

International Master's Program in International Studies

National Chengchi University

國立政治大學國際研究英語碩士學位學程

**A Study of the Origins and Development of Euroscepticism in
the European Union**

歐盟疑歐論起源與發展之研究

Filip Sebastian Kszczotek

Advisor: Dr. Yung-Fang Lin (林永芳)

May 2016

ABSTRACT

In the past decade, people have witnessed that one single event may alter the political situation of a single country, region or even the whole world. In case of the EU, the 2014 European parliamentary election was one of them. Referred to by many researchers as a “political earthquake,” this event made it possible for the eurosceptic movement to emerge from the shadows and pose a threat to the European integration process. The presence of euroscepticism in the European Parliament may be seen as the beginning of the end of the EU or perhaps just a temporary crisis of trust.

This study seeks to analyze the factors that contributed to the rise of euroscepticism since the beginning of the EU. Moreover, the impact of the 2014 European parliamentary election on European stability and the domestic political situation is also included in this paper. Finally, the author applies two-level games theory to find a proper solution to the rise of euroscepticism and the problem of potential European disintegration. Many observers claim that eurosceptic parties do not pose a threat to European integration. I suggest that euroscepticism should be recognized as one of the main problems to which the EU must respond effectively in the near future.

By answering three research questions, the author gives further insight into the power gained by most of the eurosceptic political parties. Furthermore, based on the two-level games theory and the role of negotiations, the possible implications in dealing with euroscepticism are included in this paper.

摘要

過去十年來，人們體認到任何單一事件可能改變一個國家、一個區域，或全世界的政治情況。以歐盟而言，2014 年歐洲議會的選舉就是一個很好的例子，許多研究者稱之為政治地震，這個事件可能促使對於「疑歐運動」脫離歐洲統合過程的陰影產生威脅，歐洲會議所呈現的疑歐論調可能被視為是歐盟末日的開端，或僅只是信任的暫時危機。

本研究試圖分析自歐盟成立以來造成疑歐論興起的各項因素。再者本論文也包含 2014 年歐洲議會選舉對歐洲穩定和各國政治情況的影響，最後作者應用雙層賽局理論尋求疑歐論興起的適當方法，以及歐洲分化的可能問題。很多觀察者宣稱疑歐論團體對歐洲的統合沒有造成任何威脅，作者建議疑歐論在最近期應被視為主要的問題，歐盟應有效地回應。

藉著解答這三個研究問題，作者建議進一步了解大多數疑歐政治團體所擁有的動力，此外基於雙層賽局理論和折衝的角色，結論亦包含於處理疑歐論的可能意涵。

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Chapter 1 Introduction

1.1 Research motivation

Since the establishment of the EU, member states have never had to face possibility of disintegration. In fact, prior to 2007, European citizens lived in the relatively stable times. What happened after that was beyond anyone's imagination. The severity of the eurozone, Ukrainian and immigration crises undermined the position of the European Commission, which was unable to find proper solutions for such problems.

As the crisis deepened, criticism from European political parties increased. Some targeted the basic principles of the EU and called for the immediate withdrawal from the eurozone, Schengen area, the EU and even the Single Market sphere. Criticism from other political parties concerned the need to reconstruct and reform the structure of the EU and opposed the “even closer union” project. In light of current events, many began to express their dissatisfaction and to introduce European citizens to a new wave of euroscepticism. The term itself was invented in 1985, but at that time the European Commission did not regard it as a major problem. The eurosceptic parties had little support in their objections toward the EU because of the favorable politico-economic situation in Europe. The situation has drastically changed since the 2007 Global Financial Crisis, which has made it possible for some eurosceptic parties to come to power through the legislative elections in their respective country.

As the title of the thesis suggests, the main aim is to study the origin and development of euroscepticism in the EU, as well as possible ways to deal with it. The 2014 European Parliamentary Elections indicated that Europeans showed the yellow card to the European Commission by voting for the eurosceptic parties. In the history of the EU, there have never been so many politicians in the European Parliament who have had such a destructive attitude toward the

European Community. Some of them, as mentioned before, want to reform the EU, and others want to “blow it up from inside”.¹

Most of the academic articles concerning the problem of the euroscepticism primarily focus on the political parties and their attitude towards the EU. The majority fail to mention the origin, development, and possible solutions to the rise of this particular movement. The author of this paper strongly believes that an in-depth analysis of euroscepticism is necessary, especially in such unstable times. Undoubtedly, the description of the eurosceptic political parties is required, but without exploration of the origin and development of this movement, one cannot clearly understand the term itself. Moreover, providing information about the euroscepticism in each country is necessary in order to comprehend each member state's interests and attitude. Such an ideology is so complex that providing a single, general example to explain such would be insufficient. We need to analyze the eurosceptic parties from a systematic and comparative perspective, in order to find a common solution to oppose their expansion in the EU. Doing so will most certainly help us to better understand the concept of euroscepticism in-depth.

¹ Yves Bertoncini, Nicole Koenig, “Euroscepticism or Europhobia: Voice vs. Exit?,” *Notre Europe. Jacques Delors Institute* (November 2014).

1.2 Research questions

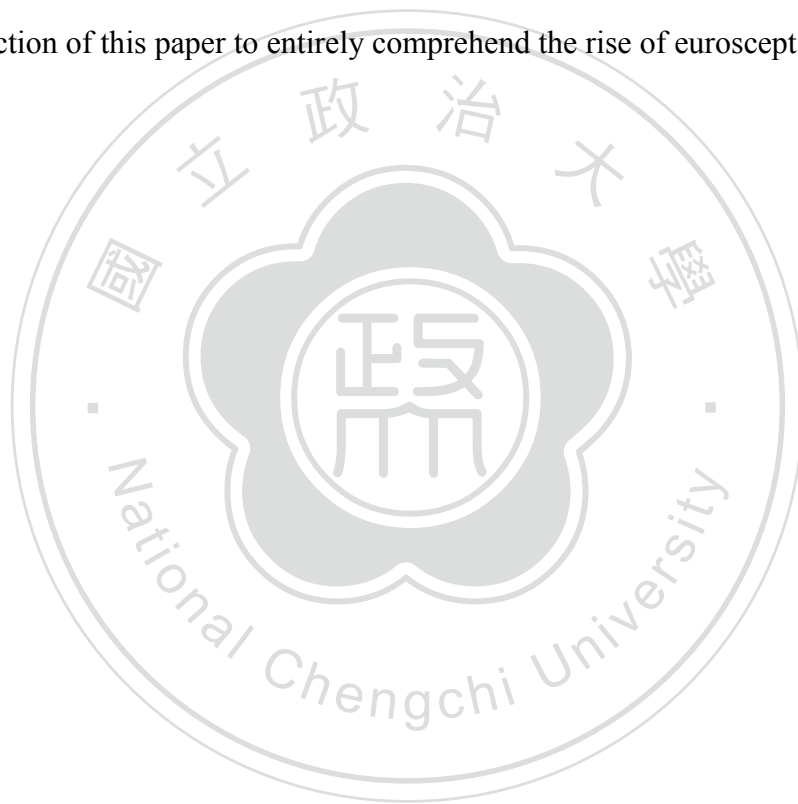
It can be concluded that euroscepticism is a relatively new concept in the international relations community. Most academic researchers began expressing interest in this particular topic after the 2014 European Parliamentary Elections primarily because prior to this event, it was not important enough to focus on this area of studies. Subsequently, these scholars discovered that euroscepticism had transformed into a significant movement in many member states. Their exploration is mainly limited to the description of the eurosceptic political parties with some short references to the origin of this political front. Instead of just presenting facts and figures concerning the rise of euroscepticism, this paper includes the analysis of the history of the movement, eurosceptic issues, political parties, and 2014 European Parliamentary Elections. Moreover, the author poses three critical questions concerning the topic of this paper, then applies the two-level games theory to find a possible solution to confront this new political front.

The main purpose of this paper is to examine the origin and development of euroscepticism in the European Union. Through the in-depth analysis of the academic journals, news, and articles, the author explores what factors and events contributed to the rise of the eurosceptic movement. Moreover, the information about the EU's development and the resulting emergence of euroscepticism is also examined in this thesis. It would be impossible to comprehend the growth of eurosceptic parties without understanding the historical background of the EU. By answering the primary question of this paper, the author connects the development of the EU with the emergence of euroscepticism. Aside from the historical aspects, the author also presents the current events being faced by the European Commission.

Secondly, the author examines the importance of the 2014 European Parliamentary Election, as well as eurosceptic parties at the domestic level. For the first time in history, some member states have experienced a sharp power shift or the emergence of eurosceptic parties in their national parliaments. Subsequently, due to the popular discontent toward the EU, the same constituency took

part in the 2014 European Parliamentary Election and the eurosceptic party infiltrated the EU's structures. In congruence with more recent events, the author explores the possibility of potential disintegration of the EU.

Finally, the author asks whether it is possible to confront eurosceptic parties and resolve the problem of the anti-EU atmosphere on the basis of the two-level games theory. This highly important question is summarized in the data selection presented in the first part of this paper. After exploring the origin and the influence of euroscepticism, the author presents his findings on whether it is possible to solve this problem through two-level games negotiation. Moreover, the theory is applied in each section of this paper to entirely comprehend the rise of eurosceptic movement.



1.3 Literature review

1.3.1 European problems

Over the past several years, the European Union has jumped through hoops in dealing with several pervasive problems. The 2007-2008 Global Financial Crisis was only the beginning of political and economic unrest in Europe, which later led to the eurozone crisis. At the time, the only possible way to revitalize the European economy was for each member state to implement painful reforms. Most countries were eager to proceed bill after bill, and can now jointly announce that their countries have finally returned to the development track. Others, fearful public response, implemented reforms slowly and inefficiently, which only exacerbated the current crisis. In each scenario, politicians made use of the global situation and, depending on the effects on their countries, applied policies in their own party programs.

Following the eurozone crisis, the EU had to deal with two major events that destabilized the positive atmosphere between member states. The first concerned the security aspect, which gained further significance after the Ukrainian crisis. After the Russian involvement in the Donbass war, the former Eastern Bloc countries felt that the EU and NATO did not provide ample protection. Moreover, many political parties accused the European Commission of being clumsy in dealing with the Ukrainian crisis and failing to defend against the possible aggressor.²

The second major problem concerns the current immigration situation regarding refugees. This is considered to be the most serious issue ever confronted by the EU. Recent events clearly show the division within the EU's structures and differing attitudes concerning potential solutions to the immigration crisis. The notion of refugee quotas, presented by the European Commission, has faced severe criticism by Central and Eastern European countries, which blamed the EU for

² Stephen Larrabee F., Peter A .Wilson, John Gordon IV, "The Ukrainian Crisis and European Security Implications for the United States and U.S. Army," *RAND Corporation*, (2015).

imposing conditions against their will.³

Other eurosceptic political parties, such as the Conservative Party in the UK and Law and Justice in Poland, value their countries' cultures and traditions. They are strongly opposed to the creation of a European super-state as well as a common European identity. For them, as is true for many soft eurosceptic parties, national interests are the most important factors in determining their policies. Centralizing power in Brussels and giving the European Commission more power than each individual member state's government is considered entirely unacceptable. Many conservatives value traits such as respect to their own cultures and traditions and devotion to their religions, and therefore do support efforts for “less Europe” in the EU.⁴

1.3.2 Euroscepticism and its variety

Since 1985 the euroscepticism has been slowly spreading throughout the Europe. Over the past 20 years, European citizens observed the establishment of new political parties calling themselves eurosceptic parties. Undeniably, their political programs first and foremost criticize the EU's structures. However, not all eurosceptic political parties have the same negative attitude toward the EU. On the one hand, we have David Cameron's Conservative Party (UK) and on the other Marine Le Pen's National Front (France). Both are perceived as eurosceptic parties, but their attitudes, policies, and plans for the EU are completely different. This is why for the first time in their book, Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart introduce two categories of euroscepticism: soft and hard euroscepticism.⁵

3 Jaroslaw Cwiek-Karpowicz, Aleksandra Gawlikowska-Fyk, Dariusz Kalan, Piotr Koscinski, Sebastian Plociennik, Patrycja Sasnal, Marcin Terlikowski, Katarzyna Staniewska, “Migration Crisis Unites Visegrad Group,” *The Polish Institute of International Affairs*, (2015).

4 Liubomir Topaloff, “Marginal No More,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 25, No 4 (October 2014): 76-87.

5 Aleks Szczerbiak, Paul Taggart, “Opposing Europe? The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism. Vol.1: Case Studies and Country Surveys,” *Oxford University Press* (2008).

Table 1.1 Division of eurosceptic political parties depending on their attitude towards the EU

Soft eurosceptic political parties	Hard eurosceptic political parties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conservative Party (UK) • Law and Justice Party (Poland) • Finns Party (Finland) • National Alliance (Latvia) • Syriza (Greece) • Podemos (Spain) • Five Star Movement (Italy) • Jobbik (Hungary) • Fidesz (Hungary) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Front (France) • United Kingdom Independence Party (UK) • Golden Dawn (Greece) • Party for Freedom (The Netherlands) • Freedom Party of Austria (Austria) • Progressive Party of Working People (Cyprus)

Source: Yves Bertoncini, Nicole Koenig, *Euroscepticism or Europhobia: Voice vs. Exit?*, 2014

The first category of eurosceptic political parties is soft euroscepticism. These parties are commonly called reformists simply because they want to change the EU's structure. They are not opposed to the existence of the EU, nor do they want to withdraw from the community. Their main criticism of the EU concerns the creation a federal Europe, in which national interests, tradition and culture would no longer matter. Their ideology is largely based on Margaret Thatcher's speech given in Bruges, in which she underlined the biggest impediments and weaknesses of the European Community. Soft eurosceptics are opposed to further European integration, creation of a European identity, and most importantly, the formation of an “ever closer union”. Nowadays, four soft eurosceptic political parties rule in the countries from which they originated: Fidesz in Hungary, Law and Justice in Poland, Syriza in Greece, and the Conservative Party in UK. This shows the power of the eurosceptic ideology in EU member states.⁶

After the 2014 European Parliament election, one could observe relatively sharp increase in hard eurosceptic parties. Parties such as the National Front, United Kingdom Independence Party, and Party for Freedom differ significantly from their soft equivalents. Most of them aim to accomplish three major points promised during their political campaigns:

⁶ Yves Bertoncini, Nicole Koenig, “Euroscepticism or Europhobia: Voice vs. Exit?,” *Notre Europe. Jacques Delors Institute* (November 2014).

1. Withdrawal from the European Union in order to stop the integration process since they do not see the benefits of a closer European Union.
2. Exit from the eurozone: many wish to return to their country's previous currency since the euro is too susceptible to changes in the economies of other eurozone countries.
3. Withdrawal from the Schengen area: they are strongly opposed to the free movement of people without border control as it may encourage the spread of terrorism and drug and illegal weapons trafficking within the European continent. Moreover, they aim to stop the flow of immigrants to their countries as they believe these immigrants will commit crimes and take advantage of their social systems.⁷

Before working with Szczerbiak to create a well-known division of euroscepticism in the article *The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU Member and Candidate State*, Taggart explored another way to identify eurosceptic parties in his paper entitled *A Touchstone of Dissent: Euroscepticism in Contemporary Western European Party System*. He believed there to be four different categories into which all eurosceptic political parties fall. If we were to compare the division of eurosceptic parties by Szczerbiak and Taggart together and Taggart alone, the former seems to more accurately analyze the origins and development of euroscepticism in Europe. Taggart in his 1998 article, suggested a highly complex way to segregate eurosceptic parties. Without in-depth insight into political games on the domestic level, such a division would prove very challenging. *The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU Member and Candidate State* argues that eurosceptic parties should be considered either soft or hard based on whether they are from the left or right wing.

⁷ Yves Bertoncini, Nicole Koenig, "Euroscepticism or Europhobia: Voice vs. Exit?," *Notre Europe. Jacques Delors Institute* (November 2014).

1.3.3 2014 European political earthquake

Between 22nd and 25th of May 2014, many Europeans took part in the historical European Parliament elections. What happened after the result of the first exit-poll was revealed surprised most of the politicians and citizens in Europe. Few could comprehend the election's outcome, and some even called it a political earthquake. In past European elections, voters had never elected as many eurosceptic party members as they did in 2014. What is more, the National Front in France and UK Independence Party in the UK secured first place, while Five Star Movement in Italy became a second political power.⁸ These results attracted the most public attention from the public simply because of the importance of France, the UK, and Italy in the EU and the fact that these were hard eurosceptic parties entering the European Parliament. With regard to soft euroscepticism, Syriza (Greece) and Fidesz (Hungary) won their elections and the Conservative Party (UK) and Law and Justice (Poland) came as a second force.⁹

Table 1.2 Soft and hard euroscepticism after 2014 elections

Parties in the European Parliament	Number of seats (%)	Number of parties (%)
Soft euroscepticism	125 (16.64%)	30 (16.3%)
Hard euroscepticism	82 (10.92%)	16 (8.67%)
Other political forces	544 (72.44%)	138 (75%)
Total	751 (100%)	184 (100%)

Source: Yves Bertoncini, Nicole Koenig, *Euroscepticism or Europhobia: Voice vs. Exit?*, 2014

Prior to the election, the number of people with negative opinions about the EU increased significantly. The best way to illustrate their involvement in the European politics is by comparing the turnout, which dropped from 62% in 1979 to 42.54% in 2014. Because of the worst economic and political crisis in the history, which started shortly after the 2007 Global Financial Crisis, the

⁸ European Policy Center, "Post-European Parliament Elections Analysis," (2014).

⁹ Yves Bertoncini, Nicole Koenig, "Euroscepticism or Europhobia: Voice vs. Exit?," *Notre Europe. Jacques Delors Institute* (November 2014).

atmosphere in Europe deteriorated rapidly, thus making the eurosceptic parties stronger. The results of the European elections, presented in the table above, precisely show the dimension and strength of the increasing euroscepticism. Of course, the 16.64% of soft and 10.92% of hard eurosceptic parties' members did not emerge out of thin air. Most of them, like a National Front of Marine Le Pen, were established a long time ago. However, given the current unfavorable economic and political situation, they have been gaining popularity little by little, which eventually led to an electoral win.

The influx of populists, radicals, extremists and anti-establishment politicians to the European Parliament means that the battle between the “more Europe” camp versus “less Europe” camp has officially begun. Looking at the statistics, which indicate that 72.44% of members come from the first camp, we should assume that the eurosceptic camp is doomed to fail. However, their entrance to the European Parliament means that as the representative of the EU, they can more broadly promote their views and opinions. They will most certainly exert pressure on public opinion concerning the “less Europe” project, which is the primary aim of soft eurosceptic parties. The others, like the UK Independence Party and National Front, want to demolish the EU's structures and reputation as well as “turning the European Parliament into a self-hating parliament”.¹⁰ What should also concern international observers is the impact of the 2014 European election on the national election of all member states. To attract voters, some parties, like the Conservative Party in UK, chose a more eurosceptic path by calling for a referendum for withdrawal from the EU.

Nowadays, the pro-EU camp has to deal not only with current problems, including the eurozone crisis, immigration issues, etc., but also with the eurosceptic parties that have become increasingly stronger. As one of the article suggests, “Liberal-democrat forces should be wary of any impulse to press the fast-forward button”¹¹ because the consequences may be more serious than we can foresee at the moment.

10 Jose Ignacio Torreblanca, Mark Leonard, “The Continentwide Rise of Euroscepticism,” *The European Council on Foreign Relations*, (2013).

11 João Carlos Espada, “The missing debate”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 25, No. 4 (2014): pp. 88-95.

1.4 Methodology

Most democratic institutions have jointly emphasized the importance of using diplomacy in solving international conflicts and reaching an agreement through several negotiation stages. The history of the EU represents the role of bargaining between member states and its final success. Since the beginning of the EU, countries have been under pressure to develop a secure and peaceful Europe. In the initial stage, it used to be relatively easy to pass and revolutionize the EU's structures because it only had six member states and the common goal to create an institution that would last. As the EU grew, it became increasingly difficult to reach common agreements on several debated issues. It would be naive to say that all the treaties were signed immediately when presented to the EU leaders. History shows that the Lisbon Treaty in particular was extremely difficult to pass given the differing stances of most member states. In the end, thanks to the countries' willingness to negotiate and reach a compromise the treaty was signed after several negotiations stages in 2007. That shows that international bargaining does matter and finding diplomatic solutions is the best way to satisfy participants.

In 1988, Robert Putnam introduced the Two-level games theory, which focuses on the role of international negotiation. He understands the two-level games to mean international and domestic policy. Both positions are extremely important in reaching the final agreements and solving many issues between involved actors. To lead the successful negotiation, the political leader (Prime Minister, President etc.) needs to take under consideration the international and domestic factors and demands. He or she takes part in the negotiation and attends to reach the best possible agreement that would satisfy both levels. Most of the time, the demands the political leader faces during international bargaining are divergent and he or she must be involved in simultaneous negotiations at both the international and domestic level.¹²

12 Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: the Logic of Two-Level Games," (1988).



Figure 1.1 The description of the level I and level II policy

The best example of failure in satisfying both international and domestic demands is the Greek bailout negotiation of 2015. The Greek PM was elected by his voters mainly due to his open criticism of the conditions set by the EU to provide yet another loan to revitalize the Greek economy. During the negotiations, he was not weighed down by the pressure from the EU to accept the proposal and was not willing to negotiate a better deal. He realized that if he had accepted the conditions set by the EU, he would have been torn apart by his domestic voters. As a result of the failed negotiations, Greece came very close to bankruptcy. Alexis Tsipras realized that the only way to save the Greek economy and remain in the eurozone was to sit one more time with the eurozone leaders and reach an agreement, which they eventually did. Consequently, he fulfilled the requirements of the first level by satisfying the international counterparts, but he failed to secure the domestic interests, which resulted in his dismissal from the position of the Greek PM. It should be stated that the Greek situation was extremely difficult to settle since both parties did not have ample time for negotiations, which resulted in one side getting less from the agreement than expected.

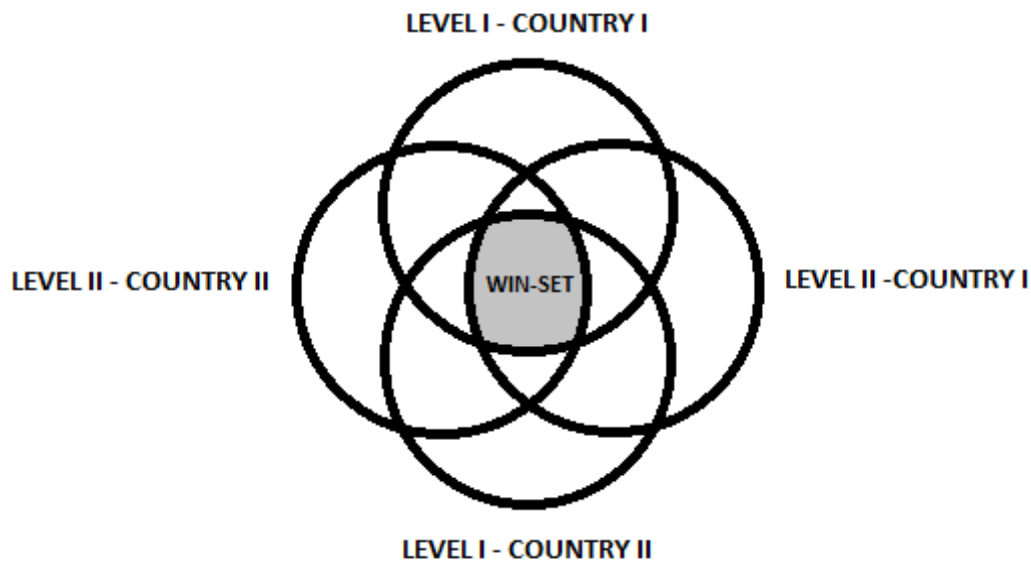


Figure 1.2 The win-set strategy depending on the international and domestic interests

Successful negotiation takes place when all actors involved reach a so-called “win-set” agreement. The entire process of international bargaining depends on the standpoint and influence of domestic voters. The higher their expectations the more difficult it is to satisfy them. This may result in the loss of their political support (in the case of reaching an unfavorable deal) or failure to sign any agreement between the international actors. The state leader is constantly under pressure from the opposition in his or her country as well as international counterparts. However, what makes a politician great is his or her ability to compromise and come back with conditions acceptable on both the international and domestic levels. That is precisely the win-set strategy, which the Greek PM could not accomplish. During his campaign, his populist approach was noted across the EU and many observers did not believe that his proposals and promises would ever come to fruition because of objections from the EU leaders.

The author of this paper strongly believes that the strategy to confront the rise of euroscepticism in Europe should be based on the two-level games theory. The history of the EU has showed us many examples in which the member states, in the face of serious conflict, were able to reach a compromise through the negotiation process. Considering the fact that the EU countries do differ a great deal with regard to political rules, culture, tradition, and even religion, bargaining between them is always an arduous operation. Despite the differences, they must represent their nations on both an international and domestic level, which provides us yet another difficulty in achieving a binding agreement. If we consider the rise of euroscepticism as an issue to be dealt with by the EU, then solving this problem through several negotiation stages must be understood as a precise and highly complex surgery. The true challenge is finding a common way to satisfy all eurosceptic parties, or simply to diminish their popularity in their home countries. The European Commission must take into consideration the fact that no single equivalent model of euroscepticism can be applied to all political actors. We can encounter hard and soft eurosceptic parties which then can be further divided into the left-wing and right-wing. By applying the two-level games theory, the author of this paper tries to prove its efficiency in dealing with eurosceptic parties after the 2014 European Parliament Elections.

1.5 Outline of the thesis

“A Study of the Origins and Development of Euroscepticism in the European Union” is composed of six chapters, including the introduction and the conclusion, as the first and last chapter respectively. The table of contents was carefully designed to provide useful information in an appropriate order so that the reader can easily find the desired analysis and data. After the first, introduction chapter, the author presents the Historical Overview (chapter 2), Issues Contributing to Euroscepticism (chapter 3), A Proliferation of Eurosceptic Political Parties (chapter 4), Impact of the 2014 European Parliament Election (chapter 5), and the Conclusion (chapter 6).

The second chapter of this thesis focuses on the historical background of euroscepticism. The main goal of this chapter is to provide a clear information about the beginning of the anti-EU movement within the EU. In the first section, the author examines the development of the EU's structures through several treaties signed by each member state. These agreements are presented to illustrate the process of creating a federal Europe and the constant desire for an “ever closer union”. Undeniably, this particular research enables us to understand the emergence of euroscepticism in 1985, as well as its later development. It was at this moment when many European politicians started to criticize the EU for its forward-looking ideas of federal Europe creation. One of these critics was the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, whose speech in Bruges is analyzed in the second section of this chapter. If not for her appearance in the College of Europe, the term euroscepticism would not have been well known at that time. As Prime Minister, she openly attacked the European Commission's ideas and opposed to the forward-looking centralization of Europe. Needless to say, the content of her speech in Bruges is considered to be the solid foundation of the eurosceptic party's ideology.

The third chapter outlines the current European issues, which have influenced the rise of euroscepticism in Europe. The first section presents the ongoing immigration problem in the EU. It

regards Europeans who seek new jobs in other member states, as well as the refugee crisis, which gained momentum in 2015. As an example, the British Conservative Party is opposed to these immigrants, who comes from the Schengen area in order to find better work, and even calls for withdrawal from the EU on the basis of this phenomenon. The other parties, especially those from Central and Eastern Europe do not want to receive any Syrian refugees because of their security concerns. The second section explains the aftermath of the 2007-2008 Global Financial Crisis and its effects on the European economy. Many member states were in a devastated financial condition that could not be solved without aid from the IMF and the EU. To revitalize their economies, the governments had no other options but to implement painful reforms in the social and financial sectors. Needless to say, such conditions were essential in saving the eurozone from disintegration. The reforms were met with great criticism from the public, resulting in the rise of eurosceptic parties that opposed this method of obtaining financial aid from international creditors. The third section discusses the security aspect that gained significance during the Ukrainian Crisis. This particular event divided eurosceptic parties into the two camps. The Polish Law and Justice is a perfect example of the first camp, which criticizes the EU for its ineffective commitment in solving the situation in Eastern Ukraine. Countries located near the conflict area are afraid that they might be the next target of the aggressive policies of Vladimir Putin, hence the criticism of the EU. The second camp is represented by political parties such as Fidesz or SYRIZA, which oppose the economic sanctions on the Russian Federation. They have strong relations with the Russian government and in their opinion, the EU policy is detrimental to their economies.

The fourth chapter focuses on the comparative perspective of eurosceptic parties. Most importantly, the classification of eurosceptism introduced by Szczerbiak and Taggart provides us with essential information about the differing ideologies. Subsequently, the author of this thesis gives many examples of the eurosceptic parties and their attitudes towards the EU and explores the likelihood of their promises coming true. This part, however trivial it might seem, shows the

complexity of euroscepticism, which varies across on member states. Moreover, the example of the UK as an eurosceptic country is also included in this part of thesis.

The fifth chapter consists of an analysis of the 2014 European Parliamentary Elections. In the history of the EU, Europeans have never elected so many eurosceptic politicians which only emphasizes the social and economic dissatisfaction in many member states. This part explores voters of the eurosceptic parties. Moreover, it focuses on the role of the newly elected eurosceptic politicians inside the European Parliament and their power to shape the EU's policies. Finally, the author juxtaposes the 2014 elections with those in 2009 ones and gives an idea of how to deal with the rise of euroscepticism in Europe.

The final chapter concludes all the findings included in this paper. Through the in-depth analysis of euroscepticism, the author summarizes his exploration based on three research questions posed at the beginning of this work. Subsequently, he suggests which part of his paper requires a further examination in order to solve the problem of eurosceptic movement in the EU.

Chapter 2. Historical Overview

*We hope to see a Europe where men of every country will think of being a European as of belonging to their native land, and ... wherever they go in this wide domain ... will truly feel, 'Here I am at home.'*¹³

Winston Churchill, 1948

It was 1948 when the British Prime Minister - Winston Churchill delivered memorable speech at the Congress of Europe that underlined the idea of European identity. Three years after the end of World War II, he emphasized the significance of the peace in Europe and his desire to build a united European family. What is more, he was not the only one who expressed aspirations for this particular project. Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Bronisław Geremek once said: “We have Europe. Now we need Europeans”,¹⁴ which called for common support on the part of European leaders. Most of them, following the example of the American Dream, wanted to create its European equivalent. Step by step, following guidelines set by the European Union, they provided their citizens with an extraordinary opportunity to live in a united community. However, it would be naive to think that this could last forever. For the past several years, the EU has encountered many impediments, in which the emergence of the eurosceptic movement lies. In order to analyze what has contributed to the rise of euroscepticism in Europe, the author presents a historical perspective, including the EU treaties and Margharet Thatcher speech in the College of Europe.

13 Gareth Harding, “The Myth of Europe,” (2012).

14 Centrum im. Profesora Bronisława Geremka, “Europa: Pomiędzyintegracją a integryzmem,” (2013).

2.1 European Union treaties and the rise of euroscepticism

It can be stated that the EU is a special creation that must constantly move forward, develop, and make Europe a better place to live. If it stops, this may signal the beginning of the end for this politico-economic union.

Table 2.1 The development of the EU's structures

Year	Treaty/Agreement	Aim
1951	Paris Treaty	Establishing the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC)
1957	Rome Treaty	Creation of the European Economic Community
1985	Schengen Agreement	Formation of Europe's borderless Schengen Area
1986	Single European Act	Establishing the Single Market
1992	Maastricht Treaty	Creation and introduction of the euro as a common European currency
1997	Amsterdam Treaty	Increase of power of the European Parliament and works on foreign and security policy
2001	Nice Treaty	Preparation of the eastward expansion
2007	Lisbon Treaty	Formation of the EU as it is at the moment

Source: Staab Andreas, *The European Union explained*, Indiana University Press, 2011

Undoubtedly, the Paris Treaty can be labeled as the beginning of the European Union. Signed in 1951 by Belgium, France, West Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands (also called as “The Six”), the treaty aimed to sustain economic stability (based on the coal and steel production) and peace. Many International Political Economy and International Relations researchers strongly believe that countries that have economic ties with each other are less likely to enter into war with one another. This could not be more accurate. Since 1951, the states forming the EU have never been in military conflicts with other member nations.

Six years later, the political leaders of the European Coal and Steel Community decided to expand the economic opportunities and signed the Rome Treaty in 1957. This resulted in the creation of the European Economic Community.

The Community shall be based upon a customs union covering the exchange of all goods and comprising both the prohibition, as between Member States, of customs duties on importation and exportation and all charges with equivalent effect and the adoption of a common customs tariff in their relations with third countries.¹⁵

The Rome Treaty was a milestone in transforming the whole European Community and marked the beginning of the “ever closer union”. On 14 June 1985, one of the most important agreements was signed by Belgium, France, West Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands – the Schengen Agreement. Their objective was to allow for the free movement of citizens within the European continent while abolishing passport and border controls. The agreement was implemented in 1995, and since that time, 26 member states have joined the Schengen area. Nowadays, many Europeans take great advantage of this system and consider it to be one of the biggest achievements of the EU. On the other hand, the agreement became one of the main “enemies” of hard eurosceptic political parties in Europe.

The next stage in the development of the EU was the Single European Act, signed in 1986 which created a crucial EU Single Market. From that moment on, all the member states could enjoy the free movement of goods, capital, services, and people, commonly known as the “four freedoms”. All 28 member states plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway (European Economic Area), and Switzerland (bilateral treaties) boast the largest GDP in the world and a 20% global share in exports and import.¹⁶ It goes without saying, the creation of the EU Single Market is considered to

¹⁵ CVCE, “Treaty establishing the European Economic Community (Rome, 25 March 1957).”

¹⁶ European Commission, “The European Union Explained: Internal Market,” (2014).

be one of the three greatest accomplishments of the EU.

In February 1992, member states decided to move forward and attempt to integrate European countries even more than the Schengen Agreement and Single European act already had. Twelve EU countries decided to sign the Maastricht Treaty introducing a single European currency – the euro. Nowadays, 19 EU member states use euro as their national currency (eurozone), 9 countries such as Andorra, Monaco, San Marino, etc. use it in terms of monetary agreements, and Kosovo and Montenegro use it unilaterally. Moreover, they established the three pillars of the EU: European Community (EC), the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), and the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). Many European leaders showed a desire to extend the potential of the EU in the fields of foreign, military, criminal and justice policy in order to strengthen the EU's position in the world. Subsequently, member states signed the Amsterdam Treaty in 1997, which extended European Parliament power over the areas mentioned in the Maastricht Treaty while focusing more on the rights of European citizens.

The next big step for the EU was the Nice Treaty of 2001. The main objective of this particular agreement was to prepare, transform and reform the EU's structures and institutions for the biggest enlargement in its history. Accession of the eight former Eastern Block and Yugoslavia countries and two Mediterranean islands forced the current EU to adapt to many extreme changes brought by these less developed countries. To shape the EU as it is now, 28 member states had to sign the Treaty of Lisbon in 2007 (so far the last EU treaty). With regard to the treaty's main objectives, it established a constitution of Europe by giving “more power for the European Parliament, change of voting procedures in the Council, citizens' initiative, a permanent president of the European Council, a new High Representative for Foreign Affairs, a new EU diplomatic service.”¹⁷

Based on the treaties and agreements signed by EU representatives over the past 60 years, one might conclude that they have stayed true to the idea of establishing an “ever closer union”.

¹⁷ European Union, “EU treaties.”

Undoubtedly, Schengen area, Single Market, and the euro were the greatest contributions to that project. Many EU leaders strongly believe that Europeans need to wait a long time before another treaty is signed. In their opinions, the EU has reached the point where having a closer union than it does right now may derive more harm than benefit.

The question to which the author wishes to respond in this part of the thesis, concerns the connection between the EU's treaties and the emergence of euroscepticism, as well as the relevance of the two-level games theory in forming the EU's structure. As was mentioned at the beginning of this section, the EU is a special creation that must constantly move forward, develop, and make Europe a better place to live. By signing treaties and agreements, European politicians have created a special union that has not been achieved in any other region around the world. It is not difficult to imagine that such a “federalization” of Europe does have its opposition. Strictly speaking, many eurosceptic figures criticized many of the treaties because they contributed to the democratic deficit. Before 1985, the term euroscepticism did not even exist. It emerged when the European Commission decided to pursue the project of an “ever closer union” through the signing of the Schengen agreement, Maastricht Treaty, Nice Treaty etc. The development of euroscepticism is inherently linked to the development of the EU itself. If we look at the main points opposed by eurosceptic parties, we then realize that these all concern the ideas implemented after 1985.

The project of an “ever closer union” is impossible without the signatures of all member states. To ratify agreements, each EU country must accept and follow the conditions outlined in the documents. Reaching a compromise has always been an extremely difficult task since there has been increasingly more states with differing interests and attitudes that have joined the EU. As the two-level games theory says, the government must attain the win-set agreement by satisfying its voters on both the international and domestic levels. The best examples to illustrate the success of such negotiation are the Schengen agreement and the Maastricht Treaty. The eurosceptic United Kingdom has never expressed its desire to join the Schengen area nor the monetary union. The

British Prime Minister had no other option than to negotiate with the European Commission regarding conditions to satisfy both parties. As a result, some countries in the EU can occasionally agree on the opt-outs from treaties and agreements implemented by the EU. Subsequently, the UK and Ireland are not the part of the Schengen area, the UK and Denmark are not in the monetary union, etc. This example shows how the two-level games theory turned out to be a success in helping eurosceptic countries ratify EU treaties and agreements.



2.2 The Thatcher speech

The literature says that the term 'Euroscepticism' was introduced for the first time by the British newspaper – *The Times* in November 1985.¹⁸ However, it was on 20 September 1988 in Bruges, when the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was invited to deliver a lecture about the European Community that this word gained popularity. At the very beginning of her speech she stated: “Mr. Chairman, you have invited me to speak on the subject of Britain and Europe. Perhaps I should congratulate you on your courage. If you believe some of the things said and written about my views on Europe, it must seem rather like inviting Genghis Khan to speak on the virtues of peaceful coexistence!”.¹⁹ Initially, even those uninterested in the European politics could observe one fascinating fact – Margaret Thatcher was a eurosceptic who opposed many ideas that the Commission had proposed to its member states at the time. This is why her presence in the notable pro-EU College of Europe was especially surprising.

The first part started much “friendlier” than many people anticipated. The PM delivered some historical information about the role of Great Britain in Europe, especially concerning the British contribution in sustaining peace after World War I and World War II. However, at the end of her thought she touched on a very controversial topic – common European identity, in saying: “The European Community is *one* manifestation of that European identity, but it is not the only one.”²⁰ Thatcher emphasized that every country has a unique culture, language and tradition. This is what defines ones as British, Spanish, Polish or Swedish and European Community must reflect the aspirations of each country.

“Europe will be stronger precisely because it has France as France, Spain as Spain, Britain as Britain, each with its own customs, traditions and identity. It would be folly to try to fit them into some sort of identikit European personality.”²¹ Her speech took place following the signing of the

18 European Sources Online, “Information Guide: Euroscepticism,” *Cardiff University*, (2013).

19 Margaret Thatcher Foundation, “Speech to the College of Europe (“The Bruges Speech”),” (1988).

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

Schengen Agreement and the Single European Act. She knew about the ideas and suggestions that the following Maastricht Treaty might bring and she was strongly opposed to them. Great Britain and Margaret Thatcher did not want to adopt the euro as their currency, nor did they want a centralized power in Brussels. She added that Europeans in the sense of common interest, can speak with the same voice to achieve benefits in the international field and that they do not need the EU to speak on behalf of every member state. “The Community will only damage itself in the eyes of its own people and the outside world if that courage is lacking.”²² Thatcher continued while criticizing the Community budget spending. Above all, she supported the Single Market but she still wanted to move forward to develop the EU potential in terms of the economy.

With regard to the idea of the Schengen area, she admitted that European leaders should make it easier for people and goods to cross borders, but “it is a matter of plain common sense that we cannot totally abolish frontier controls if we are also to protect our citizens from crime and stop the movement of drugs, of terrorists and of illegal immigrants”.²³ The last matter of her address concerned the involvement of the European countries in a common defense system. She stated that the reliance on NATO was the best thing that could happen to Europe. According to her, relying on each country's self-defense mechanism is pointless because it will not result in any success.

This is the speech from which most soft eurosceptic political parties gathered their ideas. Thatcher elaborated on to most of the principles of the EU and criticized them in her own way. Thatcher did not advocate for the creation of a European Super State nor a common European identity. She did not wish to establish The United States of Europe because Europeans are different from Americans. Europeans have different cultures, languages, traditions and putting into the one box and transforming a British, Italian, or Belgian into “European” would not make sense. She was not opposed to the idea of a European Community in itself, but she did oppose to the idea of an “ever closer union”.

22 Margaret Thatcher Foundation, “Speech to the College of Europe (“The Bruges Speech”),” (1988).

23 Ibid.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter concluded that the development of euroscepticism is inherently linked to the development of the EU itself. All treaties, signed by member states, are bound to the ever-closer union project, which is highly criticized by eurosceptic parties. Most of the eurosceptic parties are opposed to centralized power in Brussels, Schengen area, the euro as a common currency, future expansion, and other ideas implemented through European integration process. However, even the greatest projects come with an opposition from the society, so the emergence of the euroscepticism through the development of the EU should not be a surprise.

Based on the historical background, one may state that despite of many disparities, the EU member states have always found a way to pass arguable projects. Through negotiations, political leaders have agreed on the terms included in EU's treaties, both at international and domestic levels by securing win-set agreements. Finally, the speech of Margaret Thatcher, presented in this chapter, gives another insight into the development of euroscepticism in the EU. The criticism of the core EU's achievements, delivered by such an eminent politician, was spread across Europe making soft eurosceptic parties more visible than they used to be before.

Chapter 3. Issues Contributing to Euroscepticism

Back in 1988, when Margaret Thatcher delivered her speech at the College of Europe in Bruges, nobody could have predicted that eurosceptic ideology would rise in power after the 2014 European Parliament election. At that time it was the UK government that criticized the EU for their forward looking ideas and called for a less unified Europe. However, before 1988 the EU was composed of only 12 member states while now this number has increased to 28 countries, thus making it more difficult to reach common compromises on several important matters. When the European Commission could not find solutions for emerging problems, eurosceptic political parties saw their chance to attack and finally share their ideology with the public. Subsequently, soft eurosceptic parties called for an immediate reform of the EU's structures and highlighted every mistake the European Commission had made while trying to solve the ongoing crisis. On the other hand, the hard eurosceptic parties' political program has focused on destroying the EU's structure and ideology from within. They have not been eager to cooperate nor find a common solution for the current problems simply because it has not been in their interest to assist the EU, especially seeing that they are opposed to all that the EU represents.

In this chapter of the paper, the author analyzes European and international issues that contributed to the rise of eurosceptic supporters in the EU. Following the introduction, he presents the 2015 European refugee crisis, the 2009 eurozone crisis, and the 2013 Ukraine crisis as three main events that have largely affected the EU's matters in the past several years. In each case, the author of this paper explains the significance of two-level games theory while solving European issues. Refugees quotas to resettle asylum seekers across the EU, bailout programs to save the economies of countries in crisis, and finally the Minsk agreement to establish a ceasefire in Ukraine are all taken under consideration in this chapter. The success or failure of said solutions would undeniably affect eurosceptic parties and their levels of support in EU member states.

Table 3.1 Trust in the European Union in 2010 and 2014

Country	2010	2014
European Union 28	42%	35%
Austria	41%	31%
Belgium	57%	40%
Bulgaria	61%	54%
Croatia	-	41%
Cyprus	42%	26%
Czech Republic	50%	29%
Denmark	61%	35%
Estonia	68%	44%
Finland	50%	34%
France	39%	38%
Germany	37%	36%
Greece	42%	22%
Hungary	55%	33%
Ireland	44%	41%
Italy	42%	30%
Latvia	40%	34%
Lithuania	54%	48%
Luxembourg	52%	42%
Malta	54%	43%
Netherlands	53%	35%
Poland	52%	52%
Portugal	45%	30%
Romania	56%	55%
Slovakia	47%	30%
Slovenia	65%	40%
Spain	43%	25%
Sweden	43%	42%
United Kingdom	20%	23%

Source:

Standard Eurobarometer 73, Spring 2010

Standard Eurobarometer 81, Spring 2014

Based on the data collected by the Standard Eurobarometer, trust in the EU drastically declined between 2010 and 2014. Surprisingly, the only country that noted a slight increase of trust was the eurosceptic UK, whose result is still far from being positive at 23%. In 2014, statistics show that citizens from only three member states have a high level of confidence in the EU, while other countries' level of distrust remains quite high. This overall decline in trust has made it possible for eurosceptic political parties to convince their voters to support their ideology and liberate their nations from the EU's structures. Surprisingly for the European political elites, some of them succeeded during the general and European elections.



3.1 Immigration

Many eurosceptic political leaders have called for their nations to withdraw from the Schengen area, an area that they believe has been the cause of many problems, including the current European refugee situation. There were two main factors that contributed to the increase in criticism of the free movement of people in the EU. The first factor was the rise of immigration within the EU in order to find better paid jobs in other member states, while the second factor was the 2011 European migrant crisis. These two cases represent completely different motivations based on which people decided to emigrate to other countries. Nevertheless, immigration is deeply related to the idea of the Schengen area and when it intensifies, it becomes a tool used by eurosceptic politicians to win over the peoples' votes.

The first aforementioned issue primarily concerns Western European member states that provide opportunities to Central and Eastern Europeans to earn more money than they could possibly make in their home countries. As a result, many Polish, Hungarian and other Europeans who joined Schengen area in 2007 have chosen Sweden, Norway, UK, the Netherlands, and Germany as their new destinations to find well-paid jobs. Oftentimes, working abroad means paying taxes to and adopting the cultural practices of the state in which they currently reside. As a result, a majority of the migrant workers are entitled to the same social benefits as the local people. The primary criticism of eurosceptic politicians concerns those immigrants that take advantage of their national systems and exploit their social funds, as well as the number of people that emigrate in order to find well-paid jobs. Eurosceptic parties have expressed their disapproval toward Schengen area, which they claim makes it difficult for their own citizens to work in their own countries because all of the jobs have already been procured by foreigners. In reality, while it has been confirmed that some Central and Eastern Europeans take advantage of national systems and social funds, there is only an insignificant percentage of foreign workers who exploit government

welfare. The majority of immigrants actually do pay taxes and contribute to the society in which they are currently living. Moreover, many eurosceptic political parties accuse foreign workers of taking every possible job opportunity at the expense of the local people. In reality, most locals do not apply for these jobs because of their low salaries and lack of opportunities for future career growth. Many employers admit that they prefer to hire cheap labor from Central or Eastern Europe simply because they are well-qualified, hardworking, and skillful workers. Unfortunately, some people still remain uninformed about the reality of the situation and openly express their disapproval toward immigration policy, thus making them potential eurosceptic party voters.

The aftermath of the 2011 Libyan and Syrian Civil Wars (2011 – present) has been devastating for the European continent. Military intervention in Libya, led by NATO forces succeeded in abolishing Muammar Gaddafi's dictatorship and appointing a new, temporary government. This event can be characterized by a sarcastic saying concerning international security and defense - “Be nice to America, or we'll bring democracy to your country.” The establishment of democracy in a country previously ruled by a ruthless dictator is always welcomed by the international society. However, when a country or alliance decides to enact a military intervention and institute a new democratic government, it must be certain that state is prepared for a new political system that will last for many years. Unfortunately, this was not the case for Libya. The withdrawal of the NATO coalition led to yet another Libyan Civil War that has continued to the present. The Syrian case is quite similar but there was no military intervention because of UN disapproval, one of the main factors being Russia's alliance with the Syrian regime. These two major civil wars resulted in an extreme influx of refugees from those regions into the EU. Needless to say, once the possibility of illegal emigration proved highly successful, many people from African countries decided to leave their home and try to reach the EU borders. Most refugees decided to take the sea route to reach Europe on overwhelmingly overloaded ferries. Several migrant vessel incidents that resulted in an estimated 4000 deaths have already been reported.²⁴ In

²⁴ NBC News, “Sea of Death: Many Migrants Drown Trying to Reach Italy,” (April 2015).

November 2014, the European Commission under Italian control decided to begin Operation Triton to prevent the escalation of illegal emigration. The entire mission is now being extended for 2015-2016 with a budget of €120 million.²⁵

Table 3.2 Asylum applicants (including first time asylum applicants), Q1 2014 – Q1 2015

Country	Asylum applicants
Germany	247 500
Sweden	81 280
Hungary	73 590
Italy	69 350
France	63 985
Austria	34 155
United Kingdom	31 605

Source: Eurostat

Those refugees who are lucky enough to endure the journey to reach the European continent often choose well developed EU countries as their final destinations. Because of the Dublin Regulation signed in 2013 the EU member states are obliged to receive and then examine the asylum seekers who pursue international protection. This regulation states that the “common policy on asylum, including a Common European Asylum System (CEAS), is a constituent part of the European Union’s objective of progressively establishing an area of freedom, security and justice open to those who, forced by circumstances, legitimately seek protection in the Union.”²⁶ Problems arises when the number of refugees seeking asylum in EU countries exceeds the number that they can accept. In response, the European Commission submitted a proposal to alter the immigration quotas for all EU member states. However, this solution was highly criticized by some member states, especially the Visegrad group. Consequently, Poland and Slovakia announced that they would only accept Christian emigrants, and Hungary decided to build a fence along its border with Serbia.

²⁵ EurActiv, “NGOs: Migration summit fell short of expectations,” (April 2015).

²⁶ Official Journal of the European Union, “Regulations (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013,” (June 2013).

*The clear demand for the rapid implementation of a common EU migration and asylum policy, to be confirmed in a vote in the European parliament, would be wholly unacceptable to a United Kingdom that already has levels of immigration that are too high, and as Isis have previously threatened, could lead to half a million Islamic extremists coming to our countries and posing a direct threat to our civilisation.*²⁷

Nigel Farage (UKIP)

For eurosceptic political parties, the migrant crisis served as a confirmation of their ideology, which describes the Schengen area as a defective creation. Eurosceptic leaders declined to accept refugees because their countries were already dealing with problems regarding job-seeking emigrants (the UK, the Netherlands, and France), they had limited financial resources (Italy, Hungary, and Greece), or they simply did not want to grant the asylum for people who claimed Islam as their religion (Poland and Slovakia). Surprisingly, these leaders have plenty of supporters among the EU member states concerning the issue of non-EU immigration. In the end, the resettlement plan was accepted by the EU while only four countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia) voted against it, and one – Finland, abstained. However, the European Commission was prepared to deal with this criticism. What happened later made the immigration crisis even more difficult to solve, simply because of the increasing number of Europeans opposed to the EU's current refugee policy undermined their overall national security.

On the evening of 13 November 2015, the whole world was shocked by the events that took place in Paris. Nine perpetrators, all affiliated with ISIS, conducted terrorist attacks in six different locations in the French capital, which resulted in a total of 130 fatalities. The international community condemned the actors responsible for this act of terror and promised further actions aimed at the fight against ISIS. As it was revealed later, seven of the perpetrators were holding EU passports (five French and two Belgian) and were of Arabic origin. Another two terrorists crossed the EU borders along with thousands of refugees from Syria. This revelation attracted global attention and raised concerns about the overall national security of EU member states during the migrant crisis. In the face of the Paris attacks, Francois Hollande

²⁷ Rowena Mason, "Nigel Farage: EU response to migrant boat crisis would bring jihadis to UK," *The Guardian*, (2015).

declared a state of emergency in France and restored border controls in order to minimize the likelihood of future attacks by ISIS supporters. Eurosceptic Marine Le Pen criticized the actions of the French president, proclaiming that “without borders, neither protection nor security are possible”.²⁸ The leader of the National Front had repeatedly emphasized that Schengen area had no reasonable chance for success and the terrorist attacks in Paris served as perfect support for her statement. Many European governments realized that the number of refugees crossing their borders was indeed too high for them to manage. Before the Paris attacks, Germany was the first country to restore passport controls, largely focusing on the German-Austrian border. Following this event, Austria followed suit with another neighboring country – Slovenia.²⁹ At the same time, Sweden gave special attention to people coming across Öresund Bridge from Denmark by checking their identity documents.³⁰ Undeniably, actions taken by member states' governments to restore temporary border controls were based on the obligation to secure their citizens against the influx of potential terrorists into their countries. In accordance with the Schengen agreement, these kinds of security methods are approved by the European Commission, but only for a short period of time. In other circumstances, such measures would undermine the effectiveness of the Schengen area itself.

The events of November 2015 had a tremendous effect on French regional elections on the 6th and 13th of December 2015. Needless to say, the main focus of the various political campaign turned out to be national security. The Eurosceptic National Front could not have imagined a better time to attack one of the EU's greatest achievements – the Schengen agreement, and to increase their popularity in France. Their campaign was characterized by anti-Islamic, anti-immigration, and anti-EU slogans, which day by day gained growing popularity, especially in rural areas. On December 6, the National Front shocked the whole European community by securing yet another victory at the national level, receiving 27.73% of the votes. The Union for a Popular Movement, led by Nicolas Sarkozy finished in second place (26.65%) and the Socialists came in third (23.12%).³¹ These results precisely show how the EU's refugee policy in member states contributes to making eurosceptic parties stronger in the national-level elections. However,

28 Anton Troianovski and Marcus Walker, “Paris Terror Attacks Transform Debate Over Europe’s Migration Crisis,” *The Wall Street Journal*, (November 2015).

29 Jeanette Minns and Matthew Karnitschnig, “Austria suspends Schengen,” *Politico*, (January 2016).

30 David Crouch, “Swedish border controls hit Öresund bridge commuters as well as refugees,” *The Guardian*, (January 2016).

31 The Ministry of the Interior (France).

what happened in the second round could be described as a crucial victory over euroscepticism in France. The Socialist party of Francois Hollande decided to withdraw their candidates in two provinces to increase chances of the Republicans securing the vote and prevent the National Front from taking control of the region. The results of the second round proved very disappointing for Marine Le Pen when it was revealed that of the 17 regions, the National Front did not win in any of them.

Another event that tremendously augmented popularity of eurosceptic parties took place during the 2015 New Year's Eve celebrations in Germany. Around 1500 sexual assaults were reported to the police in major cities like Cologne, Hamburg, Frankfurt, Dortmund, etc. According to the police reports, most of the assailants were of Arab origin, including several who came to Germany as refugees. Many European parties started to perceive Merkel's immigration policy as highly ineffective and her position as a new “iron-lady” was sharply undermined at both the international and national level. This event created yet another opportunity for eurosceptic political parties to attack refugees, who the party considered to be threats to their host societies.

Table 3.3 The 2014 European Parliament and the 2015 regional elections results in France

	2014 European Parliament election	2015 Regional elections*
National Front	24.86%	27.73%
Union for a Popular Movement	20.8%	26.65%
Socialist Party + Radical Party of the Left	13.98%	23.12%**
Democratic Movement + Union of Democrats and Independents	9.94%	---***

Source: Ministry of the Interior

* Results from the first round

** Socialist Party

*** Democratic Movement and Union of Democrats and Independents did not decide to run as a coalition during 2015 Regional election.

Table 3.4 The 2014 European Parliament election results and political party opinion poll in Germany

	2014 European Parliament election	Opinion poll (31 Jan 2016)
Christian Democratic Union + Christian Social Union	35.36%	34.9%
Social Democratic Party	27.27%	24.0%
Alliance '90/The Greens	10.7%	9.8%
Alternative for Germany	7.04%	11.2%

Source: German government and Sonntagsfrage-aktuell.de

Table 3.5 The 2014 European Parliament election results and political party opinion poll in Hungary

	2014 European Parliament election	Opinion poll (22–26 Jan 2016)
Fidesz	51.48%	45.0%
Jobbik	14.67%	22.0%
Hungarian Socialist Party	10.9%	14.0%
Democratic Coalition	9.75%	10.0%

Source: Valasztas.hu and Századvég

Table 3.6 The 2014 European Parliament election results and political party opinion poll in the Netherlands

	2014 European Parliament election	Opinion poll (04 Feb 2016)
Democrats 66	15.4%	12.4%
Christian Democratic Appeal	15.0%	13.0%
Party for Freedom	13.3%	20.9%
People's Party for Freedom and Democracy	12.0%	16.5%

Source: Parool.nl and Ipsos

Table 3.7 The 2014 European Parliament election results and political party opinion poll in Poland

	2014 European Parliament election	Opinion poll (14 Jan 2016)
Civic Platform	32.13%	14.0%
Law and Justice	31.78%	30.0%
Democratic Left Alliance – Labor Union	9.44%	5.0%
Congress of the New Right	7.15%	4.0%
Nowoczesna	---*	27.0%

Source: PKW and MillwardBrown

* Nowoczesna did not participate in 2014 European Parliament election

Table 3.8 The 2014 European Parliament election results and political party opinion poll in the United Kingdom

	2014 European Parliament election	Opinion poll (3-4 Feb 2016)
UK Independence Party	26.60%	18.0%
Labour Party	24.43%	29.0%
Conservative Party	23.05%	39.0%
Green Party of England and Wales	6.91%	3.0%

Source: BBC News and YouGov/The Times

According to the data collected, it can be concluded that since the 2014 European Parliament election, the prevalence of euroscepticism has not decreased. The tables above provide information from member states that are either opposed to or deeply involved in the EU's current refugee policy (France, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Poland and United Kingdom) with regard to political party support during the 2014 European Parliament election and at the beginning of 2016. Largely due to the events in 2015 and the lack of any effective solutions from the EU, hard eurosceptic political parties, such as the National Front, Alternative for Germany, Jobbik and Party for Freedom gained a lot of support, especially because of their anti-immigration campaigns. Considering the soft eurosceptic parties, it can be observed that Fidesz retained its position at the national level, the Conservative Party increased in popularity in the UK, and Law and Justice won the Polish parliamentary election in 2015.

In past three years, the European Commission has not only had to deal with the increase of popularity in eurosceptic parties in the Western part of Europe, but has also had to reckon with the stance of the so-called Visegrad Group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia). At present, Hungary and Poland are ruled by soft eurosceptic parties – Fidesz and Law and Justice respectively, and the Czech Republic and Slovakia by Socialists. Surprisingly, all of them share the same stance toward the EU's immigration policy, which requires them to accept enough refugees

meet the quotas imposed by the EU.^{32 33} Their common view emphasizes the remarkable fact that a single party does not have to be eurosceptic to promote policy goals represented by such political parties such as the National Front, the Party of Freedom, or the United Kingdom Independence Party. Understanding their position toward the EU's refugee's policy requires to comprehend the post-communist reality which makes euroscepticism in Central Europe different from its Western counterparts. Since 2014, the Visegrad Group has achieved remarkable development growth and society knows that it would not be possible without entering the EU. By gaining access to the Schengen area, Western European countries were able to open their doors to acquire cheap labor from Central Europe as they had done before.³⁴ They started their immigration policies because they needed to, not because they were forced to accept refugee quotas. Visegrad Group member states had never before had such an experience, hence their current opposition to the EU's immigration policy. They do not perceive relocation as a solution to reducing or stopping the influx of refugees. Instead, they want to convince their European counterparts that allocating financial aid and money to reinforcing external borders is better than granting asylum to each person who enters the Schengen area.³⁵ The Visegrad group's position in the EU, which was stronger after the 2015 Polish Parliamentary elections, would undeniably make the group more influential than it had been before. Lastly, the role of the Visegrad group in achieving binding agreements based on negotiations is essential in the EU. If the group expresses its opinion too aggressively, as it has previously, then engaging in a debate to reach a compromise on the refugee policy might turn out to be a failure. Czech, Hungarian, Polish and Slovakian Prime Ministers are refusing to accept refugees quotas because there is a public disagreement surrounding this issue within their respective countries. This

32 On 22 September 2015, three out of four member states of Visegrad Group (Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia) voted against refugees quotas imposed by the EU. Initially, Poland was expected to follow its Central European partners but ongoing parliamentary campaign forced Polish Prime Minister – Ewa Kopacz to accept this deal in order to attract voters with liberal views.

33 Ian Traynor and Patrick Kingsley, "EU governments push through divisive deal to share 120,000 refugees," *The Guardian*, (September 2015).

34 French government opened their labour market from workers from Northwest Africa, the UK for Indians, Germany for Turkish people, etc.

35 Radko Hokovský, "How migrants brought Central Europe together," *Politico*, (February 2016).

particular example demonstrates how complex negotiations based on two-level games can be. In the case of current Visegrad group's present conservative stance, the European Commission must put in more effort in order to reach a binding agreement at the international level.

Nowadays, both the Shengen agreement and the Dublin Regulation are under constant criticism by eurosceptic political parties. Hard eurosceptic parties accuse the European Commission of being unable to protect their own citizens from the influx of “dangerous” refugees, and as a result are decreasing national security. On the other hand, soft euroscepticism emphasizes that member states should not be obligated to accept asylum seekers in the number imposed by the EU. Moreover, countries such as Greece, Italy or Hungary are strongly opposed to one point of the Dublin Regulation, which states that “(...) the first Member State with which the application was lodged, the determining Member State shall become the Member State responsible,³⁶” and puts pressure on them to protect human rights and help immigrants. The problem of EU's immigration policy is deteriorating every day, which makes it more difficult and complex to solve. Before the Paris terrorist attacks and the New Year's Eve sexual assaults in Germany, Angela Merkel appeared to have everything under control. Merkel did not expect that her open refugee policy would encourage more asylum seekers to cross the EU's borders and choose Germany as their final destination. As a result, the German government had to close its border with Austria, send some refugees back to their home countries, and most importantly deal with national security threats that had increased significantly since the 31st of December. Moreover, lacking a proper solution, the EU renewed its dialogue with Turkey and offered €3bn in aid, visa-free travel to EU countries, and the prospect of revitalised EU membership talks.³⁷ This political move shows how desperate the EU is to put an end to the European migrant crisis, while simultaneously ignoring human rights violations in Turkey. The EU-Turkey “deal” refers to stopping and returning “irregular migrants” and

36 Official Journal of the European Union, “Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 Establishing the Criteria and Mechanism for Determining the Member State Responsible for Examining an Application for International Protection Lodged in One of the Member States by a Third-country National or a Stateless Person (Recast),” (June 2013).

37 Alex Barker, “Turkey and EU seal deal on cutting migration flows into Europe,” *Financial Times*, (November 2015).

“migrants not in need of international protection” in exchange for refugees to be resettled from Turkey.³⁸ Undeniably, this is an effective way to decrease the number of asylum seekers in the EU supported by all member states and eurosceptic parties, but the conditions of this agreements infringe upon one of the most important values of the EU – human rights.

As the data collection suggests, the immigration problem has made eurosceptic parties stronger than they were in 2014. Marine Le Pen states that the issue will “impoverish European nations and kill their civility forever,”³⁹ and Geert Wilders adds that “national borders must be closed across Europe to halt an 'Islamic invasion’”⁴⁰ while Nigel Farage argues that “Islamist extremists could cross the Mediterranean and gain access to the UK as a result of EU policy to address migrant boat crisis.”⁴¹ Needless to say, the EU has to respond to eurosceptic criticism forcefully and find the best solution that will satisfy European voters who tend to support political parties like the National Front, the Party of Freedom, or Law and Justice. Negotiations are arguably one of the best ways to reach a compromise between the socialists and conservatives, Western member states and the Visegrad Group or pro-EU and eurosceptic political camps concerning the current immigration crisis and to halt the increasing of popularity of euroscepticism in Europe. As President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, said, it is not only a “race against time to save the Schengen free-travel zone,”⁴² but also to save Europe from eurosceptic political parties. Lastly, it can be assumed that a successful solution to the refugee crisis would decrease criticism of the EU and the strength of euroscepticism in Europe. Chapter 4 proves that many eurosceptic political parties use the migrant crisis to attract as many conservative voter as they can. Depriving these eurosceptic parties of their most important source of criticism regarding the EU would almost certainly bring their rising popularity to a halt.

38 Franck Duvel, “The EU’s Deal With Turkey Is a No-Win Situation,” *Fortune*, (March 2016).

39 Breitbart London, “Marine Le Pen: Migrant Influx Will ‘Impoverish’ Europe,” (January 2016).

40 Ted Thornhill, “National borders must be closed across Europe to halt an 'Islamic invasion' says far-right Dutch politician Geert Wilders,” *Daily Mail*, (November 2015).

41 BBC News, “Nigel Farage: EU asylum plan could let in extremists,” (April 2015).

42 Matthew Holehouse, “Migrant crisis: European Council president Tusk warns Schengen on brink of collapse,” *The Telegraph*, (November 2015).

3.2 The eurozone crisis

*The euro is much more than just a currency; it is a symbol of European integration in every sense of the word.*⁴³

Dr. Willem F. Duisenberg, President of the European Central Bank

At present, most European citizens wonder about the future of the European Union and the eurozone. After 2007, when the Global Financial Crisis spread around the world, nobody could have imagined that many of the affected countries would still be facing economic instability in 2015. The change of political power in Greece, rise of euroscepticism, and the position of Germany as a regional hegemon have undoubtedly allowed Europeans to consider possibility of the EU's disintegration.

“If the Euro fails, then not only the currency fails... Europe will fail, and, with it, the idea of European unity.”⁴⁴ Since the establishment of the EU, politicians have had to face numerous social, security and most importantly economic problems. Fortunately for this institution, it has been able to survive difficult times and grow even bigger and stronger (in the history of EU there has not been a country that has ever left it). The current eurozone crisis has brought states closer to one another and showed smaller, economically damaged countries that they can rely on their European friends. However, we cannot assume that EU leaders will always work to prevent the collapse of the eurozone by taking care of members in crisis. Since the end of 2009, crisis has spread across the eurozone faster than most politicians could have expected. Due to excessive and sometimes ill-advised investments, as well as each country's relatively high public debt, the EU has had to revitalize Greek, Portuguese, Spanish, Irish and Cypriot economic stability to save them from going

43 Harding Gareth, *The Myth of Europe*, (2012).

44 Douglas Webber, “How likely is that the European Union will disintegrate? A critical analysis of competing theoretical perspectives”, *European Journal of International Relations*, (2013).

bankrupt. The Maastricht Treaty presented and implemented the extraordinary idea of a common currency. However, it did not secure eurozone states against potential economic threats. Economic crisis is like a disease – once it affects one country, the others can be easily infected as well.

The European Commission and EU member state leaders commonly agreed to offer financial support for the countries affected by crisis under the extremely important condition of enacting painful but necessary reforms to revitalize their economies. Some recipients, like Ireland and Portugal, successfully terminated their bailout programs by the end of 2014 while Greece and Cyprus had to cope with lasting problems. The most striking aftereffect was the unemployment rate in Greece and Spain – 26.5% and 24.5% respectively, and in other member states.⁴⁵ Painful reforms to revitalize the economy and the high unemployment rate were two main factors that gave rise to several eurosceptic parties in Europe and strengthened the existing ones. The best example illustrating one effect of the eurozone crisis on the emergence of eurosceptical parties were the Greek legislative elections in January 2015. SYRIZA led by Alexis Tsipras won the elections with 36.3% of the total votes, which showed the dissatisfaction of the Greek population with the painful reforms. When the results were revealed, the whole EU faced a serious question about the possibility of Greek withdrawal from the eurozone, commonly known as “Grexit”. Tsipras, after refusing requirements imposed by the IMF and the EU, announced a bailout referendum on the 27th of June 2015 questioning whether or not to agree with the IMF and EU proposal.

Capital controls, imposed when the ECB froze emergency liquidity assistance for the banks (ELA), are unlikely to be lifted for some time. So while the banks are open again, cash withdrawals will be limited to €420 per week. The reality is that Greece has not been normal for several years. The financial crisis hit Greece and its banks hard. The jobless rate is above 25% and youth unemployment is as high as 50%.⁴⁶

45 Eurostat, “Unemployment rate by sex and age groups - annual average, % “, (2015).

46 Paul Kirby, “Greece debt crisis: Has Grexit been avoided?,” *BBC News*, (2015).

Tsipras was elected because he promised the Greek nation that it would not be at the mercy of Germany and other EU member states. He convinced the Greek people that conditions proposed by the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank (European troika) were unacceptable and that they needed to be renegotiated. Sticking to his promise, he did not accept conditions imposed by the creditors, which resulted in temporal chaos in Greece. Subsequently, he proposed a bailout referendum on July 5, 2015, at which point the Greek society had to answer only one question:

*Should the agreement plan submitted by the European Commission, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund to the Eurogroup of 25 June 2015, and comprised of two parts which make up their joint proposal, be accepted?*⁴⁷

To begin, it must be stated that Greek government posed a highly unclear question to their citizens, which enabled political parties to sway voters to supporting their side. As a result, with a turnout of 62.15 %, 61.31% of them said NO to the creditors' proposal.⁴⁸ Nobody inside the EU was surprised by the results. It was quite obvious that when asking the whole nation whether it wanted to pay higher taxes or not, a majority would most certainly be opposed to the idea. From that moment on, Greece stood on the edge of bankruptcy and the worst possible scenario – the “Grexit”, seemed imminent. On July 13, eurozone leaders reached a critical agreement to save the Greek economy. After 17 hours of negotiations, Tsipras agreed to conditions imposed by the EU to receive a third bailout programme. He realized that it was the only way to save the Greek economy and remain in the eurozone, so he sat once more with the eurozone leaders and reached binding agreement. Consequently, he fulfilled the requirements of the first level by satisfying the international counterparts, but he failed to secure the domestic interests, which resulted in his

47 Alberto Nardelli, “Greek referendum: how voters interpret unclear question will decide outcome,” *The Guardian*, (2015).

48 Ministry of Interior, “Referendum July 2015”.

dismissal from the position of the Greek PM. It should be noted that the Greek situation was extremely difficult to settle because neither party had ample time for negotiations, resulting in one side gaining less from the agreement than expected.

The eurozone crisis revealed how fragile the EU might be. It was definitely one of the biggest factors contributing to the emergence of eurosceptic parties, which was especially evident after the 2014 European Parliament election. Most of the countries affected by the economic crisis had no choice but to accept the conditions imposed by the European Commission to revitalize their economies. This involved the implementation of extremely painful reforms which met with common disapproval from the respective societies. The aforementioned series of events elucidates how trust of the EU declined rapidly in many member states and made eurosceptic parties stronger than they were previously.

Many Europeans do not want to keep pouring money into saving Greece from its financial problems because they consider doing so to be a bottomless pit. Greece has already been given significant financial support, and unlike Spain and Portugal, it is not eager to proceed with the implementation of new reforms to revitalize its economy. However, EU member states must take responsibility for the Greek crisis. If the European Commission left the Greek government alone with the power of decision-making, Greece would be bankrupt at this moment. What is more important is the fear of the domino effect inside of the EU. Strictly speaking, what Greece decides will affect others within the monetary union. This is precisely why most eurosceptic political parties wish to leave the eurozone. They strongly believe that leaving would liberate their countries' economies from dependence on other member states. Moreover, they would eliminate possible spillovers of any financial crisis that may affect the EU in the future. What they leave unsaid are the economic disadvantages of exiting the eurozone. Only eurosceptic parties from economically stronger countries such as National Front, can afford to leave eurozone regardless of the economic disadvantages it would bring.

*I have been saying that since the French presidential election campaign. It is a difficult issue and I have taken a big risk. (...) If we don't all leave the euro behind, it will explode. Either there will be a popular revolt because the people no longer want to be bled out. Or the Germans will say: Stop, we can't pay for the poor anymore.*⁴⁹

Marine Le Pen, National Front

Moreover, the Global Financial Crisis of 2007 and the eurozone crisis destroyed the labor system in many EU member states. The unemployment rate drastically increased and people were forced to emigrate to other countries in order to find jobs. Politicians admitted that the only way to solve this problem would be through loans given by the EU and IMF under certain conditions. Spain, Portugal, Cyprus, Greece and others were obliged to enact painful reforms in order to revitalize their economy and decrease their unemployment rates. This proposal met with significant disapproval from the members of society, and at the same time made eurosceptic parties, who declined this kind of financial help, even stronger. Such reforms involved privatisation of the national grid, changes in taxation and the pension system, full implementation of automatic spending cuts, etc.

Table 3.9 The 2014 European Parliament and the 2012 legislative elections results in Greece

	2014 European Parliament election	2012 Legislative election
Coalition of the Radical Left	26.57%	26.89%
New Democracy	22.72%	29.66%
Golden Dawn	9.39%	6.92%
Olive Tree ⁵⁰ / Panhellenic Socialist Movement*	8.02%	12.28%

Source: Ministry of the Interior (Greece)

* In 2012 Greek legislative election, Panhellenic Socialist Movement ran independently

49 Mathieu von Rohr, "Interview with Marine Le Pen: 'I Don't Want this European Soviet Union'", *Der Spiegel*, (2014).

50 Olive Three was a coalition of Panhellenic Socialist Movement and other minor left political parties which ran together during 2014 European Parliament election.

Table 3.10 The 2014 European Parliament and the 2011 legislative elections results in Portugal

	2014 European Parliament election	2011 Legislative election	
Socialist Party	31.49%	28.05%	
Portugal Alliance (Social Democratic Party + People's Party)	27.73%	38.66%*	11.71%**
Democratic Unitarian Coalition	12.69%	7.9%	
Earth Party	7.15%	0.41%	
Left Bloc	4.56%	5.17%	

Source: Comissão Nacional de Eleições

* Social Democratic Party

** People's Party

Table 3.11 The 2014 European Parliament and the 2011 general elections results in Spain

	2014 European Parliament election	2011 General election
People's Party	26.09%	44.63%
Spanish Socialist Worker's Party	23.01%	28.76%
Plural Left	10.03%	6.92%
We Can (Podemos)	7.98%	---*

Source: Ministry of the Interior (Spain)

* We Can (Podemos) did not exist during 2011 Spanish general election

Table 3.12 The 2014 European Parliament election results and political party opinion poll in Italy

	2014 European Parliament election	8 October 2012 opinion poll
Democratic Party	40.81%	28.5%
Five Star Movement	21.15%	17.4%
Forza Italia	16.81%	18.0%
Lega Nord	6.15%	4.9%

Source: Ministry of the Interior (Italy) and Ipsos

According to the data collection, it can be concluded that from 2011 and 2012, when elections at the national level took place, until the 2014 European Parliament election, euroscepticism increased in Southern Europe. The tables above provide information from member states that were affected by the 2009 eurozone crisis and had to follow the painful reform plans imposed by the EU (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain). They compare political party support during the 2014 European Parliament election with the 2011 national elections in Portugal and Spain, the 2012 legislative election in Greece and political party's support opinion poll from 8 October 2012 in

Italy. Based on the information provided, most of the eurosceptic political parties gained more support from voters in 2014 than in 2011 or 2012. In Greece SYRIZA won the European Parliament election with 26.57% of the popular vote, while Golden Dawn finished third (9.39%). In Portugal, two eurosceptic parties, the Earth Party and the Left Block, received 7.15% and 4.56% respectively, while in Spain Podemos obtained 7.98%, and the Five Star Movement received 21.15% in Italy.



3.3 National security aspect - the Ukrainian crisis

On 22 February 2014, shortly after the Ukrainian Revolution, the Ukrainian parliament disposed of Viktor Yanukovich, appointed Oleksandr Turchynov as interim President and formed an interim government. For the pro-European society, this was an ideal scenario and a chance for better life, but as we already know, this overturn did not suit ethnic Russians that inhabited Ukraine. Not only did they organize demonstrations in Eastern Ukraine, but on February 26th they began to gradually take control of the Crimean peninsula. Neither the Ukrainian government nor international organizations including the EU, could stop the process of annexation. The first round of sanctions against Russia was implemented in March 2014, but it did not deter Putin's desire to take control of the Ukrainian territory.

The Russian Federation violated international law and human rights by sending troops to Crimea in order to encourage people to rebel against the Ukrainian government. It was not until April 2014 that Vladimir Putin publicly admitted in public that he had obtained parliament's full permission to prepare for a military intervention in Crimea. However, gaining control of this controversial peninsula did not satisfy Putin. The demonstrations in Eastern Ukraine only encouraged him to engage in further military actions in this sovereign country. A majority of world leaders knew that Russian troops had helped rebels in the Donbass region, but Vladimir Putin stubbornly repeated: "There are no Russian units in Eastern Ukraine — no special services, no tactical advisers. All this is being done by the local residents."⁵¹

The annexation of Crimea and Russian intervention in Eastern Ukraine resulted in increased criticism of Russian aggression by Western countries toward. The EU, the USA, Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, Montenegro, Albania and Ukraine imposed 3-level sanctions against Russia, including ban on business transactions with Putin's fellow workers

51 Kathy Lally, "Putin's remarks raise fears of future moves against Ukraine," *The Washington Post*, (2014).

and Russian companies, as well as trade and financial restrictions on the Russian energy and defense industries. These countries did not have to wait long for a response. On 6 August 2014, Putin imposed a second round of sanctions, mainly against the USA and European countries. In contrast to the first round, these sanctions included an embargo on imports of most of the agricultural products from regions that used “aggressive” policies toward the Russian Federation. Unfortunately, these sanctions caused a boomerang effect on the Russian economy.

Surprisingly, the Ukrainian crisis that began on 21 November 2013 had a tremendous effect on the increase of mistrust in the EU, and consequently the rise of eurosceptic political parties.⁵² From a security and defense point of view, many European countries, especially those that share border with the Russian Federation, called for military support from the EU and NATO. After many attempts, the support was eventually allocated to member states that requested it. However, as they jointly admitted, it was not enough to protect against potential Russian aggression on their territory. During the political campaign for the 2014 European elections, the issue of national security in the context of the Ukrainian crisis had become one of the main topics of discussion, especially in Poland. Needless to say, it was a eurosceptic party, Law and Justice, that openly criticized the Russian government for its insurgency in Eastern Ukraine and called for an increase of military support from NATO.⁵³ The EU as a politico-economic union did not have an army, so the only powerful weapons that it possessed were economic sanctions. Member states jointly agreed on 3-level sanctions toward the Russian Federation, but in retaliation for such actions, the Russian government announced an embargo on imports of most agricultural products. It had been a long time since the relations between these two international actors had been so horrendous. Many EU countries that have close economic ties with the Russian Federation such as Hungary, Greece and Italy, called for the improvement of political and economic relations between the EU and Russia.⁵⁴

52 Riccardo Dugulin, “EU policy towards Russia increases Euroscepticism,” *Global Risk Insights*, (May 2016).

53 Michal Baranowski, Bartosz Cichocki, “Poland: Searching for a Strategic Response,” *The German Marshall Fund of the United States*, (2015).

54 Riccardo Dugulin, “EU policy towards Russia increases Euroscepticism,” *Global Risk Insights*, (May 2016).

As the Ukrainian crisis has not yet been solved and the position of the EU toward Russian Federation remained unchanged, eurosceptic parties like Fidesz or Syriza began to openly criticize the EU's policies.⁵⁵ They emphasized that the economic sanctions had not had any effect on Russian actions toward Ukraine and they harmed the economy of the EU member states. As the situation in Eastern Ukraine disintegrated, both right and left-wing eurosceptic parties grew stronger. Moreover, most parties perceived economic relations with Russia as being more profitable and consequently more important than those with the USA. Marine Le Pen admitted several times that her party was strongly opposed to any kind of trade agreements with Obama's administration and appealed for the immediate lift of sanctions and improvement of cooperation between EU member states and the Russian Federation.

However, the most striking catalyst behind the increase of mistrust in the EU in the case of the Ukrainian crisis was the EU's inability to solve this conflict. After the Minsk Protocol, the situation did not improve and EU leaders, precisely Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande, seemed rather tired of the current “progress” and were not eager to negotiate any further with Vladimir Putin. This helps to explain why European citizens have changed their political support to some populist parties that call themselves eurosceptic.

It cannot be stated that the initial measures the EU took to condemn Vladimir Putin's hostile policies were ineffective. On the contrary, the international sanctions did harm the Russian economy in ways that nobody could have expected. However, the damage did not deter the Russian government's support of the separatists in the Donbass region. EU leaders decided that the only possible way to solve this conflict was through diplomacy. As a result, the Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine was created after the May 2014 Ukrainian presidential election. The group represented three main actors: Ukraine (Petro Poroshenko), the Russian Federation (Vladimir Putin) and the EU (Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande). On the basis of negotiations they wanted to establish a peaceful solution for the ongoing military conflict. This event is best analyzed using two-level

⁵⁵ Andrew Byrne, “Hungary questions EU sanctions on Russia,” *Financial Times*, (October 2014).

games theory.

The conflict was extremely difficult to solve in a diplomatic way because of the domestic pressure in Ukraine combined with the pro-Russian Donbass and the Russian Federation. The new Ukrainian President and government were unbending and uncompromising in refusing to give any concessions to separatists. Since the illegal annexation of Crimea, Ukrainian national spirit has not been very powerful. The country could not afford to lose yet another region because such a loss would severely undermine the existence of Ukraine. On the other side, once it became openly involved in giving political and military support to the Donbass separatists, the Russian Federation it did not want to lose face by abandoning them. Russia has already been hit hard by western sanctions, but those did not discourage the country enough to terminate its aggressive policy toward Ukraine. The unbending attitude of said countries caused EU leaders to rethink their strategy in solving this problem. On 5 September 2014 in Minsk, after extensive talks, the political actors involved agreed to sign the Minsk Protocol⁵⁶. The main point of this was to ensure a bilateral ceasefire in exchange for necessary concessions from both sides. On the one hand, the Ukrainian government promised to change its constitution in order to decentralize power in Ukraine. On the other hand, the Russian Federation ensured that it would stop delivering military support to separatists and that it would withdraw the troops that it had already sent. Moreover, the negotiations between the Ukrainian government and Donbass leaders “included setting up a 30km (19-mile) buffer zone, a ban on overflights of part of eastern Ukraine by military aircraft and the withdrawal of foreign mercenaries on both sides.”⁵⁷ One might conclude that the “win-set” requirement for reaching a final agreement was temporarily fulfilled. After the second battle of Donetsk Airport, which resulted in a separatist victory, the Minsk Protocol ceasefire was officially terminated⁵⁸.

Following yet another conflict deterioration, political leaders from Ukraine, the Russian

56 David Blair, “I’m optimistic about Ukraine peace deal, says Petro Poroshenko,” *The Telegraph*, (September 2014).

57 BBC News, “Ukraine deal with pro-Russian rebels at Minsk talks”, (2014).

58 Shaun Walker and Oksana Grytsenko, “Ukraine forces admit loss of Donetsk airport to rebels,” *The Guardian*, (January 2015).

Federation, Germany, and France met in Minsk to discuss the ongoing situation in the Donbass region. The collapse of the Minsk Protocol motivated them to negotiate once more and to consider the outcome of this bargain. All of the international actors involved in two-level games decided to sign a new ceasefire on 11 February 2015. The content of this new agreement did not differ significantly from the original one and it was publicly criticized for being too fragile. Nevertheless, the EU, represented by Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande, made it clear that the current negotiations would be the last chance for Ukraine, pro-Russian separatists and Russia to sustain peace in the Donbass area. According to the two-level games scheme, the first step to achieve a win-set agreement is by attaining approval at the international level. It can be stated that this stage was successfully completed by reaching a compromise between Poroshenko, Putin, Merkel and Hollande. Problem arise when leaders of countries involved in conflict have to convince their citizens that such deals are worth implementing. From 15 February 2015, when the agreement came to fruition, only minor military disputes (excluding the Battle for Debaltseve which ended five days later⁵⁹) took place in Donbass region, making it possible to sustain the ceasefire. Despite many impediments, it can be stated that both sides succeeded in persuading their citizens to accept the deal at the domestic level, thus leading to a win-set agreement. Whether Ukraine, pro-Russian separatists, or Russia wanted to sustain the relatively peaceful atmosphere would depend on their willingness to implement all of the resolutions included in the Minsk II agreement.

The dimensions of this problem and how it affected EU member states cannot be compared to the European migrant or eurozone crisis. However, at the time that it occurred, both left and right eurosceptic political parties use criticism of the EU's clumsy actions as a trigger to increase their popularity within their countries. Needless to say, solving the problem of Russian aggression in Ukraine left European leaders with their hands tied. On the one hand, these leaders had to assure Baltic, Central and Eastern European states that in case of any actions by the Russian government

59 Alec Luhn and Oksana Grytsenko, "Ukrainian soldiers share horrors of Debaltseve battle after stinging defeat," *The Guardian*, (February 2015).

that would undermine their national security, military aid would be provided. After extensive talks, NATO decided in February 2016 to deploy thousands of troops to the region to support their European allies and stop criticism from right-wing eurosceptic political parties, such as Law and Justice⁶⁰. On the other hand, the European Commission had to contend with Hungarian, Greek, and Italian governments that were opposed to economic sanctions against the Russian Federation because their economies relied heavily on cooperation between those two actors. In order to support the Ukrainian society's efforts to get closer to the EU, member states decided to maintain their current financial restrictions on the Russian government. Nevertheless, the criticism from eurosceptic parties concerning the Ukrainian crisis decreased significantly, mostly due to two factors. The first factor came about because of the European immigration crisis that affected Hungary, Greece, and Italy, the first countries to receive an influx of refugees. For these governments, it simply became more important to focus on asylum seekers than to be too concerned about the Russian-Ukraine conflict. The second factor arose because of successful negotiations between three main actors: Ukraine, the Russian Federation, and the EU, which resulted in signing of the Minsk II agreement.

60 Matthew Holehouse, "Nato may deploy thousands of troops in Europe to ward off Russia," *The Telegraph*, (February 2016).

3.4 Conclusion

Needless to say, the migrant, eurozone, and Ukrainian crises have had a tremendous effect on the rise of euroscepticism in Europe. The formation of the EU had the simple goal of promoting peace and economic cooperation between member states. Subsequently, the EU transformed into a politico-economic union that would shape the direction of international politics. Without the process of European integration, it would not be possible to introduce a single market, common currency, and the Shengen area to achieve the status of superpower. One would not be incorrect in stating that the EU has been constantly moving forward, and that its actions have not encountered any serious criticism from opponents that would undermine the ever-closer union project. Unfortunately for the European Commission, the migrant, eurozone, and Ukrainian crises created an unfavorable situation within the EU, which was used by eurosceptic parties to emerge on both a domestic and a European level, and to increase their popularity among citizens. Three issues pose a serious threat to European integration, and their consequences would undermine the EU's economy and security.

One may assume that the financial crisis and political games that increased the influence of great global powers were two main factors that gave rise to several European problems. The complexity and timing of these issues made them so difficult to solve that they undermined the positions of Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande, who previously appeared to have everything under control. It has already been shown that eurosceptic parties have used the migrant crisis several times as a core part of their campaigns, emphasizing the lack of a solution and the open immigration policy promoted by some political leaders. The concept of enforcing refugee quotas to resettle asylum seekers in all member states has encountered harsh criticism from Central and Eastern European countries, including the Visegrad group. Despite the fact that this idea passed by way of democratic vote, many member states announced that they would not follow the Commission's orders because it would not halt influx of refugees, and most importantly because such orders would not be accepted by the domestic constituency. Subsequently, the EU made a deal

with Turkey to solve the migrant crisis, which was accepted at the international level after a series of long and complex negotiations. The proposal, criticized by some human rights activists, seems to be the best solution the European Commission has prepared thus far. Most importantly, the negotiations have a reasonable chance of being successful, and the prospects of international and domestic acceptance of this issue are highly optimistic. Confronting the eurozone crisis and revitalizing the economies of many member states was largely determined by Troika and its demands. This case introduces an agreement between two entities that was accepted at the international level but did not receive an approval from the domestic constituency. Needless to say, it was Troika that decided to lend money hence its desire to decide the conditions for the bailout programs. Many member states had to choose between painful reforms that would affect a majority of the population or allowing their countries to go bankrupt. In the case of Greece, Alexis Tsipras was elected once again as prime minister despite of his bailout agreement with Troika, which went against his party's program. Greek citizens realized that there was no other option but to accept money to revitalize their country's economy, and therefore gave another chance to the leader of SIRIZA. Two-level games and the role of negotiation appeared to be successful during the Ukrainian crisis. When faced with serious economic instability and the deterioration of regional security, the actors involved had no other option but to negotiate a ceasefire with EU representation.

Eurosceptic parties would not be so strong if it were not for the unfavorable situation in the EU caused by ongoing European issues. Their leaders noticed a weak spot that could be easily attacked and convinced many citizens that euroscepticism was a cure for European problems. The European Commission has already made serious decisions to solve the migrant, eurozone, and Ukrainian crises, and the effects can be already seen with regard to the last two issues. Unfortunately, much damage has already been done and many people have become strong supporters of eurosceptic parties. For now, the European Commission must focus on eliminating ongoing problems and rebuilding trust in the EU, which has been severely undermined.

Chapter 4. A Proliferation of Eurosceptic Political Parties

Euroscepticism represents an ideology that negates most of the principles that the EU has been promoting for many years, and even challenges the existence of the EU itself. Nowadays, eurosceptic parties appear in political debates more frequently than they did prior to 2008. Before that year, most of these debates were omitted by media coverage and mainstream parties, who treated the eurosceptic parties as insignificant entities that would never reach the electoral thresholds enabling them to enter national parliaments. When Europe began its ineffective fight against emerging European problems (eurozone, migrant and Ukrainian crisis), eurosceptic parties saw their chance and have been gaining support ever since. The shocking results of the 2014 European Parliamentary election revealed that these parties were extremely popular among voters in many member states and threatened the EU integration process. What is more, many eurosceptic candidates convinced citizens to vote for them during the national elections, which led them to electoral victories in countries such as the UK, Poland or Greece. Their increasing popularity among frustrated Europeans opened a new chapter in the modern history of the EU which emphasizes the confrontation between “more Europe” and “less Europe” camps.

This chapter focuses on the description of eurosceptic political parties in the EU. The categorization of euroscepticism into soft and hard eurosceptic parties was first introduced by Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart and has been adopted in this paper. The author of this thesis goes further to propose a division of soft and hard euroscepticism into left and right wing subcategories and includes descriptions of the political parties that can be characterized as such. Subsequently, a special case study of a eurosceptic country, the UK, is presented in chapter 4. The author then incorporates the rapid development of euroscepticism caused by the 2014 European election and the 2015 UK general election into his analysis of British attitudes toward the EU in the last section. Finally, the author utilizes two-level games theory to confirm the efficiency of international and domestic negotiations in an attempt to reach a common consensus between the UK and the EU.

4.1 Euroscepticism and its variances

According to Szczerbiak and Taggart, euroscepticism can be divided into two categories: soft and hard euroscepticism. This kind of distinction is the easiest to use when understanding the role of eurosceptic political parties within the EU because it can be applied to all of them. Presently, there are 28 member states that are represented by different parties with differing views and ideologies. Most of them contain at least one eurosceptic political party that has secured seats in the European or national parliament. These parties take an anti-EU stance every time an opportunity presents itself, and depending on the demands of the domestic constituency, they use either europhobic or reformist rhetoric to broadcast their views. However, euroscepticism and its origins differ from region to region, rendering it impossible to make any single distinction between eurosceptic parties. Consequently, euroscepticism from Southern Europe originates from the economic crisis, while in Western and Eastern Europe it arose due to the security issues concerning immigrants and the Ukrainian crisis.

Moreover, soft and hard eurosceptic parties should be further divided into subcategories: left and right wing parties. Juxtaposing Fidesz with Syriza proves that despite the fact that both promote soft euroscepticism, their views and goals are completely different from one another, hence the need for further division into left and right wings. The best way to illustrate the variety in eurosceptic parties is through analyzing the political groups in the European Parliament to which they belong. Most of the right wing soft eurosceptic parties belong to the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), the left wing soft and hard eurosceptic parties compose the European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL), and the right wing hard eurosceptic parties are divided among the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD), the Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENL), or are considered Non-Inscrits. The affiliation of eurosceptic members of the European Parliament with various groups emphasizes the complexity of the study of euroscepticism.

Table 4.1 Division of eurosceptic parties into soft and hard, and left and right wing

		Soft euroscepticism	Hard euroscepticism
Austria	Left wing	-	-
	Right wing	-	Freedom Party of Austria
Belgium	Left wing	-	-
	Right wing	-	Flemish Interest
Bulgaria	Left wing	-	-
	Right wing	Bulgaria Without Censorship	-
Croatia	Left wing	-	-
	Right wing	-	-
Cyprus	Left wing	-	Progressive Party of Working People
	Right wing	-	-
Czech Republic	Left wing	Communist Party	-
	Right wing	Civic Democratic Party	Party of Free Citizens
Denmark	Left wing	-	People's Movement against the EU
	Right wing	-	Danish People's Party
Estonia	Left wing	-	-
	Right wing	-	-
Finland	Left wing	Left Alliance	-
	Right wing	Finns Party	-
France	Left wing	Left Front	-
	Right wing	-	National Front
Germany	Left wing	The Left	-
	Right wing	Alternative for Germany	National Democratic Party of Germany
Greece	Left wing	Syriza	Communist Party of Greece
	Right wing	Independent Greeks	Golden Dawn
Hungary	Left wing	-	-
	Right wing	Fidesz	Jobbik
Ireland	Left wing	Sinn Féin	-
	Right wing	-	-
Italy	Left wing	Five Star Movement*	Lega Nord*
		The Other Europe	
	Right wing	Five Star Movement*	Lega Nord*
Latvia	Left wing	-	-
	Right wing	Union of Greens and Farmers National Alliance	-

Lithuania	Left wing	-	-
	Right wing	Order and Justice Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania	-
Luxembourg	Left wing	-	-
	Right wing	-	-
Malta	Left wing	-	-
	Right wing	-	-
Netherlands	Left wing	Socialist Party	
	Right wing	Christian Union – Reformed Political Party	Party for Freedom
Poland	Left wing	-	-
	Right wing	Law and Justice Congress of the New Right	-
Portugal	Left wing	Left Bloc	Communist Party (in Democratic Unitarian Coalition)
	Right wing	-	-
Romania	Left wing	-	-
	Right wing	-	-
Slovakia	Left wing	-	-
	Right wing	Freedom and Solidarity Ordinary People and Independent Personalities New Majority	-
Slovenia	Left wing	-	-
	Right wing	-	-
Spain	Left wing	Podemos	-
		The Peoples Decide	
		Plural Left	
Sweden	Left wing	-	Left Party
	Right wing	-	Sweden Democrats
United Kingdom	Left wing	Sinn Féin	-
	Right wing	Conservative Party Democratic Unionist Party Ulster Unionist Party	United Kingdom Independence Party

Source: Author's own calculations

* Parties' ideology and political program cannot be divided into either left or right wing subcategories.

After the 2014 European election, only six member states (Croatia, Estonia, Luxembourg, Malta, Romania and Slovenia) did not have a single eurosceptic party representing them in the European Parliament. On the other hand, some countries elected three eurosceptic parties (Czech Republic, Germany, Netherlands, Slovakia and Spain), and others even elected four (Greece and the UK). This particular redistribution cannot simply be explained by the relationship between party support and public euroscepticism. Germany has always been a member state with a high level of trust in the EU, but contrary to expectations its citizens elected three eurosceptic parties into the European Parliament. Furthermore, the 2014 European election proved that soft euroscepticism is more common than hard euroscepticism in Europe. The soft eurosceptic program is not as radical as that of the europhobes, which makes them more suitable coalition partners, or in case of electoral victory, governing parties.

4.1.1 Soft euroscepticism

SOFT EUROSCEPTICISM is where there is NOT a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that 'national interest' is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory.⁶¹

The discussion of soft eurosceptic parties requires mentioning the process of European integration. Many politicians from parties such as Law and Justice or Fidesz perceive the ever-closer union project to be a potential danger to their national interests. They oppose the idea of European federalization while stressing the importance of each member state's sovereignty and ability to make its own decisions without the EU's influence. Soft eurosceptic parties realize that the

61 Aleks Szczerbiak, Paul Taggart, "The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU Member and Candidate States," *Sussex European Institute*, (April 2002).

EU has increasingly greater decision-making power and is able to impose its views and demands on national governments. Syriza does not want to accept the conditions of the bailout program, nor does Fidesz want to approve refugee quotas that were introduced by the European Commission. European integration through the implementation of a common currency, the establishment of a coherent EU foreign policy, and the pursuit of EU enlargement were meant to increase the power in Brussels at the expense of individual member states. Those who oppose the idea of an ever-closer union are supporters of soft euroscepticism. However, it is essential to note that they do not want to withdraw from the EU, eurozone or Schengen area. Their ideology focuses on reforming EU structures rather than destroying them, especially when controversial issues concerning their countries arise. Depending on their origins and demands of the EU, soft eurosceptic parties can be divided into left and right wing subcategories.

Syriza (Greece) and Podemos (Spain) are undeniably two of the most important soft eurosceptic parties that represent the left wing in the EU. Their ideology is closely lined to Marxism, environmentalism, and feminism, and they originated in the aftereffects of the 2008 eurozone crisis that destroyed the Greek and Spanish economies. Syriza, led by Alexis Tsipras, won the elections to the Hellenic Parliament in January 2015 (36.3% - 149 seats) and in September 2015 (35.5% - 145 seats), as well as the 2014 European Parliamentary election, securing 26.6% of the total vote. The Greek population was extremely frustrated with the inefficient fight against unemployment, life deterioration, and social cuts because of the economic crisis, leading them to vote against mainstream parties in favor of Syriza. During Tsipras's campaign he promised humanitarian emergency reform (subsidizing food for unemployed citizens), support for same-sex marriage, the nationalization of banks, and most importantly strong opposition toward conditions imposed by creditors to pay off Greek debt. The main goal of Tsipras and his party was to renegotiate conditions with Troika and present the outcome to the domestic constituency. In the case of failure, three potential solutions were taken under consideration: refusing to pay the debt if it was

not reduced, leaving the eurozone (Grexit), or accepting all of the conditions imposed by Troika. The second option was an unlikely one because of the public support for a common European currency – the euro, in Greece. In the end, in July 2015, the Greek Prime Minister accepted the conditions (pension reform, child and unemployment benefits cut, etc.) for a third memorandum, which would impose harsher austerity and a 'death sentence' on Alexis Tsipras.⁶² Syriza's euroscepticism is closely related to its opposition to Troika and populist approach that enabled the party to win national and European elections. Tsipras wanted to end the austerity, which was required by the EU to fulfill all of the conditions and to receive the bailout program. Syriza exemplifies a typical soft eurosceptic, populist party which did all its best to win elections, but in the end was unable to implement all of the promises it had made during its political campaign.

In 2014, former professor of political science, Pablo Iglesias, decided to establish his own eurosceptic party – Podemos. As a leader, Iglesias repeatedly emphasized the role of Syriza as a model for ending the dominance of mainstream parties and promoting different goals for domestic and international policy. Without a clear political program, including many populist ideas like nationalization of companies and free education, Podemos was able to gain 8% in the 2014 European election (fourth place) and 20.7% in the 2015 Spanish general election (third place). Jose Ignacio Torreblanca once said that “They (Podemos) made an offer of radical change at a moment in which everyone was really fed up with the system. (...) The guys in Podemos realized that the traditional parties were not able to capture the anger of the people.”⁶³ This leads us to conclude that many eurosceptic parties are against the establishment and that most of those that represent the left wing endorse its European anti-austerity ideology. Spain, a country that was forced to meet the conditions imposed by Troika in order to receive its bailout program, created the perfect platform for the emergence of soft eurosceptic parties from the left-wing, as was the case with Podemos.

The largest number of eurosceptic parties in the European Parliament represent by the right

62 Ein Gastbeitrag von Will Denayer, “Syriza, the EU and negative integration,” *Flassbeck-economics*, (October 2015).

63 Jess McHugh, “European Anti-Austerity 2015: Podemos, Spain's Protest Party, Looks To An Uncertain Future After Tsipras Resignation, Dips In The Polls,” *International Business Times*, (February 2015).

wing of soft euroscepticism such as Fidesz and Law and Justice. Both share the same ideology, goals concerning national and foreign policy, attitude toward the EU and importance of preserving patriotism. One may assume that right wing soft eurosceptic parties follow one particular rule while governing and campaigning: “We cannot depend on anybody but ourselves.” This sentence highlights the most important point of Fidesz and Law and Justice's political programs – national interest always comes first and securing it is crucial for a country's development. Moreover, their ideology is primarily based on anti-globalization, anti-EU, and sometimes anti-minority rhetoric and coupled with their populist approach appeals to many European citizens during such unstable times. When analyzing Fidesz's development and political program in the context of euroscepticism, one must begin from 2006, when Victor Orban's party secured second place in the national election and became an opposition party. The year 2006 was particularly special for this Hungarian party because it was the last time they lost an election. In 2010, not only did Fidesz win enough seats to govern on its own, but it also secured two-thirds of the parliament majority vote to modify the country's constitution.

In the end, Orban rewrote the Hungarian constitution and reshaped the legal and institutional systems in Hungary – all with the support of the domestic constituency, which reelected him as Prime Minister in 2014. A single party with such a strong majority in the national parliament may pose a threat to democratic standards, which have always been strictly controlled by the European Parliament. In 2015, when Victor Orban proposed in 2015 bringing back the death penalty in Hungary, Jean-Claude Juncker (President of the European Commission) stated that: “A reason for divorce! One of my political beliefs is that there shall be no death penalty. Anyone who introduces the death penalty has no place in the European Union.”⁶⁴ This example demonstrates how conservative soft eurosceptic parties might be when using a populist approach to attract the support of the people. After the 2010 election, Orban launched a large scale ideological offensive to imprint

⁶⁴ Matthew Day, “Hungary could be thrown out of EU if it brings back death penalty, says Jean-Claude Juncker,” *The Telegraph*, (June 2015).

its political and aesthetic values onto Hungarian society.⁶⁵ While criticizing the EU, Fidesz mostly focused on the Syrian war, the annexation of Crimea, and the refugees crisis, an of which undermined the position of the EU in its failure to secure member states and respond to those problems quickly and effectively. Orban, who is well known for his close relations with Vladimir Putin, has expressed many times his dissatisfaction with sanctions placed on Russia because such sanctions do not produce any positive effects and only harm the Hungarian economy. When the migrant crisis occurred, Hungary was the biggest transit country for refugees inside the EU. The Hungarian prime minister repeatedly criticized the EU's efforts to halt the influx of asylum seekers by resettling them in other member states. He stated that those actions would not stop refugees from coming to Europe. A recent deal between the EU and Turkey was heartily accepted by Fidesz and other soft eurosceptic political parties because in their opinions, it will produce an actual solution for the migrant crisis. Euroscepticism in Hungary is distinctly unique from that in other member states. Without the EU's financial contribution, Hungarian development and Orban's ideas would be impossible to accomplish, and citizens are aware of this.⁶⁶ Orban's party is opposed to many conditions that the EU tries to impose on Hungary, but it does not deny Hungary's EU membership, and unlike in other countries outside of the eurozone, it promotes entering it in the near future. Surprisingly, Fidesz is a member party of the EPP group in the European Parliament, which proves that despite being a eurosceptic party, they still hold a more pro-EU attitude than others like Law and Justice and the Conservative Party. Orban's radical ideas and views have alienated him in the EPP, but that can be used to his advantage when creating public statements and respecting opinions from different political camps.

Another political party with conservative and eurosceptic views – Law and Justice, received extensive press coverage after the 2015 Polish Parliamentary election, in which they won enough seats to govern without a coalition. Chairman Jaroslaw Kaczynski has emphasized several times

65 Yudit Kiss, "Brave new Hungary," *Open Democracy*, (September 2014).

66 Benjamin Novak, "Hegedus: Fidesz has more critics than friends in European Peoples Party," *The Budapest Beacon*, (May 2014).

that he wishes to create a second Budapest in Warsaw by following the same path of reshaping the Polish constitution and institutional system as Orban did in Hungary. Law and Justice's main campaign goal is to build a strong Poland that is based on family values, the role of the church, and social support, while at the same time promoting Polish tradition and resisting European integration. Similar to the Hungarian government, Polish counterparts do not deny their EU membership for the same reason - without it, Poland would never have been able to accomplish such remarkable development as it has since its accession in 2004. However, they are firmly opposed to entering the eurozone, and most importantly they protest the centralized power in Brussels that often undermines the national law of each member state. Law and Justice's leadership does not make any offensive moves toward the EU, but rather they work to strengthen Polish national spirit symbolically by removing the EU's flags from some official government headquarters.

Law and Justice is strongly opposed to Russian intervention in the Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea, both of which undermine national security, hence their appeal to relocate more NATO bases to Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries. They have criticized the EU for its inadequate attempts to halt Russian aggression, as well as its insufficient solutions concerning the current migrant crisis in Europe. Law and Justice is averse to Muslim refugees from Syria, which thus explains their reluctance to accept the refugee quotas proposed by the EU. Before the 2015 Polish Parliamentary election, Kaczynski appealed to potential voters by saying that “refugees were bringing cholera to the Greek islands, dysentery to Vienna, various types of parasites,”⁶⁷ which further elucidates the party's attitude toward asylum seekers. In order to understand this special kind of Polish euroscepticism, we must consider certain aspects of Polish society, such as the role of the catholic church as a patriotic force and conservative family values.⁶⁸ The EU, with its modern approach, maintains ideas that are too liberal for many Polish people coming from rural areas that support Law and Justice. They do not understand the EU as a whole

67 Alex Duval Smith, “Poland lurches to right with election of Law and Justice party,” *The Guardian*, (October 2015).

68 Charles Crawford, “Who are Poland's victorious Law and Justice party, and what do they want?” *The Telegraph*, (October 2015).

because they embrace completely different values than parties in other member states. However, the support from the European Commission, namely its financial contribution as part of the Cohesion Policy, has made Poland a member state with a relatively high level of trust in the EU compared to other countries. It can be stated that euroscepticism in Poland originates from ignorance about EU affairs. For obvious reasons, the current government does not want to alter the peoples' attitudes, and as a result it represents their soft eurosceptic views throughout Europe.

4.1.2 Hard euroscepticism

***HARD EUROSCEPTICISM** is where there is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their counties should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived.⁶⁹*

Needless to say, hard eurosceptic political parties are the most difficult with whom to cooperate in the European Parliament. Some might even say that it is impossible to collaborate with them because they are opposed to everything that the EU represents. Some hard eurosceptic parties wish to leave the EU, while others aim to withdraw from the Schengen area or eurozone. A majority of hard eurosceptic parties are single-issue ones, and without their strong opposition to the EU, these parties would not even exist. Their main goal is to destroy the EU from within, but beyond this they do not seem to have proper political programs. Depending on each party's ideology, they represent radical views on EU issues, such as immigration, common currency, social benefits, and the free movement of people. Some of these parties are communist, extremely conservative, or even nationalistic parties, but they all advocate the same populist approach. They treat the EU as an

⁶⁹ Aleks Szczerbiak, Paul Taggart, "The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU Member and Candidate States," *Sussex European Institute*, (April 2002).

enemy that embodies features completely opposite to their views and political programs, including such ideas as capitalism, socialism, and bureaucracy. Their radical views make it impossible for them to govern in their respective countries or to form a coalition with other parties, which puts them in opposition to the ruling power. Nevertheless, their presence does not facilitate productive negotiations in parliament, and as a result it produces unnecessary disparities within a society. Like soft euroscepticism, hard euroscepticism can be divided into left and right wing parties, making it easier to understand their primary goals, ideologies and most importantly attitudes toward the EU.

If we consider all eurosceptic parties together, left wing hard eurosceptic parties are least represented in the European Parliament. Depending on their region, their ideologies may differ significantly, which explains why in Scandinavia most are connected to socialist and feminist movements, while in Southern Europe they are purely communist parties. The majority is widely opposed to the EU, but they are not as radical as right wing hard eurosceptic parties. The Left Party in Sweden is an example of a modern socialist, ecological, and feminist eurosceptic party that was once communist in the past. Their ideology has developed significantly over the last 20 years, which has made it easier for them to appeal to the modern Swedish society that no longer appreciates communist values. They have placed green politics, feminism and equality on the agenda, focusing on combating injustices against women and defending the environment to protect it for future generations.⁷⁰ Moreover, the party's leadership wants to follow and develop a Swedish socialist model while creating more jobs, reducing the income gap, and shortening work days. Nowadays, they do not hold as important opposition in the Swedish parliament as they once did,⁷¹ but they provide an extraordinary example left wing of hard euroscepticism in a Scandinavian country. Analyzing the party's attitude toward the EU, the Left Party is opposed to Swedish membership in the EU and NATO, and it is working on its withdrawal from such while calling for a

70 Vänsterpartiet (The Left Party of Sweden) official website: <http://skinnskatteberg.vansterpartiet.se/>

71 In 1998 Swedish general election the Left Party of Sweden finished at the third place while receiving 12% of popular vote.

referendum on EU membership.⁷² Additionally, the Left Party is strongly opposed to capitalism, which is widely represented by EU institutions, and it promotes reducing the income gap in Sweden as one of its main goals.

The Progressive Party of Working People from Cyprus, commonly known as AKEL, is another left wing hard eurosceptic party, and even the largest one considering its significance during the national elections. The party's leadership refers to itself as a member of a contemporary communist party guided by the ideology of Marxism-Leninism.⁷³ Like the Left Party of Sweden, AKEL perceives capitalism to be the greatest enemy, believing it to be highly defective and potentially disastrous to their society. Because Cyprus was one of the member states affected by the eurozone crisis, AKEL blamed the banking sector, private investors, and capitalism for the resulting economic instability. Needless to say, the party's criticism of the EU and IMF for its conditional bailout program spread across the country, and it met with common approval from a frustrated population that was unprepared for such painful reforms. Additionally, AKEL is opposed to the centralized power in Brussels that takes sovereignty away from member state governments. The party wants to reform the EU and create a different Europe in order to satisfy its populations' needs. As a communist party, it considers the EU to be an “advanced organization of capitalist integration”⁷⁴ and tries to halt the integration process connected to the idea of an ever-closer union.

The most terrifying information revealed after the 2014 European election concerned a number of right wing hard eurosceptic parties that entered the European Parliament. Their attitudes and views toward European issues produced a highly unstable atmosphere, and in some cases even resulted in chaos. Their radical ideology is primarily focused on being anti-EU, but also endorses being populist, anti-immigration, racist, homophobic, and anti-Semitic. These features make them an extremely difficult partner with whom to cooperate and reach agreements on various European

72 Kate Hudson, “The New European Left: A Socialism for the Twenty-First Century?” Palgrave Macmillan, (2012): 148-149.

73 AKEL official website: <http://www.akel.org.cy/en/>

74 Ibid.

issues. One such example of a highly controversial party that represents the right wing of hard euroscepticism is the National Front, led by Marine Le Pen. It was founded in 1972 by an extremist, Jean-Marie Le Pen, who was inspired by the Italian Socialist Movement grounded in the interior fascist tradition.⁷⁵ From the beginning of its existence, it has never had enough power to attract many voters because its views were too radical and did not appeal to modern society. When the daughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen, Marine, became the president of the National Front, her party softened its attitude toward many controversial issues, allowing it to gain a lot of support from French citizens. She led a complete revolution within the party to move away from its racist and anti-Semitic past by expelling her father from the National Front in August 2015.⁷⁶ Nonetheless, the party's ideology is largely based on anti-EU rhetoric, which is opposed to European integration and core projects like the Schengen area or a common currency. Moreover, the National Front takes hardline positions on issues like the migrant crisis, security, and radicalization in order to attract as many voters as possible in such unstable times on the European continent. When analyzing its political program, one realizes that the four most important goals for Marine Le Pen are immigration, justice and security, culture and language, and feminist values.⁷⁷ The party is strongly opposed to the refugee quotas implemented by the EU and claims that the only possible way to halt the influx of asylum seekers, stop the spread of terrorism, and secure national sovereignty is to abolish the Schengen area. In addition, they promote French cultural and linguistic expansion, propose the return of death penalty in France, and support women's rights to having abortions while simultaneously promoting traditional family values. In accordance with the party's anti-EU attitude, it wants to abolish the Schengen area, leave the eurozone, return to a situation where national laws are more important than European ones, and ameliorate relations with the Russian Federation, which deteriorated significantly after the Ukrainian crisis. Le Pen emphasizes that she does not

75 Andrea Mammone, "Don't be fooled by 'moderate' Marine Le Pen. Front National's more toxic than ever," *The Guardian*, (April, 2015).

76 Agence France-Presse in Paris, "France's National Front party expels founder Jean-Marie Le Pen," *The Guardian*, (August 2015).

77 France 24, "What does France's National Front stand for?" (May, 2014).

believe France should remain part of the EU because doing so is destroying national values and interests, and in return is proposing some kind of Pan-European Union of Sovereign States.⁷⁸ Another important party that represents right wing hard euroscepticism is the Party for Freedom (PVV), led by Geert Wilders. Its political program is largely based on maintaining an anti-Muslim attitude, which became very popular in the Netherlands during the European migrant crisis. Wilders has proposed such ideas as criminalizing undocumented migrants, revoking Dutch nationality from criminals with dual nationalities, and subjecting Muslims to other more oppressive laws and regulations.⁷⁹ Despite his hatred of Islam, Wilders's views are much more liberal than those of Le Pen. Surprisingly, he is opposed to racism and considers himself to be a strong admirer of Israel and supporter of LGBT rights, stating that “we should learn to become intolerant of the intolerant.”⁸⁰ Wilders, who used to be a VVD (currently ruling party) member, organized his own party in 2004. Since the assassination of Theo van Gogh in 2004, the PVV has gained a lot of support from the conservative part of society, which opposes such brutal acts of terror.⁸¹ Currently, his party is leading in opinion polls for the next Dutch parliamentary election and his popularity does not seem to be fading. Aside from his anti-immigration ideology, Wilders is strongly opposed to the EU. Like the National Front, the PVV criticizes the European Commission for its sanctions against the Russian Federation after the Ukrainian crisis because of the economic issues that they provoked. These parties would rather rebuild their relations with Putin than let EU and US representatives sign trade agreements that, in Wilders's opinion, would increase European dependence on the United States. Furthermore, the PVV's criticism also applies to the eurozone bailout programs aimed at saving the economies of Southern European countries. The PVV claims that the Netherlands has already paid too much to help Greece, Spain, and Cyprus and that they do not see an end to this stream of financial aid.

78 France 24, “What does France’s National Front stand for?” (May, 2014).

79 Alex de Jong, “Pro-gay and anti-Islam: rise of the Dutch far-Right,” *Roar*, (February 2015).

80 BBC News, “Netherlands Islam Freedom: Profile of Geert Wilders,” (June 2011).

81 Theo van Gogh was a director and columnist well known for his insults and radical views towards Muslim people. In 2004 he was murdered by Mohammed Bouyeri (Dutch-Moroccan Muslim). His death started a public debate about Muslim population in the Netherlands.

4.2 British euroscepticism

While discussing eurosceptic parties and their categorization between hard and soft, as well as left and right subcategories, the author of this thesis has decided to separately analyze the case of the United Kingdom. One might state that euroscepticism in the UK is represented by two major eurosceptic parties – the Conservative Party, led by David Cameron, and the UKIP of Nigel Farage, but euroscepticism is not exclusively monopolized by these two entities. As a country, the UK is considered to be the most eurosceptic member state in Europe, and the data collection provided by the Eurobarometer proves this fact.⁸² Its history of accession to the EU, opt-out agreements from main policies, and constant opposition to the ever-closer union project provide us with useful information in understanding why a single state has such a negative attitude toward the EU. Additionally, an analysis of the current development of euroscepticism in the UK under Cameron's government is also included in this part of the thesis.

It should be noted that British citizens have always struggled with the European integration process, and many times they were strongly opposed to the idea of joining the European Economic Community (EEC), which later transformed into the EU. In the 1960s, it became apparent that Europe and its economic cooperation was moving toward a greater financial project, and the British government realized that being outside of it would do more harm than good for the UK. The first attempt to access the EEC was made under Harold Macmillan's rule in 1963 and was strongly criticized across the continent, which resulted in the veto of British application for membership (French president Charles de Gaulle's objection was essential in making a final decision). Many European leaders made it clear that the UK did not show any sense of having a European spirit and that their commitment to accession was based solely on their own future interests. Nevertheless, in 1973, the UK finally became a member of the EEC under Edward Heath's government. However, the British community entered this club hesitantly, unenthusiastically, and in a moment of transient

⁸² Charles Grant, "Why is Britain eurosceptic?" *Centre for European Reform*, (December, 2008).

economic anxiety.⁸³ The UK's motivation was exactly the same as in 1963 – seeking an opportunity to benefit from European free trade, but this time the opposition across the continent was not as critical as before. It is crucial to mention that the accession was supported by a majority of the British population, with 67% of citizens saying yes to the EEC in the 1975 post-legislative referendum.⁸⁴ What they did not predict at the time was the future transformation of the EEC into a the EU through several important treaties that changed the economic union into politico-economic entity. A majority of British citizens are not satisfied with this development in the cooperation simply because it was not what they had voted for in 1975. This dissatisfaction was clearly expressed by the British government when new treaties were about to be signed and the integration process was soon to reach an even closer stage. Most of the Prime Ministers from the Conservative Party represented the citizens' hostile views regarding EU's matters, hence their objections to key ideas, such as using the euro as a common currency or the Schengen agreement (the UK used the opt-out strategy in both cases). However, euroscepticism was not born during the EU integration process. It has been present in the UK since the 1950s, when the initial EU was formed, and euroscepticism's origins can be explained by different factors.

Firstly, the geographic position of the UK, which separates British people from those on the continent, can help to explain “British uniqueness.” Being an island nation, British culture and tradition was less similar to those of other European countries than is in case for Poland and the Czech Republic, Spain and Portugal, and other European states. This sense of isolation has shaped their idea of a European family to which many believe they do not belong. Secondly, the historical aspect of the post Second World War era played an important role in the cultivation of euroscepticism in the UK. Many European states moved to form a politico-economic union in order to promote peace and stability in the region, which was dratically undermined leading up to 1945. They wanted to forget about the historical events that had destroyed the lives of so many people, but

83 Bagehot, “Why Britain is so Eurosceptic?” *Economist*, (March, 2014).

84 Richard Roberts, “Back to the future? Britain’s 1975 referendum on Europe,” *Newstatesman*, (January, 2015).

the British did not want to ignore the history that made them feel so proud and like a global superpower.⁸⁵ Thirdly, from a financial point of view the UK has one of the strongest economies in the world, and at the same time is one of the largest contributors to the EU budget. Many British politicians strongly believe that their country would accomplish much more by way of trade and investments if it was outside of the EU. The centralized power in Brussels imposes too many regulations on the British economy, which prevent them from developing faster and more effectively, especially because otherwise UK government would not be obligated to allocate money to other member states. Despite the geographical, historical, and financial factors that have contributed to creating such strong euroscepticism in the UK, the author of this thesis believes two other reasons to be the most important ones – the press and lack of knowledge. British newspapers, such as the Daily Telegraph, The Times, The Guardian, Daily Mail, etc. are well known around the world, but only a few (Financial Times or Economists) cover extensive and factual news regarding the EU. The others mentioned above are not interested in writing about EU issues, projects, or ideas, simply because it is too tedious for ordinary British readers to digest. According to the data collection, respondents felt that the information covered by the media about the EU was too negative, and almost half (48%) perceived a negative bias in press reports.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, some newspapers that print news about the EU tend to lie and spread false imagination in order to attract the eurosceptic British population to buy their publications. For example, Edward Heathcoat-Amory wrote in the Daily Mail that the constitutional treaty meant that the British would “have to give up our vital seat on the UN Security Council if the EU Foreign Minister asked for it.”⁸⁷ Fortunately, the broadcast media tries to deliver true facts and figures, while at the same time reassuring us that not all of the press and tv channels report eurosceptic news, but honestly take responsibility for their words. Lastly, it should be stated that the British society is not very knowledgeable about the EU, and may simply have the wrong impression of. Without support from politicians, celebrities, or

85 Charles Grant, “Why is Britain eurosceptic?” *Centre for European Reform*, (December, 2008).

86 Eurobarometer, “Attitudes towards the EU in the United Kingdom,” *The Gallup Organization*, (March, 2011).

87 Charles Grant, “Why is Britain eurosceptic?” *Centre for European Reform*, (December, 2008).

bussinessmen that have positive attitudes toward the EU, the education of the British people does not make any sense. British peoples' knowledge comes from the tabloids, and most of them truly believe that Europe does not understand the UK, and as a result the UK does not want to further integrate into Europe. According to the data collection, only 18% of UK respondents felt informed about the EU and 48% expected their government to inform them about the EU and its decisions.⁸⁸ Analyzing the positions of many British politicians, one journalist satirically wrote in his article that “if you want to succeed in politics or the media in Britain, make sure you do not know too much about Europe.”⁸⁹ This statement emphasizes the extraordinary fact that not only ordinary people, but also politicians, celebrities, and bussinessmen are not eager to learn about the EU as a whole or promote real facts within their country.

All things considered, we cannot conclude that the UK is a pure eurosceptic evil simply because it has a good record of implementing EU directives and representing the decisions of the European Court of Justice.⁹⁰ Moreover, the British government values four freedoms of the EU and respects the organization more than other member states. It also actively promoted the fifth enlargement in 2004 and opened its markets to Central and Eastern Europe. However, this has not changed a majority of the British population or political parties' understanding of the EU. When election campaigns begin, neither Conservative nor Labour Parties pay much attention to European issues, and as a result the 55% of UK's citizens felt that EU policy was not important in the general election in May 2010.⁹¹

Since the admission of the UK to the EU, the British government has always been an awkward partner to many member states. European leaders have become accustomed to hard negotiations and objections, especially from conservative Prime Ministers like Margaret Thatcher and David Cameron concerning controversial issues at the European level. However, after the 2014

88 Eurobarometer, “Attitudes towards the EU in the United Kingdom,” *The Gallup Organization*, (March, 2011).

89 Charles Grant, “Why is Britain eurosceptic?” *Centre for European Reform*, (December, 2008).

90 Ibid.

91 Eurobarometer, “Attitudes towards the EU in the United Kingdom,” *The Gallup Organization*, (March, 2011).

European election in the UK, euroscepticism became even more visible and introduced the possibility for the UK to become the first country in history to withdraw from the EU. One may wonder what would happen if the Conservative or Labour Party had won the 2014 European election instead of the hard eurosceptic UKIP. David Cameron realized that finishing third was a complete failure, and in order to avoid a similar result during the 2015 general election in the UK, his party reshaped its campaign strategy. His tactic was very clear and easy to understand: in order to secure first place and remain Prime Minister, he had to attract the eurosceptic voters who had eagerly voted for the UKIP in 2014. Cameron promised the Conservative Party that if it won the general election in 2015, he would renegotiate Britain's position in the EU and hold the United Kingdom European Union membership referendum.⁹² One might say that this was the best possible strategy to gain eurosceptic voters' support and weaken the UKIP. On 7 May 2015, the Conservative Party won the general election by receiving 36.9% of a popular vote and securing a majority in the British Parliament.⁹³

Subsequently, Cameron fulfilled his promise and called for the EU referendum on 23 June 2016. Vivid discussion about a possible British withdrawal from the EU spread throughout Europe. Many believe this would be the collapse of the EU with the loss of a highly important trade partner, while others perceived it to be an opportunity to remove a problematic member state from the community which would facilitate work on the ever-closer union project. The German Foreign Minister, Guido Westerwelle, stated that "Germany wants the United Kingdom to remain an active and constructive part of the European Union (...) But cherry picking is not an option. Europe isn't the sum of national interests but a community with a common fate in difficult times."⁹⁴ Donald Tusk and Jean-Claude Juncker claimed that they did not imagine the UK existing outside of the EU, and by preventing British withdrawal, they expressed their eagerness to renegotiate the terms of British

92 Tim Oliver, "Europe Without Britain. Assessing the Impact on the European Union of a British Withdrawal," *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik German Institute for International and Security Affairs*, (September, 2013).

93 BBC News.

94 Tim Oliver, "Europe Without Britain. Assessing the Impact on the European Union of a British Withdrawal," *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik German Institute for International and Security Affairs*, (September, 2013).

membership in the union. It was crucial to secure an agreement at the international and European levels, but achieving such required approval from all 28 member states. The most difficult part in reaching a consensus was the reduction of social benefits for foreign workers, which met with strong objection from the Visegrad group. After numerous negotiations, an agreement between the UK and the EU was signed, which included an emergency brake for 7-years-on in-work benefits for EU citizens, issues concerning child benefits, stronger protection of countries outside of the eurozone, and a declaration that the ever-closer union project would not apply to the UK.⁹⁵ Unsurprisingly, Cameron came back as a winner having secured a solid deal that protected British interests. Currently, it is within his power to convince British voters that staying in the EU with completely new terms would be highly advisable. If on 23 June 2016 the majority votes for remaining in the community, then it can be stated that the win-set agreement has been achieved.

Euroscepticism in the UK became stronger in past several years due to the ineffective fight against European problems, namely the euro and migrant crises. When the situation became uneasy, British people realized that they did not feel comfortable with their EU membership. What they did not see were the potential economic and political disadvantages of their withdrawal from the community. Revoking EU membership would be accompanied by the abolishment of everything connected to the EU, including the common market, which would likely produce a difficult situation inside the UK. It is highly probable that if the UK's government decides to leave the EU, Scotland will hold another independence referendum, which might pass this time. Joschka Fischer, the former German foreign minister once said that "For the EU, Britain's exit would be a heavy blow, but for the British it would be a real disaster (...)."⁹⁶ Cameron realized the potential risk of leaving the EU, thus explaining his active campaign to stay in the community. Unfortunately for him, the eurosceptic wing of the Conservative Party stands against him and other supporters of EU membership, making it difficult to convince British citizens to vote to remaining in the EU. None of

95 Jennifer Rankin, "David Cameron's EU deal: what he wanted and what he got," *The Guardian*, (February 2016).

96 Tim Oliver, "Europe Without Britain. Assessing the Impact on the European Union of a British Withdrawal," *Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik German Institute for International and Security Affairs*, (September, 2013).

this would have been possible if it were not for the cultivation of euroscepticism in the UK for many years. Presently, no one can predict the outcome of the referendum because the number of supporters and opponents is very similar. Nevertheless, one might say that the referendum in the UK will prove whether negotiations based on two level games were successful enough, and most importantly whether the pro-EU spirit is capable of winning over euroscepticism in the UK.



4.3 Conclusion

Since the 2014 European Parliamentary election, eurosceptic political parties have become important players that can have a significant impact on the future of the EU and Europe itself. Their ideologies and political programs provide populist solutions for current European issues but most importantly, a chance to break the political establishment within member states. Both soft and hard eurosceptic parties speak loudly voice that they are frustrated with the EU, and depending on their stance, want to reform or destroy it. Those who have won national elections and formed governments have proven to be difficult partners for the EU, but this does not mean that cooperation is impossible between them. Soft eurosceptic parties are eager to cooperate, and most of the time they reach common agreements on several debated issues in the negotiation stages. The EU – Turkey deal, bailout program for Greece, and new terms for the UK's EU member status prove that soft eurosceptic parties, whether they represent the left or right wing, are open to reform projects and collaboration. On the other hand it seems that, two-level games theory is unapplicable to hard euroscepticism since it denies any form of cooperation between its supporters and the EU.

Analyzing the British case as a eurosceptic country proves how fragile its EU membership is. All things considered, everything so far has gone according to David Cameron's plan: proposing the EU referendum, winning elections, calling for a public vote in June 2016, and renegotiating British terms in the EU. What is the next step in his political puzzle? Undoubtedly it is staying in the EU, but he must realize that such a plan depends on the will of the British people. From a two-level games theory perspective, past negotiations have gone accordingly with the international relations theory textbook. The disputes between two political actors were successfully solved at the European level when Cameron renegotiated the terms of British membership with EU leaders. Subsequently, as a supporter of staying in the EU community, Cameron needs to convince his constituency that voting for remaining in the EU would be highly beneficial for the UK. In June 2016, it will become apparent whether Cameron has fulfilled the requirements for securing a win-set

ageement or not. Above all, we will witness whether his long term plan, which began after his 2014 electoral defeat, succeeds in the end.



Chapter 5. Impact of the 2014 European Parliament Election

It can be stated that a completely new chapter of euroscepticism was initiated on 25 May 2014 when the results of the European Parliamentary elections were revealed. Political leaders from each member state were too preoccupied with their ineffective fight against the surrounding economic and political problems that they either did not notice the emergence of eurosceptic parties during their campaigns, or they simply underestimated their potential influence. They assumed that parties that were characterized by xenophobic, racist, homophobic, anti-immigration and most importantly anti-establishment ideologies would not gain enough support to enter the European Parliament. Unfortunately for said political leaders, their assumptions were incorrect. Many eurosceptic political parties not only entered the European Parliament, but also obtained enough support to enable them to win the 2014 European election at the national level. This event caused most European leaders to rethink their current integration policy and to prepare for influx of criticism from eurosceptic leaders that became increasingly visible in European media.

In this chapter, the author presents a general overview of the 2014 European election and compares it with the same event in 2009. Subsequently, the highly important phenomenon of “democratic deficit” could be observed when the official turnout was revealed by the European Parliament. Many researchers jointly admit that low interest in the European election among citizens was highly beneficial for eurosceptic parties, hence the in-depth analysis of the official turnout. Due to the emergence of euroscepticism, the author of this paper presents the election's impact on European policy, focusing on both the international and national level. Finally, the answer to one of the most important questions posed at the beginning of this paper is covered in this chapter: what is the best way to handle eurosceptic parties and halt the increase of their voter support? The response to this question will prove whether or not two-level games theory provide an effective solution for the emergence of euroscepticism.

5.1 Overview

The elections for the European Parliament were held from May 22 to May 25, 2014 in all 28 member states. They were deemed by many politicians to be a political earthquake that diverted many countries from the pro-EU direction they had been heading and most importantly gave eurosceptic political parties a chance to become stronger than in 2009. In these elections, European citizens voted to elect 751 members of the European Parliament, as well as a new president of the Commission. For the first time since the 1979 direct European election, every European political party could present their candidates for the President of the positions European Commission, called *Spitzenkandidaten*. Consequently, five parties decided to enroll their candidates, including Jean-Claude Juncker (European People's Party), Martin Schulz (Party of European Socialists), Guy Verhofstadt (Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe), Ska Keller and José Bové (European Green Party) and Alexis Tsipras (Party of the European Left).

Table 5.1 Results of the 2014 European election

Country	1 st place	2 nd place	3 rd place	Other notable
Austria	Austrian People's Party (26.98%)	Social Democratic Party (24.09%)	Freedom Party (19.72%)*	
Belgium	New Flemish Alliance (16.85%)	Open Flemish Liberals and Democrats (12.89%)	Christian Democratic & Flemish (12.61%)	Flemish Interest (4.26%)*
Bulgaria	GERB (30.40%)	Coalition for Bulgaria (18.93%)	Movement for Right and Freedoms (17.27%)	Bulgaria Without Censorship (10.66%)*
Croatia	HDZ coalition (41.42%)	Kukuriku coalition (29.93%)	Sustainable Development of Croatia (9.42%)	
Cyprus	Democratic Rally (37.75%)	Progressive Party of Working People (26.98%)*	Democratic Party (10.83%)	
Czech Republic	ANO 2011 (16.13%)	TOP 09 (15.95%)	Czech Social Democratic Party (14.17%)	Civic Democratic Party (7.67%)*
				Party of Free Citizens (5.24%)*
Denmark	Danish People's Party (26.6%)*	Social Democrats (19.1%)	Venstre (16.7%)	People's Movement against the EU (8.1%)*
Estonia	Reform Party (24.3%)	Centre Party (22.4%)	Pro Patria and Res Publica Union (13.9%)	
Finland	National Coalition Party (22.6%)	Centre Party (19.7%)	Finnis Party (12.9%)*	

France	National Front (24.86%)*	Union for a Popular Movement (20.8%)	Socialist Party + Radical Party of the Left (13.98%)	Left Front (6.61%)*
Germany	Christian Democratic Union (30.02%)	Socialist Democratic Party (27.27%)	Alliance '90/The Greens (10.7%)	Alternative for Germany (7.04%)*
Greece	Coalition of the Radical Left (26.57%)*	New Democracy (22.72%)	Golden Dawn (9.39%)*	Communist Party of Greece (6.11%)*
				Independent Greeks (3.46%)*
Hungary	Fidesz (51.58%)*	Jobbik (14.67%)*	Hungarian Socialist Party (10.9%)	
Ireland	Fine Gael (22.3%)	Sinn Fein (19.5%)*	Fianna Fail (22.3%)**	
Italy	Democratic Party (40.81%)	Five Star Movement (21.15%)*	Forza Italia (16.81%)	Lega Nord (6.15%)*
Latvia	Unity (46.2%)	National Alliance (14.3%)*	Harmony (13.0%)	Union of Greens and Farmers (8.3%)*
Lithuania	Homeland Union (17.43%)	Social Democratic Party of Lithuania (17.26%)	Liberal Movement (16.55%)	Order and Justice (14.25%)*
				Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania (8.05%)*
Luxembourg	Christian Social People's Party (37.65%)	The Greens (15.01%)	Democratic Party (14.77%)	
Malta	Labour Party (53.39%)	Nationalist Part (40.02%)		
Netherlands	Christian Democratic Appeal (15.0%)	Democrats 66 (15.4%)	Party of Freedom (13.3%)*	Socialist Party (9.6%)*
				Party for the Animals (4.2%)*
Poland	Civic Platform (32.12%)	Law and Justice (31.78%)*	Democratic Left Alliance (9.44%)	Congress of the New Right (7.15%)*
Portugal	Socialist Party (31.49%)	Portugal Alliance (27.73%)	Democratic Unitarian Coalition (12.69%)*	Left Bloc (4.56%)*
Romania	Social Democratic Union (37.6%)	National Liberal Party (15.0%)	Democratic Liberal Party (12.23%)	
Slovakia	Direction – Social Democracy (24.09%)	Christian Democratic Movement (13.21%)	Democratic Christian Union – Democratic Party (7.75%)	Freedom and Solidarity (6.66%)*
Slovenia	Slovenian Democratic Party (24.78%)	New Slovenia, Slovenian People's Party (16.6%)	Verjamem (10.33%)	
Spain	People's Party (26.09%)	Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (23.01%)	Plural Left (10.03%)*	We Can (7.98%)*
Sweden	Social Democratic (24.19%)	Green (15.41%)*	Moderate (13.65%)	Sweden Democrats (9.67%)*
				Left Party (6.3%)*
United Kingdom	UK Independence Party (26.6%)*	Labour Party (24.43%)	Conservative Party (23.05%)*	

Source: European Parliament, *Results of the 2014 European elections*, 2014

Notes: * Eurosceptic political parties

** Election was conducted under the single transferable vote. Fianna Fail, despite winning the largest number of first preference votes, finished on the third place

Based on the results of the 2014 European election presented in the table above, one may conclude that eurosceptic political parties gained a significant amount of support from their citizens. The most shocking results from 25 May 2014 came from France, the UK, and Denmark, where the eurosceptic ideology surprisingly defeated the mainstream parties. Consequently, the leader of the National Front, Marine Le Pen (24.86%), indicated that “The people have spoken loud and clear (...). They no longer want to be led by those outside our borders, by EU commissioners and technocrats who are unelected. They want to be protected from globalization and take back the reins of their destiny.”⁹⁷ In the UK, this event turned out to be devastating for the Conservative Party led by David Cameron, which finished third behind its rival – the Labour Party. Surprisingly, the extremely eurosceptic UK Independence Party received 26.6% of popular vote. This moment was a wake up call for the ruling party to finally begin listening to their citizens' demands, causing the UK government to adopt a more assertive attitude toward the EU and proclaim the UK European Union membership referendum. Five eurosceptic political parties (Danish People's Party, National Front and the UKIP, SYRIZA, and Fidesz) won the European election at the national level. The Hungarian results were neither surprising nor detrimental in terms of European integration, even though Fidesz is considered to be a eurosceptic party. However, the europhobic party victories, such as the Danish People's Party, the National Front, and the UKIP may be assumed to be a serious warning to the EU leaders, who allowed such parties to enter the European Parliament with so many members. In total, 30 soft eurosceptic parties in 16 different countries obtained at least one seat in the European Parliament, and 16 hard eurosceptic parties from 13 member states secured at least one seat as well. Reformists would undeniably have more power than they had before, but they were not opposed to European integration as a whole. Unlike soft eurosceptic parties, the influx of europhobes may be described as a crisis of European identity especially when we look more closely into the ideology presented by Golden Dawn, the National Front, and the UKIP presented in this chapter.

97 BBC News, “Eurosceptic 'earthquake' rocks EU elections”, (May 2014).

Table 5.2 The 2014 European parliament election's results according to political group

Country	Seats	EPP	S&D	ECR	ALDE	GUE/NGL	Greens/EFA	EFDD	NI
Austria	18	5	5		1		3		4
Belgium	21	4	4	4	6		2		1
Bulgaria	17	7	4	2	4				
Croatia	11	5	2	1	2	1			
Cyprus	6	1	1		3		1		
Czech Republic	21	7	4	2	4	3		1	
Denmark	13	1	3	4	3	1	1		
Estonia	6	1	1		3	1			
Finland	13	3	2	2	4	1	1		
France	74	20	13		7	4	6	1	23
Germany	96	34	27	8	4	8	13		2
Greece	21	5	4	1		6			5
Hungary	21	12	4				2		3
Ireland	11	4	1	1	1	4			
Italy	73	17	31			3		17	5
Latvia	8	4	1	1			1	1	
Lithuania	11	2	2	1	3		1	2	
Luxembourg	6	3	1		1		1		
Malta	6	3	3						
Netherlands	26	5	3	2	7	3	2		4
Poland	51	23	5	19					4
Portugal	21	7	8		2	4			
Romania	32	15	16		1				
Slovakia	13	6	4	2	1				
Slovenia	8	5	1		1		1		
Spain	54	17	14		8	11	4		
Sweden	20	4	6		3	1	4	2	
United Kingdom	73		20	20	1	1	6	24	1
Total	751	221	191	70	67	52	50	48	52
Total (% in the Parliament)		29.43%	25.43%	9.32%	8.92%	6.92%	6.66%	6.39%	6.92%

Source: European Parliament, *Results of the 2014 European elections*, 2014

The data collection presented in the table above shows the European Parliament election results according to political group in each member state. Generally speaking, during the parliamentary elections in each country, in order to rule, be in a coalition or simply have enough support to be strong opposition to the government, political parties need to obtain satisfactory results. The European elections are no exception to this rule. Citizens have a right to vote for their candidate from their party at the domestic level, but those candidates and parties are also members of a specific political group in the European Parliament. According to election results presented in the table above, after 2014, there were eight different groups that represented Europeans in the EP:⁹⁸

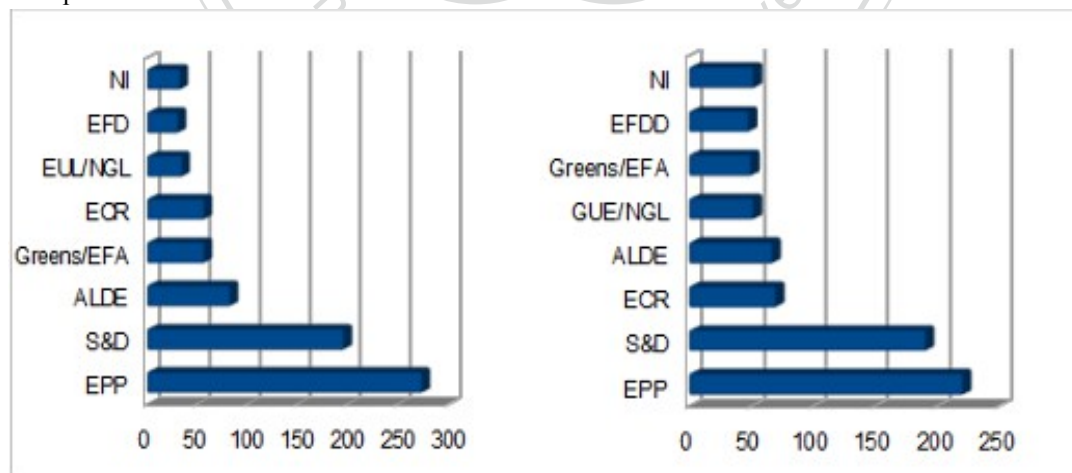
- European People's Party (EPP)
- Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D)
- European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)
- Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)
- European United Left–Nordic Green Left (GUE–NGL)
- The Greens–European Free Alliance (Greens–EFA)
- Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD)
- Non-Inscrits (NI)

Looking at the percentage distribution of each political group, it can be concluded that the big coalition of the EPP and S&D remained, accumulating in total 54.86%. Together with the ALDE they formed a so-called Commission majority, while the other groups were not aligned or were in the opposition. A majority of europhobes were able to join the EFDD (6.39%) or decided not to be affiliated with any political group (6.92%). After the 2014 European election, several talks were held to form a common hard eurosceptic group in the European Parliament. However, all of these results ended without reaching an agreement. Despite of the fact that Five Star Movement, the

⁹⁸ On June 2015, the number of political groups in the European Parliament increased to nine when Europe of Nations and Freedom was launched by Marine Le Pen.

National Front, and the UKIP originated from the same eurosceptic family, their goals differed significantly, thus preventing them from forming a single political group. Subsequently, the National Front was willing to cooperate with the UKIP but never with the Golden Dawn or Jobbik. On the other hand, the UKIP did not want to be in the same political group as the National Front, but would rather see the Five Star Movement in their “family”.⁹⁹ Fortunately for EU supporters, this lack of consensus among hard eurosceptic political parties weakened their position in the European Parliament. Moreover, for almost one year, a large number of europhobic politicians did not belong to any group because they did not want to be a part of EFDD and were not able to create their own alliance.¹⁰⁰ Consequently, they were left without any affiliation, and most importantly they did not receive benefits from the EU. When a specific group in the European Parliament is formed, the EU must provide them with financial aid to support their staff, as well as to provide them with an office space sufficient for their size. However, the most important benefit is a speaking time, which each political group has the right to use in order to participate in democratic representation in the European Parliament.

Figure 5.1 Seats distribution in the European Parliament by political group after the 2009 (left) and the 2014 (right) European elections



Source: European Parliament, *Results of the 2014 European elections*, 2014

99 Laurence Dodds, “Nigel Farage: Ukip won't unite with France's Front National,” *The Telegraph*, (May 2014).

100 Forming a group in the European Parliament requires at least 25 EP members from 7 different member states.

Compared to the 2009 European Parliamentary election, one might easily conclude that pro-EU political groups received fewer seats in the European Parliament in 2014 than previously. The Commission majority, represented by the EPP, S&D, and ALDE declined from 532 to 479 members in favor of eurosceptic parties. The greatest decline was noted by the EPP, which lost almost 7% of its political support compared to its results from the 2009 election. Subsequently, the S&D remained in second position, securing almost the same number of seats in the European Parliament as before. For the first time in history, a eurosceptic political group finished in third place – the ECR, leaving the pro-EU ALDE in fourth. The most disturbing fact was that the number of seats in the European Parliament given to europhobic parties, such as National Front or the UKIP, increased. Comparing the 2009 and 2014 European elections provides us with a numeric juxtaposition that highlights the emergence and rapid development of euroscepticism in Europe. This event is unique in that 28 member states vote at the same time, making it easier to analyze political support trends in the EU. Looking at the changes over the five year time period emphasizes the seriousness of the problems the European Community had to confront. As a consequence of ineffective solutions to problems, mentioned in the third chapter, the increase of support for eurosceptic political parties was clearly visible and covered by the media in each member state. Taking the 2009 and 2014 European election as an example, European leaders must rethink their strategies for the next election if they still wish to form a Commission majority.

5.2 “Democratic deficit”

Many researchers consider the problem of “democratic deficit” during the 2014 European election to be one of the most important factors that contributed to the surge in eurosceptic political parties. By giving rights to their citizens to elect new members to the European Parliament, the European Commission overlooked how securing a decent level of turnout might bring unexpected.¹⁰¹ 2014 election is the best example that presents consequences of “democratic deficit” in the EU.

Table 5.3 Turnout in the 2014 European Parliament election based on age group

Country	Total Turnout	18-24 years	25-39 years	40-54 years	55 years +
Austria	45.39%	29.3%	39.7%	50.6%	50.0%
Belgium	89.64%	90.1%	92.6%	89.1%	87.8%
Bulgaria	35.84%	27.2%	30.4%	34.7%	42.9%
Croatia	25.24%	13.1%	19.5%	27.2%	31.5%
Cyprus	43.93%	28.6%	32.1%	65.5%	53.3%
Czech Republic	18.2%	16.4%	17.0%	18.3%	19.6%
Denmark	56.32%	38.2%	49.1%	58.9%	64.4%
Estonia	36.52%	15.8%	28.4%	39.4%	49.4%
Finland	39.1%	10.4%	44.5%	47.2%	43.2%
France	42.43%	24.7%	30.2%	40.4%	56.5%
Germany	48.1%	29.4%	37.5%	48.7%	59.4%
Greece	59.97%	44.7%	55.1%	68.0%	63.7%
Hungary	28.97%	20.0%	20.0%	31.6%	37.1%
Ireland	52.44%	21.4%	37.3%	59.5%	75.9%
Italy	57.22%	44.7%	58.7%	65.5%	53.3%
Latvia	30.24%	17.4%	26.5%	28.0%	44.8%
Lithuania	47.35%	43.6%	33.2%	46.6%	60.6%
Luxembourg	85.55%	86.7%	77.7%	85.7%	92.0%
Malta	74.8%	61.9%	66.1%	80.1%	82.0%

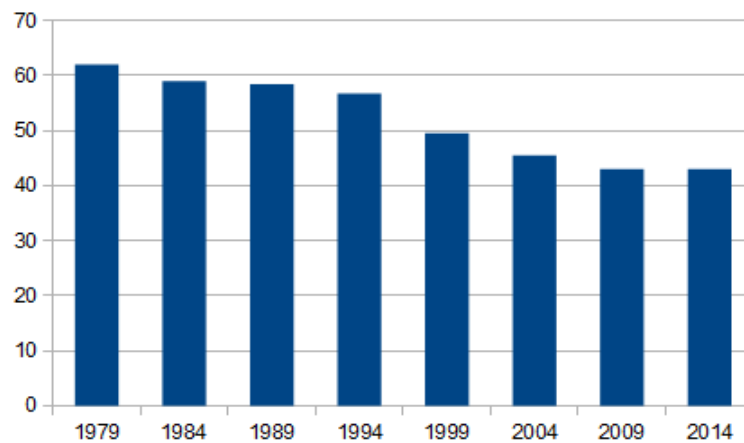
101 Matt Ford, “Europe’s Democratic Deficit Is Getting Worse,” *The Atlantic*, (May 2014).

Netherlands	37.32%	18.0%	33.8%	34.5%	48.3%
Poland	23.83%	14.1%	18.8%	28.3%	28.4%
Portugal	33.67%	18.6%	26.8%	38.4%	41.4%
Romania	32.44%	20.2%	25.3%	35.2%	42.4%
Slovakia	13.05%	5.6%	11.9%	13.0%	17.7%
Slovenia	24.55%	13.7%	17.6%	18.7%	37.4%
Spain	43.81%	26.6%	37.2%	46.2%	51.7%
Sweden	51.07%	65.5%	50.3%	49.1%	48.5%
United Kingdom	35.6%	19.4%	21.0%	32.2%	53.1%
EU28	42.61%	27.8%	35.2%	44.6%	51.3%

Source: European Parliament, *Results of the 2014 European elections*, 2014

Based on the turnout in the 2014 European Parliamentary election, it can be concluded that the discrepancy may be very high depending the member state. Consequently, 89.64% of the population in Belgium voted for their candidates, while only 13.05% of citizens from Slovakia did the same. Taking trust in the EU as a possible explanation for such a turnout does not give us a satisfactory results if we analyze member states others than Belgium and Slovakia. These two countries prove that the level of trust in the EU has an effect on how high or low the turnout is during elections, but this assumption cannot be applied to each state. Poland has always been a member of the EU, which shows a great deal of support to the European Commission, while Italy has been at the opposite end, especially after the eurozone crisis that unbalanced its economy. All things considered, despite Poland's high level of trust in the EU in 2014 (52%), voter turnout was only 23.83%, while in Italy 57.22% of population voted in spite of the country's relatively low level of trust in the EU – 30%. The official data provides information about the percentage of citizens that participated in each member state by age group. It proves one crucial assumption, that the younger population does not feel obliged to participate in European election. In the 18-24 years age group, only 27.8% voted in 2014. The number of citizens who participated in the 2014 European elections increased according to age group – older voters tended to participate more actively than younger ones.

Figure 5.2 Turnout in the European elections (1979 – 2014)



Source: European Parliament, *Results of the 2014 European elections*, 2014

The problem of low voter turnout began in 1979 (61.99%) and it declined to its lowest level in 2014 (42.61%). Important to note, in 1979, only 9 countries formed the EU, which made it easier to attract their citizens to vote in the European election. Furthermore, since the historical signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1958, member states have become familiar with the EU's structures and most of them understand their citizens' obligation to vote. As the number of EU member states increased, turnout declined election after election. However, it was the 2014 European election's turnout that attracted the most attention, not because it was lowest level of voter turnout in history, but because of the aftermath that ensued.

Why did Europeans stay at home rather than vote during the 2014 European Parliamentary election? How did the “democratic deficit” influence the increase in support for eurosceptic political parties? All thing considered, ordinary European citizens, especially those from the young generation, are not interested in the European parliamentary election. A majority does not know what politicians in the EU do and how these politicians affect their lives. When asked whether or not they participated in the 2014 election, or not a majority answered that they had not. These citizens simply stated that they had had more important things to do than vote for their candidate for the European Parliament. Additionally, when asked about the reason for their absence during the

European election, many people claimed that their votes would not matter because the EU had no effect on their ordinary lives. The situation changes when national elections take place. European citizens are well informed about the importance of these elections, as well as the voting process and characteristics and political programs of each candidate.¹⁰² If European Commission desires to attract more voters, they need to run a more visible campaign across Europe. The idea of presenting a candidate for the President of the Commission from each political group in the European Parliament was an extraordinary solution, but the implementation of it proved to be a complete failure.¹⁰³ In many member states, voters were not interested in the dull campaigns led by the EPP, S&D, or ALDE or were not informed about them. The European Commission must address its issues directly to their voters and make sure this message is promoted in each member state. Without solid debate and rising awareness of the work that the EU performs, the turnout in 2019 could be even lower. Lastly, we cannot compare the voting culture in post-communist countries such as Poland, Slovakia and Hungary, with Scandinavian or Western states. Central and Eastern Europeans need a lot of time to grow accustomed to full electoral participation, like in Sweden or Belgium, simply because of the historical events that prevented them from taking part and vote when elections in these communist countries were held.

*Voters who have no strong preferences will tend to stay home, while those who care significantly about certain issues will cast their vote. This helps boost the performance of single-issue parties or, for that matter, fringe parties.*¹⁰⁴

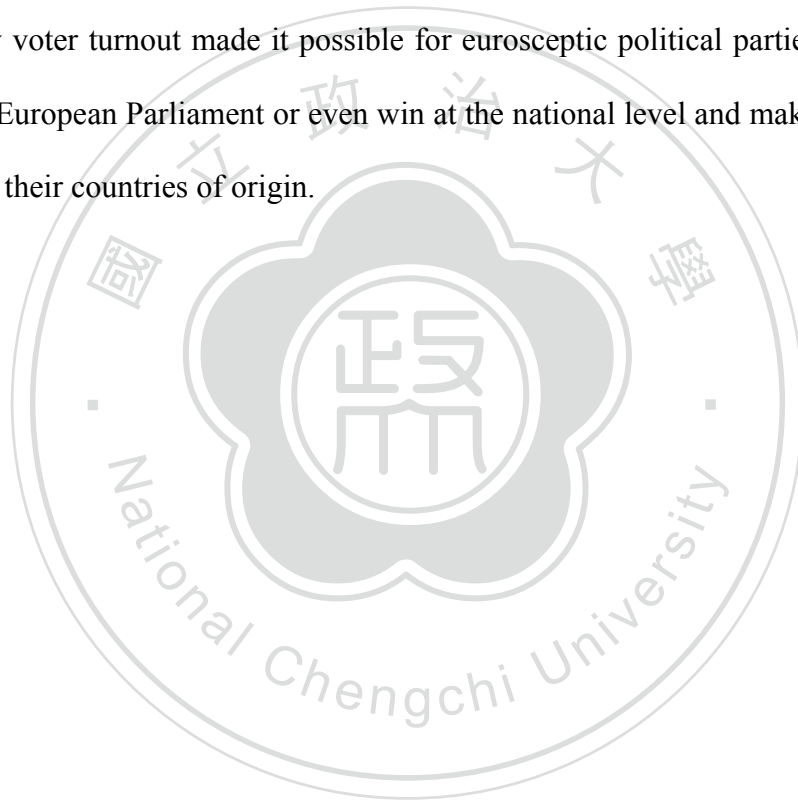
“Democratic deficit” has had a significant effect on the rise of eurosceptic parties in the European Parliament since 2014. Many citizens have decided to express their dissatisfaction with the current direction of the EU or their governments' approach, and have voted against them in

102 Data collected from conducting interviews on a sample of 20 people (18-25 years old) from the EU member states.

103 Hermann Schmitt, Sara B. Hobolt, Sebastian Adrian Popa, ““Spitzenkandidaten” in the 2014 European Parliament Election: Does Campaign Personalization Increase the Propensity to Turn Out?” (September 2014).

104 Eric Bertsou, “The 2014 EP Elections: A Victory for European Democracy? A Report on the LEQS Annual Event 2014,” *The London School of Economic and Political Science*, (July 2014).

favor of anti-establishment parties. Moreover, they have noticed that the EU has fruitlessly tried to solve ever-lasting problems, hence their understandable frustration. Some of them have attempted to break the dominance of major parties at the domestic level by voting for minor, eurosceptic political parties (in the UK, the UKIP was ahead of Labour and Conservative Party while in France, the National Front finished first before the Union for a Popular Movement and Socialists Party). Voters for anti-establishment and eurosceptic parties were highly motivated to use their votes as a protest and appeal for certain issues. On the other hand, people who tended to support major parties decided to stay at home simply because of their lack of interest in the European elections. Subsequently, low voter turnout made it possible for eurosceptic political parties to obtain enough votes to enter the European Parliament or even win at the national level and make their parties even more important in their countries of origin.



5.3 The 2014 European parliamentary election's impact

The 2014 European Parliamentary election had a tremendous effect on the political situation in Europe both internationally and domestically. For the first time in the history of the EU, there is the biggest representation of soft and hard eurosceptic politicians whose primary goals in the European Parliament are to disrupt its work as much as possible. Their presence altered the traditional division between left and right political parties into pro-EU and eurosceptic sides. This does not mean that political groups within European Parliament will fight against each other to convince voters to endorse their ideologies. Some of the soft eurosceptic parties belong to pro-EU political groups, such as Fidesz in EPP, making it more difficult to implement some controversial policies (especially those concerning immigration policy).

Most eurosceptic parties use the European Parliament as a place where they can spread their views to other member states, but more importantly to domestic audiences.¹⁰⁵ Without support and significant results during the national elections, they cannot do anything more opposing the EU. They are not interested in the actual work of the EU, and most of them treat it as a secondary job that they attend periodically. After the election, 132 eurosceptic deputies could decide whether to join an existing political group or to form a completely new one in order to reap the benefits and broadcast their views during parliamentary sessions. As a result, the majority of europhobes represent the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD), and the remaining portion created the Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF). Needless to say, they would be more powerful and visible in the media if two groups united, but Nigel Farage's reluctance to form an anti-EU coalition with Marine Le Pen makes this unlikely to happen. However, euroscepticism is not represented only by EFDD or ENF. Reformists and europhobes also belong to other political groups in the European Parliament, such as ECR, Greens-EFA, and GUE-NGL, and their members have a right to express their opinions about European issues like integration, immigration, monetary union, etc. Soft

¹⁰⁵ European Policy Center, "Post-European Parliament Elections Analysis," (May 2014).

eurosceptic parties typically call for changes in EU structures, while hard eurosceptic attack every idea or solution that the European Commission proposes for ongoing problems. These speeches are usually characterized by hateful language against emigrants, the Jewish community, or Muslim people. Since most of the attackers do not have seats in the national parliament, they use every possible opportunity in the EU to broadcast their views.

The impact of the 2014 European Parliamentary election on the national politics of each member state was so significant that it transformed into a political problem that the EU is currently confronting. Many politicians assumed that the success of eurosceptic parties in May 2014 was temporary because it resulted from the lowest voter turnout in the history. They did not anticipate that those parties would be climbing up in opinion polls or even winning elections at the national level. In 2015, the National Front (27.73%) won the first round of regional elections in France, SYRIZA (35.5%) won the election in Greece, Law and Justice (37.58%) obtained a parliamentary majority, Finnis Party (17.7%) finished second in Finland, and the Danish People's Party (21.1%) in Denmark and Podemos (20.7%) secured third place in their national elections. Those results only emphasize the fact that the rise of euroscepticism was not a temporary phenomenon and the main aim of eurosceptic parties – attracting attention in their countries of origin, was accomplished.

In many EU member states, the 2014 election changed the political program and ideology of many mainstream political parties. In some cases, their politics and attitudes toward domestic and international issues either softened or hardened. Before the 2015 Polish Parliamentary election, two major parties – the Civic Platform and Law and Justice, demonstrated how the 2014 European election and ongoing problems influenced their campaign. Jarosław Kaczyński's party (Law and Justice) has always been known for its nationalistic and soft eurosceptic attitude. During the campaign, they used a highly populist approach based on anti-immigration (European migrant crisis), security (Ukrainian crisis), and economic rhetoric (eurozone crisis). The current Prime Minister, Ewa Kopacz (Civic Platform), changed her party's direction from center-right to center-

left in order to attract young liberal voter.¹⁰⁶ As a result of such political games, Law and Justice won a majority of the seats in the Polish parliament and started its controversial reform program. In the UK, David Cameron had to make a quick and effective move after the Conservative Party's loss in the 2014 European election in order to win the United Kingdom general election of 2015. The British population has always been eurosceptic, but it recently achieved its highest level of euroscepticism by the electoral victory of the UKIP in 2014. To attract the 26.6% of the British population that voted for Nigel Farage's party, Cameron decided to harden his stance on EU matters. It became clear to him that it was about time to listen to his citizens' wishes and try to oppose ever-closer union project promoted by the European Commission. Consequently, he promised that in the case of a Conservative party victory, as a Prime Minister he would propose the UK European Union membership referendum after the general elections.¹⁰⁷ In the end, David Cameron accomplished his goal and won the UK election in 2015 by gaining 36.9% of the popular vote.

All things considered, the impact of the 2014 European Parliamentary election on EU member states became one of the biggest concerns of pro-EU politicians. Most of them did not expect that after the 2014 European political earthquake, eurosceptic parties would survive at the domestic level because they seemed to have everything under control. Political leaders assumed the eurosceptic parties they might have entered the national parliament in the form of a powerless minority, but even then they were strong enough to influence the government where controversial issues were concerned. The problem arose when eurosceptic parties won elections or secured 2nd or 3rd place, thus making them important players in the domestic arena personifying the voice of a frustrated population. It is assumed that 132 eurosceptic politicians occupy only 1/6 of the European Parliament. However, all of them have a right to broadcast their views from Brussels and reach many voters in their countries of origin, which can be used as a devastating weapon against mainstream parties.

106 Aleks Szczerbiak, "Can Civic Platform still win the Polish election?" *The Polish Politics Blog*, (August 2015).

107 Lamiat Sabin, "David Cameron vows earlier EU referendum if Tories win election," *Independent*, (January 2015).

5.4 How to confront euroscepticism?

It has been proven that euroscepticism has become one of the most serious problems in the EU. Many believed that eurosceptic parties would vanish as soon as the real run for national parliament seats began. They could not have been more wrong. Against all predictions, eurosceptic parties are gaining more support at the domestic level than anybody could have expected. Their leaders have used unfavorable situations in Europe caused by the migrant, eurozone, and Ukrainian crises in order to spread their views and populist ideas across member states. EU leaders have begun to analyze mistakes made before the 2014 European election and try to find an effective solution to prevent against the future rise of euroscepticism. They have realized the danger of letting additional eurosceptic political parties enter the European Parliament and as a result most of them have begun to implement useful measures in order to decrease the popularity of euroscepticism before the 2019 European Parliamentary election.

First and foremost, EU leaders need to rebuild trust in the EU, which was drastically undermined when the solutions for ongoing European problems were not implemented effectively. They must show European citizens that they have everything under control while emphasizing the strength of the EU. It can be assumed that measures to solve the migrant, eurozone, and Ukrainian crises have already been implemented. Based on diplomacy and the negotiation process at both the international and domestic level, the eurozone and Ukrainian crises have alleviated significantly. However, until Greece completes its bailout program and Ukraine, Russia, and pro-Russian rebels put an end to their military conflict, these problems will remain unsolved. On the other hand, the migrant crisis poses a serious threat to European integration by dividing member states within the EU, which makes them unable to reach a common agreement on issues like immigration policy – mostly because of the Visegrad group's objection. By solving the problems that have most affected the European population over past 8 years, the European Commission would deprive eurosceptic parties of their core arguments criticizing the Commission's inefficiency in dealing with ongoing

issues. Because most eurosceptic leaders use the anti-immigration campaign to attract potential voters, solving the migrant crisis would force them to find alternative ways of attacking the EU. In that case, it would provoke confusion and disparity within eurosceptic parties, whose programs would no longer appeal to ordinary citizens. If the eurosceptic party is single-issued, the easiest way to decrease its support and eventually eliminate it from a political race is simply to solve that issue. This paper has revealed which European problems have contributed most to the rise of euroscepticism, and as a result the decrease in trust in the EU. Solving these problems, or at least alleviating their effect on member states would be an important first step in hindering the progress of eurosceptic parties. Once the European Commission rebuilds its trust, it will put itself in a favorable position to begin its fight with europhobes like Nigel Farage and Marine Le Pen.

Decreasing support for eurosceptic parties would require more actions at the national level rather than in Brussels. EU leaders must acknowledge the fact that euroscepticism originates from each member state, not the European Parliament. Criticizing eurosceptics from Brussels would not do any harm simply because that information is often omitted by the media due to a lack of general interest in EU matters. This is why the European Commission must take action to increase knowledge about the EU across the European population. Ordinary citizens often associate the EU with rules and regulations imposed on their countries and the financial contribution it provides when they see posters in front of newly built investments. They do not know what people in the EU do, how they shape political and economic unions, or how they secure their interests and democratic standards when such are in danger. They imagine that people working in the EU simply earn a lot of money without doing anything beneficial for their nations. In reality, the EP members who do not want to be involved in any projects or actions led by the EU come from eurosceptic parties. Evidently, the European Commission cannot increase knowledge about the EU and its accomplishments without help from the national governments of member states. Only with their consent can it invest money into educational programs that would explain how the EU works or simply advertise EU

actions and policies in the media more than they did previously. If the population knew more about the EU, it might become more involved in the EU's policy-making, current issues, and projects. Consequently, citizens would not vote blindly for eurosceptic parties because of their newly acquired knowledge of benefits that the EU offers.

Thirdly, the 2014 European Parliamentary election was a clear sign that the European Commission needed to change its direction toward the ever-closer union. Many European nations have shown their concern about the future of the European integration project while highlighting the need to reform the EU. The recent European issues have revealed how fragile the EU might be once it is affected by serious problems. Nowadays, leaders need to revitalize the EU's economy and political and social stability by ensuring that the eurozone, migrant, and Ukrainian crises will not happen in the future and if they do, find a way to respond to them more quickly and effectively. The fight between “more Europe” and “less Europe” mostly involves soft eurosceptic parties, not hard ones, hence their other name - “reformists”. Recent negotiations with the British government regarding reform of the social system and providing access to benefits for European migrants proves that there is room for change. Cameron and other EU leaders reached a binding agreement at the international level, and now it is in the British Prime Minister's power to convince his citizens to vote to remain in the EU in June 2016. If he succeeds, this will be a historical accomplishment in negotiations between pro-EU and soft eurosceptic parties. Such an agreement would prove that in such a difficult times, Europe needs more diplomacy instead of disagreements. Negotiations between the Commission and soft eurosceptic parties has a reasonable chance of success simply because Fidesz and the Conservative Party want to reform the EU. On the other hand, the author assumes that two-level games theory does not apply to europhobes who desire to leave and destroy everything connected to engage in the EU, hence their reluctance to any negotiations.

Another factor that would decrease support for eurosceptic parties in member states would be a higher voter turnout in future European Parliamentary elections. It has been proven that

“democratic deficit” had a significant impact on the rise of euroscepticism in the European Parliament. Member states must involve their candidates more actively in the campaigns than before by underlining the benefits that the EU may provide if their politicians are elected. Occasionally, they might use the European Parliamentary election as a domestic fight between political parties to address issues that should be considered during national elections rather than European ones. If this kind of tactic encourages more citizens to vote, then it should not be seen as a problem. On the other hand, EU matters need to be presented during the campaigns, but in the case of domestic political games they are often set aside. The idea to introduce competitors for Commission President by each political group in the European Parliament was considered to be a smart move, but debates, information, and news about it did not reach citizens at the domestic level. Such an idea requires greater publicity and interest from the society. Moreover, candidates must use the sources of civilian frustration based on current events in order to promote effective solutions for problems like unemployment, the refugee crisis, or economic instability. Without it, the public would not be interested in following debates or interviews. European citizens do not want to watch discussions about cohesion policy programs or energy union because they find such to be boring. Vivid debates would undoubtedly attract more attention from member states and as a result encourage more people to vote during the European Parliamentary elections.

Lastly, pro-EU political parties should insist on promoting left-right competition instead of dividing into pro-EU and eurosceptic camps. In this case, they would avoid dangerous repercussions from voters having to choose between “more Europe” or “less Europe” projects. Instead, they should maintain the traditional order, while at the same time making eurosceptic parties disagree with one another. If eurosceptic parties were to have the same ideology, views, and aims, defeating them would be a very difficult and complex process. Fortunately for pro-EU parties, eurosceptic parties differ significantly from each other, and disputes between Nigel Farage and Marine Le Pen are a perfect example of this statement.

5.5 Conclusion

Without a doubt, we may consider the 2014 European election to be a crucial moment in the history of the EU. Since the beginning of this politico-economic union, members states have pursued the idea of an ever-closer union by signing important treaties. Many might have imagined that this project must have had some end in sight, but they did not anticipate that it would come in 2014. This particular election changed the situation not only inside the European Parliament, but also in each member state making it possible for eurosceptic parties to rise to power and promote their different version of Europe. Taking “democratic deficit” and ongoing European issues into consideration, it can be assumed that these factors contributed immensely to the significant number of eurosceptic politicians elected in May 2014. In total, the nearly 30 soft and hard eurosceptic parties that entered the European Parliament have already had an enormous impact on the EU's policies, and most importantly on the domestic politics of many countries. They became more visible and aggressive in their campaigns, thus leading them to electoral victories at the national level.

Nevertheless, there are several ways for the European Commission to deal with the rise of euroscepticism and decrease its support within the EU. Rebuilding trust in the EU, educating people about the work that the Commission and European Parliament perform, ameliorating voter participation in upcoming elections, and most importantly, listening to the voice of the frustrated population are only few ideas that might hinder the increase of eurosceptic politicians emerging at both the European and national level. These strategies have a reasonable chance for success if we use diplomacy as a negotiation tool between EU leaders and citizens. When all political actors make concessions, then we may have a win-set agreement that can be easily introduced to and hopefully accepted by the domestic constituency. Taking all factors into account, pro-EU and soft eurosceptic political parties have proven that there is always room for discussion, which can lead to achieving a compromise on various matters. Unfortunately, we cannot state the same about europhobes.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

For the first time in history, the EU has been exposed to extensive criticism from many political parties. Their leaders took advantage of the unfavorable situation in Europe caused by the ongoing crises and used it as a platform from which to broadcast their anti-EU views. Surprisingly, euroscepticism did not emerge as a temporary trend that would vanish after the 2014 European Parliamentary election. On the contrary, eurosceptic parties in many member states gained immense popularity and their support does not seem to be fading away, insomuch that many Europeans have begun to ponder the possible disintegration of the EU.

This thesis has revealed that euroscepticism as a political ideology did not emerge shortly before the 2014 European election, but its origins were deeply related to the process of European integration as a whole. Chapter two proves that EU treaties, which at some point turned in the direction of an ever-closer union, encouraged opponents to criticize European leaders for their ideas about so-called European federalization. The current structure of the EU was possible because of the Lisbon Treaty signed in 2007. In conjunction with past agreements, they combined to form a unique politico-economic union with a borderless area, common currency, and a single market, but also retained centralized power in Brussels. Many politicians have noted that the European integration process went too far because in some cases, the decisions made at the European level may overrule those made at the national level. This is where euroscepticism was born - in the process of European integration, and its supporters are highly opposed to centralized power in Brussels and key ideas like the Schengen area, the Single Market, and using the Euro as a common currency. One such opponent was Margaret Thatcher, who gave an unforgettable speech at the College of Europe in 1988. This event can be considered the official date when the term *euroscepticism* was brought into political life because of the harsh criticism of the EU by the British Prime Minister.

However, it was not until the European financial crisis that eurosceptic parties began their populist campaigns to attract frustrated voter support. The author of this thesis strongly believes that three European issues: the eurozone, Ukrainian, and migrant crises, have essentially contributed to the rise of euroscepticism in Europe. At one point, many perceived the EU as a politico-economic union that had everything under control and continuously passed forward-looking ideas during parliamentary sessions. They did not pay much attention to EU matters until the eurozone crisis began, and following it – the Ukrainian and refugee crises. Because of the lack of effective solutions to these ongoing problems, eurosceptic parties have elucidated the EU's weak spots and attacked them with anti-EU and populist rhetoric. Regardless, implementing such ideas as the Schengen area and the Euro as a common currency were ground-breaking and many welcomed them with great enthusiasm, but the current European issues revealed how fragile these notions might be. Without the eurozone crisis, Syriza would never have won their elections; without the refugee crisis, the National Front and Party of Freedom would never have gained so much popularity; and without the Ukrainian crisis, many eurosceptic parties would not have enough weapons with which to attack the EU's actions. Chapters two and three emphasize that euroscepticism as a political ideology was present long before the financial crisis began but the timing and intensification of current European problems and the EU's late and ineffective solutions have enabled eurosceptic parties to rise in power and spread their anti-EU views across Europe.

Subsequently, chapter four proves how complex the study of euroscepticism is. A presentation of eurosceptic political parties concludes that division into soft and hard euroscepticism is not sufficient to comprehend their ideologies and motivations. Nevertheless, from a general point of view, Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart's research helps us to understand which factions can be called reformists and europhobes. An in-depth analysis shows that further division of soft and hard euroscepticism into left and right wings is necessary, and without it the understanding of eurosceptic parties would not be complete. Furthermore, using the UK as an

example of the most eurosceptic country in the EU gives us additional insight into the origins and development of euroscepticism in Europe. It proves that the UK has always been opposed to the European integration process and treats the EU as a business partner while avoiding closer cooperation.

Lastly, the information presented in chapter five gives us a general overview of the historical 2014 European Parliamentary election. Previously, European voters had never elected so many eurosceptic politicians to represent their countries in the European Parliament. These numbers were the highest in the history of European elections, but were still too low to have a great impact on European politics. However, the entrance of eurosceptic parties into the European Parliament and formation of anti-EU groups allowed them an opportunity to broadcast their views more than they had been able to before. Additionally, the phenomenon of democratic deficit is also discussed in this chapter. It has been proven that if it were not for the lowest turnout in the history of European elections, eurosceptic parties would not have been able to achieve such success.

All things considered, in answering the most important research question posed in the introduction of this thesis, we can state that several factors contributed to the rise of euroscepticism in the EU. Implementing the idea of an ever-closer union and centralized power in Brussels can be seen as some basic catalysts that enabled eurosceptic parties to emerge in European politics. They have been critical of the EU and its projects, namely the creation of a European family, the Schengen area, and the Euro as a common currency for many years, but their criticism was ineffective during stable times. It all started to fall apart at the beginning of the financial crisis that came to Europe. The rapid development of euroscepticism was possible because of the eurozone, Ukrainian and refugee crises that arose in Europe one after another, making it extremely difficult for European leaders to solve said issues. Subsequently, eurosceptic politicians saw their opportunity to spread their views and emphasize their disagreement with the bailout programs imposed on their countries, the refugee quotas, and the sanctions against Russian Federation. Finally, the lowest voter

turnout in the history of European elections and the lack of interest in EU matters can be considered yet another factors that contributed to the rise of euroscepticism. Many Europeans are simply not interested in European campaigns or they do not think their votes are important enough to have an impact on their future. Those who were determined enough to take part in the 2014 European elections were mostly frustrated voters who were opposed to the EU's policies and ever-closer union ideas.

By answering the second research question about the importance of the 2014 European Parliamentary election and the significance of eurosceptic parties at the domestic level, the author of this thesis has presented in-depth analysis of facts and figures in chapter five. Many politicians jointly admitted that the political earthquake, which took place in May 2014, began an entirely new era in European politics. At this point, the traditional “fight” between the left and right was replaced by a “more Europe” and “less Europe” ideology. By bringing their representatives into the European Parliament, eurosceptic parties officially began their campaigns at the European level in order to secure satisfactory results during the next national elections. Their number in the European Parliament is still too low to have an impact on European politics, but it provides them with an opportunity to widely broadcast their views and convince their domestic constituencies to vote for them. Since 2014, many eurosceptic parties have been able to achieve remarkable results during national elections, and some of them have even won theirs. There is no doubt that the 2014 European Parliamentary elections were critical to the current political situation in Europe, so much so that people began considering the possible disintegration of the EU. However, this unfavorable scenario will not play out in the near future, and even the potential withdrawal of the UK from the EU may hurt it but would not destroy the institution. Hard eurosceptic parties, even if they are capable of winning national elections, are not able to form governments and implement all of their anti-EU ideas. On the other hand, soft eurosceptic parties have proven that they could be difficult partners concerning EU matters, but they are willing to cooperate and negotiate with others to reach

a consensus on various debated issues. Concerns about EU disintegration would be greater if any hard eurosceptic parties won the majority vote during national elections. In the end, the events following the 2014 European Parliamentary elections should be taken as a lesson for the European Commission, revealing that its current political approach is not working and reforms are necessary to regain the trust of the frustrated members of society.

Applying the two-level games theory in each chapter of this thesis has made it possible to determine whether or not international and domestic negotiations have a reasonable chance for success when conflict arises. The “Historical Overview” section explained that the formation of the EU since 1951 was quite strenuous. The introduction of new ideas through several treaties and agreements in order to pursue the ever-closer union project encountered many obstacles from member states. Accordingly, the UK was one of the countries that was firmly opposed to such concepts as the Schengen area or using the Euro as a common currency, but successful negotiations between the European Commission and European leaders made it possible to establish terms that suited all parties involved, leading to a signed agreement. Chapter three -“Issues Contributing to Euroscepticism” revealed how complex the negotiations at both international and domestic level were when the euro, migrant and Ukrainian crises occurred. In the case of Greece, a win-set agreement was not accomplished because of rejection at the domestic level, which later led to Alexis Tsipras's resignation as a Greek PM. Naturally, bailout programs in other member states affected by the eurocrisis were not accepted enthusiastically by majority of society, but it seemed to be the only option for them to revitalize their countries' economies. The migrant crisis turned out to be even more difficult to solve than the previous example. Reaching a consensus to reduce the influx of refugees to the EU, while at the same time respecting human rights, led to extreme divisions between member states. Southern European countries demanded the rapid relocation of migrants from their territories, Western European and Scandinavian nations promoted an open-door policy, while Central and Eastern European member states were strictly opposed to granting asylum

in their region. The idea of refugee quotas proposed by the European Commission was democratically accepted at the international level, but the domestic constituency in Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, etc. was highly opposed to such, which led to several anti-immigration demonstrations. In order to reach an agreement accepted by all member states and move closer to a final solution for the migrant crisis, the EU negotiated the terms of refugee relocation with Turkey, which was ratified by all political leaders. In the case of the Ukrainian crisis, negotiations for a ceasefire in Eastern Ukraine involved three political actors – Ukraine, the Russian Federation, and the EU. The first agreement to restore peace and stability in the Donbass region was signed in Minsk on 5 September 2014 after prolonged dialogue, but it was quickly terminated due to the battle over Donetsk International Airport. However, the second protocol – Minsk II, secured a win-set agreement and was accepted at the international and domestic levels proving that negotiations based on two-level games theory can be very successful. Chapters four and five provide us with a final answer regarding the possible ways of confronting eurosceptic parties and euroscepticism as a whole. One may conclude that negotiations with soft eurosceptic parties have a reasonable chance of success because most of such desire to reform the EU instead of destroying it. Moreover, the author of this thesis finds the case of the UK's membership in the EU fascinating because it provides a concrete example of negotiations based on two-level games theory led by a soft eurosceptic party. However, future examination will only be possible after 23 June 2016, when the referendum is set to take place, making it impossible to analyze it completely at this point.

All things considered, euroscepticism is a relatively new topic in international relations studies that has recently become widespread across Europe. Before 2014, it was quite challenging to find journal articles discussing euroscepticism, thus explaining why so many news articles by major newspapers were used as reference. Additionally, the biggest difficulty in conducting the research was posed by the current European situation and ongoing problems, which are further developing each day. Therefore, further research is needed because we cannot predict what will happen in the

near future, especially in such unstable times. The UK-European Union membership referendum, following the national elections and the 2019 European Parliamentary election, may provide us with entirely new information regarding the development of euroscepticism in the years to come. For the time being, however, the future implications of euroscepticism remain to be seen.



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