the PVV criticises the negative effects of the Euro and the cost for Holland – in paying its share of community solidarity, it is a net contributor. This party demands a sizeable reduction in the existing responsibilities of the EU and their *return* to national states, although paradoxically in the fight against illegal immigration it favours the increase in inter-governmental community cooperation. In sum, the hostility shown to the EU and the xenophobia were the two factors that contributed to the rise of the radical Dutch right. The populist denunciation of community “interference” and the lack of transparency of European institutions, along with anti-Islamic prejudice (Wilders warned about an alleged “tsunami of Muslims” if Turkey joined the EU), plus the rejection of the traditional national “political class”, were skilfully exploited by the PVV<sup>90</sup>.

**Hungary:** the weakness of the socialist/liberal government and the adoption of harsh, unpopular economic and social measures provoked strong political tensions in the country. This explains the overwhelming victory of the center-right FIDESZ and the strong rise of the extreme JMM. On the one hand, the European elections in Hungary reflected the disappointment and general indifference towards the EU, and on the other, the campaign was totally dominated by internal political affairs. Since 2006 the JMM has become increasingly visible. It is an authoritarian and xenophobic party – neofascist by nature – and has accumulated frustrations. This party, which has recovered symbols of interwar Hungarian fascism, has today synchronised with – for example – the Magyar Guard, a neo-Nazi group that advocates expelling Hungarian Jews, gypsies, homosexuals and foreigners. In addition, the JMM message has gained acceptance: the economic crisis has worsened because the EU used the CEECs as internal colonies. However, it is still somewhat contradictory the Euroscepticism both in this party and also what is becoming widespread in Hungary. In 2001 only 13% of Hungarians were against their country's entry into the EU – with the subsequent rapid disenchantment after 2004, by 2008 only 31% considered it positive (22% of Hungarians have a frankly negative

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<sup>90</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 37-38; Villani, 2009, p. 180-184; De Wilde, 2010, p. 1-8; Van Ham, Smets, 2010, p. 131-135.

image of the EU). Although the central slogan of JMM (“Hungary for Hungarians”) is very popular, 69% of voters in this party are against their country leaving the EU, reflecting a sort of resigned acceptance that there is no possible alternative to the current status quo<sup>91</sup>.

**Italy:** European elections in this country coincided with local elections (“administrative elections” in the Italian political lexicon) which involved municipalities and provinces. Consequently, once again the elections were strictly internal, an evaluation of Berlusconi, so the campaign revolved almost exclusively around this controversial leader entangled as usual in various scandals and court cases, conspicuously ignoring matters strictly European. What was noteworthy in these elections was the increase in abstention, the new triumph of right wing (PdL and LN) and the disappearance of the radical left, with less consensus than ever (the PRC and the *Comunisti Italiani* attained only 3.4%, down from 4% needed to obtain representation). In contrast, the LN obtained an excellent result (it doubled from 2004) and capitalised on the protest vote (being in government, this is not without its significance). The LN is increasingly critical of the EU, but does not advocate Italy’s exit from the same and during the campaign stressed the centrality of national sovereignty of States against *Brussels*, barely mentioning Europe in its campaign, focusing almost exclusively on internal affairs<sup>92</sup>.

**Portugal:** the entire campaign focused on an intense debate on the severe internal economic crisis and the results meant a net loss of socialists in government and a clear triumph for the right wing. The radical left did achieve significant progress and in the struggle between the two, on this occasion the BE (which doubled its results compared with 2004) marginally advanced the CDU-PCP. Both parties harshly criticised the EU and manifested opposition to the Lisbon Treaty. Both aimed to defend the rights of workers and demand stronger government regulation of the economy<sup>93</sup>.

**UK:** Since 2005 British politics have experienced leadership changes in the major parties. In the conservative party, Howard was replaced by Cameron in 2005, in the Liberal Democrat Kennedy was succeeded by

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<sup>91</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 27-28; Pancheri, 2009, p. 267-268; Todorov, De Waele, 2009, p. 710, 715 and 718; Batory, 2010, p. 102-104; Heller, 2010, p. 11-13, 15-16, 18 and 20-21; Raycheva, Róka, 2011, p. 65.

<sup>92</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 30-31; De Winter, Gómez-Reino, 2009, p. 641; Rodomonte, Rosa, Sterpa, 2009, p. 134-136, 138, 140 and 142; Bressanelli, Calderaro, Piccio, Stamatí, 2010, p. 113-115; Roncarolo, 2011, p. 136-139.

<sup>93</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 40-41; Casseti, Ricci, 2009, p. 202-203; Santana Pereira, 2010, p. 144 and 147.

Campbell who, in turn, would be replaced by Clegg in 2007 and the Labour Party Blair passed the baton to Brown in 2009. On this occasion, the European elections coincided with local elections, two particular events that usually do not mobilise the electorate in this country. The economic and financial crisis and tensions in the Brown government made the whole campaign revolve around these issues, with Europe completely out of the debate. As a consequence, the elections were an evaluation of the Brown government and in this sense, the result was disastrous for Labour since they were relegated to third place, behind the europhobic UKIP (in votes not in seats, as they tied in this case). This party was one of the big winners of the elections and their excellent results confirmed the solidity of Euroscepticism in the UK. The UKIP is a monothematic party whose objective is almost exclusively to get the UK out of the EU because, in its opinion, the EU imposes “illogical, bizarre and wasteful” policies on the British people, ignoring public opinion and without allowing citizens to pass judgement on the same. For the UKIP, the EU is ruinous for the UK and exacerbates corruption in public life. Although its rhetoric contains some xenophobic overtones, the UKIP has sought to expand its electoral influence through arguments that emphasise national sovereignty against Brussels. 69% of the voters of this party express their refusal to continue maintaining current British links with the EU and 82% strongly support the exit of the UK from the community. This thesis matches the classic far right stance of the BNP, that, for the first time, obtained no less than two MEPs<sup>94</sup>.

In the case of Northern Ireland, this has its own political dynamic with a different party system and the significant novelty here was represented by the historical fact that the primary political force in the territory was the SF. All things considered, affairs of a strictly European nature played a very minor role in the campaign<sup>95</sup>.

**Romania:** the country has a magmatic and personalist party system with habitual political defections – this time, with the change of the electoral formula (proportional with the possibility of personal selection of candidates), the results benefitted the PRM. Indeed, this party – that had lost representation in the national parliament in 2008 – would maintain this in the European elections of 2009 and this despite having to compete for space with the clearly neofascist radical right *Noua Dreaptă* party. Despite the strong ultranationalism of the PRM, it is in

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<sup>94</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 44-45; Clementi, 2009, p. 210-211; Hanley, 2009, p. 671, 677-679; Carter, Loomes, Landberg, 2010, p. 178-181; Michailidiou, 2010, p. 10 and 16; Negrine, Stetka, Fialová, 2011, p. 79 and 87.

<sup>95</sup> Clementi, 2009, p. 212; De Winter, Gómez-Reino, p. 2009, p. 638; Carter, Loomes, Landberg, 2010, p. 181.

favour of Romania's membership of the EU and, in fact, European affairs had little impact during the election campaign. The PRM reiterated its nationalist ideology, emphasised the Christian character of Romania and populistically championed a strict policy against generalised corruption<sup>96</sup>.

**Sweden:** European issues are important in Sweden and are very divisive politically. In the parties critical of the EU there were populist parties that stood out (the Pirate Party) and although the radical left retained its European representation, it experienced a significant decline (more than seven percentage points), reflecting the electorate's shift to the right with respect to this. The VP is very critical of the EU and doctrinally defends Sweden's exit from the community, although in its practical policy it accepts the reality of membership<sup>97</sup>.

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<sup>96</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 43; Vanucci, 2009b, p. 229-231; Todor, 2010, p. 149-153.

<sup>97</sup> Coosemans, 2009a, p. 49; Mezzanotte, 2009, p. 260-261 and 264; Joensson, 2010, p. 172 and 175.