

PAPERS

CORNELIA HILDEBRANDT (ED.)

**SITUATION ON THE
LEFT IN EUROPE AFTER
THE EU ELECTIONS:
NEW CHALLENGES**

**INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP OF
THE ROSA LUXEMBURG FOUNDATION
JULY 21-23, 2014, IN BERLIN**

Content

EUROPEAN WORKSHOP - INTRODUCTION.....	3
PAOLO CHIOCCETTI	
THE RADICAL LEFT AT THE 2014 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTION: A FIRST ASSESSMENT	7
CORNELIA HILDEBRANDT	
ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE EUROPEAN ELECTION OF 2014.....	15
THILO JANSSEN	
A QUARTER DIVIDED BY FOUR FAR RIGHT-WING PARTIES IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AFTER THE ELECTIONS OF MAY 2014.....	26
KRZYSZTOF PILAWSKI AND HOLGER POLITT	
THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA AND POLAND: IN THE SPIRIT OF NEOLIBERAL ECONOMICS AND OF TRADITION	40
JIRÍ MÁLEK	
EAST OF THE WEST.....	45
DR RICHARD DUNPHY	
THE LEFT IN THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND AFTER THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS OF 2014: THE RISE OF SINN FÉIN AND THE POLITICAL SITUATION OF THE MARXIST, OR CLASS-BASED, LEFT	49
INEGO GREGORY MAUZE	
2014 GENERAL ELECTIONS: RESPITE FOR THE « BELGIAN COMPROMISE »,	64
MARGARITA MILEVA	
SHORT OVERVIEW OF THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS IN BULGARIA 2014	71
MARKO KOSTANIC	
THE ELECTION RESULTS OF CROATIA.....	75
GIORGOS CHARALAMBOUS	
EUROPEAN ELECTIONS – CYPRUS (NIGHT-REPORT)	77
JIRÍ MALEK	
POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC.....	81
ANDREAS NISSEN	
THE EU-ELECTIONS IN DENMARK: TRIUMPHANT POPULISM	91
INGER JOHANSEN	
THE DANISH PEOPLE'S PARTY - A SUCCESS STORY BASED ON A CONSCIOUS JOURNEY TOWARDS THE CENTRE OF DANISH POLITICS	95
HOLGER POLIT	
ESTONIA ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, MAY 2014	100
TEPPO ESKELINEN	
EUROPEAN ELECTION RESULTS IN FINLAND 2014.....	101
ROGER MARTELLI	
THE FRENCH SHOCK.....	103
ELISABETH GAUTHIER	
WORKING-PAPER TO ELECTION RESULTS IN FRANCE IN FRENCH :.....	104
HORST KAHRS	
ELECTIONS TO THE 8TH EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTORAL RESULTS IN GERMANY	112
NTINA TZOUVALA	
THE GREEK CASE: SOME INITIAL THOUGHTS AFTER A HISTORICAL RESULT	114

MATYAS BENYIK	
EVALUATION OF EP ELECTIONS IN HUNGARY IN 2014 BUDAPEST,.....	116
DR RICHARD DUNPHY	
REPUBLIC OF IRELAND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS 2014	119
ROBERTO MOREA	
EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2014: AN ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS IN ITALY	124
HOLGER POLITT	
LATVIA AND LITHUANIA - ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT	126
NICO BIVER	
BEST RESULT FOR THE RADICAL LEFT SINCE THE BEGINNING OF DIRECT ELECTIONS TO THE EP IN 1979 - REPORT: EP ELECTIONS 2014 IN LUXEMBOURG	128
CORNELIA HILDEBRANDT	
MALTA AND THE EUROPEAN ELECTION-RESULTS.....	132
MICHAEL A. OLSON	
NETHERLANDS VOTERS DEFY ANTI-EU-TREND	133
HOLGER POLITT	
POLAND - ELECTIONS TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, MAY 25, 2014	137
CATARINA PRÍNCIPE	
ANALYSIS OF THE ELECTORAL RESULTS IN THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2014: PORTUGAL.....	139
FLORIN POENARU	
EUROPEAN ELECTIONS IN ROMANIA - THE SOCIAL DEMOCRATS WIN WITH A LANDSLIDE, THE NON-AFFILIATED LEFT VOTES IN THE STREET.....	142
CORNELIA HILDEBRANDT	
SLOVAKIA – RESULTS OF THE EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2014	144
ANEJ KORSIKA	
EUROPEAN ELECTIONS 2014 - SOCIALIST FORCES DELIVER AN IMPRESSIVE PERFORMANCE IN SLOVENIA.....	145
LUÍS RAMIRO AND JAIME AJA	
THE LEFT IN THE STORM: THE RADICAL LEFT AND THE 2014 EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS IN SPAIN	150
CENTER FOR MARXIST STUDIES (CMS), STOCKHOLM	
ELECTION ANALYSIS SWEDEN 2014	160
CORNELIA HILDEBRANDT	
GREAT BRITAIN – EUROPEAN ELECTION RESULTS	164
AUTORS	166

European Workshop - Introduction

On the situation of the left in Europe after the EU elections: New challenges

International Workshop of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation,

July 21-23, 2014, in Berlin, Franz-Mehring-Platz 1, 10243 Berlin

The challenges facing the left in Europe have changed dramatically since the last EU elections. The real estate and banking crisis of 2008-'09 has long since grown into a full-fledged economic, political and social crisis, carrying with it – especially in the countries of southern Europe – the dangers of social catastrophe. Unemployment, especially among young people, has for almost two years solidified at a very high level –almost 60% in Spain and Greece. The privatization of public utilities and the dismantling of public services are being pushed ahead by the ECB, the EU Commission and the IMF (the Troika), as are wage and salary cuts; these measures are the conditions for the issuance of new loans designed to stave off state bankruptcy, and, even more than that, the bankruptcy of banks. Within the European Union, social, political and economic divides are growing between and within countries and regions. The social peace is being disturbed, and political conditions are producing increased tension. Even the expulsion of countries is being considered.

These developments promoted by the dictates and memorandums of the Troika are leading to the emergence of a new phase of Europeanized, democracy-destroying, authoritarian-repressive neoliberalism which is promoting political and social pressure within the EU and, as a result, the dangers of social, political and economic distortions. In this context, nationalistic and anti-European sentiments, some of them leftwingd to value-conservative movements, are moving ever more toward the center of society, a development which is being politically expressed in the growing influence of anti-democratic and anti-European parties and movements. At the level of social movements, this includes demonstrations against abortion rights in Spain, and, at the political level, with good results achieved by the *Front Nationale* in France, the parties FIDEZ and Jobbik in Hungary and the Golden Dawn in Greece, as well as the True Finns in the Sweden-Democrats in Scandinavia.

In view of the social and economic instabilities within the EU, including not only the countries of the EU's periphery, but also the core countries such as France, Spain and Italy, the question that arises is not only that of the design of a core Europe which ties in Germany, but rather that of the effect of Germany's dominating role for the future of European development, since that goal is no longer based solely on radical social cutbacks and the privatization of public services with the aid of the Agenda 2010 in Germany, but rather, since 2013, on a new foreign-policy self-perception – the abandonment of the "policy of reticence."

Goal of the workshop

The goal of the workshop is to analyze the new relationship of political forces in Europe within the EU and its member countries, and to draw conclusions for the European Left Party in particular countries and regions, and also for the strengthening of the Europeanization of struggles. The goal is to "tell it like it is" – to present the strengths and weaknesses of European left parties, and discuss their strategic options for future struggles. This includes

the deepening of the knowledge around concrete challenges faced by the left in particular countries of Europe.

What are the key questions?

- How have the political relations of forces in Europe, and especially within the European Union, changed since 2009? How should the results for the left parties be considered in the context of the entire spectrum? Which possibilities for the organization and implementation of leftist political approaches will become apparent at the European level in light of the results of the EU elections?
- Where have the left parties been successful, and which concrete conditions have been the foundations for their success? Which new forms of struggle, electoral alliances and socio-political alliances have proven themselves, or have emerged anew? What role has the attempt at personalization played with regard to the new possibility of electing the Commission President, and could it be useful for the left parties?
- Can tentative statements regarding the effects of left electoral offers, and regarding the nature of the electorate which supports the left parties, be formulated? How can a stronger Europeanization of struggles be achieved by using and expanding national struggles?
- How have the left parties' possibilities for developing an alternative political agenda developed?

These and other questions are to be discussed at the workshop.

In the first block, the new conditions/new contexts of the European elections, and the capabilities of the left parties to respond adequately to these conditions, are to be discussed.

In a second part, the concrete conditions and challenges facing the left and its results in the EU election are to be presented and discussed, using the examples of selected country studies.

A third step will address possible paths for strengthening the Europeanization of the struggles, in the course of an evaluation of the electoral campaigns and the results of the EU elections.

- What answers does the left have for all these developments? How are they being perceived, and which alternative strategies are being developed? Which strategies has the Left Party pursued nationally and at the European level, and on which alliances can it depend in that regard?
- What are the strengths of radical left parties in comparison with the social democrats, the greens, the conservatives and the right wing? What are the key elements of their strengths and of their weaknesses; what are the conditions for success of left parties today, and who are their allies, both at the societal and at the political levels?
- Which conclusions must left parties draw from the elections for the European Parliament? What are their strengths? How can the weaknesses of left parties be realistically addressed, both at the national and at the European levels?

The following three thematic blocks are proposed:

1. **Current challenges to Europe**

Discussion of current challenges regarding European developments before and during the EU electoral campaign

2. **How should the results of the left parties be assessed?**

Assessments from the particular countries of the EU, and based on that, a comprehensive overview; development of tendencies and possible scenarios

3. **Conclusions for the formulation of strategic goals and the formation of new national and European alliances**

The results will in conclusion be presented and discussed at the Summer University of the European Left Party

SCHEDULE

July 21, 2014, open Lesson

Welcoming conversation in the salon of the RLS, with representatives of the Left Party

Arrival/ Welcome

Opening Wilfried Telkämper, director of the Center for international dialogue

Cornelia Hildebrandt, RLF and Walter Baier, Coordinator Transform

Historical Legacies and Political Perspectives of the European Social Democracy'

Gerassimos Moschonas, PhD, University of Paris-2, is currently an Associate Professor in Comparative Politics at the Department of Political Science and History of Pantei on University, Athens (Greece).

July 22, 2014 Workshop

Assessment of the overall results of the elections to the European Parliament - shift political power

- What shows the European Election about the political power relations in Europe? Input: **Walter Baier**, coordinator of Transform
- Renationalization or Europeanization – a new cleavage? Input: **Cornelia Hildebrandt**; deputy secretary of the Institut for social analysis, Rosa Luxemburg Foundation

Block: The new political situation in Eastern Europe – the role of Ukraine-conflict for European Election

- On the situation in Ukraine: **Volodymyr Ishchenko**, deputy director of the **Center for Society Research** and lecturer at the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy
- The situation in the Baltic States: **Tomas Tomilinas**. Tomas is a member of the Demos Institute for Critical Thought, a Lithuanian
- On the situation in Czech Republic: **Jiří Málek**, SPED Society for European Dialogue, Czech Republic

Block: Why are the right-wing parties successfully in Europe? attractive vote for the rightwing bloc in Europe? To the different situation

- input to Ukip in UK **Dan Hough**, University of Sussex
- input to left strategy vis a vis to the FN Elisabeth Gauthier, Espaces Marx, France
- input to the Dansk Folkeparty **Inger V. Johansen**, Transform Denmark
- coherence between the far rights – **Thilo Janssen**, political scientist, Germany

Block: The new situation with the successfully Left in Europe New kind of political alliances: with input to Spain, **Luis Ramiro**, Europe of Citizens Foundation (FEC)

- input to the window of opportunity of Italian Left:
Roberto Morea, transform Italia
Input to Austria – **Barbara Steiner**, transform Austria
The new leftwing-power in Slovenia?: **Anej Korsika**,
international secretary of the initiative for Democratic Socialism (united Left in Slovenia)

July 23, 2014

Block: The new situation with the successfully Left in Europe Strategic debates and experiences of the radical Left

- general input **Richard Dunphy**
- input to new forms of organisation: **Íñigo Errejón Galván** PODEMOS
- inputs to Cyprus: **Giorgos Charalambous**, University of Cyprus
inputs to Croatia: **Marko Kostanic**, Center for Workers Studies in Zagreb and publicist

Challenge for the political left – what is to be done

- input **Margarita Mileva**, board of the European Left party
- conclusion open questions/next steps
Walter Baier/Cornelia Hildebrandt

Paolo Chiocchetti

The radical left at the 2014 European Parliament election: a first assessment

The publication of the final results of the 2014 European Parliament (EP) election of 22-25 finally permits to draw a first assessment of the performance of the radical left.¹

The election marked an important electoral advance for this party family, which won 12,981,378 votes (+1,885,574) corresponding to 7.96% of valid votes (+1.04%). This was matched by an even stronger increase of radical left Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), from 36 to 53, and of their parliamentary group (European United Left/Nordic Green left - GUE/NGL), from 35 to 52.²

On the negative side, the radical left failed to hit some key strategic targets. In terms of seats, the GUE/NGL did not fulfil the overblown expectations of some early opinion polls³ and did not reach the status of third largest force in the coming European Parliament. In terms of votes, its growth was overshadowed by the much stronger gains of far right Eurosceptic parties.

1. Electoral Results: Important But Uneven Gains

The aggregate score⁴ of radical left parties in European Parliament elections reached in 2014 (7.96%) its zenith since the fall of really-existing socialism, beyond the previous peaks of 1999 (7.59%) and 2009 (6.92%).

The electoral gains, however, were not evenly distributed across the continent (see TABLE 1). In fourteen countries the radical left improved its support but in twelve countries it suffered instead moderate or heavy losses.⁵

¹ All data are retrieved from the relevant official national source (usually the Ministry of Interior); results are still provisional in a few countries.

² The two categories do not entirely overlap. On the one hand, some red-green (e.g. the Danish SF) or regionalist (e.g. in Spain) radical left parties, as well as most ecologist deputies elected within radical left coalitions (e.g. the Catalonia ICV), have often opted to sit with the Green group. On the other hand, other kinds of parties have sometimes joined the GUE/NGL group for technical reasons (in 2014 the Danish Eurosceptic coalition, the German and Dutch animalists and an Irish independent).

³ Cunningham, K., Hix, S. (2014) "Socialist marginally ahead, radical left up to third", 5 March 2014, <http://www.electio2014.eu/it/pollsandsenarios/pollsblog>

⁴ This is the sum-total of radical left votes divided by the total valid votes expressed in the EU countries. The use of aggregate (or weighted) figures is preferable to that of unweighted simple averages of national results, as the latter tend to distort the overall size of party families.

⁵ In Malta the radical left was absent both times, Croatia was not yet a member in 2009 (but the radical left lost heavily compared to the 2012 EP election).

TABLE 1. RADICAL LEFT RESULTS, 2009-2014

	Votes 2009	Votes 2014	Change	share 2009	share 2014	Change
AUSTRIA	18,926	60,451	+41,525	0.66%	2.14%	+1.48%
BELGIUM	107,046	235,092	+128,046	1.63%	3.51%	+1.88%
BULGARIA	0	14,231	+14,231	0.00%	0.64%	+0.64%
CROATIA	-	34,380	-	-	3.73%	-
CYPRUS	106,922	70,130	-36,792	34.90%	27.09%	-7.82%
CZECH R.	334,577	175,027	-159,550	14.18%	11.55%	-2.63%
DENMARK	371,603	248,244	-123,359	16.38%	10.92%	-5.46%
ESTONIA	3,519	226	-3,293	0.89%	0.07%	-0.82%
FINLAND	109,948	167,006	+57,058	6.60%	9.66%	+3.06%
FRANCE	2,165,037	1,554,647	-610,390	12.57%	8.20%	-4.37%
GERMANY	2,004,500	2,220,724	+216,224	7.61%	7.57%	-0.05%
GREECE	718,790	1,934,025	+1,215,235	14.02%	33.82%	+19.81%
HUNGARY	27,817	0	-27,817	0.96%	0.00%	-0.96%
IRELAND	256,123	377,128	+121,005	14.00%	22.77%	+8.77%
ITALY	2,162,215	1,108,457	-1,053,758	7.06%	4.04%	-3.02%
LATVIA	0	6,817	+6,817	0.00%	1.55%	+1.55%
LITHUANIA	13,341	0	-13,341	2.43%	0.00%	-2.43%
LUXEMBOURG	9,740	14,773	+5,034	4.91%	7.25%	+2.34%
MALTA	0	0	0	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
NETHERLANDS	330,802	458,079	+127,277	7.26%	9.64%	+2.37%
POLAND	51,872	0	-51,872	0.70%	0.00%	-0.70%
PORTUGAL	810,571	636,833	-173,738	24.32%	20.96%	-3.36%
ROMANIA	0	9,803	+9,803	0.00%	0.18%	+0.18%
SLOVAK R.	13,643	10,287	-3,356	1.65%	1.83%	+0.18%
SLOVENIA	0	28,700	+28,700	0.00%	7.14%	+7.14%
SPAIN	823,329	3,174,027	+2,350,698	5.27%	20.78%	+15.51%
SWEDEN	182,140	234,358	+52,218	5.75%	6.31%	+0.56%
UK	463,344	207,933	-255,411	3.06%	1.26%	-1.80%
TOTAL	11,085,805	12,981,378	+1,895,574	6.92%	7.96%	+1.03%
VALID VOTES	160,105,511	163,109,024	+3,003,513	41.42%	41.17%	-0.24%

Successes were spectacular in several states of the periphery. In Greece the radical left soared to 33.82% of valid votes (+19.81%), becoming the largest national party family. This result was driven by the hefty gains of SYRIZA (26.57%), which confirmed its scores of the June 2012 national election and overcame the conservatives as the first Greek party. In Spain the radical left rose to 20.78% (+15.51%) thanks to the excellent debut of the far left list PODEMOS and strong gains of Izquierda Unida and the left-regionalist alliance Los Pueblos Deciden. In Ireland the division of the Trotskyist far left led to the loss of the seat of the Socialist Party but the rise of the left-nationalist Sinn Féin pushed the total radical left score

to 22.77% (+8.77%). In Slovenia, finally, the 2012-2013 anti-austerity protests provoked the emergence of a previously inexistent electoral radical left (*Združena levica* and *Solidarnost*) which scored 7.14%, although it failed to gain parliamentary representation.

These gains in medium-small nations, however, were partially erased by stagnating or negative results in the large states of the centre. Particularly negative were the results in the three countries: France (8.20%, -4.37%), where the *Front de Gauche* barely grew and the far-left *NPA* practically disappeared; Italy (4.04%, -3.02%), where the coming together of the whole radical left spectrum and several external allies in the coalition *L'Altra Europa con Tsipras* (AET) did reach its main target – a re-entry in the EP after five years of absence – but almost halved their previous electoral capital; and the UK (1.26%, -1.80%), where traditional far left groups almost didn't bother to run and obtained a mere 0.29% of valid votes – the remaining 0.97% was won by the Northern Irish *Sinn Féin*. Heavy losses were also sustained in the radical left strongholds of Cyprus (27.09%, -7.82%), where the communist *AKEL* paid the price of the 2012-2013 financial crisis, Denmark (10.92%, -5.46%), where the eco-socialist *SF* did not repeat the feat of the previous election, and Portugal (20.96%, -3.36%), where *CDU* and *PCTP/MRPP* somewhat gained but the *BE* more than halved.

This unevenness springs from the interaction of two main trends.

On the one hand, European Parliament elections clearly remain *second order elections*⁶ dominated by national issues and calculation. The marked innovations of the 2014 campaign – the selection by the main Europarties of *Spitzenkandidaten* for the role of President of the European Commission; televised debates between the main candidates – seem to have had a minimal impact in this respect, as the results of each party family have remained very inhomogeneous and voters' participation has remained extremely low.⁷ The only true element of "Europeanisation" of this election can be found, paradoxically, in the growth of parties critical of the current status of the European integration project: this dissatisfaction, however, has assumed highly different forms in each country, rewarding from case to case the far right (e.g. the French *FN*), right-wing nationalists (e.g. the British *UKIP* and the Danish *DF*), unclassable populists (the Italian *M5S*) and the radical left.

On the other hand, the increasing polarisation of European nation-states on macro-economic lines (a richer and exporting centre vs. a poorer and semi-insolvent periphery) has partially reflected on the radical left vote. While in the former results have generally been lukewarm, in the latter the radical left has often consolidated scores beyond 20% of the valid votes, strongly growing in Greece, Ireland and Spain and preserving an important audience in Cyprus and Portugal.

2. Parliamentary Representation: A Larger But Somewhat Heterogeneous Group

The electoral growth described in the previous paragraph has translated into very large gains of MEPs (see TABLE 2). Total radical left seats have risen from 36 (4.89%) to 53 (7.06%); GUE/NGL seats from 35 (4.76%) to 52 (6.92%).

⁶ Reif, K., Schmitz, H. (1980) "Nine second-order national elections – a conceptual framework of European election results", *European Journal of Political Research*, 8(1), 3-44.

⁷ The overall share of valid votes over registered votes has further shrunk – slightly – from 41.42% to 41.17%. More worryingly, this share is below 35% in most Eastern European (Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia) and a few Western European (Portugal, UK) countries, calling into question the quality of the European Parliament's democratic legitimation.

TABLE 2. GUE/NGL PARLIAMENTARY GROUP, 2009-2014

	Seats 2009	Seats 2014
CYPRUS	AKEL (2)	AKEL (2)
CZECH R.	KSČM (4)	KSČM (3)
DENMARK	<i>Folkeb. (1)</i>	<i>Folkeb. (1)</i>
FINLAND	-	VAS (1)
France	Front de Gauche (4) , AOM (1)	Front de Gauche (3) , AOM (1)
GERMANY	DIE LEFTWING (8)	DIE LEFTWING (7) , <i>Tierschutz (1)</i>
GREECE	KKE (2), SYRIZA (1)	SYRIZA (6)
IRELAND	Sinn Féin (1)	Sinn Féin (3), <i>Mike Flanagan (1)</i>
ITALY	-	AET-ind. (2), AET-PRC (1)
LATVIA	LSP (1)	-
NETHERLANDS	SP (2)	SP (2), <i>PvdD (1)</i>
PORTUGAL	BE (3) , PCP (2)	PCP (3), BE (1)
SPAIN	IU (1)	IU (5) , Podemos (5), EH Bildu (1)
SWEDEN	V (1)	V (1)
UK	Sinn Féin (1)	Sinn Féin (1)
GUE-NGL	35 / 736 (4.76%)	52 / 751 (6.92%)
COUNTRIES	13 / 27	14 / 28

Notes: bold = members of the PEL; italics = technical allies.

The GUE/NGL parliamentary group has expanded thanks to the net gains of existing members (+3 MEPs), the affiliation of previously non-represented radical left parties (+13 MEPs) and technical agreements with a few other non-leftist parties (+3 MEPs), while losing 2 MEPs due to the disaffiliation of the Greek KKE.

Despite these gains, the group remains relatively uninfluential within the European Parliament. Its overall size has increased only marginally, from the sixth to the fifth position (above the Greens). Its geographical representation, likewise, has increased from 13 to 14 countries (with the comeback of Italy and Finland and the loss of Latvia) and covers only half of the EU member states.

An additional challenge will be represented by a significant degree of internal heterogeneity.⁸

One important division will be that between parties affiliated to the Party of the European Left (PEL)⁹ (24 MEPs), other radical left organisations (25 MEPs) and technical allies (3 MEPs). The former, created in 2004, has consistently sought to strengthen the coordination the radical left within the EU institutions on “modernist” (downplaying their communist roots) and “Euro-constructive” (attacking the main thrust of EU policies but supporting the progress of European integration) lines; this has often created tensions within the GUE/NGL,

⁸ The organisation VoteWatch Europe (<http://www.votewatch.eu/>), for instance, points out that the voting cohesion rate of the GUE/NGL in the past legislature was the lowest of all groups save the EFD (79.37%). This rate is likely to sink further in the coming legislature.

⁹ See Dunphy, R., March, L. (2013) “Seven year itch? The European Left Party: struggling to transform the EU”, *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*, 14:4, 520-534.

which retains a confederal character in order to accommodate the large ideological and programmatic differences between its member-parties. The latest move of the PEL, which has fielded Alexis Tsipras (SYRIZA) as candidate for president of the Commission, has indeed evoked much sympathy within the GUE/NGL but at the same time risks to alienate the more radical and Eurosceptic radical left parties – as the defection of the KKE to the non-attached MEPs indicates.

Another key question is the transversal rift around the issue of Euroscepticism, which requires delicate balancing acts both within the group and within most individual parties.¹⁰ The deepening of the Eurocrisis has somewhat sharpened the strategic elaboration and debate on the issue, as supporters of a reformed “social Europe” are increasingly pitted against advocates of a weakening or breakup of the EU, considered as a necessary step to free their countries from neo-liberal external constraints and to adopt progressive national macro-economic policies. The latter position is supported by several orthodox communist (KKE, PCP, AKEL), radical left (V) and other (Folkb.) parties, as well as by internal minorities in other parties. These forces, however, are themselves divided on the opportunity of explicitly calling for an exit from the Eurozone and the EU, as opposed to a partial renegotiation of existing commitments.

3. Past And Present

The long-term trajectory of the radical left in European Parliament elections is portrayed in TABLE 3. From the crisis and electoral decline of the Communist-dominated “old” radical left in the 1984-1994 decade (from 15.00% to 7.08%) emerged a reconfigured “new” radical left, which has since stagnated around 7-8% of total valid votes.

TABLE 3. HISTORICAL EVOLUTION, 1979-2014

	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
Valid votes	60.15%	56.93%	56.40%	54.43%	47.27%	43.75%	41.42%	41.17%
RL votes (%)	14.80%	15.00%	11.48%	7.08%	7.59%	6.86%	6.92%	7.96%
EP seats (n.)	410	434	518	567	626	732	736	751
RL seats (n.)	46	43	45	29	43	42	36	53
RL seats (%)	11.22%	9.91%	8.69%	5.11%	6.87%	5.74%	4.89%	7.06%
GUE seats (n.)	44	41	42	28	42	41	35	52
GUE seats (%)	10.73%	9.45%	8.11%	4.94%	6.71%	5.60%	4.76%	6.92%
GUE countries	3/9	4/10	7/12	5/12	10/15	14/25	13/27	14/28

This trend was determined by two main components: growth and decline within existing EU members and the effects of the successive EU enlargements (see TABLE 4).

¹⁰ See Dunphy, R. (2004) *Contesting capitalism? Left parties and European integration*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, and Charalambous, G. (2011) “All the shades of red: examining the radical left's Euroscepticism”, *Contemporary Politics*, 17(3), 299-320.

In the original nine member-states the radical left swiftly declined from 1984 (14.93% of valid votes) to 1994 (4.25%), slowly recovered until 2009 (6.74%) and then fell again in 2014 (5.14%). The determinant factor was here the crisis of French and Italian communism, which was not sufficiently compensated by the growth of other radical left forces (e.g. the SP in the Netherlands or the PDS/Die Leftwing in Western Germany).

The 1981-1995 waves of enlargement, however, brought into the EU territories (including Eastern Germany) with radical lefts which had withstood better the collapse of the Soviet Union and were in average much stronger than their counterparts. The electoral results of this second group somewhat declined from 1999 (12.29%) to 2009 (10.33%) but swiftly soared in 2014 (19.30%). Despite having only one-third of the population of the first group of countries, they contributed more than half of all radical left votes.

The 2004-2013 waves of enlargement, on the contrary, saw the accession of countries with very weak radical lefts: these totalled in 2014 only 1.52% of valid votes. Within the former Eastern bloc the collapse of really-existing socialism left behind many former communist parties which successfully reconverted to social-liberalism but, with the exception of the neo-communist Czech *KSČM*, practically no viable radical left force. The only positive gain was Cyprus, where the communist AKEL managed to preserve and even increase its considerable electoral weight.

TABLE 4. EFFECTS OF THE THREE WAVES OF ENLARGEMENT

	1979	1999	2014
EU members in 1979 (Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, West Germany, Denmark, Ireland, UK)			
Registered voters (n.)	184,474,494	207,497,569	222,958,570
Valid votes (%)	60.15%	45.07%	45.64%
Radical left votes (n.)	16,425,278	5,052,995	5,233,556
Radical left votes (%)	14.80%	5.40%	5.14%
1981-1995 enlargements (Greece, Portugal, Spain, East Germany & Berlin, Austria, Finland, Sweden)			
Registered voters (n.)		82,168,563	85,609,547
Valid votes (%)		52.83%	44.78%
Radical left votes (n.)		5,333,517	7,398,221
Radical left votes (%)		12.29%	19.30%
2004-2013 enlargements (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia)			
Registered voters (n.)			87,605,149
Valid votes (%)			26.28%
Radical left votes (n.)			349,601
Radical left votes (%)			1.52%

The 2014 EP election delineates a clear division of the contemporary European radical left in three relatively homogeneous geo-political macro-areas.

Across most Western Europe the radical left tends to be a medium-sized party family with some parliamentary representation and electoral scores between 4% and 10%. Negative exceptions are the extremely weak parties of the UK and Austria;¹¹ Belgium is slightly below the norm but growing rapidly; a somewhat positive exception of instead Denmark.¹²

The Mediterranean and Atlantic periphery, on the contrary, has become the vanguard of the present influence and future prospects of the radical left. The mix of a severe socio-economic crisis, large anti-austerity mobilisations and the presence well-rooted political organisations of different kinds, from orthodox communist to left-reformist and left-nationalist, has pushed electoral scores well above 20% of valid votes: since the beginning in Cyprus, since 2009 in Portugal, in 2014 in Greece, Spain and Ireland.

The former Eastern European regions, finally, resemble an archipelago of a few localised strongholds – Eastern Germany (19.74%) and the Czech Republic (11.55%), recently joined by Slovenia (7.14%) – in a sea of almost complete absence.

4. Future Prospects

This picture entails both opportunities and dangers.

At the level of formal EU institutional dynamics, the radical left is unlikely to leave a significant mark on the future course of EU policies. Within the European Parliament the European People's Party (EPP) and the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D) groups, despite their losses, still enjoy a comfortable parliamentary majority (413 seats out of 751); conversely, an unlikely centre-left alliance of S&D, Greens and GUE/NGL (294 seats) falls much short of the required majority. Within the Council, likewise, the radical left influence will probably remain negligible: its past involvement as leader of one national government (Cyprus, 2007-2013) and junior partner in several other cabinets has passed almost unnoticed. Even a future electoral victory in Greece will probably have little effect, due to the small size of the country and the post-Lisbon expansion of qualified majority voting.

Things are different, however, if we look at the possible evolution of national political situations.

In several countries of the Southern and Celtic periphery the radical left is rapidly coming out of its previous marginality and now faces an historic opportunity to establish itself as the largest party family and become the leading partner of governmental coalitions. In Greece SYRIZA is likely to win the next general elections and, if the current crisis-cum-austerity will continue, it is no more inconceivable to foresee a further collapse of existing ruling parties and similar exploits of the radical left in countries like Cyprus, Ireland, Spain and Portugal.

At present, radical left parties appear to be quite unprepared for this eventuality. Partisan divisions heavily hinder the establishment of effective united fronts both for the present opposition and for a future governmental majority. The thorny problem of the relationship with the social-liberal left continues to prove divisive and risks snatching defeat from the jaws of victory, confining the most intransigent forces to a splendid isolation and the most

¹¹ The radical left of Luxembourg failed to gain representation due to the small size of the national contingent (6 MEPs) but scored a healthy 7.25% of valid votes.

¹² The figure retained is that of the SF (radical left but affiliated to the Green group), with 10.92% of valid votes; in addition, the Eurosceptic movement Folkb. (cross-party but mainly supported by the far-left E, affiliated to the GUE/NGL) gained 8.07% of valid votes.

conciliatory ones to a junior role within centre-left alliances. Finally, serious contingency plans for a possible breakup of the Eurozone (and perhaps of the EU) remain confined to a few academics and activists.¹³ Should this scenario materialise, the radical left thus risks missing its chance and ending up leaving an open field to neo-conservative or far right solutions.

In the rest of Western Europe, the radical left needs to resume its pre-2009 growth path and acquire a capacity to exert an effective leftward pull within each national political system. The parties of the largest and most influential countries (Germany, France and Italy) bear here a crucial responsibility for the outcomes at both domestic and EU level. Their current stagnation or decline, produced by structural constraints and past mistakes, precludes any possibility of a progressive shift of EU policies.

In Eastern Europe, the big challenge is represented by the almost complete absence of viable radical left forces. This state of affairs threatens to keep the radical left confined to a position of permanent marginality within the European Union, especially if turnover rates should start to converge¹⁴ or if Mediterranean countries would start to leave the Union. The recent developments in Slovenia are encouraging, but in most other Eastern countries embryonic alternatives rather fell back or did not even bother to run. The emergence of domestic radical left forces which, while critically elaborating the failures of really-existing socialism, are able to connect with the deep popular dissatisfaction with the post-transition regimes and the current economic crisis is therefore vital. The stronger parties of the Union should make the task of supporting – politically and financially – this process their first international priority.

¹³ See Lapavistas, C. *et al.* (2012) *Crisis in the Eurozone*. London: Verso; Sapir, J. (2012) *Faut-il sortir de l'euro?* Paris: Seuil; Bagnai, A. (2012) *Il tramonto dell Euro*. Reggio Emilia: Imprimatur; Mateo, J.P., Montero, A. (2012) *Las finanzas y la crisis del euro: colapso de la Eurozona*. Madrid: Editorial Popular; Ferreira do Amaral, J. (2013) *Porque devemos sair do Euro*. Alfragide: Lua de Papel; Durand, C., ed. (2013) *En finir avec l'Europe*. Paris: La Fabrique; Lordon, F. (2014) *La malfaçon. Monnaie européenne et souveraineté démocratique*. Paris: LLL.

¹⁴ The share of valid votes across the former Eastern Europe is markedly lower than the EU aggregate level (2014: 28.77% to 41.17%).

Cornelia Hildebrandt

Analysis of the Results of the European Election of 2014

Introduction

Since the European election of 2014, there has been a split across Europe's political landscape. While in the EU's southern countries – especially in Greece, Spain and Portugal – the growing protest against the predominant line of European policy has been articulated largely in a leftist context, a front of dissatisfaction to the right of the conservatives has been emerging in those core countries of the EU which have been less affected by the crisis. The result is a surprising polarization of the electoral results between the centre and the peripheries of the EU, between and within the political camps, and to some extent, within the EU member countries.

The results of the European elections describe a continuing shift to the right, with a new quality: nationalist, right-wing populist parties and parties of the extreme right have attracted more than 11 million voters, especially from the conservative camp, so that the electoral share of parties to the right of the conservatives Europe-wide now stands at 22%. These parties have emerged as the real winners of this election.

The result in coming years will be a modification of the hitherto existing lines of confrontation: no longer will they run only between the political camps, along the classic socio-economic lines of conflict, i.e., market radicalism vs. the welfare state, or the socio-cultural lines of conflict, i.e., an open, liberal society vs. authoritarian, ethnically based shut-off societies within the EU. Now, they lines will also run perpendicular to these, and at the same time perpendicular to the line between the "EU-integration camp" and the "strengthening of national political approaches" camp. Here, we would like to discuss these conflicts, and also the results of the party families which competed in the election, on the basis of the following initial comprehensive theses:

Initial summarizing theses

1. The decisions taken by the European Union, particularly those involving the budgetary policies of EU countries, directly affect the lives of its citizens. The elections for the European Parliament – and particularly the electoral participation rate in those elections – reflect the extent to which the EU enjoys societal legitimacy. From May 22-25, 2014, 160 million citizens in the twenty-eight countries of the European Union (approx. 43% of the electorate) went to the polls to elect the members of the European Parliament. The results should cause us to stop and think. On the one hand, it was not possible to mobilize the majority of the citizens for these elections; electoral participation reached a historic low in Slovakia with 13%, and was below 20% in the Czech Republic. In Croatia, only one voter in four went to the polls. Only in two formerly state-socialist countries did electoral participation exceed 35%; moreover, only 34.2% of British and only 37% of Dutch voters went to the polls. The European *demos* (Habermas) is weak. Moreover, the results reflect a shift to the right, with the message that nationalist, right-wing populist parties and parties of the extreme right of gained, and they are the real winners of these elections. As a result, the following lines of confrontation are to be expected in the coming years:

2. First, the course pursued to date by the ruling elites enjoys no support from a considerable portion of the citizenry; rather, it is increasingly being fundamentally rejected, so that “business as usual” is becoming more difficult. Both the hitherto intra-national lines of conflict, firstly, that between market radicalism on the one hand and the welfare state on the other, which, with the implementation of European austerity policies by the EU, is no longer a purely national matter; and, secondly, that between authoritarian/ethnic isolation vs. libertarian opening, which is visibly and dramatically expressed in the controversy over asylum and refugee policies, are being overformed by the conflict between EU integration based on the existing foundations – the Lisbon Treaty and the crisis-policy measures – on the one hand and the reinforcement of national policy approaches to defend existing social standards on the other. However this development, too, is fragile, and the processes are still contradictory.
3. Second, in the context of these modified conflict situations, new right-wing groupings are forming; in two major EU countries, France and Britain, but also in Denmark, they are in the range of a potential majority. As a result, an intra-elite dispute with broad support in the population based on widespread nationalist and value-conservative fundamental societal tendencies has emerged. For significant portions of the citizenry, nationalist, right-wing populist parties and the parties of the extreme right have assumed the function of the critics of EU policy.
4. This critique has two dimensions: First, it is directed against the market integration being pushed by the existing major Conservative and Social Democratic parties, and against European institutions. The goal is however not so much to remove these institutions as to re-legitimize them in national terms: the social question is leftwingd to national and even nationalist goals, i.e., social policy must be secured nationally, both against The EU Europeans and against asylum-seekers and immigrants from elsewhere. What is at issue is no longer the character of socially, culturally and pluralistically open societies, within the EU and definitely not outside of it. With the linking of social and national issues in such a way as to target not only the nation-state dimension, but equally, too, the immigrants, asylum seekers and refugees within countries, a new revival of value conservatism is arising.
5. Second, this critique formulated by the right wing is raising the issue of real deficits of democracy in both European and national institutions. It involves a declaration of war against their representatives, the national and/or European elites; existing deficient democratic procedures and regulations, including democracy as the fundamental value to be striven for in the formulation of society, are being called into question. In view of these developments, an even more strongly disputed development of the EU, and, as a result, a reconfiguration of the forces of the European and national elites is in the offing.
6. For the first time, European parliamentary elections resulted in the greatest growth for those parties which call for withdrawal from the European Union. Especially the electoral results in France and Great Britain are an expression of political crisis in which for the first time, the European Constitution is being directly called into question. The cause of these developments include the neoliberal policies pushed through 2005 under the Lisbon Strategy, which have the goal of making the EU the most competitive region in the world, at the cost of undermining its democratic procedures and institutions, and

radically dismantling its social standards. For the citizens, the EU is thus no longer palpable as a “community of democratic values”, and its social “use value” is losing support in the societies of the EU countries.

7. The criticism of the orientation of the EU is also being formulated from the left. The family of Left parties were able to score the greatest gains at the European level. The number of their seats rose from 35 to 52. However, they have so far been able to formulate political projects only in a few countries, such as Greece, Spain or Portugal, where they have been able to articulate and represent such projects from the left in a position also within the range of potential majority. However, if SYRIZA in Greece, the strongest party to emerge from the European elections, with a result of over 26%, were to be faced with the question of forming a left-wing government determined to oppose the dictates of the Troika, the resulting overlap of national and European crises would lead to a confrontation at the European level with constitutional repercussions.
8. The political elites of the Conservative and Social Democratic parties would confront such pressure with a “grand coalition” at the European level. In this way, the Social Democratic parties, which are weaker on a pan-European level – they emerged as the strongest political force in only six EU countries – can be tied in in a stabilizing manner. This will prove necessary particularly because these elections have revealed political crises in some hitherto presumably stable countries of the EU which have in some cases so far been concealed. This grand coalition is, however, politically under siege, particularly from the right. The political elites, too, are becoming aware of the fact that a suitable “business-as-usual” cannot succeed for this reason, the coalition is internally differentiated, possibly even split. Two options are currently possible: The first is a reduction of the EU’s function to that of the confederation with a common market, a solution currently being put forward by Great Britain and Hungary, which is supported by the parliamentary groups of the political right: the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), the Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD), and the members of the European Alliance for Freedom (TAF), which has so far failed to establish itself. The would be an attempt to strengthen the integration of the Europe countries, and “pay” for this with possible loosening up of the austerity policies, in order to achieve rapid economic and social success.
9. However, it must be taken into account the fact that the differences between his party families, particularly the two larger ones, the Conservatives and the Social Democrats, is becoming increasingly blurred. For instance, the Italian PG has long since stopped being a classical social democratic party; nonetheless, at the European political level, it supports the Social Democratic Party Group. The French Socialists and the Spanish PSOE, too, have undergone a political change of direction toward the position of their Conservative predecessors in government. Among the conservatives, on the other hand, the Hungarian FIDEZ belongs to the EPP at the European level, although its European policy position is considerably closer to that of the two-party groups to the right of the EPP.
10. The European Union is in its deepest crisis ever. This crisis is impacting not only particular countries in the southern part of the EU and the periphery, nor only smaller countries; rather, countries which have hitherto been considered part of the economic and political “core”, the countries that have been the mainstay of the EU economically, are also

affected. The crisis of the economic regime has become a crisis of the social and cultural dimensions as well. It is now threatening to develop into a systemic political crisis of the EU. The three hitherto strongest party families in the EU Parliament, the Conservatives, the Social Democrats and the Liberals, lost over 10% of their strength in this election compared to 2009, when 72.4% of the electorate voted for these groups. The Conservatives suffered the greatest losses; the Liberals much less. The Social Democrats were unable to profit from these developments; on the contrary, they have lost the support of major parts of their core voter clientele in those areas where they supported the austerity policies of governments, or continued those of predecessor governments. In the past twenty years, they have not been able to link the social question to economic policy in a positive manner. Instead, they have to a considerable degree helped achieve an EU integration that blocks precisely that linkage. In Spain and France, they suffered heavy losses, and virtually imploded in Greece. In some countries, such as the Netherlands, the Czech Republic or Finland, their results were on a level with those of middle sized or smaller parties.

11. The crises have been caused by both national and European factors, and the countries of the EU have been affected by them in very different ways. Electoral campaigns have expressed his dual nature of the situation more strongly than has been the case in previous elections. In view of the threatening low voter participation rate, most governing parties depended on electoral strategies which were consciously oriented toward national issues in order to mobilize their core base of support. One reason for this was to cover up the “business-as-usual” political and economic concepts – or the lack of any concepts at all – to solve urgent pressing problems, which has determined their policies at both the European and the national levels. That was true of the majority of Social Democratic parties, many of which suffered heavy losses, but it was also true of the left parties in countries which were less strongly affected by the crisis. The left party in Germany, too, primarily presented itself as a national party, even though it is fundamentally in favour of a change in European policy. On the other hand, those parties which made the connection between national and European policies the point of departure for their electoral strategies were successful. For the right-wing populist parties, that meant, for example, protection of the “national element” both against the institutions of the EU and against the corrupt political class. Nationalistic parties such as the UKIP in Britain and the Danish People’s party positioned themselves successfully along this line of conflict, as did the French Front National. To an extent this is also true of SYRIZA; which made the betrayal in the social sphere the central issue. A vote for SYRIZA at the same time appeared to be a contribution to the solution of the Greek crisis, and to a change in European policy.
12. The electoral results of the new right express more than only a critique of the constitution of the European Union; rather, the entire range of political institutions, both national and European, is being called into question. UKIP, FN and the Danish People’s Party, together with other right-wing populist parties, describe themselves as parties outside the political system, the democratic values of which they are increasingly questioning. The view that sees nationalistic and right-wing populist “flukes” in these European elections, meant to “send a message” to the respective national governments, distorts the perspective of a change in the basic mood of society which, after these elections, will no longer be able to be democratically “reined in”, as has been the case

with national elections in the past. UKIP, for instance, operating in an apparently unchangeable political party system in Great Britain, has been systematically underestimated. In national elections, it first appeared as a relevant force in 2010, winning 13.1% of the vote. At the European level, on the other hand, its rise had already been considerable before that. In 1999, at its first try, it won 16.52%, then increased that to 15.64% in 2004, to 16.51% in 2009 and to 27.5% in 2014. For years, the results of the European elections as indicators of a shifting *Zeitgeist*, and as a seismograph for changing societal moods and even political reorientations, have been underestimated. Now however, the electoral results at the European and national levels have tended to converge (see Thesis 1). The design of the European Union has become a domestic policy issue within countries, so that that domestic policy has become direct European policy.

13. The Greens were unable to repeat their success of 2009, dropping by just under 1%. The development of a European Green New Deal got stuck at the conceptual level, and in view of the serious social and economic problems at hand, it proved virtually impossible to present it effectively Europe-wide. What was missing, in the context of the crisis, were realizable policy proposals with mass appeal which might have been able to actually bring together social and ecological issues toward the realization of a Green New Deal.
14. The radical left, these elections are an expression of Europe-wide weakness and at the same time a relative success. The GUE/NGL obtained 52 seats, compared with 35 in 2009. These gains are primarily due to the results achieved by the left in Greece, Spain and Portugal, and also by Sinn Féin in Ireland. The left was successful where it was authentic and concretely in solidarity with those most acutely affected by the crisis, and where it succeeded in forging broad coalitions in open political alliances. For example, the Spanish *Podemos* ("we can") list emerged directly from the "indignant" movement 15-M, which was formed out of the social protest against the austerity policies of the Troika, and was supported by the United Left (IU). Together with the likewise strengthened left in Portugal – the CDU and the Bloco together got over 17% – and the Greeks, there is a possibility for a southern European transnational cooperative effort which can now once again, at least in the EP, count on the support of the Italian left as well. Elsewhere, the Slovenian United Left electoral alliance, which emerged from the Initiative for Democratic Socialism (IDS), achieved only 5.47% of the vote, not enough for a seat. And the new left electoral alliance "A Different Europe" (*Europa anders*) in Austria won fewer votes than the Eurosceptic EuroStop list; nonetheless, these developments are promising.
15. The EP elections in effect reflected a north-south divide for the Left parties. While they were successful in southern countries which have been particularly affected by the crisis, Left parties stagnated in the so-called core countries of the EU such as France, the Netherlands and Germany. They were especially successful where they were able to forge the broadest possible alliances in which those affected by the structural change of the modes of production and reproduction could be united with those who have now been additionally affected by the crisis-caused upheavals. The ability to address various sectors of society and to incorporate them into alliances is an essential reason for this success. Evidently, the Left in the core countries of the EU has not yet been able to forge alliances of various sectors, including the traditional working class, to the extent that this has been possible in the southern countries most affected by the crisis. To a large extent

– in France for example – workers and the unemployed voted for the FN. The Left in Germany, the Netherlands and France stagnated. Moreover, even 25 years after the collapse of state socialism, the radical left has, in most post-socialist countries, not succeeded in establishing relevant leftist parties.

16. The Left in Europe will need more than merely symbolic solidarity in its own ranks – and that not only in the event of a leftist takeover of power in Greece. The solidarity will have to be palpable as a European phenomenon, and have practical use value for people in Greece and in other countries of the EU. If a leftist Greek government places the question of the constitution of the EU on the agenda, the Left will have to put forward concrete paths for a new beginning for the EU, and will have to underpin its demands for social peaceful and democratic Europe concretely. It will have to take up the experience of the struggle of the “indignants” just as much as the experience of work in municipalities, and it will have to interlink the experiences and struggles in political institutions instead of juxtaposing them to one another. The European Left has the dual task of defending the institutions of democracy in Europe, and at the same time making a contribution to the political-economic, social and ecological reconstitution of the foundations of the EU. This is a strategy of tough struggle with the new right, of open conflict with the ruling elites, and of a very open search for allies.

Point of departure, and a look back to 2009 to 2014

Since the last European elections in 2009, the European Union has changed, as has the political situation in Europe – especially since the crisis in Ukraine. The transitional period after the end of the Cold War ended with the occupation of Crimea, a violation of international law. This has change the role of the EU, which increasingly sees itself as a global actor in the worldwide contest. As a result, the very different social standards in the countries of the EU are being rigorously dismantled for the sake of global competitiveness – and that is being legitimized as a way out of the state debt crisis into which the EU the political class maneuvered them, in order to save the banks in 2008/2009. Especially in the southern countries of the EU, this has developed into a social crisis, with the danger of political instability and social catastrophe. The privatization of public utilities and the dismantling of public services has been driven forward under the pressure of the EU institutions, the ECB and the EU Commission, as well as by the IMF – together, these three constitute the “Troika” – and implemented by the executive branches at the national level. As a result, however, the social, political and economic imbalances within the EU, both among the countries and regions and within them, and hence the dissatisfaction with the prevailing policies and their institutions, have grown.

The immediate results have been political crises in particular countries of the EU, which have been expressed in the form of early elections. Just between 2010 and 2012, twelve of the seventeen parliamentary elections were called early; nine of these were in the euro zone. In all of these cases, with the exception of Belgium, the extent and the concrete implementation of imposed austerity measures in order to handle the crisis – particularly the banking crisis – provided the necessity for early elections. As in the case of Greece, this often involved an increasing polarization of the electorate, or, as in Italy, resulted once again in a restructuring of the party system. Since 2010, we have seen the emergence of a wide variety of new types of “anti-parties”, such as the Palikott Party in Poland, Beppe Grillo in Italy, the Pirates or the AfD in Germany, or the Potami Party in Greece. The change of government did not bring with it any change in policy. For this reason, the participation of

Social Democrats in the government of 16 EU countries – as opposed to seven in 2009 – can also not be seen as a political shift to the left. The mass protests against former French President Sarkozy are now being directed against François Hollande, as he is continuing the policies of his predecessor. What did this then mean for the European parliamentary elections of 2014?

The following questions emerged in the period leading up to the 2014 EP elections:

- Who would the people vote for, especially in the southern countries of the EU, after the mass protests of 2011 to 2013 had for the most part remained just as barren of results as the changes of government with no changes in policy? What effect would the continued and worsening social crisis have on electoral participation
- The social movements which emerged during the crisis formulated their critique not only in reference to the social questions, but also as a fundamental critique of representative democracies, in which parliaments have been disempowered to the benefit of the national executives, which for their part, as in Croatia, Italy, France and Spain, have been bogged down in corruption scandals. In many countries slogans emerged such as “*Que se vayan todos!*” – Spanish, meaning roughly “Throw them all out!” The rejection of all political institutions, but especially of the parties, also affected the Left parties, in favour of a *direct “nationalization of the city squares”*. What would this mean in the election for the Left parties?
- The development sparked by the imposed measures and by the memorandum of the Troika led to the emergence of a new phase of Europeanized, democracy-destroying authoritarian-repressive neoliberalism which increased both the political and social pressure within the EU, and as a result, the dangers of social, political and economic distortions. In this context, nationalistic and anti-European prejudices, connected with value-conservative movements, increasingly encompassed the centre of society, a development expressed in the growing influence of antidemocratic and anti-European parties and movements, as could be seen from the national elections since 2009. Would this tendency also be confirmed in the 2014 elections?

How would the Ukrainian crisis affect the results of the European elections?

This is the context in which European elections of 2014 took place, the results of which provide insight into the changed political balance of forces in the EU and within the particular countries in the EU.

Electoral participation and the results of the party families

Electoral participation

With 43%, electoral participation was at the same level as in 2009. Nonetheless, the electoral participation in countries where there is no mandatory voter participation was particularly notable. In Slovakia, it was only 13%, 19.5 in the Czech Republic, and 22.7% in Poland. In Croatia only one voter and four went to the polls. Only in two former state-socialist countries did voter participation surpass the 35% mark; only 34.2% of Britons and only 37% of the Dutch went to the polls. In view of these figures, it is necessary to critically examine the EP elections as the legitimizing democratic foundation of the EU Parliament. Compared with 2009, voter participation rose in those countries in which – apart from those

where voting is mandatory – other elections were held on the same day or, where these elections were viewed as “test runs” for national elections, as was the case in Romania and Sweden.

An overview of the party families

Viewing the elections to the European Parliament between 1979 and 2014, one gets the impression that not much seems to have changed during that period. The Conservatives and Social Democrats, the two large party families in the European Parliament, were, until 2009, able to attract 60% of the voters – in 2009, that figure was still 61.3%. In 2014, the share dropped to 54%. The Conservatives had the greatest losses, 6%, although they remain the strongest party group. The Social Democrats were able to maintain the share they had won in 2009, while suffering major losses in certain countries, especially in France, Greece and the Netherlands.

Concomitant with this loss has been a strengthening of the smaller party families, i.e. especially the right wing conservative, right-wing populist and extreme right parties and party groups in the European Parliament, the combined share of which is now approx. 20%. If one adds to this total the seats held by right wing extremist parties which do not qualify for party group status, and those of the Hungarian FIDESZ, which is also open to the extreme right, this total is boosted by another 3%.

The Social Democrats, Greens and Left together hold less than 40% (approx. 38%) of the seats. However, this is only an arithmetic order of magnitude, which does not reflect any common project. The share won by the Greens in 2014, 17.19%, was slightly lower than the 7.47% they had won in 2009. From 1999 to 2009, the Greens were the fourth-strongest force in the European Parliament; now they have been surpassed by the European Conservatives and reformists. Nonetheless, the Greens can depend on a solid electoral base Europe-wide, which, however, they have not been able to expand. The Left is currently the only party family which has been able to increase its share of the overall vote, albeit moderately. Although increasing its number of seats from 35 to 52, the Left is still below the 7.5% it won in 1999. The decisive factor will be how this arithmetic increase can be translated into more political influence. The Liberals have been the third strongest political force in the European Parliament since 1989, and they retained that position in 2014, in spite of a loss of 3%.

TABLE 1. EUROPEAN ELECTION RESULTS 2004 - 2014

Party Groups/Fraction in the European Parliament		Share of the vote 2004	Share of the vote 2009	Share of the vote 2014	Gains/ losses
GUE/ NGL	United European left/Nordic Green left	5.60	4.76	6.92	2.17
S&D	Progressive Alliance of Socialists & Democrats	27.30	25.00	25.43	0.43
Greens/ EFA	The Greens/European Free Alliance	5.80	7.47	6.66	-0.82
ALDE	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europa	12.00	11.41	8.92	-2.49
EVP	European People's Party (Christian democrats)	36.70	36.01	29.43	-6.58

EKR	European Conservatives and Reformists	4.25	7.34	9.32	1.98
EFDD	Europe of Freedom and direct Democracy	4.35	4.35	6.39	2.04
N/F	Nationalist and fascist parties	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
NA	Non-affiliated	4.00	3.67	6.92	3.26
Total		100.00	100.00	100.00	

On the three party families of the left

The Social Democrats were the strongest force in Italy (PD with 40.8%), Malta (53%), Portugal (31.5%), Romania (37.6%), Sweden (24.4%) and Slovakia (24.1%). They were able to maintain or slightly increase their share of the vote in Germany (winning 27.3%), Great Britain (25.4%), Austria (24.1%), Spain (23%), Bulgaria (90.5%), and Denmark (19.1%). In the Czech Republic, the Social Democrats failed to meet their own expectations, winning only 14.2% of the vote. Social Democratic parties suffered catastrophic losses in Belgium (11.15% in Wallonia and 8.08% in Flanders), taking fourth place behind the green-liberal New Flemish Alliance, Liberals and Conservatives. In Estonia, they dropped from 70.1% to 13.6%, in Latvia from 28.4% to 13.0%, and in Slovenia from 10.5% to 7.9%. In Greece, the Social Democrats no longer stood as the PASOK, a name with a grand tradition, but rather as ELIA, which, according to initial polls, was able to attract 8% of the votes. In Finland, the Social Democrats again suffered losses in this European election, dropping from 19.2% to 12.3%; in France they dropped to 14%, in Ireland to 6%, in Luxemburg to 11.8%, and in the Netherlands to 29.6%, taking fifth place after the Socialist Party, a Left party. In Latvia, their 13% represents a years-long weak position, as is the case in Poland, in Hungary (10.9%), and in Cyprus (10.8%).

The Greens were unable to maintain the results they had achieved in 2009, losing four seats. However, they were able to increase their vote in Austria from 9.93% to 14.52%, and they are still traditionally strong – albeit not as strong as in 2009 – in Germany (10.7%) and in France (8.9%); especially in the latter, they failed to meet their own expectations. This trend was already shown in the national parliamentary elections between 2009 and 2014, where they had also failed to obtain their expected results. They received good results in national parliamentary elections in Germany (2013: 8.4%, down 2.3% from 2009), in France (5.46% in 2012, compared with 3.25% in 2007), Austria (12.42% in 2013, up 1.99% from 2008), and Sweden (7.34% in 2010, compared with 5.2% in 2006). The Finnish Greens also scored relatively well in 2011 with 7.3%, a slight drop from 2008. In the Netherlands, the Greens lost considerably compared with 2010, winning only 2.33% in 2012. It is notable that it is especially in those countries where the radical left is badly splintered or not represented in Parliament that relatively strong Green parties have developed.

In Belgium, the Greens achieved over 4% in 2010, in Hungary (LMP), 7.4%, and in Estonia, 3.8%, while they won 11% in Luxemburg in 2009 and over 12% in Austria.

That confirms a trend that was already apparent for the respective parliamentary elections in 2010 and 2014. The Greek SYRIZA was especially successful, gaining 26.9% in the elections in June 2012. The French Left also achieved good results, with 6.91% for the Front de Gauche in

the parliamentary elections in 2012. The Swedish Vänsterparti was able to maintain its previous result of 5.6% in 2010 (-0.3%). In Denmark, the United List (EL) was able to boost the 2.17% it had won in 2007 to 6.6% in 2011. On the other hand, the support for the Socialist People's Party (SF) dropped from 13.4% to 9.2%. The Social Democratic minority government is supported by the EL. The Left Alliance (VAS) in Finland was able to stabilize itself at 8.1% in 2011 (-0.7% over 2007). Two months before the election, due to the lack of any change in policy in Finland, the VAS withdrew from the six-party center-left coalition that had existed since 2011. The Spanish United Left (IU) increased its vote from 3.77% in 2008 to 6.92% in 2011. By contrast, the Left in Portugal dropped from 9.81% 2009 to 5.17% in 2011. In the presidential election in Cyprus in 2013, the candidate of the AKEL loss to the Conservative candidate by wide margin. The Left Party in Luxemburg has been represented in Parliament by two deputies since 2013.

The results for the Left in the EU elections of 2014 are both an expression of their Europe-wide weakness and also a relative success. The GUE/NGL has won 52 seats, compared with 35 in 2009, thanks largely to the results in Spain and Greece. The Left has proven successful where it has made national and European austerity policies the point of departure for its electoral campaigns, and has stood in solidarity with those most sharply affected by the crisis, and also where it has succeeded in forming broad coalitions in open political alliances. For instance the Spanish *Podemos* (We can) is the political arm of the indignant movement 15-M, which formed in the social protests against the austerity policies of the Troika. It achieved 8% of the vote on its first try, for five seats, thus carrying the Spanish grassroots left directly into the EU Parliament, where, together with the United Left, which also won five seats (10%) in the EP, it will be able to reinforce transnational southern European cooperation, together with the Portuguese and the Greeks. The Left in Portugal too was able to achieve 17% of the vote, led by the Portuguese Left Green Alliance, which unites the Communists (PCP), the Greens (PEP) and the movement Democratic Intervention (ID) with 12.7%, while the results for the Left Block was considerably less than its possibilities may have been. Sinn Féin, too, was able to increase its support from 11.2% in 2009 to 17% in Ireland. In Italy the successful "Tsipras List" is based on support for a call from intellectuals around the newspaper *il Manifesto* to form an electoral list of prominent personalities in support of the candidacy of the Greek Alexis Tsipras, the lead candidate of the entire European Left. It has been represented in the European Parliament since 2008. The new Austrian electoral alliance "A Different Europe" (*Europa anders*) was unable to win seats; however its development is promising.

The results of the right wing

The results for the right-wing populist, right-wing conservative and other parties of the radical right in Eastern Europe indicate a broad-based presence in the EU. At least one of these parties is represented in the EU Parliament in 20 of the 28 countries.

In this election to the European Parliament, primarily those parties made gains which stand for the formation of a conservative force with a right-wing nationalist bent. Leading the pack was the right-wing populist UKIP with 27.5%, the FN with 25% and the nationalist Danish People's Party with 26.6%. But in other countries of the EU, too, such parties were either strengthened or, like the PIS in Poland, could at least maintain their strong positions. Hence, very diverse right-wing parties have characterized this election, with the diversity extending to those parties which were able to strengthen their vote, or reinforce it at a high level. In Austria, the German nationalist, racist FPÖ had already been able to increase its share of the

vote by 4% to over 21% in the national election; now, with 19.7% in the European elections, this result has been confirmed, and the FPÖ is the nation's third strongest political force. The same is true of the right-wing populist VVP headed by Gerd Wilders, which won 13.2% – less than it had itself expected – the Nationalist “true Finns”, with 12.9%, and also the fascist “Golden Dawn” party in Greece. In the same time, fascist parties in Belgium (Vlaams Belang/“Flemish Interest”: 3,7%) and the Bulgarian ATAKA lost considerably. ATAKA won only 2.96%.

Thilo Janssen

A quarter divided by four

Far right-wing parties in the European Parliament after the elections of May 2014

i

Introduction

Like all political actors in the European Union (EU), far right-wing parties have been confronted with dramatic change on European political level in the past half-decade. The EU has developed further towards the “ever closer union” referred to in Article 1 of the European Union treaty (TEU) – although the circumstances of this accelerated integration process are probably quite different from what the heads of EU states and governments had in mind when they signed the last update of the EU Treaties in Lisbon on December 13th 2007. The same year, the financial crisis erupted and subsequently caused severe economic and social damage in most EU Member States. The anti-crisis measures involved new steps of EU economic integration, mainly with the intention to prevent the Euro area from falling apart¹⁵. This process included rescue programmes for the private banking sector and austerity policies in the South. In the North public opinion was stirred up with cliché stories about allegedly “lazy” Southerners: “Sell your islands, you bankrupt Greeks”, commanded, for instance, the largest German daily *Bild* on October 27th 2010. (Kaufmann et al. 2011) Furthermore, approaching the European elections in May 2014 a majority in the European Parliament (EP) successfully pushed for the nomination of European lead candidates (Spitzenkandidaten) by the European parties for the presidency of the European Commission (COM) – an absolute novelty in the history of EU supranational politics. This brief record of recent events shows that the multifaceted crisis generated rapid change in European politics. At the same time, political and economic uncertainty in almost all EU Member States led to a decisive decline of trust in the bodies of political representation. According to the Eurobarometer, public trust in the European institutions fell from a peak of 57 percent in spring 2007 to 31 percent in autumn 2013, while trust in national governments declined from 43 to 23 percent in the same period. (COM 2014)

This common feeling of political uncertainty was a fertile ground for right-wing ideologies in many Member States. Hence, the chance of a successful performance of nationalist anti-EU parties in the European elections 2014 grew steadily in the pre-election polls. However, while agreeing on the probability of a relative success for far right-wing parties in the elections, political analysts were of different opinion if these parties would actually be able to develop decisive political impact. Among others, researchers from the University of Amsterdam (Lange et al. 2014) argued that right-wing party electoral “growth and their intention to cooperate, signify important changes for the EU and European politics”. Mudde (2014) opposed this expectation in an article with the programmatic headline “Plus ça change, plus la même chose” that, because of personal and political tensions and lack of programmatic cohesion, “history teaches us that the chances that this group [the Le Pen-Wilders alliance] will be an important political actor in the next EP are close to none”.

The intention of this article is to take a look at the results of the far right-wing party in the

¹⁵ The Euro bailout funds EFSF/ESM and the Troika Memoranda, the European Semester, the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (Fiscal Compact) and legislative measures on EU level like the “Six-Pack”, the “Two-Pack” and the Banking Union.

European elections and the outcome of the group-building processes in the constitution of the 8th EP. Examining the coherence of the far right-wing parties in the EP, the following four issues shall be considered:

1. Organisation: How are the far right-wing parties organised in the European Parliament?
2. Cohesion: Does programmatic cohesion matter for far right-wing party cooperation?
3. Obstacles: What are the obstacles for right-wing party cooperation?
4. Impact: Is far right-wing party cooperation on European level politically relevant?

In this article the term *far right-wing* refers to all right-wing parties that *by choosing alliances allocate themselves* further on the political right than the (mostly) centre-right, conservative, and Christian-democratic European Peoples Party (EPP). The analysis includes parties in a spectrum ranging from national-conservative parties and right-wing populist parties to the extreme and neo-Fascist right (on concepts to distinguish types of far right-wing parties cp. Häusler 2014; Hübner 2009). However, this approach entails that EPP member parties like the Hungarian Fidesz, whose leader Victor Orbán recently proclaimed the “end of liberal democracy” (Simon 2014) in Hungary, are not included in the analysis.

1. Organisation: How are the far right-wing parties organised in the European Parliament?

Before taking a closer look on the election results of May 2014, it is helpful to make a little excursion to the past, because the phenomenon of far right-wing party cooperation in the EP is not at all new.

The first right-wing extremist group in the EP was the Group of the European Right in 1984. It consisted of the French Front National (FN), the Italian Social Movement (MSI), the Greek E.P.EN, and the Northern Irish Ulster Unionists (UU). It was followed by a few other technical groups in 1989 (FN, Flemish Block (VBk), Republicans (REP)), and in 1999. After the 2007 accession of Romania and Bulgaria the Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty (ITS) group was founded as the latest attempt to unite the extreme right in the EP. It included the FN, the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ), Flemish Interest (VB), the Greater Romania Party (PRM), Ataka, and the Italian parties Tricolour Flame (FT) and Social Alternative (AN). (Virchow 2014) The latter was represented by Benito Mussolini’s granddaughter Alessandra Mussolini; today she is a member of Forza Italia (FI) and the EPP. ITS existed only a couple of months.

The political grey area between the vastly moderate EPP and the extremist ITS spectrum was filled out by groups who integrated a mixture of right-wing populists, national conservatives and parties from the extreme right. A fluctuation of parties between these groups was not uncommon. The Europe of Democracies and Diversities group (EDD) of 1999 and its successor in 2004, the Independent/Democracy (IN/DEM) group, were politically diverse and rather technical. They included, among others, the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), the Popular Orthodox Rally (La.O.S.), the Movement for France (MPF), the Italian Northern League (LN), the Dutch ChristianUnion – Reformed Political Party (CU-SGP), and the League of Polish Families (LPR).

Compared to the IN/DEM group, the Union for a Europe of Nations (UEN) was more cohesive and even accompanied by a congruent European party called the Alliance for a Europe of Nations (AEN). The UEN was first founded in 1999 and existed in slightly changing

compositions until 2009. It was dominated by the Italian National Alliance (AN), which later fused into Berlusconi's Forza Italia, and the Polish Law and Justice (PiS). Its members also included the Danish People's Party (DF), the Irish Fianna Fáil (FF), the LN, the Latvian For Fatherland and Freedom (TB/LNNK), the Lithuanian Order and Justice (PTT), and also the Polish LPR.

In the run-up to the EP elections in 2009 the far right-wing party spectrum on EU level restructured in a qualitatively new way. The national-conservative British Conservative Party (CP) ended its 17 year membership in the EPP-ED (ED for European Democrats) to form a new Euro-sceptical group called Europe of Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), thereby including some of the former UEN parties. The ECR was founded and clearly dominated by the CP, joined by the Czech Civic Democratic Party (ODS), Jarosław Kaczyński's PiS, and a couple of smaller far right-wing parties, among them the Latvian TB/LNNK (a supporter of the commemoration Day for the Latvian SS Legion), and the Dutch ChristenUnie (CU). The split from the EPP also led to the foundation of a corresponding European party, the Alliance of European Conservatives and Reformists (AECR), and a European Think Tank called New Direction (ND). The programmatic statement of the ECR group, published under the title "The Prague Declaration" in 2009, calls for the "sovereign integrity of the nation state" while "opposing EU federalism" and adheres to a free market and small government agenda, a late reminiscent of Thatcherism (Margaret Thatcher served as the patroness of the Think Tank ND until her death in 2013). (Janssen 2013)

Moreover, a couple of far right-wing populist and extremist parties from the UEN and IN/DEM spectrum in 2009 succeeded again in the foundation of a new EP group, now called Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD). The EFD was dominated by UKIP and chaired by its charismatic party leader Nigel Farage. The second largest delegation in the EFD was the LN, joined by the DF, the True Finns (P), LA.O.S., the Slovak Nationalist Party (SNS), the Lithuanian PTT, and others. In the course of the legislative period the group collected new members like the former VB leader Frank Vanhecke in 2011, and a Polish group called Polish Solidarity (SP) consisting of four MEPs who had left the ECR party PiS in 2012. The SP group advocated for the reinvention of the death penalty, against the LGBT¹⁶ movement and "Brussel's cosmopolitanism". (Janssen 2013)

The former ITS parties FN, FPÖ, VB, and PRM were not included in the EFD group, and the same applied to Geert Wilder's Dutch Freedom Party (PVV), the Hungarian neo-fascists from Jobbik, and the British National Party (BNP). Being excluded from the newly founded far right-wing EP groups most of these parties were looking for other possibilities to cooperate on EU level. They decided to found official European parties which would provide a legal framework and access to EU funds.

In autumn 2009, the BNP, Jobbik, and the old radical faction of the FN (represented by Marine Le Pen's inner party rival Bruno Gollnisch and her father Jean-Marie Le Pen) founded the European party Alliance of European National Movements (AENM), together with an Ataka MEP, and smaller parties not represented in the EP anymore like the Italian FT. Bruno Gollnisch, the president of the AENM, declared: "European nationalists must be ready to compete in elections on a continent-wide basis when that system is implemented by the globalists who run the European Union, even though all true nationalists are opposed to the concept". (Janssen 2013) Until the end of 2013 the AENM set up its own website and organised a series of mutual visits, seminars, and conferences for strategic exchange in

¹⁶ LGBT: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender

Hungary and the UK. The AENM was a late attempt to keep the old Western European anti-Semitic radical right alive. It sought fresh input especially from the Eastern European Jobbik party which has its biggest base of supporters among young voters between 18 and 30. (Endre 2013) In Western Europe, since the 1990s a new kind of right-wing extremism had entered the stage with an anti-Muslim and anti-immigration, but pro-Israel agenda. One of the most important protagonists here is Geert Wilders and his PVV, but also non-party organisations like the English Defence League (EDL). Marine Le Pen with her “Dédiabolisation” (Economist 2012) of the FN is trying to reform her party in a similar direction. In an AENM conference in 2012, Nick Griffin, the leader of the BNP (who resigned after the failure in the European elections 2014) called the conflicts with the new pro-Israel radical right a “battle for the soul of nationalism”. (Janssen 2013: 9)

The second new right-wing extremist European party started with more potential. The European Alliance for Freedom (EAF) was founded in late 2010 as an organisation that brought together MEPs from the non-attached extremist right (Andreas Mölzer and Franz Obermayr from the FPÖ, FN leader Marine Le Pen, Philip Claeys from VB), MEPs from the EFD (Godfrey Bloom from UKIP and the former Lithuanian president Rolandas Paksas from the PTT), and activists from parties at that time not yet represented in the EP (like Kent Ekeröth from the Sweden Democrats (SD)). Bloom was elected the first president of the EAF, in 2012 he was followed by FPÖ’s Franz Obermayr. The aim of the EAF was to follow the common anti-EU agenda of radical right-wing parties while at the same time avoiding conflicts deriving from a too close cooperation between parties. Bloom described the EAF project with the following words: “The only criterion is agreement with the mission statement, to create a Europe of sovereign states ...” About the relations between the EAF members he wrote: “None of us represents our respective political parties or comes with cultural or social baggage, this removed most of the bases for disagreement.” (Bloom 2012) The EAF established its own Think Tank called European Foundation for Freedom (EFF) that published leaflets against the EU accession of Croatia, conducted public opinion research on topics like immigration, and published a study that tried to show the cohesion of votes of EAF members with the UKIP delegation in the EP – obviously to win over Nigel Farage for future cooperation. In 2012, the EFF hosted a conference with representatives of the youth organisations of VB, FPÖ, FN, and SD in the Flemish Parliament in Brussels. Two years later, in April 2014, these youth organisations founded a common European organisation called Young Europeans for Hope (YEAH).

When the European elections 2014 approached, the political far right-wing in the EP was divided into four different alliances, two of which enjoyed official group status in the EP: the national-conservative ECR and the right-wing populist/extremist EFD. The other two alliances were official European parties, but did not enjoy group affiliation in the EP: the extreme right-wing EAF and the neo-Fascist AENM. While the defection of parties and single MEPs from one group to another happened frequently and cooperation was common, the competition became stronger with the approaching elections. All of these alliances had the ambition to attain official group status in the EP after May 2014. The condition to be fulfilled according to the EP rules of procedure was to gather 25 MEPs from a quarter of the Member States (seven out of 28). Hence, all groupings were looking for partners they could entice away from the competing groups and among the parties that were about to newly enter the EP, such as the German AfD, the SD, or the Italian Five Stars Movement (M5S).

In the election run-up, Media attention widely concentrated on the EAF when Geert Wilders– after years of self-chosen isolation within the radical right – surprisingly decided to

join the EAF and announced his decision on a press conference in The Hague in November 2013, sharing the stage with FN leader Marine Le Pen. The EAF was henceforth referred to as the Le Pen-Wilders group. It successfully drew over the former EFD members LN and SNS. Apparently, it had the best chances to lead the camp of the far right-wing parties in the EP from May 2014.

The EP elections brought the expected success for the far right-wing parties. In three Member States right-wing extremist or right-wing populist parties turned out to be the strongest parties: The FN in France, the UKIP in the UK, and the DF in Denmark. In the EP there are now 176 out of 751 MEPs who place themselves further on the political right than the EPP. This amounts to roughly 23 percent, almost a quarter. Out of these 176 right-wing MEPs, two official parliamentary groups have emerged again.

The first unexpected development was how the new ECR regrouped. A look at the right column of Table 1 shows that only six of the old 2009-2014 ECR members were re-elected into the EP. As a consequence, the ECR decided to open up further to the populist right and invited UKIP's former allies DF and the P, alongside the newly elected German AfD and a couple of other small parties to become ECR members. In the end, the ECR turned out to be the third largest group in the EP with 70 MEPs from 17 Member States.

Table 1: The ECR group after the European elections 2014

	Member State	Party	Result 2014	MEP 2014	Result 2009	Group 2009-2014
1	United Kingdom	Conservatives	23,31	20 (-5)	27,00	ECR
2	Poland	PiS	31,78	19 (+4)	27,4	ECR
3	Germany	AFD	7,00	7	---	---
4	Denmark	Dansk Folkeparti	26,60	4 (+2)	14,8	EFD
5	Belgium	N-VA	16,35	4 (+3)	6,13	Greens/EFA
6	Finnland	True Finns	12,09	2 (+1)	14,0	EFD
7	Czech Repulic	ODS	7,65	2 (-7)	31,45	ECR
8	Netherlands	CU – SGP	7,67	2 (+/-)	6,82	ECR/EFD
9	Bulgaria	BBTS+VMRO-BND	10,66	1	---	---
10	Greece	ANEL	3,47	1	---	---
11	Croatia	HSP dr.Starčević	41,42 ¹⁷	1	---	---
12	Latvia	TB/LNNK + VL	14,25	1 (+/-)	7,45	ECR
13	Lithuania	LLRA (AWPL)	8,05	1 (+/-)	8,42	ECR
14	Germany	Family Party	0,70	1	---	---
15	Slovakia	OL'aNO	7,64	1	---	---
16	Slovakia	NOVA	6,83	1	---	---
17	Ireland	Fianna Fáil	22,30	1 (-2)	24,08	ALDE

¹⁷ Result of a three party coalition that gained three MEPs: two joined the EPP, one the ECR.

A surprise was the re-foundation of the EFD, now renamed Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD). The day after the EP elections, Nigel Farage's UKIP had lost almost all of its allies of the former EFD. The LN and SNS had defected to the EAF already before the elections (the SNS then failed in the Slovak EP election), P and DF had joined the ECR, the Greek LA.O.S. failed in the elections. Nonetheless, UKIP refused to join the EAF after having been approached by Marine Le Pen. Farage explained, anti-Sewithism would still be "deeply embedded" in the FN, therefore he would not cooperate with the EAF. Then UKIP found a new partner in Beppe Grillo's Italian M5S. The so called Grillini held an online referendum in which members could decide whether they wanted to join UKIP or the ECR group. 29,584 M5S members participated and voted with a 78.1 percent majority for a partnership with UKIP. Next, the Lithuanian former EFD (and EAF) member Order and Justice (PTT) decided to join the emerging group, followed by the newly elected parties Sweden Democrats (SD), the Czech Free Citizens' Party (SO), and the Latvian Greens and Farmers (ZSS), making it six national delegations – one was still missing. Meanwhile, Joelle Bergeron, a French MEP who got elected into the EP on the list of the FN defected from the French nationalists. With Bergeron being national delegation number seven, Farage had secured his leadership of one part of the far right-wing populists in the EP – despite the inclusion of populist right-wing parties into the ECR and despite Le Pen's and Wilder's pronounced ambition to lead a broad coalition of nationalists in their common fight against the EU.

Table 2: The EFDD group after the European elections 2014

	Member state	Party	Result 2014	MEP 2014	Result 2009	Group 2009-2014
1	United Kingdom	UKIP	26,77	24 (+11)	16,09	EFD
2	Italy	M 5 Stelle	21,15	17	---	---
3	Lithuania	PTT	14,25	2 (+/-)	12,22	EFD
4	Sweden	SD	9,70	2	---	---
5	Czech Republic	Svobodní	5,24	1	---	---
6	Latvia	ZZS (LZS+LZP)	8,26	1	---	---
7	France	Independent (FN)	24,95(FN)	1	6,3 (FN)	NA (FN)

Eventually, the right-wing extremist EAF failed to get an official group status in the EP. The remaining five EAF parties are FN, PVV, FPÖ, VB, and LN. The Slovak SNS is not represented in the EP anymore, and the former allies SD and PTT joined UKIP and M5S into the EFDD. Like UKIP, the DF and the M5S had refused Le Pen's invitation to join the EAF already before the elections. Shortly before the deadline (midnight, June 23rd) to register for group status in the EP, Le Pen approached Janusz Korwin-Mikkes' Polish New National Congress (KNP). However, the partnership was rejected by Wilders, reportedly because of Korwin-Mikkes too radical anti-Sewithic, misogynic, and homophobic statements. For now, Le Pen has to relinquish her aim to lead a broad radical right-wing group in the EP, but this might not be the end of the story. As history shows, defections from far right-wing parties and groups in the EP are very common and could bestow Le Pen and Wilders the two missing partners necessary to form an official group in the EP in the course of the ongoing legislative term.

Table 3: The EAF without official group status after the European elections 2014

	Member state	Party	Result 2014	MEPs 2014	Group June 2014	Result 2009	Group 2009-2014
1	France	Front National	24,95	24 (+21)	NA	6,3	NA
2	Netherlands	PVV	13,32	4 (-1)	NA	16,97	NA
3	Austria	FPÖ	19,72	4 (+2)	NA	12,71	NA
4	Italy	Lega Nord	6,15	4 (-5)	NA	10,2	EFD
5	Belgium	Vlaams Belang	4,14	1 (-1)	NA	9,85	NA

NA: non-attached

Lastly, the neo-Nazis and fascists from the AENM remain far from being able to form an official group in the EP. The Bulgarian Ataka and the BNP have not been re-elected. However, Jobbik and FN's radicals around Bruno Gollnisch and Jean-Marie Le Pen will probably find new partners in the radical neo-Nazi parties Golden Dawn (CA, renamed National Dawn (EA) after being faced with criminal charges in Greece) and the German National Democrats (NPD).

Table 4: Non-attached far right-wing parties after the European elections 2014 (in add. to EAF parties)

	Member State	Party	Result 2014	MEPs 2014	Group June 2014	Result 2009	Group 2009-2014
1	Hungary	Jobbik	14,67	3 (+/-)	NA	14,77	NA
2	Greece	Chrysi Avgi	9,38	3	NA	---	---
3	Germany	NPD	1,00	1	NA	---	---
4	Poland	KNP	7,15	4	NA	---	---

While a number of far right-wing parties was not re-elected to the EP (see Table 5), it should furthermore be recognised that there are nine EU Member States without a far right-wing party of electoral relevance in the European election 2014. In the so called Programme Countries Spain and Portugal no far right-wing parties profited from the crisis. Ireland, also a Programme Country, has a leftist and non-chauvinist nationalist party, Sinn Féin, which is part of the United European Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) group in the EP. In Romania and Slovakia PRM and SNS failed in the elections. The four other countries without strong far right-wing parties in EP elections are Estonia, Luxemburg, Malta, and Cyprus.

Table 5: Far right-wing parties that failed in the European elections 2014

	Member State	Party	Result 2014	Result 2009	MEPs 2009	Group 2009-2014
1	Bulgaria	Ataka	2,96	11,96	2	NA
2	Romania	PRM	2,71	8,65	3	NA
3	Greece	LA.O.S.	2,70	7,15	2	EFD
4	United Kingdom	BNP	1,14	6,04	2	NA
5	Slovakia	SNS	3,61	5,56	1	EFD
6	Hungary	MDF	---	5,31	1	ECR
7	Austria	BZÖ	0,47	4,58	1	NA
8	Belgium	LDD	---	4,51	1	ECR

2. Cohesion: Does programmatic cohesion matter for far right-wing party cooperation?

Political or programmatic cohesion of party groups on EU level can be measured by comparing political programmes and public statements or voting behaviour in the EP.

The cohesion rate of the ECR 2009-2014 was remarkably high at 86.65 percent. After the first votes in the first two plenary sessions in July 2014 the new ECR group's cohesion rate is at around 79 percent, but because of the small number of votes included the informative value of this figure is very weak. (Votewatch 2014)

In contrast to the ECR, the cohesion in the EFD 2009-2014 with an average of 48.59 percent did not even exceed the 50 percent mark. It was the lowest cohesion rate of all groups in the EP. This means that in a majority of the cases these right-wing populist and extremist parties were of different opinion when they were voting on economic and monetary policy, foreign policy, or environment and climate issues. (cp. Janssen 2012) After the first two plenary sessions the cohesion rate in the newly formed EFDD is only about 42 percent. (Votewatch 2014)

Table 6: Cohesion of political groups in the European Parliament 14/7/2009-17/04/2014

Political Group	Av. cohesion rate in votes %
Greens/EFA	94.68
EPP	92.63
S&D	91.54
ALDE	88.40
GUE-NGL	79.37
ECR	86.65
EFD	48.59

Source: Votewatch.eu

Unfortunately, there is no comparing data available on the voting behaviour of the non-attached right-wing extremists. Comparing the programmes and statements of these parties

in the EP, it appears that the political diversity in the EAF and AENM spectrum is even more significant than in the EFD group. (Janssen 2013)

Accordingly, political cohesion is not the decisive factor for cooperation in the populist and extremist far right-wing party spectrum. However, three political issues can be identified as having been functioning as the substantial basis for cooperation:

1. The rejection of the EU – in favour of a total dissolution, a retreat, or a replacement of the current EU by a Union of loosely cooperating nation states.
2. An anti-pluralism agenda – with a negative attitude towards immigrants and Muslims (prevalent in the West), and on Roma, Jews, and other national minorities (prevalent in the East).
3. The ostentatious rejection of the EU accession of Turkey.

The following examples do not include statements from single parties or MEPs but instead exemplify the political output of the AENM, the EAF, and the EFD. They will also show how the three common objectives of the populist and extremist right-wing parties helped build coalitions inside the EP.

The rejection of the EU is the most important common objective of far right-wing parties, although there are differences concerning the idea about what should replace it. The AENM took the position that the “EU is an insidious Communist cabal which dictates virtually every law, in every EU members' country, and it is well past its sell-by date. The AENM was established to create a bond between all fellow nationalists who look forward to freedom and ditching the totalitarian 'elected dictatorship', which is the EU.” (AENM 2012) The declaration of the EAF for the European elections 2014 stated that the alliance “was formed in order to promote and defend to the utmost the people’s and Member States’ democratic rights against the Brussels drift.” (EAF 2014) And the first point in the very short four point programme of the EFDD group advocates for the “co-operation among sovereign European States” and “rejects the bureaucratisation of Europe and the creation of a single centralised European superstate”. (EFDD 2014)

Although the anti-pluralism agenda of the populist and extreme right-wing parties takes on different forms in Eastern and Western European countries, it represents an integral part of the common political output on EU level. For instance, the AENM started an online campaign in 2013 under the headline “Oppose EU attack on freedom to resist mass immigration & anti-white genocide” (which was allegedly planned by the EP). (AENM 2013) In its common election manifesto of 2014, the EAF criticised “mass immigration” as opposed to “traditional family policies” and claimed that Europe’s “Christian and humanistic roots are threatened by the rise of radical Islam within the European Union”. (EAF 2014) The EFDD stipulates that “Peoples and Nations of Europe have the right to protect their borders and strengthen their own historical, traditional, religious and cultural values.” (EFDD 2014) It is also remarkable that anti-immigration policy was as an occasion for a cooperation between MEPs who nowadays belong to different groups of the far right in the EP. For instance, in 2010, EFD member Morten Messerschmidt – now leader of the DF delegation in the ECR group – tabled a motion for a resolution together with Nikolaos Salavrakos (LA.O.S./EFD), Mario Borghezio (LN/EFD), Philip Claeys (VB), and Andreas Mölzer (FPÖ). The resolution called for a strengthening of the FRONTEX agency¹⁸ and asserted that “combating illegal mass

¹⁸ European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (Frontex)

immigration is one of the key challenges facing both the historically established peoples of Europe and the EU". (EP 2010)

Also the rejection of EU accession talks with Turkey proved a fruitful basis for a cooperation between far right-wing parties. In December 2009, the already mentioned MEPs Messerschmidt, Salavrakos, Borghezio, Claeys, and Mölzer tabled a common resolution "on the human rights situation in Turkey" with the aim "to suspend the current accession negotiations and not to open any further chapters of the negotiations". (EP 2009a) The same goal was pursued by the AENM members Bruno Gollnisch (FN), Diwithar Stoyanov (Ataka), Zoltán Balczó (Jobbik), and Andrew Henry William Brons (BNP): Together with Andreas Mölzer (FPÖ) they tabled a common resolution on "breaking off the accession negotiations with Turkey". (EP 2009) Almost the same resolution was tabled several month later by the PVV delegation titled "on immediately breaking off the accession negotiations with Turkey". (EP 2010a) Starting in 2010, DF politician Morten Messerschmidt organised a number of conferences on issues concerning the political situation in Turkey and called this project the "Turkey assessment Group of the European Parliament" (TAG) – even though it was just a personal initiative under the roof of the EFD group. The TAG sessions were also attended by AENM member Nick Griffin (BNP). (Janssen 2012: 13f) On a congress held in June 2011 in Malta, the EAF decided to use the newly invented European Citizens Initiative (ECI) of the EU for a broad EU-wide campaign against the accession of Turkey. (EAF 2011) Furthermore, since the website of the EAF was launched in 2010, visitors can participate in an online poll concerning Turkey's possible EU accession, and the only text published under the rubric "Articles" on the website of the EAF think tank EFF is titled "Why Turkey should not join the EU". (EFF 2014)

3. Obstacles: What are the obstacles for right-wing party cooperation?

Despite the threefold opposition of right-wing populist and extremist parties against the EU, social pluralism, and the EU accession of Turkey, the failure of the EAF to form an official group in the EP shows that having some common denominators is still not a save ground for far right-wing parties to form a large and stable parliamentary group in the EP. The underlying problem can be called *the extremism of the others*: Two far right-wing parties A and B form a coalition on EU level. This partnership will be closely observed by the media and political opponents in the home countries of A and B. Hence, an extremist public statement of party B –anti-democratic, anti-Semitic, or racist – is likely to cause political harm to party A. The public behaviour of representatives of party B will be used in A's home country to show that A is evidently not a party within the respected democratic sphere. While in the home country of far right-wing party A political provocations might be well calculated, it is not possible to control the public relations strategy of partner party B.

Sometimes, the extremism of another far right-wing party excludes cooperation already from the start, for instance, when disputes concerning national minorities in neighbouring countries are involved. Explaining why some parties of the extreme right would not join the newly founded AENM, MEP Soltan Balczó (Jobbik) declared in 2009: "Millions of ethnic Hungarians live [outside] Hungary and the Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary will never work together with parties that are not patriotic or nationalist, but instead chauvinist. We will never work with the Slovak National Party or the Greater Romania Party. This is a declaration!" (Leigh 2009)

Disputes concerning migrant communities are an obstacle for cooperation especially between eastern European right-wing parties on the one hand, and their potential western European partners on the other hand. The ITS group collapsed in 2007 after only a few months of existence because Alessandra Mussolini (MS – today FI/EPP) called Romanian immigrants in Italy criminals, whereupon the Romanian nationalists of the PRM left the group in indignation. Other examples of possible disaffection is a campaign of the PVV in 2012, when the party put up a website which urged Dutch people to lodge complaints about Central and Eastern Europeans in the Netherlands, or UKIP's anti-immigration campaign in the EP elections, with posters asking "26 million people in Europe are looking for work. And whose jobs are they after?" while a huge finger points at the viewer.

Also anti-Sewithism is a highly controversial topic between parties of the far right. While for traditional radical right-wing parties like the FN (despite Marine Le Pen's modernisation efforts), BNP, NPD, and also Jobbik or Golden Dawn anti-Sewithism is a part of their political identity, for some far right-wing parties like the PVV or UKIP anti-Sewithism is not acceptable. Therefore, it is even more surprising that Wilders decided to join the EAF. As already shown in chapter one, the anti-Sewithism of the FN prevented UKIP and DF from joining Le Pen and Wilders into the EAF. As if to proof them right, in June 2014, just shortly after the elections, the old Jean-Marie Le Pen provoked another anti-Sewithic scandal when he threatened to make an "oven load" of the Jewish singer Patrick Bruel, obviously a reference to the furnaces used by the Nazis to burn the bodies of their victims. (Chazan 2014) On the other hand, the Polish KNP was excluded from the EAF ostensibly because of the anti-Sewithism of its leader Korvin-Mikke, who claimed in an interview that "killing millions of people was not the purpose of Hitler", going on: "Show me even one sentence that will prove the fact that he knew about the extermination of the Jews". (Times of Israel 2013)

To conclude, here are two examples how an openly racist provocation can alienate far right-wing partners on EU level. Mario Borghezio, re-elected MEP for the Italian LN in 2014, referred to the Italian government in 2013 as a "bongo bongo" administration, because of Italy's first black minister Cécile Kyenge. The scandal got Borghezio excluded from the EFD group. Interestingly, when in 2011 he called some of the ideas of the Norwegian mass murder Anders Breivik "excellent", this was apparently no reason for UKIP or the DF to end the cooperation with Borghezio or the LN. Another example is the case of Andreas Mölzer who was the leading candidate of the Austrian FPÖ in the 2014 EP elections, until he made the following statements and had to resign: He called the EU a "conglomerate of niggers" ("Negerkonglomerat") and said that compared to EU regulations Hitler's Third Reich was "probably informal and liberal". The subsequent media scandal led to the withdrawal of the SD from the EAF. The SD apparently feared negative consequences of this partnership for the EP elections and the Swedish national elections in September 2014.

4. Impact: Is far right-wing party cooperation on European level politically relevant?

The far right-wing party spectrum, now holding a quarter of the seats in the EP, is politically diverse and currently divided into four factions: The ECR and the EFDD as official groups in the EP, and the European parties EAF and AENM. Given the internal division, it is not clear yet how strong the political impact of the 176 far right-wing MEPs will be.

First of all, despite the strong presence of the FN with 23 MEPs, without official group status Marine Le Pen is largely marginalised in the EP. The EAF has clearly lost the competition for domination in the camp of the far right, at least for now. As a consequence, the impact of its members is not likely to be significant for European politics. The AENM, a project of the old FN radicals Jean-Marie le Pen and Bruno Gollnisch with their partners from Jobbik and BNP might even cease to exist.

Secondly, the EFDD is a project which requires further assessment. It is not obvious yet how M5S and UKIP, the two dominating parties in this group, will fit together in the long run. Qualitatively, the EFDD group does not seem to differ a lot from its antecedent groups Independents/Democrats (IN/DEM: 2004-2009) and EFD (2009-2014). Thus, it is most likely that the EFDD group will continue to be no more than a platform for the particular national political ambitions of each of the party delegations involved, and especially those of UKIP's Nigel Farage, who declared that he seeks to be elected into the UK House of Commons in 2015. Nevertheless, since UKIP's success already provoked a right-turn in British politics and led British Prime Minister Cameron to announce an in-or-out EU referendum for 2017 (provided he is re-elected), EFDD leader Farage's influence on European politics cannot be denied.

Thirdly, the far right-wing group with the most remarkable success story and probably the strongest political impact on EU level is the strengthened ECR, with Cameron's CP, Kaczinski's PiS, and their new allies in the German AfD, the DF, and the P, now being the third largest group in the EP. For the impact of the ECR, it will be decisive how well its members will be able to link politics on national level to common political initiatives in the EP. That ECR member parties are able to have an impact on European policy was observable in recent events, such as the reinvention of border controls in Denmark enforced by the DF while tolerating the centre-right Danish government in 2011, the rejection of the Fiscal Compact by the CP and ODS governments in 2012, and of course David Cameron's announcement of a referendum on United Kingdom's EU membership.

Furthermore, since nationalist tendencies do as well exist in the EPP – Orbán's Fidesz being only the most radical example – the far right-wing parties could occasionally be successful to pressure the EPP further towards the right, for example in the attempt to restrain individual civil rights. Shortly before the EP elections such a cultural shift towards right-wing authoritarianism was apparent already when two EP reports on reproductive rights for women were rejected by a coalition of the far right and the EPP. This was insofar a surprise as in preceding EP votes on similar topics the mainstream of the EPP had regularly voted with the culturally liberal political spectrum.

Apart from grand scale impact of far right-wing parties on European politics, the actual existence of these groups is a political factor already by itself. Belonging to an official group in the EP is important for many reasons: Access to financial resources, infrastructure, information, staff, media, and speaking time in the plenary are important factors in the quest for political power.

For some parties, the EP is an irreplaceable base for the development of political impact also on national level. It is not just a coincidence that the leading personalities of several far right-wing parties, including UKIP (Nigel Farage), the FN (both Le Pens), or the AfD (Bernd Lucke) are elected MEPs. UKIP might serve as an example: The British majority voting system makes it very difficult for emerging parties to enter the House of Commons. Thus, Farage chose the EP as his political base, because the representative voting system in EP elections

made it much easier to gain seats. His now eleventh year of EP group leadership is the backbone of his current political success in the UK.

Table 7: The rise of UKIP in European elections, compared to national elections

EP elections	1999: 6,5 %	2004: 15,6 %	2009: 16,5 %	2014: 26,7 %
National elections	2001: 1.5 %	2005: 2.2 %	2010: 3.1 %	2015: ?

Literature

- Chazan, David (2014): Fury over Jean-Marie Le Pen's 'anti-semitic' remark. On: The Telegraph. June 8th 2014
- COM – European Commission (2014): European Commission: Standard Eurobarometer 81, Spring 2014
- De Lange, Sarah/Rooduijn, Matthijs/van Spanje, Joost (2014): The 'Le Pen-Wilders' alliance will change European politics. On: policy network, February 4th 2014
- Economist (2012): Dédiabolisation. In The Economist Newspaper, August 11th to 17th 2012
- Endre, Sik (2013): Minden korban FIDESZ. On: Tarki Research Institute tarki.hu, November 18th 2013
- Häusler, Martin (2014): Zwischen Neonazismus und Rechtspopulismus. Aktuelle rechte Erscheinungsformen. In: Benbrahim, Karima/Jantschek, Ole/Manthe, Barbara (eds.): salongfähig, trittsicher. Rechtspopulismus und Rechtsextremismus in Europa. IDA e.V., Düsseldorf
- Hübner, Carsten (2008): Rechtsextreme Netzwerke und Parteien in Europa. Eine Bestandsaufnahme vor der Europawahl 2009. GUE/NGL group in the European Parliament, Brussels
- Janssen, Thilo (2012): Was macht die politische Rechte im Europäischen Parlament? Studie im Auftrag der Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung. Berlin
- Janssen, Thilo (2013): Die Europäisierung der Rechten EU-Gegner. Rechte europäische Parteien und rechte Fraktionen im Europäischen Parlament vor den Europawahlen 2014. Studie im Auftrag der Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung. Berlin
- Kaufmann, Stephan/Muzzupappa, Antonella/Nuss, Sabine (2011): "Sell your islands, you bankrupt Greeks". Rosa-Luxemburg-Foundation, Berlin
- Leigh, Phillips (2009): Far-right alliance fails to get EU parliament cash. On: euobserver, November 11th 2009
- Mudde, Cas (2014): The Le Pen-Wilders Alliance and the European Parliament: Plus ça change, plus la même chose. On: The Washington Post, February 11th 2014
- Simon, Zoltan (2014): Orban Says He Seeks to End Liberal Democracy in Hungary. On: bloomberg.com, Juli 28th 2014
- Times of Israel (2013): Polish ex-MP says Hitler didn't know about Holocaust. On: July 3rd 2013
- Virchow, Fabian (2014): Europäische Dimensionen der extremen Rechten. In: Benbrahim, Karima/Jantschek, Ole/Manthe, Barbara (eds.): salongfähig, trittsicher. Rechtspopulismus und Rechtsextremismus in Europa. IDA e.V., Düsseldorf

Sources:

- AENM – Alliance of European National Movements (2013): Oppose EU planned white genocide. On: AENM.eu, September 16th 2013
- Bloom, Goodfrey (2012): Eurosceptic parties entering new paradigm. On: ukipmeps.org, December 6th 2012

EAF – European Alliance for Freedom (2014): Political Party Manifesto 2014. On: eurallfree.org, last opened August 31st 2014

EFDD – Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (2014): Charter. On: efdgroupp.eu

EFF – European Foundation for Freedom (2014): Why Turkey should not join the EU. On: eurfreedom.org, January 15th 2013

EP - European Parliament (2010): Motion for a European Parliament resolution on strengthening the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders (Frontex) B7-0229/2010

EP – European Parliament (2010a): Motion for a European Parliament resolution on immediately breaking off the accession negotiations with Turkey, B7-0062/2010

EP – European Parliament (2009): Motion for a European Parliament resolution on breaking off the accession negotiations with Turkey, B7-0244/2009

EP – European Parliament (2009a): Motion for a European Parliament Resolution on the human rights situation in Turkey, B7-0245/2009

Krzysztof Pilawski and Holger Politt

The European Parliamentary Elections in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland: In the spirit of Neoliberal Economics and of Tradition

Taken together, the three Baltic republics Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania occupy an area about half the size of Germany. However, since the population is not even one tenth that of Germany, the citizens in this north-eastern region of the EU elect a total of only twenty-five members to the European Parliament – eleven from Lithuania, eight from Latvia and six from Estonia. Poland, by contrast, is one of the larger EU member countries, with an area almost as large as that of Germany, but with less than half Germany's population. This, too, is reflected in the number of representatives Poland elects, which is fifty-one.

In other respects too, Poland is very different from the three Baltic states. Unlikely Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, which have to a large degree already experienced the advantages and disadvantages of modern service-oriented societies, Poland still has a mixed economic structure, in which not only a disproportionately high share of agriculture and also a still significant mining sector (particularly hard coal, brown coal and copper), but also heavy industry and processing industries are particularly important. Poland is now the location for the considerable part of the supply industry for the German economy. These briefly listed factors generated different effects during the serious crisis years from 2008 through 2010. While Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia suffered a collapse of their GDPs in the double-digit range, Poland was the only large country in the EU which enjoyed continued economic growth during this period, albeit barely more than 1%. Since the same neoliberal economic spirit dominates in all four countries, the reasons for the important difference referred to here can be attributed to a significant degree to the respective economic structures. Nonetheless, particularly hard coal mining and heavy industry regularly come under serious pressure in Poland; currently, this is particularly true of coal, since production costs cannot stand up to the competition of cheaper imported coal. While Poland is still facing thoroughgoing restructuring processes in some important sectors of the economy and in certain regions, this process has largely been concluded in the three Baltic states. In these countries, there is no industrial work force of any significant size.

All four countries share a common socialist history which lasted from 1945 until 1989, or 1991, in the Baltic states. On the other hand, Poland was not a Republic of the Soviet Union, but rather, as a People's Republic in its own right, maintained a significant, if restricted, degree of national sovereignty. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, on the other hand, were Soviet Republics, in which both Russian and the respective national languages were used. The resulting push by political elites in the Baltic Soviet Republics for complete national independence was an important factor in the progressive disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1990 and 1991. Here, important traditions in the history narratives of the countries intersect: the deep systemic transformation after 1989 is seen as an upheaval and a new departure in which the decades of Soviet rule or hegemony could be removed, and the recourse or reconnection to the respective nation-state developments prior to the Second World War became possible once again. The important difference was provided by the Second World War, for while Polish resistance against the Soviet Union at no point involved any attempt at an alliance with Hitler's Germany, and thus remained within the framework of the strategic alliance with the Western Allies, Lithuania, Latvians and Estonians in some cases fought on Hitler's side – with dramatic consequences. Nonetheless, at the European

level, it sometimes appears that Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia are harmoniously in the same historic-narrative boat. Only a deeper examination will reveal differences which should not be underestimated.

However, that does not change the fact that these four countries generally speak with one voice with regard to issues of the EU's eastern policy, i.e. policy towards Belarus, Ukraine and especially Russia; in the many-voiced concert of the twenty-eight EU member countries, that fact is hard to overlook. All four of these EU member countries have long historic experience with direct Russian rule, which lasted between 100 and 200 years.

Of course, this somewhat remote past is not the central issue for EU membership, but nonetheless deserves mention here, since it helps explain situations in which these countries frequently adopt common positions not necessarily shared by other member countries. This is particularly true in the case of the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary which, in questions of the EU's eastern policy, often adopt positions different from those of Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. What separates these countries, which all obtained EU membership in 2004, and which were all part of the Soviet camp from 1945 through 1989, is the experience of the presence or lack of Russian domination prior to the First World War.

The contexts addressed here describe long historical lines reaching far back into the past, which nonetheless retain their influence in the present. Of course, historical narratives are largely fed within the boundaries of nation-states, but at the EU level, too, attempts are continually being made to obtain grist for one's own mill by citing these connections.

All four countries border directly on Russia, although in the cases of Lithuania and Poland, this involves only the Kaliningrad Region, an exclave within EU territory. The only other EU country with a direct border with Russia is Finland, which, however, has historic experiences of a specific relationship with Russia based on compromise and good neighbourliness. Unlike Finland, the former Soviet Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are NATO members, as is Poland. All four countries in unison see this membership is an important guarantee of their security and of their national independence, an attitude which gained in significance at the time of the European parliamentary election due to Russian actions in Crimea and other areas of eastern Ukraine. Even if such fears are certainly also present in Poland, the situation there is still considerably different from that in the Baltic states, where there are significant Russian or Russian-speaking minorities, especially in Latvia and Estonia, where these groups constitute more than one third of the resident populations. Indeed, these two countries are split societies with respect to many fundamental issues of domestic and foreign policy, a fact which, however, is only partially reflected in the landscape of political parties, for recently, moderate forces within the Russian-speaking one third of their populations have in both countries been more successful than radical forces.

Russia's President Vladimir Putin has justified the actions he took in March 2014 in Crimea with the claimed need to protect the Russian population, without even recognizing the far-reaching autonomy stipulations that had already existed there. In the capitals of the three Baltic states, this was perceived as a bellwether action, for Moscow has long complained about the situation of the Russian-speaking minorities in the Baltic states, often justifiably.

The path of gradual acculturation of the minorities to the majority societies, which has been more or less approvingly accepted by the EU, has been only partially successful. One expression of that fact is that in connection with the crisis in the Ukraine, ever more young Russians in the Baltic states have accepted Moscow's offer of Russian citizenship. When

Putin thus states that Russia's interests are always affected wherever Russians live, he is referring to the EU countries Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

All these factors were significant for the European parliamentary election in May 2014, even though it was not a polarizing plebiscite on any of the currently relevant issues. What was at stake here was the composition of a Parliament for which each country could only elect a certain number of representatives. The four countries harbour ever fewer illusions about the EU Parliament's possibilities for affecting current EU policy, which is one of the reasons why electoral participation was lower here than in comparable nationwide elections. However, this is true elsewhere as well, so that it should not give cause for any overly rapid interpretation as an expression of disillusionment with the EU. Acceptance figures for EU membership are exceptionally high in Poland, a fact which has not changed, and this is true, too, among ethnic Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians. Surveys of the entire populations of these countries, however, also include the widespread, currently increasingly sceptical views of the Russian minorities.

Estonia

Elections for the European Parliament were dominated by domestic policy issues, and also by the current conflicts regarding the Ukraine and particularly the behaviour of Moscow in that regard. As a result, Estonia's membership in the European Union and NATO received increasing attention. Unlike 2009, there were no major surprises with regard to other domestic policy constellations. However, electoral participation was only 36.6% (2009: 43.2%) and thus failed to meet expectations.

The six seats elected by Estonians were distributed as follows:

The **liberal Reform Party** won two seats, with 24.3% of the vote; it sits with the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) Parliamentary Group in the EP.

The left-liberal **Centre Party** won one seat, with 22.3% of the vote; it too, is an ALDE member. The **conservative Pro Patria and Res Publica Union** won one seat with 13.9% of the vote; it sits with the European People's Party (Christian Democrats). The **Social Democrats** won one seat with 13.6% of the vote; they sit with the Progressive Alliance of Social Democrats. The independent candidate **Indrek Tarand** got 13.2%, and joined the Greens/Free European Alliance Group.

The Centre Party has traditionally been an important representative of the interests of the Russian minority in Estonia and has a politically moderate, left-liberal orientation with a social-democratic accent, so that some observers consider it to be Estonia's real social-democratic party. However, in spite of its consistently good election results, it has never been accepted into a governing coalition. In this election too, it took second place, just behind the liberals. The mayor of Tallinn is a Centre Party member.

Indrek Tarand, by profession a TV journalist originally elected to the European Parliament in 2009, once again won his seat, standing on a one-man list. Five years ago, he achieved 25%, which would have been enough to give him two seats in the European Parliament, a fact which was widely viewed as a slap in the face for the other parties. This time, he was able to retain his seat in spite of attracting significantly fewer votes.

Latvia

In Latvia, the continuing conflict in the Ukraine, and especially Moscow's behaviour, had a greater effect on the elections to the European Parliament than did domestic factors. That, too, explains why the governing conservatives were able to win half the seats allotted to Latvia. A total of five Latvian parties will be represented in the European Parliament. Voter participation, amounting to only 30%, was far below expectations.

Of the eight Latvian seats, the conservative party Unity won four, with 46.2% of the vote; it is a member of the European People's Party Group. The other four successful parties, which each won one seat, were: the National Alliance "All for Latvia!", (14.2%; European Conservatives and Reformists; the right-wing conservatives); the social-democratic party Harmony (13%, Progressive Alliance of Social Democrats Group); the Union of Greens and Farmers (8.3%, Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy Group; right-wing populists), and the Latvian Russian Union (6.4%; Greens/Free European Alliance Group).

Former Premier Valdis Dombrovskis (2009-2013) will join the Parliament at the head of the conservatives. The country's delegation includes two ethnic Russians, those representing the parties Harmony and the Russian Union, respectively.

The Socialist Party founded by former MEP Alfred Rubiks in 2009 failed to win a seat, with considerably less than 5% of the vote. In 2009, Rubiks had been elected to the EP on the Harmony ticket, and had sat with the GUE/NGL group.

Lithuania

Along with domestic issues, the Ukraine crisis was a major issue; broad sections of the public saw it as a severe burden on bilateral relations with Russia. In addition, there was the relationship with Belarus, which, for historical reasons, are relatively close, and which on the one hand are subject to additional strains due to Russia's action in Ukraine, but on the other open up new lines of communication regarding issues vital to both countries.

Voter participation was 47%, higher than in 2009, when only 20.5% of voters went to the polls. One important reason for that was the runoff in the presidential election which was held on the same day.

The eleven Lithuanian seats were distributed as follows: The conservative **Homeland Union**: 17.4%, two seats, European People's Party. The **Social Democrats**: 17.3%, two seats, Progressive Alliance of Social Democrats. The **Liberals**: 16.5%, two seats, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe. The **nationalistic Order and Justice Party**: 14.3%, two seats, Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy. The **Labour Party**: 12.8%, one seat, Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe. The **Electoral Action of Poles in Lithuania**: 8%, one seat, European Conservatives and Reformists. The **Alliance of Peasants and Greens**, 6.6%, one seat, Greens/Free European Alliance.

Lithuania's MEPs include one ethnic Russian, Victor Uspaskich, founder of the Labour Party, which has dropped far behind its former successful results, when it garnered up to 30% of the vote and was the country's strongest party. Valdemar Tomaševski, an ethnic Pole, represents the Polish list.

Overview of the Baltic states

Taken as a whole, the seats of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania break down as follows between the party groups in the European Parliament: With seven seats, the European People's Party

is the strongest group, followed by the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats, with six seats, the Progressive Alliance of Social Democrats with four, the Greens/Free European Alliance and the Europe for Freedom and Direct Democracy group with three each, and finally the European Conservatives and Reformists group with two seats. Only the European People's Party, the Social Democrats and the Greens won seats in all three countries.

The electoral mood emerging from these results is clearly liberal-conservative, while social democratic and green positions are considerably weaker. National conservative and patriotic positions are a factor not to be underestimated in Latvia and Lithuania.

Poland

Since regular parliamentary and presidential elections are scheduled for next year, the elections for the European Parliament was seen by Polish parties as a welcome test of the mood of the country, perwitting them to prepare for the upcoming electoral campaigns in a timely manner. However, the electorate did not completely play along, providing a voter participation rate of only 23%, which was surprisingly low. The current crisis in Ukraine did not affect that, although it has been followed with great interest by the Polish public. However, since all-important parties took fairly similar positions here, the hot domestic policy issues were more important in determining the decisions of the voters.

The two major parties which have been at each other's throats for almost ten years now crossed the finish line virtually neck-and-neck. Here, the current crisis in Ukraine may have helped the ruling liberal-conservative Civic Platform (PO). At any rate, the national-conservative Law and Justice Party (PiS) missed its goal of at long last becoming the country strongest party again. Trailing far behind were the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), the Polish People's Party (a farmers' party), and the right-wing populist Congress of the New Right (KNP).

Poland's fifty-two seats were distributed as follows: the liberal conservative PO (European People's Party) won 32.1% of the vote, for nineteen seats, the national-conservative PiS (European Conservatives and Reformists) was close behind with 31.8% and also with nineteen seats, the SLD (Progressive Alliance of Social Democrats) won 9.4%, for five seats, the KNP 9.1% for four seats, and the farmers' party 6.8% for four seats.

Significant was the failure of the left-liberal list Europe Plus, founded by Janusz Palikot and Aleksander Kwaśniewski, which presented itself as an alternative both to the governing PO and to the left-democratic SLD. That is a clear warning to Palikot, whose list will have to fight hard to return to the Polish parliament in 2015.

In the national-conservative spectrum, the unquestioned leadership of the PiS has been reinforced, because other conservative lists failed to meet the 5% threshold, and have since hinted that they plan to approach the PiS with regard to the upcoming elections. A joint national-conservative list would have won no less than 40% of the votes.

One disappointment is the success of the right-wing populist Congress of the New Right, headed by Janusz Korwin-Mikke. This list achieved surprisingly good results, winning four seats in the EP. Korwin-Mikke is a dyed-in-the-wool EU opponent who makes no bones about his rejection of "European socialism". On the Ukrainian question, he considers Moscow's actions legitimate, since, for example in Crimea, it was able to implement the right of national self-determination.

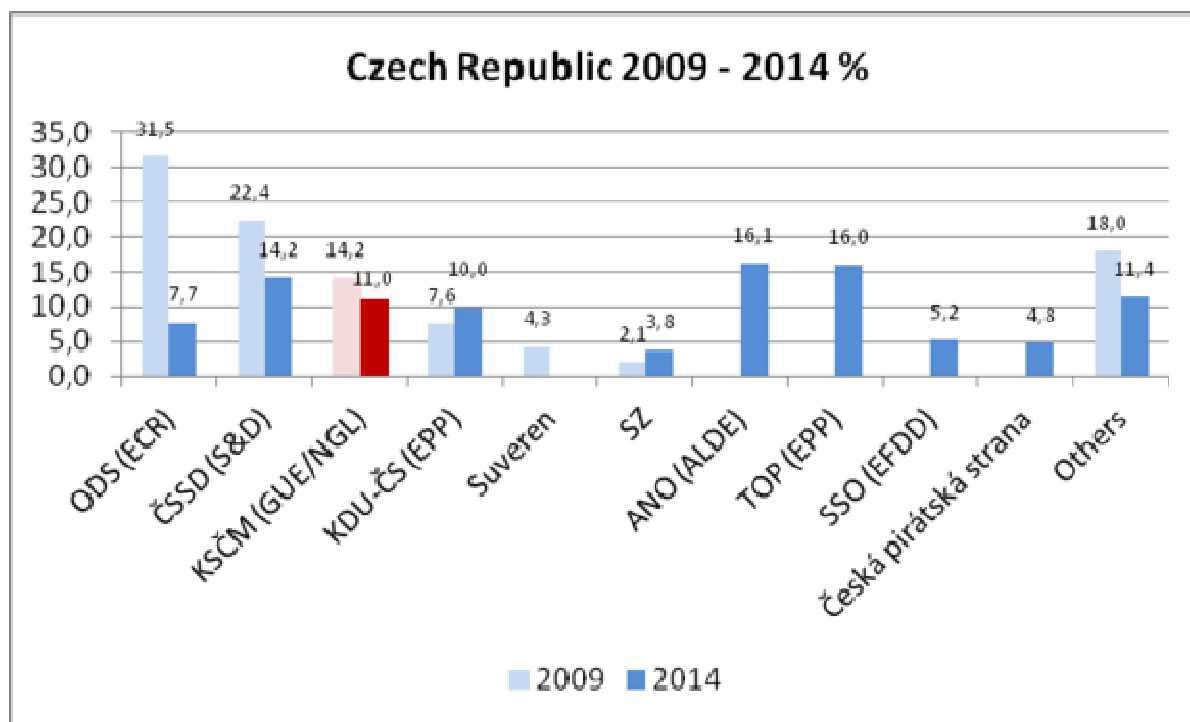
Jiří Málek

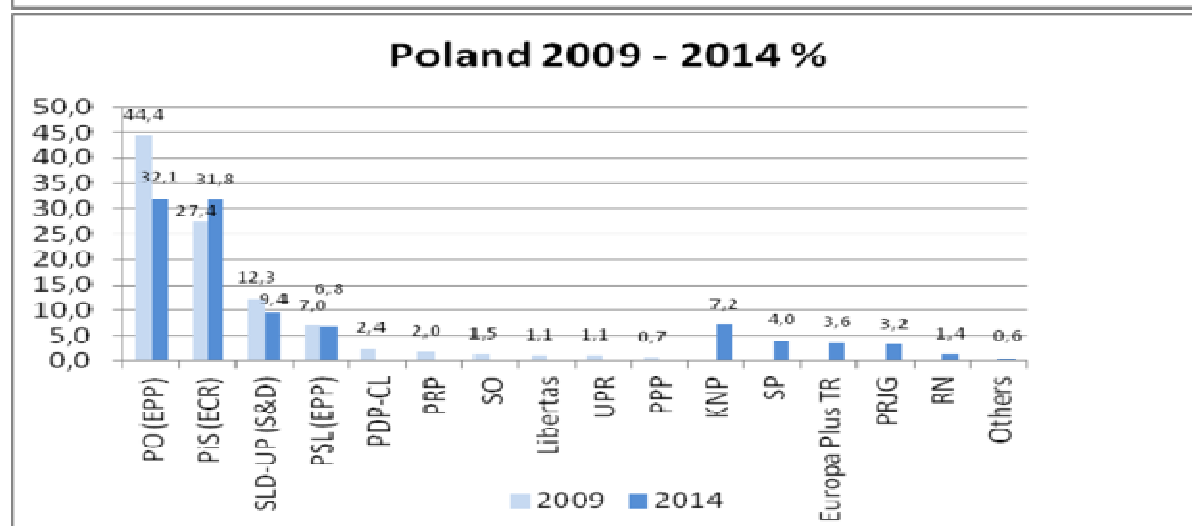
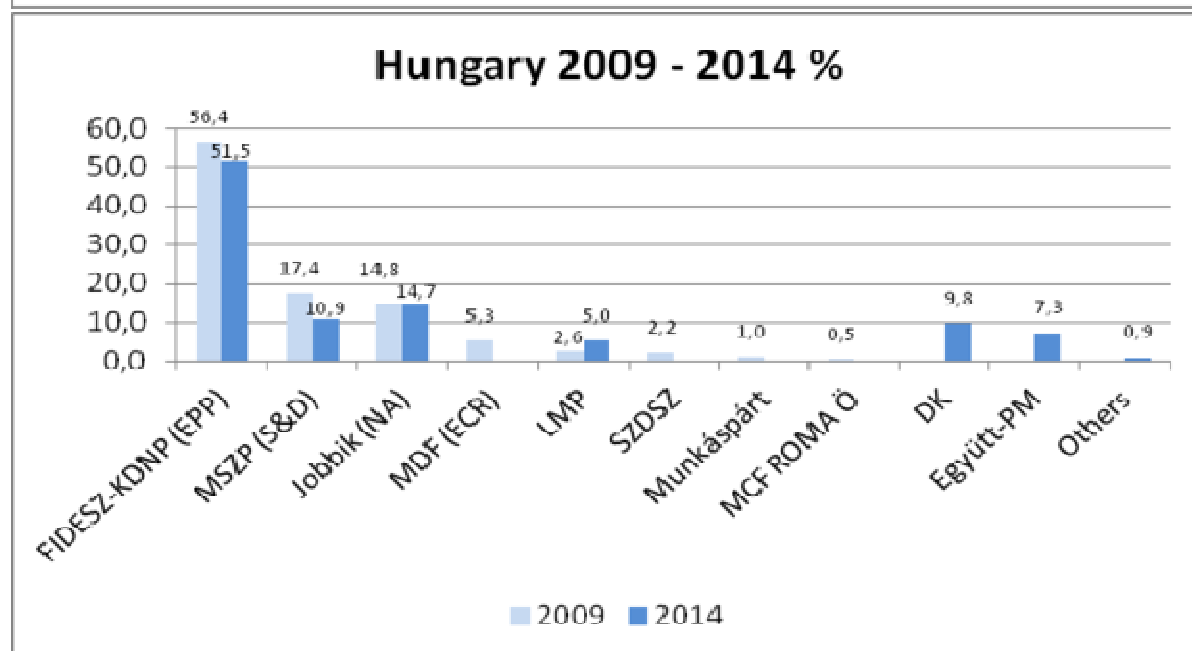
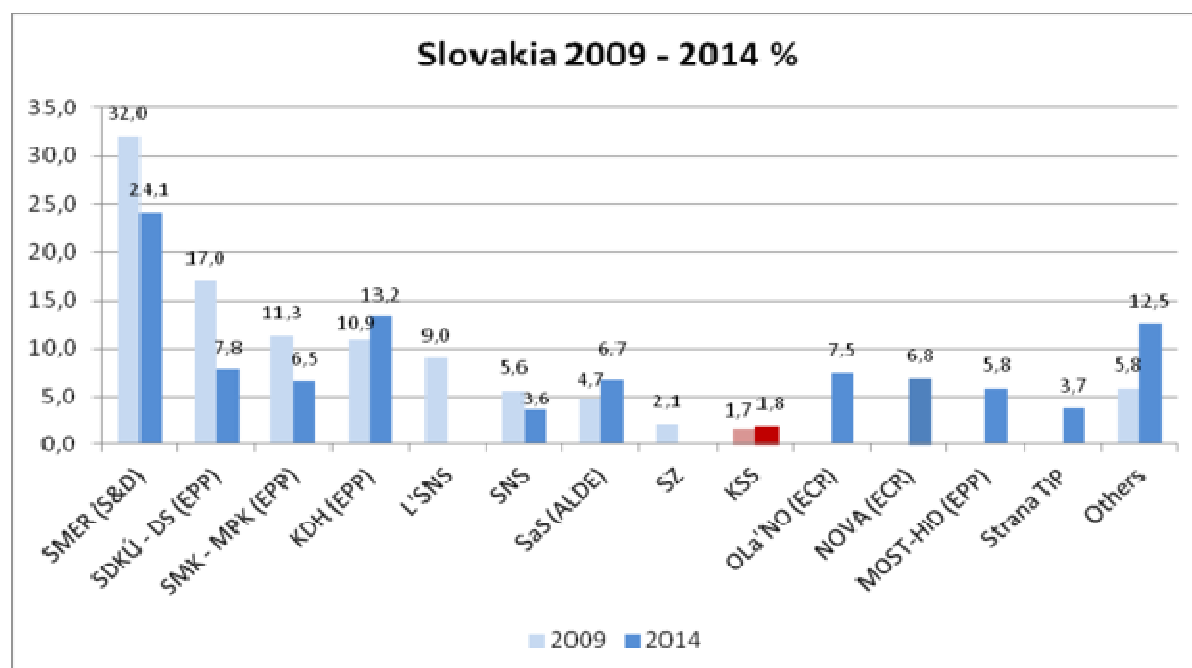
East of the West

Before me is the task of speaking in a limited timeframe on things that can hardly be responsibly described in brief. For that reason please allow me to make use of a method that could be compared to tossing a flat stone along a flat surface – ever grazing the water, making a couple of little waves and flying off a little more to brush the surface again. With regards to several issues I too will merely brush the surface and rush on to others. And it is likely more questions will arise than answers.

What will I be speaking about? The Karlovy Vary Film Festival has a section called: East of the West. Likewise we will devote this time to the area east of the West, though in the slightly narrower sense of the part of Central Europe otherwise known as the Visegrad Four - The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland (total 106 EP seats – 14,1 %).

What happened in this area in the recent elections to the European Parliament? I don't wish to recite the numbers, results and facts that are generally known.





Is there something else instead that we should notice? Europe must undoubtedly have

noticed the score it achieved in terms of participation in these elections. In the Czech Republic it was 82% of eligible voters that neglected to cast a ballot. In this we were overtaken by the state closest to us – Slovakia – which took the prize Europe-wide with 88% nonparticipation. But other states performed similarly: Poland – 77%; Hungary – 71% nonparticipants. Wedged between these two countries were also Slovenia and Croatia. All of the post-communist countries fell below the European average of 43% voter turnout, with only Lithuania slightly above it.

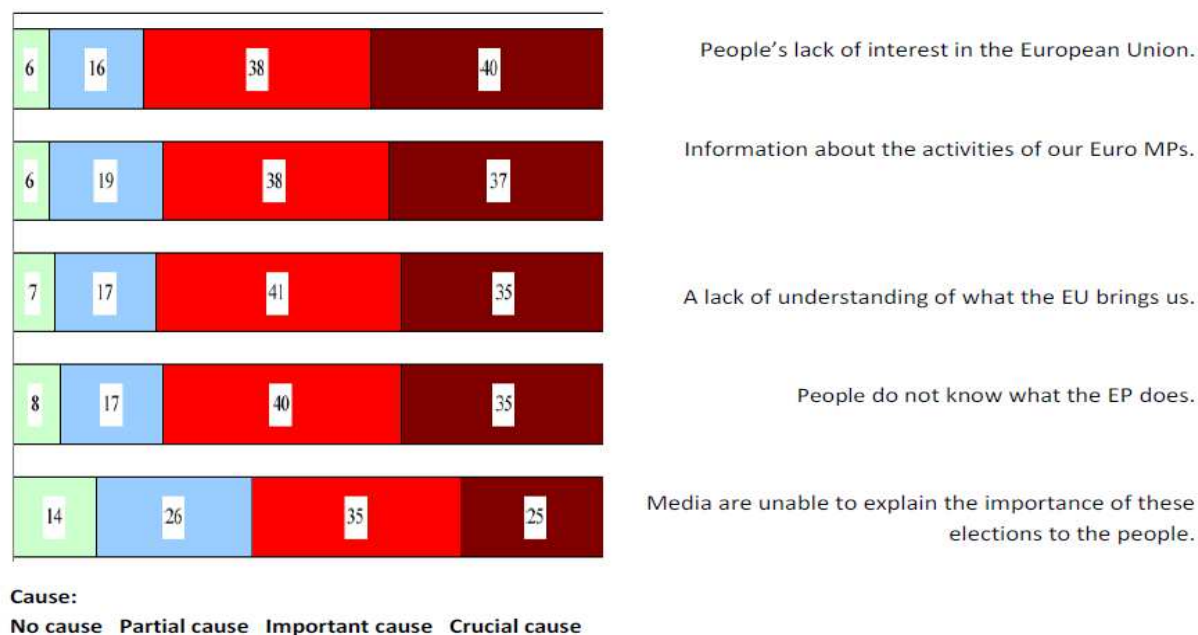
Turnout															
Country	seats	1979	1981	1984	1987	1989	1994	1995	1999	2004	2007	2009	2013	2014	
EU		61.99	-	58.98	-	58.41	56.67	-	49.51	45.47	-	43	-	43.09	
BE Belgie/Belgium		91.36		92.09		90.73	90.66		91.05	90.81		90.39		90.00	
DK Dánsko/Denmark		47.82		52.38		46.17	52.92		50.46	47.89		59.54		56.40	
DE Německo/Germany		65.73		56.76		62.28	60.02		45.19	43		43.27		47.90	
IE Irsko/Ireland		63.61		47.56		68.28	43.98		50.21	58.58		58.64		51.60	
FR Francie/France		60.71		56.72		48.8	52.71		46.76	42.76		40.63		43.50	
IT Itálie/Italy		85.65		82.47		81.07	73.6		69.76	71.72		65.05		60.00	
LU Lucembursko/Luxembourg		88.91		88.79		87.39	88.55		87.27	91.35		90.76		90.00	
NL Nizozemsko/Netherlands		58.12		50.88		47.48	35.69		30.02	39.26		36.75		37.00	
UK Spojené království/Great Britain		32.35		32.57		36.37	36.43		24	38.52		34.7		36.00	
EL Řecko/Greece			81.48	80.59		80.03	73.18		70.25	63.22		52.61		58.20	
ES Španělsko/Spain					68.52	54.71	59.14		63.05	45.14		44.87		45.90	
PT Portugalsko/Portugal					72.42	51.1	35.54		39.93	38.6		36.77		34.50	
SE Švédsko/Sweden								41.63	38.84	37.85		45.53		48.80	
AT Rakousko/Austria									49.4	42.43		45.97		45.70	
FI Finsko/Finland									30.14	39.43		38.6		40.90	
CZ Česká republika/Czechia	21									28.3		28.22		19.50	
EE Estonsko/Estonia	6									26.83		43.9		36.44	
CY Kypri/Cyprus										72.5		59.4		43.97	
LT Litva/Latvia	11									48.38		20.98		44.91	
LV Lotyšsko/Lithuania	8									41.34		53.7		30.4	
HU Maďarsko/Hungary	21									38.5		36.31		28.92	
MT Malta/Malta										82.39		78.79		74.81	
PL Polsko/Poland	51									20.87		24.53		22.70	
SI Slovinsko/Slovenia	8									28.35		28.37		20.96	
SK Slovensko/Slovakia	13									16.97		19.64		13.00	
BG Bulharsko/Bulgaria	17										29.22	38.99		35.50	
RO Rumunsko/Romania	32										29.47	27.67		32.16	
HR Chorvatsko/Croatia	11												20.84	25.6	

Before I set to looking for answers to why things ended up like that, a few words about the region of Central Europe. The four states I mentioned have much in common in their recent history and, as a result of that experience, share very similar social structures. Communist-type parties previously governed here, the countries were members of the Comecon and the Warsaw Pact. It is thus possible to expect that the political behaviour of these countries' citizens will be similar all in all. In a way, this is true. All states that share a communist or, to put it more accurately, socialist past, had below-average voter turnout in elections to the EP. At the beginning of June, company STEM (STEM, Trendy 6/2014) did a sociological survey of on voter turnout. The results are for the Czech Republic, but would doubtless have much in common with the other CE states. In brief, this is what was determined:

"The lowest voter turnout in the history of Czech Euro-elections was apparently caused by people's lack of interest in the European Union, accompanied by a lack of understanding of what the EU brings us. Another reason people did not participate in elections to the EP was that they did not understand what the institution does and had little information on the activities that their chosen EP representatives would carry out. Roughly one-half of those who refrained from voting were regular non-voters (who do not participate in the EP or any other elections); another third decided not to participate during the week before or on the day of the election."

The lowest voter turnout in the history of Czech Euro-elections was apparently caused by (in % answers of interviewees):

STEM, Trends 6/2014



Certain journalists and political scientists let it be heard that the reason for the lack of participation was opposition to “Europe”, patriotism or a failure to appreciate European democratic traditions. The exact results do not confirm this.

“The tendency to avoid the election to the EP was slightly higher among people of lower middle age (up to 44 years) and those with lower levels of education (people with basic or apprentice-level education account for 49% of the population and 56% of them did not vote; people with a college education account for 16% of the population and 11% of them did not vote). In terms of professions, nonparticipants more often tended to be blue-collar workers (labourers), or people without work, and those with a centrist political orientation.

The most common reaction of people to the result was that nonparticipation was the manifestation of our citizens’ lack of interest in the EU (for more than three quarters of people this was an important or fundamental factor). Another three opinions though were given to about the same extent: that people do not have sufficient information about the activities of our Euro MPs, that they do not understand what membership in the EU brings and that they do not know what the European Parliament does. More than a half of people believed that an important or fundamental factor in the low turnout was the media, which was unable to explain the importance of these elections to the people.

Two-thirds of the population were of the belief that people “not feeling like Europeans” had little or nothing to do with their not going to the polls.”

There is however one aspect that the survey did not analyse and that I would like to add. It does not apply only to the European elections. But in its own way it would explain the similar behaviour found in other former socialist countries. It’s about one’s inner relationship to democracy and the specific form that democracy takes in the post-communist era. In the years following that systemic change, formally democratic principles did indeed become a cornerstone of society; in practice though, emphasis was being placed on democratic rituals.

Dr Richard Dunphy

The left in the Republic of Ireland after the European Parliament elections of 2014: the rise of Sinn Féin and the political situation of the Marxist, or class-based, left

- To provide some context to the electoral and political success of Sinn Féin in the 2014 Irish elections;
- To offer some critical reflections on the short- and medium-term prospects for Sinn Féin, and to raise some concerns about that party's relationship to radical left politics;
- And to offer some critical commentary on the lesser, but still significant, political success of class-based, Marxist parties to the left of Sinn Féin.

Introduction

The Irish general election of 2011 was arguably the most significant parliamentary election in the history of the state – certainly the most significant since 1932. As is well known, that election witnessed the implosion of the hitherto all-dominant Fianna Fáil (henceforth FF) party, which had dominated the politics of Ireland since 1932. Founded in 1926, FF first entered government in 1932 and was in power for 60 of the next 79 years (until 2011), only once polling below 40% of the popular vote throughout the entire period and averaging 45%-46%. This record made it the most successful electoral machine in Western Europe. FF began life as a radical nationalist or republican party, with a strong populist appeal to both urban workers and small farmers. Many on the weak and unpopular Irish left held to the hope that it would prove to be a leftist party. But it quickly made its peace with capitalism and with the Catholic church and by the 1940s had become a conservative if pragmatic, catch-all Catholic nationalist party of the centre-right with a strong appeal to the small Irish bourgeoisie but also with a lingering populist and welfarist appeal to many Irish workers and small farmers. I mention this point now because many commentators have noted parallels with the appeal of Sinn Féin (henceforth SF) today; a point to which I will return.

FF was in government between 1997 and 2011 and claimed much of the credit for the years of Celtic Tiger boom. Its remarkable short-sightedness during the boom period – when it failed to invest or plan for the future and urged Irish people to spend, spend, spend – above all, on property – as if the boom would last forever – also mean that it took much of blame when the Irish economy nose-dived after 2008. When FF in government negotiated a bail-out of the corrupt Irish banking sector, accepting what were widely perceived as very unfavourable terms that were imposed by the Troika, its popularity collapsed. Wave after wave of crippling public spending cuts were imposed on the Irish people, including, for example, the ending of automatic entitlement to free medical care for pensioners over the age of 70 and huge reductions to public sector wages and pensions.

In the general election of 2011, its vote fell from 41.6% to 17.4% and its number of parliamentary seats from 77 to 20. This was defeat on then lines of that of PASOK in Greece although FF's roots in Ireland are arguably much deeper than those of PASOK and its recovery is already under way. Nor was 2011 to furnish Ireland with a Syriza moment. True, both the radical nationalists of SF, preaching a strong anti-austerity message, and the small Marxist left, preaching class politics, did well, polling 9.9% (with 14 seats) and 2.7% (with 5 seats) respectively. But the underlying conservatism of Irish voters showed itself in the fact

that the real victors in 2011 were the centre-right bourgeois Fine Gael (henceforth FG) party, which won 36.1% (and 76 seats) and its traditional coalition ally the centrist Labour Party, which won 19.4% (and 37 seats). Furthermore, non-party Independents won 12.7% and 14 seats, a hugely significant point to which I will return later.

Table 1: Summary of February 2011 Irish General Election results

Party	% of votes	Seats in Dáil	2009 %	2009 seats
FG	36.1	76	27.3	51
Labour	19.4	37	10.1	20
FF	17.4	20	41.6	77
SF	9.9	14	6.9	4
Marxist parties*	2.7	5	1.3	0
Greens	1.8	0	4.7	6
Independents	12.7	14	8.1	8
Total	100	166	100	166

*Socialist Party (1.2% - 2 seats), People Before Profit Alliance (1% - 2 seats), Unemployed Workers' Action Group (0.4% - 1 seat), Workers' Party (0.1% - 0 seats)

In the aftermath of these elections, a two-party coalition of FG and the Labour Party took office, commanding 103 of the 166 parliamentary seats, the biggest majority in the history of the state. The economic and social policies of FG were indistinguishable from those of FF and it quickly advocated acceptance of the Troika's demands and imposition of sweeping cuts in public expenditure and rises in taxes. Labour, which had contested the 2011 elections on a platform of rhetorical opposition to these policies – insisting that it would be 'either Labour's way or Frankfurt's way' – quickly accepted that it would be Frankfurt's way, if the party was to get into coalition government. Between 2011 and 2014 Labour has presided over policies of cuts after cuts, seeking support on the basis that things would be even worse if it was not in government and that it was ameliorating the cuts at least for the weakest. This message has been lost entirely on Irish voters who are acutely aware that the banks bail-out has cost the Irish tax payer 65 billion Euros to date, an average of 14,000 Euros per man, woman and child in Ireland. The FG/Labour coalition government between 2011 and 2014 accepted a Troika deal that has necessitated repeated cuts: cuts in spending on health and education and pensions; cuts to wages; increased charges on visits to doctors; the virtual wipe-out of all spending on social housing at a time of growing homelessness; cuts to spending on environmental protection and on promoting gender equality. Most controversial of all, perhaps, were new taxes on home ownership and on water consumption. The new water charges, which take effect in October 2014, will impose a cost of at least 240 Euros on each Irish household, although they are likely to rise to at least twice that according to experts. Irish households are being fitted with water meters to measure consumption at a rate of 75,000 households per month. The most Labour could claim was that it obtained a rebate for old age pensioners and that households without meters would be charged in the basis of the number of residents, not the size of the house.

The 2014 European elections and local government elections were held against the background of unprecedented public dissatisfaction with the ruling parties, with evidence above all of a complete collapse in support for Labour since its participation in government, above all a collapse in Labour's working-class support in Dublin and other urban areas. As in

many European countries, austerity was the big theme – the only real theme – of the elections.

The Campaign

As is well-known, elections to the European Parliament are often seen as ‘second order’ elections, in which little salience is given to European issues and voters are primarily motivated by reactions to the government in power. Given that the FG/Labour coalition government was half-way through its term in office, and that opinion polls suggested a catastrophic collapse in support for one of its components – Labour – this was always going to be the case in Ireland in 2014 also. Then again, insofar as austerity is a Europe-wide issue that has galvanised opinion against the current direction of EU policy, one might argue that the salience given to austerity made the 2014 European elections the most European yet held in Ireland (as perhaps elsewhere). In Ireland, unlike elsewhere, turn-out was boosted to a respectable 52.4% by holding the elections on the same day as local elections.

Austerity and opposition to austerity may have been the only real theme of the 2014 elections in Ireland, but the theme was played out in different ways. Nationalist and sovereigntist themes featured prominently – for example, in the repeated calls by the maverick libertarian Independent candidate, Luke ‘Ming’ Flanagan, who topped the poll in the traditionally rural, Catholic and conservative Midlands/North West Euro-constituency, for Ireland to leave the EU altogether. (Flanagan, a maverick best known hitherto for his campaign for the legalisation of marijuana, would on election join the GUE/NGL Confederal group in the EP). The small Marxist parties also advocated Ireland’s withdrawal from the EU, but on the grounds of its capitalist nature; their campaigns focussed strongly on economic, social, gender, environmental and class issues. SF, rejecting calls for EU withdrawal and calling for reform of the EU from within to make it more of a confederation of sovereign nation-states, combined nationalist and social equality themes in its attack on austerity.

The ‘bourgeois’ parties

Fine Gael, the dominant party in government and a Christian Democrat party allied to the European Peoples’ Party, campaigned on the basis of its ‘courage’ in providing strong government and in implementing the ‘necessary’ austerity measures to revive the Irish economy. It sought to appeal to the solid core of bourgeois and petty bourgeois support that it retains. It claimed that Ireland’s official exit from the Troika regime in December 2013 proved that the cuts had been worthwhile and that the country was moving in the right direction. Fianna Fáil, also on the centre-right and a populist nationalist party (although somewhat incongruously allied to ALDE in the European Parliament), was in no position to mount a convincing attack on the current government’s record, having negotiated the deal with the Troika and implemented the expensive bail-out of the banks when it was in office. The most it could hope for was that centrist and centre-right voters who were disillusioned with the current government, but lacked any other home to migrate to, would return to it in sufficient numbers to generate a steady if slow recovery. Nevertheless, it remained ‘contaminated’ in the eyes of many of those who used to support it. Many of its nationalist and working-class voters have switched to SF or Independent (non-party, generally populist or localist) candidates. Labour was reduced to arguing that Government cuts and austerity programmes would have been worse without it.

The left and Sinn Féin

The Irish left has always been weak – electorally, ideologically and organisationally. Until the 1980s, there was never much of a class-based or Marxist left in the Republic of Ireland and most Irish left-wing groups and parties struggled to come to terms with the appeal and legacy of militant, radical nationalism (known in the Irish context as republicanism). Whether republicans – even those who describe themselves as ‘left republicans’ (and by no means all republicans do so) – who seek to mobilise people on the grounds of national identity, rather than class identity for example, and opposition to the link between Northern Ireland and Great Britain, rather than class solidarity – are part of the Irish left has always been a bone of contention. Some Irish socialists accept left republicans as a force for progressive change. Some argue that they seek only to manipulate social issues and workers’ grievances to gain support for a nationalist and reactionary agenda. Given the rise in support for SF in recent years, this is a central issue. If one accepts SF’s claims to be a left party, and of republicanism (or radical nationalism) to be a left ideology then by definition, the Irish left is nationalist and republican – since SF outnumber everyone else put together. However, if one defines the radical left in terms of a class-based ideology and distrusts radical nationalism, then one obvious conclusion is that the Irish left is more differentiated internally, and the political outlook for the left in Ireland more complicated than the rise of SF might imply.

Until the recent agitation against Troika-imposed austerity, the most successful class-based Marxist party in the republic of Ireland was undoubtedly the Workers’ Party during the 1980s. Although it grew out of the SF movement, the Workers’ Party effectively abandoned republicanism as a bourgeois ideology and developed into a Marxist-Leninist party along pro-Soviet lines. In effect, Ireland’s communist party. It built up a solid block of local and disciplined activists and reached 7.5% of the national vote in 1989, winning seven seats in the Irish parliament and 1 seat in the European Parliament. However, the Workers’ Party split and declined in the wake of the collapse of the USSR. A pro-Gorbachev, or pro-Eurocommunist, majority formed a new party, Democratic Left, which failed to achieve much success and merged with the Labour Party in 1999. A hard-line Marxist-Leninist minority continued as the Workers’ Party – and still does so, to this day. It is allied to the KKE, for example. But it has ceased to be of any electoral significance.

Nevertheless, agitation against austerity since 2008 has seen the re-emergence of a Marxist, class-based left of some electoral significance – above all in Dublin, which is exactly where the Workers’ Party has its greatest successes in the 1980s. This time, it is parties of a Trotskyist (not a pro-Soviet) orientation that have tapped into this substantial reservoir of support for a non-nationalist, class-based radical left in Dublin at least. In the 2009 European Parliament elections, the small Socialist Party – a class-based Marxist party of Trotskyist inspiration – surprised many observers of Irish politics by scoring a real triumph in Dublin. Its popular leader, Joe Higgins, polled more than 12% of the first preferences in Dublin, winning a seat in the Dublin constituency (at the expense of Sinn Féin). He sat with the GUE/NGL group in the EP. Joe Higgins stood down in 2011 and his EP seat was defended in 2014 by the young party activist who replaced him, Paul Murphy. The 31-year old Murphy is much less well-known and faced competition from a rival Trotskyist-led group – the People Before Profit Alliance (PBPA) – which decided against supporting his candidacy, instead choosing to field the popular Dublin councillor, Brid Swirth, as its own candidate.

Both Marxist parties ran vigorous, class-based campaigns, emphasising the fight against water and housing taxes, poverty and unemployment, women’s rights and gay rights,

environmental issues, and class inequality and social injustice. They called for rent controls and a public or social house building programme; new taxes on the rich; and emphasised their fight for abortion rights in Ireland¹⁹. This message proved to have substantial appeal in Dublin, where the two Marxist parties polled around 13%. Although, the non-nationalist, class-based left only polled around 3.5% of the national vote, it achieved a solid core of local councillors, including some 17 councillors in Greater Dublin, which promises potential expansion in the future, a point to which I will return.

Without doubt, the most successful anti-austerity campaign was that run by SF. There is no doubt that SF makes no claim to be a Marxist party, with party leader, Gerry Adams, once famously declaring that 'there are no Marxists in Sinn Féin'. Nor does it usually describe itself as 'radical left' and even less so 'anti-capitalist'. It does, however, describe itself as 'left republican'. It has combined calls for defence of national sovereignty and the 'Irish national interest' against any increase in EU powers, with strident and consistent anti-austerity policies. This combination has proven attractive to many Irish voters. Indeed, given the nature of Irish political culture, it is perhaps an easier combination for many anti-austerity voters to identify with than the class-based political ideology of the smaller Marxist parties. The strongly nationalist theme was evident even in the title of the party manifesto, 'Putting Ireland First'.

SF ran a highly professional campaign, proving that it now has a solid core of several thousands of party cadres in the Republic of Ireland that it can rely on to get its message across to voters. Given its reputation for strong local activism and a strategy of deliberately embedding its activists in local community projects, the decision to hold the European elections on the same day as local government elections probably played in its favour and increased its ability to get its voters to turn out. In its campaign the party emphasised²⁰:

- Decent wages, an end to zero hours contracts, legislation to protect the right to strike, and the need for social progress clauses in EU Treaties;
- Opposition to proposed cuts in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), arguing instead for a 'well-funded CAP' to protect the interests of Irish farmers;
- Strong support for small and medium sized private businesses;
- Support for an EU-wide Convention to identify competencies to be returned to member states;
- Support for a reduction in the powers of the European Commission;
- Support for more MEPs from smaller member states, and for smaller member states to retain their right to one Commissioner each;
- A pledge that the party would campaign for EU funding to promote Irish reunification by supporting cross-border integration;
- Support for attempts to utilise the EU to put pressure on the British and Irish governments for a poll in Northern Ireland on Irish reunification;
- A demand for members of the Northern Ireland executive to participate in the Council of Ministers;
- A demand for upgraded recognition of the Irish language to create '180 jobs in the EU institutions for Irish language speakers for jobs such as interpreters, translators, lawyer-linguists'.

¹⁹ Socialist Party, 'We Can't Afford to Live: Shift the burden to the Super-Rich', European Election manifesto, Dublin, 2014. People Before profit Alliance, 'Vote Brid Swithh. Send a Working Class Fighter to the European Parliament', Dublin, 2014.

²⁰ All points taken from 'Putting Ireland First', the Sinn Féin EU Manifesto 2014, Dublin, 2014.

In short, SF, as might be expected, fought a strongly nationalist and republican campaign, opposed to further European integration, in favour of rolling back EU powers in favour of greater national sovereignty, but with specific policies aimed at urban workers, farmers and the petty bourgeoisie. Many of these proposals were rather vague, however, and arguably not that radical. The Manifesto is interesting for what it doesn't mention – no calls for an extension of public ownership, for example, and no mention of capitalism, or even neo-liberalism. In fact, there is probably nothing in the Manifesto's sections on social equality and workers' rights that the Labour Party won't happily echo, once it is back in opposition.

It is perhaps worth commentating that the SF manifesto never once mentioned such words as 'socialism', 'socialist', 'left', or 'left-wing' and – as in 2009 – was the only European manifesto of a major Irish political party which made no mention at all of its European Parliament grouping – in SF's case, of course, this is GUE-NGL.

The impact of the electoral system and political culture

Ireland utilises the Single Transferable Vote (STV) form of proportional representation for all elections, whereby voters rank candidates according to their personal preferences (first preference, second preference, third preference, etc.) regardless of party membership, and in multi-seat constituencies. Thus, in a 4-seat constituency, if a party fields 3 candidates in the hope of winning 2 or 3 seats, those candidates are forced to compete against each other, as well as candidates of rival parties, in order to secure a seat.

STV notoriously accentuates and exaggerates the impact of a number of prominent aspects of Irish political culture that have always worked against a traditionally weak Irish left. The first is a marked tendency towards Personalism – the fact that many Irish voters cast their votes on the basis of the perceived personal qualities of candidates rather than the attractiveness of party programmes or party loyalty (let alone ideological cohesion). The personalisation of Irish politics – the strong emphasis on colourful, extrovert personalities over the ideologically-committed – poses particular challenges for a radical left party in Ireland. To succeed, a party must choose candidates who have strong personalised appeal; but these candidates, in turn, can be difficult to control or manage, when elected. Often, they know perfectly well that, once elected, they stand a good chance of being re-elected – as Independents – provided they maintain their personal following, regardless of the appeal of the party to which they belong.

The second is a marked tendency towards Localism – a preference for candidates with strong local roots in one's immediate community over those who might be better qualified but lack local ties. Most Irish members of parliament, and indeed MEPs, remain active in local politics, realising that a local council seat can be the key to survival in Irish politics. The strong emphasis on localism can mean that petty geographical rivalries for resources undermine attempts at promoting class or gender solidarity, for example, and thus has a further deradicalising effect on anti-establishment parties. Localism also diverts energy that might be better spent on strategic planning and party and policy development into such activities as maintaining loyal local followings amongst voters through acts of petty clientelism.

The third is that STV, by forcing candidates to compete against members of their own parties as well as rival parties, can encourage fissile tendencies in Irish parties and a tendency towards factionalism. The only counter-balance to these tendencies that are encouraged by the electoral system and Irish political culture is to maintain strong internal party discipline.

Unfortunately, in the Irish context, the only parties that have ever managed this are those that grew out of the quasi-paramilitary tradition of SF/IRA. For example, when Eamon De Valera, the undisputed giant of 20th century Irish politics – he served 21 years as Prime Minister and 14 years as president – founded his FF party in 1926, he did so by converting many military units of the old IRA into new FF party branches, insisting on the same unquestioning obedience to authority and leadership that IRA volunteers had shown during the war of Independence (1918-20) and subsequent civil war (1921-23). The Workers' Party in the 1980s achieved a strong degree of party discipline, which allowed it briefly to flourish; but it, too, grew out of the left-wing Official IRA/Official SF, which split from Gerry Adams' Provisional SF in 1969/70. And, of course, the current SF, led by Adams, has a huge advantage over smaller parties on the radical left, not to mention the labour and Green parties, in that its recent emergence from under the wings of the paramilitary structures of the IRA mean that its internal life is notoriously characterised by strong discipline, lack of criticism of the leadership and lack of internal democracy. All of which are 'useful' in allowing it to transcend the fissile tendencies encouraged by the electoral system but may create further problems in the future (see below).

The emphasis on personality, on localism, on defying party discipline in order to win more votes than other candidates from one's own party – all of these tendencies, taken to their logical conclusion, can result in the abandonment of party altogether and the proliferation of a confusing array on Independent candidates and politicians. STV means, after all, that a voter can cast their first preference for an individual Independent candidate whom they admire, and then cast their second preference for the party they feel closest to. It encourages Independent voting. Many of these Independents are in reality former members of parties who have deliberately excluded themselves or provoked expulsion from their parties because they know that standing up against the central party leadership, in defence of local interests, will make them local heroes and guarantee their re-election. Some of them are radical left-wingers who see no advantage to joining a party as they are more likely to be elected as Independents. But, of course, this arguably weakens the emergence of a radical left alternative in Ireland. Ireland has always had more independent members of parliament than most European democracies. However, in the wake of the 2014 elections, the challenge that Independents pose to the very existence of a party-based democracy has never been higher – and is likely to grow. In the 2011 general election, 14 members of the Irish parliament (out of a total of 166) were elected. By 2014, with defections from both government parties to the ranks of Independents, this had risen to 20. In the 2014 European elections, 3 Independent MEPs (out of a total of 11) were elected. With weeks, FF's only MEP, Brian Crawley, had been expelled from the party and had chosen to sit as an Independent, boosting this number to 4. More than 20% of all local government elected representatives are now Independents (see table 3), and some commentators predict that, on current trends, there could be up to 30 or even 35 Independent parliamentary deputies after the next (2016) general election. It cannot be over-stated, in my view, how debilitating this atomisation of politics is to attempts to forge a coherent radical left alternative.

STV also necessitates good vote management strategies on the part of Irish parties. Success in winning seats often depends not only on the number of first preferences won; sometimes, even more important, is an ability to win second, third and subsequent vote transfers from candidates of other parties. In 2009 European Parliament elections, the small Socialist Party fielded only one candidate – the popular, widely-admired and respected Joe Higgins in Dublin. He has many years of long, hard struggle on behalf of the Dublin working-class

communities under his belt. Although his vote in Dublin averaged out as only 2.7% of the national vote, combined with strong transfers from other candidates it was enough to secure his election. By contrast, SF polled more than 11% of the national vote in 2009, but this vote was pretty evenly spread throughout the country and the inability of SF to attract sufficient transfers from other parties meant that it failed to win any seats – losing its Dublin MEP to the Socialist Party. These conditions did not hold in 2014. First, Higgins stood down as MEP in 2011 and his replacement – the young and relatively unknown Paul Murphy – had nothing like the charisma or personal appeal of Higgins. Second, the rival Marxist party – People Before Profit Alliance – scorned SP appeals to support Murphy and fielded a European candidate of its own in the form of popular local government councillor Brid Swithh. Its thinking seemed to be that because Swithh was a popular local councillor, she was more likely to take the Marxist seat in Dublin than Murphy was. In the event, their rivalry cost them both dearly and the seat was lost, proving that effective vote management is extremely important for small and radical parties. Third, SF increased its vote markedly since 2009. That party had chosen young candidates in the Republic of Ireland, unconnected in voters' eyes with its paramilitary past (unlike in Northern Ireland where its candidate was a convicted former IRA prisoner). SF's candidates in the Republic of Ireland projected an image of youth, modernity and moderation²¹. This proved a wise and successful strategy which allowed SF to be much more successful in 2014 than it has ever been before in attracting transfer votes from other parties.

The results

Elections to the European Parliament in the Republic of Ireland were held on Friday 23rd May, on the same day as local government (regional) elections and two national parliamentary bye-elections. This fact helped to boost voter turn-out over what it might otherwise have been.

One of the parliamentary bye-elections was won by the governing FG party (holding what was, in effect, a fairly safe party seat). The Socialist Party, however, scored a spectacular success in the Dublin West bye-election. Its candidate, Ruth Coppinger, who had a very high local profile, polled over 20% of the first preference votes and won the seat, defeating strong challenges from both Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin. This vote shows that, with a candidate with strong local roots, there remains strong potential bedrock of support for a Marxist class-based politics, as opposed to the left radical nationalism of Sinn Féin, in Dublin at least.

The main outcomes of the 2014 European elections in the Republic of Ireland (see Table 2) can be summarised as follows:

- An enormous success by non-party Independents (19.8%), who actually polled more votes than SF and were the biggest success story of these elections
- A spectacularly good performance by SF, which polled an unprecedented 19.5% of the total first preference votes and won 3 MEPs
- A slight increase in the non-nationalist Marxist vote from 2.7% to 3.5%, despite losing the only Marxist MEP
- A disastrous collapse by the Irish Labour party

²¹ Nevertheless, they remained inculcated with the party's sense of strong discipline, cult of leadership and unquestioning submission to party central control. Moreover, all three MEPs elected for SF in the Republic were full-time party employees – on the party payroll – before being selected as candidates and are tied to the party by a promise to hand over their MEPs' salary in return for a party wage.

- The two bourgeois parties, FF and FG, polled exactly 22.3% each, which was slightly disappointing for FG and mildly encouraging for FF; however, their combined share of the vote is the lowest it has ever been in the history of the state.

Table 2: Elections to the European Parliament in the Republic of Ireland -2014. Total turnout was 52.4%

Party	Leader	EP group	ideology	Total votes (First Preference)	2014 %	2009 %	2014 seats	2009 seats
Fine Gael	Enda Kenny	EPP	Centre-right	369,120	22.3	29.1	4	4
Fianna Fáil	Micheál Martin	ALDE	Centre-right populist	369,535	22.3	24.1	2	3
Labour Party	Eamon Gilmore	S&D	Centre-left	88,229	5.3	13.9	0	3
Socialist Party	Collective leadership	GUE/NGL	Marxist (Trotskyist)	29,953	1.8	2.7	0	1
Sinn Féin	Gerry Adams	GUE/NGL	Radical Nationalist/ anti-austerity	323,300	19.5	11.2	3	0
Green Party	Eamon Ryan	Greens/ EFA	ecologist	81,458	4.9	1.9	0	0
People Before profit Alliance	Collective leadership	No elected	Marxist-led (Trotskyist)	23,875	1.5	n/a	0	0
Catholic Democrats	Nora Bennis	?	Ultra-conservative	13,569	0.8	n/a	0	0
Direct Democracy Ireland	Jan Van de Ven	?	"neither left nor right"; populist	24,093	1.5	n/a	0	0
Fís Nua	None	Probably Greens/ EFA	Green party splinter group	4610	0.3	n/a	0	0
Independents		various	various	328,766	19.8	11.5	2	1
(Others in 2009)						5.6		
Total				1,656,518	100	100	11	12

These results were more or less mirrored by the results of the local government elections (see Table 3).

Table 3: Local Government elections in the Republic of Ireland, 2014

Party	Seats won	Change from previous	% of first preference votes	Change from previous
FF	267	+49	25.3	+0.3
FG	235	-105	24.0	-10.7
SF	158	+105	15.2	+7.4
Labour	51	-81	7.2	-7.0
Greens	12	+9	1.6	+0.5
Marxist parties*	31	+19	3.4	+1.2
Other parties	2	No change	0.7	+0.5
Independents	193	+71	22.6	+7.6
Total	949		100	

*Socialist Party (1.2% and 14 seats), People Before Profits Alliance (1.7% and 14 seats), Unemployed Workers' Action Group (0.1 and 1 seat), Workers' Party (0.2% and 1 seat), United Left (0.2% and 1 seat)

Given the tendency for opposition parties to benefit from a tendency to use European elections to register a protest vote against the party (or parties in power), and given the intensely local nature of politics in Ireland, the local elections are perhaps a better guide to the true state of politics in Ireland in 2014 than the European elections. As can be seen, SF did not do as well in terms of votes in the local elections, but still had a very successful performance. The Marxist parties polled the same share of the votes in both sets of elections, but make some in-roads in the local elections, increasing their seats from 12 to 31. Non-party Independents did even better in local elections (as might be expected).

The non-nationalist Marxist left

In the European elections, the two Marxist candidates in Dublin polled around 13% of the first preference votes. This is an impressive vote. But, because the vote was split evenly between them, and they did not successfully overcome their dogmatic rivalries to the extent of organising large-scale transfers of later preferences votes to each other, they fatally damaged the chances of either winning Higgins' 2009 seat. The seat was lost – in effect, to SF. As noted, the Socialist Party did win the Dublin West bye-election for the national parliament, meaning that there are now 6 parliamentary deputies from the non-nationalist Marxist left in the Irish national parliament (the Dáil). But, the endless splits and fissile tendencies encouraged by the STV electoral system and Irish political culture mean that these 6 Marxists are now divided into no less than 4 political parties: Joe Higgins and Ruth Coppinger (Socialist Party), Clare Daly and Joan Collins (United Left), Richard Boyd Barrett (People before Profit Alliance), and Séamus Healy (Workers' Unemployed Action Group). In addition, there are perhaps another 6 or so parliamentary deputies that might be considered Marxist or socialist – or, at any rate, are certainly to the left of SF. These include John Halligan and Catherine Murphy (both former members of the Workers' Party), and Thomas Pringle (who resigned from SF accusing it of a lack of internal democracy and of being insufficiently left-wing) and possibly Finian McGrath (whose slightly maverick views include outspoken support for the Cuban government and who might possibly be described as an Irish *Fidelista*).

In the local elections, the non-nationalist Marxist left won at least 31 seats. (I say 'at least', because it is quite possible, indeed likely, that a small but as yet unquantifiable number of the Independent councillors elected share their broad political outlook). The success was greatest in the four councils that form the complex local government structure in Greater Dublin. Here, the Marxist left won no less than 17 councillors, which represents a solid base in the capital city. Moreover, its share of the vote in each of the four councils that make up Greater Dublin was between 10% and 12%. Given the importance of local roots and well-known local activists to success in national (and indeed, European) elections, this represents a good basis upon which to plan for future success.

Yet, the non-nationalist Marxist left faces formidable problems in Ireland, even if the future presents it with dramatic opportunities for expansion, above all if SF enters coalition government in 2016 and moves to the centre as part of the compromises involved in coalition-building (see below). I would single out three problems, in particular. First, its various small factions and individual Independents have, to date, proven singularly and somewhat spectacularly unable to overcome their sectarian and dogmatic rivalries (as well as personal rivalries and personal bitterness) and the chances of their overcoming the tendencies towards fragmentation and atomisation in order to build a credible radical left party that could exploit the opportunities for growth are minimal. Second, neither individually nor collectively do any of the groups present on the Marxist left possess anything like the numbers necessary to sustain the sort of grass roots, community, local activism that is the secret to success in Irish politics. All of the groups and parties taken together probably amount to no more than several hundred activists. (SF, by contrast, can probably draw upon around 3000 activists in the Republic of Ireland). Third, despite genuine and courageous support for abortion rights and gay rights, for example, many of those on the Marxist left remain comititted with Trotskyist fervour to a dogmatic interpretation of socialism that has not always proven conducive to electoral or organisational expansion, shall we say?

Sinn Féin

The outcome of the 2014 European elections left SF in a position to present itself as the voice of the Irish left in Europe and the main electoral success story. Without doubt, SF has benefitted most from the anti-austerity backlash (after the Independents, of course). Its radical nationalism has enabled it to draw support from Fianna Fáil while its leftist rhetoric and anti-austerity message has proven attractive to former Labour voters. Its share of the votes in 2014 European election was 19.5%, compared to 11.2% in 2009. It won 3 seats as opposed to none in 2009. Despite polling significantly less in the local elections (15.4%), it still scored a huge success, trebling its number of local councillors from 53 to 158. This provides a very strong base upon which to build for further parliamentary success at the 2016 general election. And it is on that election that SF's attention is now focussed.

The short-to-medium term prospects for both Sinn Féin and the non-nationalist Marxist left

The non-nationalist Marxist left has established a small but significant base, especially in Dublin, upon which it can hope to build for further political and electoral success. Hard-working local councillors is the secret to success at a future general election in Irish politics; and the Marxist left now has a core of these councillors. It can realistically hope to hold the six seats it has at the 2016 general election and perhaps add a few more. However, it faces formidable obstacles. First and foremost, dogmatism and political sectarianism mean that

the Marxist left is crippled by internal (often heavily personalised) rivalries that sap energy and undermine effective electoral strategy – vote transfer strategy under STV. The various small parties are unable to work effectively together, let alone with anyone else. Irish parliamentary law requires a party to have a minimum of seven deputies before it is recognised as a full parliamentary group with rights of membership on all-party parliamentary committees, etc., and access to additional state funding. At present, the 6 Marxist deputies – divided into 4 parties - sit with Independents as part of a Technical group. Even if their numbers were to grow, it is unlikely that any single one of them would reach the magic number of 7 deputies required to make a real impact, or that they will reach sufficient agreement and convergence to join together to create a lasting alliance. Future cooperation with SF is also a problem. Whilst it is possible at local government level, this may become strained as SF focuses its attention on entering coalition government by 2016, probably with Fianna Fáil. Ironically, it is the compromises and rightwards move that government participation would inevitably impose on SF that might afford the Marxist left its best chance of expansion.

SF certainly emerges from the 2014 elections greatly strengthened politically and electorally, but also faces novel challenges now. On the basis of its performance, above all in the local elections, commentators predict that it is likely to make gains in perhaps 15 constituencies at the 2016 general election, bringing its total of parliamentary deputies to 28 or 29 out of what will then be a total of 158 (reduced from 166). At that point, it becomes a central part of the parliamentary arithmetic in calculating the prospects for a new coalition government. Within days of the 2014 elections, Gerry Adams was indicating that SF would like to participate in government from 2016. Indeed, it is now central to party strategy that it enters government both north and south of the Irish border in 2016, the centenary of the Easter 1916 Rising. SF believes that it can present this to its supporters as tangible evidence of progress towards a united Ireland. Since 2007, SF has of course participated in coalition government in Northern Ireland with its once-derided Unionist enemies. The price for such coalition has been the down-playing in practice of rhetorical opposition to neo-liberalism in favour of implementation of privatisations, hospital closures, public-private finance initiatives in the public sector, etc. In short, SF in government in the north has acted like any other centre-right or centre-left party in Europe that has chosen to work with neo-liberalism rather than go against the tide. One of the figures on the left of SF, Eoin Ó Broin, who has served as its director of European Affairs (and who is married to its new Dublin MEP, Lynn Boylan), had admitted that such redistributive and welfarist policies as it advocated in Northern Ireland remain within the 'same economic consensus on generating growth as the other parties'²². Yet, SF seems to think that if it can reach a position where it is in government in both Irish states, and a SF Minister for Agriculture in the north can sit down with a SF Minister for Agriculture in the south to plan for an all-Ireland agricultural policy, for example, that this is the way to achieve Irish unity by stealth. In this perspective, getting into government on both sides of the border becomes a radical nationalist/republican imperative, and overrides such concerns as its choice of coalition partners or the actual content of the policies implemented in government – as long as they are all-Ireland policies. Gerry Adams indicated to a special conference of his party on 21 and 22 June 2014 that he hopes SF will be ready to enter government in 2016: 'For our part Sinn Féin needs to be ready for government in this State on our terms, agree our policy priorities and political platform. Our commitments need to be deliverable. We are ambitious for change and

²² Ó Broin, *Sinn Féin and the Politics of Left Republicanism* (London, 2009), p.301.

believe we can deliver on jobs, housing and health.²³ Interviewed on Irish radio shortly afterwards, he indicated that the one core principle that SF would not compromise on as part of coalition deals was 'a strategic plan for Irish unity'²⁴. Any coalition of which SF was a part would have to be committed to pressurising the UK government into holding a new referendum on Irish unity. However, radical economic and social policies, such as a new wealth tax on anyone earning over 100,000 Euros, would evidently not be a stumbling block to coalition compromises as he indicated that SF had not yet settled on such a tax and that it would be the subject of internal discussions. Many on the left of SF, though reluctant to voice any criticism of the leadership, are concerned that a move towards the centre on economic policies may be the price they are willing to pay for a coalition with Fianna Fáil. Eoin Ó Broin, for example, would prefer a coalition with Labour, the Greens and smaller socialist parties. The problem for this approach is that neither Labour nor the Greens trust SF or are willing to contemplate any sort of alliance. And, in any case, the numbers (in terms of parliamentary seats) do not stack up. The party leadership probably now see a coalition with the centre-right Fianna Fáil party as more realistic. At any rate, this strategy may lead to a down-playing of radical policies and left-wing rhetoric in the next few years and an emphasis on economic policies that are at best Keynesian and perhaps not as radical as that.

This has happened before. Frampton²⁵ talks of how Gerry Adams moved the party towards the centre in the late 1990s, reassuring the business community that SF was 'business-friendly', urging multinationals to play a role in stimulating growth, and telling the Dublin Chamber of Commerce in 2004 that SF had no plans to raise taxes. Ó Broin admits that pursuit of coalition with Fianna Fáil led to the abandonment of 'left' policies in 2007 when SF made an economic U-turn on fiscal policy; it supported low taxes, offered no meaningful job creation or public finances policy and abandoned wealth/tax redistributive policies a week before polling day. He argues that such a stand alienated left-wing voters and contributed to a poor electoral result in 2007.²⁶ He claims that a post-election internal review left many dissatisfied because ideological and strategic issues were left unaddressed. The Party's relaunch 'in September 2007, under the heading Engaging Modern Ireland, contained a mixture of common sense and political spin, but again avoided engagement with the more substantive issues that lay behind the electoral disappointment'.²⁷

Naturally, the collapse of the Irish economy since 2008 with the exposure of massive corruption in the banking and finance sectors and the imposition of harsh financial measures by the European Central Bank and others, has afforded greater opportunity for anti-establishment and anti-austerity rhetoric, above all insofar as the financial constraints imposed on Irish governments can be seen as a violation of national sovereignty. But the SF leadership may now, post-2014, seek to restrain any really radical 'left turn' that could jeopardise its hopes for participation in coalition government in the south.

Given that SF has always been a nationalist and republican, first and foremost, rather than a socialist or left party, the sacrificing of social radicalism for the perceived advancement of nationalist objectives is not surprising. But, even so, it will provoke unease, unrest and possibly dissent within SF ranks. Many of the more left-wing members of the party will find a

²³ Quoted in Harry McGee, 'SF prepares for government where compromises await', *The Irish Times*, Monday June 23 2014.

²⁴ Quoted in John A. Murphy, 'Why we should be wary of SF in government', *The Irish Times*, Tuesday July 8, 2014.

²⁵ Martyn Frampton, *The Long March: The Political Strategy of Sinn Féin, 1981-2007* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp.141-3.

²⁶ Ó Broin, 2009, p.242.

²⁷ Ó Broin, 2009, p.283.

move towards the centre and the compromises that coalition with Fianna Fáil will undoubtedly impose very difficult to stomach. Indeed, participation in such a coalition government after 2016 might well lead to a significant loss of votes and members, above all in Dublin. This would create opportunities for the non-nationalist Marxist left of course. But it is also true that some, in the political mainstream, see the early involvement of SF in coalition government as a way of neutering SF radicalism and defusing anti-austerity agitation. One Fianna Fáil parliamentary deputy told the present author, 'the sooner we involve them in government, the sooner they become like everyone else and lose their radical chic'.²⁸

Face with greater internal debate and dissent, the question of whether the SF leadership will open up and legitimise greater party democracy, or rely on its own brand of authoritarian democratic centralism to maintain rigid control of the party, becomes more pressing. The authoritarian party culture of SF has attracted much critical comment from former members, journalists and political commentators alike. The Spanish political commentator Rogelio Alonso, who has written an extremely well-informed book on Irish republicanism based on interviews with numerous SF and IRA insiders, points out, that the party leadership has constantly blocked off political alternatives, branding those opposed to the leadership's strategy as 'anti-republican' and 'enemies of the peace process'. Anyone who has dared to question the leadership line has risked being isolated within the close-knit republican neighbourhoods of Belfast and elsewhere, ostracised and even subjected to pickets of their homes.²⁹ Internal repression has on occasion been used: the IRA, for example, threatened to shoot former member and hunger striker John Nixon because he was going to stand as an independent candidate in elections against Sinn Féin.³⁰ A long line of SF members who have argued for a more socially radical or anti-neo-liberal stance – for example, the Donegal county councillor Thomas Pringle (now an independent parliamentary deputy) or the Member of the Legislative Assembly of Northern Ireland, John Kelly³¹, have been forced to leave the party. The leadership cult has helped maintain organisational unity and discipline, but at the price of the political underdevelopment of SF as a party. Another of those forced out, County Down councillor, Martin Cunningham, declared that SF had come to represent 'dictatorship, just dictatorship ... anybody who disagrees with the party is sent on their way – quite a few republicans have gone and what have they been replaced with? It is not a democratic party.'³²

Even Eoin Ó Broin³³, has admitted that the party inherited an organisational model that is 'highly centralised in its distribution of power and vertical in its structure of command.' It places excessive emphasis on discipline and loyalty rather than debate and internal democracy. However, Ó Broin disingenuously claims that these qualities are shared with other left parties. That is not true at all of Green left, 'new left', and democratic socialist parties, nor parties such as the Italian *Rifondazione Comunista* that are close to the social movements. It is truest of those hard-line communist parties from which SF is most ideologically distant. (And, of course, of far right parties).

It is likely that SF will come under pressure from within to change its political culture and allow greater internal debate and democracy. Given the emergence of a new generation of

²⁸ Author's interview with FF parliamentary deputy who requested anonymously, Dublin, 28 June 2014.

²⁹ Rogelio Alonso, *The IRA and Armed Struggle* (London, 2007), p.126.

³⁰ Alonso, op. cit., pp. 135-6.

³¹ Mentioned in Martyn Frampton, *The Long March: The Political Strategy of Sinn Féin, 1981-2007* (Basingstoke, 2009), p.144.

³² Quoted in Frampton, 2009, op. cit., p.117.

³³ Eoin Ó Broin, *Sinn Féin and the Politics of Left Republicanism* (London, 2009), p.304 passim.

young local government councillors and MEPs - and, presumably, after the next general election, parliamentary deputies also - it seems likely that this new generation will demand a full say in determining the future direction of the party. This is particularly so as the generation whose leadership was legitimised by long involvement in the armed struggle in Northern Ireland – Adams, McGuinness, etc., begins to age and fade from the scene. Greater internal democracy may be desirable, and even essential, but it also carries risks of succumbing to the fissile tendencies that afflict most Irish political parties. There may a temptation to ‘manage’ any rightwards move that coalition government participation involves by strengthening central control, even if this frustrates the hopes of some for greater internal democracy.

Finally, another challenge that SF may well increasingly face in the years ahead as it becomes more and more part of the Irish political mainstream and gears up for possible government participation is its failure, or rather refusal, to come to terms at the ideological and moral levels with the legacy of the 30-year long armed struggle or terrorist campaign. Neither SF nor the IRA have ever apologised for the huge sufferings and waste of lives, property and political opportunities that the armed struggle involved. When convenient, SF distances itself from the more unpalatable episodes by maintaining the fiction that SF and the IRA are separate organisations. In reality, most of the time, the party is happy to celebrate and glorify the armed struggle in marches and parades, books and posters, tee-shirts and music. The myths that the IRA is an ‘undefeated army’ and that terrorism was fully justified in the past are constantly repeated. The justification offered by SF officials for the abandonment of armed struggle in favour of the peace process is that it is simply a change in tactics. Ó Broin, for example, repeats constantly the claim that the armed struggle was ‘merely a question of tactics’, and that its abandonment represented no repudiation of principle³⁴. Apart from the fact that this is simply dishonest – the armed struggle was no mere tactic for Republicans, but their guiding principle, their *raison d’être* for many years – it raises some serious questions. If armed struggle was a tactic, is commitment to the peace process also a tactic? If armed struggle was ‘justified’ in the past, could it also be deemed justified in the future? And if nothing fundamental has changed in the party’s republicanism beyond a switch in tactics, what is to say that SF/IRA will not switch back to armed struggle/terrorism in the future if peaceful, democratic politics do not seem to be delivering the movement’s goals? Can a party that lives with such ambiguity be considered either democratic or socialist? It is precisely this issue that has led the Labour Party to emphatically rule out any possibility of cooperation with SF.

³⁴ Interview with Eoin Ó Broin, Dublin, 16 June 2010.

Inego Gregory Mauze

2014 General elections: Respite for the « Belgian Compromise »,

Kind of elections : Federal, regional and European.

Voting system : proportional with preferential votes.

Threshold: 5%

Compulsory voting : Yes.

A Landslide victory of the Flemish-pro-independence voting was expected. It's actually with its concentration on the N-VA (« New-Flemish Alliance », right-wing nationalism), at the expense of *Vlaams Belang* ("Flemish interest », far right nationalism), that traditional parties, remained stable, will have to deal with. The marginal shift to the right of the French-speaking Belgium doesn't have to obscure the major political fact that implies the arrival of members from the radical left in federal, Brussels and Wallonia's parliaments.

Pre-election context

For the main *political families**³⁵ of the country, the triple vote of the 25th may 2014 was dangerous. The tension was especially high for the six parties ruling at federal level: during all the term, the coalition of Social-democrats, Christian-democrats and liberals was confronted to radically different critics depending on *linguistic communities**.

Flanders: contestation of the Belgian social model.

In the Northern part of the country, CD&V (Christian democracy), Open VLD (center-right liberalism) and SP.a (Social-democracy) were confronted to heavy attacks of N-VA, which already relegated them to historically low results in 2010, becoming the first party of the country. Indeed, after the longest political crisis of the country's history, those parties undertook a reform of the Belgian federalism – considered as largely insufficient by the N-VA that claims massive transfers of sovereignty from federal to federated entities and demands the end of financial solidarity between Flanders and Wallonia. Furthermore, the outgoing majority, which is in minority in the Flemish-speaking parliamentary group, is led by the French-speaker Elio Di Rupo, whose party (PS - social-democracy) is heavily rejected by the nationalists. Many reasons that allow for the N-VA to present itself as the only real representative of Flemish interests.

N-VA, which successfully brings together nationalist claims and openly neoliberal agenda, did not fail to recall its deep frustration regarding socio-economical action of outgoing government. The austerity measure of 22 billion € in two and a half years (mainly by cuts in expenses) was clearly not enough for the party, which wants substantial cuts in social security. Relaying the demands of Flemish employers' unions, Flemish nationalists want important neoliberal reforms, especially concerning the labor market. In addition, the anti-trade-unionism of N-VA has increased during the campaign. This reflects a will to challenge the social organization in *pillars** that provides to trade-unions (mainly the Christian and socialist ones) an important power and grants them political connections. This polarization between the « PS's model » and the « N-VA model» foresees big challenges for center-left parties (SP.a and ecologist of *Groen!*) that didn't even get a fifth of the 2010 votes.

³⁵ Terms with an asterisk refer to the glossary at the end of this paper.

Brussels and Wallonia: PS challenged on its left.

In French-speaking Belgium (Wallonia and Brussels), on the contrary, it's on its left that the government experienced its biggest threat. In the front line the PS whose successive concessions made for the right wing of the coalition show their addiction to power according to its opponents. The reform delaying the pre-retirement age, the creation of the digression of unemployment allowances or the ratification of the European Fiscal Compact were at the origin of frictions with trade-unions that are traditionally won over by the PS. More broadly, the posture of the party-of-the-lesser-evil of the PS, in power without interruption since 1988, begins to be strongly criticized.

This is how a dynamic in favor of the left of the left has progressively emerged in the South of the country. Even if the national trade leadership continues to be close to their party-relay (the Christian democrats for the Confederation of Christian trade unions (CSC), the social democrats for the General Federation of workers of Belgium (FGTB)), certain "centrales" and personalities called for the first time for the constitution of a political assembly left of the social democrats and the classical political ecology. An expectation partially fulfilled by the Communist Party and Revolutionary Communist League (LCR, a Trotskyist-inspired party)'s support of the Belgian Workers Party (PTB-PVDA³⁶). Orthodox Marxist-Leninist party that has initiated internal changes with regard to strategy and communication since 2008, PTB has gained an important media coverage – together with a growing social anchorage through a like-minded associative galaxy.

Unite under the acronym PTB-GO ! – for « Gauche d'ouverture » (« Opening left »), what is the sign of the recognition by the PC and the LCR of the dominance of the PTB inside the radical left – the three parties hoped to make its success on the disappointed voters of governmental left. Their aim : give back parliamentary representation to the left of the left, lost by the PC during the eighties. Furthermore, two « ecosocialists» formations where in race : the Left Movement (MG) and Vega.

Results.

In Flanders, the vote for independence in decline

Contrary to expectations, the grand coalition is not sanctioned and ends up slightly reinforced with 97 seats out of 150 (+2). This result, however, is not much of an evolution in comparison with the score of 2010, where the three political families that had marked the political life in the post-war did not even win together 64% of the seats. Without showing popular support for the "Belgian compromise", it shows – nevertheless – that voters expressed gratitude to parties that have stabilized the country after 541 days of political crisis. The phenomenon is particularly noticeable in Flanders, where the three member parties of government now have a slight absolute majority of seats.

In fact, indisputable victory of N-VA must be clarified. If nationalists gain 5 seats (27 to 33) and increase their score of 4.4% [2], it is primarily at the expense of the extreme right separatist Vlaams Belang (VB), which collapses to 3 seats (-9) and 5.9% of the vote (- 6.7). Contrary to the forecasts expressed by the leader of the N-VA Bart De Wever, we are witnessing a slight reflux of the independence camp (- 3 seats in favor of the non-nationalist right and environmentalists). If the N-VA can now embody it in a quasi-monopoly with a

³⁶ On the contrary of the majority of political parties in Belgium, the PTB-PVDA keep a unitarian structure and is not divided regarding linguistic communities.

strengthened mandate, it is far from the envisaged scenario of an absolute majority for the independence camp (N-VA + VB) in the Flemish electoral college, which would have been a huge step in the direction of Belgium's dismantlement.

A more right-wing Wallonia

The slight strengthening of the MR (liberal right), and especially the collapse of Ecolo (political ecology) (- 4% compared to 2010, - 10% on average compared to European and regional elections in 2009) lead to a tilting to the right of both Brussels and Walloon assemblies. The rather good performance of the PS (which remains the first Walloon and Brussels party despite a slight decline compared to its exceptional score of 2010), allowing the socialist family to stay the first in the country, shows its impressive electoral efficiency: persistent local roots, staging of clashes with right wing of the government and polarization against the model carried by the N-VA (socially and economically close to French-speaking liberals) allowed the PS to embody a vote of "social security".

Success for the PTB's hegemonic strategy.

Bellow what opinion polls announced, the PTB-GO ! lists lead radical left at its best score since 1978, with 3.8% at national level, allowing the election of the first radical left members of the federal parliament since 1981. As know the fact that the average score of radical left between this date and 2010 doesn't exceed 1.5%; this performance is an important evolution in Belgian political landscape. The 5.2% (+3.6%) gains in French-speaking Belgium allow PTB, to get two seats in Wallonia's parliament and four seats in Brussel's parliament. Those results are especially interesting since the party, counting two workers from its new elects, makes its best scores on traditional areas of the electorate of the social-democrats, in particular in their workers bastions. This "class vote" allow the PTB to marginally compete with social-democrats on the role of "social loudspeaker" it wants to play.

Globally, the party could celebrate the electoral success of the renewal of its old-fashion strategy of "enlightened vanguard", that lead PTB to refuse any form of electoral alliance where it would not be the prominent part: if PC and LCR kept a total freedom of speech during the campaign and where allow to defend their own political platforms, not any candidate of those parties where placed at an eligible place on the PTB-GO! lists. The failure of "ecosocialists" lists, affected by the heaviness of the "useful" vote in favor of PTB, and the resign of the smaller leftist competitor, allow temporarily the PTB a free space to impersonate the left of the left for next years.

A divided french-speaking far-right

If the far right collapses in Flanders, it is increasing globally on the French side: Overall, the cumulative scores of the Parti Populaire (PP, liberal, right-wing populist and pro-European, who gets one seat at federal and Walloon parliaments) and four other smaller parties reach 8.1%, ahead of the radical left. However, this disturbing score is partly due to the great heterogeneity of these different parties in terms of electorate and program, which is a durable structuring brake on a unit basis.

The European election overshadowed

Note also that the European election was globally overshadowed by the parliamentary and local elections. Nevertheless, there has been a relative strengthening of liberal parties, drive in French-speaking Belgium by the former European Commissioner Louis Michel, and in Flanders, the European liberal candidate for the presidency of the European Commission and

former Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt, who allows the party to climb to second place (20% of the vote, behind the N-VA (26.7%) for only the third place nationally (15.7%).

Post-electoral situation

Political stalemate or neoliberal step forward?

In accordance with the momentum of power devolution to federal entities, the later where the first to announce the colour of their regional coalition: A centre left alliance between social-democrats and Christian-democrats was created in Wallonia and Brussels (including there the small regionalist party FDF), while a right-wing coalition between N-VA and Christian-democrats was looming in Flanders. However, the future coalition at the federal level is highly uncertain, considering the importance of political and politician considerations. At the moment, two main political options exist. On the one hand, the employers and business union's friendly center-right coalition would associate liberals, Christian-democrats and N-VA with the N-VA assuming a key role within the coalition. Indeed, the election aftermath saw the party sent several clear signals showing it would be ready to put on hold its program of institutional reform in order to set up its radically neoliberal socio-economic agenda. On the other hand, renewing the current large coalition seems unlikely without the failure of the centre-right scenario. If such configuration would see the Social-democrats remain the Belgian first political family within the coalition, they would have no other option but to make a lot of concession to the centre right parties, while having to deal with a though opposition of the N-VA.

Regardless of the type of political majority at federal level, antisocial attacks are expected: to respect its European comwithment for a balanced budget, Belgium must provide a budget effort of 10 billion € for the Parliament's term. All but radical and centre left parties clearly mentioned that they refuse to favour new tax revenues, such as higher tax rate on capital or the cancelation of tax deduction mechanisms, despite the 6.1 Billions € annual loss of income it generates. As budgetary saving of the outgoing government will liwith the next majority's flexibility to act, it is likely that it will be forced to tackle the biggest expenses at the federal level, namely the social security. If the presence of Social-democrats might tend to liwith the level of social damages, it will definitely not prevent the adoption of antisocial measures. In a context where no new social conquests shall be expected, the radical left faces an open and wide political space to act.

Relaying social mobilisation: the left MPs upcoming challenge.

The main challenge for the PTB will be to turn this electoral breakthrough into political and social gains. Meanwhile the backbone role of the PTB within the coalition *PTB-GO!* makes it a natural leader and risks therefore to make it renounce to its opening process, several elements could prevent this to happen. Indeed, despite the party's steady growth in opinion polls during all the legislature – especially since the 2012 local elections –, the significant jump is to be found in the announcement of the asymmetric cartel. On the other hand, we can see that PC and LCR candidates bring to the coalition a significant number of votes (almost 15%) that might have missed to the PTB if it ran separately. Indeed, important frictions still exist between this party and a part of the left regarding the program, the practice and the ideology of the PTB³⁷.

³⁷ The main critic regard the history of this party, who used to be the most orthodox maoïst movement until recent years, on which other parties point the ambiguous distancing of the historical regime of "real existing socialism". On the other hands, some trade-unions and movements from the southern with a strong regionalist

On the other hand, the support from a part of the trade-unions looks to be attached to this process of opening towards other political parties. Taking into account the importance and their legitimacy in Belgium, labour unions could become an integration factor for the left. In a context where PTB is still trying to get rid of its "sectarian" reputation, rejecting such an opening could highly damage its reputation. Nevertheless, trade-unions would have to go through major changes should they be willing to play this role: in addition to the need to clearly demonstrate the official line of independence (and then to renounce in maintaining a privileged relationship with government parties), some fundamental questions such as the level of breakdown with capitalism will have to be addressed.

This closed and balanced common action between trade-unions and parliamentary and extra-parliamentary radical left should then become a new deal in social and political landscape. "The union should play an important role in informing workers and by boosting social movements from the base," said Jean-François and Tamellini, federal secretary of the FGTB. "These struggles must then be relayed by all parties and parliamentarians in recognizing the anti-capitalist message on the broadest possible basis and without any partisan exclusions." Nevertheless, that's clear that this ideal machinery will be confront to the traditional inter-partisan bickering of the radical left, which are in Belgium, more often the rule than the exception.

2014 Results for political parties represented at the Federal Parliament

Political family/ ideology	Party (linguistic community)	% of votes (evolution 2014-2010)	seats (on 150)
Social-democracy		20.5 (-2.4)	36 (-3)
	SP.a (d)	8.8 (-0.4)	13 (=)
	PS (fr)	11.7 (-2)	23 (-3)
Right-wing nationalism	N-VA (d)	20.3 (+2.9)	33 (+6)
Liberals		19.4 (+1.5)	32 (+3)
	Open VLD (d)	9.8 (+1.2)	14 (+1)
	MR (fr)	9.6 (+0.3)	18 (+2)
Christian democracy		16.6 (+0.2)	27 (+1)
	CD&V (d)	11.6 (+0.7)	18 (+1)
	CdH (fr)	5 (-0.5)	9 (=)
Greens		8.6 (-0.6)	12 (-1)
	Groen ! (d)	5.3 (+0.9)	6 (+1)
	Ecolo (fr)	3.3 (-1.5)	6 (-2)
Far right nationalism	Vlaams Belang (d)	3.7 (-4.1)	3 (-9)
Brussels regionalism	FDF (fr)	1.8	2
Radical Left	PTB-GO ! (PTB, PC, LCR) (fr)	2	2
Far right liberalism	Parti Populaire (fr)	1.5 (+0.2)	1 (=)

tradition point the Unitarian philosophy of this party, who refuse any discussion about economical federalism in the name of the unity of the country's workers.

Glossary

Political families : in a political landscape where political debate is organized on a communitarian basis, this term refer to the “brother parties” from both side of the linguistic boundaries, who share a common ideology or/and political origin.

Linguistic community: Belgium include two main public opinions (dutch-speakers in Flanders, French-speakers in Wallonia and the most important part of Brussels), with few interaction between them. Educated and informed in different languages, Flemish and French-speakers have an only partial knowledge of the debates occurring at the other side of the linguistic boundary.

Pillarization : In very segmented societies, this term refer to a structuration of society (schools, mutual insurances, universities, trade-unions, political parties, etc.) in ideological “pillars”, taking care of people of the pillar “from the cradler to the grave”. In Belgium, the Christian-democrat, liberal and social-democrat political elites from those pillars interact between each other to manage the social tension during the most part of the country’s history.

Abbreviations of political parties

PS : Parti Socialiste (french-speaking social-democracy)

MR : Mouvement Réformateur (french-speaking liberal center right)

cdH : Centre démocrate Humaniste (french-speaking christian-democracy)

Ecolo : french-speaking political ecology

FDF : Fédéralistes Démocrates Francophones (french-speaking brussel’s regionalism)

PP: Parti populaire (French-speaking far right liberalism)

N-VA: Nieuw-vlaams Alliantie (dutch-speaking conservative, liberal and right-wing nationalism)

CD&V: Christen-Democratisch en Vlaams (dutch-speaking christian-democracy)

Open VLD: Vlaamse Liberaln en Democraten (dutch-speaking liberal center right)

SP.A: Socialistische Partij Anders (dutch-speaking “blairist” social-democracy)

Groen!: dutch-speaking political ecology

VB : Vlaams Belang (far-right flemish nationalism)

PTB-PVDA: Parti du Travail de Belgique – Partij van de Arbeid van België (Radical Left)

Results of the parliamentary elections in 2014 and EP-elections until 2014										
Party / Coalition	2010 PW in %	2014 PW. in %	+/- %	Seats	EP- 1994 in %	EP- 1999 in %	EP- 2004 in %	EP- 2009 in %	ÉP 2014 in %	Seats
conservativ N-VA	17,40	20,30	+2,9	27			with CD&V	6,13	16,35	4
Parti Socialiste	13,70	11,70	-2,0	26	11,40	9,59	13,54	10,88	11,15	3
CD&V	10,80	11,60	+0,8	17	16,98	13,49	17,43	14,43	12,21	2
MR Liberal	9,30	9,60	+0,3	18	9,08	10,03	10,35	9,74	10,52	3
sp.a socialist.	9,30	8,80	-0,5	13	10,92	8,44	11,04	8,21	8,08	1
VLD liberal	8,60	9,80	+1,2	13	11,37	13,61	13,56	12,75	12,51	3
Vlaams Belang	7,80	3,70	-4,1	12	7,78	9,35	14,34	9,85	4,14	1
CDH Christ- demokraten	5,50	5,00	-0,5	9			5,68	4,99	4,33	1
Ecolo	4,80	3,30	-1,5	8	4,97	8,44	3,75	8,55	4,45	1
Groen	4,38	5,30	0,92	5			4,95	4,90	6,51	1
PP		1,50							2,27	0
PTB-GO		3,70							2,09	0
Turnout	89,22	89,50			90,66	91,00	90,81	90,46	90,00	

Margarita Mileva

Short overview of the European elections in Bulgaria 2014

On May 22-25, 2014, the citizens of the European Union voted on the composition of the European Parliament for the eighth time. In Bulgaria, the European elections were held on May 25, 2014. Despite the increased importance of the European Union and its influence on many areas of everyday life, the political parties in Bulgaria again failed to motivate more eligible voters to take part in the European elections than in 2009. The turnout of 35.52% is 1.97% below the turnout in 2009 (37.49%).

The valid votes were distributed as follows:

Party/Coalition	Alignment	European Party	Votes EP 2014 in %	Votes EPs 2009 in %
GERB (Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria)	right-wing populist and conservative	member of the European People's Party	30.40%	24.36% (+6.04%)
Coalition for Bulgaria (the Bulgarian Socialist Party, the party "Movement for Social Humanism", the party "The Bulgarian Social Democrats", the party "Roma", the Communist Party of Bulgaria, the Bulgarian Agrarian Union "Aleksandar Stamboliyski", the party "New Dawn" and the party "European Security and Integration")	social-democratic	The Bulgarian Socialist Party and the party "Bulgarian Social Democrats" are members of the Party of European Socialists	18.94%	18.50% (+0.44%)
DPS (Movement for Rights and Freedoms)	liberal	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe	17.26%	14.14% (+3.12%)
Coalition "Bulgaria Without Censorship" (the party "Bulgaria Without Censorship", the party VMRO – "Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization", the party "George's Day Movement" and the party "Agrarian People's Union")	right-wing populist and nationalist	n/a	10.66%	n/a
The coalition "Reformist Bloc" (the party "Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria", the party "Bulgaria for the Citizens", the party "Union of Democratic Forces", the "People's Party Freedom and Dignity" and the Bulgarian Agrarian People's Union)	right-wing conservative	The party "Democrats for a Strong Bulgaria" and the party "Union of Democratic Forces" are members of the European People's Party	6.45%	Nein

The coalition "ABV – Alternative for Bulgarian Revival" (the party "OBT – United Labour Bloc" and the party "OSD – United Social Democrats")	social-democratic; nationalist	n/a	4.02%	n/a
The party "National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria"	nationalist	n/a	3.05%	n/a
The party "Ataka"	extreme right; nationalist		2.95%	11.96% (-9.01%)

The seats in the European Parliament are distributed as follows:

Party/Coalition	Seats 2014	Seats 2009
GERB (Citizens for European Development of Bulgaria)	6	7 (-1)
Coalition for Bulgaria	4	5 (-1)
DPS (Movement for Rights and Freedoms)	4	3 (+1)
The coalition "Bulgaria Without Censorship"	2	n/a
The coalition "Reformist Bloc"	1	n/a
The party "Ataka"	0	2 (-2)

These results show that the strongest political force in the European elections 2014 in Bulgaria is the right-wing populist party GERB. This party governed Bulgaria until February 2013 and had to resign following the mass protests in the winter of 2013. The main loser of these elections is the Bulgarian Socialist Party, which ran as part of the Coalition for Bulgaria. At the same time, its current coalition partner DPS gained votes. Already on the evening of the election, these developments stirred discussions about early parliamentary elections in Bulgaria before the end of 2014.

The campaign in Bulgaria was shaped by the following main topics: The fundamental freedoms of the EU's internal market, the advancement of Bulgaria as a welfare state, the promotion of education, human rights, Bulgaria's equal status within the EU, and others. Most of the parties and coalitions that took part in and campaigned for the elections took up these topics with a view to national politics and designed their campaigns as campaigns for national elections and not for European elections.

The tendency of a strong shift to the right in the EU is also discernible in Bulgaria. The extreme right-wing party "Ataka" that had been represented in the European Parliament will not be represented anymore, but in their place the coalition "Bulgaria Without Censorship", which consists of nationalist and other extreme right-wing groups, was elected to the European Parliament with 10.66%. In total, 16.66% of votes in Bulgaria went to nationalist groups and parties of the extreme right.

The Bulgarian Left

The party “The Bulgarian Left”, which has been a member of the European Left since 2010, took part in the elections for the European Parliament for the first time on May 25, 2014. The central message of our campaign was the necessity of a different European Union that serves the people and not the banks and corporations. In our campaign we publicized the demands of the European Left for a democratic, social, peaceful and ecological European Union on a new contractual basis. We also severely criticized the policies of the Troika and the brutal austerity policy towards the Southern European countries. Given that Bulgaria is the poorest country in the EU and the majority of the population lives in poverty, we placed particular emphasis on social issues. Thus, for example, we demanded the introduction of an EU-wide minimum wage, which would amount to 60% of the average wage of the respective member state. In this context, we also demanded an immediate increase in the minimum wage and the minimum pension in Bulgaria, so that the people in the country can live in dignity. Other topics important to us were criticism of privatized health care and the necessity of health care free of charge and accessible to all; criticism of the destroyed Bulgarian agriculture and the necessity to put it on a new footing; criticism of the policies relating to villages and the smaller towns and the necessity of creating perspectives for the development of rural areas; the mass emigration of Bulgarian citizens because of the lack of personal and professional perspectives in Bulgaria and the necessity of different policies that guarantee perspectives for life in dignity and professional development in Bulgaria; discrimination against minorities; homophobia and the current situation in Ukraine.

Left: From 3% in projections to 0.5% - still almost tripled share

The first projections on the evening of May 25, 2014 showed 3% for the party “The Bulgarian Left”, which the media and the commentators saw as the big surprise of the European elections 2014. However, after the vote count was completed, the Central Election Commission announced 0.5% as the official result of the party. This is the only case in these elections in which such a large reduction from the first projections to the final result occurred. The reasons for this unexpected difference will have to be analyzed and determined in the coming days and weeks. Given that several allegations of violations of election laws were filed on election day, manipulations cannot be excluded. However, the result of 0.5% almost amounts to a tripling of the last result (0.17%) that the party obtained in the parliamentary elections in 2013.

Margarita Mileva, Leader of the party “The Bulgarian Left” and Vice President of the Party of the European Left

Results of the parliamentary elections 2013 und EP-Elections 2009 und 2014							
Party/ Coalition	National 2013 In %	+/- %	Seats	EP-2007 in %	EP-2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seats
Conservativ GERB	30,54	-9,18	97	21,68	24,36	30,40	6
Social-democrats Coalition für Bulgarien (BSP)	26,61	8,95	84	21,41	18,50	18,93	4
Liberal DPS	11,31	-3,14	36	20,26	14,14	18,4	4
fascist Ataka	7,3	-2,06	23	14,20	11,96	2,96	0
NDSV				6,27	7,96		
Sinyata					7,95		
Lider					5,70		
RZS					4,67		
right-populist Bewegung BWC						10,66	2
Conservativ RB reformist. block						6,45	1
Social-democrats. nationalist. ABV						4,02	
Nationalist NFSB National Front						3,05	
Turnout				29,22	38,92	35,5	

Marko Kostanic

The election results of Croatia

The immediate context in which the elections for the European parliament were held in Croatia was determined by two events – catastrophic floods that hit the region and corruption affairs destabilizing the coalition in power, or rather its strongest party - SDP, the social democrats. Due to the floods, the official campaign was all but suspended by the candidates. It may be that this decision had some impact on turnout: at 25%, it was slightly better than in the last year EU Parliament elections, organized upon the EU accession, but for a percent or two at best. The other factor, corruption affairs, has been the dominant topic in the media and public debates in the last few months and most of the analysis and results prediction were articulated within this perspective. Expectedly, the coalition in power lost the elections but not in such a degree as to enable the opposition to issue a call for early parliamentary elections. However, any deeper analysis of party dynamics in Croatia and these results requires taking into account the almost six-year-long economic recession with no signs of recovery as well as the ideological status of the EU in the Croatian public imagination and political field.

The conservative party, HDZ (Croatian democratic union), won the elections for the European parliament, just like last year. The party was also caught in a corruption scandal few years ago, but on a much more serious scale (as compared to what is currently known about the SDP's affairs); with their prime minister Ivo Sanader ending up behind the bars. Consequently, they lost the national elections two and a half years ago and then conducted a so-called 'catharsis' process. Basically, this meant a rhetorical move to the right by invoking anticommunism and war, together with an organisational consolidation of logistics and infrastructure. The outcome of such political dynamics was easy to predict – SDP with their coalition partners would not be able to pull the country out of the crisis, while HDZ would actively wait for the new elections, attacking the social democrats all along for their incompetence and ideological deviations, mostly by instigating cultural wars around gay rights and similar topics. This also enabled them to win two European elections in the meantime.

Both of the two main parties, no differently than the smaller competitors, were not only unwilling, but also unable and incompetent to address the crucial EU problems during the campaign, be it the architecture of the EU, the notorious democratic deficit, the relations between core and periphery, or anything else substantial regarding EU policies or structural constraints. The reason for this is the status and the role that the EU has had in the Croatian political space since the break-up of Yugoslavia. It was never treated as a political entity with its dynamics, conflicted interests and structural contradictions but as an eschatological goal that had to be reached in order to escape from the communist past and geographical destiny. The questions about the EU and Croatia's entrance have never been articulated in a political sense in the broader political mainstream. This had an impact on the topics and debates during the campaign. Almost none of them included debates on fiscal monitoring or the transatlantic trade partnership. Debates and interventions were mostly concerned with daily, ephemeral political affairs. The Centre for Peace Studies, a Zagreb based NGO, did a study of the topics covered by the campaign. The most vivid example of a politically fully misleading campaign is the statistic on the prime minister's media appearances - out of the 317 individual appearances; he referred to the EU only once.

Besides the two main parties, brief remarks should be made about the remaining four parties/coalitions. The biggest surprise was the newly founded ORAH (Sustainable development for Croatia) that won almost 10% of the votes and a MEP. The party's success is completely leftwingd to the political capital of its president, Mirela Holy, who was a minister for environment in the current government, kicked out for a minor corruption scandal. As bigger corruption affairs have begun to appear without such consequences, her political rating as an honest politician started to rise. Her ideological program is a mix of classical middle class sustainable development ideas and mild anti-neoliberal rhetoric. The further development of the party depends on the logistical and infrastructural work-however; it is likely to turn out as a one hit wonder, as was the case with the Croatian Labourites, who suddenly became the third party in the country coquetting vaguely with anti-neoliberalism. Equally a one man show without an articulated political or economic program, Labourites failed to win any seats in this election. The Association for Croatia coalition was on the brink of winning a seat - a coalition of small right-wing parties, further to the right than HDZ, but with their manoeuvring space fully dependent on HDZ's rhetorical shifts and logistical work. Finally, the newly founded technocratic 'no left, no right' National Forum, a party led by a capitalist owner of a health clinic, did not manage to cross the 3% threshold, apparently marking an end to their political project, in spite of the media attention they received. To sum up-the dual party system is still more or less stable, with minor surprises that are mostly symptoms of system dynamics.

Results of the parliamentary elections 2011 und EP-Elections 2013 und 2014						
Party / Coalition	national 2011 in %	+/- %	Seats	EP-2013 in %	ÉP 2014 in %	Seats
SDP/SDP+HNS+HSU+SDSS+IDS	40,72	5,00	80	32,07	29,93	4
leftwing HL_SR (ArbeiterParty)	5,17		6	5,77	3,46	0
HDZ/HDZ+HSP AS			47	32,86	41,42	6
social-liberal HSLS	3,10		0	0,00	-	-
nationalist HSP/STARECEVIC	3,07		0	1,26	7,00	0
center-right Partyen HSS/HSLS	3,04		1	3,86	-	-
HDSSB	2,93		6	3,01	im Alliance	-
nationalist. HSP_ STARECEVIC	2,81		1		im Alliance	-
H-Rast					im Alliance	-
O-RaH					9,42	1
Other					6,40	0
among them Pirates					1,13	0
Turnout	46,00			20,86	25,10	

Giorgos Charalambous

European Elections – Cyprus (Night-report)

Final Results per party

DISY (right-wing): 97,732 votes, 37.75%, +1.76% since 2009: 2 MEPs: Eleni Theocharous and Christos Stylianides

AKEL (left-wing): 69,852 votes, 26.98%, -08,37%: 2 MEPs: Takis Hadjigeriou, Neoklis Silikiotis

DIKO (nationalist/centrist): 28,044 votes, 10.83%, -1,48% : 1 MEP: Kostas Mavrides

EDEK/Ecologists (social democrats/greens): 19,894 votes, 7.68%, -3,76% : 1 MEP: Diwithris Papadakis

Citizens' Alliance (populist/nationalist/centrist): 17,549 votes, 6,78%

Message of Hope (anti-corruption technocrats): 9,907 votes, 3,83%

ELAM (far-right): 6,957 votes, 2.69%, +2,48%

Sener Levent (Turkish/Cypriot journalist and public intellectual): 2,718 votes, 1,05%

Animal Party: 2,288 votes, 0.88%

DRASy/EYLEM (radical left/bi-communal): 2,220 votes, 0.86%

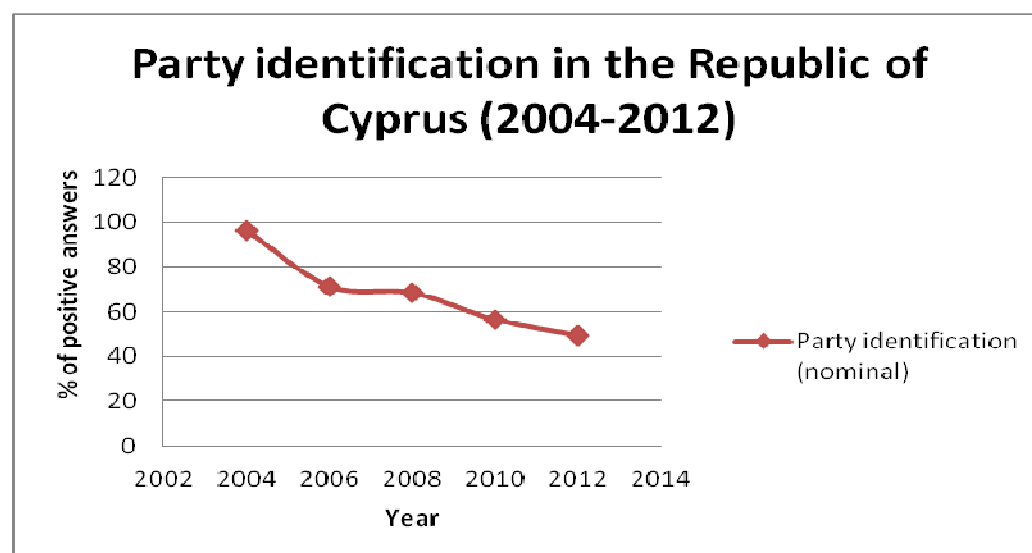
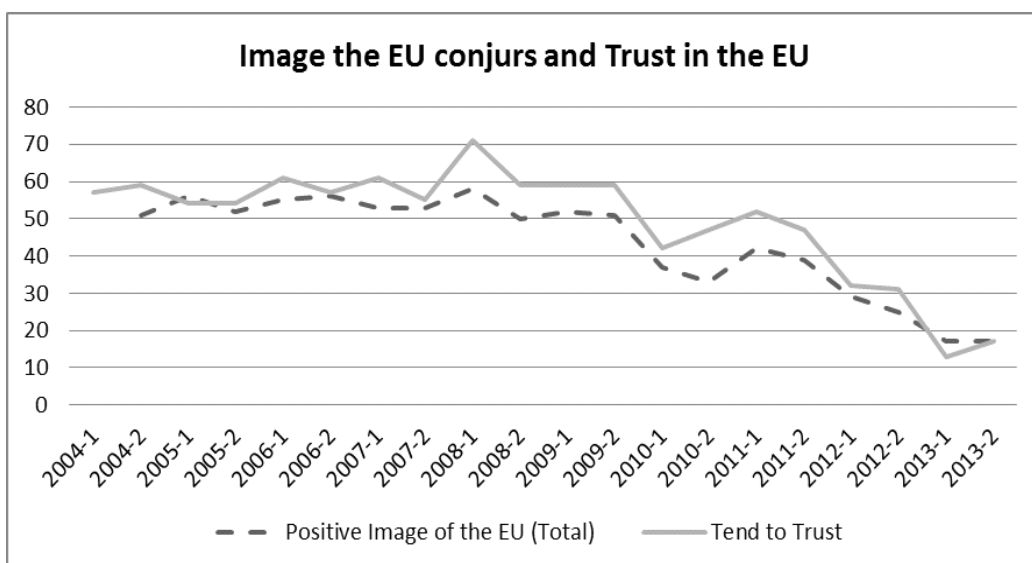
Other independent candidates: 0,18% + 0,13% + 0,08 + 0,03 + 0,03 + 0,03

Socialist Party of Cyprus (Turkish/Cypriot/radical left): 278 votes, 0,11%

Turnout

	European elections 2014	European elections 2009	Parliamentary Elections 2011	Presidential elections 2013
Nicosia	48,25%	58,96%	76,84%	82,45%
Limassol :	42,71%	56,93%	78,91%	83,04%
Famagusta	43,64%	60,97%	79,74%	84,30%
Larnaca	49,06%	62,19%	80,81%	84,30%
Paphos :	46,96%	61,22%	82,50%	84,58%
Abroad	56,00%	67,25%	68,30%	80,00%
Special polling stations (T/Cs) :	3,19%	—	—	—
Total :	42,37%	59,40%	78,70%	83,14%

Slides of Giorgos Charalambous – presentation on the RLF-workshop



2008-2013: The Cypriot left's first time as the main party of government

- Very negative public opinion.
- No important reforms passed.
- Left-implemented austerity.
- Applies to the EFSF.
- Next elections with a 'centrist' candidate.
- 2013: Right returns to power with a (more or less) landslide victory

When in government AKEL...

- Was overly consensual and pragmatist.
- Was organizationally rigid.
- Was fully aligned with the President.
- Was socially inactive.

A preliminary assessment

- AKEL failed in government because it was not radical enough:
 - Not good enough for the pro-solution voters.
 - Not supportive enough of the working class and lower strata.
 - Not a 'different' presidency from previous ones.

Table he absence of protest in Cyprus

Year	Riots (Cyprus)	Anti-Government Demonstrations (Cyprus)	Riots (Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal)				Anti-Government Demonstrations (Greece, Italy, Spain, Portugal)			
1983	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	4	0
1984	0	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	1	0
1985	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
1986	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
1987	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
1988	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0
1989	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1990	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	0
1991	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1992	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	0
1993	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0
1994	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
1995	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0
1996	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	0
1997	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1998	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1999	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
2000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2001	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0
2002	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
2003	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0
2004	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0
2005	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2006	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
2007	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
2008	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	1	0	0
2009	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0
2010	0	0	1	1	0	0	4	1	0	0
2011	0	1	6	1	1	0	21	4	7	1
2012	0	0	9	2	8	0	8	3	19	4
2013	0	4	5	4	7	0	19	9	12	6
Total	1	6	29	11	22	1	62	28	63	12
(2009-2013)	0	5	22	9	16	0	53	17	38	11

Source: Data Banks

Cypriot European Parliament election results show a weakening of the position of island re-unification advocates. Netting 37.7 per cent of the vote, Democratic Rally (DISY), the conservative opposition party, is now the strongest party on the Greek and therefore EU-side of the island. This result put DISY well ahead of the governing centre-left Progressive Party of Working People (AKEL), which narrowly missed 27 per cent. AKEL is a European Left (EL) observer party. AKEL's result replicates the results of the 2011 parliamentary election, when the party already garnered far less support from voters as compared to the 2009 EP elections. Turnout for the social democratic DIKO has decreased systematically since the 2004 EP elections. In the 2014 elections, DIKO came close to its 2011 parliamentary elections result. Results for EDEK, a further social democratic party, have evolved along similar lines and the party can now expect to win around a 7 per cent share of the vote. Effectively, this

has left the centre-left without a majority. Symmaxia's – the National Citizens Alliance – results are also noteworthy, in spite of the party not managing to gain a single seat in these elections.

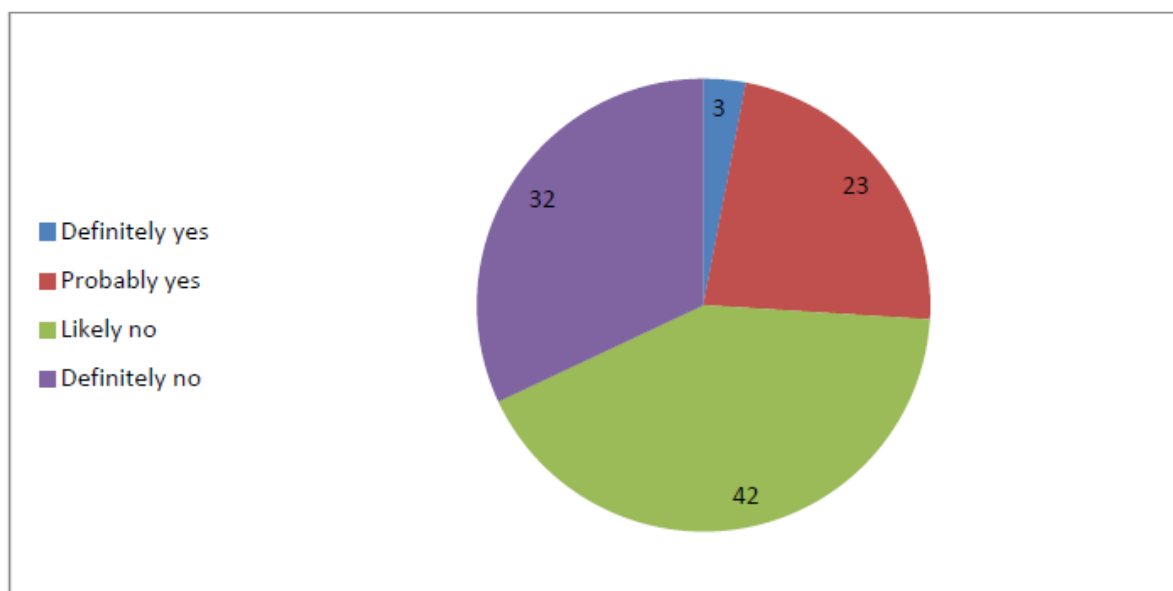
Results of the 2011 parliamentary elections and EP elections until 2014							
Party / Coalition	national 2011 in %	Seats	Diff. Seats	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seats
Conservativ DISY	30,54	20	+2	28,23	35,65	37,70	2
Leftwing AKEL	26,61	19	+1	27,89	34,90	26,90	2
Democratic Party DIKO	11,31	9	-2	17,09	12,28	10,80	1
Social-dem.. Öko-Party EDEK	7,3	5	0	10,79	9,85	7,70	1
EURO-KO	3,88	3	-1		4,12		
KOP	2,21	1	0	0,86	1,50	other	
Nationalist Symmaxia Bürger-Alliance						6,70	0
ELAM	1,08					2,69	
LASOK	0,66			0,24		-	
Orthodox MHNYMA -	0,21					3,80	0
Turnout	78,80	—		72,50	58,90	44,00	

Jiří Malek

Political Situation in the Czech republic

Democracy in the Czech republic (2013)

Are you satisfied with the democracy in our country? in %



CVVM 2013

Voter turnout/non-turnout is analysed in detail, but it is taken as fact that elections intrinsically resolve the point that “the people are the source of all power, executing it through the legislative, executive and judicial bodies”, as set out in the Czech Constitution. It would seem that Czech citizens have a legitimate feeling that there are, at the very least, a few other sources of power that come from elsewhere. After all, none of the fundamental issues that have had a significant impact on Czech society in the long term have ever been the mainstay of an election campaign to the Czech Parliament at any time in the post-revolution era. These issues were ultimately dealt with by more or less anonymous and non-transparent, often international, ruling elites. To mention a few at random: the speedy integration into the NATO military-political structure, active participation in the Balkan conflict, the bid to install US military bases in Czech territory (i.e. the “radar affair”), the means and execution of state property transfers via coupon privatisation, the so-called reforms to the health care and pension systems, which entailed the *de facto* privatisation of public property and institutions, restitution of Church property on an unprecedented scale and so on. In none of these strategic decisions were “the people” perwilted any significant say. While the Czech Constitution of 1992 does envisage referenda, for safety’s sake no act of implementation on referenda has ever been passed. And thus, it seems, “the people” have come to understand that their participation in the ritual of European elections is not of much consequence.

“The politicians make an effort, the budgets are inflated, ad agencies work desperately, money flies everywhere... and the voters just blow it all off. Even professional pundits and

analysts have realised that there's something wrong here. Democracy, as we have conceived it and imposed it upon our citizens, is not supposed to look like this. The citizens are supposed to be delighted! The easiest thing to do would be to get a whole new citizenry, but that's too technically demanding."

To avoid any misunderstanding: this is not the opinion of some fierce leftist but of the conservative and libertarian sociologist and journalist P. Hampl. It must also be said that this opinion is not shared either by the mainstream media or by the so-called renowned political commentators. Those groups persist defend in contemporary democracy as the best it could possibly be. And if there is a mistake somewhere, then it is on the part of the citizenry, which is not "civic-minded".

It is interesting though (as I'll mention later on) that this absence of voters affected all social segments of the populace equally, which is clear from the election results within the country, which do not essentially differ from parliamentary elections with higher voter turnout. There is nothing to support the thesis that nonparticipation in European elections equates with a condemnation of Europe, an expression of our being closed off within a national, nationalistic setting. Citizens distinguish between Europe itself and its citizens, and the political-economic structures of Europe. While they identify with the former, many have at least a number of doubts about – or various degrees of objection to – the latter. We are Europeans, but we are not content in the contemporary neoliberal European capitalist system. In a system that boasts of democracy, but makes skilful use of every means of swaying the citizen to its own advantage regardless of *demos kratos* (people power). The message sent by non-voters - at least a part of them - can be read that way, too. And why is this more easily perceptible in the east of the West? Perhaps because citizens of the neglected East see certain aspects more clearly. Just after the fall of communism there emerged a slogan: "Back to Europe". These nations went over to Europe, but Europe itself was undergoing a transformation. It appears that a large part of the population wanted to be a part of Europe, but didn't know what it was they were becoming a part of. And the contradiction between the expectation of brighter tomorrows and the rather grey reality reinforced the scepticism and disillusionment of a part of the citizenry. It is important to avoid the easy and erroneous interpretations that are sometimes heard from the left. This is not about a majority becoming disillusioned with capitalism as such, but with contemporary, neoliberal Central European capitalism.

Now for the second brush against the surface of politics. How did the European elections actually turn out in CE? This too is a topic about which I do not want to repeat facts and figures in detail, as they are known for the most part. While parliamentary elections do enjoy two to three times greater voter turnout in the countries mentioned (CZ 59.5%, SK 59.1%, PL 48.9%, HU 61.7%), none of those countries saw a result in the EP election that was fundamentally different from their parliamentary election results in terms of the political parties' spread. What can we deduce from that? Not even lower voter turnout caused any significant qualitative shift in the distribution of political representation. That representation in EP elections "copies" the national level in all countries.

Results of European election and Czech Parliamentary elections (in %)

Party	Poll-Czech parliament election- June 2014	European parliament election 2014	Czech parliament 2013 (Chamber of deputies)	European parliament election 2009	Czech parliament 2010 (Chamber of deputies)
ANO 2011 ("YES" - the movement close to ALDE party-moderate right)	27,1	16,13	18,65	-	-
Věci veřejné (The Public Affairs)	-	-	-	2,40	10,88
TOP 09/STAN (TOP-Liberal conservative party)/(The Movement of burgomasters and independent personalities)	9,6	15,95	11,99	2,28	16,70
ČSSD (Social democrats)	19,1	14,17	20,45	22,38	22,08
KSČM (Communist party)	13,4	10,98	14,91	14,18	11,27
KDU-ČSL (Christian democrats)	6,3	9,95	6,78	7,64	4,39
ODS (Civic democrats)	6,6	7,67	7,72	31,45	20,22
Strana svobodných občanů ("Party of free citizens" - liberal conservative, anti-EU party)	2,8	5,24	2,46	1,26	0,74
Pirate party	4,1	4,78	2,66	-	0,80
Green party	2,6	3,77	3,19	2,06	2,44
Úsvit přímé demokracie (Dawn of Direct Democracy - centre party supported "the direct democracy")	4,8	3,12	6,88	-	-
Turnout	56	18,20	59,48	28,22	62,60

Slovakia

Parliamentary election 2012 and European election 2014		The Slovak parliament	
		EP	
Description of the party	Party	%	%
Christian democrats	Zelení	0,3	
	Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie	8,82	13,21
	Strana demokratickej ľavice	0,18	
National party	Slovenská národná strana	4,55	3,61
Center-right conservative party	OBYČAJNÍ ĽUDIA a nezávislé osobnosti	8,55	7,46
"Freedom and Solidarity" - right liberal party	Sloboda a Solidarita	5,88	6,66
Greens	PRÁVO A SPRAVODLIVOSŤ	0,41	
	NÁŠ KRAJ	0,19	
	Strana zelených	0,42	0,46
Social democrats	Ľudová strana Naše Slovensko	1,58	1,73
	SMER - sociálna demokracia	44,41	24,09
	Zmena zdola, Demokratická únia Slovenska	1,29	
Communist party of Slovakia	Národ a Spravodlivosť - naša strana	0,63	
	Komunistická strana Slovenska	0,72	1,51
	Strana Rómskej únie na Slovensku	0,11	
Party of Hungarian minority - centre right opposition	MOST - HÍD	6,89	5,83
	99 % - občiansky hlas	1,58	
	Ľudová strana - Hnutie za demokratické Slovensko	0,93	
Democratic party (center-right, conservative, liberal party)	STRANA +1 HLAS	0,03	
	Robíme to pre deti - SF	0,34	
	Obyčajní ľudia	0,16	
Party of Hungarian minority-liberal conservative	Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia - Demokratická strana	6,09	7,75
	Strana občanov Slovenska	0,15	
	Strana maďarskej koalície - Magyar Koalíció Pártja	4,28	6,35
Turnout	STRANA SLOBODNÉ SLOVO - NORY MOJSEJOVEJ	1,22	
	Strana živnostníkov Slovenska	0,15	
		59,11%	13,05%

From this one can also infer that no relevant political force either gained or lost ground on account of low voter turnout. It's as if citizens said: we won't go to the polls, but we'll keep the basic proportion. What led Czech voters to that choice?

The Czech reality can, again, be illustrated with a post-election sociological survey of company CVVM (CVVM, VI/2014). This survey states that "...participating in the election were primarily stable and regular 'staunch' voters who are accustomed to taking part in every type of election and consider it an obligation to participate and support their preferred party or candidate, believing that their vote is important in this regard. The reason for voting most frequently given was indeed 'to support a preferred party or candidate' (21%), closely followed by 'to influence the future, participate in decision-making' (19%), 'to fulfil a civil duty' (18%) and the statement that the respondent is a regular voter (14%). Certain other, less-frequent answers can also be put into the same categories, such as 'to exercise my right

to vote' (3%), 'interest in politics, elections and participation in them' (1%) or 'the need to express my opinion and preference' (1%). Conversely the negative option 'to vote against a party or candidate' was an essentially marginal matter (2%) and only a small percentage of the declared rationales was taken up with general or specific dissatisfaction with domestic policy relating to a need for change or protest (5%). Another factor that proved not to be too significant was the specifically European rationales regarding in one way or another the EU itself, which together comprised 9% of the collected responses, the most common of which was 'interest in the EU or EP and its importance for the CR' (4%) and the statement that we are EU members and citizens (3%). An entirely marginal reason for taking part in the election was the influence of family and environment (1%). The overall responses indicate that it was primarily the politically active core supporters of individual political parties who took part in the election. One fourth (25%) stated that they voted for the party for which they had the greatest affinity or sympathy, almost the same number (24%) gave as their reason agreement with the platform or convergence of opinion, 14% praised the quality of the party and its individual members or candidates, and a similar portion (14%) of EP election voters asked categorised themselves as committed supporters of the party who vote for it regularly. With regard to the topics that the voters said played an important role in their decision to choose a party, domestic issues took precedence – with more than one third (36%) of voters – over issues associated with the European Union, which in turn had priority for a tenth (9%) of EP election participants, although for the relatively largest, majority portion (53%) both were of equal importance."

In the first part of this presentation I spoke about nonparticipation and the reasons for it. It would be interesting to compare the situation in the individual Visegrad countries. I believe though that the differences would not be qualitative. What is different is how the opinions manifest themselves outwardly - how they are reflected in the political structures arising from civic elections. How the political map looks in the individual countries.

That is the third brush of the rock on the water. In the introduction I spoke of how these four states have much in common. Let us look at the composition of the legislative assemblies that arose from parliamentary elections. It would seem that there could not even be more differences. In three of the countries there is no politically relevant entity that could be said to represent the radical left. In two of them (Slovakia, Hungary) there are parties that belong to the Party of the European Left (EL), but these are (with all due respect) marginal parties. In Poland there isn't even any party that approximates the EL. Alongside all this is CPBM (KSČM) (an EL observer), with its consistent election results between 11 and 15%. How is it possible? The answer to that would require a seminar in itself and even then there is no guarantee that we would reach any shared fundamental conclusions. So allow me to merely point to a couple of those small waves I mentioned earlier. But we have to go back a quarter of a century. In all of these countries there were communist state parties (with various names, that is). In each country there was massive membership in these parties (KSČ – Communist party of Czechoslovakia as a whole: 1,700,000 members, with around 1.2 mil. members on the Czech side and half a million in Slovakia). The political changes in 1989 confronted the communist parties and their members with an existential question – where do we go from here? Whereas Poland and Hungary "set things in motion" in at least the second half of the 1980s, in Czechoslovakia – in the joint state of Czechs and Slovaks – there were no such visible changes. Even Gorbachev's perestroika received a much more ambiguous reception here. On the other hand, the socio-economic situation of the citizens of Czechoslovakia was better and more stable than in Poland and Hungary. In each of these

countries the parties and their members sought to set their own course. In each of the countries they went through a greater or lesser transformation. That transformation consisted of denying their own governing parties certain principles such as a “leadership role” in society, the absolute dominance of party ideology, a monopoly of the cadre. It was also about seeking stance *vis-à-vis* their own history. In the Czech Republic and Slovakia this also came to include the handling of the relationship to the Prague Spring and the half-million KSČ members that had to leave the party in the early days of so-called normalisation. The wave of change and the end of the Soviet hegemony at the turn of the 1990s had three fundamental consequences in the Central Europe region: re-orientation towards the West, the transfer from a command economy to market capitalism and the transformation of the system of one-party government into one of free political competition. These constants constituted a basic political “post-communist” consensus both within the democratic political forces and within the scope of public opinion (book: D. Kunštát, Behind of red curtain, Institute of Sociology, Academy of Science CR, Praha 2013 – the following facts are taken from there).

In Poland and Hungary the post-communist parties accepted the policies of their reform wings. They transformed themselves into “catch all parties” closer to the social democratic parties of Western Europe. At the same time, individual bodies of opinion splintered off. Some of these survive to today, but their political impact is quite marginal. Transformed parties came to power in the 1990s as social democratic or socialist parties. They both got themselves into crises and are now in the opposition. It is generally true that the successful transformation of the Czech Communist Party – i.e. cleansing it of its communist burden, in the understanding of the political mainstream – means its social-democratisation and reformation, practically reducing its membership base.

The process was similar in Slovakia as well. The original Communist party gave rise to the post-communist SDL’ (Party of Democratic Left, which also shared power in the 1990s. A crisis followed, however, as is traditional for the “reformed” communist parties of the post-Soviet bloc, as did a loss of political positions and voter confidence. Its core moved on to the newly-emerging SMER party, which now declares itself to be a “pure” social democratic party. With that, the restructuring of the original Communist Party was complete.

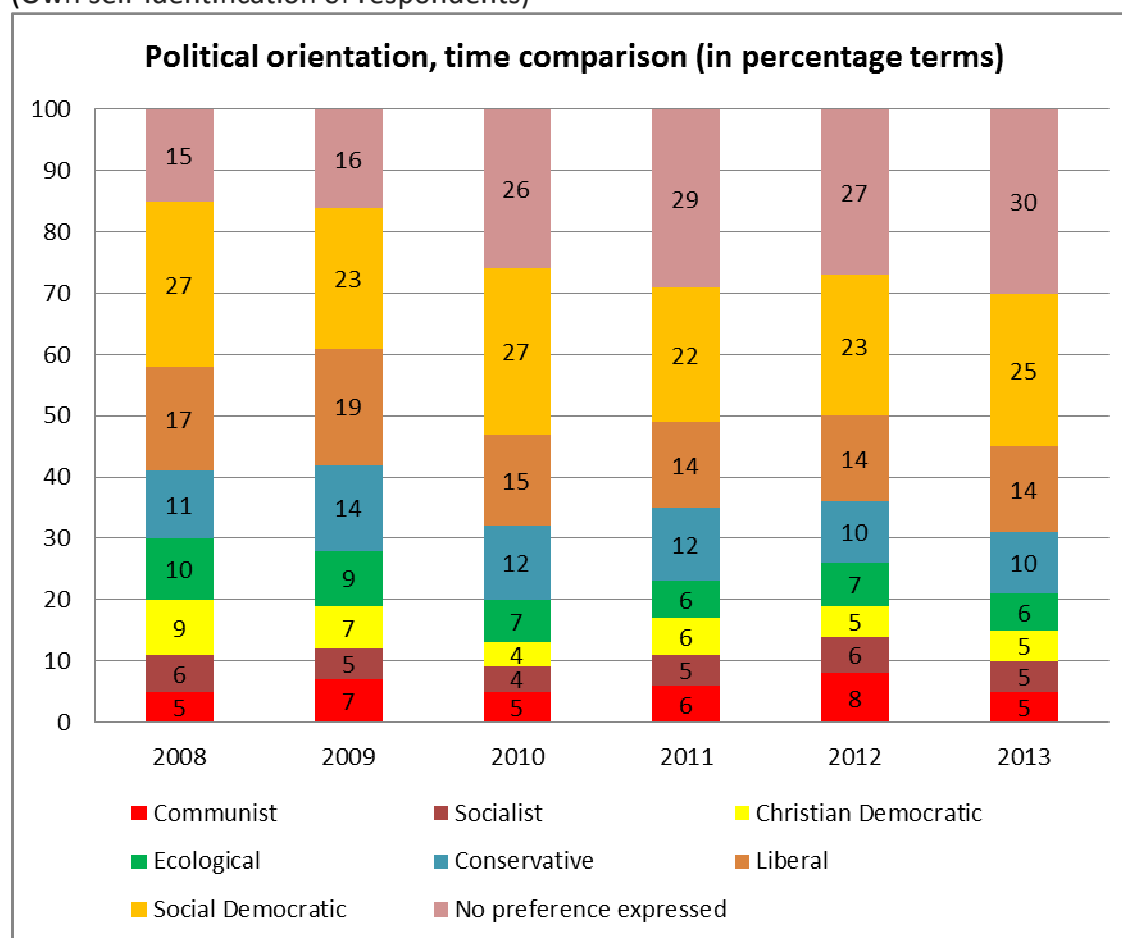
In addition to this movement there also existed other post-communist formations, the most distinct of which today would seem to be the Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS, tying in to the communist segment), which nonetheless only has the support of around 1%. It is a member party of the EL, although it has been practically inactive there of late. This does not mean though that there are no voters for the radical left in Slovakia, but SMER has integrated all leftist elements into itself, including those voters. It remains to be seen how long this system can work, dependent as it is on its charismatic leader. In the most recent parliamentary elections (2012) SMER received 44.4% of the vote while KSS won 0.7%. The presidential election in the spring of this year though saw the SMER chairman and the government defeated; while in the European elections SMER received 24.1%, KSS 1.5% and another radical left-wing group 0.5%. It would seem that the moderate left in Slovakia has reached a boundary that they cannot overcome, and that the pendulum is starting to swing back to the right. What will become of the Slovak radical left when that happens is an open question.

CPBM (KSČM) is a rarity in the area of Central Europe. In none of the other post- communist countries does a communist and little-transformed party play an analogous role in the party

system. In none of them does such a party enjoy such large and stable voter support. KSČM never lost the position of a significant and fully relevant political force, or the potential that allows it to put pressure on other parliamentary parties.

How did this “miracle” come about? Through a number of factors. It is certainly not true what some pundits from the anti-communist camp say, that communists continue to constitute a danger to the state and society. This line of argumentation states that we see here the manifestation of “friends of the old communist systems” who are only interested in regaining their power. A far more precise point of view is this: that in its 25-year development, CPBM has gone through several phases. In the first period it looked for a new path towards the future. There were partial reforms and adaptations to new conditions. The membership base changed too, with part of the original members including several members of Parliament leaving and creating new entities. Many of these later vanished, with only the tiny SDS (Party of Democratic Socialism) – an EL member party – operating long-term. Czech communists and their party have been under the pressure of the anti-communist segment of Czech society and the new political elites since the outset of the 90s. V.Handl characterised the historical development of CPBM (KSČM) and its transformation as a process “from a strategy of left-wing withdrawal to unwilling Europeanization”. Like a journey starting in a ghetto and prevailing over an orthodox communist course, through a period of stabilisation to the position of sought-after political partner – though often with aversion on the part of its partners. I would say that it was thanks to the Communist Party’s only partial reformation and its being under heavy anti-communist pressure from outside that it was able to maintain its political position and unity with relative success. The “centrist” policy that the CPBM (KSČM) leadership has undertaken – perhaps more intuitively than deliberately – has proven to be successful in the long-term. We must also be aware of the fact that the post-communist arrangement in the Czech Republic could not have been a foundation for the formation of social democracy. Czech Social Democracy (ČSSD) operated in exile from 1948 and at the beginning of the 1990s it once again began operating at home and gradually building up its organisational and core structure until its victory in parliamentary elections (1998). Since the mid-1990s the Czech left thus hosts a stable structure of moderate and radical leftists represented in practice by ČSSD and KSČM. There are of course in Czech society radical leftist forces of a non-communist (and sometimes even anti-communist) nature. Never have they put together a political force of any consequence, however. Their significant representatives are in left-wing groups emerging ad hoc within the scope of NGOs etc., or are occasionally offered candidacies in one of the centre-left entities (closer for example to the Green Party, SPOZ etc.). On the other end of the spectrum is the KSČ-ČSSP (Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – Czechoslovak party of labour) formation which claims continuity with the former pre-revolution Communist party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) and avows the principles of Marxism-Leninism. In the European elections they received 0.56% of the vote.

Political orientation of population in the Czech Republic (Own self-identification of respondents)



CVVM 2013CPBM (KSČM) today and what exactly does it stand for? Once again we tend to run in to various myths and would-be scientific opinions rather than relevant facts. The Sociological Institute of the Academy of Sciences (D.Kunštát) compiled a relatively detailed analysis of the position of the Communist Party, its members and voters in contemporary Czech society. I have little leeway here to deal with the many important, interesting and, to some, even surprising points that arose from this analysis. So I will touch upon them telegraphically, in fragments:

- From the point of view of political science, Communist party is deemed to be an anti-system party; even the public sees it as a party that has at the very least reservations against the current system and does not envision merely repairing it. Its policy aim (even in KSČM documents) is modern socialism, albeit very vaguely defined. Policy-wise KSČM is seen as a left-wing alternative to Social Democracy. Importantly, it is perceived as such by a large portion of the public, to say nothing of its own voters. The cornerstone of the party's political support are those who were among the defeated in the post-revolution transformation. It is interesting to note that there has yet to be a document compiled as would describe a vision for the future – Socialism for the 21st Century. In-party discussions about such a document are still underway. In any case, the party's supporters neither discuss the concept nor mourn its absence. "In terms of the political stances of voters, KSČM seems to be a collectively organised alternative to the (current) democratic order..." Notwithstanding that, KSČM does not acknowledge anything other

- than democratic ways and means towards social transformation. KSČM is not a “revolutionary” party outside of the democratic framework;
- Anti-communism is gradually becoming more and more stale, and continues to be entrenched in an ever more narrow group of citizens;
 - Communist ideas were never implemented by Czech society from out of the “barbarous East”, but are a very powerful integral part of one domestic tradition;
 - The constituency of communist candidates is neither the exclusive nor majority recipient of the votes of “former communists”, as certain commentators are fond of saying (for example in 2010 the majority of pre-revolution communists supported other political entities than KSČM, the majority probably backing social democrats). The majority of the party’s current electorate has nothing to do with the previous Communist party of Czechoslovakia - KSČ. The CPBM (KSČM) constituency is older – 58.6 years on average (2010), 44.3 for other parties. However, it is civically active - 40% of KSČM voters are involved in various organisations (interest-group, sports, fire brigades, unions etc.). One third of the voters are even unwilling to accept the return of “communism” or any other personal dictatorship. They look favourably on socialism, followed by communism, and least favourably on capitalism and dictatorship. Democracy on this scale is roughly in the middle. At the same time, many of them do not see socialism (communism) and democracy as mutually exclusive systems. They both simultaneously received positive appraisals.
 - The perception of KSČM by non-voters is gradually changing. A slight majority of non-communist voters consider the party to be “totalitarian”, but 3/5 of them acknowledge the party has the same rights and obligations as others. There are still 2/5 of non-KSČM voters who hold the opinion that the party should be outlawed, or otherwise restricted in its activities. More than 1/3, however, believe that the Communist Party has been transformed into a modern political party, and that it is the only political entity that has not discredited itself and supports a Czech foreign orientation. Half of them consider KSČM to be a representative of the poor, and 2/5 believe that “communists” respect private business.

Why am I talking primarily about Communist party? Because there are not many others to mention. The other radical leftist forces on the Czech political scene are fragmented and in many ways marginal. They have no significant support even among the part of the public that is left-oriented. Partly because they do not present themselves sufficiently and do not offer the citizens a credible vision. On the other hand, there are many left-wing activists doing a great deal of praiseworthy and valuable work “down there” at the communal level, in non-profit organisations, dealing with ecology or social work. Unfortunately these endeavours are not transformed to the higher political levels where they could and should be influencing the processes of decision making.

I would be glad if this presentation contributed at least a little to the understanding of what is happening to the east of the West, and if understanding of the differences between individual European regions and their citizens, understanding of the dialectics of the general and the particular, led to a unified and well-conceived left-wing strategy throughout Europe, in the West and in the East.

Jirí Hudecek

The European election in the Czech Republic.

The official results are as follows:

Participation 1 528 250 out of 8 395 132 voters, i.e. 18,20% (99,2% valid votes).

This is record low, both in 2009 and 2004 there was over 2 mil of voters (a low number anyway).

Parties and elected MEPs

ANO (populist, in the government) 16,13%, 4 mandates (Telicka, Jezek, Charanzová, Dlabajová)

TOP09 (neoliberal, opposition) 15,95%, 4 mandates (Niedermayer, Pospisil, Polcak, Stetina)

CSSD (social democrats, in the government) 14,17%, 4 mandates (Keller, Sehnalova, Poc, Poche)

KSCM (= CPBM, opposition) 166 478 votes, 10,98%, 3 mandates (Konecna, Mastalka, Ransdorf)

KDU-CSL (Christian, opposition) 9,95%, 3 mandates (Svoboda, Sojdrova, Zdechovsky)

ODS (neoliberal, opposition) 7,67%, 2 mandates (Zahradil, Tosenovsky)

Svobodni (= "Free", eurosceptic/right wing/neoliberal) 5,24%, 1 mandate (Mach)

39 parties participated in this election (highest number so far), only 3 additional of them came over 3%.

Pirates (they fell with 4.78% short of the needed 5%), Green Party 3,77%, and Usvit přímé demokracie T. Okamury (= Dawn of the direct democracy of Tomio Okamura, another eurosceptic party) 3,12%

The remaining parties were unable to cross 1% line, the best among them being KSC (= Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, "to the left" from CPBM with 8500 votes. two extreme right-wing parties ("Workers Party of Social Justice") and "Right wing" (the official name fills a whole page) got approx 8000 votes each.

The winner is - as expected in polls - the party of the billionaire Babis, established in 2011 just to - almost - win the last parliamentary elections. He is now the most visible member of the government (Minister of Finances) and, moreover, they icked up Telicka, who is - regardless of his real showing in the past - considered by many as competent and able to represent the Czech republic. In fact, their result is somewhat lower than expected, and lower than in the last parliamentary elections (both in absolute numbers and percentage). Similar result got the main governing party, the social democrats. In fact, these two parties were very close last year, too. They just reversed their positions. A remarkable fact: the leader of their list, strongly left-leaning ecologist and sociologist Keller, was - in absolute numbers - the second most successful from all candidates in individual votes (over 50 000 votes; best result got, from the second position, Pospisil from TOP, formerly the Minister of Justice from the ODS)

The main opposition party TOP09 improved their percentage in comparison with the last parliamentary elections (but got much less votes as most others, too).

The results for CPBM are somewhat lower than expected, and lower compared to the last EP election (and with one mandate lost is a sort of disappointment). But they are not surprising (cf. our report of political situation in CR to the ExB in Rome). The reasons are, in brief: lack of a personality with some appeal "outside the party ranks and supporters" (as V. Remek used to be), large abstention among the usual CPBM voters (in part due to anti EU position), ability of the social-democratic leader Keller to attract some of the traditional voters for radical Left.

Jirí Hudecek, member of ExB EL, vice chairman of SDS (Party of democratic socialism, CZ)

Results of the parliamentary elections 2013 und EP-Elections 2004 - 2014							
Party / Coalition	Electio ns 2013 in %	+/- %	Seats	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	ÉP 2014 in %	Seats
CSSD (social- democrats)	20,45	-1,63	50	8,78	22,39	14,17	4
Populist MilliardärsParty ANO	18,65	+18,65	47			16,13	4
KSCM (communist)	14,91	+3,64	33	20,27	14,18	10,98	3
TOP neoliberal Opposition	11,99	-4,71	26			15,95	4
ODS dem. Citizens Party	7,72	-12,50	16	30,05	31,45	7,6	2
Usvit	6,88	+6,88	14			3,12	
KDU-CSL (christian- demokratisch)	6,78	+2,39	14	9,58	7,65	9,95	3
SZ (Greens)	3,19	+0,75		3,17	2,06	3,77	
SNK-ED				9,58			
SuV					4,26	5,24	
Pirates					2,89	4,78	
Turnout	59,48			28,30	28,22	19,5	

Andreas Nissen

The EU-elections in Denmark: TRIUMPHANT POPULISM

1. At elections to the EU-Parliament their whole country is one electoral district, i.e. people can vote for the same candidates all over the country. One can either vote for a party or list or cast a personal preference vote for a particular candidate. Denmark sends 13 members to the EP, between 7-8 % of the votes are necessary to win a seat. Because of this quite high barring clause electoral alliances are perwitteded.

At these elections there were two such alliances:

- One between the Social Democrats, the Socialist People's Party, and the Social Liberals. This alliance secured the Social Liberals their seat.
- and one between the Liberal Party and the Conservatives.

2. The turn-out this time was 56,3%, 3,2 percentage points down from 2009, but still very respectable compared to the EU-average of 40%.

3. The final results, compared to 2009:

Danish People's Party:	26,6% (15,3%),	4 seats (2)
The Social Democrats:	19,1% (21,5%)	3 seats (4)
The Liberal Party:	16,7% (20,2%)	2 seats (3)
The Socialist People's Party:	10,9% (15,4%)	1 seat (2)
The Conservatives:	9,2%(12,7%)	1 seat (1)
The People's Movement against EU:	8,1%(7,2%	1 seat (1)
The Social Liberals:	6,5% (4,35)	1 seat (0)

The right wing Liberal Alliance received only 3% and was not represented.

4. The most remarkable feature of these elections is no doubt the landslide victory of the Danish People's Party (DF). Like the UKIP and the Front National was also this EU-skeptical party nationwide the biggest party in this election.

The DF managed very skilfully to capitalize on the growing unease with the phenomenon of social dumping and the presence in Denmark of a considerable number of migrant workers particularly from Eastern Europe. In this connection one must mention the party's leading candidate, Mr. Morten Messerschmidt. He is a young, charismatic and very gifted politician who has given the DF a touch of respectability. He has very skilfully succeeded in articulating the concerns of many working class voters, who would usually support the Social democrats or other mainstream parties. He alone received a record number of 465,000 personal

preference votes, i.e. about 80% of all votes cast on the party and more than 20% of all votes in the election!

5. Before turning to the results of the Left and the main themes of the elections, I will comment some other features of the elections.

Like most other parties the Social Democrats did not field any really high-profile candidates and they were not able to counter the offensive of the Danish People's Party in a way that would keep social democrat voters from voting for Mr. Messerschmidt. Still the sentiment in the party is that things could have been worse - it is still the second largest party, its losses were relatively limited considering the general unpopularity of the present centre-left government, and the fourth seat it won in 2009 was very marginal.

The Liberal Party, however, suffered a resounding defeat. This defeat is mainly due to a number of affairs concerning the extravagant habits of its leader, the former Prime Minister, Mr. Lars Løkke Rasmussen. The latest of these affairs exploded just before Election Day, and liberal voters clearly punished the party by staying at home or voting for other parties.

The defeat has thrown the party into a deep crisis, where the leadership of Mr. Rasmussen is being thrown into doubt. This crisis is the most important immediate political fall-out of the elections: it casts doubt on the ability of the centre-right opposition to get their act together before the upcoming parliamentary elections in Denmark, and gives new hope for the embattled incumbent government.

6. While the populist right triumphed beyond expectations the results for the Left were not so bad.

The Socialist People's Party (SF) lost about a third of its votes from 2009 and one seat. This may seem a resounding defeat, but a comparison with 2009 is not really relevant.

In 2009 the party was at an unprecedented peak of its popularity which it has not been able to sustain. In 2011 the SF joined the centre-left government coalition with the Social Democrats and the Social Liberals and thus became a party in government for the first time in its more than fifty years long history. Participation in an unpopular government with the a long series of concessions especially to the Social Liberals threatened to obliterate the progressive identity of the party and caused growing resentment among party members. This resentment exploded in the beginning of this year when a revolt from party members forced SF to leave the government and to elect a new party leadership, the second within a year.

This profound crisis brought the party to the verge of extinction, but it seems that the new party leadership has managed to stabilize the party, giving it a clearer profile outside the government.

At the beginning of the election campaign it seemed very doubtful that SF would be represented in the EU-Parliament at all, so a vote of almost 11% is a remarkable recovery and it must give cause for optimism in the party.

The party is a member of the Green group in the EP, and it is consistently pro-EU, but with a green and progressive reformist touch. Its leading candidate and long time MEP, Mrs. Margrethe Auken has been presented in the election campaign as a progressive watch dog in

the EP against the neo-liberal policies of the EU, and this has clearly had some resonance with quite a few progressive voters who under no circumstances want to be identified the populism of the DF. Mrs. Auken had a very good personal score, as she won 153.000 personal preference votes, the third largest number.

The Red-Green Alliance decided at its Annual Conference not to field its own list at the EP-elections but to recommend its voters to support the People's Movement against the EU (FB), as we had done at previous elections. The decision was made after a membership vote with a narrow majority in favor of supporting the FB. The issue had caused a heated debate, and the outcome of the discussion left a substantial minority that was dissatisfied and not particularly motivated for supporting the FB.

But the RGA had featured very prominently in the FB and in the campaign. 7 of the 20 candidates on the FB-list are members of the RGA, among them 3 of the top 4.

The leading candidate and new MEP is Rina Ronja Kari, a young woman. She has replaced the political veteran and prominent member of the RGA, Søren Søndergaard, MEP from 2007-2014.

In spite of her relative inexperience Rina has managed to put her mark on the election campaign together with the other RGA candidates. It has been of great importance for the RGA to present a progressive and EU-skeptical alternative to the Danish People's Party, and in spite of relatively bad odds at the outset of the campaign the FB stood its ground and consolidated its seat. The FB has been associated to the GUE/NGL and it will continue to do so.

Within the RGA we will now have to evaluate the outcome of the election and discuss whether we will stick to our present position supporting the FB, or whether we should envisage fielding our own list of candidates at the elections of 2019.

7. Some general comments.

As indicated above the main, and dominating, theme of the election campaign was the question of social dumping and the transfer of welfare benefits to other countries. These are themes that at the core of the Nordic labour market and social model. The DF managed to profit from this agenda with its slightly veiled xenophobia, this time directed at East Europeans and not against immigrants from the South.

This obviously struck a chord with a substantial number of voters, and these are questions that not party will be able to ignore.

It is essential that the Left will be able to combine a defense of the Nordic model with an internationalist attitude that shows solidarity with migrant workers while attacking the employers, especially in the construction sector, in agriculture and in the service sector, who profit greatly from hiring underpaid workers, working at lamentable working conditions.

Results of the parliamentary elections 2011 und EP-Elections bis 2014									
Party / Coalition	2011 nat. Elections in %	+/- %	Seats	EP- 1994 in %	EP- 1999 in %	EP- 2004 in %	EP- 2009 in %	ÉP 2014 in %	Seats
V – Liberal	26,70	+0,5	47	18,96	23,39	19,36	20,24	16,70	2
O- DF Dän. People's -Party	12,30	-1,6	22		5,83	6,80	15,28	26,60	4
C - konservativ People's Party	4,90	-5,5	8	17,74	8,47	11,35	12,69	9,20	1
I - liberal Alliance	5,00	+2,2	9					2,90	0
A- social-democr.	24,80	-0,7	44	15,83	16,46	32,65	21,49	19,10	3
F - SF Socialist. People's Party	9,20	-3,8	16	8,58	7,11	7,96	15,87	10,90	1
B- RV Social-liberal	9,50	+4,4	17	8,48	0,14	6,36	4,27	6,50	1
N FmEC/ Enhedslisten (RGA)	6,70	+4,5	12	10,32	7,29	5,17	7,20	8,00	1
JB				15,23	16,11	9,08	2,37	-	-
Turnout	87,70			53,27	0,46	47,89	59,54	56,4	

Inger Johansen

The Danish People's Party - a success story based on a conscious journey towards the centre of Danish politics

The Danish People's Party (DPP)³⁸ was the big winner of the EP elections in Denmark with 26.7 % of the votes. This was a rise in the party's votes of 11.2 % compared to the EP elections in 2009. The Danish People's Party was also one of the most successful in the EP elections at EU level.

But there is a remarkable distinction between the Danish People's Party and most of the other extreme rightwing parties in Europe: Studying the development of the DPP you will find one of the most strategically oriented European extreme right wing parties in Europe - and less ideological and more pragmatic than many of the others. No doubt other extreme rightwing European parties are informed about and discuss the strategy and policies of the DPP? To which degree will this and the party's success influence the other parties?

How to explain this success?

Of course it is not that the Danish electorate has suddenly become extreme rightwing and xenophobic that made over a fourth of the electorate vote in favour of the DPP.

No - it would be more truthful to say that it is the DPP - basically a populist, xenophobic, nationalist and extreme rightwing party - that has moved towards and tried to compromise with the positions of the broad working classes rather than the other way around. Interestingly and typically, the DPP has joined the group of European Conservatives and Reformists, the ECR, - with the British Conservatives - in the European Parliament, and not the more rightwing and EU sceptical group the EFDD, Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy.

Looking at the strategy of the DPP, this choice is completely in keeping with its goal to become an influential party in the centre of Danish politics.

More successful in the EP elections than at a national level

It needs to be underlined that the DPP's success is also remarkable but less so with regard to the party's position in the Danish political landscape, where it is now at 17.9 % of the votes (June 30 opinion poll)³⁹ - around 9 % down from the EP election result, but still with a substantial rise of 5.6 % of the votes since the last Danish parliamentary elections in 2011.⁴⁰ It has 5 % less support than the Social Democrats and „Venstre“, the big liberal party, which both muster around 23 % each in this poll.

As the DPP supports the formation of a rightwing/bourgeois government after the next parliamentary elections, due to take place before September 15, 2015,⁴¹ they may very well

³⁸ See recently updated article on the politics and history of the Danish People's Party - English version - in Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danish_People%27s_Party. The article also contains a long list of references and some sources.

³⁹ Altinget.dk, 30 June, 2014, published from the Danish daily *Jyllandsposten*: „Måling: Dansk Folkeparti redder blå blok“ (Poll: Danish People's Party saves blue bloc of parties). A poll conducted by Voxmeter for Ritzau.

⁴⁰ As a matter of fact the 2011 parliamentary elections were the first for the DPP to suffer a slight setback, reaching 12.3% compared to 13.8% in the 2007 elections.

⁴¹ Danish parliamentary elections are called by the government, but according to Danish law no later than four

be able to secure a victory for the rightwing bloc of parties. But the party has also recently announced that in the more distant future it might choose to support the Social Democrats.

⁴² So the Danish People's Party has advanced both at a Danish level - but even more so in EP elections, the new voters attracted to the party in the EP elections mainly former voters of the Liberals in "Venstre" and of the Social Democrats.⁴³

The Danish People's Party does not seem to have attracted any EU critical supporters of the radical left, e.g. the Red-Green Alliance, which did not stand in the elections but as in previous EP elections chose to support the People's Movement Against the EU, which won one seat in the elections as in 2009.

The explanations for the most recent success of the Danish People's Party are diverse and both national and EU related, the most important being on one hand the conscious strategy of the DPP to capitalize on popular disaffection with the mainstream political parties because of their support of austerity policies and social cuts and these parties' uncritical position with regard to the EU.

On the other, very cleverly to link this disaffection with the social dumping induced by immigration from Eastern Europe due to the EU's free movement of labour - and thus to link up with the general EU scepticism among a broad section of Danish working class and many other voters.

Thirdly, the DPP had a very charismatic and clever top candidate in the EP elections - Morten Messerschmidt - who managed to attract the largest number ever of personal votes in Danish EP elections - 465,758 votes.

Lastly it should be added that a scandal involving Lars Løkke Rasmussen, the previous Prime Minister and Chairman of the liberal party "Venstre", just before the EP elections,⁴⁴ made many voters turn away from "Venstre" and to the DPP.

DPP populism and real politics

The DPP is verbally a very EU sceptical party, but in actual fact less EU sceptical than for example the Red-Green Alliance. The DPP is not opposed to the EU as an institution and system, it is not anti-capitalist, it is in favour of the single market - but proposes it to be reduced by introducing an opt-out on welfare.⁴⁵

The same way, although the DPP voices strong opposition to social dumping, it does very little in reality to reduce it, in fact more often it has voted against such steps.⁴⁶ Likewise, despite the party's stand as strong supporters of the weak and elderly, it has made compromises where it has supported cuts in public welfare in the party's work as elected representatives in local councils.

The DPP promotes itself as a centre party but in reality it votes like a rightwing party.⁴⁷ But still this populism and hypocrisy does not seem to affect the broad popular view of the DPP.

years after the previous elections.

⁴² See recently updated article on the politics and history of the Danish People's Party - Danish version - in Wikipedia: http://da.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dansk_Folkeparti

⁴³ Altinget.dk, 26 May, 2014.

⁴⁴ Lars Løkke Rasmussen, the former Prime Minister, had been buying expensive clothes and holidays paid for by his party.

⁴⁵ Press release, Danish People's Party, 27 December, 2013. DR (Danish Radio): EU valg (EP elections), 22 May, 2014.

⁴⁶ Information, 11 July, 2014

⁴⁷ Information, 21 July, 2014

During the years of bourgeois rule from 2001 - 2011, the DPP pursued the well-known policies of an extreme right wing party - as reflected in its restrictive immigration policies. These years were extremely successful for the party in terms of political impact, as the DPP (with between 12 and 13.9 % in the elections) became the parliamentary basis of the bourgeois government and used this to promote and realize these policies in various deals with the government. This led to a serious deterioration of the political and economic situation of immigrants and refugees in Denmark.

It should be noted that the Social Democratic-led government since 2011 has done nothing to change these policies, apart from abolishing the so-called "start help" together with other "poverty" benefits, which meant the removal of the lowest rate of social benefits. So it seems that the main political achievement of the DPP has been that by strengthening the party by attracting the votes of the mainstream parties, it has also been able to move the mainstream parties to the right - especially with regard to immigration policies.

Moving towards the centre of Danish politics

But the DPP has also softened its stance over the recent years. There is a focused and determined strategy of seeming to move towards the centre of Danish politics, which the DDP has pursued cleverly for years. In this regard joining the ECR in the EP was a natural thing to do.

This strategy builds on a solid analysis and understanding of the broad Danish working class voters, who are generally not attracted to right wing extremism. Neither they nor many of the lower middle class voters and pensioners, who were among the first to vote in favour of the DPP, are attracted to fascism for example. Nazi or fascist inclinations were always a very tiny minority culture in Denmark. But many of these working class and lower middle class voters were and are concerned with the issue of "too many" immigrants and refugees, seemingly threatening their jobs or the welfare state. The DPP has sought to exploit this reality in order to strengthen its strategy and party.

Looking at the style of the party it has clearly become less overtly racist. For years it attacked immigrants and refugees, especially of Muslim background, and underlined the importance of being Danish. But since the last elections in 2011, especially with a new party chairman in 2012, when Kristian Thulesen Dahl replaced Pia Kjaersgaard, and with him a new more lenient style, the effort to move towards the centre of Danish politics has become even more obvious.

The DPP was set up in 1995 after a split in the then Progress Party,⁴⁸ a party considerably more extreme and rightwing than the DPP ever was - a real extreme right wing protest party. Those that established the new party were fully conscious of the fact that in order to gain influence they had to create a party able to appeal to and attract a much larger section of the electorate. The DPP was not to be a protest party only. In 1998 the DPP had its first breakthrough managing to gain 7.4 % of the votes in the parliamentary elections. After trimming and centralizing the party - expelling those that opposed this -, it slowly gained more ground.

Political developments have favoured the DPP. Both its impact during the former bourgeois government and now with the popular disenchantment with the centre-left government

⁴⁸ See article on the politics and history of the Danish People's Party in Wikipedia:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danish_People%27s_Party.

from 2011, which made it possible to attract many Social Democratic voters. The party now musters among its members, a broad section of the Danish population - also trade union members. Members of the party no longer consider it shameful to admit that they are.⁴⁹

A recent study shows that the DPP is now the biggest working class party in Denmark - bigger than the two big mainstream parties - with 26.7 % of working class voters supporting the party.⁵⁰

After gaining a huge number of new voters in the EP elections, the perspective of the party is clearly to try to turn them into a stable electorate of the party. The DPP does not wish to seem to be associated with extreme right wing parties like the French Front National or the UKIP in Britain, which advocates leaving the EU, as this could harm the party's standing and strategy.

The challenge to the left

This development of moving the party forward as the mainstream parties are losing ground also seems to be part of a reorientation in Danish politics, which the progress of the Red-Green Alliance since 2011 (around 10 % in the polls in May-July 2014⁵¹) is also part of. Just like the DPP the Red-Green Alliance has attracted a huge number of new voters, disaffected with the Social Democratic-led government's austerity policies and attacks on the welfare state. But the RGA's success with this is limited compared to that of the DPP, also as regards attracting Social Democratic voters.

Therefore the crucial strengthening of the DPP is clearly a challenge to the Danish left and the Red-Green Alliance.

The RGA tried for a number of years to demonstrate - in figures - how the verbal assurances of the DPP of opposing welfare cuts, did not match the reality.⁵² But without much impact.

Recently one of the RGA parliamentary candidates interviewed together with a DPP MP in a Danish daily⁵³ voiced the opinion that developing a left-wing populism, as the DPP was using right-wing populism, maybe could help the radical left.

However, populism is after all more a tactical than a political answer.

There are as well now openings from the Danish Socialist People's Party (SF) towards the DPP for closer cooperation - for example around concrete issues such as the new job reform of the government.⁵⁴ SF is politically close to the Social Democrats⁵⁵ and members of the Greens in the European parliament.

The RGA is still having a rethink concerning the measures to be taken for changing the situation and attracting the disaffected voters, now supporting the DPP. It is important that some of the concerns of these voters should be taken seriously and be addressed by the left

With regard to political answers, the RGA is already very EU critical, even more than the DPP.

⁴⁹ *Information*, 5 - 6 July, 2014, and 8 July, 2014.

⁵⁰ According to a Gallup poll conducted by Altinget.dk, February 2014

⁵¹ **Capitalist**: Opinion polls of the government led by Helle Thorning-Schmidt II and supporting parties

⁵² See *Information*, 5 - 6 July, 2014: The Red-Green Alliance made reports from 2005 to 2008 on the complicity of the Danish People's Party in social cuts. The DPP was doing this in two out of five local administrations.

See also article on the politics and history of the Danish People's Party - Danish version - in Wikipedia:

http://da.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dansk_Folkeparti - footnote 7.

⁵³ *Information*, 15 July, 2014.

⁵⁴ *Børsen*, 14 May, 2014.

⁵⁵ Until January 2014, SF was a member of the Social-Democratic-led coalition government.

Developing more EU criticism as such seems to be much more relevant for radical left parties elsewhere in the EU as one way to deal with the concerns and EU scepticism of the broad public, who might see extreme rightwing parties as an alternative.

But there is no doubt that - as the RGA had chosen again to support the Danish People's Movement in the recent EP elections - the RGA did not get the chance to fully campaign on left wing issues such as for example linking opposition to EU neo-liberal economic policies and austerity directly with the austerity policies that a broad section of the Danish working classes also oppose at a national level. Denmark is not a Euro-member country - but despite this the Danish centre-left government has chosen to comply with EU economic policies and the fiscal pact.

The RGA does have an opportunity here to reach more sections of working class voters that are presently attracted to the DPP.

One of the strengths of the radical left is certainly as well to be able to link criticism of neo-liberal policies with anti-capitalism and to develop credible alternatives to liberal and SD policies - with a socialist perspective.

Holger Polit

Estonia Elections to the European Parliament, May 2014

1. The elections to the European Parliament are subject to a 5% threshold. The parties subwith electoral lists, but the voters must select and vote for an individual candidate.
2. This year's elections to the European Parliament were mainly dominated (besides the domestic issues) by the current conflict over the Ukraine and in particular, the Russian activity in this conflict. This placed an increased focus on Estonia's membership in the European Union and in NATO. In contrast to 2009, there were no major surprises with respect to the usual domestic constellations.

3. Election results

Voter turnout: 36.6% (2009: 43.2%)

Reform Party (liberal)	24.3%	2 seats
Center Party (left-liberal)	22.3%	2 seats
Patriotic Union (conservative)	13.9%	1 seat
Social Democrats	13.6%	1 seat
one-person list Indrek Tarand	13.2%	1 seat

4. The Center Party traditionally represents the interests of the russophone minority in Estonia. It has a cautious, left-liberal political alignment. So far, despite consistently good election results, it has not been able to enter into a government coalition. The mayor of Tallinn belongs to this party.

The television entertainer Indrek Tarand, who runs on his own, will be returning to the European Parliament. In 2009, his 25% share of the vote would even have sufficed to win two seats. This time around, he received significantly fewer votes, but still enough to repeat his success.

Results of the parliamentary elections 2013 und EP-Elections 2009 und 2014								
Party / Coalition	Stimmen	In %	+/- %	Seats	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seats
RE estnische ReformParty	164.255	28,60	+0,8	33	12,22	15,33	24,30	2
Kesk Estnische ZentrumsParty	134.124	23,30	-2,8	26	17,53	26,07	22,30	2
IRL - konserv.	118.023	20,50	+2,6	23	10,50	12,22	13,90	1
social-dem. SDE	98.307	17,10	+6,5	19	36,79	8,69	13,60	1
EER - Greens Estlands	21.823	3,80	-3,3			2,73	0,30	
ERL People's union Rahvaliit	12.184	2,10	+5,0		8,05			
Indrek Tarand (Greens)						25,81	13,20	1
Turnout		63,50			26,58	43,90	36,4	

Teppo Eskelinen

European election results in Finland 2014

The Left managed to get a clear electoral victory in Finland. With an increase of 3,4 per cent of the votes, the Left Alliance could fairly call itself the only winner of the elections. This meant also the Left Alliance's return to the European Parliament. The new MEP is Merja Kyllönen, second term MP and former minister of transport.

The general election results provided little surprises, as the opinion polls quite well predicted the final results. Quite expectedly, the conservatives and the centre party were the biggest parties. The most interesting element in the result of the centre party was the total division in the attitudes towards European integration amongst the top candidates, as both leading Euro-skeptical and current commission member were elected.

The right-wing populist True Finns party clearly waited for an electoral victory. They indeed increased their popularity from the European election of 2009, but on the other hand are clearly in decline from the peak of their support in the 2011 parliamentary election, and had problems calling their result a victory. The social democrats finished behind the True Finns with a humiliating defeat, scoring historically low at 12,3 per cent. This catastrophe will call for deep self-reflection within the SDP.

Also the Greens scored considerably lower than in 2009, losing their second MEP. This was yet somewhat expected, as the 2009 score was unusually high. The last seat went to the Swedish People's Party, which managed to keep its MEP (who is, incidentally, an old Marxist radical).

The Left proceeded in almost all areas of the country. In Helsinki constituency, the Left Alliance finished third, ahead of both True Finns and the Social democrats. In the Suomussalmi constituency, home to fresh MEP Kyllönen, the Left Alliance got 50,7% of the overall vote.

The campaign of the Left was generally successful. Behind Kyllönen but with a considerable personal vote (number 9 in the country) was Li Andersson, the chairperson of the Left Youth. Andersson's campaign was highly inspiring especially for the younger generation of the Left, and she had considerable support in the large cities (number 2 in Helsinki). Kyllönen, on the other hand, could mobilize her base in eastern and northern parts of the country. Other Left candidates, despite an active campaign, finished far behind the two.

The other EL group, the communist party, finished with 0,3 per cent of the vote, showing a steady decline from 2009.

Overall results:

Conservatives: Kokoomus: 22,6% 3 seats

Liberals: Centre 19,7% 3 seats, Swedish people's party 6,7% 1 seat

Nationalist, unclear alignment: True Finns 12,9%, 2 seats

Social democrats: 12,3% 2 seats

GUE/NGL: Left Alliance 9,3% 1 seat, Communist party 0,3%, 0 seats

The Greens: 9,3% 1 seat

Results of the parliamentary elections 2011 und EP-Elections bis 2014									
Party / Coalition	2011 nat. Elections in %	+/- %	Seats	EP-1996 in %	EP-1999 in %	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seats
KOK	20,40	-1,9	44	20,17	25,27	23,71	23,21	22,60	3
Social-dem. SDP	19,10	-2,3	42	21,45	17,86	21,16	17,54	12,30	2
Right-populist. Perus/PS True Finns	19,10	+15	39		0,79	0,54	9,79	12,90	2
Liberal KESK	15,80	-7,3	35	24,36	21,30	23,37	19,03	19,70	3
Left-Alliance	8,10	-0,7	14	10,51	9,08	9,13	5,93	9,30	1
VIHR Greens	7,30	-1,2	10	7,59	13,43	10,43	12,40	9,30	1
RKP	4,30	-0,3	10	5,75		Alliance			
KD	4,00	-0,9	6			4,28		5,20	
RKF/SFP swed. People's Party				5,75	6,77	5,70	6,09	6,70	1
turnout-	87,70			57,60	30,14	39,18	40,48	40,90	

Roger Martelli

The French Shock

The European elections, coming on the heels of local elections, were a disaster for the left. They confirmed, all at once, the dissatisfaction of the French people for the course being followed by the European Union, and their distaste with the policies conducted by the president and his premier.

Voter abstention dropped by almost 3% (56.8% vs. 59.4% in 2009), and polls indicated that issues of primarily European importance were a stronger factor than previously in determining how to vote. More than half (55%) of persons interviewed indicated that European issues were what motivated them to make their choice; only one third had given this response in previous European elections.

The parties considered to be “of the government”, the Socialists (PS) on the left and the Gaullist UMP on the right, both lost ground. The UMP dropped 7 percentage points from 27.8% to 20.7%, while the Socialist Party dropped 2 ½ percentage points, from 16.3% to 13.9%. For the PS, this was the worst result since that achieved by Michel Rocard in 1993.

The big winner of the election was the National Front (FN) headed by Marine Le Pen, which quadrupled its result over 2009, getting 26% as opposed to 6.3% in the previous election. It is likely to take 24 of France’s 74 seats in the European Parliament. This trend was shown in all electoral districts, and was particularly spectacular in the northwest, where the FN outclassed the UMP, with 33.6% vs. 18.8%. Only in the Ile-de-France region around Paris and in the West (deservedly) was the party surpassed by the established party of the right. The vote for the FN seems to have been the strongest among employed persons, particularly blue-collar workers, with one poll indicating that 45% of those workers who went to the polls voted for the FN.

The French left thus suffered a crushing blow, losing 10% of its vote in five years, and winning its lowest level of support (34.7%) in the history of European parliamentary elections. The Ecologists (EE-LV) were unable to repeat their good showing of 2009 under the leadership of Dany Cohn-Bendit, dropping from 16.3% to 8.7%.

As for the Left Front (FG), its results were deceptive. It had hope to profit from discontent on the left provoked by the policies pursued by President François Hollande, and from the dynamism of the radical left at the continental level. This was not realized. The FG’s candidates improved their position only slightly, from 6% to 6.2%, and all in all, the left front lost one seat, that of Jacky Hénin in the Northwest. It seems that only half of those who had voted for Jean-Luc Mélenchon for president in 2012 went to the polls this time.

In 2009, the Left Front and the extreme left had attracted a little over 12% of the voters; this time, that dropped to 7.8%. The FG failed to profit from the drop in support of the extreme left parties, the NPA and the LO. Adding to these parties the 3% won by the “Nouvelle Donne” list of recent dissidents from the PS, the total for the “left of the left” amounts to less than 11% of the vote.

All in all, the results of the European elections for the left can be summed up in three points:

1. The drop in support for the “parties of government” indicates the extent to which the institutionalized political world has been discredited. The left and the right alike give the

impression of being an autistic system, deaf to the anguish and wishes of the country.

2. The social-liberal option taken by the PS has shocked the left, which is historically structured around the values of equality and democracy. This neoliberal slide alienates segments of the population which feel abandoned.
3. Currently, this dissatisfaction translates into resentment more than combativeness. The voter abstentionism and the vote for the FN are the major result. For the alternative left in France, this raises crucial questions of structuring and renovation in the culture of their project..

Elisabeth Gauthier

Working-paper to Election results in France in French :

Nouveaux éclairages avec une étude de grande ampleur réalisée par Harris Interactives :
« Dix leçons inédites sur la séquence électorale 2014 »

1.Un « vote de classe » :

- les personnes qui se définissent comme 'classes modestes' ont un comportement électoral
 - très défavorable aux partis de gouvernement
 - très favorable au FN (35% contre moyenne 25%), un peu au Front de gauche (8% contre moyenne 6%)
- Les chômeurs s'abstiennent à 72% (moyenne 58%), votent 34% FN et 10% FdG ; et seulement 11% PS, 11% UMP
- Les personnes se définissant comme 'classe aisée' votent nettement plus nombreuses (58%, contre moyenne 42% et 31% pour classes modestes), et principalement pour PS, UMP, Centre
- Le Vote ouvrier différencié selon lieu de travail et de vie
 - Ouvriers votent plus nombreux (46% participation),
 - Ils votent en moyenne 43% pour FN (moyenne 25%)
 - Plus faible chez ouvriers dans grandes usines (35% FN, 33% pour gauche ou extrême gauche), plus qualifiés, et en Région parisienne

2. Défiance face à la démocratie et à la politique

- « Notre système démocratique ne fonctionne pas bien » :
 - électeurs FN : 83% ; abstentionnistes : 72%, électeurs FdG : 66% ; UMP : 56%, Verts : 48%, PS : 29%
 - selon situation sociale : chômeurs : 81% ; Habitants grande banlieue : 78% ; classes modestes : 74% ; Personnes sans bac : 74% ; foyer disposant de moins de 1200 E nets par mois : 72%
- Défiance face à la politique: parallèlement avec exclusion sociale ; particulièrement chez les femmes, les jeunes
 - Les plus confiants : électeurs écologistes, socialistes
 - Confiance minoritaire chez autres électorats, particulièrement celui du FN
 - La politique ne parle pas au femmes jeunes, en situation socialement fragile
- Les femmes à distance de la politique

- Très forte abstention (municipales : 43%, européennes : 66%), surtout chez jeunes femmes et en situation socialement fragile.
- Souvent, elles ne se reconnaissant dans aucune force politique
- Forte abstention chez familles monoparentales
- Abstention massive chez les jeunes : 74% (moyenne 58%)
 - Ils se situent légèrement plus à gauche que la moyenne
 - Une spécificité chez les électeurs jeunes FN : masculins, catégories populaires, et une forte adhésion de fond au programme FN

3. Grave crise à gauche

- Electorat Hollande 2012 très dispersé ; 57% s'abstiennent, 20% votent PS, 23% pour autres listes (6% pour FN, 6% pour FdG, 16 pour Verts)
- Electorat écologiste : très dispersé ; 32% abstention, 35% autres listes, 33% listes écologistes
- Electorat Melenchon 2012 surtout peu mobilisé (46% votent listes FdG), et dispersé ;électorat motivé par valeurs égalité, justice mais peu confiants dans l'avenir
- Electorat Sarkozy 2012 : 50% s'abstiennent, 30% votent UMP, 17% FN, 9% Centre
- Au total, les électeurs se situent à gauche : 28%, au centre : 14%, à droite : 28%, ni gauche ni droite : 30%

Les Partis de gouvernement rassemblent un électorat relativement aisé, satisfait il y a une forte érosion à gauche.

4. L'électorat FN se compose de

- 62% d'hommes, de 38% de femmes
- 40% CSP- (catégories socioprofessionnelles -), de 26% CSP+, 24% Inactifs
- Au dessus de la moyenne chez 35-49 ans et 50-64 ans
- Au dessus de la moyenne dans régions Nord-Est et Sud-Est

Entre adhésion et protestation :

- 26% des électeurs FN pensent que son programme peut améliorer la situation de la France ; 39% veulent exprimer un mécontentement par ce vote

5. Ce qui alimente le vote FN

- Découragement : au total 66% se disent ou inquiets, ou découragés, ou indignés.
 - Electeurs FdG : plus que moyenne inquiets, indignés
 - Electeurs PS : confiants, sereins
 - Electeurs UMP : confiants, sereins, aussi inquiets
 - Electeurs FN : indignés
 - Abstentionnistes : découragés
 - Ceux qui se disent 'indignés' : particulièrement les >65ans, catégories supérieures, chefs d'entreprises
- Le sentiment « je donne trop à la société par rapport à ce que je reçois » : 74% des électeurs (81% ouvriers hors grandes entreprises)
- Isolement territorial (périphéries des villes en voie de métropolisation), isolement social et politique, insécurité sociale élevée (ouvriers hors grandes entreprises)

- L'opinion « qu'il y a trop d'étrangers » : 64% (78%)
- « Il y a plus d'insécurité en France que dans d'autres pays » : 37% (50%)

Conclusion

On observe à quel point l'influence du FN

- ne se situe pas à la marge de la société, ou dans un segment bien défini
- touche celles et ceux qui ont le plus besoin de l'intervention politique pour protéger leurs conditions de vie
- est une des expressions des difficultés croissantes de la vie sociale, politique, démocratique ; des inégalités croissantes du point de vue social et politique
- se bâtit sur la base d'une profonde défiance vis à vis de la démocratie et de la politique, avec une posture 'anti-système' très efficace
- se nourrit des divisions entre classes subalternes (je donne trop, au profit de 'non-méritants'....)
- augmente avec l'absence de relations sociales, d'une gauche combattive et crédible

Lutter contre l'extrême droite ne peut par conséquent se résumer par une action spécifique parmi d'autres.

- L'enjeu, c'est la constitution d'une gauche crédible, rassembleuse, efficace.
- Toutes les tentatives spécifiques anti-extrême droite traditionnelles ont échoué car elles ne répondent pas au problème posé
- Les discours moralisateurs et les coups rageurs s'avèrent depuis fort longtemps vains.
- C'est aussi le cas des tentatives visant à constituer
 - cordon sanitaire
 - bloc républicain
 - front antifasciste (que cherchent à faire avancer certains mouvements en Europe)

Dans les conditions actuelles (vu le poids, l'ancrage atteints par l'extrême droite dans nombre de pays), seule une stratégie politique globale peut avoir de l'effet, constituer une contre-offensive

- L'enjeu : c'est la construction d'une dynamique idéologique et politique à gauche, d'une force de gauche crédible et ambitieuse, d'une alternative crédible pour contrecarrer la droite extrême et nationaliste
- Dans certains pays, leurs progrès proviennent de la radicalisation de l'électorat de droite, mais aussi, alors que s'accumulent les phénomènes de crise, de l'érosion des forces de gauche. Le problème majeur à gauche est la démobilisation de ses électeurs, l'érosion de ses forces constituées, la grève des citoyens, notamment des plus touchés par la régression sociale, leur sécession avec la représentation politique.
- Pour contrer le poids de l'extrême droite, la gauche doit mener une grande bataille sur les valeurs, pour un changement de politique, mais aussi autour de l'interprétation des causes de la crise et des conclusions politiques à en tirer. C'est l'interprétation politique des réalités contemporaines que fournissent les droites extrêmes et nationalistes qu'il s'agit de déconstruire. Négliger la bataille de l'hégémonie culturelle serait une grave erreur.

- Il s'agit de créer des dynamiques en faveur d'un changement de politique, de vraies réponses et solutions.
- Face à la fracture démocratique, une telle dynamique populaire ne saura émerger que si la gauche sait se distinguer de ceux qui sont considérés comme les piliers du système en réinventant la politique avec les citoyens.
- Un intense travail intellectuel est également à fournir pour contrer les visions identitaires, individualistes, xénophobes et refonder un projet politique pouvant unir les différentes composantes des classes subalternes. Travail de création de pouvoir d'interprétation, de re-stabilisation du langage
- La Gauche doit gagner la capacité de mener une politique de changement au niveau européen si elle ne veut pas être réduite à une posture de témoignage. La bataille contre l'austérité qui rapproche les peuples européens et peut favoriser la compréhension de l'intérêt commun, l'intérêt commun de modifier les rapports de force.

Posture du PS extrêmement risquée :

- Elle joue le va-tout : encore une fois gagner les élections par peur du FN
- Face à la menace du FN, toutes les forces à gauche, voire au centre devraient se rallier au PS pour empêcher une ré-édition 2002 (deuxième tour entre Chirac – Le Pen)
- Pourquoi ?
 1. On ne vaincra pas la Droite extrême et nationaliste par des manœuvres.
 2. Elle n'est pas un phénomène éphémère, mais durablement installé, en progrès.
 3. Il y a droitisation dans la société (capacité d'initiative, opinion, mentalités, représentations, langage...), dégradation des rapports de force.
 4. L'effacement des différences entre la droite 'classique' et le social-libéralisme (devenu la ligne de conduite de la social-démocratie) est favorable au renforcement des droites extrêmes et nationalistes
 5. Dans le contexte de crise profonde et de déstabilisation des systèmes politiques et institutionnels à laquelle ces partis contribuent, leur essor constitue un réel danger .
- Les partis les plus importants comme le FN visent le pouvoir. Ils cherchent à s'afficher comme « compatibles » avec les institutions, « respectables et modernes » ce qui rend possible des alliances politiques avec la droite conservatrice et libérale
- Dans le contexte de crise sociale et politique, de la démocratie, leur posture « anti-système » (tout en cherchant à s'installer au cœur du système), contre « les élites d'en haut » est très efficace.
- Les leaders ont systématiquement recours à des provocations, des ruptures de tabous afin de nourrir l'image d'opposants au système.
- Souvent, ces forces ne s'appellent pas 'partis', mais Front national, Lega Nord, Vlaams Block
- Le vide à gauche lui est très favorable

Droite extrême et nationaliste – un phénomène européen

Discours simpliste et efficace

- Bâti sur des arguments « de bon sens », le discours se veut évident, proposant des solutions simples à des problèmes complexes.
- Par exemple, L'Etat devrait être économe comme chaque ménage,
- Les solutions se veulent radicales, à l'opposé de la recherche de compromis.
- Les mécontentements, angoisses, ressentiments, préjugés sont mobilisés, face aux prétendus ennemis. Mise en scène d'un antagonisme entre 'les simples gens' et 'les élites'. Entre 'les méritants' et 'les non méritants'. Les boucs émissaires varient, selon les circonstances.
- Dans la crise actuelle, l'islam est considéré comme ennemi principal de l'avenir des peuples européens,
- L'Europe sert aussi d'argument pour nourrir ressentiments, nationalismes et rejet des élites. La crise européenne, les politiques d'austérité et la perte de légitimité démocratique ouvrent un espace aux forces de droite extrême et nationaliste. Le rejet grandissant de l'UE, l'absence d'alternative crédible favorise une critique simpliste de « l'Europe ».
- Pour ces partis, l'espace politique légitime est défini par la nation de façon réactionnaire, naturaliste, selon des critères ethniques ; elle constituerait une entité culturellement homogène. Cela va de paire avec la xénophobie, le racisme et le rejet de minorités. Le nationalisme se mêle à la xénophobie, au racisme, à l'islamophobie et parfois à l'antisémitisme.
- Leur grande capacité d'adaptation et le flou de leurs programmes leur permettent de s'adresser à des populations différentes aux intérêts parfois contradictoires (ouvriers et petits artisans, commerçants, indépendants)
- Le FN se présente comme 'ni gauche, ni droite'. Il emprunte des termes du discours du mouvement ouvrier, en détournant le sens, le langage.
- Le discours « protectionniste » est efficace. Il s'adresse avec une tonalité cohérente à différentes populations.
 1. L'économie nationale – imaginée sans distinction entre capital et travail - serait à protéger face au mondialisme, au pouvoir européen et de l'Euro.
 2. La protection sociale devrait être réservée aux « nationaux et méritants » et refusée aux immigrés et « parasites ».
 3. L'identité nationale (aux aspects mythiques) serait à préserver comme entité naturelle et culturelle.
- Il parle à des classes aux intérêts en partie antagoniques :
 - A l'ancien prolétariat malmené par la crise, la financiarisation, la globalisation
 - A la 'classe patrimoniale' (Boltanski/Esquerre), dont la valeur du patrimoine dépend de l'environnement (refus de la proximité de pauvres, de 'perturbateurs'...)
- Il entretient la nostalgie d'un passé idéalisé ainsi qu'une vision homogène de la société qu'il s'agirait de défendre contre des agresseurs. Toute une série d'oppositions structure l'idéologie de ces partis : la chrétienté face à l'islam ; la famille face à ses détracteurs ; *law and order* contre les populations dangereuses ; l'identité culturelle (conçue comme naturelle) contre toute sorte d'envahisseurs...

Conflit – hors de confrontation de classe

- Depuis l'aggravation des problèmes sociaux, ces partis les prennent en compte à leur façon, développant un discours 'néosocial'. Il s'agit d'une tentative de représenter « ceux d'en bas » tout en captant les ressentiments des couches plus aisées, et de renforcer les divisions en bas de la société.
- Ils permettent l'expression d'une sorte de révolte contre TINA, There Is No Alternative (il n'y a pas d'alternative). Ils accusent « les élites, l'Europe, le mondialisme », mais ne définissent pas les adversaires en terme de classe.
- Il y a naturalisation des rapports sociaux : l'opposition fondamentale n'est pas selon eux entre les travailleurs et les 1 %, mais entre des « bons nationaux méritants » et des migrants, des parasites, des Roma, des musulmans, les « fraudeurs », les « fainéants », les outsiders de toute sorte dépourvus de tout mérite.
- Ce naturalisme ethniciste vide de nombreuses notions (peuple, identité, républicain, liberté...) de leur contenu, de leur histoire, en faisant glisser le discours vers une « rhétorique de l'évidence ». Le recours à des métaphores biologistes permettent de 'naturaliser' les rapports sociaux.
- Il profite du fait que les catégories populaires sont aujourd'hui « socialement dispersées, non constituées en mouvement social ni en peuple politique acteur et souverain »⁵⁶. Ce ne sont plus les principes de solidarité ni les droits sociaux et démocratiques qui fondent l'action sociale. L'aide doit être *individuellement* méritée et se justifier par l'appartenance à « la communauté »
- Dans le cadre d'une politique d'austérité, de régression sociale inédite, de mise en concurrence, notamment en utilisant l'argument de la dette publique, un tel discours « néo-social » peut trouver une grande résonance.
- Ainsi, sans attaquer la stratégie des dominants dans le contexte du capitalisme financiarisé, ce discours permet de nommer des adversaires, de désigner des boucs émissaires, de préciser qui est 'eux' et qui est 'nous', de dévoyer ainsi la confrontation capital-travail, d'ethniciser la question sociale

Ces partis contribuent à décrédibiliser la politique, à accentuer la crise démocratique

- Dans un contexte où les partis traditionnels subissent une forte érosion, voire ont tendance à implorer, cette évolution peut être interprétée comme un signe avant-coureur de régimes autoritaires, xénophobes, antisociaux, non démocratiques.
- La droite extrême et nationaliste contribue à miner la démocratie parlementaire, à désarmer les citoyens que cette « famille politique » condamne à s'en remettre au chef, à la concurrence entre chefs.
- Si, dans les années 1930, les droites fascistes avaient joué un rôle décisif et destructeur dans une période de « guerre de mouvements », pour parler comme Gramsci, notre période historique voit les partis de droite extrême évoluer dans un contexte de « guerre de positions » de plusieurs décennies caractérisé par un « roll back » du néolibéralisme (depuis les années 1970) contre les compromis sociaux de l'après 1945.

⁵⁶

Formulation empruntée à Roger Martelli

Eléctions européennes 2014 :

Dans le conglomerat de l'offre politique de la droite extrême et nationaliste, on retrouve des postures nationalistes-autoritaires, traditionalistes-conservatrices, restauratrices-romantiques ou encore réactionnaires -petit bourgeois. S'il y a bien du commun dans le discours de ces forces, ceux-ci s'inscrivent dans les traditions diverses et s'adaptent aux réalités nationales et régionales.

Cette progression, depuis le milieu des années 1980, n'est pas l'expression ponctuelle de protestations, mais montre l'émergence d'un courant politique d'une grande diversité, dotée d'une capacité à s'adapter aux conditions en évolution. Ces partis sortent de la marginalité pour s'installer au centre de la société jusqu'à participer à des gouvernements.

Ils savent imprégner le débat politique, se présenter comme des forces anti-systèmes, gagner des batailles idéologiques et radicaliser l'ensemble du camp de la droite.

Résultats

- Les forces néolibérales réussissent à maintenir leur hégémonie, tout en s'effritant.
- Les libéraux reculent.
- Le PPE reste le premier groupe au Parlement européen tout en ayant perdu un cinquantaine de députés.
- Il est flanqué d'une droite extrême et nationaliste, divisée mais de plus en plus influente. Elle réalise des progrès marquants en France, au Danemark, en Grande Bretagne ; améliore son score ou le maintient à un haut niveau en Autriche, Suède, Grèce, Finlande, Hongrie. Des députés allemands (un néonazi, six souverainistes) font leur entrée. Parallèlement, le PVV aux Pays Bas, Ataka en Bulgarie, le Vlaams Belang en Belgique et la Lega en Italie subissent des pertes surprises.
- La social-démocratie, en difficulté dans un certain nombre de pays, reste au total assez stable, les Verts reculent et laissent la place du 5^{ème} groupe à la gauche anti-austéritaire avec son groupe GUE/NGL qui passe de 35 à 52 députés.
- Le FN (avec ses partenaires traditionnels de « l'Alliance européenne pour la liberté » (AEL), FPÖ, PVV, VB, Ligue du Nord) a échoué dans sa tentative de former un véritable groupe sur la base d'un pacte pour « détruire de l'intérieur » l'UE. Refus UKIP et G.Wilders pour échapper à la désignation d'« extrême droite »
- Les partis nazis / fascistes ayant des députés (NDP, Aube dorée et Jobbik) sont isolés et se retrouvent parmi les Non-inscrits.
- Le groupe ECR (Conservateurs et réformistes), animé par les Tories (les conservateurs anglais ne sont pas membre du PPE) s'est renforcé en récupérant l'AfD allemand, l'ODS tchèque, « Droit et justice » de Pologne ainsi que deux partis d'extrême droite du Danemark (DF) et de Finlande (Vrais Finlandais), tous deux à la recherche de « respectabilité ».
- La coalition « Europe de la liberté et de la démocratie » (ELD) est animée par Nigel Farage de l'UKIP et compte également les Cinq étoiles de Grillo (Italie), les Démocrates suédois, une députée FN dissidente, des souverainistes de Lituanie

(Ordre et justice), de Lettonie (Union Verts et paysans) et le « Parti des citoyens libres » (République tchèque, pour la sortie de l'Euro).

Results of the parliamentary elections 2011 und EP-Elections bis 2014									
Party / Coalition	2012 1. Wahlgang in %	+/- %	Seats	EP-1994 in %	EP-1999 in %	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	ÉP 2014 in %	Seats
Conservativ/ UMP	27,12	-12,42	185	25,57	Alliance	16,64	27,88	20,70	20
PS Socialisten	29,45	+4,62	258	14,49	21,95	28,89	16,48	13,98	13
FN Front National	13,79	+9,11	15	10,52	5,69	9,81	6,34	24,95	24
Right-conserv. DVD	7,55	+0,69	15				4,45		
RPRd-MPF. Souveränisten				12,34	13,05	6,67	6,10	3,82	
PCF/Front de Gauche	6,91	+2,62	10	6,89	5,24	5,24	6,05	6,34	3
EELV - Greens	5,46	+1,08	16	2,95	9,72	7,40	16,28	8,91	6
DVG leftwing	5,05	+1,76	21						
UdF/MoDem	1,76	-5,85	11		9,28	11,95	8,46	9,90	7
Turnout				52,76	52,48	51,18	40,63	56,80	

Horst Kahrs

Elections to the 8th European Parliament Preliminary analysis of the electoral results in Germany

Prognosis based on exit polls:

	CDU	CSU	SPD	Grüne	FDP	LINKE	AfD	Andere
ARD 20:42	30,4%	5,1%	27,2%	10,7%	3,3%	7,5%	7,0%	8,8%
Stze	30	5	27	11	3	7	7	6
ZDF 19:24	35,7%		27,2%	10,7%	3,0%	7,5%	6,9%	9,1%
Stze	35		27	11	3	7	7	6

Kleine Parteien

	Piraten	Freie Wähler	NPD	Tierschutz	Familie	ödp	Partei	REP
ARD 20:42	1,4%	1,5%	1,0%	1,2%	0,7%	0,6%		0,4%
Stze	1	1	1	1	1	1		
ZDF 19:24	1,5%	1,5%	1,0%	1,1%	0,8%	0,7%	0,5%	0,4%
Stze	1	1	1	1	1	1		

The parties of the German governing coalition achieved significant gains compared with the EP election of 2009. However, the relation of forces has changed: while the SPD will probably increase its vote by about 7 percentage points, the CDU seems to be largely stable, although its Bavarian regional sister party, the CSU, will lose more than two percentage points, for a total of only 5% nationwide. Angela Merkel seems to be an electoral draw, but Bavarian Premier Horst Seehofer does not: the European elections were a favorable opportunity for Bavarians to send their state government a message; in the rest of the country, no such deed seems to have been felt.

The strength of the governing parties is primarily due to the widespread perception on the part of the population, that the general economic situation, and also the personal situation of most people, is current. Moreover, politics in Germany seems to have been a stronger motivator for voters than European politics were. The campaign of the two parties was focused on the role of Germany in the EU and the advantages of the EU and the euro for the economic situation of Germany. Moreover, the government and parliament passed a number of resolutions and laws prior to Election Day, such as the minimum wage and pension increases, which signaled a return to social democratic policies. This primarily explains the electoral success of the SPD, which, however, is still below the 30% mark, and far behind the CDU. Nonetheless, the party seems to have recovered from its poor results during the 2009 – 2013 era. At the end of the campaign, the SPD played the German card with determination, by calling for votes for Martin Schultz, a candidate “from Germany” and “for Europe.”

The Left Party showed itself to be stable at approximately the level of voting in 2009. However, that meant that the party fell behind in its results in last year’s federal election. While the party lost votes across the board in eastern Germany, it was able to increase its vote in the West German states, and considerably, in some cases. However, it will probably lose one seat in the EP, due to the abolition of the threshold. The campaign of the Left Party was oriented primarily toward its core voters, and concentrated on the core issues for which the party is well known.

The Greens suffered slight losses, although they recovered considerably from last year’s federal elections.

The greatest changes came for the “bourgeois” parties: the losses of the FTP underscored the party’s defeat in the federal elections, and showed that it will have trouble fighting its way out of the 2 – 3% ghetto. On the other hand, the “Alternative for Germany” (AfD) could celebrate its first electoral success, and will presumably send the same number of members to the European Parliament as the Left Party. It drew protest votes and votes from the nationalist, liberal-conservative, petty-bourgeois circles. The bulk of its support comes from economic-liberal and value-conservative voter groups. They trust having their own economic capabilities rewarded in the European competitive market, and see the dominant EU policies as threatened by their concepts of order based on the idea of competition. Voters who have become politically homeless are now attaching themselves to the nationalist and competition-oriented populism of the AfD; whether or not this will become a stable association is more than an open question.

In addition to the AfD, a large number of other small parties, about six, will enter the new European Parliament with one member from each. This is possible due to the abolition of the threshold, due to a ruling by the Federal Constitutional Court. The fact that one of them is a representative of the fascist NPD is more than regrettable.

The electoral results in Germany, as in other countries, were, first and foremost, national electoral results. They were determined by the question of what the situation of the political scene in Germany is, and only secondarily by the question of which representatives from Germany could represent German interest in Europe. European interests, or an idea of what would be good for further European integration to create a democratic, social Europe were only a minor factor in the electoral campaign.

The electoral results show our European partner countries that the political relations of power in Germany are stable. The right wing and nationalist populist parties exist, but they are still very small. By contrast to other countries, such as France and Britain, where the “right-wing populists” have advanced to the top positions and will soon be able to exert considerable pressure on policy, this will not be the case in Germany. On the other hand, it can be expected that the CSU will continue to increase pressure to re-nationalize immigration and social policies more strongly.

Ergebnisse der Bundestagsselections 2013 und EP-Elections bis 2014									
Party / Coalition	2013 nat. in %	+/- %	Seats	EP-1994 in %	EP-1999 in %	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seats
conservativ CDU/CSU	41,50	+6,9	311	38,80	48,66	44,51	37,85	30,00	29,5
Soz.dem. SPD	25,70	+2,7	193	32,16	30,70	21,52	20,78	27,30	27
Liberal FDP	4,80	-9,8	0	4,07	3,03	6,07	10,97	3,40	3
Greens	8,40	-2,3	63	10,06	6,44	11,94	12,13	10,70	11
LEFTWING	8,60	-3,3	64	4,72	5,79	6,07	7,48	7,40	7
rightpop. AfD	4,70	+4,7	0		-	-	-	7,00	7
Pirates	2,20	+0,2	0	0,00	0,00	0,00	0,87	1,40	1
Fascist NPD	1,30	-0,2	0	0,22		0,94		1,00	1
Republikaner			0		1,70	1,88	1,32		
Turnout	71,5			60,02	45,19	43,00	43,27	48,10	

Ntina Tzouvala

The Greek case: some initial thoughts after a historical result

The result of the European elections in Greece must be read and interpreted against the backdrop of the ongoing harsh austerity measures imposed by the Troika and successive Greek governments post 2009. Hence, the victory of the radical left was not particularly surprising, although it is undeniably historical. SYRIZA is now the biggest party in Greece, having received 26.56% of the votes, whereas the leading governmental right-wing New Democracy party has received 22.73%. The neo-Nazi Golden Dawn party is now the third biggest party in Greece (9.40%), gaining 3 MEP seats for the first time in modern Greek political history. The second governmental party (Socialist Party, running under the brand Elia) received 8.03% of the vote, and the newly founded Potami (which means *river* in Greek) party managed to secure 6.60% of the vote, electing 2 MEPs, closely followed by the Communist Party which received 6.09% of votes cast. The last party to win a seat in the European Parliament was Independent Greeks (right-wing, anti-austerity) with 3.45%. It is worth noting that Democratic Left, a former governmental party that withdrew its support almost a year ago, scored exceptionally low (1.20%). The total sum of the parties that did not manage to be represented in the European Parliament was almost 15%, with the extreme-right LAOS party scoring an unexpected 2.70%. Voter turnout was slightly above 60%, which is comparable to the 2010 turnout. In any case, it is also worth reflecting on the qualitative characteristics of these figures, since it is believed that younger voters might have abstained more than older voters, who tend to support traditional right-wing or centrist parties (New Democracy and Elia).

In order to fully grasp the significance of this result, we need to factor in the successes of the radical left, represented by SYRIZA, in the municipal and provincial elections that took place on 18 and 25 May. SYRIZA managed to secure a victory in the country's largest province (Attiki), where Rena Dourou marginally yet decisively beat the government-backed candidate who had previously held the post for 12 years. Perhaps even more impressively, Gabriel Sakellarides, a young radical economist supported by SYRIZA, secured an unprecedented 48.60% in the municipality of Athens, a traditionally conservative constituency. Furthermore, candidates supported by SYRIZA managed to come first in the second round of the municipal elections in a number of working-class neighbourhoods.

Crucially, it is the first time in Greek political history that a left-wing party wins by such a clear margin in the European elections. Given that the political debate prior to the elections was heated and polarised, it is fair to argue that this was not a peculiar protest vote specifically targeted at the European elections. The result accurately reflects the domestic balance of political power and constitutes a vocal message of disapproval of the current government and its aggressive austerity policies. The victory of SYRIZA acquires added political and symbolic value given that it constitutes an anti-austerity vote with clearly left-wing characteristics within a wider European context of increasing support for the extreme-right. That said, there are two elements that need further consideration. First, the neoliberal political centre is undergoing a transformation, with the entrance of Potami onto the political scene, the collapse of the Democratic Left and the fact that the Socialist Party, despite its sharp decline, still retains some of its influence. The role of the mass media here has been crucial, given that the leader of Potami was a leading journalist in one of the most notoriously pro-government TV stations. Secondly, it became evident that the far-right,

including the neo-Nazi far-right, is stabilising at around 15%, exerting considerable influence upon traditional working-class areas.

In any case, the victory of SYRIZA must be understood as a victory not simply against New Democracy, but a victory against a powerful nexus of pro-austerity, pro-establishment actors ranging from an implicit coalition between most political parties to mass media and corporate interests. SYRIZA managed to gain extensive support despite the generalised sense of fear that was being cultivated by the media, and the current government that has steadily been claiming that the rise of the Left will lead to “destabilisation”. Thus, we can reasonably assume that SYRIZA has laid down deep, veritable roots in those parts of the Greek society most influenced by the crisis (the unemployed, traditional working-class neighbourhoods, the youth) that constitute the nucleus capable of bringing about radical political and social transformations.

Results of the parliamentary elections 2012 und EP-Elections bis 2014									
Party/ Coalition	6/2012 national in %	+/- % zu Mai- Elections 2012	Seats	EP- 1994 in %	EP- 1999 in %	EP- 2004 in %	EP- 2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seats
Konserva- tive ND	29,66	+10,81	129	32,65	35,99	43,01	32,29	22,80	5
Social-democr. Pasok	12,28	-0,90	33	37,65	32,93	34,03	36,64	-	
Social-dem. ELIA DA								8,00	2
linksliberal Anti-Party to Potami								6,60	2
Kommunisti- sche . KKE	4,50	-3,98	6	10,06	8,67	9,48	8,35	6,10	2
Radikale Leftwing SYRIZA-	26,80	-10,10	71	6,25	5,17	4,16	4,70	26,60	6
DIMAR	6,25	-0,14			6,85			1,20	0
OIK.PRAS				0,00	0,00	0,67	3,49		0
Nat. konser- vative ANIOX				8,65	2,28				
nationalist. LA.O.S.	1,58	-1,31				4,12	7,15	2,70	0
ANEL	7,51	-3,11	20					3,40	0
Fashist <i>Chrysi_Avgi</i> Golden dawn	6,92	0,05						9,40	3
turnout	62,49			73,18	71,49	63,22	52,63	58,20	

Matyas Benyik

Evaluation of EP elections in Hungary in 2014 Budapest,

The ruling right wing Fidesz gained an overwhelming victory in the EP elections: the ruling party acquired 51.49% of the votes in the low, only 28.92% turnout and 12 MEPs will be sent to the EP out of Hungary's total seats of 21. The ruling party improved its outcome by almost 8 percentage points compared to the results in the national elections last April, while Jobbik reached the second place with 14.68%, which means 3 seats in the European Parliament.

The turnout was below the all-time worst, though PM Viktor Orban drew the attention to Hungary's highest participation rate among the six Central European countries.. Fidesz has the better results among the European People's Party (since it won the biggest share). According to Orban the MEPs must represent the interests of Hungarians. „Everybody should fight, I welcome the [freedom] fighters”. He congratulated to all MEPs regardless of the party colors. Then he called up the MEPs to serve the Hungarians with honor.

The real surprise is the appearance of the left-liberal forces: the MSZP reaching 10.92% of the votes slipped to the third place, which means only two EP-seats, while the Democratic Coalition led by ex-PM Ferenc Gyurcsany causing serious surprise reached 9.76%, which means also two EP seats. Immediately behind them the party of ex-PM Gordon Bajnai, the Together 2014-PM has 7.22%, which represent one EP-seat.

MSZP party chairman, Attila Mesterházy has offered his resignation to the Presidency of the Socialist Party National Board. He said: „We sadly noted the election results, we are disappointed, we expected better results.” „This result is a new lesson to the Socialist Party” - he added in a press conference last night. One thing is sure: this result also affects the local elections in next September. The Budapest results show that the Socialist Party has lost its leadership in the opposition of the capital, so Csaba Horváth certainly will not be the main mayoral candidate.

Power relations within the left-liberal Unity have thoroughly been changed since the MSZP lost the previous leading position, the previously dismembered Gyurcsany fragmented the left voters. The MSZP gained only 27 thousand votes over Democratic Coalition, while the latter has only 58 thousand votes less, than Together 2014-PM alliance.

LMP passing through the threshold (5.01%) may send one representative to Brussels meanwhile - again, this is the third time in the history of the party that it exceeded the 5% liwith at the end. András Schiffer Co-Chair called heroic work done in the campaign, and the success is another important step in the party-building, adding: „We will work in order that the European policies should not be at the mercy of different economic lobby groups.”

However, from this moment MSZP cannot neglect the new left-wing parties with a „single wave” referring to the „narrow core”. It is no coincidence that Gyurcsany last night brought up the coming municipal election, stating. „If we want to replace the mayor in Budapest, or in the major cities we are to unite.” The Democratic Coalition has been the strongest party in Budapest and in several other towns and cities, so it can send two MEPs to the European Parliament.

It was not easy to beat the MSZP – Gabor Vona said, because in the election campaign Jobbik was strongly attacked. But he thinks the Jobbik can not be crushed.

We have not been cracked up today, but the MSZP had been - he said. Jobbik has become challenging Fidesz, "we remained the last resort." While the Fidesz helps the rich, the Jobbik is on the side of the fallen. Vona congratulated Jobbik's MEPs: Krisztina Morvai, Zoltan Balczó and Béla Kovács as well.

We will be the first - Vona said. He promises hard work (for themselves), requested the EP representatives to do so and gave the word to Morvai. „I am proud and happy because I am Hungarian and I know that Hungary will never be made dictatorship again - she started. According to her, the press and the media are under total control. It turned out that the intelligence is under the direct management of the prosecution. According to Morvai the hundreds of thousands of voters showed that the fifties can not be brought back in Hungary. Morvai thanked the victory also to the internet, saying: „I'm glad that it could not have been controlled.”

Results of EUP elections in Hungary on 25 May 2014 announced by National Election Office (NVI):

FIDESZ-KDNP (Hungarian Civic Union): 51,49% (12 MEP)

1. Ildikó Gáll-Pelcz MEP
2. József Szájer MEP
3. László Tóké MEP
4. Tamás Deutsch MEP
5. András Gyürk MEP
6. Kinga Gál MEP
7. György Schöpflin MEP
8. Norbert Erdős
9. Andrea Bocskor
10. Andor Deli
11. Ádám Kósa MEP
12. György Hölvényi

Jobbik (Movement for a Better Hungary): 14,68% (3 MEP)

1. Krisztina Morvai MEP
2. Zoltán Balczó
3. Béla Kovács MEP

MSZP(Hungarian Socialist Party): 10,92% (2 MEP)

1. Tibor Szanyi
2. István Ujhelyi

Democratic Coalition (DK): 9,76% (2 MEP)

1. Csaba Molnár
2. Péter Niedermüller

Együtt-PM (Together 2014): 7,22% (1 MEP)

1. Benedek Jávor

Politics Can Be Different (LMP): 5,01% (1 MEP)

1. Tamás Meszerics

Summary of the EP elections in Hungary

1.) Many citizens believe that on April 6 at the parliamentary elections they have fulfilled their obligations. Therefore, many people have accrued to the question why the EU Parliament and the national election was not held at the same time. If it is held in two different Sundays, the people could easily reply that they do not sacrifice their two rest days.

2.) The European Union is very far from the vast majority of the 8 million eligible voters. There is a widely spread belief that mainly the elite will benefit from the EU fundings, which are spent on new urban centers, fountains, decorative coatings.

3.) EU funding has not created new jobs, and the EU has not proved very effective in crisis management. The EU clearly followed a restriction policy, and it could not elicit any particular sympathy for the Hungarians. The EU election was in no way about the future of the EU and Hungary's 21 seats can have little meaningful influence on the functioning of the EU Parliament. In addition, there was no information on what the parties want to achieve when the mandates become reality.

4.) Thus, many citizens tend to think that domestic policy is more at stake. Low turnout is also an immediate judgment on how things are going in Hungary. Behind the massive absenteeism a rebel against the existing order may also be discovered.

5.) The anti-EU rhetoric of Fidesz leaders who are constantly speaking about freedom struggle against the EU because „Brussels liwiths Hungary's national sovereignty and interferes into our country's internal affairs.” It would have been a miracle if under such government rhetoric more people would have gone out to vote.

6.) The low participation explains almost total lack of EUP elections campaign, as well.

Results of the parliamentary elections 2013 und EP-Elections 2004 bis 2014							
Party / Coalition	2014 national in %	+/- %	Seats	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	ÉP 2014 in %	Seats
Fidesz-KDNP	44,87	-7,86	263	47,40	56,36	51,50	5
MSZP	25,57	+6,27	59	34,30	17,37	10,90	2
Jobbik	20,22	+3,55	47		14,77	14,70	3
Greens LMP	5,34	-2,14	16		2,61	5,00	1
MUNKASPART ArbeiterParty				1,83	0,96		
Liberal SZDSZ					2,16		
Social-liberal Coalition DC						9,80	2
soz. Demokrat. Együtt-PM						7,20	1
Turnout	59,48		385	38,48	36,31	28,90	

Dr Richard Dunphy

Republic of Ireland European Parliament Elections 2014

Background

Elections to the European Parliament in the Republic of Ireland were held on Friday 23rd May, on the same day as local government (regional) elections and two national parliamentary bye-elections. This fact helped to boost voter turn-out over what it might otherwise have been.

Ireland utilises the Single Transferable Vote (STV) form of proportional representation, whereby voters rank candidates according to their personal preferences (first preference, second preference, third preference, etc.) regardless of party membership, and in multi-seat constituencies. Thus, in a 4-seat constituency, if a party fields 3 candidates in the hope of winning 2 or 3 seats, those candidates are forced to compete against each other, as well as candidates of rival parties, in order to secure a seat. STV thus works against party discipline.

STV also notoriously accentuates and exaggerates the impact of two prominent aspects of Irish political culture that have always worked against a traditionally weak Irish left. The first is a marked tendency towards Personalism – the fact that many Irish voters cast their votes on the basis of the perceived personal qualities of candidates rather than the attractiveness of party programmes or party loyalty (let alone ideological cohesion). The second is a marked tendency towards Localism – a preference for candidates with strong local roots in one's immediate community other those who might be better qualified but lack local ties.

STV also necessitates good vote management strategies on the part of Irish parties. Success in winning seats often depends not only on the number of first preferences won; sometimes, even more important, is an ability to win second, third and subsequent vote transfers from candidates of other parties. In 2009 European Parliament elections, the small Socialist Party fielded only one candidate – the popular, widely-admired and respected Joe Higgins in Dublin. He has many years of long, hard struggle on behalf of the Dublin working-class communities under his belt. Although his vote in Dublin averaged out as only 2.7% of the national vote, combined with strong transfers from other candidates it was enough to secure his election. By contrast, Sinn Féin polled more than 11% of the national vote in 2009, but this vote was pretty evenly spread throughout the country and the inability of SF to attract sufficient transfers from other parties meant that it failed to win any seats – losing its Dublin MEP to the Socialist Party.

These conditions do not hold in 2014. First, Higgins stood down as MEP in 2011 and his replacement – the young and relatively unknown Paul Murphy – does have anything like the charisma or personal appeal of Higgins. Second, the rival Marxist party – People Before Profit Alliance – scorned SP appeals to support Murphy and is fielding a strong European candidate of its own in the form of popular local government councillor Brid Swithh. The left vote will therefore be split and maximum discipline of these two candidates in getting their voters to transfer to each other is needed if either is to have any chance of winning. Frankly, this looks unlikely. Indeed, the Socialist Party has publicly attacked the PBPA for 'political sectarianism' in fielding a candidate at all, which does not bode well for maximum cooperation. Third, the Sinn Féin has increased its vote markedly since 2009. That party has chosen young candidates in the Republic of Ireland, unconnected in voters' eyes with its paramilitary past (unlike in Northern Ireland where its candidate is a convicted former IRA prisoner). SF's

candidates in the Republic of Ireland project an image of youth, modernity and moderation. The party is proving much more successful this time at attracting transfer votes from other parties. In Dublin, at least, it may not even need transfers – it looks set to top the poll in Dublin with around 20%

Early indications from the local government elections show that the anti-austerity wave that has without doubt swept over Ireland has benefitted independent (non-party) candidates, many of whom have strong local profiles, more than any other force. In the local elections, Independents polled 28.4%, while the two main political parties, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael (both centre-right) polled 24.8% and 23.8% respectively. Sinn Féin were in third place with 15.5%. The Labour Party suffered a complete electoral collapse, polling 7.5%. The two Marxist parties of the left – the Socialist Party (Trotskyist) and the People Before Profit Alliance (also Trotskyist-led) – both secured the election of many new local government representative in Dublin, but on a combined share of the national vote that looks likely to be less than 2%. The Socialist Party, however, scored a spectacular success in the Dublin West national parliamentary bye-election. Its candidate, Ruth Coppinger, who had a very high local profile, polled over 20% of the first preference votes and won the seat, defeating strong challenges from both Fianna Fáil and Sinn Féin. This vote shows that, with a candidate with strong local roots, there remains a strong potential bedrock of support for a Marxist class-based politics, as opposed to the left-sounding radical nationalism of Sinn Féin – in Dublin at least.

The Campaign themes and the parties

The campaign for the 2014 European Parliament elections in the republic of Ireland has been dominated by one theme: austerity. The sweeping cuts imposed by the Troika upon Ireland has provoked a huge popular backlash. The main targets of this backlash have been the two parties that have governed Ireland since 2011 – Fine Gael and the Labour Party. Above all, the Labour Party – seen as betraying the poor and the marginalised – has borne the brunt of the backlash and is facing electoral annihilation. Specific government policies that have incurred popular ire include: the imposition of a water tax on households that is currently around Euro 240 per household but likely to rise to more than twice that; the imposition of a property tax (essentially a tax on home owners); the introduction of cuts to pensions and welfare benefits; and the failure to address crises in housing, health and employment. In addition, outside of Dublin, the crisis in Irish agriculture and fishing has been a recurrent issue in the campaign.

Fine Gael, the dominant party in government and a Christian Democrat party allied to the European Peoples' Party, campaigned on the basis of its 'courage' in providing strong government and in implementing the 'necessary' austerity measures to revive the Irish economy. Its share of the vote is likely to be well down on the 29.1% it polled in 2009, although it retains a solid core of bourgeois support.

Fianna Fáil, also on the centre-right, is a populist nationalist party (although somewhat incongruously it now sits with ALDE in the European Parliament), traditionally associated with the Catholic church. It has tentatively begun to secularise in recent years. It dominated Irish politics for much of the period from 1932 until 2011, throughout which period its vote rarely fell below 40%. In 2011, embroiled in corruption scandals and roundly blamed by Irish voters for the crisis of the Irish economy, it suffered an unprecedented political collapse, seeing its share of the vote fall to less than 17%. Even by the time of the European elections in 2009, it has sunk to 24.1%. It has since recovered ground, but is still 'contaminated' in the

eyes of many of those who used to support it. Many of its nationalist and working-class voters have switched to Sinn Féin or Independent (non-party, generally populist or localist) candidates.

The Labour Party (S&D) has been in coalition government with Fine Gael since 2011 and is bearing the brunt of popular disgust with austerity policies. Labour's participation in government has been a disaster. It faces electoral wipe-out now. It polled 13.9% in 2009 and won 3 MEPs. It is likely to win around 6% and no seats this time. Its campaign was reduced to trying to defend its implementation of austerity policies against attacks from all other parties.

The Greens faced a terrible result in 2009 (just 1.9% and no seats), when they suffered from participation in coalition with Fianna Fáil. They have since recovered their sense of purpose as an opposition party to some extent and have benefitted from Labour collapse, above all in Dublin. They have an outside chance of a seat in Dublin.

The left and Sinn Féin

In the 2009 European Parliament elections, the small Socialist Party – a class-based Marxist party of Trotskyist inspiration – surprised many observers of Irish politics by scoring a real triumph in Dublin. Its popular leader, Joe Higgins, polled more than 12% of the first preferences in Dublin, winning a seat in the Dublin constituency (at the expense of Sinn Féin). He sat with the GUE/NGL group in the EP. Joe Higgins stood down in 2011 and his EP seat is being defended by the young party activist who replaced him, Paul Murphy. The 31-year old Murphy is much less well-known and will struggle to hold the seat, especially as a rival Trotskyist-led group – the People Before Profit Alliance (PBPA)- decided against supporting his candidacy, instead choosing to field the popular Dublin councillor, Brid Swithh, as its own candidate.

Both Marxist parties ran vigorous, class-based campaigns, emphasising the fight against water and housing taxes, poverty and unemployment, women's rights and gay rights, environmental issues, and class inequality and social injustice. Polls suggested that they could poll between 15% and 20% in Dublin but that the vote will be split evenly between them, fatally damaging the chances of either winning Higgins' 2009 seat.

Their likely failure does look like leaving Sinn Féin in a position to present itself as the voice of the Irish left in Europe. Without doubt, Sinn Féin (SF) has benefitted most from the anti-austerity backlash (after the Independents, of course). Its radical nationalism has enabled it to draw support from Fianna Fáil while its leftist rhetoric and anti-austerity message has proven attractive to former Labour voters. Its share of the votes in 2014 looks likely to rise by about 6 % points, compared to 2009 – up from 11.2 to around 17%. It should win 3 seats as opposed to none in 2009.

Sinn Féin is aligned to the GUE/NGL group in the European Parliament, even though many Irish socialists and Marxists do not see it as authentically or fully 'left'. There is no doubt that it makes no claim to be a Marxist party, with party leader, Gerry Adams, once famously declaring that 'there are no Marxists in Sinn Féin'. It does, however, describe itself as 'left republican' – the term 'republican' tending to denote militant nationalism in the Irish context. It has combined calls for defence of national sovereignty and the 'Irish national interest' against any increase in EU powers, with strident and consistent anti-austerity policies. This combination has proven attractive to many Irish voters. Indeed, given the

nature of Irish political culture, it is perhaps an easier combination for many anti-austerity voters to identify with than the class-based political ideology of the smaller Marxist parties.

Sinn Féin in the Republic of Ireland has chosen young or relatively inexperienced candidates who have no known association with the paramilitary past of the IRA and who project a modern and moderate image compared to its Northern leadership. This seems to have played well with voters in the Republic of Ireland. (By contrast, in Northern Ireland, where the party's support is rooted entirely in its traditionalist advocacy of the Catholic Nationalist community, its outgoing and defending MEP, Martina Anderson, openly boasted on her election literature of her past as an imprisoned IRA member). Sinn Féin is likely to send 4 MEPs back to the European Parliament and to the GUE/NGL group – 3 from the Republic and 1 from Northern Ireland.

The results

Elections to the European Parliament in the Republic of Ireland -2014. Total turn-out was **52.4%**

Party	Leader	EP group	ideology	Total votes (First Preference)	%	(% in 2009)	Seats	(Seats in 2009)
Fine Gael	Enda Kenny	EPP	Centre-right	369,120	22.3	29.1	4	4
Fianna Fáil	Micheál Martin	ALDE	Centre-right populist	369,535	22.3	24.1	2	3
Labour Party	Eamon Gilmore	S&D	Centre-left	88,229	5.3	13.9	0	3
Socialist Party	Collective leadership	GUE/NGL	Marxist (Trotskyist)	29,953	1.8	2.7	0	1
Sinn Féin	Gerry Adams	GUE/NGL	Radical Nationalist/ anti-austerity	323,300	19.5	11.2	3	0
Green Party	Eamon Ryan	Greens/EFA	ecologist	81,458	4.9	1.9	0	0
People Before profit Alliance	Collective leadership	Probably GUE/NGL if elected	Marxist-led (Trotskyist)	23,875	1.5	n/a	0	0
Catholic Democrats	Nora Bennis	?	Ultra-conservative	13,569	0.8	n/a	0	0
Direct Democracy Ireland	Jan Van de Ven	?	"neither left nor right"; populist	24,093	1.5	n/a	0	0
Fís Nua	none	Probably Greens/EFA	Green party splinter group	4610	0.3	n/a	0	0
Independents		various	various	328,766	19.8	11.5	2	1
(Others in 2009)						5.6		
Total				1,656,518	100	100	11	12

Results of the parliamentary elections 2011 und EP-Elections bis 2014									
Party / Coalition	2011 nat. in %	+/- %	Seats	EP- 1994 in %	EP- 1999 in %	EP- 2004 in %	EP- 2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seats
konservat. Fine Gael	36,10	+8,78	76	24,27	24,59	27,76	29,13	22,00	4
populist. Center-right Fianna Fáil	17,45	-24,11	20	35,00	38,64	29,45	24,08	22,00	1
Labour-Party	19,45	+9,32	37	10,99	8,73	10,56	13,92	6,00	
Sinn Féin	14,00	+3,00	14	2,97	6,33	11,20	11,24	17,00	3
Green Party	1,85	-2,83	0	7,92	6,69	4,32	1,89	6,00	
trotzkist. Party/en	1,21	+0,57	0	1,94	0,76				
leftwing PBPA	0,97	+0,52	0						
Independent								24,00	3
Turnout	69,90			43,98	50,21	56,66	57,57	51,60	

Roberto Morea

European Elections 2014: an Analysis of the Results in Italy

The vote in Italy has given the country a framework in which the Democratic Party seems to have become a shapeless political body, scooping up votes from even former Berlusconi supporters. For weeks the defeat of Beppe Grillo's party was predicted and completely false opinion polls have stoked fears, resulting in a polarized clash on domestic issues which lacks debates on austerity and alternative policies.

Grillo's challenge of populism and discontent did not win through in the end, and it is clear that not having a clear position (either right or left), has done more to scare than attract voters. Thus the majority of the vote favored the governing party, giving Renzi's the power to decide over every ally and every standpoint regarding internal criticism.

It's a miracle that *l'Altra Europa con Tsipras* achieved such a high percentage of the vote. Totally ignored by the mass media and with a completely unknown figurehead, the party has still been able to overcome the barrier of 4% needed to elect MEPS.

This success was built on a political platform of criticism against the regime of grand coalitions both in Europe and in Italy involving Letta and Renzi (both prime ministers of the Democratic Party). We sought to offer an alternative. This was the proposal to merge the left-wing movements of the Democratic Party with the Left in Europe. This sent the message that a credible alternative at European level was the only option that strengthened the left-wing opposition within a Europe that only considers the interests of banks and finance, even if the parties themselves were completely and deliberately ignored by the media.

Another positive aspect of this list is that it encompasses people which represent struggling members of society, intellectuals and workers. In short, this party-list displays a rootedness that has allowed us to re-establish a relationship with a social reality that could only have been obtained through a horizontal and grass-roots structure.

An analysis of the vote tells us that the vote for parties on the Left was patchy; we won three seats in total: one in the north-west, one in the center and one in the south. Our voters were concentrated in large cities, with our electorate largely consisting of young people and more educated groups. The problem of recognition and penetration into popular sectors that remain cut off from our communication circuits thus remains an issue.

The total cost of our general election campaign stood at EUR 220,000, which would be the expenditure for a single candidate in some of our country's other political parties. More than half of this money has been collected through forms of self-financing, fund-raising dinners, subscriptions and individual contributions.

It's been a long campaign that started with the collection of the required number of signatures needed to subwith the party to the electoral list. In Italy we needed at least 150,000 signatures, 3000 as a minimum for each region, even smaller states such as Valle d' Aosta, which has just over 128,000 inhabitants. However, this campaign not only saw us collect more than 220,000 signatures, it also helped us on the way to achieving success; it was during this time that most of the collective work was done to achieve the result, which led to a better outcome. The Aosta recorded 3,569 votes, equal to 7.68% of the vote. This shows that the hard work has paid off in terms of consent.

Another important element was to convert preferences shown by the electorate, which we also aimed to do during the last election; however, this resulted in a failure to produce a political profile or a single project. This time the list's officials focused less on the party line of their parties of origin thus allowing aggregation processes and blending, which were indispensable.

This achievement marks a successful milestone, but this is just the beginning. We are still a long way from rebuilding an Italian Left that is worthy of our history, but at least we have taken the first step in making this goal a reality.

Results of the parliamentary elections 2011 und EP-Elections bis 2014								
Party / Coalition	2013 nat. in %	Seats	EP-1994 in %	EP-1999 in %	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seats
Coalition Bene Commune PD+	29,55	345	-	-	-	-	-	-
PDS/PD Party Democratico	25,38	-	19,06	17,34	31,80	26,13	40,81	31
L'Ulivo Tree - with u.a. PD, PRC, de Pietro	-	-	-	-		-	-	-
Coalition die Centro- destra (Berlusconi)	29,18	125	-	-	-	-	-	-
Forza Italia Berlusconi			30,62	25,17	20,93	35,26	16,81	13
Alliancea Nazionale			12,47	10,30	11,49		3,66	0
fascist Lega Nord			6,56	4,49	4,96	10,20	6,15	5
Mo Vimento 5 Sterne	25,55	109	-	-	-	-	21,15	17
PPI/Coalition NCD+UDC+PPI)			10,00	4,24			4,38	0
Coalition Mario Monti	10,56	47	-	-	-	-	-	-
leftwing SEL	3,20	0	-	-	-	3,12	Liste Tsipras	-
Rifondazione Comunista	2,25	0	6,08	4,27	6,06	3,38	Liste Tsipras	-
Liste Tsipras	-	-	-	-	-	-	4,03	3
Turnout			35,66	69,76	71,72	65,05	60,00	

....

Holger Politt

Latvia and Lithuania - Elections to the European Parliament

1. Latvia had a 5% threshold and proportional representation.
2. In Latvia, the months-long conflict over the Ukraine and, in particular, the Russian actions have influenced the elections to the European Parliament more strongly than domestic factors. This is part of why the governing conservatives were able to win half of Latvia's seats. In all, 14 election committees competed in the elections, and five lists will be sending members to the European Parliament.

3. Election results

Voter turnout: 30.8% (2009: 52.5%)

Results:

Unity (conservative)	46.2%	4 seats
All for Latvia (patriotic)	14.2%	1 seat
Harmony	13.0%	1 seat
Union Greens and Agrarians	8.3%	1 seat
Russian minority	6.4%	1 seat

4. The conservative block "Unity", which was formed out of several groups in 2011, left all the other parties far behind. The eight new Latvian MEPs will include two Russians, one Harmony representative, who is critical of the Kremlin's current Ukraine policy, and one Russian minority representative, who has lent unequivocal support to the Kremlin's stance.

The Socialist Party founded in 2009 by the incumbent MEP Alfred Rubiks fell significantly short of the 5% threshold. Rubiks entered the European Parliament for Harmony in 2009 and joined the GUE/NGL group.

Results of the parliamentary elections 2012 und EP-Elections 2009 und 2014							
Party / Coalition	p. Elections 2011 in %	+/- %	Seats	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seats
SC Center f. Harmony	28,40	+2,4	31		19,54	13,00	
ZRP ReformParty	20,80	+20,8	22				
V Einigkeit conserv.	18,80	-12,4	20			46,20	
NA national-conservati Alliance	13,90	+6,2	14			14,20	
TB/LNKK: Fatherland and Freedom					7,46		
ZZS Greens u. Farmer	12,20	-7,5	13	4,28		8,30	
LPP/LC ReformParty	2,40	-5,3		3,27	7,5		
PS: Bürgerunion					24,32		
PCTVL f. Human rights					9,64		
JL New Era (liberal-conserv.)					6,66		
Turnout	59,49			41,34	53,64	30,80	

Lithuania

1. This year's elections to the European Parliament were held together with the runoff presidential elections. This resulted in a much higher voter turnout of 47%, compared to 20.5% in 2009. A 5% threshold applies, and seats are awarded by proportional representation.
2. Besides the domestic issues, the Ukraine crisis played a major role. Due to the Russian actions, this crisis is widely perceived primarily as a dramatic strain on the bilateral relationship with Russia. Thus, there has been an increased focus on Lithuania's membership in the European Union and in NATO in recent months.

3. Election results

Voter turnout: 47%

Conservatives	17.4%	2 seats
Social Democrats	17.3%	2 seats
Liberals	16.5%	2 seats
National Conservatives	14.3%	2 seats
Labour Party	12.8%	1 seat
Polish minority	8.0%	1 seat
Agrarians and Greens	6.6%	1 seat

4. The elections were clearly dominated by domestic issues. The top candidates fielded by the political parties at the European level did not play a prominent role.

Results of the parliamentary elections 2012 und EP-Elections 2009 und 2014							
Party / Coalition	nat. Elections 2012 in %	+/- %	Seats	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seats
DP ArbeitsParty	19,80	+10,8	29	30,16	8,79	12,80	2
LSDP social-democrats	18,40	+6,7	38	14,43	18,61	17,30	2
TS_LKD Vaterlandsbund	15,10	-4,6	33	12,58	26,86	17,40	2
liberal LRLS	8,60	+2,9	10		7,36	16,50	2
DK	8,00	+8	7,00				
Liberaldemokraten TT	7,30	-5,4	11,00		12,22	14,30	1
poln. Minderheits-Party LLRA	5,80	+1,0	8,00		8,42	8,00	1
argrar. Greens LVZS	3,90	+0,2	1,00		1,87	6,60	1
	63,50			48,38	20,98	47,00	

Nico Biver

Best result for the radical Left since the beginning of direct elections to the EP in 1979 - Report: EP Elections 2014 in Luxembourg

Elections to the European Parliament in Luxembourg for the first time were not held simultaneously with the elections to the Chamber of Deputies. In 2013, early elections had been called after the Luxembourg Socialist Workers Party (SAP) withdrew their support from Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker and his Christian Social People's party, CSV. The cause of the governing crisis was a flagrant violation of the law by the Luxembourg Secret Service, an act supposedly carried out without Juncker's knowledge, though he was responsible for monitoring the service.

Both coalition parties lost votes in the elections of October 2013, dropping to 34% and 19% respectively. The Greens and the right-wing nationalist Democratic Reformists Alternative also both suffered losses.

The big winner in the chamber of deputies election was the Liberal Democratic Party (TDP), which rose from 15 to 19%, and the small Left Party. The latter continues its steady climb, and increased its share of the vote by a third to 4.5%, and the number of its deputies from 1 to 2. The Communist Party of Luxembourg lost slightly, down to 1.5%, and gained no seats. The new participant in the election was the Pirate Party, which won 13% but did not win any seats.

As a result, the DP, the LSAP and the Greens formed a government without the CSV, which had been in power since 1926 with only one break, the Liberal Socialist government of 1974 to 1979.

The elections to the European Parliament thus provided an opportunity for evaluating the new government and the opposition.

The electoral system

Luxembourg elected only six representatives to the European Parliament, elected on a national basis by proportional representation. That means that a party has to win about one sixth of the vote to win a seat. That encourages people not to waste their votes, but to vote for the parties who can win seats. Seats are distributed by the d'Hondt method, which is disadvantageous to smaller parties.

In Luxembourg, voting is mandatory up to the age of seventy-five. Dissatisfaction with parties of the political system can therefore not be expressed by staying away from the polls, but only by a larger number of blank or spoiled ballots. According to a survey carried out on Election Day 2009, the parties at both ends of the political spectrum profit from this system. 80% of all voters stated that they would go to the polls even if it were not mandatory, but only 45% of the voters for the KPL and 64% of the voters for the Left Party made that statement

One unusual feature, moreover, is that every voter has six votes. If he backs a party, the vote counts for every candidate in that party. However, it is also possible to vote for candidates and one or several lists, and even to give up to two votes to a single candidate. Personalities are major factor in the voting decision.

Moreover, a notable feature of Luxembourg is that the majority of the working population does not participate in the elections. Of the 365,000 dependent employees, 44% are border crossers from France, Belgium and Germany, 27% are immigrants and 29% are Luxembourgers. The social composition of the voting population of Luxembourg is moreover very different from that of the rest of the population. The results of the census of 2011 show that Luxembourg voters are on the average older than the overall population, their unemployment rate is lower and a much higher percentage of them work in the public service sector, while blue-collar workers are underrepresented. This situation has a negative effect on the results of left parties, and increases the weight of right-wing nationalist parties who can hope for little support from the immigrants.

In EU elections, the opinion of immigrants – 250,000 of the 550,000 residents – would be very considerable, considering the fact that 90% of them are EU citizens. But, of the less than 180,000 eligible voters from other EU countries, only 21,650 have registered to vote in Luxembourg. How many of them voted in their home countries is not known.

Overview: the election results

Voter participation

Voter participation decreased compared with 2009, from 90.8% to 85.6%. Apparently, the possibilities for gaining an exemption from the duty to vote was used more broadly than in 2009, when a double election was held. Notably, too, a high proportion of blank or invalid ballots increased from 9.2% to 9.9%.

	EU '09	Seats	Parl. '13	EU '14	Seats	2009/14	20013/14
CSV	31.36	3	34.02	37.75	3	6.39	3.73
LSAP	19.48	1	19.32	11.75	1	-7.73	-7.57
DP	18.66	1	18.99	14.77	1	-3.89	-4.22
The Greens	16.83	1	10.30	15.01	1	-1.82	4.71
ADR	7.39		6.78	7.53		0.14	0.75
The Left	3.37		4.50	5.76		2.39	1.26
KPL	1.54		1.45	1.49		-0.05	0.04
Pirate Party	-		2.96	4.23		4.23	1.27
PID1	-		1.69	1.82		1.82	0.13
Citizens List'	1.38		-	-		-	-
Ballots	90.76		91.32	85.55			
Blank/invalid ballots	9.18		6.79	9.92			

1) Party for Integrative Democracy, a split-off from the ADR

The results of the parties

The clear victor was the CSV, which increased its share by almost 7 percentage points, to 38%, which was also an increase over its results in the chamber of deputies election of 2013. It achieved its best results in an EP election, retaining the three seats it had won in 2009. No doubt the CVS profited from the media presence of Juncker – who did not run for parliament – and also from the prominence of its candidate, Viviane Reding, vice president of the EU commission.

The losers in the election were the three parties of the governing coalition. The LSAP dropped by almost a percentage points to 12%; nonetheless, like the DP and the Greens, who suffered smaller losses, they won one seat.

Although increasing their vote, the smaller parties won their seats. The winners of the election include the Left Party, which almost doubled its vote over 2009, and increased its share over the 2013 election.

The ADR, and the right edge of the political spectrum, which is associated with the conservative AECR group in the European Parliament, was able to win votes again for the first time since 1999. In 2009 and in the parliamentary elections of 2013, the ADR lost votes due to the split off of its left wing. Since then, it has moved further to the right.

The ADR, which campaigned under the slogan “less Europe more Luxembourg”, is opposed to immigration in the Luxembourg social system, and is in favor of the protection of Luxembourg’s identity and the Luxembourg language, which it would like to implement as another official language of the EU. The ADR is particularly opposed to the right of immigrants to vote for the chamber of deputies, which is supported by the governing parties, and by the Left Party, but is opposed by the CSV and the GPL. For years, a majority of Luxembourg was also in favor of extending the voting rights. However, while 59% were in favor in 2012, that figure dropped to 39% in April 2014.

The results of the Left

Shares of the vote of the radical leftists in European elections in Luxembourg, 1979-2014

Party	1979	1984	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
Left Party	-	-	-	0,93	2,78	1,68	3,37	5,76
KPL	5,00	4,08	4,71	1,63	in Déi Lénk	1,17	1,54	1,49
LCR/RSP	0,51	0,38	0,61	-	-	-	-	-
PSI2	-	2,56	-	-	-	-	-	-
GRAL3	-	-	0,86	-	-	-	-	-

1) 1994: New Left, founded by a KPL split off and the Revolutionary-Socialist Party (RSP, formerly LCR); 1999: the Left Party, as an alliance of the new left and the KPL; thereafter, as a separate party

2) Independent Socialist Party, left split off from the LSAP

3) Green-Alternative Alliance

The Left Party was able to almost double its results over 2009, and increase its vote over that in the parliamentary election of 2013. It probably also profited from the sobering performance of the new government, which has continued its neo-liberal austerity policies. The ministers of the government have lost considerable sympathy compared with December 2013, while the left party deputy Serge Urbany was able to increase his vote. One factor that may have been important was that, unlike in the parliamentary election, the Left Party’s most respected politician, seventy-three-year-old André Hoffmann, was a candidate, and received many personal votes.

The Left Party ran with a very detailed program under the slogan “rebuild Europe”. “Neither the neo-liberal Europeanism, nor the nationalist isolationism serves the interests of the peoples, and especially not the wage-dependent population. It is important to take a new direction, in order to rebuild and unite Europe on a different basis from that of finance capitalism.”

The Communist Party of Luxembourg (KPL) stagnated at a low level. It presented a short program, which stated that the EU is not reformable. It demanded the dissolution of the EU and the abolition of the euro.

Taken together, the two parties reached 17.25%, the best result for the radical left since the beginning of direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979. A new participant in the election was the Pirate Party, which in the perception of the voters, is to the left of the LSAP and the Greens. They were able to improve their results from the chamber election, and may have especially drawn votes from the Greens and the Left Party.

Cornelia Hildebrandt

Malta and the European Election-results

As in the 2009 elections, head of government Joseph Muscat's Labour Party (PL) won Malta's 2014 EP elections. His party netted over 50 per cent of the vote. This confirms a trend already visible in the 2013 parliamentary elections, when PL garnered a 55 per cent share of the vote. The conservative Nationalist Party (PN), currently the largest opposition party, reached 40 per cent. As in 2009, the green party was unable to increase its share of the vote. Voter turnout was 75 per cent. Voting is not compulsory in Malta.

Results of the parliamentary elections2013 und EP-Elections bis 2014						
Party / Coalition	National %	2013 in %	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seats
national-conservativ PN	43,34		39,76	40,49	40,02	3
Labour-Party	54,83		48,42	54,49	53,39	3
AD – Greens	1,86		9,33	2,34	2,94	0
Imperium Europa	-		-	1,46	-	-
Nationale Alliance	-			0,64	-	-
Other			2,49	-	-	-
Turnout	78,80		82,39	78,79	74,80	

Michael A. Olson

Netherlands Voters DEFY Anti-EU-Trend

Dutch politicians on both the Left and the Right who sought to make a statement by exploiting what were assumed to be high levels of dissatisfaction with the European Union and the euro were caught short by the results for the European Parliament elections in their country. In a set of country-by-country elections held over a four-day period among all EU member-states for the first time under the new legal framework of the Treaty of Lisbon, the procedures used in the Netherlands voting also called into question the viability of EU authorities' efforts to prevent any influencing of later voters by those called upon to vote earlier.

THE OFFICIAL RESULTS

Name - Long Name (Leader)	% of votes	New EP Seats	Old EP Seats
D66 – Democraten 66 (Pechtold)	16,5	4	3
CDA – Christen Democratisch Appel (Van Haersma Buma)	16,1	5	5
VVD – People's partij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (Rutte)	12,8	3	3
PVV – Partij voor de Vrijheid (Wilders)	14,2	4	4
SP – Socialistische Partij (Roemer)	10,3	2	2
PvdA – Partij van de Arbeid (Samsom)	10,0	3	3
SGP/CU – Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij/ChristenUnie (Van der Staaij/Slob)*	8,1	2	2
GroenLinks – GroenLinks (Grashoff)	7,4	2	3
PvdD – Partij voor de Dieren (Thieme)	4,5	1	0

Voter turnout was 37,3% of the eligible voting population.

*The VVD and PvdA parties (**in bold**) form the current Dutch coalition government.*

** The SGP and CU, two parties representing the Protestant religious right, put forward common candidates for the 2014 European Parliament election.*

THE SYSTEM

The Treaty of Lisbon (which entered into force 1 December 2009) for the first time determined the parameters of these elections to the European Parliament. Among the changes this brought about were adjustments to the national allocations of seats in the European Parliament, under which the Netherlands delegation was increased by one from 25 to 26.

Given each member-state's allocation of MEP seats, the Treaty prescribes that they be distributed among the various competing political parties in elections by a *degressive* proportional representation system, meaning one designed in some way to slightly favor the chances of smaller parties for gaining representation. The system used by the Netherlands for this (described, in Dutch, here: <http://tinyurl.com/Wijze-van-Verkiezing>) is the very same

as that country uses nationally to elect representatives to its lower house of parliament, the *Tweede Kamer*. The effective electoral hurdle is determined mathematically from the number of seats up for allocation (it amounts to 100% divided by 26 seats = 3.85%); as long as a party gains at least that percentage of the vote, it stands a chance of gaining an additional seat(s) from the redistribution of preference votes from other parties that did not meet that hurdle.

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

With the growing political importance of the European Parliament (another effect of the Treaty of Lisbon), the impact of European-wide elections such as these on national politics – still the main prize – has increased considerably. The essential dynamic of these 2014 elections in the Netherlands was that they came roughly in the middle of the current cabinet's expected term in office (unlike, for example, neighboring Belgium, where the European elections were held the same day as national federal elections). This fact on the one hand constrained the electoral behavior of the parties making up the current governing coalition, the liberal VVD and the Labor Party PvdA. On the other hand, it encouraged several parties who are out of government to advance their positions in the eyes of the public in preparation for eventual national elections, taking advantage of a focus on several Europe-related issues which during an ordinary national campaign might be expected to figure less prominently.

That current Dutch cabinet is a Grand Coalition, a joining of the two parties that gained most votes during the last national election (September 2012), parties which also in ordinary situations would not be inclined to be so closely associated, as one (VVD) is a mainstay from the center-Right while the other (PvdA) is the same from the center-Left. The practical effect of that Grand Coalition on this European campaign was a constraint on these parties' campaign efforts: as they still have to work together daily to agree upon and accomplish national business, they could not do much to emphasize their differences for campaign purposes, at least on the part of those groups of party personnel at the very top holding key positions in the national government. A likely result of this was slightly disappointing results: the VVD only held on to the number of seats it holds in the European Parliament, and the PvdA did the same but only after forecasts had first predicted a one-seat loss.

This particular timing for the European election offered greater opportunities for Dutch parties that do *not* make up the government, and in particular for those in a position to exploit key issues that had arisen with respect to the EU. Clearly, these 2014 elections to a very great extent were a referendum on the European Union itself: this could be seen in the speeches and electoral materials so often centering around the question “Do you want more Europe? Or less?” For most parties, the correct answer was “Less,” and that was due to key sub-issues related to the EU about which there was clearly voter dissatisfaction: the economy, and immigration.

How could the EU affect the Dutch economy, when the free trade that it brings does so much to boost it and national contributions to the common EU budget are still at such comparatively low levels? Actually, Brussels' effect has been direct and clear-cut, in the form of an insistence that governments return as directly as possible to holding no more of a national budget deficit than 3% of GDP. This pressure has caused the Rutte Cabinet to push through controversial cuts to public funding in areas such as the health system, public arts, and the like. It has all gone under the label “austerity” (often the English word) and is unpopular, particularly among voters and politicians of Left, who wonder how that can be suitable policy for a Dutch economy still struggling with the effects of the financial crisis that

started in Europe in 2009. While at first benefiting from their close ties to the buoyant German economy, Dutch fortunes have lately suffered various setbacks; for instance, the Dutch are European champions in holding household debt (for the most part tied up in real estate whose price-level has stagnated for years), and this has exercised a considerable drag upon consumer demand and employment.

Related to this is the question of immigration – related because of popular perceptions that cheap immigrant labor steals jobs that should be for the Dutch. Such perceptions often are irresistible themes for the media, particularly the popular press, which is not above exaggerating the issue to boost readership. This was very closely tied to “Less EU!” sentiment as well, for as a member-state the Netherlands does not hold complete control over its over immigration policy but must follow EU guidelines. It was dissatisfaction with this in particular that the right-wing, anti-immigrant PVV party, headed by Geert Wilders, hoped to exploit in order to build upon its surprising result at the last European elections in 2009 (four seats) to gain momentum for the next national Dutch election – and, secondarily, to join with various other like-minded parties in other EU member-states (e.g. the French *Front National*, the UK's UKIP) to build a powerful anti-EU fraction within the EU Parliament itself. Indeed, in the run-up to the 2014 elections many polls predicted that Wilders' party – which actually urges a Dutch withdrawal from the EU - would be able to do exactly that by winning more MEP seats than any other Dutch party.

UNEXPECTED RESULTS – AND A LESSON FOR THE LEFT

Even the initial exit-poll projections made it clear that Wilders would not succeed in that aim, however, and official results show his PVV coming in fourth place, only retaining its four-seat MEP allocation. What was perhaps more surprising was the similar failure of Leftist parties to harness the real national resentment over what is perceived as EU-imposed austerity to make real gains themselves.

That is perhaps not so surprising when we consider again the effect of the presence in government of one of the two main leftist parties, the PvdA (the other being the even more-leftist *Socialistische Partij* or SP). First there was the effect mentioned above of having to be restrained in its campaigning; but it also turns out that the SP had decided to take advantage of the PvdA's governmental presence to use these European elections to surpass it as the true “anti-Europe” party of the Left (with a view to the next Dutch election, of course), even raising €700,000 for its campaign to do so (according to an *NRC Handelsblad* analysis: <http://tinyurl.com/ofgn7pk>).

The result was that there was pronounced disunity and competition on the Left, and disappointing results followed. Of course, it was no disaster: the PvdA largely held on to its usual voters concentrated mostly in the North (in Friesland and Groningen provinces) and in Amsterdam; and the SP did the same with its traditional heavy support in the more working-class Dutch cities (Arnhem, Nijmegen) towards the German border. (The following site provides valuable maps of Dutch party support: <http://tinyurl.com/mcfwf2x>) Both parties retained the seats that they held. But those Leftist parties wanted more than that – indeed, the SP had budgeted to win more than that, convinced that austerity's unpopularity gave it a good chance, and that that other pole of anti-EU sentiment, Wilders' bloc of PVV voters, had to be countered. Instead, Dutch voters (or the 37.3% who turned out) as usual provided a more uncertain verdict (MEP seats to be divided among nine separate parties). But that did have the slightly surprising element of an endorsement of a pro-EU stand by a significant part of the voting electorate – another sort of countering of the PVV - as seen in the gains of the

parties that were the top-two finishers, the unabashedly pro-European liberal D66 and the somewhat pro-European Christian-Democratic CDA.

Finally, that there would be some sort of surprise result of these European elections in the Netherlands, including a setback for the PVV, was apparent shortly after Dutch polls closed on the evening of Thursday, May 22. This was even though things were not supposed to be that way: Brussels had imposed strict rules on holding the release of official election results until just before midnight of the following Sunday, May 25, the day when most other member-states did their voting. But European officials had not counted on transparency provisions in Dutch law requiring vote-counting to be done publicly, with totals at individual polling-stations immediately announced to whoever asked for them. A couple of polling/media organizations took advantage of these provisions to gain an early idea of how the results would go, with the result that these forecasts were soon under widespread discussion.

Results of the parliamentary elections 2012 und EP-Elections bis 2014									
Party / Coalition	2012 nat. Elections in %	+/- %	Seats	EP-1994 in %	EP-1999 in %	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	ÉP 2014 in %	Seats
conservative VVD	26,58	+6,09	412	17,91	19,69	13,20	11,39	12,80	3
PdVA	24,84	+5,21	38	22,28	20,11	23,60	12,05	10,00	3
Right-populist-Party PVV	10,08	-5,37	15	0,00	0,00	0,00	16,97	14,20	4
SP socialist Party	9,65	-0,17	15	1,34	5,04	6,97	7,10	10,30	2
CDA christian democrats	8,52	-5,10	13	30,77	26,94	24,43	20,05	16,10	5
social-liberal D66	8,03	+1,08	12	11,66	5,80	4,25	11,32	16,50	4
christian SGP/CU	3,13	-0,11	5		0,50	5,87	6,82	8,10	2
GroenLinks	2,33	-4,34	4	3,74	11,85	7,39	8,87	7,40	2
Turnout	87,70			35,69	30,02	39,26	36,75	37,50	

Holger Politt

Poland - Elections to the European Parliament, May 25, 2014

1. The electoral system is the same for the national parliamentary elections, i.e., proportional representation combined with majority constituency voting. The local electoral committees in constituencies set up their own candidates list, and determine its order, but the total electoral result nationwide determines that those candidates and the list will actually be elected to get the most votes, in accordance with the individual candidates marked by the voters; this choice actually determines the order of the list.

A 5% threshold applies. Nine lists were entered nationwide, of which five won seats in the European Parliament. One of these lists was not previously represented in the national parliament. Of the parties represented in the national parliament, three failed to achieve the 5% threshold.

2. In the autumn of 2015, both parliamentary and presidential elections will be held in Poland. As a result, these elections for the European Parliament were welcome test of strength for all parties. The result was that real European issues were of relatively low importance in determining voters choices. The first reactions of all top politicians also referred to the domestic significance of the results. Those who were satisfied with the goals achieved saw themselves as confirmed, while those who failed to do so accepted the message the voters had sent them.
3. In addition to the domestic political constellation, the only major issue of importance to voters was the conflict in the Ukraine. Since public opinion in Poland is much less divided on this matter than in other EU countries, such as in Germany, the influence of the domestic situation could not be determined by this issue. Indeed, the governing coalition probably profited the most from the Ukrainian issue.

The death of former Communist President Wojciech Jaruzelski was the issue addressed by many top politicians on election night.

4. Electoral results

Electoral participation was 23%, or 2% less than in 2009. Participation in national elections is around 50%.

Results

PiS (National conservative)	32.3%	19 seats
PO (liberal-conservative)	31.3%	19 seats
SLD-UP (left-democratic)	9.5%	5 seats
PSL (peasants party)	7.2%	4 seats
New Right (right-liberal)	7%	4 seats
Polish Solidarity (right-conservative)	4%	0 seats
Europa Plus (Palikot)	3.5%	0 seats
Common Poland (conservative)	3%	0 seats
RN (right-radical)	1.5%	0 seats

The Polish media stresses that the race between the governing coalition, consisting of the PLO and the PSL, and the national conservatives of the PiS, is once again open. The splintering of the two major parties, which are represented in Parliament, was

unsuccessful, so in this respect, the power of party loyalty was once again emphasized; this occurred both with the PiS under Jarosław Kaczyński and with the PO under Donald Tusk. This is the most important indicator for next year's election.

It should also be noted that the right-wing nationalists' movement (RN), which models itself on the Hungarian neo-fascist party Jobbik, and is specifically oriented toward young people, and achieved very poor results, compared with its own expectation

5. From the left perspective, the failure of the left-liberal list Europe Plus/Twój Ruch is notable. The list was set up by Janusz Palikot; restarting it gained 10% in the parliamentary election of 2011 and former president Aleksander Kwaśniewski, and resulted in several prominent personalities. This outcome is a severe setback for Palikot in his struggle with the left-democrats of the SLD.
6. The SLD formed a list together with the UP (Union of Labor), primarily to allow Adam Gierek to run; with almost 10%, they won a relatively good result. The party/list will send experienced representatives and politicians to the European Parliament: Adam Gierek, Janusz Zemke, Lidia Geringer de Oedenberg, Krystyna Łybacka, and Bogusław Liberadzki.

Results of the parliamentary elections 2011 und EP-Elections bis 2014							
Party / Coalition	national 2011 in %	+/- %	Seats	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seats
Liberal-cons. PO	39,20	-2,30	207	24,10	44,43	32,13	19
national-cons. PiS	29,90	-2,20	157	12,67	27,40	31,78	19
Palikott RP	10,00		40	0,00	0,00	3,58	0
PSL argrar. Conservativ	8,40	-0,50	28	6,34	7,01	6,80	4
left-democr. SLD-UP	8,20	-5,00	27	9,35	12,34	9,44	4
national PJN	2,20	2,20				-	
neoliberal KNP	1,10	1,10				7,15	
national-cons. SP Polish Solidarity				7,33		3,98	
Euro-sceptical Polska Razem PRJG						3,16	
RN –right radicale				5,33		1,40	
Turnout	48,92			24,10	24,53	22,70	

Catarina Príncipe

Analysis of the electoral results in the European Elections 2014: Portugal

Like other elections held in the country, the European elections in Portugal use the D'Hondt Method⁵⁷ voting system. This means that there are no barring clauses or thresholds.

The results are as follows (although some of the consulates have not yet counted their votes):

Partido Socialista (PS) [Socialist Party] = 31.5% = 8 MEPs

1. Francisco José Pereira de Assis Miranda
2. Maria João Fernandes Rodrigues
3. José Carlos das Dores Zorrinho
4. Elisa Maria da Costa Guimarães Ferreira
5. Ricardo da Piedade Abreu Serrão Santos
6. Ana Maria Rosa Martins Gomes
7. Manuel Pedro Cunha da Silva Pereira
8. Liliana Maria Gonçalves Rodrigues de Góis

Aliança Portugal (AP) [Alliance for Portugal] = PSD (Partido Social-Democrata) + PP (Partido Portugal) [Coalition between the Social Democratic Party and the Popular Party] – Coalition that is currently in Government = 27.7% = 7 MEPs

1. Paulo Artur dos Santos Castro de Campos Rangel
2. Fernando de Carvalho Ruas
3. Sofia Heleno Santos Roque Ribeiro
4. João Nuno Lacerda Teixeira de Melo
5. Carlos Miguel Maximiano de Almeida Coelho
6. Cláudia Sofia Gomes Monteiro de Aguiar
7. José Manuel Ferreira Fernandes

Coligação Democrática Unitária (CDU) = Partido Comunista Português (PCP) + Partido Ecologista “Os Verde” (PEV) [Democratic Unitarian Coalition = Portuguese Communist Party + Ecologist Party “The Greens”] – 12.7% = 3 MEPs

1. João Manuel Peixoto Ferreira, 2. Inês Cristina Quintas Zuber, 3. Miguel Lopes Batista Viegas

Partido da Terra (MPT) [Party of the Land] = 7.1% = 2 MEPs

1. António de Sousa Marinho e Pinto and 2. José Inácio da Silva Ramos Antunes de Faria
- Bloco de Esquerda (BE) [Left Bloc] = 4.6% = 1 MEP: Marisa Isabel dos Santos Matias

Other parties that did not win any seats:

Livre (L) [Free] = 2.2%

Partido pelos Animais e pela Natureza (PAN) [Party for Animals and Nature] = 1.7%

Partido Comunista dos Trabalhadores Portugueses (PCTP/MRPP) [Communist Party of the Portuguese Workers] = 1.7%

Partido Nova Democracia (PND) [New Democracy Party] = 0.7%

Partido Trabalhista Português (PTP) [Portuguese Labour Party] = 0.7%

⁵⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/D%27Hondt_method

Partido Popular Monárquico (PPM) [Popular Monarchist Party] = 0.5%
Partido Nacional Renovador (PNR) [National Renovator Party] = 0.5%
Movimento Alternativa Socialista (MAS) [Socialist Alternative Movement] = 0.4%
Portugal Pró-Vida (PPV) [Portugal Pro-Life] = 0.4%
Partido Democrático do Atlântico (PDA) [Democratic Party of the Atlantic] = 0.2%
Partido Operário de Unidade Socialista (POUS) [Workers' Party for Socialist Unity] = 0.1%

Blank votes: 4.42% / Spoilt votes: 3.06%

Abstention: 65.33% / Turnout: 34.67%

2009

Partido Social Democrata (PPD/PSD)	31.71% = 8 MEPs
Partido Socialista (PS)	26.53% = 7 MEPs
Bloco de Esquerda (BE)	10.72% = 3 MEPs
CDU — Coligação Democrática Unitária (PCP -PEV)	10.64% = 2 MEPs
Partido Popular (CDS -PP)	8.36% = 2 MEPs

The elections: a brief political evaluation

First, it is important to state that Portugal elected one less MEP in 2014 than in previous European parliamentary elections (22 in 2009, 21 in 2014).

The 2014 elections were won by the PS (which notched up one of the best results of all the Socialist Parties in Europe), but this victory is not outstanding, and the results are not significantly greater than those of the Aliança Portugal (Coalition between the Social Democratic Party and the Popular Party PSD – PP) which comprises the current right-wing coalition government. For the PSD, this year saw their worst result in a European election, which clearly demonstrates people's frustrations with the austerity-imposing government. However, the elections took place only one week after the announcement was made to end the memorandum (the Troika "left" Portugal on 17 May). This fact may, to some degree, have created a feeling of relief at a possible end to austerity, and this might have helped keep protest voting and the fear of political crisis (if the government would have to step down) to a minimum.

Undoubtedly, the biggest winner was the MPT. In the 2009 elections, they achieved 0.67% of the vote. However, they have managed to win this time as their main candidate was well-known public figure Marinho e Pinto (a renowned journalist and lawyer) who was able to capture the protest vote using slogans such as "against corruption" and "all parties are the same". This is fundamentally a phenomenon that has been seen many times in Europe, especially in times of austerity and when attacks on the existing system are launched (see Grillo in Italy or "Potami" in Greece). The party itself could be said to be "green conservative", and it has made alliances with the right-wing in several local elections. However, the party had never played any sort of significant role in Portuguese politics. Now, with 2 MEPs elected, we have to wait and see on which side of the political spectrum they choose to position themselves.

The Left

The second winner in these elections was the CDU (the Portuguese CP in coalition with the Green party). They had an increase of 2% and almost elected a 4th MEP. There are several important points that are key to understanding this result: the CP is a very big, traditional party, with a very strong popular basis (especially in the centre-south and south of Portugal) and they have held a steady political position since the beginning of the crisis, i.e. =a left and patriotic government (that clearly excludes any sort of alliance with the Socialist Party). Another important issue relates to the movements of resistance happening in Portugal now; although big demonstrations organised by broader platforms were taking place up until last year, none has occurred in over a year. In that sense, the only steady mobilisation episodes were those organised by the CGTP trade union confederation, which is politically very close to the CP. In this sense, it is not surprising that the CDU has profited from this during an electoral campaign.

Bloco de Esquerda was dealt the biggest defeat in these elections (a drop of 6%, fewer votes than in 2004 and a reduction in its MEPs from 3 to 1). The reasons for this defeat are multiple and sometimes difficult to grasp. Bloco has been dealing with a steady internal crisis since the 2011 national elections (where Bloco lost half of its votes and half of its MPs), but that is not the only issue. Bloco is a young, unestablished party, still seen by many as a “protest party”, and it has been unable to indicate what direction it would take in matters concerning alliances on the left. Its political strategy has also not been clear for the past two years. Besides that, the big, social mobilisations which took place between 2011 and 2013 have not found their “organic” partner in Bloco, and these mass mobilisations have petered out over the last year – a dynamic that could have pushed Bloco up in the electoral results. The “Tsipras phenomenon” also did not mobilise people as expected. Tsipras was in Portugal campaigning for Bloco, but this aspect had no impact on electoral turnout. It is also important not to underestimate the influence of the MPT being recognised as a “protest party”, as well as the part played by the newly formed (centre) left formations (like the “Livre” party) that captured some of the voters that would traditionally vote for Bloco.

Results of the parliamentary elections 2011 und EP-Elections bis 2014									
Party / Coalition	2011 nat. Elections in %	+/- %	Seats	EP-1994 in %	EP-1999 in %	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	ÉP 2014 in %	Seats
PS Socialisten	28,05	-8,51	74	34,87	43,07	44,53	26,53	31,47	8
conservativ PSD Coalition with CDS-PP	26,58	+9,55	108	34,39	31,11	33,27	31,71	27,71	7
conservativ CDS-PP	Alliance with PSD	-	-	12,45	8,16	Alliance with PSD			-
Leftalliance CDU with Communists	7,90	+0,04	16	11,19	10,32	9,09	10,64	12,67	3
Bloco	5,17	-4,64	8	-	1,79	4,91	10,72	4,56	1
öko-con. MPT				0,43	0,40	0,40	0,67	7,14	
L Greens								2,18	0
Turnout	58,03			35,54	39,93	38,60	36,78	34,50	

Florin Poenaru

European Elections in Romania - The Social Democrats win with a landslide, the non-affiliated Left votes in the street

The main focal point of these European elections took place before the actual vote. A civic group –Uniti Salvam [United, We Save], a loose group of heterogeneous leftist activists, which successfully spearheaded last year's protests against the goldmine project in Rosia Montana – announced at the beginning of the week a citizens strike. They invited citizens to boycott the vote and take to the streets instead, in order to protest against the existing political class and against the draconic laws governing the forming and the registration of political parties in Romania. This stirred a nation-wide debate, with many voices from within the establishment, either from the political parties or from the media, condemning such an attitude as defeatist and counterproductive.

So far, existing polls suggest a 32 % turnout, a 5% increase compared to the 2009 vote. From this perspective, combined with the fact that only about 300 people took to the streets in Bucharest, it appears that this civic initiative has failed. However, it is undeniable that the boycott determined an important societal debate and a (more or less leftist) political subjectivation of non-affiliated activists. In addition, the civic initiative made the first concrete towards a plausible political articulation in the future and also, though low-key, gave voice to a widespread disenchantment with the current political class. After all, about 60% of the voters did not vote in the past 3 electoral cycles. While the prevalent mood against established politics cannot be denied, its political articulation is still nascent. Whether this will take a leftist direction or a right-wing populist tone is still uncertain.

Apart from this aspect, at a more general level, internal issues dominated the campaign for the European Parliament. Basically it reflected current local struggles with a view to the Romanian presidential elections of December 2014. The campaign was polarized between the incumbent president Traian Basescu, a right-wing figure who carried the flag of austerity measures after the 2009 crisis, and the incumbent Prime-Minister, the head of PSD (the Social-Democrats, affiliated with S&D) which has now a comfortable majority in Parliament following the 2013 Romanian Parliamentary Elections. Ponta seeks to replace Basescu as the next president, while Basescu, after falling out with his former party PDL (the right-wing Liberal-Democrats affiliated with EEP), is currently gunning for his new pet party, Partidul Miscarea Populara (Party for a Popular Movement). In between them, Crin Antonescu, the head of center-right PNL (the National-Liberal Party, affiliated with ALDE), a former ally of Ponta against Basescu in 2013, is trying to keep the backing of the party as a presidential nominee.

This struggle kept European issues at bay and the electoral results for the European Parliament have been framed from the beginning as indicators for the presidential race. Most of the right-wing parties displayed clear messages against the ruling PSD and tried to portray this party as anti-democratic and lacking in European values given its high number of local capitalists as members, most accused of corruption and monopoly. This label was magnified during the 2013 impeachment of the President, when PSD had to bend several laws in order to accomplish it, which attracted the wrath of several European officials, denouncing the Orban-like tactics of Victor Ponta. While the President survived the

impeachment, PSD retained the anti-European stamp for right-wing voters, already quite powerful given that it is considered to be the offspring of the pre-1989 communists.

In order to counter this and with an eye to the Presidential elections, PSD played the national card and portrayed itself as the only party able to represent the interests of the Romanians at the European level. PSD's campaign veered from social issues to national pride, effectively styling itself as a popular and even populist party. No wonder that some local commentators considered that PSD managed to incorporate a significant number of votes that otherwise would have gone to the extreme-right.

In this context, paradoxically or not, the independent candidates were the ones addressing themes more in line with current European debates. That these candidates were largely conservative and right wing, with Orthodox undertones, is no surprise either, given the Romanian context. Iulian Capsali for example, a candidate having the backing of the Romanian Orthodox church, had the most coherent independent campaign by feeding into all the conservative fears: from gay rights to EU ingrained secularism. It had little societal impact, but it managed to coagulate such views which so far remained dispersed and without a political articulation.

At the time of writing this report there are several exit-poll results available, from different survey institutions. However, they are highly contested by the preliminary results coming from electoral parties and from the Central Election Bureau. Therefore, the following figures must be treated with caution since they are definitely subjected to change. Early preliminary official results together with the number of seats apportioned to each party will not be announced until Monday 26 May at noon.

1. PSD (The Social Democrats) (41.01 %), 2. PNL (The National Liberals, center-right)(14,92 %), 3. PDL (The Liberal-Democrats, right-wing) (11,82 %), 4. UDMR (The Hungarian minority, right-wing)(7,1 %), 5. PMP (The Popular Movement, right-wing) (6,7 %) 6. Mircea Diaconu (independent right-wing) (5,91 %), 7. Forța Civică (right-wing) (2,11%) 3

Results of the parliamentary elections 2012 und EP-Elections bis 2014						
Party / Coalition	Parl. Election. 2012 in %	Parl. Election 2008 in %	EP-2007 in %	EP-2009 in %	ÉP 2014 in %	Seats
social-liberal Union USL	58,63					
Social-democratic PSD	USL-Alliance	33,10	23,12	31,70	37,60	16
PNL liberal	USL-Alliance	18,57	13,45	14,52	15,00	6
conservativ PDL/ARD	16,51	32,36	28,92	29,71	12,23	5
Right-populist Dan Diaconescu PP-DD	13,99				3,67	0
Hungaria (UDMR),	5,14	6,17	5,52	8,92	6,30	2
nationalist PRM	1,25	3,16	4,15	8,65	2,70	
Rightwing Mircea Diaconu					6,81	1
Rightwing PFC					2,60	
rightwing PNTCD					0,89	
Turnout				27,67	32,20	

Cornelia Hildebrandt

Slovakia – results of the European elections 2014

The social-democratic SMER party was unable to repeat its previous results from the 2012 parliamentary elections and the 2009 EP elections. This was already foreseeable in the March 2014 presidential elections, when the social democratic candidate Robert Fico was clearly defeated by the independent candidate Andréj Kiska. Euro-sceptic parties triumphed in this election and received well over 30% of the vote. Remarkable in this context is the result of the populist and EU-sceptic OL'aNO party. It almost repeated its result from 2012, which at the time caused quite a stir. This time though, the party probably lost votes to the newly founded conservative NOVA party.

Voter turnout was 13 per cent, a figure even below the 2004 negative record of 16 per cent. Such developments make it questionable whether the results can in any way be considered a representative expression of the will of the people in Slovakia.

Results of the parliamentary elections 2012 und EP-Elections bis 2014							
Party / Coalition	National 2012 in %	+/- %	Seats	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seats
SMER	44,41	+9,6	83	16,90	32,02	24,99	4
liberal KDH	8,82	+0,3	16	16,20	10,87	13,21	2
EU-sceptical conservativ OL'aNO	8,60	+8,6	16			7,46	1
ung. Minderheit Party Most-Hid	6,90	-1,2	13			5,63	1
SDKU Christ-demo-kraten	6,10	-9,3	11	17,10	16,98	7,75	2
europaskeptische. Liberal SaS	5,90	-6,2	11		4,72	6,66	1
nationalistische SNS	4,60	-0,5		2,90	5,56	3,61	0
Nationalkonser-vative SMK	4,30	0		13,25	11,34	6,53	1
national-libral-conservativ NOVA						6,83	1
LS-HZDS				17,04	8,98	1,73	0
SZ Green					2,11		
Turnout	98,43			16,94	19,64	13,00	

Anej Korsika

European elections 2014 - Socialist forces deliver an impressive performance in Slovenia.

Rarely does a country experience European, parliamentary as well as local elections in a period of less than 6 months, but that is exactly what is happening in Slovenia right now. Results of recent European elections, being the first election of the three to be held, are therefore even more telling than they would be otherwise. On the basis of the outcome for these elections, it is tempting to draw conclusions or at least make predictions about the other two, especially the upcoming parliamentary elections. But before we immerse ourselves in the broader analysis of the Slovenian political scene, let us first focus explicitly on the aftermath of the European elections. The elections are held in accordance with the system of proportional representation, which is combined with the ranked voting system, i.e. preferential voting. The entire country counts as one electoral unit and received votes are distributed according to the D'Hondt system. The election threshold is not known in Slovenia, and members of European Parliament (EP) are selected in accordance with the above stated procedures. As a country, Slovenia has 8 members of European Parliament (MEPs).

Since the country joined the European Union (EU) in 2004, these were the third EP elections to take place in Slovenia. Therefore, putting the data into perspective will help us to gauge the current mood and aspirations of Slovenians with regard to the EU. When a referendum was held on whether Slovenia should enter the EU more than ten years ago, voter turnout was more than 60%, and almost 90% voted in favour of EU membership. Great hopes were invested in the project of EU accession; somehow it seemed as though there was a bright, well-deserved future that finally lay in store for us within the broader European family of nations. At least that was the idea a majority of politicians from both right- and left-wing parties were promoting. Nationalists enthusiastically proclaimed that Slovenia would finally and once again become a part of Europe, as if having been part of the former Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia had somehow erased it from the map. In this sense, EU accession was an explicitly ideological project. Even though the country stayed very much right where had been since the end of World War II, it seemed there was a lot of effort involved in changing its geopolitical position. We were told that we were finally leaving the Balkans, and that we were moving towards the centre which had always been our rightful place. At the time, when trying to introduce new laws, a popular argument many politicians put forward was that it (the new law) was "a well-known practice in other European countries".

However, this enchantment with Europe did not last very long. Already the first European elections in 2004 had a very low turnout of 28%; five years later the turnout was also 28%, but this year it has fallen to 24%. According to the latest opinion polls gauging attitudes across Europe, the Slovenians trust in the European Union is well below 30%, which is a dramatic drop from the 90% who supported the organisation when the country entered the EU. But Slovenians are not alone: all in all 60% of Europeans in the EU member states no longer trust the EU. The majority of those questioned in 20 out of the 28 member states are even convinced that the EU is heading in the wrong direction. So, when analysing the perception of the EU and its elections, one must bear in mind that it was a project fully

invested with hopes and aspirations, and one which is systematically encouraged by Slovenia's politicians. But, at the same time, this project has obviously seen a dramatic about-turn in how it is perceived by ordinary people. Politicians who once exalted the supposedly impeccable examples of policies and legislature that other, more advanced EU countries had adopted, are now delivering a very different rhetoric. Now, Slovenian politicians have been using the threat of the Troika and its politics as one of their core issues when talking about the EU. Here, one can see the true essence of the cynicism that pervades modern day liberal politics; politicians, whether they are conservative, liberal or social democratic, use the same rhetoric and implement the same policies. Ironical as it may seem, the fact is that, at least in Slovenia, nominally left-wing governments have been much more successful in implementing neoliberal policies than their conservative colleagues.

Their rhetoric towards the EU is identical inasmuch as they all perceive the threat of the Troika as an inevitable, natural and even justified fact: as something that cannot be questioned in any meaningful way. What we are actually facing is a "grand ideological coalition" where any substantial differences between conservatives, liberals and social democrats disappear. At the end of the day, they are all devoted austerians, regardless of their nominal political affiliations. The iconic phrase that the protagonists of such a grand coalition like to repeat ceaselessly is that they themselves "must implement the harsh austerity measures, otherwise the Troika will come and do it in a much harsher way!" At least two things are obvious in this often repeated sentence. We must be our own Troika: we must carry out cuts and ignore democratic rights and procedures, otherwise, and this is a second point, the actual Troika will come, which is even more undemocratic and even more relentless in its demands for restructuring public debt, cutting the public sector etc. So there is a blunt admission that the Troika is a threat to the national sovereignty of member states and that feeling the Troika breathing down your neck is by no means pleasant. But, as we have already emphasised, at the end of the day, the Troika is perceived as an inevitable, natural and justified fact.

Conservative victory and defeat for the Liberals and Social Democrats

We have already noted that voter turnout was the lowest for any European election held in Slovenia: less than a quarter of the population with voting rights actually exercised their right. Such a low turnout is in itself telling, and it indicates a vote of no confidence in the elections as such, as well as in the EU. An ever increasing amount of people are aware that current austerity policies are drastically worsening their living conditions and future prospects. More and more people are beginning to realise that what is happening in Athens is done at the hand of Brussels and that solidarity between European nations cannot exist in a Europe built like this. Therefore, it is not that surprising that a great many people did not bother to vote and that even amongst those who did, a significant number decided to subvert with invalid ballots (more than 17,000 people). Before we turn to the specific results, there is another general observation that is worth reaffirming, which is that voters of right-wing parties are traditionally more disciplined, and a low turnout always means that these parties will profit. Indeed, this was also the case in these elections.

The absolute winner in the Slovenian European elections was the SDS (Slovenian Democratic Party) party which gained 24.88% and managed to have 3 MEPs elected. The SDS party also won the 2009 European elections. A coalition of parties comprising the NSi and SLS (New Slovenia and Slovenian People's Party) finished second and received 16.56% of the vote and 2 elected MEPs. It is already known that SDS, as well as the coalition of NSi and SLS, will

enter the political family of the European People's Party, strengthening the party with 5 MEPs from Slovenia. Before we examine where the final 3 of the 8 MEP seats were allocated, the results of

the right-wing SDS party first need further contextualisation. Janez Janša, president of SDS since 1993, was recently sentenced to two years' imprisonment because of corruption charges in arms transactions during his mandate as prime minister (2004-2008). His response to the conviction was that he had been sentenced by a judicial system that wanted to damage public trust in his party, the SDS. Obviously, this conviction did not harm his level of public support or the results of his party in the last elections.

The other three seats were distributed among three social democratic or liberal parties. The Social Democrats (SD) suffered the biggest defeat. During the 2009 European elections SD received 18.43% of all votes and finished second with 2 MEPs. Five years later their electoral results were catastrophic: gaining only approx. one third of their previous votes the SD received only 8.02% and lost 1 MEP. Furthermore, their president Igor Lukšič who heads the party's list, was not elected because a former MEP of SD, Tanja Fajon, was re-elected with preferential votes. The presidency of Igor Lukšič was characterised by an ever increasing lack of support of the SD, tinged by arrogant and cynical statements about new leftist parties. He blamed the United Left coalition⁷ for the loss of SD votes. The day after the election his party accepted his offer of resignation.

Furthermore, the Democratic Party of Pensioners of Slovenia (Desus), a rather peculiar party and perhaps one unique to Slovenia, won the 7th seat in parliament and notched up 8.14% of vote. Their policies can be described as social-democratic, bearing in mind that modern day Social democrats often pursue neoliberal policies. They have also already announced that their MEP (Ivo Vajgl an MEP for a second term) will join the European parliament's liberal group, ALDE.

A newcomer, Igor Šoltes, former president of the Court of Auditors, was actually the most successful of the three parties, receiving 10.45% of votes and securing himself a mandate in the EP. In an interview he stated that he will most likely return to Slovenia after the first 6 months at the European Parliament, i.e. a period he must complete if he wishes to be entitled to the benefits given to former MEPs. He clearly aspires to become a major political figure in Slovenian politics. One of his "political assets" was his supposed moral integrity, which he enjoyed as the president of the Court of Auditors. However, journalists uncovered the inconvenient truth that Šoltes was living in a municipality apartment where he paid a significantly reduced rent. Even after he rose to the position of the president of the Court of Auditors, he continued to live in this apartment for a further 5 years, arguing that his salary (which was more than EUR 5,000 before tax) did not allow him to move out. It remains to be seen whether voters will punish such hypocrisy.

An encouraging first victory for socialist forces in Slovenia

Whilst analysing losers among winners is interesting, it is equally fascinating to analyse winners among losers. But first let's look at losers that are simply losers. One such example is the Positive Slovenia (PS) Party which, up until recently, led the government and had an incumbent prime minister. Things started falling apart when the former president of the PS Zoran Janković, who was also the incumbent mayor of the capital and facing various criminal charges, decided to run for the party presidency once again against the incumbent prime minister, Alenka Bratušek. He managed to win, causing the collapse of the government, early

elections and a split in the PS. Consequently, the party that enjoyed all of the resources, media coverage and had a popular candidate achieved only a meagre result of 6.61%.

Another loser among losers was two-time MEP, Jelko Kacin, who did not manage to get his third mandate (4.88%). Yet further down the list is the Slovenian National Party, a long-time oppositional party whose xenophobic president Zmago Jelinčič Plemeniti/ Zmago Jelinčič the Noble, won only 4.04%. However, the ultimate loser amongst losers was a neoliberal party called the Civic List, another coalition party which was part of the former government of Alenka Bratušek. Civic List managed to get only 1.12% of the votes. That same night its president, Gregor Virant, resigned as party president and it is most unlikely that the party will ever become a significant political player again.

However, one definite winner among the losers was the tripartite coalition United Left (UL), consisting of Initiative for Democratic Socialism (IDS), Workers Democratic Party (DSD), and Party of Sustainable Development of Slovenia (TRS). The coalition was another political newcomer (IDS having been founded as a party only this March), but it had an explicit agenda of democratic socialism and strongly criticised the EU's existing structure and its (mal)functioning, especially in terms of its austerity measures and grave inequalities between countries of the centre and on the periphery. The coalition was staunchly against any kind of fascism, even more so in the current situation where the continent is seeing a powerful surge in nationalist or even fascist parties within the EP. The coalition did not have any substantial financial resources and had to make ends meet with the little that it had. Media coverage was hardly present and a great majority of public polls have projected that the result of the UL might be around 3% but will most likely be much lower. However, the actual results of the UL during the European elections were almost double the projected figure, i.e. 5.47% (21,590 votes). Their performance was therefore definitely the biggest positive surprise of the whole European elections.

One can immediately see that this new-born force, which chose to follow a radical socialist agenda and operated with an extremely limited budget as well as other resources, was able to show that there is widespread distrust of other, nominally leftist parties. The difference between UL and SD was 2.6%, and the party's even smaller margin compared with the PS (1.14%) is very telling, especially, if one takes into account the fact that the PS won the last parliamentary elections in 2011 and achieved 28.51% of all the votes. Considering the UL's media blockage and, as a result, all the other setbacks it suffered, this is indeed a splendid and unexpected result. As such, it shows that other left-wing parties, ranging from those championing social democracy to those advocating social liberalism, are becoming increasingly bankrupt and unable to address the real issues Slovenian people are facing today. The UL was therefore the only player to consistently argue that the EU, as it exists today, is causing social disasters and needs to be radically reformed, with the ultimate goal of forming a United States of Europe that would be an organisation of socialist states. Other parties have stubbornly supported the EU without voicing meaningful critiques.

The UL was also very successful in holding its founding congress and hosting Alexis Tsipras of Syriza, as well as Dominic Heilig from Die Leftwing. With this gesture, it has shown its clear commitment to international solidarity and cooperation with progressive socialist forces. The founding congress and the presence of Tsipras and Heilig guaranteed huge media coverage and helped promote the UL in the wider public space. As we mentioned at the very beginning of this report, Slovenia is currently facing turbulent times politically and it seems that very shortly (as early as the second half of July) early parliamentary elections will be

held, followed by local elections at the end of September or at the beginning of October. Although the results of the European elections cannot be mechanically applied to the logic of parliamentary elections, it is still significant that the UL could enter Parliament if it achieved the same result; one could say that this was one small step for the European Left and one giant leap for the Slovenian Left. New and much more difficult challenges already lie ahead, to which one can only say – the struggle continues!

Anej Korsika, Coordinator of International Affairs, Initiative for Democratic Socialism

Results of the parliamentary elections 2012 und EP-Elections bis 2014							
Party / Coalition	nat. Elections 2012 in %	+/- %	Seats	EP- 2004 in %	EP- 2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seats
liberal LZJ-PS	28,50	+28,5	28	0,00			
conservativ SDS	26,20	-3,1	26	17,65	26,66	24,88	3
Social-democrats	10,50	-20	10	14,15	18,43	8,02	1
liberal LGV Bürgerliste	8,40	+8,4	8		11,48		
DeSUS Pensio- närsparty	7,00	-0,5	6	im Alliance	7,18	8,14	1
conservativ SLS	6,80	+1,6	6	8,41	3,58	16,56	2
Nsi Christdemokraten	4,90	+1,5	4	23,57	16,58		
nationalistische SNS	1,80	-3,6	0	5,02	2,85	4,04	
Verjamemem (Greens EP-Fraktion)						10,46	
Turnout				28,00	28,00	24,00	

Luís Ramiro and Jaime Aja

The Left in the Storm: The Radical Left and the 2014 European Parliament Elections in Spain

Six years after the beginning of the 2008 economic crisis, the 2014 European Parliament (EP) elections resulted in enlarged representation for the parties integrated in the group of the United European Left-Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL). This increase was very significant in a few countries where a considerable growth of radical left parties took place. One of the most important surges in this vote occurred in Spain. IzquierdaUnida (United Left, IU, the organisation created by the Partido Comunista de España - Communist Party of Spain, PCE - in 1986, and in which the Spanish Communists still are the largest component) and its allies grew from 4.2 per cent of the vote in the 2009 EP elections to ten per cent five years later.⁵⁸ This important upturn in IU's electoral evolution was, however, partially overshadowed by what became the big news of election night – the strong electoral showing of Podemos (We Can), a party only launched in January 2014 and very loosely organised at the time of the May EP elections. Podemos, which despite the vagueness of its ideological self-definition had announced it would support the candidacy of Alexis Tsipras for the presidency of the European Commission and join the GUE/NGL group in the EP, obtained eight per cent of the vote and five MEPs. Taken together, the support for IU and Podemos was the highest share of votes ever received by the radical left in Spain in any kind of election.

The electoral growth of these two parties took place in the context of a large change in Spanish public opinion, a very relevant modification of the voters' preferences, and, finally, a significant variation in the party system. Ultimately, the 2014 EP election results were part of a political process set in motion by the economic crisis that began in 2008, the implementation of austerity policies since 2010, and the parties' and voters' reactions to the general social, economic, and political emergency, and the turmoil afflicting Spanish society ever since.

The 2014 EP election results in Spain – beyond 'second order' election dynamics

The 2014 EP election results show many striking features. They contrast with the outcome of the previous national elections (2011), and, more importantly, they also indicate a very relevant change in relation to the previous Spanish experience of EP elections.

In some respects, the 2014 Spanish EP elections still fits the 'second order' model. Electoral turnout was low in relative and Spanish terms (43.8 per cent). Yet, despite the fears of a record low participation due to public dissatisfaction amidst a deep economic crisis, turnout was not exceptionally low (in the 2009 EP elections turnout had been 44.9 per cent).⁵⁹ Additionally, as is normal with 'second order elections', the government party saw their

⁵⁸ IU ran within an electoral coalition, Izquierda Plural (Plural Left), with the Catalan Ecosocialist or Left-Green party Iniciativa per Catalunya Verds (Initiative a Green Catalonia, ICV, which belongs to the European Green Party), the Galician left-wing nationalists of Anova-Irmandade Nacionalista (Anova-Nationalist Brotherhood), several smaller Green parties such as The Greens-Green Option (based in Catalonia) and The Greens Federation, the Galician Espazo Ecosocialista (Ecosocialist Space), the left-wing Basque and Navarrese parties Etxerrekoko Ekimena-Etorkizun Iratzarri and Batzarre (Assembly), the small left-wing party Construyendo la Izquierda-Alternativa Socialista (Building the Left-Socialist Alternative, CLI-AS), and the Catalan branch of IU (Esquerra Unida i Alternativa (United and Alternative Left)).

⁵⁹ Turnout was 68.9 per cent in the previous national elections of 2011.

support diminished very significantly. However, as Table 1 shows, in more than a mere negative result, the support for the main centre-left and centre-right parties, the social democratic Spanish Socialist Workers' Party (Partidosocialistaobreroespañol, PSOE) and the conservative Popular Party (Partido popular, PP), plummeted compared to the previous EP elections. In fact, the sum of the two centre-left and centre-right parties (PSOE and, since 1982, PP) was below fifty per cent of the vote share for the first time since democratic elections began in 1977.

Table 1. Electoral results, European Parliament elections, 2014

	2014 EP elections, % votes (seats)	Change from 2009 EP elections, % votes (seats)
<i>PP</i> (Popular Party, centre right)	26.1 (16)	-16 (-8)
<i>PSOE</i> (Socialist Party, centre left)	23 (14)	-15.8 (-9)
<i>IU-ICV et al.</i> (United Left-Initiative for Catalonia Greens et al., radical left and left-wing Greens)	10 (6*)	+6.3 (+4)
<i>Podemos</i> (Radical left)	8 (5)	+8 (+5)
<i>UPyD</i> (Union, Progress and Democracy, centre right)	6.5 (4)	+3.7 (+3)
<i>CEU</i> (Coalition for Europe, centre right peripheral –Catalan, Basque and others – nationalist)	5.4 (3)	-0.3 (0)
<i>EPDD</i> (The Left for the Right to Decide, centre left peripheral nationalist)	4 (2)	too different for comparison
<i>C's</i> (Citizens, centre right)	3.2 (2)	+3.2 (+2)
<i>LPD</i> (Peoples Decide, left-wing peripheral nationalist)	2.1 (1)	too different for comparison
<i>Primavera Europea</i> (European Spring, left-wing peripheral nationalist and Greens from <i>Equo</i>)	1.9 (1)	too different for comparison

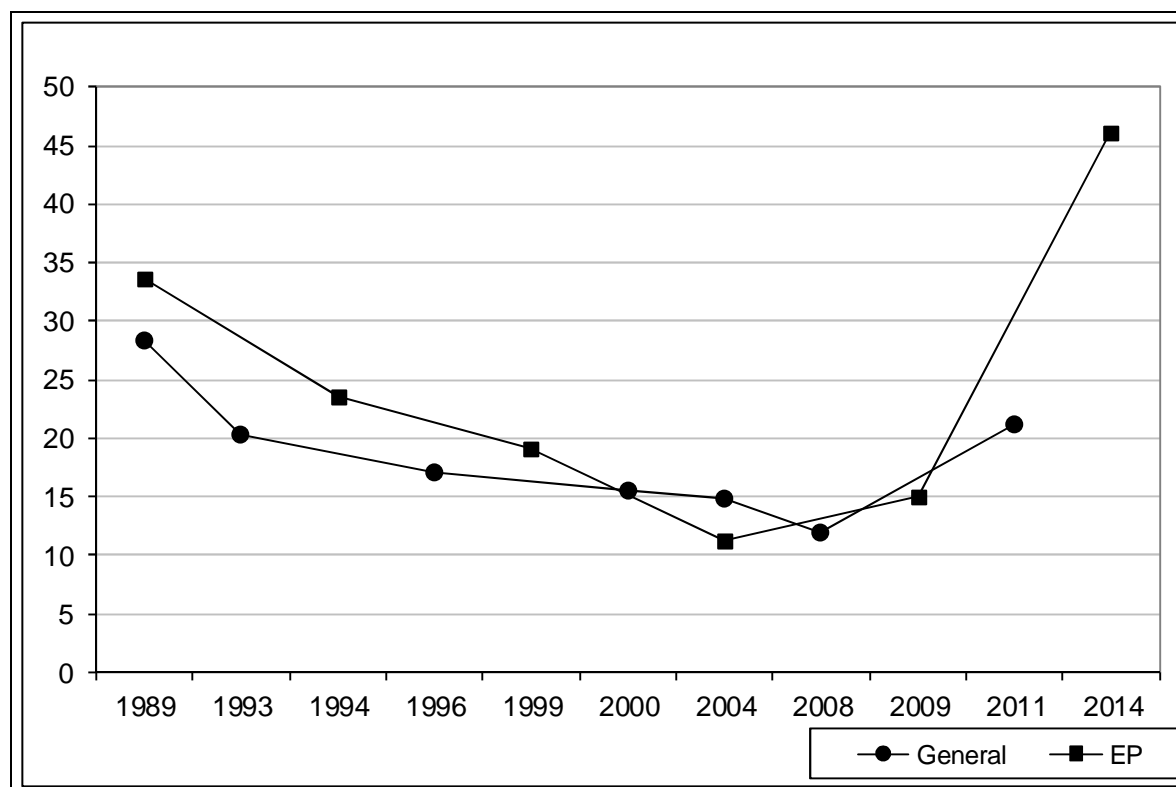
Source: Ministry of the Interior. *The four MEPs who belong to IU and one associated to *Anova-Irmandade Nacionalista* are part of the GUE/NGL group jointly with the five MEPs from *Podemos*. One MEP elected in the IU-ICV coalition is a member of ICV and belongs to the Green group of the EP.

Confirming the 'second order elections' hypotheses, several opposition, smaller, and new parties, and parties and coalitions created a few months in advance for the purpose of running in the EP elections, were relatively successful. The centre-liberalUPyD and C's, the centre-left Catalan nationalist ERC, the coalition (mainly) between the Valencian nationalists (*Compromís*) and the Greens (*Equo*), and the left-wing Basque nationalist *Bildu* were among

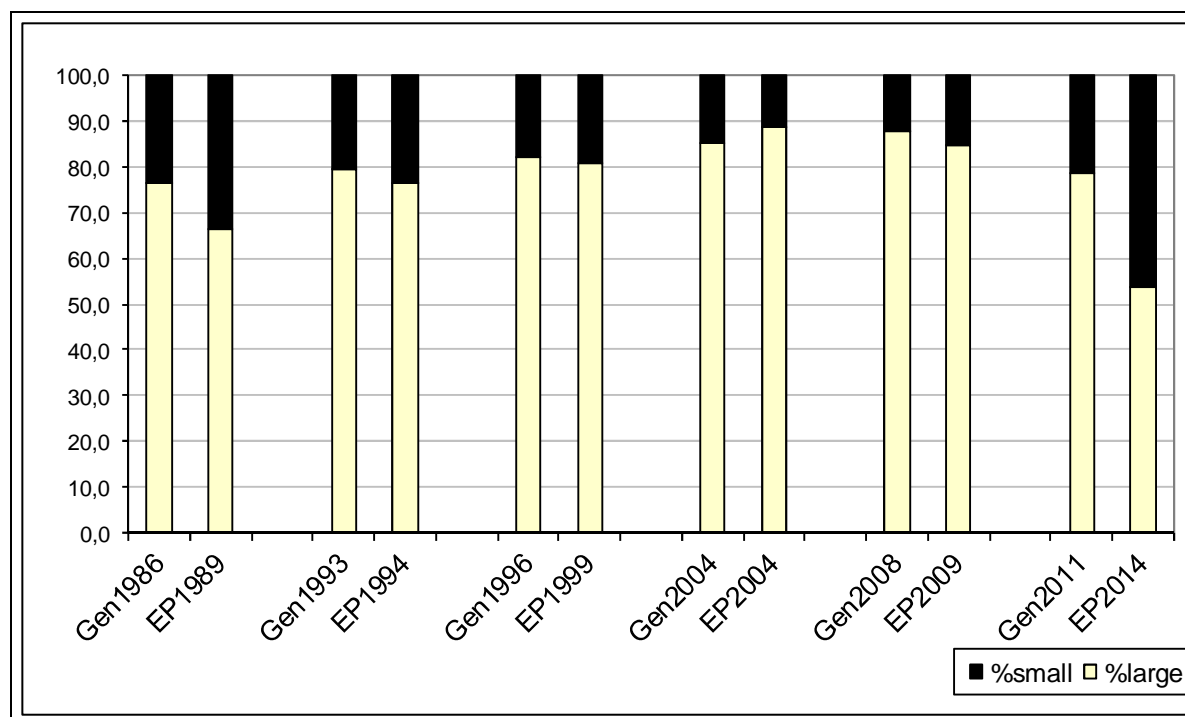
the parties gaining a significant share of votes. This was also the case with IU and Podemos. The growth of smaller parties and the unprecedented decrease in the vote for larger mainstream centre-left and centre-right parties resulted in a new, more fragmented, party system.

However, although the 2014 EP elections in Spain show many features common to less relevant 'second order' elections, its relevance goes beyond them. EP elections in Spain, in contrast to the 'second order' theory, have in fact been characterised by decreasing gains for smaller parties, and the previous 2004 and 2009 EP elections showed a strongly bipartisan distribution of preferences.⁶⁰ However, the 2014 EP elections broke not only with the recent experience regarding EP elections in Spain but also the entire Europe-wide record of EP results. As Graph 1 shows, in the 2014 EP elections Spain's smaller parties reached their highest level of support ever in EP elections. Graph 2 shows the relative vote share of smaller parties and larger parties (including the two larger nationwide parties, PP and PSOE, and the two larger Catalan and Basque nationalist parties, the centre-right PNV and the CiU) in national general elections and EP elections. Both Graph 1 and Graph 2 indicate a previous trend of the decreasing weight of smaller parties, a small and recent change of this trend in the 2009 EP elections and in the 2011 national general elections (when smaller parties began to improve their results), and a drastic growth for smaller parties in the 2014 EP elections.

Graph 1. Vote for smaller parties, general and EP elections



⁶⁰ Ramiro and Font, '¿Una oportunidad para los pequeños?'.

Graph 2. Vote for smaller and larger parties in general and EP elections compared

The growth and fragmentation of radical left parties in Spain

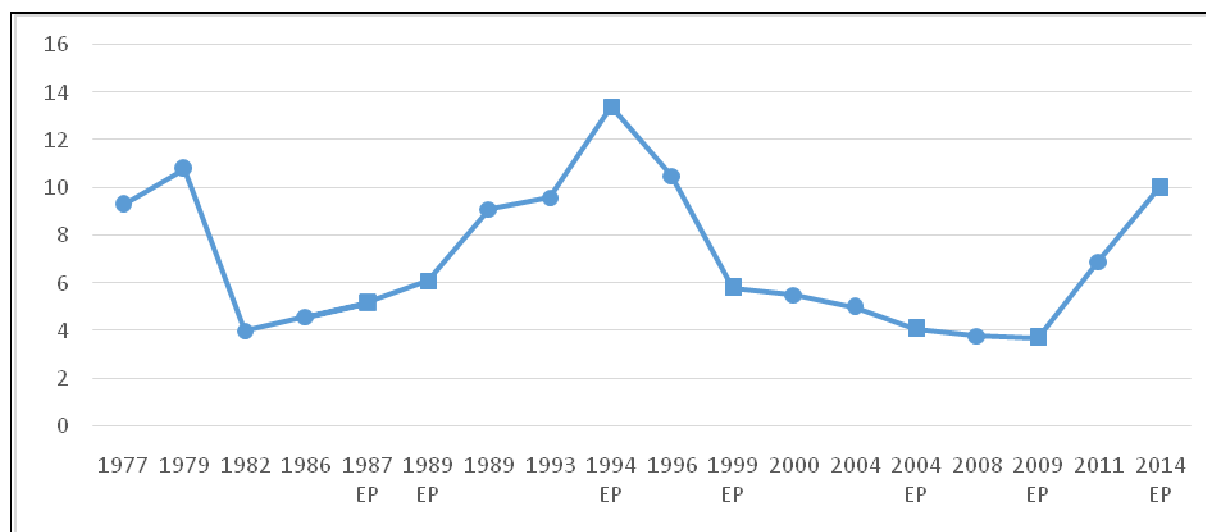
The increased fragmentation of the party system after the 2014 EP elections was partly due to the electoral growth of Spain's radical left. However, one of the most striking features of the May 2014 results was that the support for radical left parties in Spain also showed, for the first time since the democratic transition, a considerable internal fragmentation. Two electoral lists that can be classified as radical left gained parliamentary representation and obtained a similar share of the vote: IU grew electorally and Podemos, created five months before the elections, had a spectacular showing.

IU experienced a very relevant vote increase compared to the previous EP 2009 elections (from 3.7 per cent to ten per cent of the votes), and, leaving aside the different conditions proper to each type of election, its share of votes also grew in relation to the 2011 general elections. From this point of view, IU's results showed an upward trend. Moreover, the support for IU was relatively homogeneous across Spanish regions. Although in some areas IU had a weaker performance, the results in some of the traditionally less 'IU supportive' provinces were relatively high and above the 'usual' figures (with very high numbers, in relative terms, in regions such as the Canary Islands or Cantabria). At the same time, the electoral support for IU in some of its historic strongholds (such as Andalusia and Asturias) was particularly strong. In sum, across regions IU's electoral performance was good, improving its results and lending continuity to a pattern of growth already seen in recent, but different, elections.

However, putting IU's results in the context of its recent electoral trajectory helps nuance the magnitude of its growth. IU grew in the 2014 EP elections from a very low point of departure. Its recent improvement is against the background of its worst ever electoral results achieved in the 2008 (national) and 2009 (EP) elections and a decade-long electoral crisis (1999-2009). As Graph 3 shows, IU grew from an extremely weak starting position, and

in its 2014 EP elections results it has not caught up with its highest level of support in the EP elections of 1994.

Graph 3. Electoral evolution of IU-ICV (PCE-PSUC before 1986), 1977-2014



Source: Ministry of Interior

IU's growth was also lower than forecast by the polls. Leaving aside the very diverse quality of the various polls, and the intrinsic difficulties of predicting election results in an increasingly volatile political environment, IU's election results partly occurred against higher expectations. Additionally, the 'intention to vote for IU' indicator produced by one of the most qualified Spanish pollsters, the public institution Centre for Sociological Research (Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas – CIS), which had showed an uninterrupted growth for IU in the past, ceased to signal this progressing evolution just two months prior to the 2014 May EP elections. To some degree, placed in the context of the evidence provided by previous polls, IU's 2014 EP elections results expressed an arrested growth.

Another important element that contributed to IU's result was that, despite its growth, Podemos was able to gain more votes than IU in several Spanish regions, and in some others they got an almost equal share of votes. That a new party so recently founded and with only a loose organisation on the ground before the May EP elections had been able to electorally overcome IU in some regions was very significant. This was relevant not only because, as Table 3 shows, the number of places in which Podemos overtook IU was relatively high but also because this superior Podemos showing took place in some of the traditional IU strongholds (such as Asturias and Madrid) and in very populated and politically symbolic regions (such as, again, Madrid).

Table 3. 2014 EP elections, IU and Podemos results by region

	<i>IU, ICV et al.</i>	<i>Podemos</i>
<i>Galicia</i>	10.5	8.3
<i>Asturias</i>	12.9	13.6
<i>Cantabria</i>	9	9.2
<i>Basque Country</i>	5.5	6.9

<i>Navarre</i>	9.5	9.3
<i>Aragon</i>	9.4	9.5
<i>Catalonia</i>	10.3	4.6
<i>Balearic Islands</i>	8.9	10.3
<i>Valencian Community</i>	10.6	8.2
<i>Castile-La Mancha</i>	8.7	6.3
<i>Madrid</i>	10.6	11.4
<i>La Rioja</i>	8.1	7.5
<i>Castile- Leon</i>	8.3	8.1
<i>Extremadura</i>	6.3	4.8
<i>Andalusia</i>	11.6	7.1
<i>Murcia</i>	9.7	7.6
<i>Canary Islands</i>	10.5	11
<i>Ceuta</i>	3.4	3.7
<i>Melilla</i>	3.3	2.9

Source: Ministry of Interior. The shaded rows indicate regions where Podemos gained more votes than IU.

Podemos' result was striking for several reasons. With the party founded only five months before the May elections, the results meant they had gained the largest share of votes ever obtained by a new contending party in any EP or general election in Spain. At the time of the EP elections, and despite the frequent and regular presence of its party leader on TV shows during the campaign and even long before the launch of the party, Podemos' ideological self-definition remained vague. Its message made the party resemble radical left populist parties or socialist populist parties (March 2011), combining classic democratic socialist or radical left positions with an overwhelming emphasis on the confrontation between a corrupted elite (a 'caste') and a morally virtuous common people. Since then, the party has progressed in its political clarification and party building. But a full analysis of its ideology is still pending, leaving aside the accounts by some of the party promoters and founders. One of the most notable recent developments in its clarification of its political and strategic positions is its increasingly open rejection of the left-right division as a determinant of party and political alignments, arguing that this categorisation limits the possibilities of electoral victory for 'anti-regime' parties. This dismissive approach towards the left-right cleavage (which means that the party will not declare itself to be leftwing) – aimed at attracting voters ideologically distant from the traditional left electorate – was likely to benefit Podemos' support already by the 2014 EP contest (as we will see later) and is likely to have important implications for the near future.

Although the 2014 EP elections in Spain were not merely the product of the typical 'second order elections' dynamic, they were not a completely extraordinary phenomenon either. The 2014 EP elections could signal a move of Spain's electoral dynamics closer to what is a more general and common pattern in, at least, Western Europe.

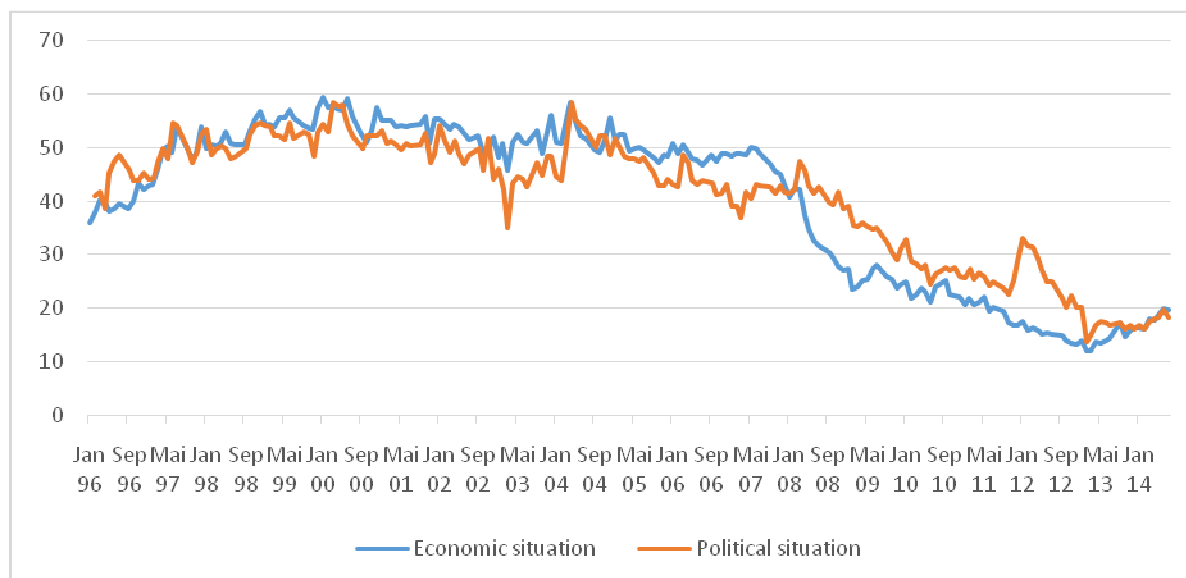
In the most recent period many have warned of successive or simultaneous crises in the capacity of governments to provide welfare to their citizens, the party government model and the diverse party functions, the different pillars of political representation,

representative government itself, or even the Western model of democracy and politics.⁶¹ These crises predate the current economic and political crisis of the European Union, have affected every Western European democracy for more than two decades, and have been profusely discussed. They are visible in many symptoms. As to the crises related to parties and electoral politics, these changes, challenges or crises experienced in Western European polities manifest themselves in the form of a significant decline in party membership figures, electoral turnout, voter loyalty, party identification, party and electoral alignment, and, finally, the weight of larger mainstream parties. At the same time, they are expressed through increases in electoral volatility, 'last-minute' electoral decisions, the appearance of new parties, and, in general, voter dealignment.

Spain exhibited several but not all of these features common to many Western European party systems prior to 2014. Some of them were very strongly visible since the 1980s. Spanish parties have always had particularly weak social links, and there was an important symbiosis between mainstream parties and the state characterised by an overwhelming financial dependence on public subsidies. Episodes of corruption and party patronage were not uncommon before the current explosion of corruption cases, and Spain has been an example of high political disaffection. However, some other features of the democratic crisis were not fully visible or had a minor presence. Above all, the Spanish party system projected strong two-party dominance.

However, the 2008 economic crisis, one of the deepest in Spanish history, triggered a political crisis and a significant change in Spanish public opinion. The public has a negative view of politics, a pessimism and mistrust on a scale never before seen. As the data from CIS surveys show, positive evaluations of the economic and political situations have decreased sharply since the beginning of the economic crisis, and both trends seem to be related.

Graph 4. Positive evaluations of the economic and political situations

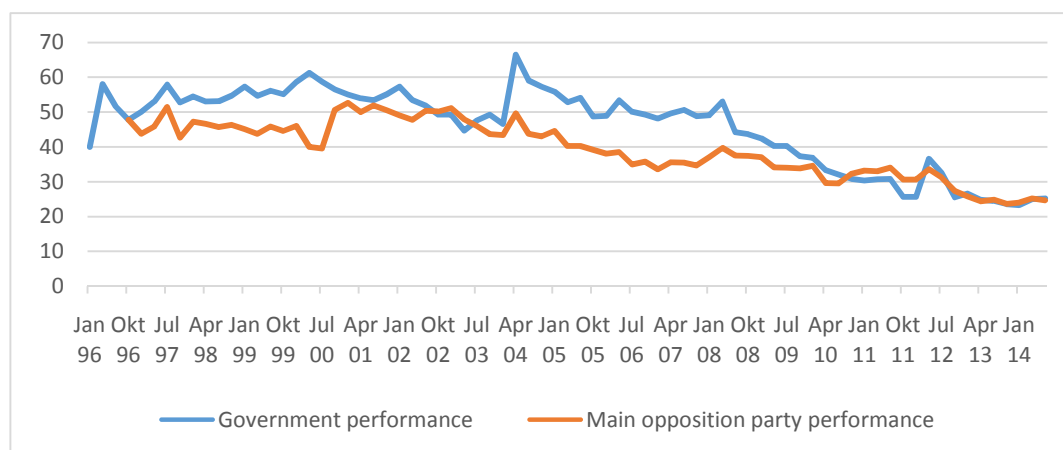


Source: CIS indicators from Barometer surveys

⁶¹ See, among many others, Peter Mair, *Ruling the Void*, London: Verso, 2013.

The connection between economic and political crises affected how the performance of government and the main opposition parties is seen. As Graph 5 indicates, positive perceptions of the actions of government and the main opposition party have declined, it mattering little which party is in office (PSOE in 2004-2011, PP since 2011) or in opposition.

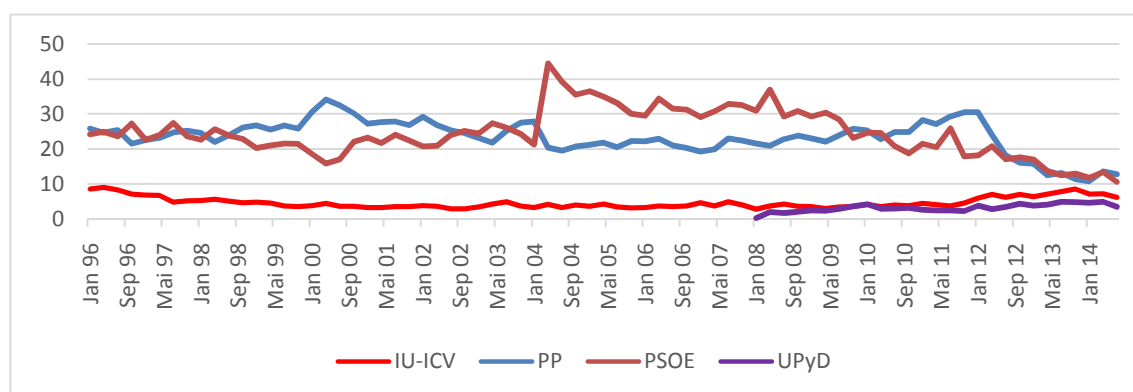
Graph 5. Positive evaluations of government and main opposition party performances



Source: CIS indicators from Barometer surveys

This change in public opinion seems to represent more than mere short-term corrections, with the positive perceptions of the economic and political situations diminishing rapidly since the start of the economic crisis in 2007-2008. Additionally, the change in public opinion entailed a modification in political preferences, already expressed in the 2011 general elections, manifested again in the 2014 EP elections, and, according to public opinion polls, still ongoing. As Graph 6 shows, the support for the two larger mainstream parties has decreased sharply. PSOE's decline began in 2008, before the austerity policies were implemented (in 2010), and it has been unable to recover support despite being in opposition since 2011; in turn, the conservative PP was severely punished by public opinion ever since it came into office that year. While the public lost faith in the capacity of the two larger mainstream parties, the two smaller nationwide parties IU and the centrist UPyD increased their figures in terms of voter intention, transforming the two-party dominance of the Spanish party system. Interestingly enough, the growth of the two smaller parties came to a halt shortly before the 2014 EP elections.

Graph 6. Voter intention: PSOE, PP, IU, and UPyD



Source: CIS indicators from Barometer surveys.

The left in the storm

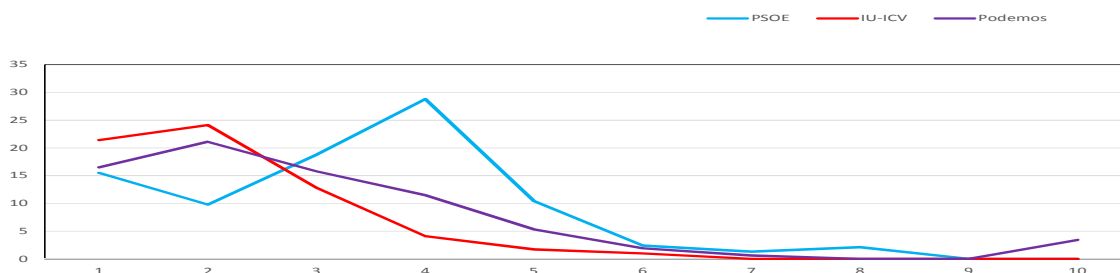
New parties, such as Podemos, have successfully taken advantage of the political opportunity structure. Spain has joined the group of Western European countries with more than one radical left party with parliamentary representation (e.g. Greece, Italy, Portugal, France, or Denmark, at different points in time and with obvious differences). Spain also joins the list of party systems where both radical left and green parties are present, with the green party Equoentering the EP. And, finally, Spain also joins the group of countries in which a new and/or populist partygains parliamentary representation – in this case what could be described as a left-wing populist party.

The new political landscape in Spain also points to a new competition within the left in general and, more specifically, within the radical left. The centre-left PSOE, the radical left IU and the newly emerged Podemos – which, even if it does not declare itself to be a left party, can be considered as such – have increased the competition for votes, as well as for activists and other resources, such as media exposure, in the left-to-centre space. The negative change in the voter intention trend for IU at the beginning of 2014 anticipated to a certain degree the arrested gains obtained in the 2014 EP elections. At the same time, the strong support garnered by Podemos in the May 2014 EP elections signalled the appearance of a new party that appeals to some of IU's voters or potential voters.

In sum, one of the most important outcomes of the 2014 EP elections was the increased competition, volatility, transfer of votes, and fragmentation within the left-to-centre electoral space.

This is clearly illustrated in Graph 7 by the data on the distribution of the most preferred left-to-centre party by voters over each position of the ideological scale right after the 2014 EP elections. Voters self-placed in the most left-wing positions (1, 2 and 3) distributed their support among IU, PSOE and Podemos. IU cemented its support with the vote of the more radical left voters (positions 1 and 2) while the PSOE gained the support of the more moderate voters. The PSOE improves and IU worsens their results as we move towards more moderate centre-left positions (3 and 4). As in every western society, the moderate-left (and centrist) voters are more numerous than the radical-left voters, among whom IU was able to win the highest shares in the 2014 EP elections. The strength of Podemos came from its very good performance among radical-left voters while also being able to attract voters from much more centrist and moderate positions, placing the ideological profile of its voters between those of IU and the PSOE.

Graph 7. Percentage of vote for PSOE, IU, and Podemos in each ideological position, 2014 EP elections (1-10 left-right scale)



Source: CIS, 2014 EP elections post-electoral survey

This signals the emergence of a complex competitive situation in the near future, in which left-wing parties will be forced to adjust their organisational and political strategies to compete or to cooperate. It is much too soon to analyse the ideology, policies, strategies and electorate of Podemos, as the organisation is still in the process of party building. Nevertheless, despite its vague ideology, or perhaps precisely because of it, it is benefitting from a bandwagon effect with regular improvements of its voter intention numbers in recent polls, which broadens its electorate – and, quite possibly, the heterogeneity of its composition. By contrast, recent polls do not show such good news for IU, apparently confirming the situation of arrested growth. However, both organisations can anticipate a near future of clarification in terms of strategy decisions. Confronted with their mutual rivalry for votes, IU and Podemos will have to decide about whether to collaborate or compete for a partially overlapping electorate in a context marked by a tight electoral calendar; local, regional, and general elections are due in 2015.

LITERATURE:

Mair, Peter, *Ruling the Void*, London: Verso, 2013.

March, Luke, *Radical Left Parties in Europe*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2011.

Ramiro, Luís and Joan Font, '¿Una oportunidad para los pequeños? El voto a partidos pequeños en las elecciones al Parlamento Europeo', Mariano Torcal and Joan Font (eds), *Las elecciones europeas de 2009*, Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2012.

Reif, Karlheinz and Hermann Schmitt, 'Nine second-order national elections. A conceptual framework for the analysis of European Election results', *European Journal of Political Research* 8,1, (1980), pp. 3–44.

Results of the parliamentary elections 2011 und EP-Elections bis 2014									
Party / Coalition	2011 nat. Elections in %	+/- %	Seats	EP-1994 in %	EP 1999 in %	EP-2004 in %	EP-2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seats
conservativ PP	44,63	+4,71	186	40,12	39,74	41,21	42,12	26,06	16
PSOE	28,76	-15,09	110	30,79	35,33	43,66	38,78	23,00	14
leftwing IU	6,92	+3,15	11	13,44	5,77	4,15	3,71	9,99	6
Podemos	-		-	-	-	-	-	7,97	5
censtrist UPyD	4,70	+3,51	5	-	-	-	2,85	6,50	4
Christian dem. Catalan. CiU/ CEU- Alliance	4,17	+1,14	16	4,66	4,43			5,44	3
nationalist. EAJ-PVN/ Coalition CN	1,51	+0,32	6	2,79	2,90	5,15	5,10	Alliance with CEU	-
nationalist. BNG	0,76	-0,07	2		1,45	1,27		Alliance LPD	-
EPDD leftnat. Catalan. Alliance								4,02	2
center-left katalan. Cs Ciudadanos								3,16	2
Turnout	68,94			59,14	63,05	45,14	44,90	45,90	

Center for Marxist Studies (CMS), Stockholm

Election Analysis Sweden 2014

Feminists in parliament: small success for the Left and significant gains for the Fascists

This year elections will be held in Sweden for the European parliament (on 25 May) and the municipal, regional and national assemblies (on 14 September). In addition to this, some municipalities and regions will usually also use this as an opportunity to hold referendums at the same time. On the election day for seats in the European Parliament, six municipalities will hold referendums on issues such as harbour area development, construction of a new sports stadium or reorganisation of schools. These referendums will probably contribute to voter participation in the EP elections in these areas.

The election threshold for the EUP election is the same as for national elections: 4%. Sweden uses open lists, with the possibility to choose favourite candidates. In the national elections, some candidates are strongly campaigning for their own personal placement within the party list, and although this was not so significant during the EUP election campaign, it was seen most frequently among the liberals and the right-wing parties.

The political situation with regard to the elections

This year is a “super-election year”, with EUP elections in May and national, regional and municipal elections in September. This has clearly had an impact on the campaigns for the EU Parliament, with an increased tendency to test out issues and slogans on voters for the upcoming national elections rather than actually address issues regarding the work of the EU.

The government (a coalition consisting of Moderaterna, Centerpartiet, Folkpartiet and Kristdemokraterna) have had grim results in the polls for almost a year; the Left, Greens and Social Democrats have gained, as have the far right Sverigedemokraterna party. In addition, Feministiskt Initiativ have led a very successful campaign with a limited budget, using social media to a large extent.

The economic situation is less than healthy, but better than in most European countries. (Unemployment stood at 8.7% in April)

Overview of the election results

The last election turnout was 43.8%, but this time 48.9% of citizens came out to vote, a very good turnout for a European election. But, as always, it was mainly voters from high-income areas that went to polling stations in greater numbers whilst voters in rural or low-income urban areas stayed at home.

Results and results of single parties/including numbers of seats

			2014	+/-	2009	seats 2014	+/-	seats 2009
3rd	Conservative	Moderaterna	13.6%	-5.2	18.8%	3	-1	4
	Neo-liberal	Centerpartiet	6.5%	+1.0	5.5%	1		1
	Liberal	Folkpartiet Liberalerna	10.0%	-3.6	13.6%	2	-1	3
	Christian Democrat	Kristdemokraterna	6.0%	+1.3	4.7%	1		1
1st	Social Democrat	Socialdemokraterna	24.4%	-0.2	24.7%	6		6
	Left Party	Vänsterpartiet	6.3%	+0.6	5.6%	1		1
2nd	Greens	Miljöpartiet de gröna	15.3%	+4.4	10.8%	3	+1	2
	Right extreme	Sverigedemokraterna	9.7%	+6.5	3.3%	2	+2	-
	Pirates	Piratpartiet	2.2%	-4.9	7.1%	-	-2	2
	FI	Feministiskt initiativ	5.3%	+3.1	2.2%	1	+1	-
	Turnout	Valdeltagande	48.9%	+5.0	43.8%			

Maybe we are seeing the beginning of a new era in Swedish elections. Until now, voters had voted based on socioeconomic issues, but now, with the Greens making significant gains, as well as the feminists and the Swedish democrats, voters are increasingly shifting their focus towards issues of socio-cultural belonging. The Left and the feminists are very similar when it comes to feminist issues (in an attempt to smear the feminists with a communist past, foreign Minister Carl Bildt claimed they were “Siamese twins”). According to an analysis made by the largest environmental organisation in Sweden, the Left have a better environmental policy than the Greens. But identity might triumph over policy proposals, at least in the EU parliamentary elections.

Election topics

Overall, the parties have been using slogans and topics that are similar to those that they will use in the national elections in September. The general idea is that the EUP election is some sort of dress rehearsal for national elections. The Left Party is going for “Not for sale”, which in the national campaign takes aim at the privatisation of welfare institutions and venture capitalists in the Swedish school system. In the EUP campaign it translates to a broader aim, with workers’ rights, the environment, women's rights etc. being brought into focus.

The slogan “Out with the racists, in with the feminists”, used by Feminist Initiative during their campaign, sums up their policies quite well. The Left and the feminists have really appealed to their voters’ fear of a large extreme right, and the Greens have done the same but with a greater focus on environmental issues. The feminists have also avoided the

subject of which party group they will support, arguing that they need to negotiate with each of the groups in order to see where they can have the largest amount of freedom to go against the group line, if necessary, in order not to compromise their votes. Their newly elected MEP, Soraya Post, has stated in an interview that she leans towards GUE/NGL, but the party chair Gudrun Schyman says that they are open to an Alliance with the Greens as well. There have been some campaigns to encourage people to vote, most of them rallying around the need to vote *against* far right parties.

Some examples:

SSU – social democratic youth association, made a video-clip called *Never forget to vote*, featuring the grandchild of the Nazi officer Rudolf Höss, explaining that it may be easy to forget your past, but you still have to face up to it.

The local branch of the Left Party in Biskopsgården, a suburb in Göteborg with a population largely on low incomes, has made videos featuring local people explaining why people in Biskopsgården (and everywhere else) need to vote.

- EU and racism
- EU and working conditions
- EU and the right to asylum
- Candidate Malin Björk, from Göteborg greets voters in Biskopsgården (in English as the population of the suburb are from all over the world).

Results of the left parties

Left Party: 6.3%, 1 MEP (Malin Björk), a small gain of votes.

Feminists: 5.5%, 1 MEP (Soraya Post) – a huge gain.

What is interesting is that the Left Party and the Feminists made gains at the same time. In polls carried out by the SVT (Swedish Public Service television), voters answered questions on where they see themselves on the political spectrum, for instance as left- or right-leaning. 86% of the feminist voters regarded themselves as left-leaning in terms of their political views. What is more, whilst both the Left Party and Feminist initiative have gained voters and the Greens have gained a significant number of voters, the social democrats have not lost as many as feared. So the “cannibalism of the Left”, which many feared, has not really materialised.

Left Party voters

According to the poll made by SVT (Swedish Public Service TV), the Left Party might have a higher number of female voters and young voters. The old (64 and above) tend to go to the social democrats. The feminist voters are young, urban women, with an academic background, or with a history of involvement with the non-parliamentary Left.

Which social movements were relevant for the political situation and the elections?

A new anti-racist movement has really come to the fore during this election, not necessarily helping specific parties but making a statement that people really should vote, and subsequently vote against the far right. In December 2013, a protest organised by the local population in the suburb of Kärrtorp outside Stockholm in opposition to Nazi activities in the area, was attacked by a group of 30 Nazi activists armed with bottles, knives and bats. The

attack was met with resistance and the locals, together with a small group of anti-fascist militants, chased the Nazis into the nearby forest, where all of them were arrested by the police. The following week 16 000 people gathered in Kärrtorp in a very powerful demonstration of protest against extreme right violence. All party leaders, except the prime minister, were present but not allowed to speak. Only people from local organisations made speeches, stating that they were grateful for the support shown, but that they were not letting themselves become a tool in a political party agenda.

Grass roots organisation

At the same time, protests in some 30 cities in Sweden and Finland took place in solidarity. On the 8th March, after the International Women's Day demonstration in Malmö, in southern Sweden, a group of left-wing feminist protesters were attacked and stabbed by a group of Nazi activists from the small Svenskarnas Parti (Party of the Swedes, former National socialist front). One of the Nazi activists had just recently returned from Ukraine, where he had joined a Swedish Nazi volunteer group which was fighting alongside Svoboda and the Right sector. The police did not arrest him on the spot and he has now fled the country, but three of the other Nazi attackers were arrested. No one died, but one left-wing activist was in a coma for a couple of weeks and is now recovering.

Massive support came from all over Europe, showing solidarity with the victims. Although these events did not exactly mark the start of this new anti-racist/anti-fascist movement, they did shine the media spotlight on all the ongoing struggles and brought groups together. All of a sudden, reports started to come in from hospital staff refusing to meet with Sweden Democrat politicians visiting their work place as well as firefighters driving away their trucks in order to spoil photocalls when the SD campaign came to visit etc. And, when they were criticised by SD officials in the media, huge support campaigns erupted on social media seemingly out of nowhere, like *Brandmän mot rasism* (fire fighters against racism). During the Sweden Democrats campaign, they have been met with noisy protests, thousands of turned backs and pointed middle fingers, as well as sabotaged posters, denied ad campaigns in some media along with protests against the media that took their money. They too have played the part of the bullied victim, seeking sympathy.

The Feminist Initiative is a 100% grassroots organisation: it has no employed officials and a huge social media fan base twittering every move of party chair Gudrun Schymans' campaign. Members of the anti-racist movement have traditionally been, to a large extent, Left Party voters, but the feminists have clearly made huge gains here. The feminists have been very active in the protests whereas the Left Party have been more invisible and have sometimes even spoken out against protests which have turned into violence. It is possible that when Left Party chairperson Jonas Sjöstedt actively spoke in opposition of protests against the Sweden Democrats by making noise at their meetings, the party lost some voters to the Feminist Party. The overall strategy of the Left Party leadership has been to attract

voters from the middle by not appearing too radical, and by focusing on serious economic issues and not the phrase "radicalism".

Finally, in Sweden, the fact that Tsipras campaigned for the chair of the commission has played a very marginal role in terms of turn out.

Cornelia Hildebrandt

Great Britain – European Election results

In spite of polls already anticipating the results, the greatest surprise was nonetheless the success of the UK Independence Party (UKIP). Since the 2004 elections, UKIP's share of the vote has always hovered at around 15 per cent, a figure the party has now increased by 10 per cent. Backed by this support, UKIP, with its EU-sceptical positions, will surely use the May 2015 House of Commons elections campaign to influence the UK's position vis-à-vis the European Union. Moreover, the party is bound to use upcoming election campaigns to push for an early referendum on the UK's continued membership in the EU. Even now, right wing conservatives are supporting this discourse. Other Tory representatives say the coming election could result in a very tight race between Labour and Tories. They hope that the traditionally higher voter turnout in national elections (around 60 per cent) will curb UKIP support. Nonetheless, compared to the 2009 elections, and even more so to the 2010 House of Commons elections, conservative results are catastrophic. For the Tories this was the worst result ever registered in any House of Commons or EP election. Labour clearly increased its share of the vote in comparison to 2009, albeit staying behind its 2010 House of Commons election result. Liberal Democrats netted 6.9 per cent of the vote; a shattering result that left the party at an historic low. Compared to 2009, the Greens lost slightly, garnering 7.67 per cent, but they did win three seats. Striking are the great regional differences. In Wales and Scotland, UKIP did far less well. Although achieving a good result in Wales (28.1 per cent) the party nonetheless came second to Labour (28.8 per cent). In Scotland UKIP came fourth, behind the Scottish SNP, Labour and Tories.

What is to be made of UKIP's success? UKIP presented itself as a (right-wing) populist, anti-establishment party. Thanks to its charismatic leader Nigel Farage, it appealed not only to the more conservative segments of the working class, but also to all those unhappy with the political system. In local elections held on the same day as EP elections, UKIP also broke into some Tory strongholds and currently holds more than 300 council seats. So far the party has not made full use of its potential in House of Commons elections.

Yet the question remains how the 2014 EP-election results will impact the 2015 House of Commons elections. The challenge posed by UKIP will not simply disappear. So far, the hope that this would somehow happen has characterised dealings with UKIP. Such an approach fails to recognise the severe changes to the social consensus formerly dominated by the relation between the two large parties. In the past this consensus had a strongly integrating effect in the political arena, effectively including the Liberal Democrats. A significant share of the population broke this consensus in the EP elections, putting into question the UK's political system as well as its relation with the EU. The election results demonstrate how attractive a right-wing populist critique is and highlights the lack of a relevant and radical left-wing party.

Results of the House of Commons Elections 2010 and EP-Elections until 2014									
Party / Coalition	2010 nat. Electio ns in %	+/- %	Seats	EP- 1994 in %	EP- 1999 in %	EP- 2004 in %	EP- 2009 in %	EP 2014 in %	Seat s
Tories konsv.	36,10	+3,8	307	27,00	33,50	25,85	27,75	23,31	19
Labour (social- dem.)	29,00	-6,2	258	42,60	26,25	21,86	15,74	24,74	20
Liberal. Demokraten	23,00	+1,0	57	16,10	11,86	14,42	13,75	6,90	1
right-populist. UKIP	3,10	+0,8			6,52	15,64	16,51	26,77	24
Right-radiale BNP	1,90	+1,2			0,96	4,75	6,24	1,11	0
green-liberal scottische SNP	1,70	+0,2		3,10	2,51	1,36	2,12	2,40	2
Green Party	1,00	0		3,10	5,86	5,58	8,62	7,67	3
Playd Cymru Party of Wales				1,00	1,73			0,69	1
Sinn Fein				0,30				0,66	1
other	4,20	-0,8	28						
Turnout	65,10			36,50	24,00	38,52	34,70	36,00	

Authors

Jaime Aja, University of Córdoba (Spain), works on industrial relations and political behavior. He is director of Fundación Europa de los Ciudadanos.

Matyas Benyik is an activist of attac Hungary.

Nico Biver, **political** political scientist and activist. Member of the parliamentary group DIE LINKE and since 2001 a member of the Municipal Council of the city of Marburg.

Giorgos Charalambous, University of Cyprus **University of Cyprus**, Social and Political Sciences Department, Adjunct. Studies Political Parties, European Radical Left, and Euroscepticism

Paolo Chiocchetti, Political scientist. BA in Political Science (University of Bologna, 2004); MA in International Relations (University of Bologna, 2006); Associate Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (2013); PhD in European Studies (King's College London, 2014).

Richard Dunphy, Senior Lecturer in Politics. He teaches courses on Contemporary Irish politics and Gender, Power and Sexuality at Honours level, and is available for supervision of undergraduate dissertations in contemporary sexual politics and in Irish politics

Teppo Eskelinen is a political philosopher and collaborator of Left Forum (Finland).

Elisabeth Gauthier is director of Espaces Marx (France), member of the Managing Board of transform! europe and member of the National Council of the French Communist Party.

Cornelia Hildebrandt is Vice Director of the Institute for Critical Social Analysis of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (RLS) and its consultant on parties and social movements.

Thilo Janssen is a political scientist specialising in European studies. His research focuses on right-wing parties at the European level, left-wing parties in Europe, and social policy in the EU. Since 2008 he has been a political advisor for Die LINKE's MEP Gabriele Zimmer. author of the studies *What is the Political Right-Wing Doing in the European Parliament?* (2012) and *The Parties of the Left in Europe – A Comparison of their Positions on European Policy* (2013).

Inger V. Johansen is a member of the European Affairs Committee and International Committee of the Red-Green Alliance, Denmark. She is on the Executive Board of the Party of the European Left and its Secretariat, and on the Board of Transform!Danmark.

Horst Kahrs, social scientists, senior research fellow of of the Institute for Critical Social Analysis of the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation (RLS) for commons and social structure analysis.

Marko Kostanic He is a dramatist and political activist from Zagreb, member of the Center for Workers Studies in Zagreb and j journalist by www.bilten.org.

Anej Korsika is a PhD. candidate at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ljubljana. He has been active in various student struggles. From 2007 to 2009 he was the president of Polituss, an association of political science students. He is a member of editorial board of the magazine *Borec* [Fighter], a member of the Institute for Labour Studies, and a secretary for international affairs of the Slovenian parliamentary party Initiative for Democratic Socialism in the United Left coalition.

Jiří Málek graduated from The Institute of Chemical Technology in Prague. He was active in the youth movement and in the Communist Party and was in charge of education, universities, and academic science for the municipality of Prague. After 1990 he was active in

private business and then in the Party of Democratic Socialism. He is a chairman of the managing board of the Society for European Dialogue (SPED).

Gregory Mauzé, political scientist and activist in Belgium and blogger: **Social Struggle Back in Force in Belgium. The Left and Migrants: How to think about Struggles in Common by Migrants, Non-migrants and Minorities?** <http://www.transform-network.net/de/netzwerk/autorinnen/news/detail/AuthorStandalone//322.html>.

Roger Martelli is a historian, Co-Editor of the monthly “Regards”, former member of the National Board of the French Communist Party (PCF) and author of several works about communism in France.

Margarita Mileva, Leader of the party “The Bulgarian Left” and Vice President of the Party of the European Left.

Andreas Nissen, political scientist and activist in Denmark. Member of the Red Green Alliance in Denmark.

Michael A. Olson, political scientist and activist in the Netherland.

Krzysztof Pilawski has been a journalist in Poland since the mid-1980s. From 1992 to 2002 he worked as a correspondent for the Polish newspaper *Trybuna* in Moscow, before becoming its editor, which he remained until 2006. He is now working as a freelance publicist and journalist, dealing mainly with issues of political history in Poland and other countries in the region.

Florin Poenaru, graduate student of the Central European University, Sociology and Social Anthropology, member of Criticatac in Bukarest and editor of Lefteast <http://www.criticatac.ro/lefteast>

Holger Politt has been collaborating with the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation since 2002 and heading the foundation’s Warsaw office from 2002 to 2009. Since 2010 his main focus has been Rosa Luxemburg’s work concerning Poland, culminating in publications such as *Autonomy and the Question of Nationality* (2012) and various texts on anti-Semitism as well as on the 1905/06 revolution (2014).

Catarina Principe, member of the Bloco de Esquerda (Left Bloc).

Luís Ramiro, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Leicester, UK, studies political behaviour, organisations, and parties. He has published extensively on these topics, including three books on Spanish and European parties. His articles have appeared in journals such as *The Journal of Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, *South European Society and Politics*, *Mobilization*, and *Party Politics*.

Ntina Tzouvola. Law School, University of Durham. Protecting Vulnerable Families: Legal Enclosures and (Hetero)normativity.

IMPRESSUM

PAPERS 7/2014 wird herausgegeben von der
Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung und erscheint unregelmäßig
V. i. S. d. P.: Martin Beck
Franz-Mehring-Platz 1 • 10243 Berlin • www.rosalux.de
ISSN 2194-0916 • Redaktionsschluss: Juni 2014
Gedruckt auf Circleoffset Premium White, 100 % Recycling