

RENATIONALISING EUROPE?

RIGHT-WING POPULIST PARTIES ARE BECOMING STRONGER, BUT NOT MORE UNIFIED

Florian Hartleb

Many observers believe that the European Union and its integration project will now be put to a stress test. Intellectuals have been increasingly levelling criticism at the EU, and German writer Hans Magnus Enzensberger has been adding grist to the Eurocritics' mill with his recently published book *Sanftes Monster Brüssel oder die Entmündigung Europas*¹ (Brussels the gentle monster, or the incapacitation of Europe). According to Enzensberger, the EU project is the product of a "post-democratic era". The oft-cited "democratic deficit" in the Union is simply "a fancy name for the political incapacitation of its people". The EU does not rule by force or by diktat, "but by process". It does not want to oppress its citizens, "but simply to quietly go about homogenizing living conditions on the continent". There is nothing new about the current polemics; they have merely become much more strident, even in the media.

The main concern is that right-wing populist parties have emerged from the European financial crisis looking much stronger, and have recently had repeated electoral success at the national level. "Populist responses are calling into question the major successes of the European Union: the euro, the single market, even the free movement of persons", warned the President of the European Commission in a key-note speech to the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 28 September.² It has not escaped the notice of worried European and national leaders that Eurosceptic parties have



Dr. Florian Hartleb is a Research Fellow at the Centre for European Studies in Brussels.

- 1 | Hans Magnus Enzensberger, *Sanftes Monster Brüssel oder die Entmündigung Europas*, Suhrkamp Verlag, Berlin, 2011.
- 2 | José Manuel Durão Barroso, "European renewal – State of the Union Address 2011", 28 Sep 2011, <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/11/607&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en> (accessed 2 Nov 2011).

fared much better in the latest elections held in France, Austria, Italy, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and Scandinavia.

Following elections in Sweden in 2010 and in Finland in 2011, right-wing populist parties in the shape of the Sweden Democrats and the True Finns entered parliament for the first time. In some countries it would even be fair to say that there is now a "second generation", with Marine Le Pen (Front National) in France and Heinz-Christian Strache (FPÖ) in Austria successfully establishing themselves as

Greece is currently being forced to implement tough reforms under European supervision, something which has led to internal divisions and aroused nationalist sentiments.

new party leaders.³ One of the key issues is just how much the European Union should interfere in national affairs, and especially in a country's financial matters. Greece is currently being forced to implement tough reforms under European supervision, a point which has led to internal divisions and aroused nationalist sentiments. The following indicators could herald the dawning of a new era of renationalisation:

- The unpopularity of the European project as a result of the current euro crisis;
- The growth in popularity of populist, nationalist movements, at least in some places;
- The possible formation of an "international" group within the European Parliament, with networking aspects;
- The revival to some extent of the notion of the nation state in the form of protectionism.

On the other hand, European integration is now well-advanced. The European model is still proving to be very attractive, with countries like Croatia voting for inclusion and others showing a willingness to join. There is a general consensus that joint European action is the key to success in dealing with trans-national problems such as terrorism and migration, and now also in terms of putting in place protection mechanisms against volatile financial markets. This kind of crisis management and the readjustments being made in economic governance may also lead to positive readjustments in terms of solidarity and European team spirit.

3 | Cf. Florian Hartleb, *After their establishment: Right-wing Populist Parties in Europe*, Centre for European Studies/ Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Brussels, 2011.

IS EURO CRITICISM EN VOGUE?

Right-wing populists are generally “soft” Eurosceptics, while right-wing extremists tend to be “hard” Eurosceptics who reject the whole idea of “Europe” on principle. The overall EU question in its various facets is nicely instrumentalised for populist aims. Right-wing populists like to criticise the weaknesses in European foreign and security policy as an excuse to promote their own typically black-and-white image of a western Christian bulwark against an unpredictable Islam. They also criticise the free movement of goods within the single market and blame it on the problem of organised crime. They rely on the fact that there is huge potential for anti-European sentiment which they can turn to their political advantage. Many right-wing populist parties take an ambivalent stance towards the European Union, especially on the issue of immigration. Populists, who want to “survive” as parties in the longer term, are unlikely to call for a boycott of the European Union per se, but are more likely to promote the idea of Europe as an economic and cultural fortress of “us against them”.⁴

Many right-wing populist parties take an ambivalent stance towards the European Union, especially on the issue of immigration.

However, in contrast to right-wing extremists, right-wing populists do not object to the European unification process. Their criticism is not levelled at the “whether” but at the “how”. This is probably why there is currently so much interest in the phenomenological differences between “hard” and “soft” Euroscepticism, as encountered by Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak in 2002 when looking at the latest East European EU candidate countries. The “soft” form tends to mean the qualified rejection of certain aspects of the integration project or of the EU in its current institutional form. A common argument is that all these supranational treaties are often at odds with national interests. The “hard” form, on the other hand, rejects the entire principle of the “European idea”, including therefore EU accession or membership.⁵

4 | Cf. Jocelyn Evans, “Wir gegen euch – Rechtspopulismus heute”, *The European*, 19 Nov 2010, <http://theeuropean.de/jocelyn-evans/4821-rechtspopulismus-heute> (accessed 4 Feb 2012).

5 | Cf. Paul Taggart und Aleks Szczerbiak (eds.), *Opposing Europe? Comparative and Theoretical Perspectives*, Oxford, 2008, 1-15.

Despite the fact that the integration process is continuing unabated, the European Union is not very popular amongst Europe's citizens. A look at the Eurobarometer surveys published by the European Commission reveals that, in Europe as a whole, a small majority of people think the European Union is a bad idea.⁶ Euroscepticism is also not limited to right-wing populist parties, as we can see from the strongly Eurosceptic grouping within the heart of the ruling British Conservative Party (the "Tories").

Right-wing populists are demonstrating a growing scepticism towards the idea of a more integrated Europe. Right-wing populist parties are taking advantage of people's resentment towards the idea of a Europe that will be run by the European Union, at the expense of their own national identity. They don't really trust the European Union, hence the slogan "Europe yes – EU no".⁷ Right-wing

Right-wing populist parties warn that Brussels' institutions will drastically impact national sovereignty and identity. Weaknesses within the current institutional set-up offer an ideal point of attack.

populist parties can see no positive future for a unified Europe, nor any good reasons to support it. On the contrary, they warn that Brussels' institutions will drastically impact national sovereignty and identity. Weaknesses within the current institutional set-up offer an ideal point of attack: EU policies lack democratic accountability, even if the Treaty of Lisbon did actually strengthen the powers of the European Parliament.

The eurozone crisis, and especially the "sick man" of Greece, increases the fear that the economic crisis will have a political and cultural ripple effect. However, while there are protests on the streets of the affected countries – Greece, Spain and Portugal – there are currently no right-wing populist formations. It is not possible to discern a direct causal link between the economic crisis and the emergence of this type of movement. Indeed, it is in rich countries, especially Scandinavia, where right-wing populist parties are enjoying a great deal of success and welfare chauvinism issues are being blatantly exploited. The aim of welfare chauvinism policies is to restrict access to the services of the welfare state to the local population alone. Here the

6 | Cf. the most recent Eurobarometer survey: *Standard Eurobarometer 75*, 8/2011.

7 | Cf. *ibid.*

term “welfare” refers to the social services provided by the state to the individual and not the welfare of society as a whole.⁸ Welfare chauvinism bases its arguments on the fiction that conflicts over the distribution of resources revolve solely around the nation state and takes advantage of protectionist attitudes amongst the population and the electorate. Voters want to maintain their vested interests at all costs and so are prepared to turn to a party that promises to fight for these on their behalf. Right-wing populist parties tap into the people’s desire for protection with slogans about walling off the outside world and stir up fears about economic degradation and social decline.

During the the last elections in Finland, held on 18 April 2011, opposition to the EU’s bailout of Portugal developed into a key election issue, with the result that the Eurosceptic True Finns party came from virtually nowhere to win nearly 20 per cent of the vote. The party – which does not have a xenophobic agenda – stood for election on the basis that it supported blocking bailouts to member states with high levels of sovereign debt and renegotiating the rescue fund treaty. It also called for an open, no-holds-barred debate on Europe. Its 2011 election manifesto stirred up fears that EU-level cooperation resulting in an increase in immigration would put the welfare state in danger.⁹ Euroscepticism can therefore become a rallying cry if the European Union, or even better a member state, has financial difficulties and begins calling for European solidarity. Of course, the success of right-wing populist parties is volatile and depends on economic circumstances. If the current EU crisis management is successful, then right-wing populist groupings will lose support. In the presidential elections held in Finland in January 2012, Timo Soini, the main leader of the True Finns, only won 9.4 per cent of the vote.

Euroscepticism can become a rallying cry if the European Union, or even better a member state, has financial difficulties and starts asking for European solidarity.

8 | Cf. Frank Decker, *Der neue Rechtspopulismus*, Opladen, 2004, 198-206.

9 | Cf. Tapio Raunio, *Whenever the EU is involved, you get problems. Explaining the European policy of The (True) Finns*, Sussex European Institute, Sussex, 2012.

ARE EXTREMISTS ON THE RISE?

Overall, empirical studies¹⁰ show that right-wing extremist parties in European elections can expect fewer votes than in national elections. The modalities of European elections tend to have a limiting effect, especially for smaller countries. For example, there are only eight Latvian members of the European Parliament and only six from Estonia. An exception is the British National Party, which took advantage of proportional representation at the European level in 2009 to enter the European Parliament for the first time,

The National Democratic Party of Germany would like to go down a totally different path in Europe and would like to see the European Union disbanded as a symbol of political globalisation.

with 6.3 per cent. As hard Eurosceptics, right-wing extremist parties tend to fundamentally reject the idea of "Europe". The National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD), for example, which is not represented in either the German Bundestag or the European Parliament, would, by its own admission, prefer to take an entirely different route in Europe and would like to see the European Union disbanded as a symbol of political globalisation. For this party, the European Union is a symbol of heteronomy.¹¹

In the June 2009 European elections, a new right-wing extremist party in Hungary caused a furor. The right-wing extremist Jobbik movement, founded in 2004 by anti-communist students came out of nowhere to win 14.8 per cent of the vote, becoming the third largest party in the process, just behind the socialists, a position it maintained during the parliamentary elections in 2010. Jobbik is a Hungarian play on words which basically means "a more preferable choice" and "more to the right". With slogans such as "Hungary belongs to the Hungarians", the party is not only right-wing extremist, anti-Roma and anti-Semitic, it is also fiercely Eurosceptic. The main face of its campaign was the former feminist¹² and now fanatically right-wing extremist

10 | Cf. Eckhard Jesse and Tom Thieme, "Extremismus in den EU-Staaten im Vergleich", in: idem (eds.), *Extremismus in den EU-Staaten*, Wiesbaden, 2011, 431-482.

11 | Cf. Florian Hartleb, "Gegen Globalisierung und Demokratie. Die NPD als eine neue soziale Bewegung im europäischen Kontext?", *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen*, 40 (2009) 1, 115-127.

12 | From 2003 to 2006 she was a member of the United Nations Experts' Committee and taught criminal law at the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest.

Krisztina Morvai, who appeared on all their campaign posters. Morvai, born in 1963, was asked in an interview for the German daily newspaper *Die Welt* in 2010: "You were elected to the European Parliament. You clearly don't like your job or why else would Jobbik be fighting for Hungary to leave the EU?" She replied: "We are not definitely in favour of leaving the EU. But we are against the formation of a European empire. We are against the idea of robbing nation states of their right to make decisions.

There is no control over the EU Commission, which is shocking, and totally undemocratic. I'm a Eurosceptic but I live in hope that we can change the EU. But if the worst comes

The rise the Hungarian Jobbik is not some side-effect of a laborious transformation process, but should be seen as a post-transformation phenomenon.

to the worst [...], Hungary should leave the EU. We cannot simply give away our country. The European Union needs Hungary more than Hungary needs the EU."¹³ The success of the Hungarian Jobbik may well be an isolated incident within the EU, but it gives us pause for thought, for the rise of this party, or rather of this movement, is not merely the side-effect of a laborious transformation process; rather, it should be seen as a post-transformation phenomenon¹⁴ following a successful transformation – and one whose future is unclear.¹⁵

Right-wing populist parties generally tend to be distinguished by anti-democratic elements that are opposed to the system. However, a debate flared up in the summer of 2011 over potential links to extremism, or even terrorism. On 22 July, the Norwegian Anders Behring Breivik killed 69 people, mostly young people attending a holiday camp run by the Labour Party (Norske Arbeiderparti). Breivik, who was 32 years old at the time of the incident and who had written a 1,500-page manifesto and posted a Youtube video consisting of rants against "cultural Marxists" and Islamists, had once been a junior official of the Progress

13 | Interview with Krisztina Morvai. Thomas Roser, "Ungarn muss notfalls aus der EU austreten", *Die Welt*, 12 Apr 2010, <http://welt.de/article7153203/Ungarn-muss-notfalls-aus-der-EU-austreten.html> (accessed 22 Mar 2012).

14 | Cf. Melani Barlai and Florian Hartleb, "Rechtsextremismus als Posttransformationsphänomen – der Fall Ungarn", *Totalitarismus und Demokratie*, 1/2010, 83-104.

15 | Cf. Áron Buzogány, "Soziale Bewegung von rechts: Der Aufstieg der national-radikalen Jobbik-Partei in Ungarn", *Südeuropa Mitteilungen*, 5-6/2011, 38-51.

Party (Fremskrittspartiet). However, he left because he felt the party was too moderate. His manifesto was entitled "Europe 2083", a reference to the 1683 Battle of Vienna against the Turks (400 years later). Even the title suggests that his inhuman act was meant as an attack on a united Europe. However, Breivik's manifesto, contrary to the opinion of many observers¹⁶, had little to do with right-wing populism. It was cobbled together from various snippets of stock text, some of it terrorist-linked, that Breivik had found on the internet and reworked. The perpetrator basically wanted a return to the Middle Ages and was fiercely opposed to what he referred to as the "cultural Marxism" prevalent in Europe after 1945 and mass immigration. Experts in Norway are now debating whether he is of sound mind or whether he is demonstrably insane.

Following Breivik's massacre, the right-wing political parties distanced themselves from the "work of an emotionally unbalanced individual", as the French National Front put it. They rejected all those who "use terror, scaremongering or violence or who encourage the use of violence" (Danish People's Party), and stressed that "opposition

There is no recognisable correlation between the strength of right-wing populist parties and the number of right-wing extremist acts of violence.

to the idea of multiculturalism does not equate to a call to violence" (Geert Wilders' Dutch Party for Freedom).¹⁷ There is generally no recognisable correlation between the strength of right-wing populist parties and the number of right-wing extremist acts of violence, whether in terms of the number of members or electoral success. In Germany, for example, the number of right-wing extremism-related crimes is relatively high, and yet there is no right-wing populist party of note. In his manifesto, Breivik also copies references from the internet that point to the success of

16 | "Anders Breivik's political stance is reasonably well aligned with that of right-wing populists." Tim Spier, quoted in: *Financial Times*, 26 Jul 2011, <http://ftd.de/politik/international/60083830.html> (accessed 22 Mar 2012).

17 | What was more scandalous was the statement by Mario Borghezio, member of the European Parliament from Italy's Northern League, who defended Breivik's pamphlet: "100 percent of Breivik's ideas are right, many of them excellent in fact." One day later Borghezio corrected himself. Quoted in: Matthias Kamann et al., "Anders Breivik sieht Europa im Krieg mit dem Islam", *Die Welt*, 30 Jul 2011, <http://welt.de/article13516740/Anders-Breivik-sieht-Europa-im-Krieg-mit-dem-Islam.html> (accessed 22 Mar 2012).

right-wing populist parties, but there is no objective reason to assume a direct connection. Breivik should be regarded as an isolated terrorist, rather than as an adherent to a particular movement.

ARE THERE POPULIST INTERNATIONAL GROUPINGS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT?

Within the institutions and organs of the EU, Eurosceptic parties can only directly exercise their influence and position in the European Parliament. However, because of splits amongst the various groups and the formation of alliances with more pro-European parties, there is no large Eurosceptic faction. Following the European elections in 2009 there is now a disparate, confusing and ever-changing picture.

Table 1

Eurosceptic groups in the European Parliament after 2009

Libertas	Eurosceptic movement which grew out of the Irish "No" to the Treaty of Lisbon, only one seat
Europe of Freedom and Democracy faction (EFD)	Genuinely Eurosceptic, with the British UKIP party; small and heterogeneous
European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)	A union of ex-EPP members; the largest parties include the British Conservatives, the Czech Civic Democratic Party (Občanská demokratická strana, ODS) and the Polish Law and Justice Party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, PiS): heterogeneous; ¹⁸
Eurosceptics not belonging to a faction	Non-right-wing extremists, including the Austrian Dr. Martin's List.

As a genuine European party alliance, Libertas was only able to win a single seat, in France, even though it took part in elections in several countries. The Europe of Freedom and Democracy faction (EFD), which can be considered to be Eurosceptic, forms the smallest faction in the Parliament. In the European elections in traditionally Eurosceptic Britain, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) was the second biggest party with 16.5 per cent. Alongside the

18 | Cf. David Allen, "Die EU-Politik der britischen Koalitionsregierung: Distanz vor Pragmatismus", *Integration*, 3/2011, 197-213, here: 198-199.

British, the group also contains the regionalist, right-wing populist Northern League as well as the right-wing extremist Slovak National Party (Slovenská národná strana, SNS), which from 2006 to 2010 was a member of a coalition government led by the social democrats. But even in this group there is a high degree of heterogeneity, not least when it comes to lack of discipline. When it comes to voting cohesion, the EFD has a much lower percentage rate than other factions.¹⁹ The UKIP is also suffering from internal divisions following what was, for them, a very successful European election campaign in 2009. In 2004 they had already achieved 16.8 per cent of the vote, until the TV talk show host Robert Kilroy-Silk quit the UKIP group in the European Parliament. There were also internal squabbles after 2009. Three of the 13 elected members have left the group since 2009 (as at April 2011). Between 2004 and 2009 the UKIP was part of the Eurosceptic Independence/Democracy group (Ind/Dem group). Following the failure of Libertas, this group was too weak to form a group after 2009.

Within the European Conservatives and Reformists group there is a West and East European alliance, who left the EPP after the 2009 European elections because they were too pro-European.

Another Eurosceptic front is grouped within the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) group. This is a West and East European alliance made up of groups such as the British Conservatives and the Czech ODS, who left the EPP after the 2009 European elections because they were too pro-European.²⁰ The Polish PiS is also a member of the group. At the end of 2010, four PiS members of the European Parliament were amongst the founders of the new Polish party, Poland Comes First (Polska Jest Najważniejsza, PJN), which is somewhat more moderately conservative than the PiS. However, the members in question continue to be a part of the ECR group. There was a quite a stir during the inaugural sitting of the newly-elected Parliament on 14 July 2009 when the British ECR member Edward McMillan-Scott announced that he was running for the position of one of the Vice Presidents of Parliament, even though the ECR had proposed the Pole,

19 | Cf. Group Cohesion Rates on *VoteWatch.eu*, http://votewatch.eu/cx_european_party_groups.php (accessed 7 Sep 2011).

20 | Cf. Philip Lynch and Richard Whitaker, "A Loveless Marriage: The Conservatives and the European People's Party", *Parliamentary Affairs*, 61 (2009) 1, 31-51.

Michał Kamiński (at that time still PiS). McMillan-Scott was elected as one of the Vice Presidents of the Parliament with the conspicuous support of other factions,²¹ while Kamiński was unsuccessful.

Between 1999 and 2009, the Union for a Europe of the Nations also formed a faction in the European Parliament. Radical right-wing populist parties such as the Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti, DF) and the Northern League were active in this group, along with the Polish parties Self-Defence of the Republic and League of Polish Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin). This group ceased to exist after the 2009 European elections. As a result, the post-fascist, nationalist, conservative Italian Alleanza Nazionale joined the Berlusconi alliance Popolo della Libertà (PdL, successor to Forza Italia) and so became a member of the European People's Party.

Right-wing extremists, who are generally "hard" Eurosceptics, have so far failed to become a force in their own right in the European Parliament. The European Right faction, formed after the second European elections

The European Right faction was the only truly right-wing extremist group in the history of the European Parliament that was able to sustain its initial strength for a full legislative period.

in 1984 and led by the Frenchman Jean-Marie Le Pen, was the only truly right-wing extremist group in the history of the European Parliament that was able to sustain its initial strength for a full legislative period (until 1989). Another faction that failed was the one set up after the 1989 European elections by the German party The Republicans under their leader at that time, Franz Schönhuber. There were constant disagreements over national or territorial issues, which divided the various groups. The German Republicans clashed with the Italian neo-fascist MSI, when the former stressed the "German character of the South Tyrol".

During subsequent legislative periods (1994-1999 and 1999-2004), there were no right-wing extremist factions in the European Parliament. In 2007 there was a brief attempt to form a group called Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty (ITS), with the aim of uniting right-wing extremists from Western

21 | McMillan-Scott was expelled from the ECR faction as a result. He switched to the British Liberal Democrat Party in 2010 and became a member of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) faction.

and Eastern Europe. The groups included parties such as the Austrian FPÖ, the French National Front, the Belgian Vlaams Belang and the Greater Romania Party (Partidul România Mare). After previously being unsuccessful, with the entry of Romania and Bulgaria into the EU they saw an opportunity to achieve the necessary legal requirements for forming a faction – 20 members of the European Parliament from six different member states.²² Their main aims were to fight against a constitutional treaty for Europe (Constitutional Treaty), to fight the trend towards centralisation and to prevent Turkey from gaining membership in the EU, all as part of an overall battle to retain national identities. As far as the founders of the group were concerned, the European Union should be simply an alliance of sovereign nation states.

Only a few months after the group was formed, in November 2007, it was disbanded again – a sign of the difficulties of sustaining European cooperation amongst right-wing extremist parties and of creating a party grouping that can work together in a practical way. The group did not have the necessary minimum number of members to build a faction after five members of the European Parliament from the Greater Romania Party left in protest against the Italian member Alessandra Mussolini (PdL). The Romanians were incensed by statements made by the granddaughter of Il Duce which suggested that Romanians in Italy had typically led a criminal lifestyle. Mussolini was referring to the murder of an Italian woman, where a Roma from Romania had been accused of the crime.²³

The majority of right-wing extremist members of the Parliament remain without a faction because national sensitivities often make it impossible to form some kind of organised cooperation.

All in all, the majority of right-wing extremist members of the Parliament remain without a faction because national sensitivities often make it impossible to form some kind of organised cooperation. This has proved to be the case, for example, for the three members from the Hungarian Jobbik.

22 | Currently, to form a faction a minimum of 25 members of the European Parliament is required, elected from a quarter of the member states. Art. 30, para. 2, Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament.

23 | Cf. Hartleb, n. 11.

Euroscepticism does not need to have a right-wing orientation per se. Many of those at the top of the Socialist Party (Parti socialiste) called for a "No" vote in the 2005 referendum in France. The European Left faction, which, with 35 members (as at April 2011), is part of a larger group of socialist and post-communist parties known as the European United Left/Nordic Green Left, questions the very basis of the political and economic system of the European Union and complains about a lack of social and democratic policies. It criticises current developments within the European Union, which it considers neo-liberal for being unsocial and undemocratic and therefore dangerous, and calls for an almost total restructuring of all areas of the European Union, ranging from the economic system and defence through to agriculture and environment policies on to the democratic structure as a whole.²⁴

In general, the European United Left aligns with its member parties in adopting a fairly heterogeneous position. For example, there was a dispute in the German Die Linke party before the 2009 European elections over the nomination of candidates. Pro-European politicians such as the leading candidate in the 1994, 1999 and 2004 European elections, Sylvia-Yvonne Kaufmann, and the former intellectual leader of the party, André Brie, were not included amongst the party's nominations for the lists being drawn up for the 2009 European elections,²⁵ as they had voted against party lines in favour of the Treaty of Lisbon. Despite being in favour of the European integration process, their election manifesto came across as fairly Eurosceptic, and there is more and more talk about a different Europe, and a different EU. The status quo is painted in fairly bleak terms, with cuts in social services, war, non-transparent decision making, etc.²⁶ Even the Dutch left-wing populist Socialist Party (Socialistische Partij) believes that the nation state must "protect

The election manifesto of the German Die Linke came across as fairly Eurosceptic. The status quo is painted in fairly bleak terms, with cuts in social services, war, non-transparent decision making, etc.

24 | Cf. Uwe Backes and Patrick Moreau (eds.), *Communist and Post-Communist Parties in Europe*, Göttingen, 2008.

25 | Stefan Reinecke, "Die Dissidentin", *die tageszeitung*, 23 Feb 2009, <http://taz.de/Linke-hadern-mit-Europa/!30835> (accessed 22 Mar 2012).

26 | Cf. the European election manifesto at http://dielinke.de/fileadmin/tpl/gfx/wahlen/pdf/europawahlprogramm2009_neu.pdf (accessed 21 Feb 2012).

its discretionary powers against an intrusive European Union".²⁷ As a result, the Left reject any economic or social deepening of a union they consider to be neo-liberal, and their representatives in the German Bundestag, for example, voted against the bailout package. And here we have the paradox that the European Left, who like to portray themselves as supporting internationalisation, are also often seen to be in favour of renationalisation.

SUMMARY

The integration process will continue to be borne by the governments of the various member states, so it is likely that Euroscepticism will continue to be used as an opposition tool

Because European integration has a limited influence on national party systems, Euroscepticism is not a mainstream feature of the European party system.

in national multi-party systems. There are admittedly some exceptions, such as in the UK, where Eurosceptics have found a political home in the ruling coalition and the Conservatives are therefore no longer members of the European People's Party (faction or party). However, because European integration has a limited influence on national party systems, Euroscepticism is not a mainstream feature of the European party system. Despite the opportunities presented by the current economic situation, it has not been possible to build a true Eurosceptic party grouping because of the absence of a core structural identity, the lack of trust and solidarity amongst the various parties, and the lack of a definitive strategic agenda, even though a significant proportion of EU citizens are Eurosceptics themselves.²⁸ These citizens can only make their dissatisfaction known indirectly via the elections to the European Parliament or through Citizens' Initiatives, which are enshrined in the Treaty of Lisbon, but difficult to implement in practice. This suggests that it is unlikely that any right-wing populist or extremist international groups will be formed any time soon. Extremist parties do not have enough potential support to pose a threat to the existing liberal democratic

27 | Gerrit Voermann, "Linkspopulismus im Vergleich", in: Friso Wielenga and Florian Hartleb (eds.), *Populismus in den Niederlanden und in Deutschland im Vergleich*, Münster, 2011, 179-204, 186.

28 | Cf. Florian Hartleb, *A thorn in the side of European elites: The new Euroscepticism*, Centre for European Studies, Brussels, 2011.

order. The success of the populists also tends to be volatile, as has been shown in the case of the True Finns.

As in the past, the EU can have a direct influence on the future of Euroscepticism, or even marginalise it, as the Eurosceptics have so far failed to find common cause and it is unlikely that they will do so any time soon. The differences that exist amongst Eurosceptics suggest that individual cases need to be examined in the context of the individual member state concerned. The problem of nationalistic right-wing populism will continue to be seen at a national level. There is much to suggest that the debate over the future of European integration and of the European Union itself will also continue to have a significant influence on the political debate in individual member states. According to leading European state and government heads, the 2011/12 crisis has shown that, with greater economic and social integration, some of the obvious design flaws within the Eurozone can be rectified and more stability guaranteed. In terms of legitimacy, this can only be the case if the peoples of Europe and the European Union as a whole subscribe to this view, and not just the political elite. Then there will be no new era of renationalisation. The power of European integration is so strong that it is unlikely that there will be any national U-turns on this issue, despite the occasional upsurge of populism or extremism in individual countries.