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What future for Europe?

Political actors' narratives on European integration and democracy in national parliaments (2015–2021)

Magdalena Góra, Elodie Thevenin
and Katarzyna Zielińska (eds)

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with contributions from Dia Anagnostou, Filippa Chatzistavrou, Birthe Einen, Max Heermann, Espen D. H. Olsen, Viliam Ostatnik, Guri Rosén, Max Steuer, Fabian Tigges, Natália Timková, Resul Umit, Janna van Diepen, and Tiziano Zgaga

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Preface

The EU has expanded in depth and breadth across a range of member states with greatly different makeups, making the European integration process more differentiated. *EU Differentiation, Dominance and Democracy* (EU3D) is a research project that specifies the conditions under which differentiation is politically acceptable, institutionally sustainable, and democratically legitimate, and singles out those forms of differentiation that engender dominance.

EU3D brings together around 50 researchers in 10 European countries and is coordinated by ARENA Centre for European Studies at the University of Oslo. The project is funded by the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme, Societal Challenges 6: Europe in a changing world – Inclusive, innovative and reflective societies (2019-2023).

The present report is a part of EU3D's work on public opinions, debates, and reforms (WP 4). With a specific focus on the narration of EU reforms by political actors within national parliaments, the report examines how these narratives serve as foundational pillars for potential constitutional models, particularly in the context of the Future of Europe. It does so by analysing debates on the future of Europe in eleven national parliaments and the European Parliament between 2015-2021. Important questions addressed in the report include how national parliaments envision the constitutional-democratic outline of the future of the EU. Emphasis is placed on the relationship between integration and differentiation and in terms of the question of dominance. The report represents an important contribution to the understanding of how political actors narrate the future of the EU and whether these visions correspond with the existing constitutional narratives on the future of the EU.

John Erik Fossum
EU3D Scientific Coordinator

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Chapter 1

Analysing Differentiated Debate on the Future of Europe in National and European Parliaments. Introduction

Magdalena Góra, Elodie Thevenin and Katarzyna Zielińska

Introduction

The debate on the future of Europe initiated in 2015 by the Five Presidents' Report (European Commission 2015) and the European Commission's White Paper (European Commission 2017) started yet another round of reflection on the finalité politique of the European Union (EU). This unfolded in a period that, it seemed, allowed the bloc to overcome mounting crises: financial, migration, and destabilisation in its neighbourhood. As Jean-Claude Juncker's farewell report stated, 'After years of crisis, Europe is bouncing back' (European Commission 2019, 7). This held true for only a short time, with new crises – the COVID-19 pandemic and Russian aggression against Ukraine bringing fully fledged war into the European continent – soon following.

Various actors engaged in the debate across the continent, from governments and leaders such as Emmanuel Macron and Mateusz Morawiecki to civil society organisations and individual citizens, especially within the framework of the Conference on the Future of Europe, launched in 2021 (Alemanno and Nicolaidis 2021). In this report we define the debate on the future of Europe (FoE) as a multidimensional and multi-actor exercise in conceptualising, expressing, and deliberating on the polity- and policy-oriented proposals on improvement of functioning of the EU. The polity dimension entails a variety of proposals concerning the institutional setup of the EU and assessment of its democratic quality. We focus on what is stressed as malfunctioning when it comes to the operation of European democracy and what rectifying measures are proposed. We primarily understand the reflection on the state of democracy in the EU as concerning various aspects of law-making

differentiation of the polity (Fossum 2019). The policy dimension refers to those proposals that are oriented towards reforming EU policies and, through this, propose rectifying measures for the operation of the EU as well as for its democratic performance.

The national parliaments – the key arenas that this report focuses on – have become important and creative fora where the debate on the future of Europe has been pursued by political actors. Even if not the key political institutions in the processes of European integration, also usually punching below their own weight, national parliaments are indispensable and core arenas of political debate in every liberal democracy. In this study, 11 national parliaments were studied over a period of seven years (2015–2021), representing a variety of member states – large and small, western and eastern, and northern and southern – providing an array of perspectives on what the key contentious issues are when it comes to the functioning of EU democracy and what remedies are offered. In addition, the study includes the European Parliament (EP), a forum offering a more pan-European perspective on the future of Europe debate (Johansson and Raunio 2022).

Political parties and their representatives in parliaments are the key actors analysed in this report. We assumed that partisan actors will be specifically interested in fostering visions of integration as well as in discussing the potential malfunctioning of democracy within the EU in national arenas (Blesse et al. 2020). The party landscapes in many countries (such as France) have dramatically changed in recent years, resulting in reshuffled positions on European integration (Kauppi 2022). In many countries, as European integration was increasingly politicised, it was placed in the centre of political bargaining in the domestic arena, impacting the way partisan actors envisioned the future of integration (de Wilde et al. 2016; de Wilde and Raunio 2018). Across the continent, European integration and its future are contested by populist, Eurosceptic and sovereignist actors that are skilfully undermining the constitutive elements of integration (Basile and Mazzoleni 2019; Góra and Zielińska 2023; Brubaker 2020; Verzichelli 2020; Fabbrini and Zgaga 2022).

Our analysis presented in the volume demonstrates three key developments. Firstly, the national debates on the future of Europe rarely focus on the polity aspects of the reforms of European integration, and coherent and detailed visions of integration are seldom displayed by partisan actors. Secondly, the national debates are primarily driven by

specific issues relevant for local constituencies. They are linked to crises that impact the local populations and structured by domestic political conflicts. Thirdly, apart from typical ways of narrating the future of Europe in terms of intergovernmental or federal visions, a new and prominent sovereignist narrative linking former Euroreject – i.e. a combination of Europhobe and EU-pessimist positions (Kopecký and Mudde 2002, 302) – positions with strong Euroscepticism is on the rise in almost all the contexts we studied.

This chapter is structured as follows. First, we discuss the theoretical underpinnings of the study and offer conceptualisation of the key aspects of the debate on the future of Europe. Second, we present the study's methodology and provide a detailed picture of the empirical material. This is followed by a summary of the key findings in a comparative perspective as well as presentation of the structure of the report.

Imagining the democratic future of Europe. Theory and practice?

The current debate on the future of Europe is not a new exercise, even if we account for the very challenging domestic and external developments such as a sequence of internal crises – financial, migration, and rule of law – as well as external troubling developments such as increasing destabilisation of the EU's neighbourhood, assertive adversary strategies of Russia and China aimed at destabilising the EU, and the overall troubled dynamics in the international system. Reflection on the functioning of the EU's political system and on the democratic standard within it has characterised the debate on integration since its inception (Castiglione and Schönlau 2007, 291). Two views – as seen from the perspective of assuring democratic standards – were dominant. The first stressed that European integration was a problem contributing to hollowing of democracy and hence European integration should be limited to functional and primarily economic spheres. The second argued that, in the interdependent globalised world, democracy could only be protected by a supranational solution and in practical terms through federalising the EU (Eriksen and Fossum 2012, 4–5). These state-oriented visions of democracy were sometimes transposed to the EU level, thus imagining the EU polity as departing from a state basis and state features (Schmidt 2004; Eriksen and Fossum 2012). The latter refers primarily to

the cosmopolitan ideals (Beck and Grande 2007; Delanty and Rumford 2005) that are imprinted in regional transnational integration.

The debate – academic and political alike – focuses on democracy, which remains the pivotal concept featured in reflections on European integration. As stated above, the key aspects are how much democracy shall be assured at the supranational level and if that might happen at the expense of democratic standards on the national level. Hence the discussions on democratic malfunctions and ways to improve them are primarily concentrated on the institutional setting of the EU and its key institutions. This relates to calls for institutional reforms of the EU in the perspective of consolidating the democratic foundations of the EU: '[f]or democratisation to take place, someone must raise a claim for reform' (Fossum 2019, 32-33). Secondly, the debate also concerns the division of competences between the EU and member states and capacity to act specifically in response to the crises. While the debate on democratic qualities within the EU is well developed, more recently scholars have begun to analyse how differentiation and democracy are interrelated. Differentiation characterises the contemporary political system at the national level as well as within the EU. Therefore, as Fossum argues, democratic standards, specifically of representative democracy, need to be assessed in conjunction with reflection on differentiation and a focus on what forms of differentiation are conducive to democracy (Fossum 2021). In order to analyse the relationship between democracy and differentiation, we propose in this study to focus on five distinctive dimensions of differentiation characteristic of the EU.

The first of these focuses on interinstitutional relations between EU institutions as well as between supranational and national ones, specifying what kind of reforms should be conducted. Law-making differentiation focuses on how power is functionally organised at these levels of the EU polity. This concerns the relationship between law-making arrangements horizontally at supranational and national levels as well as the relations between the executive, legislature and courts at the EU level. Many reforms in that area are debated in academic literature as well as by political actors – most vividly recently the position of Spitzenkandidaten (Wolfs, Put, and Van Hecke 2021; Hamrík and Kaniok 2019) or changes in European Parliament elections (Galpin and Trenz 2019; Duff, Pukelsheim, and Oelbermann 2015). There have also been

numerous debates concerning giving more power to national parliaments (Crum 2018).

The second dimension of differentiation captures the EU's capacity to act and to create new policies or policy instruments. It refers to which institutions at a given level are in charge of what kind of issues, what kind and range of expertise these institutions possess, how that is organised, and how specialised the EU political system is. In this area, the proposed reforms for the EU primarily concern the need to develop new policies or expand shared competences for the EU institutions (Brooks and Geyer 2020), create new agencies or reform existing ones (Scipioni 2018) and develop new policy instruments (Buti and Fabbrini 2022; Fabbrini 2022). Reflection on competences also includes the relations and allocation of powers between levels of governing units that we refer to as vertical (competence) differentiation. It fosters reflection on what type of institution has a crucial role in deciding on a certain legal act or policy.

Table 1.1 Five dimensions of differentiation and specific research questions guiding the study

Law-making (horizontal) differentiation	Does a political actor mention interinstitutional relations within the EU political system?
Functional (competence-based horizontal) differentiation	Does a political actor mention the EU capacity to act?
Vertical (competence) differentiation	Does a political actor mention change in competence between the EU and member states?
Territorial (vertical) differentiation	Does a political actor mention territorial differentiation?
Differentiation of citizens' rights	Does a political actor mention citizens' rights: seek to alter citizens' rights and status in the EU, including changes in EU citizenship?

Source: Own compilation based on Fossum 2021, 2019.

In the literature on European integration, scholars also debate territorial arrangements within the EU setup, in which not all EU member states take part in a common policy or institutional arrangement that proliferated over time (Stubb 1996; Leuffen, Rittberger, and

Schimmelfennig 2013; Leruth and Lord 2015). Scholars define differentiated integration (DI) as:

> the process whereby European states, or sub-state units, opt to move at different speeds and/or towards different objectives with regard to common policies. It involves adopting different formal and informal arrangements (hard and soft), inside or outside the EU treaty framework (membership and accession differentiation, alongside various differentiated forms of economic, trade and security relations). In this way relevant actors come to assume different rights and obligations and to share a distinct attitude towards the integration process – what it is appropriate to do together, and who belongs with whom.
>
> (Dyson and Sepos 2010)

They also point out that DI poses serious concerns regarding the democratic outcomes of European integration. While some actors may view DI as a way to have a say – and the possibility to (not) participate – on specific policy areas, the lack of uniformity at the EU level raises concerns on democratic standards (Eriksen 2019; Fossum 2015; Winzen 2020a; Schimmelfennig and Winzen 2019). The reflection on DI also covers the status of non-members in a form of external differentiation (Fossum, Garcia Quesada, and Zgaga 2020; Gora and Zubek 2021; Schimmelfennig and Winzen 2017).

Finally, the differentiation-democracy configuration (Fossum 2021) also needs to refer to citizens' rights, which are fundamental for every democratic system. Reflection in the literature demonstrates a focus on issues related to differentiation in the nature and range of rights for individuals, such as civil and political rights, freedom of movement, and citizenship. As Fossum argues:

> States vary in terms of different citizenship incorporation rules; they vary in terms of whether they allow for singular or dual/multiple citizenships; they vary in the precise bundle or composition of rights that they offer; they vary in what group-based rights and protections they offer; and they vary in the relative importance of individual versus group-based rights. All these dimensions speak to the relationship between differentiation and modern constitutional democracy
>
> (Fossum 2021, 10)

In our study we specifically investigated the statements referring to any change in citizens' rights as operating in the EU (and at supranational level).

Differentiation may indeed lead to fragmentation within the EU, which would in turn foster dominance (Fossum 2019). Dominance is an important relational element in the current setting of the EU that may occur between several EU member states and/or between member states and EU institutions. Dominance in this perspective is defined as a 'relationship or a circumstance wherein an actor (be that a person, an organisation, or a collective) can be arbitrarily interfered with and/or manipulated' (ibid., 2) and might take different forms. As seen from the perspective of narratives on the future of European integration, dominance is not only an objective unjustified exercise of power (Batora and Fossum 2023), but its perceptions can help to identify where political actors locate the key problems in the functioning of complicated and differentiated democratic systems. As Czerska-Shaw et al. claim, focusing on dominance reveals

> the areas of institutional relationships that are perceived as unjust, problematic, unaccountable, and imposing. It allows for the observation of where the problematic (from various perspectives) issues are located and examine how these are perceived (who is abusing power, who is imposing) as well as what solutions are offered.
>
> (Czerska-Shaw et al. 2022, 4)

We assume that dominance is a relational concept and that the relations between dominating and dominated indicate a specific power distribution (Orzechowska-Wacławska, Mach, and Sekerdej 2021). Dominance is also ubiquitous and characteristic of all social relationships, specifically within the complex and differentiated European polity, and may be formalised and institutionalised in hierarchical systems (Czerska-Shaw et al. 2022). For this study, we were specifically interested in how and in which relationship dominance was detected and (subjectively) perceived by political actors.

These concepts – democracy, differentiation and dominance – serve as analytical tools for the analysis of the political debate on the future of Europe that we observe in this study on political actors' visions. We use them to analyse elements of key narratives of European democracy: (1)

intergovernmental or (2) federal union as well as (3) regional-cosmopolitan narrative (Fossum 2021). We understand these key visions, presented in the following sections, as constitutional narratives in which 'the principles of democracy and differentiation are entrenched and combined in the institutional-structural arrangements that are normally embedded in the constitution' (Fossum 2021, 1). We follow a specific meaning of constitutional politics in which we pursue the 'reverse view of the relationship between constitutional reality and politics by looking at ways in which political action contributes to the creation of a stable structure of rules, norms and expectations within which ordinary politics operates' (Castiglione and Schönlau 2007, 284). In other words, the narratives allow us to unpack how political actors envision the future of the EU, and as a result how they create the frames within which potential developments are anchored. This is in line with the so-called narrative turn in EU studies (Garcia and Guinda 2022; Bouza García 2017). In an age of crises mounting around the EU since 2008 (at least), and primarily emergency politics, many scholars have noted that pro- and anti-EU narratives have become increasingly entangled and have been reinforcing each other (Bouza Garcia 2017; McMahon and Kaiser 2022; Kaiser 2017; de Wilde 2021). Constitutional narratives are treated here as a specific type of narratives on European integration that are focused on functioning of democracy, interinstitutional relations, competencies and citizens' rights.

As exposed by Fossum (2021), the first constitutional narrative – intergovernmental Union – anchors the democratic order on the national level and stresses the role of member states and the importance of sovereignty for the functioning of each of them, but also of the EU. As in the famous debate on the democratic deficit, many scholars, such as Moravcsik or Majone, perceived the EU as constrained by member states which adhere to democratic standards (Majone 1998; Moravcsik 2002; Follesdal and Hix 2006). In this perspective, still popular among many proponents of integration, while the EU might be granted several capacities in different domains and policy areas, the scope of actions should be determined by member states and limited to the provisions of the treaties. Within that perspective, the reforms would rather entail making the existing institutional setup more efficient in providing economic benefits to the member states. The underlying principle is that national sovereignty should be protected, and if there is more power given to the EU institutions this would be to intergovernmental

institutions. Because, in this narrative, democratic principles are assured at the national level, there are calls for giving more competences to national parliaments. The European Commission (EC) can be seen as an opponent and weakened through various reforms. The intergovernmental narrative implies the possibility of territorially differentiated integration, strengthening the sovereignty of member states. Consequently, citizens' rights are also kept under national control, and might therefore vary within the EU. The existing scholarship allows for further nuancing of intergovernmentalism. Within republican intergovernmentalism, Bellamy offers a vision of the EU

> as a republican association of sovereign states that is designed to overcome the possibility for their mutual domination while providing a mechanism for their securing certain global goods and avoiding various global bads, not least through their reciprocal recognition of rights to citizenship
>
> (Bellamy, 2019, 72)

However, as critics note, analysts 'stretch' such terms as intergovernmental to make them work for the EU. 'Bellamy's intergovernmental option underlines that the EU must not subvert democracy within each member state and at the same time must contribute to democratise relations between the member state' (Fossum 2021, 5), the question is whether that is possible within the confines of intergovernmentalism. Bellamy seeks to address that by linking in cosmopolitanism. Fossum argues that Bellamy would have been better served by drawing on the federal model.

For a long time, radical Eurosceptic actors rejected the processes of European integration, perceiving them as an existential threat for sovereignty (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2008). However, as scholars have noted, Brexit significantly challenged such positions and many previous rejectionists turned into strong Eurosceptics, searching for a narrative allowing protection of national sovereignty and simultaneously benefiting from the economic effects of integration (Pirro, Taggart, and van Kessel 2018; Sondel-Cedarmas and Berti 2022). This sovereignist vision of intergovernmentalism (or simply sovereignism) arises from 'a holy alliance between nationalism and populism' (Fabbrini 2019, 62). As scholars have noted, 'new sovereignism refers to the belief in the primacy of the nation-state, governed according to the principle of popular sovereignty, over inter- and supranational governance structures and the

'transnational' sphere of economic and social activity' (Spiegeleire, Skinner, and Sweijs 2017, 34). Sovereignty is the key element in this vision, to be protected in political, cultural and economic dimensions (Fabbrini and Zgaga 2022; Góra and Zielińska 2022). In terms of EU institutions, the proponents of sovereignism accept the existence of intergovernmental institutions but demand significant repatriation of competences from supranational institutions, specifically from the EC.

The second constitutional narrative – federal union – tends to aim for bigger changes within the EU towards a federation. Its key premise is Rittberger's dictum of 'no integration without representation' (Rittberger 2005; Heermann and Leuffen 2020). For proponents of that narrative, there should be a fully-fledged democracy system at the EU level (Fossum 2021, 5). In the federal vision, representation is compound, meaning that citizens are represented directly at the federal level as well as indirectly through subunits within the overarching polity (Fossum 2021, 33). The key institution in which democracy might be vested is the European Parliament, which should have a more significant role in creating and controlling the executive, specifically the EC (Rittberger 2005; Hobolt 2014; Lord 2020). In the recent debate in the EU, federal solutions were offered for those countries in the Eurozone in order to provide better control over monetary and economic union. Hence, DI is a significant feature of the contemporary federalist reflection on the trajectories of integration (Fromage 2018).

The third constitutional narrative – named regional-cosmopolitan government – stresses the cosmopolitan appeal of the EU. In this perspective, moral universalism is seen as the prime regulatory rule (Roche 2018; Ponzanesi 2018). This model reflects the global dimension and highlights the EU's role as standard setter on the global arena in regard to values and democracy (Beck and Grande 2007; Eriksen and Fossum 2012). Citizens' rights are of prime importance in this model, whereby basic rights must be decided at the supranational level and expanded further down to the different governing levels. This narrative was more prominent in the 2000s, especially among progressive forces, yet seems to have lost its appeal (possibly temporarily) since the above-mentioned crises hit the EU (Góra, Mach, and Trenz 2013). On the other hand, scholars prominently suggest that cosmopolitanism as a specific disposition at citizens' level is becoming an important new quality of the

political landscape in Europe, opposing more parochial communitarian positions (de Wilde et al. 2019; Strijbis, Helmer, and de Wilde 2020).

Table 1.2. Conceptualisation of democracy, differentiation and dominance in three constitutional narratives.

Constitutional narrative	Intergovernmentalism – Europe of sovereign states	Federal union	EU as non-state regional government
Democracy (inter-institutional relations)	Nationally based – key role: national parliaments involve themselves in EU affairs	EU-level: checks and balances	EU: Community method and EU parliamentarism
Capacity/competence	EU has a limited range of competencies	EU has competencies and capacities similar to a (limited) state	EU level has limited own resources and competence in a few specified set of issues
Vertical differentiation	Member states determine EU competences; constrain EU resources	Division of powers between levels	Pyramidal structure: few distinct EU competences, much more at the national level
Territorial differentiation (DI)	Differentiated integration and opt-outs/opt-ins	Main pattern: between states	Functional and territorial – far more limited than in a state
Perceived dominance	Perceived as supranational technocracy: imposing and unaccountable	Exclusion: states in more peripheral location feel excluded	Minorities, including member states

Source: Own compilation based on Fossum 2021.

Focused on parliamentary discourse, our study suggests that the three key constitutional narratives are not yet fixed and might be subject to modifications depending on the context in which political actors operate and their ideological position as well as stance on European integration. We will demonstrate in this study that the emerging variations challenge

the existing narratives and propose new ones. As noted above, our approach is deductive in the sense that our starting point is normative reflection on three possible scenarios for the development of European integration. Our approach is not merely to test the models but to query how the political actors understand the EU and whether they operate with other conceptions. Insofar as that is the case, we outline these and discuss how they relate to the models we start out with. We therefore specifically focus on what political actors in national parliaments are raising as the most pertinent issues in their discussions on how to reconfigure the EU to make it more democratic. It is important to note at this point that not all actors are necessarily interested in making the EU polity (and the national one as well, for that matter) more democratic. Since the European democracies are struggling with illiberal tendencies, these are also impacting how democracy and the threats to it are perceived in the context of European integration (Kubas 2022; Sadurski 2019; Zielonka and Rupnik 2020; Bodnar 2021). Levitsky and Ziblatt claim that liberal democracies currently die most often from the wounds inflicted by elected politicians (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2019). Many of the key indicators of such processes are initially rhetorical, such as questioning of the constitutional principles or delegitimising political opponents, only later turning into actual de-democratising moves (ibid.) hence often visible in parliaments. An additional complication is the fact that it seems that, in the age of populism in Europe, analysing constitutional narratives for the EU requires special attention to the fact that populist actors tend to hollow out the universal appeal of many key notions, and democracy is one of these (Müller 2017).

Parliaments as strong arenas for debate on the future of Europe

Parliaments across Europe differ significantly when it comes to composition, style of work and European competences, and this also applies to the manner and degree of their involvement in EU affairs. Their role in this area has evolved significantly in recent decades. Initially, they gained the status of the victims of European integration due to the impact the process had on their role in European politics. However, with time and in response to accusations of the EU democratic deficit, national parliaments strengthened their positions, securing the right to 'scrutinise European affairs and to control the way in which ministers and officials represented national interests in Brussels' (Auel and Christiansen 2015,

262). The Lisbon Treaty has institutionalised the role of national parliaments (Article 12 TEU). Studies on the role of national parliaments in the EU distinguish five ideal types of involvement. Some of them build on the functions traditionally associated with parliaments: policy shaper – referring to legislating functions; government watchdog – relating to controlling functions; and public forum – building on parliament's communication function. However, in the context of EU politics, the parliaments sometimes develop the specific role of EU expert, whose aim is to gather information, and European player, aiming to 'establish direct dialogue with the EU institutions' (Rozenberg and Hefftler 2016, 28). Sprungk highlights the additional roles that the national parliaments have been equipped with since the Lisbon Treaty: a networking role by cooperation with their fellow European parliaments; a gatekeeping function in the case of subsidiarity concerns; and a unitary scrutiniser role with all parties, overcoming the traditional opposition-government dynamic, using 'the same strategies for governmental control' in the context of EU affairs (Sprungk 2003, 560). Different national parliaments embrace such functions in various combinations and degrees depending on their specific role in the national context in question. Moreover, the observable growing role of the executive power and disempowerment of the national legislatives (Ishiyama 2019) also impacts the parliaments' involvement in EU affairs. Yet this is further modified by the main cleavage in the parliament, running between government and opposition parties. The former are often not interested in using all controlling functions available to them (Auel 2007, 491).

Parliamentary assemblies have been set up across the EU Affairs Committees, but their tasks and methods of operation vary (Rozenberg and Hefftler 2016, 29), also depending on the way the parliaments' work is organised. Scholars distinguish between working and debating parliaments. The former prioritise the work of committees over plenary debates. Members of parliament (MPs) therefore focus on examination and preparation of documents rather than on speeches in the plenary. The latter type, debating parliaments, focus on plenary debates, which also tend to be less consensual as the opposition often uses this forum to criticise the government (Auel and Raunio 2014, 15). Yet, as Auel and Raunio show in their comparative research on European parliaments, the distinction between working and debating type of parliaments may be modified by the party politics as well as by political salience and the politicisation of the issue in question. So, even in the case of the debating

parliaments, the government or ruling party may delegate 'problematic' issues to the committees to avoid their politicisation (Auel and Raunio 2014, 22–23).

Apart from their legislative functions, the parliaments have communicative functions, also in relation to EU affairs. They constitute the formal dimension of the public sphere (Habermas 2006), the 'strong publics' where public deliberation culminates in legally binding decisions (or laws) (Eriksen 2007; Fraser 1990). The parliaments form arenas where members of the parliaments negotiate ideas, opinions, policy suggestions and proposals representing the interests of their respective (in the case of the European Parliament – national) constituencies and political parties. The partisan competition for the electorate adds further dynamics to the debates, often also limiting the parliaments' ability to act unanimously in relation to EU affairs (Brack 2021, 9). As such, they also play an important part in communicating to the public as their role is also to inform their citizens on policy issues (Auel and Raunio 2014, 13). Furthermore, 'a polyphony of parliamentary discourses' not only reflects the political, social and cultural configurations of the dynamic social world, but also 'contribute to shaping these configurations linguistically and rhetorically' (Ilie 2010, 1). The parliamentary debates as an area of policy making therefore often resonate with the informal areas of the public sphere. They influence and are shaped by the discourses in informal areas of the public sphere (e.g. media, civil society organisations).

Similarly, the Lisbon Treaty strengthened the European Parliament's role in the EU political system (Hix and Høyland 2013). Most of its functions resemble the role that the national legislatures play in their respective national systems, which also includes a communicative function. Furthermore, the EP position also builds on its status as the only directly elected EU institution. Consisting of deputies from all EU member states, the EP constitutes a multinational forum, functioning in close proximity to the other EU institutions. This creates a supranational space where MEPs are subject to the pressures of Europeanisation, which requires them to adjust claims representing national interests and identities to the broader European agendas, also represented by the European groups to which they belong. This also means that the national parties and electoral practices are both affected by the EP's institutional norms and structures and shape the composition of the EP delegations and their agendas (Slapin and Proksch 2010; Raunio 2012).

In our study, the national and European parliaments constitute arenas where EU issues are reflected upon and where political actors shape the narratives on the EU in the public spheres of their respective national context as well as in the supranational space. Our key focus in this study is the political actors that inhabit the national and European parliaments. We are interested in finding out how such actors narrate the future of the EU and how (if at all) such visions correspond with the existing theoretical models of the constitutional narratives on the future of the EU.

Political actors as drivers of reform?

This section demonstrates how various political actors engaged in debate on European integration in national and European parliaments. For many years, scholars observed a permissive consensus among Europeans as regards integration, which meant that the debate at the level of citizens and hence among political actors was rather limited and primarily focused on the benefits and costs of overall integration (Hooghe and Marks 2009). With time, however, and specifically since accelerated expansion of European integration into many policy areas after the Treaty of Maastricht, scholars noted growing interest in European integration among citizens in the form of a constraining dissensus (ibid). For many scholars, European integration has since at least the 1990s become part of domestic political conflicts, resulting in its increased politicisation (de Wilde 2011; Hutter and Kriesi 2019). National parliaments were useful arenas where this politicisation was pursued, becoming part of the process of domestication of European integration into the national public debates (Kröger and Bellamy 2016). Political parties – and especially radical ones – are key politicising agents using polarising frames to impact the consensus on European integration as well (Hutter and Grande 2014). This has in turn been reflected in growing interest and more nuanced positions of political actors – specifically political parties – on European integration.

In the study presented here, we developed several assumptions to see how the future of Europe has been discussed by political actors focusing on if, how and why political actors in parliaments debate European integration. The parties' positions on issues related to the overall assessment of European integration as well as on specific policies are not uniform across national contexts. The local contexts, previous patterns of relations with other countries on the continent, the length of membership

in the EU and the history of integration impact the way these actors build narratives of European integration (Medrano 2003; Lacroix and Nicolaïdis 2010). The founding countries are characterised by much more proactive stances in debates, specifically in France, Italy and Germany. The newcomers to the bloc, meanwhile, often stress the peripheral location and previous patterns of dependency as key elements of their vision of the EU (i.e. Poland or Czechia).

As many scholars point out, the debate on European integration usually concerns specific policies and is driven by the concerns of domestic constituencies. Political actors are less engaged in proposing and debating reforms. Hence one of the key ambitions of this study is to analyse how the reforms of the EU are debated by political actors. Scholars have analysed previous grand debates accompanying the work of the Convention on the Future of Europe and preparing the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe (Statham and Trenz 2013; Maatsch 2010). As noted above, one of the key new elements is the long decade of crises – fast and slow burning – that the EU and its member states faced, which significantly weakened pro-European narratives. At the same time, the crises enhanced the search for new attractive frames among both proponents and opponents of European integration (Blokker 2021; de Wilde 2021).

However, the national contexts and different responses to the crises overlap with two other important variables: the ideological position on the political scene represented by a left-right scale and the position towards European integration. Regarding the former, a party's location on the left-right axis in many contexts determines its views on European integration (Arnold, Sapir, and de Vries 2012; De Vries 2018; Hooghe and Marks 2018). Scholars have noted an inverted U-curve model in which 'Extreme Left parties and extreme Right parties share Euro-skepticism; parties in the middle, including most Social Democratic, Christian Democratic, Liberal, and Conservative parties, are generally much more supportive of European integration' (Hooghe, Marks, and Wilson 2002, 968). This is due to strategic and ideological factors that mobilise radical actors against European integration (de Vries 2007). In addition, other researchers have specifically raised the role of radical actors in triggering the debates and their mobilisation of polarising frames that are conducive to further politicisation of European integration (Hutter and Grande 2014). On the other hand, the role of Eurosceptic actors and their views on

integration also impact the national party systems and the position of radical as well as mainstream actors (Statham and Koopmans 2009; Meijers 2017; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2008). As a result, we expect that radical parties (i.e. communist/socialist and right-wing party families, located on both extreme sides of the political spectrum) would take the opportunity to speak on the EU's future during these debates. We therefore assume that these parties – usually also more Eurosceptic – will be active during FoE debates in an attempt to appropriate the debate for themselves and convey their own view(s) of European integration.

Additionally, the literature points to the characteristics of the domestic party systems, and specifically their polarisation, to impact the position towards European integration, and in our case also activities in debates on FoE (Arnold, Sapir, and de Vries 2012). Finally, the role of a given party in government and incumbency are key variables impacting the activities in debates (Green-Pedersen 2012). We expect parties in government to be more active as they will be able to use their executive position to frame the debate.

The second key aspect when it comes to political actors concerns how they frame European integration (Medrano 2003) and what reforms they propose, especially related to core state powers (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2018; 2015). This in turn is a key to detecting what future developments of integration they favour and whether the ideological underpinnings impact the preferences. Scholars systematically examining party frames argue that

> fringe parties use a much more consistent discourse, opposing European integration for largely the same reasons. By contrast, we believe that the established, pro-EU political forces apply different justifications in different situations, and also employ functional arguments to support European integration.
>
> (Helbling, Hoelinger, and Wuest 2010, 497)

In our approach we analysed the proposed reforms (law-making differentiation) of European integration proposed by political actors. Other studies found that right-wing parties tend to use nationalistic frames in their justifications for European integration (Helbling, Hoelinger, and Wuest 2010). This is consistent with studies on right-wing Euroscepticism as well as on sovereignism (Basile and Mazzoleni 2019; Brubaker 2017; Braun, Popa, and Schmitt 2019; S. Fabbrini and Zgaga

2022). Mainstream parties in turn rather tend to use efficiency-related frames, pointing to the functional benefits of European integration, while left-wing parties often raise economic issues. In our study we expect parties favouring European integration to advocate for more EU competences, notably by advocating for the reform of supranational institutions. In this respect, we assume that these political parties will demand institutional reforms seeking to give more power to supranational institutions, notably the EP and the EC. In contrast, we expect that more Eurosceptic parties would seek to relocate competences into the hands of national institutions or advocate for maintaining the current EU institutional status quo. In the case of them asking for competences on the EU level, we assume that Eurosceptic actors would favour competences for intergovernmental institutions (e.g. Councils).

As we stated in the introduction to this study, an important dimension of the current debate on the future of integration concerns the reconfigurations of territorial differentiation and their linkage to democracy (Fossum 2021). Leruth noted that 'one cannot fully understand the variety of positions that parties and governments take on 'Europe' without considering the potential for differentiated integration, especially in policy areas where differentiation takes place' (Leruth 2015, 817). This is because the process of differentiation touches upon the key conundrum between democracy and functionality of European integration (Kröger, Lorimer, and Bellamy 2021). Moreover, the debate on the desired level of differentiation involves governmental and political actors (Bellamy, Kröger, and Lorimer 2021; Heermann and Leuffen 2020; Winzen 2020b) as well as citizens (Telle et al. 2022; de Blok and de Vries 2022). In order to further nuance the picture of political actors' preferences on DI, we will analyse which actors in our dataset debate and evaluate it. We hypothesise that DI would most often be brought up during debates by radical and Eurosceptic parties in the prospect of defending national interests and the state's sovereignty. This point derives from research showing that increased bargaining for DI in the EU is often the result of the presence of Eurosceptic parties in government (Winzen 2020). As we expect Eurosceptic actors to be critical towards the EU, we assume that DI might be addressed by these actors as a way to regain more control over European integration. In its in-depth analysis of specific national contexts, this study also provides a nuanced picture of the key justifications given for and against DI.

Finally, as stated above, an important aspect of the debate on FoE is how political actors perceive the malfunctioning of democracy within the EU. An analytical tool that allows us to nuance the views on European integration and its future trajectories is dominance, and specifically how political actors perceive the unjust exercise of power. This points to those elements that are – in the eyes of political actors – dysfunctional in the European project. Little has been written to date on how dominance is perceived by political actors (Kröger, Lorimer, and Bellamy 2021; Czerska-Shaw et al. 2022). However, the literature on Eurosceptic, populist and sovereignist actors has engaged with this issue in an indirect way, capturing the othering of the EU often done through raising domination patterns (Fabbrini and Zgaga 2022; Góra and Zielińska 2022; Borriello and Brack 2019; Pirro, Taggart, and van Kessel 2018). Therefore, in our research we expect Eurosceptic parties to be the most critical towards the EU, and thus to address and criticise dominance the most.

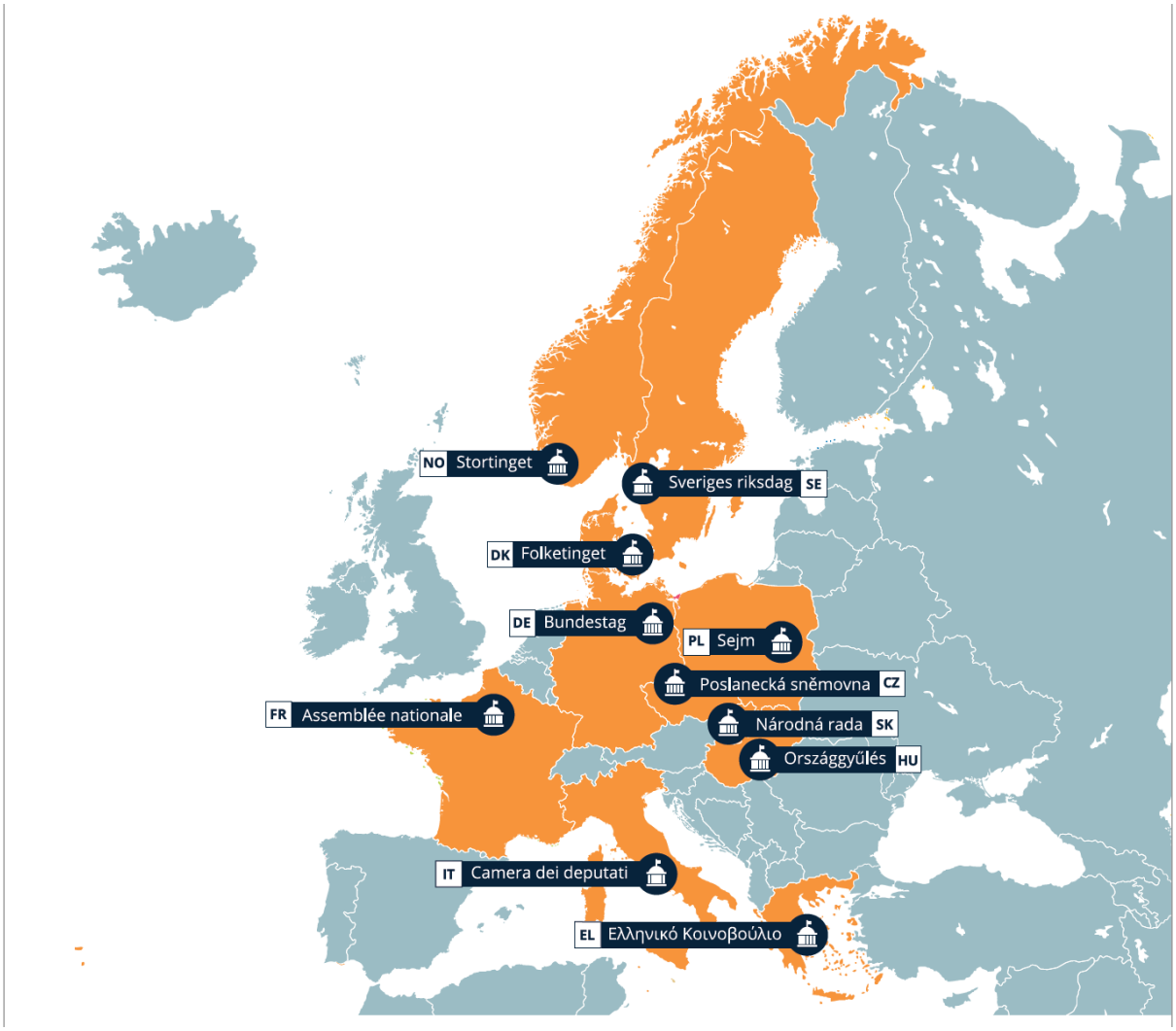
All in all, in analysing the combination of these elements in the final section of the chapter we will discuss how overall we can assume what future trajectories will be supported by different types of political actors active in national parliaments as well as in the EP. In the next section, we will explain the methodological basis and characteristics of the gathered data.

Researching the future of Europe debate in European and national parliaments: methodological remarks

As noted above, the national parliaments constitute key arenas where EU issues are reflected upon and where political actors shape the narratives on the EU. Therefore, our study focuses on how FoE is debated in these specific arenas. Two general questions guided the research. Firstly, the study aimed to find out how political actors in the EP and national parliaments envision the constitutional-democratic outline of the EU in future. Secondly, it aimed to reveal how democracy, differentiation and dominance intersect in the narratives of European democracy that occur in the arenas of the national and European parliaments. To observe the multidimensionality as well as similarities and differences of the parliamentary debates on FoE for our study we selected 11 national parliaments (Czechia, Germany, Denmark, Greece, France, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Sweden, and Slovakia), representing countries of different types of association with the EU (member and associate states),

varying length of EU membership, and geographically covering different regions of the EU (see Map 1). Additionally, to highlight the supranational level of the FoE debate, we also included the European Parliament.

Map 1.1. Analysed national parliaments.



The political actors that inhabit national parliaments are the main focus of the study. We were interested in finding out how such actors narrate the future of the EU, how the key dimensions of the ongoing debate, i.e. democracy, differentiation and dominance, intersect in their accounts, and how (if at all) their visions of the EU's future correspond with the existing constitutional narratives on the future of the EU. Starting from the premise of the parliaments' communication functions, the plenary debates served as our empirical material. Despite the differences in the sample between the 'nature' of respective parliaments (i.e. working or debating), the plenary debates are more publicly visible, hence they are

more often used by political actors to communicate the position of their parties to the wider public. The selection of the debates covered the period from 2015, when the debate on FoE was launched, until 2021.

The sample included three types of debates, focusing on three interrelated topics: future of Europe, eurozone and migration. All three topics are directly linked to the broader discussion on the future developments of EU integration, but they touch upon dimensions (i.e. democracy, differentiation and dominance) that are central to identifying which constitutional narratives occur in the analysed debates. The researchers responsible for each national case followed the same guidelines to identify the relevant plenary debates and build the sample of debates for their respective parliaments. The process involved checking the parliamentary research services for information about relevant debates, looking into the schedule and topics of the relevant committees (i.e. dealing with European affairs, foreign policy, migration, financial issues), as they usually precede the plenary session, as well as conducting keyword searches in national databases of parliamentary debates. As plenary sessions on EU affairs in national parliaments are often organised pre- or post-European Council meetings, a list of relevant Council meetings was also established to identify related plenary sessions in national parliaments. In the first round, all debates loosely related to the topics in questions formed the initial sample. In the next step, revisions and comparison of debates between national cases made it possible to significantly reduce the sample. In the end, the sample included 196 plenary debates from 11 national parliaments from 2015 to 2021. Amongst those debates, 71 discussed the future of European integration in broad terms, 60 were focused on Eurozone governance, and 65 dealt with migration and asylum in the EU. For the EP, a similar sampling strategy was applied. A total of 18 debates were selected: six on FoE, six on Eurozone-related issues and six on the topic of migration. Among the debates on FoE, four plenary debates were selected from the series of debates on the future of Europe organised with heads of states or governments during the eighth EP. Other debates on FoE were related to the Conference on the Future of Europe. A full list of all analysed debates is provided in Annex 1.

As our study focuses on the political parties that are the key actors inhabiting parliaments, the individual speeches of M(E)Ps representing different political parties served as the basic unit of analysis. The selected

sample of debates consisted of 7,666 speeches (from national parliaments and the EP), excluding minor interruptions and technical speeches. Table 1.3 offers a detailed data overview for the European Parliament and all national assemblies.

Table 1.3. Overview of data selected from European and national parliaments.

Parliament	Number of debates (FoE/ Eurozone / Migration)	Number of speeches analysed	Including	Number of MPs' speeches	Number of government representatives' speeches	Number of MEPs' speeches	Including	Number of speeches on FoE
CZ	18 (6/6/6)	538		486	53	0		228
DE	21 (7/7/7)	261		249	52	0		224
DK	17 (6/6/5)	1269		1148	121	0		1123
EL	12 (3/4/5)	546		436	110	0		127
FR	18 (6/7/5)	674		542	132	0		301
HU	20 (9/4/7)	515		441	54	20		294
IT	19 (7/6/6)	373		353	20	0		329
NO	24 (7/10/7)	664		488	176	0		430
PL	18 (7/3/8)	600		558	42	0		299
SE	17 (7/5/5)	531		438	93	0		271
SK	12 (6/2/4)	634		571	32	31		246
Total	196 (71/60/65)	6605		5710	885	51		3872
EP	18 (6/6/6)	1061		0	65	996		761
Grand total	200 (74/59/67)	7666		5710	950	1047		4633

Our data analysis had both quantitative and qualitative elements. The quantitative part served to answer the question of how political actors who belong to a different party family representing a contrasting position on the left-right scale and regarding European integration differ in their involvement and preferences in FoE debates. To discern the partisan

cleavage, we applied a set of variables characterising each speech included in the sample. The first group of variables relates to the individual features of M(E)Ps who spoke in debates. The variables included full name, gender and incumbency. Additionally, we added a variable showing the actor's role in the debate, i.e. M(E)P vs other function, e.g. member of government or other institution or organisation. In the case of the EP debates, nationality was also an important description.

The second group of variables aimed to demonstrate the partisan cleavage within parliamentary debates on FoE and involved the following party characteristics: national party name, party family to which it belonged, its ideological orientation, and its attitude towards the EU. To ensure comparability of the national cases in our study, we applied the ParlGov party classification scheme, which offers a database of political parties in parliament. ParlGov distinguishes party families via the combination of two dimensions: the party's 'position in an economic state vs. market dimension and a cultural dimension on liberty vs. authority'. This results in eight party families being distinguished: communist/socialist, green/ecologist, social democracy, liberal, Christian democracy, agrarian, conservative, right-wing. ParlGov also helps to position each party on the left/right and pro-/anti-EU integration scales (Döring 2016, 539). However, as ParlGov draws on expert surveys in classifying parties on the two scales, it has difficulty in ascribing the relevant values to newcomers and in capturing a party's reorientation on both scales over time. To account for this, each national team critically reviewed the classification proposed for their country, drawing on other party classification systems, e.g. the 2019 Chapel Hill expert survey. The final classification of all political actors from each national parliament is available in Annex 2. In the case of the EP, the European party families and their ideological orientation serve as the main variables.

Whereas the variables showing the partisan cleavage served as our independent variables, the dependent variables were supposed to demonstrate the qualitative dimension of the analysed speeches. Our analytical scheme drew on earlier research on European integration (Statham and Koopmans 2009; Wendler 2017; Góra 2019) as well as discourse research (Keller 2011). We assume that the parliaments constitute discursive fields (where political actors, i.e. political parties, compete with one another, attempting to promote (and impose) their

interpretation of the issue in question on the wider publics. Treating the individual M(E)Ps' speeches as articulations of the party's position on FoE, we developed a scheme of codes to capture whether they were speaking on FoE and if they referred to any of the three dimensions that we were interested in highlighting, i.e. democracy, differentiation and dominance. The first set of codes therefore served to show how political parties perceive and present democracy in the EU. More specifically, we wanted to find out if the political actors identify malfunctioning of democracy in the EU, if they proposed rectifying measures at any level of governance, suggested institutional reforms to strengthen democracy within the EU, or named which institution, national or European, or specific instruments need to be strengthened. Additionally, the codes were meant to demonstrate if political actors raise the issue of citizens' rights as well as the question about the EU's capacity and potential new developments and financing changes to the existing arrangements. The second set of codes was intended to help us assess how parties tackle differentiated integration in the context of the FoE debate. We were interested in finding out if political actors argue for territorial differentiation of EU policies or institutions, i.e. a setup in which not all EU member states take part in a common policy or institutional arrangement, the status of non-members etc., directly and indirectly referring to differentiated integration. The third set of codes focused on dominance, with the aim of identifying whether political actors mention or refer to dominance when they speak about the EU's future. We also aimed to capture whether they refer to and define dominance. We were interested in finding out if political actors locate the conceptualisation of democracy, differentiation and dominance in the FoE debate in any specific policy fields. Finally, we wanted to see whether proposals on the future of Europe identify any specific institutions as allies or opponents.

The coding was hierarchical. Firstly, we applied content-specific codes to paragraphs within a speech that referred to democracy, differentiation and dominance. Secondly, we used category-related codes to mark each full speech containing content-specific codes related to each of the dimensions of the FoE debate, i.e. democracy, differentiation and dominance.

The content-specific codes are primarily used in the national case studies presented in the following chapters. Each national case study aimed to present a nuanced and detailed picture of specific elements and dynamics

of the FoE debates taking place in the parliament in question. This further serves to reflect on the question of whether the way political actors debate FoE allows any of the dominant constitutional narratives to be identified. On the contrary, category-related codes played a pivotal role in the quantitative comparative analysis presented in the following section of this chapter. Each statement containing one or more of the category-related codes, i.e. referring to democratic malfunctioning, polity and policy reforms, differentiation and dominance, as well as migration policies and frames, was treated as FoE-related. The sample of references to FoE represents 3,872 speeches in national parliaments and 761 in the EP. In total, 4,633 FoE speeches were analysed, which is 58% of all the speeches. In the following analysis, the category-related codes played a role of dependent variables in the quantitative analysis (see last column in Table 1.3).

FoE debates in national parliaments compared

The comparative analysis of the intensity of the FoE debate demonstrates that there were several triggers in national contexts responsible for more intense debates, but overall political actors engaged in FoE debates in response to domestic drivers such as crises and EU responses concerning the domestic scene (harsh austerity measures, response to an influx of refugees etc.), formal roles in EU decision making (rotating presidency in the Council), or prominence of specific issues for domestic constituencies.

The economic crisis and imposed domestic austerity measures were significant contexts in which debates were held in the case of Greece and, to some extent, in Italy. In Hungary it was also rather a reactive stance to FoE issues, and key debates were initiated in response to the so-called refugee crisis, which specifically concerned Hungary. Brexit triggered debates in several countries (Czechia, Denmark, Norway). In Italy too, FoE debates were nested within wider debates on crises that strongly affected that country, and as a result there have been intense discussions on policies with a high domestic salience, i.e. migration and economic policy in the first place. In Sweden it was an overall sense of urgency caused by the multiple crises mounting before the EU that facilitated debates on FoE. In Poland, increased politicisation (and polarisation) of EU matters on the domestic political scene seemed to trigger the debate. In Slovakia, meanwhile, it was the country's presidency in the Council

of the EU that formed the broader context of parliamentarians' interest in FoE. In the case of Norway – a non-member with less ability to influence the constitutional makeup and future of the EU – most of the proposals were related to that of the future of the relationship between the EU and Norway – and therefore views and opinions on the EEA deal, rather than the future of the EU itself. Similarly to other countries, proposals regarding the future of the EU often emerged in the midst of treating other, more specific topics such as social issues, transportation or migration.

As seen in a comparative perspective (Figure 1.1), FoE was similarly intensive in all researched cases as measured by the percentage of references to the key dimensions of the debate. The only exception was Denmark, where MPs are engaged in longer and more interactive debates than in other parliaments. This can be explained by the functioning of the Danish parliament, in which MPs do not have limits to add 'short notes' (i.e. brief comments) after their main speech which impacts the frequency of their intervention. This results in frequent but short speeches, often by the same speakers, and a very interactive debate, hence the high number of statements in Denmark. Overall, on average 350 speeches by each parliament concerned FoE in the selected debates. Interestingly, also in Norway – not a member of the bloc – the debate was similarly intensive.

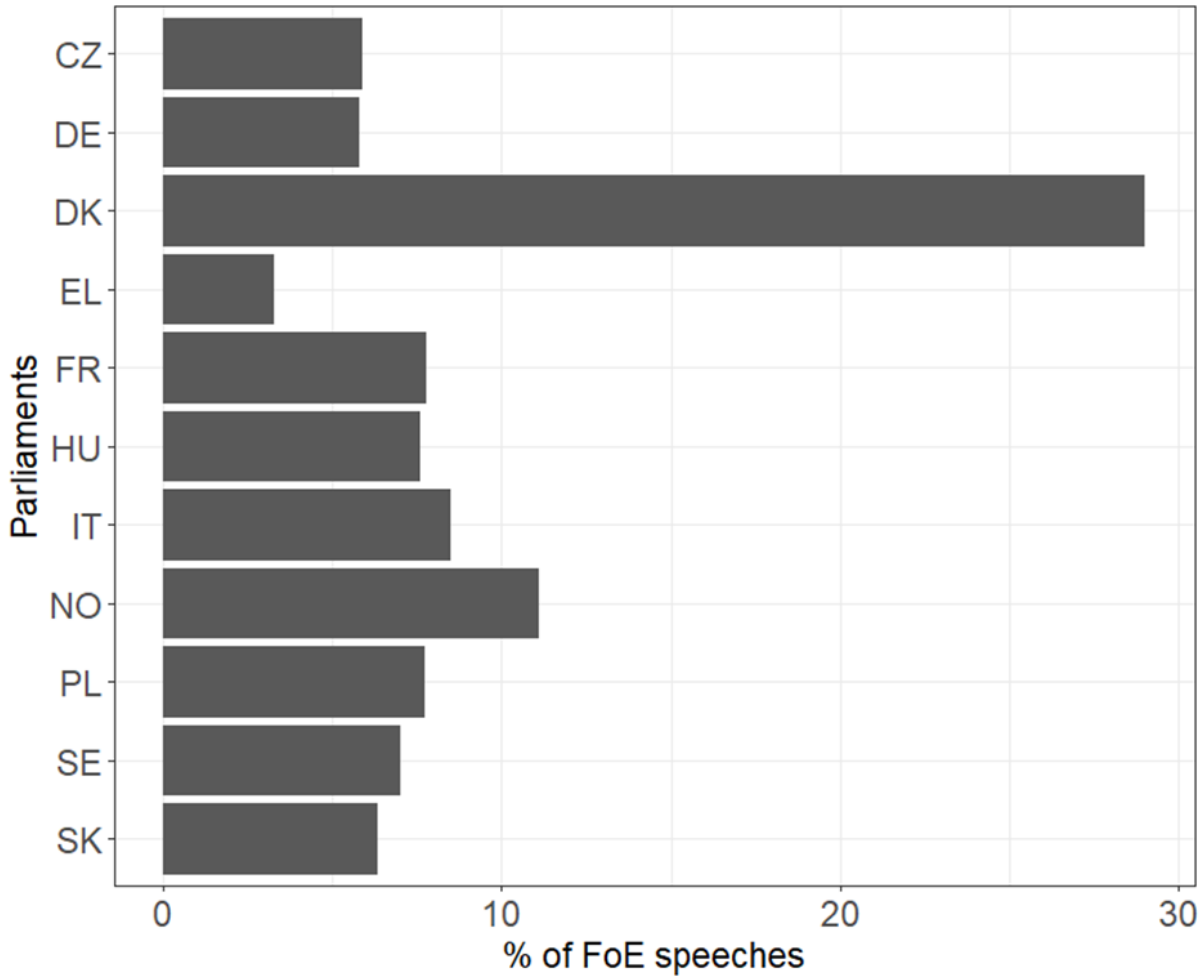


Figure 1.1. Distribution of FoE speeches by analysed national parliaments (n= 3872 – number of FoE speeches).

When delving into the political actors' involvement in the selected debates, our data highlighted the fact that conservative and right-wing actors were very active during debates related to European affairs. In light of the existing literature stressing the increased involvement of Eurosceptic, nationalist and/or populist actors when debating European integration as presented above, across national parliaments we also observe frequent activity in the debates of actors sceptical towards European integration (the strength of their disapproval of the EU varying depending on the national context and across time).

Eurosceptic actors tended to be active even when holding few seats in a given parliament. This strong involvement of conservative and right-wing political actors results in polarised debate between proponents and opponents of EU integration, as demonstrated by Figure 1.2 below. Parties in favour of EU integration were indeed also very active, and were usually the ones putting the debate on the parliamentary agenda,

especially when holding the parliamentary majority (i.e. France). Overall, the analysed debates presented a high confrontation between pro-European and Eurosceptic parties, usually located on the (far) right of the political spectrum. The countries of the Visegrad Four (Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) but also Denmark and Norway illustrate this trend with a major proportion of the parliamentary debate on FoE seized by conservative and right-wing actors, often from the governing majority.

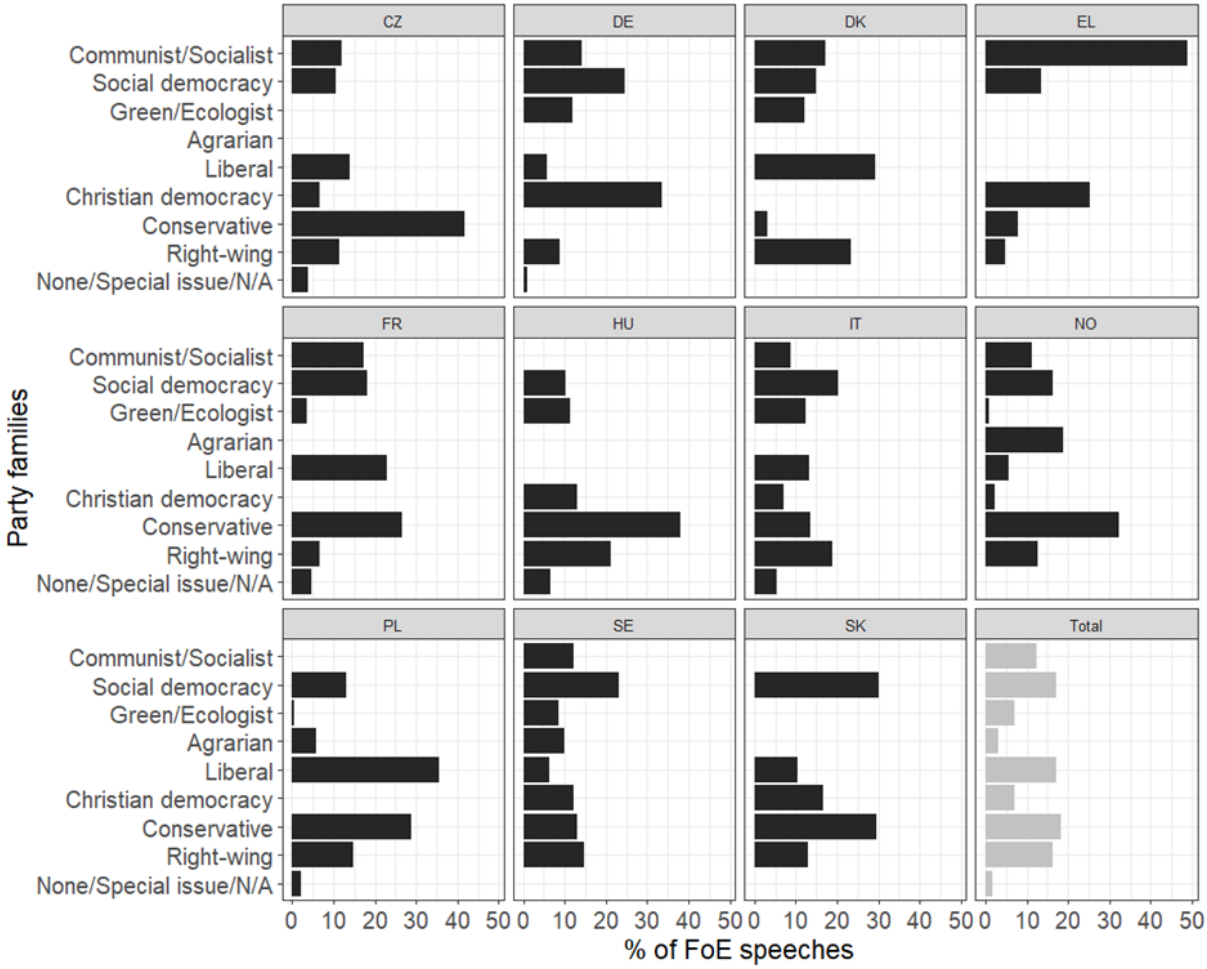


Figure 1.2. Frequency of FoE speeches by party family and by national parliament (n= 3872 – number of FoE speeches).

As stated in previous parts, we specifically focused on three dimensions of the FoE debate that were analysed in selected parliamentary contexts in a comparative mode. We focused on MPs' requests for institutional reforms (e.g. strengthening the role of the EP or advocating for a stronger role for national parliaments etc.). Secondly, our dimension focuses on DI in the EU, specifically how territorial differentiation has been considered in parliamentary speeches when it comes to proposals that argue for or against DI in the EU. Finally, the third dimension zooms in on the issue

of dominance in the EU. We used variables describing the speakers – specifically their ideological position – to nuance the analysis.

EU institutional reforms debated?

The discussion on EU institutional reforms remained in the background of the discussion on Europe's future in all analysed parliaments constituting only a fraction of the FoE debates. Overall, across all national parliaments, reforms were mentioned in approximately 11.5% of FoE speeches. Some variation with regard to the demand for such reforms was noted. While some parliaments barely discussed institutional reforms (i.e. Greece, Poland and Sweden), calls for institutional reforms reached more than 15% of FoE speeches in France, Norway and Slovakia.

As shown in Figure 1.3 below, requests for EU institutional reforms were most frequent in speeches from parties belonging to liberal and conservative families (over 2% of speeches). Right-wing parties were also keen to demand reforms. What our results suggest – which will be developed in the different case studies presented in this study – is that the place of the party in parliament (i.e. from the governing majority or in opposition) is a factor influencing the demand for reform. Indeed, reforms were very often brought up by majority (or dominant) parties (for instance by the social democrats or liberals in France, but by conservative actors in Hungary).

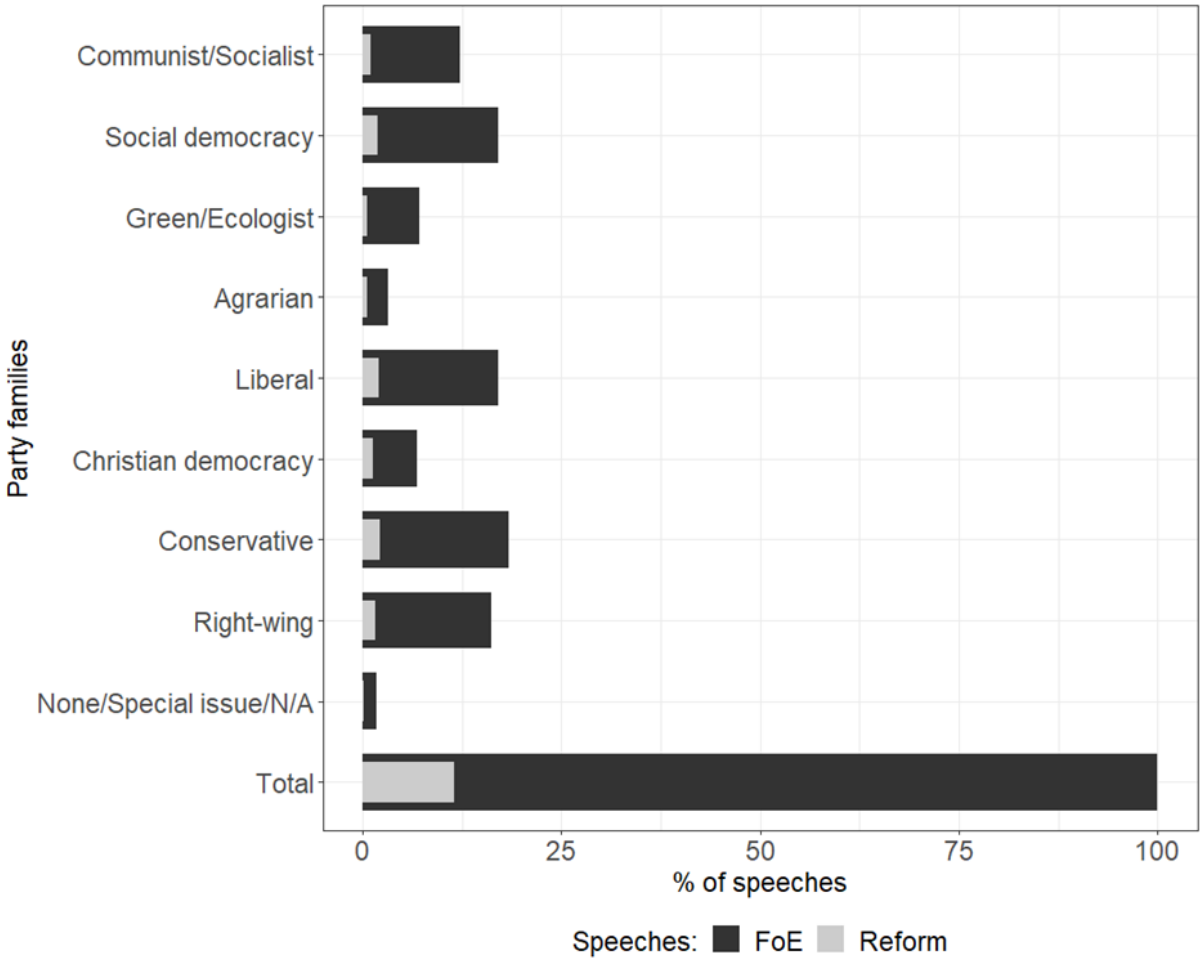


Figure 1.3. Frequency of references to EU institutional reforms in FoE speeches by party family (n= 3872 – number of FoE speeches, m= 444 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to EU institutional reform).

Furthermore, the content of reforms demanded crucial changes depending on party families. As illustrated in Figure 1.4 below, maintaining the institutional status quo is by far the most requested reform. This has notably been most addressed in Italy, Norway and Slovakia, as well as strongly advocated for in Germany. Furthermore, our data shows that it is conservative actors who have most advocated for this reform (over 40% of requests), not willing to further develop the EU, but also not willing – or able, depending on their position within the parliament as well as the national context – to diminish its current institutional capacities.

The second most frequently addressed reform concerns the demand for a stronger role for national parliaments within the EU institutional setup. This reform proposal has been central to the vast majority of national parliaments, and especially discussed in Germany, France, Hungary,

Poland and Sweden. Although addressed by all party families, it has most frequently been advocated for by conservative and right-wing parties, willing to keep a close eye on EU affairs and, as discussed in the theoretical section, seen as an assurance for sovereignty.

The demand for implementing the direct democracy instrument has been particularly discussed in the French and Danish parliaments, In France, liberal parties mostly discussed and defended this development in response to President Macron's call for EU-wide public consultations. In Denmark, it was right-wing actors who requested direct democracy instruments. Mirroring Danish domestic functioning that favours direct democracy instruments, several political actors asked for national referendums on EU affairs, especially regarding Danish opt-outs.

Overall, actual reforms of EU institutions were not central to parliamentary debates on FoE. Yet our research demonstrates that the conflict between strengthening and weakening EU institutions clearly follows a pro- versus anti-EU integration divide. As an example, we can zoom in on the case of the European Parliament. Weakening the EP has mostly been advocated by right-wing political actors sceptical of the EU (accounting for approximately 55% of the time this reform has been mentioned), while strengthening it has been addressed by green parties (36% of the time when this reform had been mentioned) and social democrats (21%) mostly supportive of EU integration. In a similar vein, reforms concerning setting up new institutions, notably for the governance of the Eurozone (i.e. creating a Eurozone parliament and a Eurozone-dedicated ministry of economy), were mostly favoured by social democrats and green parties in the EP.

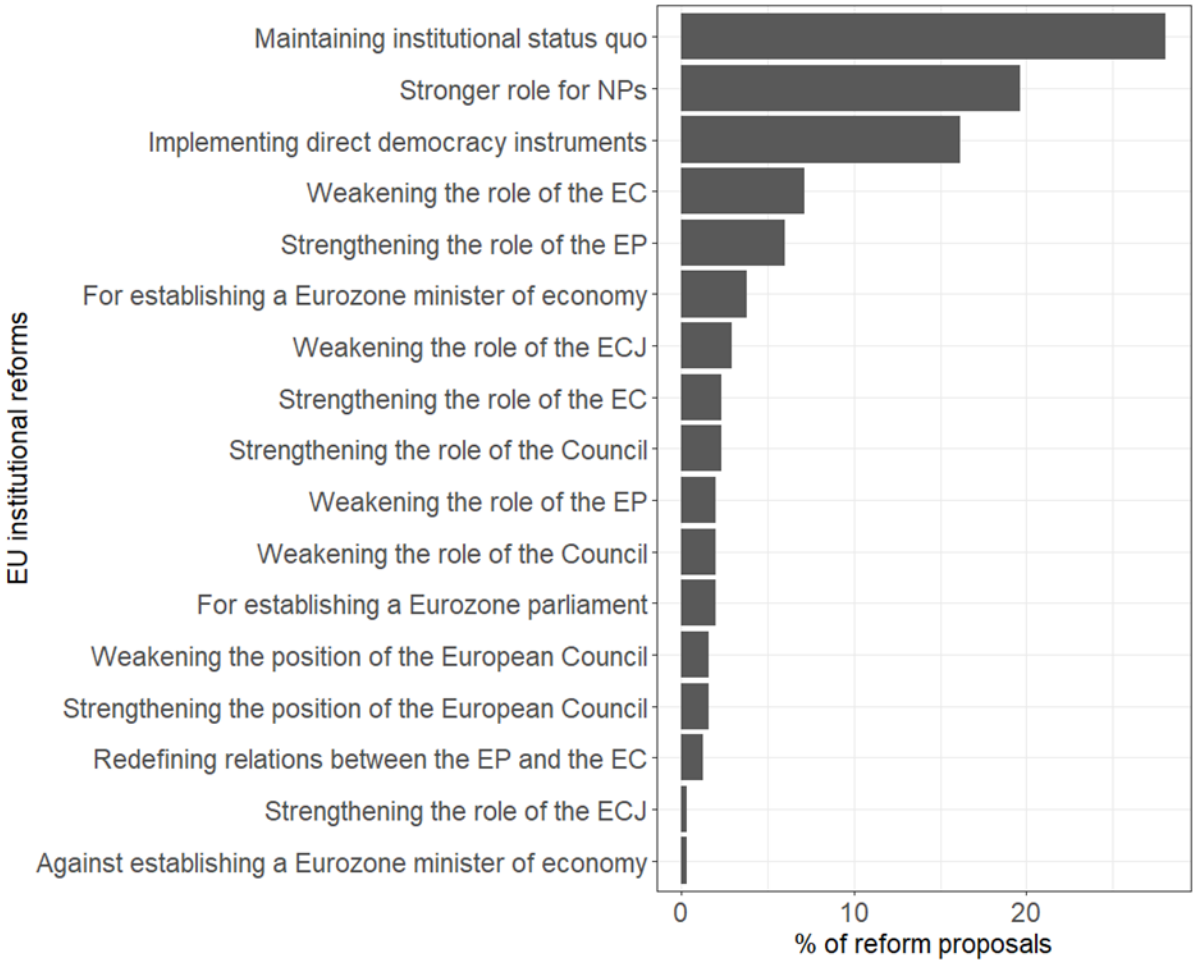


Figure 1.4. Frequency of references to EU institutional reforms (n=545 – number of institutional reform proposals).

Differentiated integration as a vehicle for the future

DI was mentioned in slightly more than 20% of FoE speeches across the analysed national parliaments. As demonstrated in Figure 1.5, it was discussed by all party families in parliament. Geographically speaking, it was most often addressed in Denmark and Sweden, but also Germany and Poland. Overall, DI remained frequently addressed on the extremes of the political spectrum – communist, conservative and right-wing families. However, as the qualitative analysis of the different national cases show, DI has been advocated or disapproved for various – and conflicting – reasons, following a pro- versus anti-EU integration cleavage. On the one hand, it was often favoured by pro-European parties, and indeed perceived as a way to deepen EU competences further and quicker where desired. In this case, DI was assessed quite positively and advocated for notably by liberal parties. On the other hand, it was sometimes seen as a possible tool for the further peripheralisation of some

EU member states. This was notably a concern in the Polish parliament, where DI was vigorously criticised by conservative actors from the ruling majority but also disregarded by liberal opposition parties.

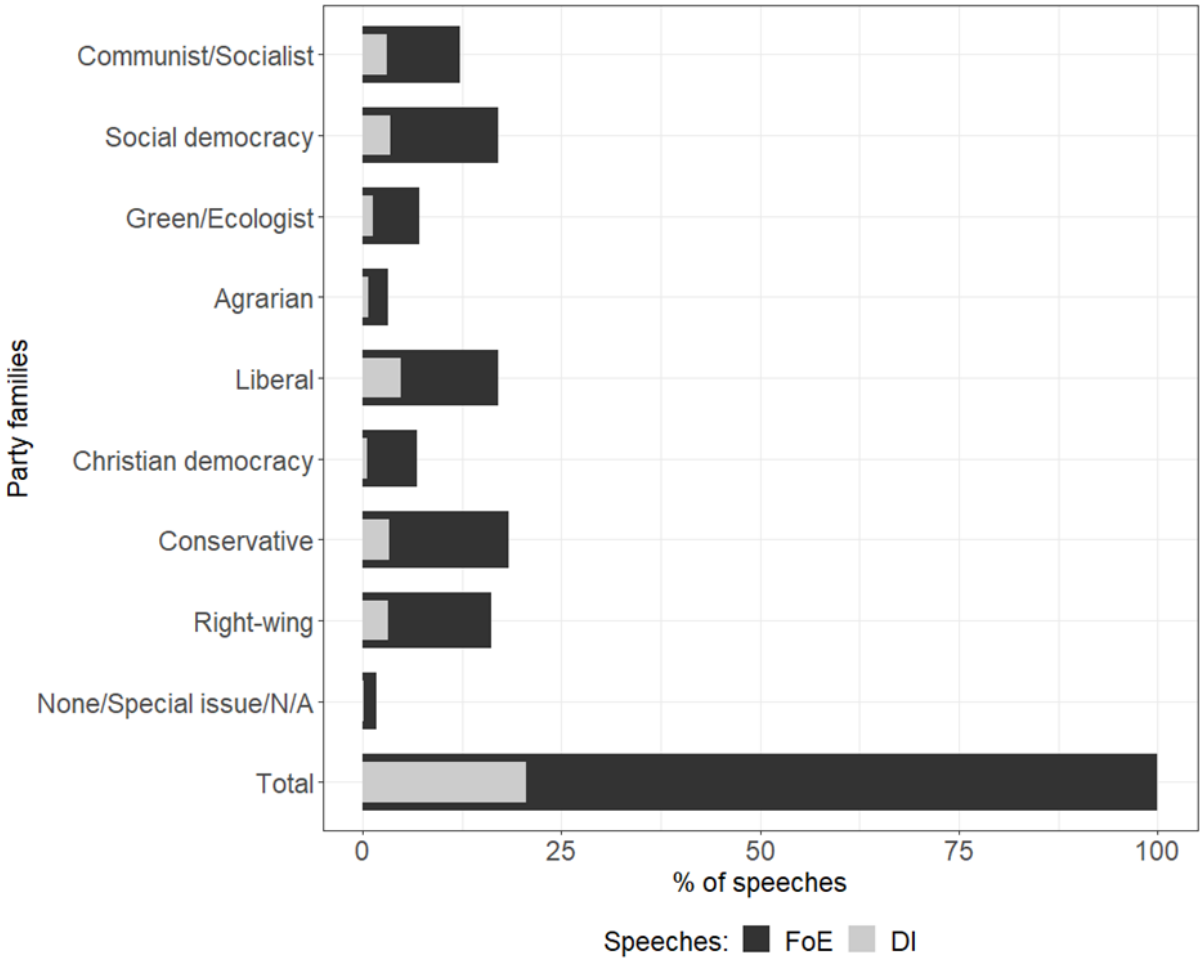


Figure 1.5. Frequency of references to DI in FoE speeches by party family (n= 3872 – number of FoE speeches, o= 798 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to DI).

Unjust exercise of power within the EU in focus

Dominance, which we defined as unjustified exercise of power, was addressed in 19.4% of FoE speeches across the national parliaments. As depicted in Figure 1.6, dominance is mostly addressed by parties at the extremes of the political spectrum, i.e. communist and right-wing party families. On the pro-/anti-EU integration scale, political actors addressing dominance in selected parliamentary debates are located rather on the Eurosceptic end. If we look at mentions of dominance on the level of national parliaments, our results show that it was primarily discussed in Germany, Greece and the Visegrad countries.

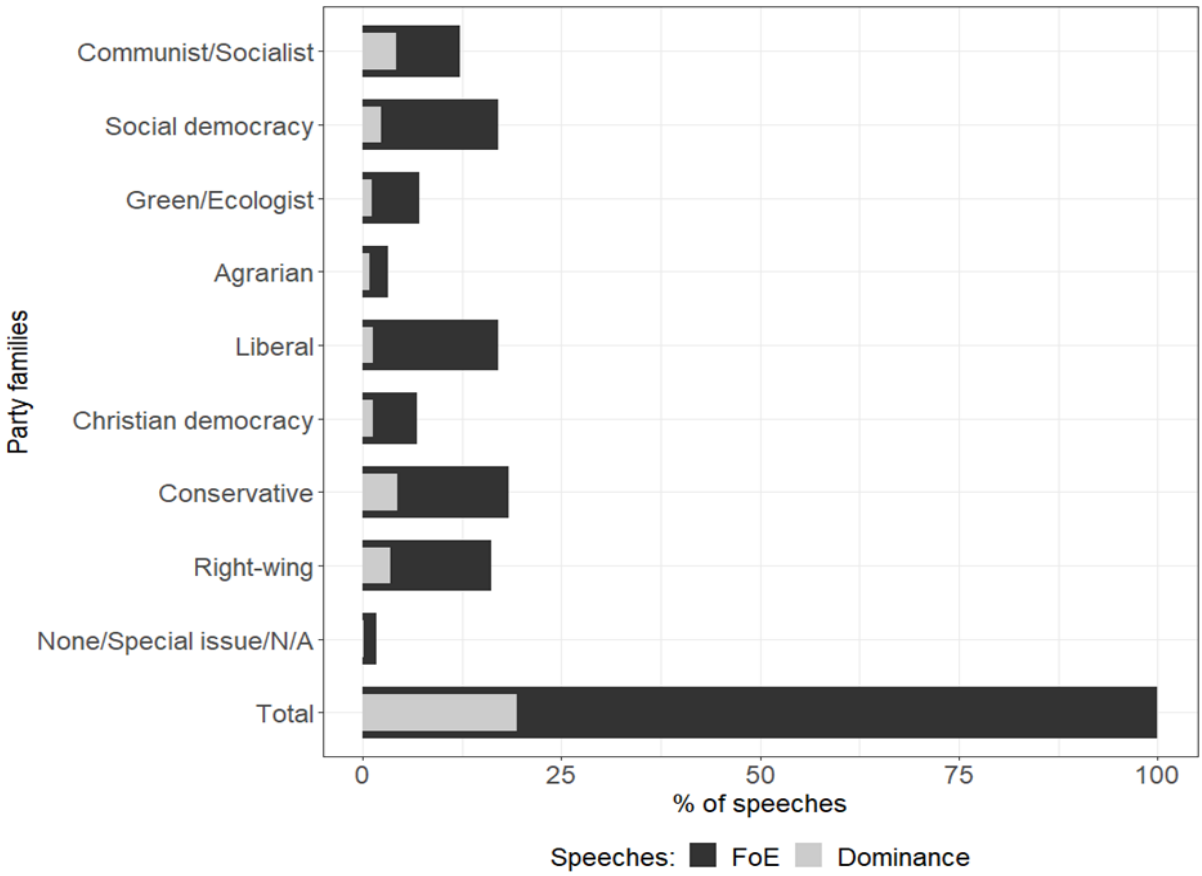


Figure 1.6. Frequency of references to dominance in FoE speeches by party family (n=3872 – number of FoE speeches, o=753 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to dominance).

It is important to note that dominance was always negatively perceived in all national parliaments and by all political actors. But we can also notice a division in the perception of dominance if we delve into the different forms of it perceived by political actors in parliaments. As shown in Figure 1.7, political actors across parliaments were mostly critical of a perceived illicit hierarchy within the EU, whereby some member states dominate others, mostly with regard to the Union's decision-making process. The perceived illicit hierarchy was disapproved of on both sides of the political spectrum. Furthermore, it was the main perception of dominance in the Nordic and Visegrad countries. These countries also addressed and criticised inequality within the EU regarding member states' status and recognition. As such, based on these two forms of perceived dominance these countries seek to address the peripheralisation of some member states within the EU, criticising the fact that some countries have greater weighting in the EU's decisions and policies while others remain marginal(ised). As mentioned above, these countries were also critical of DI for a similar reason. This divide in the

EU is somewhat strengthened by the fact that countries which were seen as dominating – notably France and Germany – either do not significantly address the issue of dominance in FoE debates (this was the case in the French parliament) or perceive dominance very differently (as was the case in Germany). Indeed, dominance was frequently discussed in the German parliament, but mostly with regard to inequality in distributive terms. A similar situation is witnessed in Italy, where dominance is frequently framed in relation to redistributive capacities in the EU, with regard to either economic policy or refugees.

In sum, while dominance has always been criticised in national parliaments, a divide emerges. On the one hand, several political actors feel that their own country's position in the EU is marginalised, thus criticising an illicit hierarchy in the EU or inequality in terms of status. On the other hand, political actors from countries generally seen as dominant perceived inequality in more redistributive terms. This divide seems to be more geographical than following left-right or pro-/anti-EU integration lines.

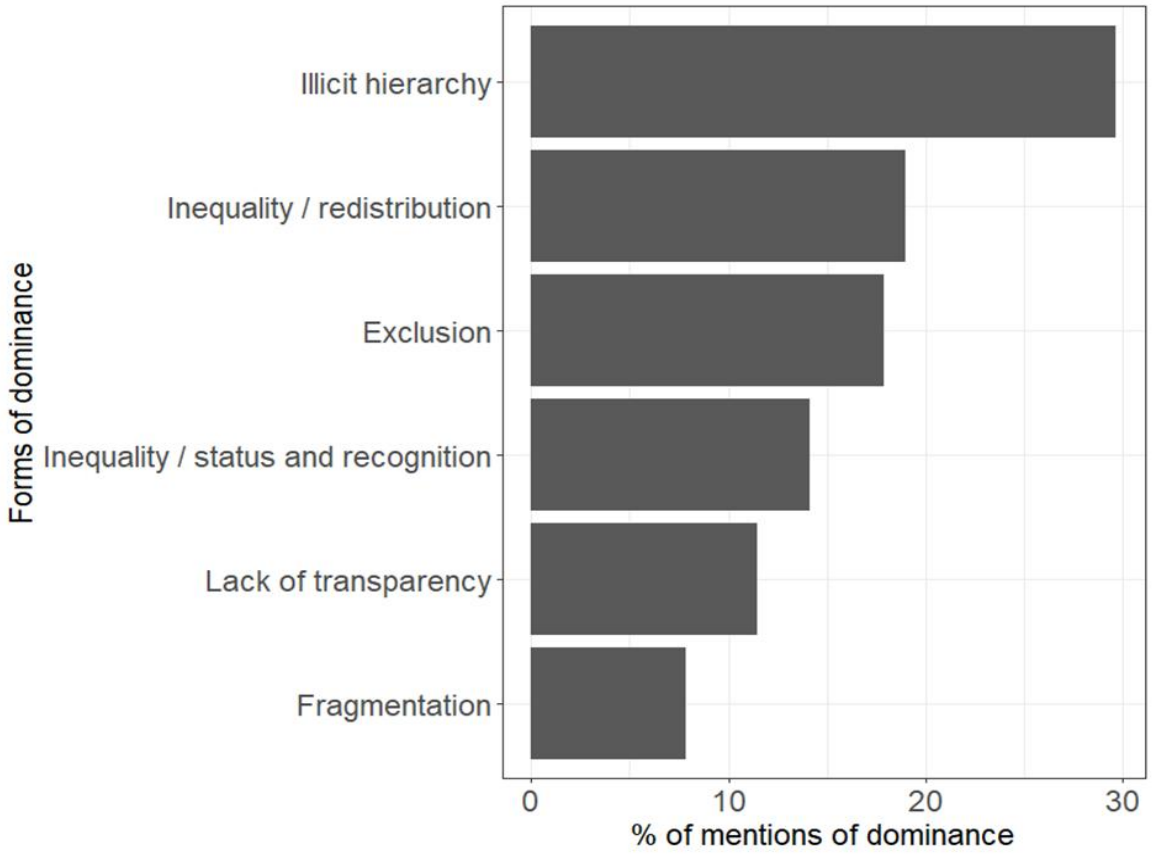


Figure 1.7. Frequency of references to forms of dominance (n=968 – number of mentions of forms of dominance).

Differentiated visions of European integration: Constitutional narratives on European integration

The starting point for our study was a reflection on three possible narratives on democratic Union. We used codes related to democracy, differentiation and dominance to qualitatively analyse, in all national contexts and in the EP, how political actors narrate the future of the EU. Interestingly, our research shows that they predominantly saw it in either intergovernmental or federal frames. The cosmopolitan-regional narrative was the least often detected in political discourses across the EU. Some elements of that narrative – usually characterised by progressive Green-Alternative-Libertarian (GAL) movements – were detected, for instance, in the German Green party.

The second observation concerns the significant degree of inconsistency detected in the narratives. Many political parties opted on a general level for a narrative, but simultaneously when debating specific policies and necessary instruments they may have contradicted the building blocks of their own preferred vision. A good illustration is visible in the German CDU/CSU, in which, despite promoting the intergovernmental middle ground with strong control vested in the national parliament, the same actors suggested more federal solutions to the refugee crisis. All in all, the way political actors reflect on the future is neither consistent nor very detailed and thorough.

Analysis of the intergovernmental and federal narratives demonstrates that political actors nuanced the visions they promoted and distinctive subversions emerged recently. This was mostly in response to domestic triggers and demands. When it comes to an intergovernmental narrative, for many of the actors we studied, democracy should be protected at a national level even if they agree to development of integration. As an illustration, this was the stance of the German CDU, defending the EU status quo and exposing the intergovernmental vision of the EU, while offering little in the way of reform proposals. Similarly, the French Republicans preferred to keep a tight rein on European affairs, notably through a powerful role granted to the European Council and the national parliament or in economic affairs. From a different ideological stance, the French leftist party France Unbowed also suggested repositioning several competences on the national level and putting an end to unrestrained globalisation, but retaining cooperation in Europe on social rights.

The main difference between the intergovernmental variations lies in the extent and degree of competences and capacity given to the EU level and specific competences for EU institutions. While some EU competences and capacity, especially held by intergovernmental institutions, are seen as desirable in the intergovernmental narrative, the sovereignist version of intergovernmentalism advocates for a repositioning of competences to national institutions, with the exception of some policy areas, in which the EU's action is seen as beneficial, but only when supervised by member states. Sometimes, however, intergovernmental narratives were merged with aspects of federal union, as in the republican version described above, in which democracy should be secured and thriving at the national level but at the same time democratic legitimacy is required at supranational level. In some national contexts, such mixed versions were also detected (i.e. in Italy and Germany). In sum, intergovernmentalism as a constitutional narrative is supported by traditionally Eurosceptic actors across the researched cases. It was, however, also stretched by actors very critical towards European integration in a version of the sovereignist narrative that holds only some elements of the intergovernmental setup.

The sovereignist narrative – detected in many national contexts – stresses the sacrosanct character of national sovereignty and cooperation between sovereign states only when considered as a necessity. Democracy is solely vested in nation states, but, as the vision is often pursued by populist actors, they often raise radical notions of democratisation such as demands for direct democratic instruments. For instance, as Tiziano Zgaga claims, the Italian Northern League 'has repeatedly criticised democratic procedures at EU level. It has pushed for weakening supranational institutions, while calling for re-nationalisation (particularly in fiscal and monetary terms), de-Europeanisation and assuming an anti-EU stance' (Zgaga 2023 in this volume).

This narrative is also internally contradictory as it demands radical repartition of competences from supranational institutions such as the EC, while at the same time attempting to maintain the benefits of integration. In addition, many sovereignist actors strongly expressed condemnation of further federalisation of European integration, such as the French National Rally, whose vision of the future of Europe strongly relied on the protection of national sovereignty as well as fierce opposition to the

vision of a federal Europe. In this regard, their statements were similar to those of the Polish PiS.

Some actors, such as the German AfD, expressed radical sovereignist visions. As Heermann and Tigges write in their chapter:

> The Eurosceptic AfD took a rather unconstructive sovereignist stance in debates on FoE. While it voiced some sovereignist claims (e.g. in monetary or defence policy), in general the contributions of AfD MPs to plenary debates represented ideas of disintegration and the reversal of European integration, (re-)shifting competences towards national parliaments.
>
> (Heermann and Tigges 2023 in this volume).

In the Greek case similarly, the radical left and right-wing parties often proposed destructive moves such as vetoing the banking union.

The federal narrative was clearly visible among actors in founding countries, most clearly the German SPD and French REM. The idea of deepening European integration is clearly a path promoted by several French political parties, including Macron's REM and the Socialist Party. However, similarly to intergovernmental narratives, our research demonstrates that the federal constitutional narrative has been subject to variation regarding the degree of federalism advocated for by MPs in different contexts. We see in this perspective two main options: a multi-headed federal-type Union equipped with a distinct institutional structure resembling the federal compound state and a de-coupled federal political Union. In the first federal version, political actors typically demand strengthening supranational EU institutions and develop a fully-fledged representative system with the EP as a core institution in which democracy is vested. Usually, this also entails advocating for more EU capacities, but in many contexts, it is very policy dependent. A good illustration is the Italian Democratic Party, which supported federal solutions for the entire Union. The special second version was present primarily in the Eurozone countries, which focused on creating a federal structure specifically designed to control the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). We refer to this sub-narrative as a de-coupled federal political Union since it includes requests for specific interinstitutional arrangements for governing the single market and Eurozone. In addition, political actors demand more capacity for the EU, especially centred on the EMU. The distinctive feature of that version is

how DI is approached and specifically accepted for Eurozone countries. It is illustrated by views of the French REM, whose politicians argued that in order for the Eurozone to be more competitive on the international arena, it needs to have a fully-fledged governance structure, with a parliament and government. The party's view envisions a de-coupled political union, with the EU and Eurozone both having developed supranational setups.

Structure of the report and overview of chapters

The study presented here is composed of an analysis of the EP followed by 10 national chapters.[1] We ordered the national cases in groups starting from the founding states: France, Germany and Italy. The next group is made up of northern and southern countries: Greece, Denmark and Sweden. Then comes the group of Visegrad countries: Poland, Hungary and Slovakia are presented. The last chapter presents the Norwegian case study.

This review of debates across the continent starts with a chapter focusing on the EP groups' visions of the future of European integration. Through a qualitative analysis of plenary sessions related to the future of the European integration, the authors discuss the reform proposals made by the groups, as well as their perceptions of democracy and dominance in the EU, demonstrating the nuances between the groups, going beyond the binary opposition of pro- versus anti-European integration.

The debate on FoE was to a great degree initiated and driven by French President Emmanuel Macron. His vision of 'European sovereignty' has indeed been at the heart of many discussions on the EU's future. However, as the French case study demonstrates, at home his pro-European attitude has been criticised by several political actors for putting European affairs higher on the political agenda than domestic ones. The French debate shows high intensity as a result of the leading position of the president. One of the key shared concerns among French political actors was the idea that democracy in Europe needs to be strengthened. However, parties hold diverging views on the way to rectify the EU's perceived democratic malfunctioning, as well as on the

[1] The Czech case study is not included due to the prolonged sick leave of the researcher responsible for writing the chapter. The coded data from Czechia is included in the comparative overview.

path EU integration should take. Furthermore, the notion of European sovereignty has been closely debated in the domestic parliamentary arena and mostly favoured by Macron's governing party. Yet it received fierce criticism from the opposition on both sides of the political spectrum and seemed to have exacerbated claims for protecting national sovereignty and limiting European integration. In contrast, the German debate on FoE in its institutional aspect was mainly driven by external events and actors, most prominently by the 2015 migration crisis, Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as Macron's reform proposals. The analysis of German political actors shows that the CDU/CSU party group defended the EU status quo within the intergovernmental narrative of the EU. The more federalist-minded SPD was constrained by its position as the CDU/CSU's junior coalition partner. It nevertheless voiced dissenting views, especially related to Eurozone policy proposals. Among opposition parties, calls for both 'federalist' and 'sovereignist' reforms emerged as well. While all parties perceived problems of 'dominance' in the EU, there was no consensus about the nature of and remedies for these problems. Perceptions of dominance were rather shaped by party ideology and party preferences regarding European integration and economic policy. In the chapter covering the Italian case, party positions on the future of Europe were driven by two specific policies rather than by a coherent polity reflection: fiscal policy (reform of the Stability and Growth Pact) and migration policy (reform of the Dublin Regulation). Such policies were very salient and politicised during three crises that had a major impact on Italy: concerning the euro, migration, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The chapter demonstrates that all different constitutional models are applied, with two variants very visible: the supranational centralisation model as a variant of the multi-headed federal model, and the sovereignist narrative. The key feature of the analysed debates in Italy was that positions were never expressed in a comprehensive way.

The Greek case study demonstrates that parliamentary representatives advanced views and disagreements about the future of Europe mostly indirectly, in the context of debating EU policies that have strong relevance and consequences for Greece, such as the Eurozone and migration/asylum. They did not, though, engage in any explicit and sustained way with issues related to the institutional aspects and to visions of the EU's constitutional architecture. Mainstream political parties on the left and right implicitly projected two visions for the future of Europe – those of intergovernmentalist and policy-dependent federal

solutions. The anti-EU parties of the far left and far right, on the other hand, do not believe that the EU can be reformed for the benefit of the people, and their views of the EU reflect the sovereignist pattern of intergovernmentalism.

The northern countries are represented in our study by Sweden and Denmark. These are specific cases since they are outside of the Eurozone and maintain a peripheral status. Swedish parliamentary debates on the EU in general and the future of Europe more specifically are centred mainly on an intergovernmental perspective focusing on relations between the member state and the supranational level. Migration is the policy area that stands out as most important in this regard, following from the recent turn in Swedish politics with heightened public debate on this issue. In the Danish case it is argued that, while debates are thorough on European issues, they are also very general. As in other cases, the debates are triggered by crises such as migration. The key theme for most of the party actors across a left-right continuum is the need for a more 'efficient EU'. As a consequence, the predominant constitutional narrative in Denmark was the intergovernmental vision of EU integration. This follows from the continuous stressing of the role of member states and the coherent national focus on Danish benefits only.

The Visegrad members share similarities with their northern counterparts. In the Polish case study, the increasingly polarised political scene formed a specific context for debate on FoE, pushing actors to undertake clear positions on integration even if the overall debate was shallow and lacking more nuanced and detailed statements. The governing right-wing populist PiS (and its more radical minor coalition partner United Poland) developed a clearcut sovereignist narrative primarily utilising established frames of national sovereignty and anti-German sentiments. At the same time, opposition parties in response clarified their own positions and accepted pro-federalist views. In Hungary, Viktor Orbán's Fidesz dominated the parliamentarian field and structured the conditions in which the FoE debate was held. The ideas on the future of the EU presented by the parliamentarians offer a window into the contestations and preferences of coalition and opposition actors, as well as the degree of their engagement with the challenges the EU had dealt with. This applied despite the curtailment of the opposition's rights in Hungary and the disproportionate access of governing actors to the parliamentary pulpit. The chapter demonstrates that Hungarian

parliamentarians have overwhelmingly followed the executive's anti-EU rhetoric, with the opposition making limited use of the discursive space provided to them by the procedural rules, appealing on symbols and feelings rather than reason, and asking the EU institutions to do the impossible. Thus, they contributed to Hungary moving away from envisioning the EU as a polity with a constitutional potential. The Slovak case study breaks with the regional pattern witnessed in the other two cases, but only partially. The chapter describes that the Slovak politicians tended to criticise the EU, but did so vaguely and in an abstract manner – without clearly differentiating between the European Council, the Commission, and the Parliament, highlighting their respective mandates and influence, or proposing solutions in their critique. Similarly to other cases in the region, hard Eurosceptics gradually abandoned rhetoric advocating for a Slovak exit from the EU, arguing more for inner transformation of the Union protecting national sovereignty. The analysis also demonstrates that the transactional logic in the relationship between Slovakia and the EU seems to be prevalent in MPs' thinking and the energy they devote to supporting (or opposing) basic premises leaves practically no space for more specific proposals and more expert discussions.

The Norwegian case study closes the volume, demonstrating that debate on FoE also concerns non-members. Since Norway is a highly integrated non-member, the debate naturally centred on the EEA-imprinted conditions of cooperation. In addition, parliamentary debates on the EU and European affairs tend to be interest-based and focus on how Norwegian interests in different policy domains and as a sovereign state can be safeguarded or promoted.

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Chapter 2

European Parliament: Conflicting Visions on the Future of the Union

Elodie Thevenin and Resul Umit

Introduction

In this chapter, we focus on the European Parliament (EP), analysing a selection of its plenary debates on the future of Europe (FoE), the Eurozone, and immigration policy – three key topics for investigating visions of the future of European integration. If we are to understand how parliamentarians debate reforming the European Union (EU), the EP stands out as an obvious case study. Founded in 1952 and directly elected since 1979, it represents the citizens of the EU. The EP plenary therefore provides Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) with democratic opportunities to contribute their constituents' and/or their own vision for the EU to the debate. There is also an increasing amount of weight attached to what MEPs say, as the EP has become a powerful institution in the EU. In this perspective, this contribution investigates European parliamentary groups' visions of the future of European integration, zooming in on proposed institutional and policy reforms, views on differentiated integration (DI) and perceptions of dominance. Results show that each parliamentary group seeks to advocate for a specific vision of the future of the European Union – eventually picturing the EU being more or less integrated. Yet we demonstrate a deep discrepancy between groups when it comes to proposed reforms, notably with Eurosceptic groups less keen to make specific proposals, but more likely to engage in critique of the EU. Furthermore, speakers' national affiliation also influences parliamentary groups' vision on the future of Europe, leading sometimes to disparities within groups.

The Parliament's position in the political system

True to the origin of the word *parliament*, in its early decades all the European Parliament could do was to *talk*. In the legislative process, for example, the EP was only to be consulted, and it took a decision by the European Court of Justice in 1980 to clarify that its opinion must be heard before the Council of the EU adopted legislation (Corbett, Jacobs and Shackleton 2016, 258-260). It has, however, gained significant ground in terms of not only legislative but also budgetary and supervisory powers since the first direct elections in 1979, dramatically strengthening its position in the EU political system (Corbett, Jacobs and Shackleton 2016, Hix and Høyland 2013, Héritier, et al. 2019).

The EP is the co-legislator of the EU, alongside the Council of the EU. Although the EP is still only consulted for legislation in some sensitive areas such as the EU's revenue, in practice this procedure is now used rarely (Corbett, Jacobs and Shackleton 2016, 258-263). Instead, in most areas of EU competence, legislative decisions are made through the ordinary legislative procedure, where the EP is formally on an equal footing with the Council. Once the Commission drafts a legislative proposal in this procedure, the two legislative institutions have the same powers to amend, reject, or approve it – during up to three readings in each institution. Proposals are then adopted only if both the Council and the EP approve the same text.

Budgetary powers are another aspect of the EP's increasingly strong position in the political system of the EU. With the changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty, the EP shares the power to authorise the EU's annual budget with the Council of the EU – in a setting similar to the ordinary legislative procedure. Moreover, at the end of each budgetary year, the EP then has the authority to scrutinise the Commission's implementation of the annual budget through the discharge procedure. Yet it does not have equally strong authority in some important budgetary matters. For example, in determining the size and sources of the EU's revenue or setting its multiannual financial framework, the Council of the EU has the leading role. Still, the Council must seek the EP's consent in these matters.

The EP also has supervisory powers over other institutions in the EU. The budgetary discharge procedure is a good example of these powers, but as a directly elected institution, it has been given increasingly more powers to hold other institutions to account, especially through appointment and

dismissal. Most importantly, the EP has the authority to elect the Commission president, although it is the European Council that proposes a candidate for the position in the first place. Before the Commission can start its term, the nominees for commissioners attend individual parliamentary hearings, with the EP then voting on the Commission as a whole. The dismissal of the Commission by the EP is also possible, although this has never happened in practice. The EP has important roles in the appointments to other institutions as well – such as to the European Central Bank, the European Ombudsman, and numerous EU agencies – although its exact role changes depending on the institution in question (Corbett, Jacobs and Shackleton 2016, 298-311).

These rules and procedures have varying degrees of effect on how the plenary works in the EP. On the one hand, representatives from the European Commission (EC) and the Council of the European Union speak frequently in the plenary. This facilitates the collaboration between these three institutions in the decision-making process. It also allows the EP to fulfil its role in parliamentary scrutiny and democratic accountability, as representatives from other institutions report to the MEPs or answer their questions in the plenary. On the other hand, the involvement of the plenary in EU politics is more limited than the formal rules and procedures might suggest. This is not only because the EP often operates as a working parliament, where most parliamentary activities – especially those regarding legislation and scrutiny – take place in committees (Lord 2018, Hix and Høyland 2013). The involvement of the plenary is also limited because legislative decisions are increasingly made in informal negotiations behind closed doors, with fewer and fewer MEPs involved (Corbett, Jacobs and Shackleton 2016, 240-245). For example, for a large majority of the legislation passed through the ordinary legislative procedure, only one reading – rather than two or three – occurs in the EP (Hix and Høyland 2013).

Political parties and views on European integration

Political parties at the European level typically consist of like-minded national parties from member states. Known as Europarties, their role and resources have been increasing over time (Héritier, et al. 2019). With the 2014 EP election, for example, Europarties started to nominate their own candidate for the all-important position of Commission president. Nevertheless, the elections to the EP are still conducted within national

constituencies, where voters choose between – and sometimes within – the lists of candidates put forward by national parties. As a result, there is a long-lasting debate about whether Europarties are best seen as parties themselves or as umbrella organisations of national parties (Sigalas and Pollak 2012).

Both national parties and European political groups affect the legislative behaviour in the EP (Hix 2002, Slapin and Proksch 2010).[2] Sorace (2018) shows that MEPs are more likely to speak in the plenary debates if they are seeking re-election (through their national party) or have a seat on the frontbench (of their European political group).[3] When there is a divergence between the positions of these two principals, MEPs voting in line with the wishes of their national party speak more often, compared to the MEPs voting with their European political group (Slapin and Proksch 2010). In terms of policy positions, the debates are shaped by (dis)agreements based rather on national or pro-/anti-integration dimensions than the classic left-right dimension (Proksch and Slapin 2010).

Given the relationship between national parties, Europarties, and European political groups, one way to understand the policy positions of the groups in the EP is to look at the position of national parties from which their MEPs come. Figure 2.1 therefore plots the left-right positions of national parties and their positions towards European integration for the European political groups in the EP at the end of the eighth term in April 2019. It shows that there is an inverted U-shaped relationship between these positions: parties at or around the centre of the left-right political spectrum tend to support European integration, while others –

[2] Once elected to the EP, MEPs form political groups in the Parliament, provided that there are at least 25 MEPs from 25% of the member states willing to share an affiliation. Europarties facilitate forming political groups, and indeed most MEPs become affiliated with the political group of the Europarty of their national party. However, Europarties and the political groups of the EP are officially separate organisations. As a result, members from multiple Europarties can form a single group in the EP. In fact, MEPs can join a different group than the one affiliated with the Europarty of their national party or choose to remain independent.

[3] Technically, it is the political groups that allocate speaking time to their members. Additionally, MEPs can have spontaneous opportunities to speak, subject to the president's approval through the catch-the-eye procedure, for short interventions towards the end of plenary debates. See Corbett, Jacobs and Shackleton (2016, 197-198) for further details.

positioned towards the ends of the classic spectrum – tend to oppose it. Overall, these results fit in well with the qualitative analyses of where Europarties and European political groups stand politically (Raunio 2017; Corbett, Jacobs and Shackleton 2016).

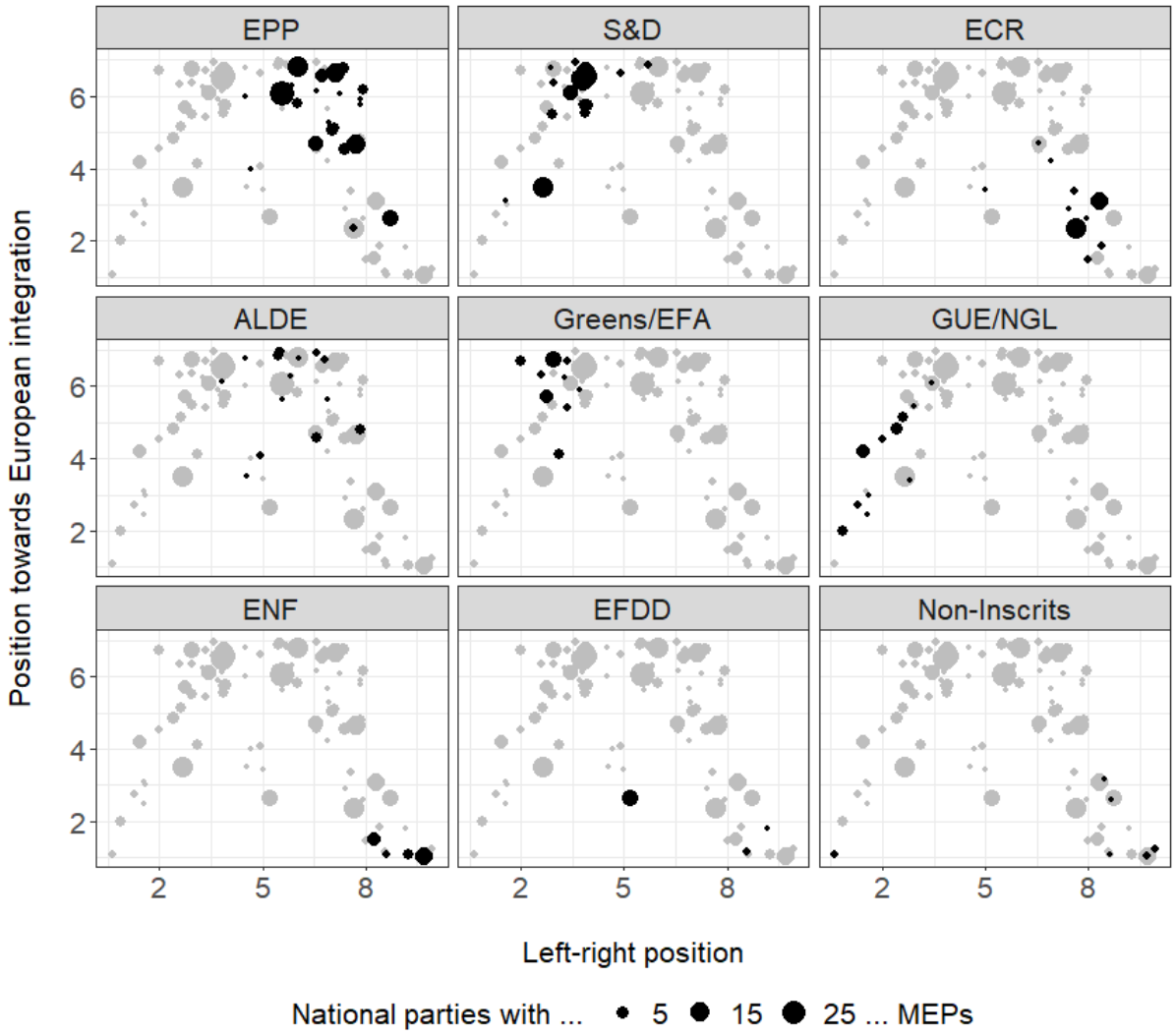


Figure 2.1. Left-right positions of national parties and their positions towards European integration, by European political groups as of April 2019. Note: Higher scores indicate, respectively, right-wing and pro-integration positions. Source: 2017 Chapel Hill Expert FLASH Survey (Polk, et al. 2017).

At the end of the eighth term, the largest groups in Parliament were the centre-right European People's Party Group (EPP), composed of Christian democratic parties, and the centre-left Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), comprising socialist parties (see composition of the Parliament in Annex 2). Indeed, MEPs from these party families have been forming the two main groups throughout the history of the Parliament (Corbett, Jacobs and Shackleton 2016).

These groups frequently work together to push through a pro-integration agenda, and this pro-integration coalition sometimes includes the liberal-centrists in the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE) for a 'super grand coalition' (Hix and Høyland 2013). The Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA) was another group with MEPs from parties with pro-integration positions in this term. In contrast, the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR), Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD), and Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF) had anti-integration positions. This group structure remained largely the same after the 2019 EP election.[4] Our analysis is mostly based on the level of the EP groups.

The future of Europe debate since 2015

During the October 2017 meeting of the European Council, President of the European Parliament (2017–2019) Antonio Tajani invited the heads of state or government of EU member states to speak in the EP, to debate how to reform the EU and its policies in the future. This was in the aftermath of the Brexit referendum, at a time when the EU was said to be in 'a reflection process on the future of the EU-27' (Drachenberg, Anghel and McGlynn 2017, 6), and these debates were one of the EP's main contributions to this reflection process.

Many accepted the invitation, and by the time the EP dissolved for the 2019 elections, 20 heads of state or government had spoken in these extraordinary debates on separate dates. The only member states whose representatives did not participate were Austria, Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom. Among those who did participate, we chose to include four debates by (1) French President Emmanuel Macron, (2) Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, (3) German Chancellor Angela Merkel, and (4) Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte. This is a selection motivated by heterogeneity – in terms of geography and attitudes towards European integration. First, this selection includes member states from Southern and Eastern as well as Western Europe. Second, as Figure 2.2 shows, it also includes

[4] EFDD ceased to exist, ALDE became Renew Europe (Renew), and ENF was replaced by Identity and Democracy (ID) at the beginning of the ninth term of the Parliament.

representatives of parties, or coalition of parties, from a wide range of parties in terms of their positions towards European integration.[5]

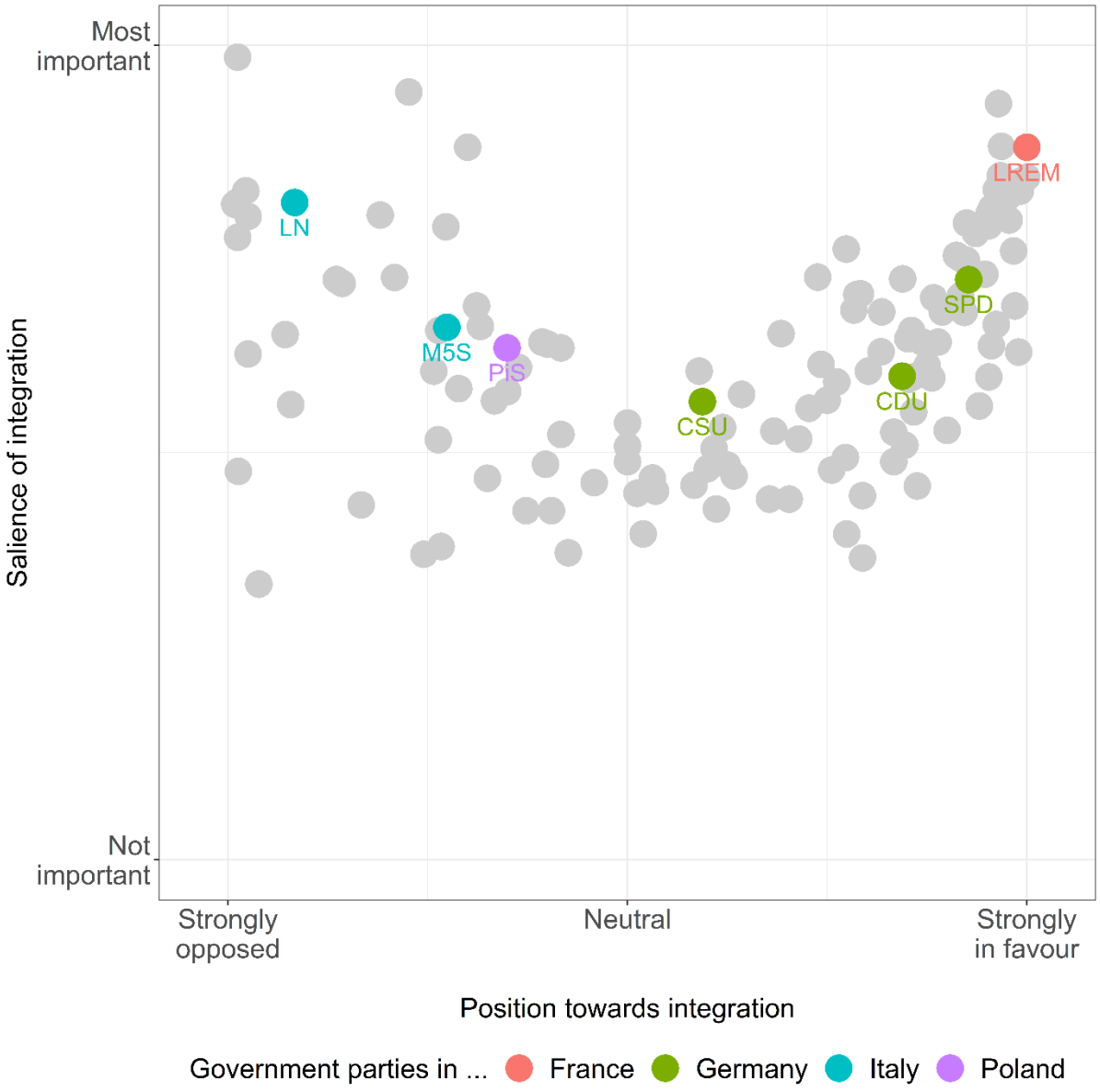


Figure 2.2. Party positions towards and salience of European integration. Source: 2017 Chapel Hill Expert FLASH Survey (Polk, et al. 2017).

The future of Europe debates with heads of state or government start with a long speech by the guest leaders and continue with shorter contributions from the members of the European Commission as well as of the European Parliament. The guests then take the floor once again for the last substantive speech, responding to the contributions of the other

[5] At the time of his speech, Prime Minister Conte was himself independent, but he was leading a coalition of the Five Star Movement (Movimento Cinque Stelle – M5S) and Northern League (Lega Nord – LN).

speakers in the debate. Anghel et al. (2019) analyse the speeches by heads of state and governments in these debates, finding a genuine engagement with the question of Europe's future by, for example, putting forward numerous proposals. Their analysis shows that, while the leaders shared a number of overall objectives – such as the need for unity in the EU – in general, many emphasised different policy objectives and/or argued for contradictory institutional designs in their speeches (Anghel, et al. 2019). Our analysis takes this line of inquiry further, as we analyse all speeches in these debates, not only the ones delivered by the leaders. Although these debates are specially convened, and as such do not belong to the routine in the EP, they provide us with a unique opportunity to analyse the views in the EP on the future direction of the EU.

We also analyse debates beyond the ones organised by President Tajani. For example, we include a debate on the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE). In March 2019, French President Emmanuel Macron called for 'a Conference for Europe' to formalise the reflection process on the future of the EU (Macron 2019). This call later found support among all main actors in the EU, and ultimately led to the creation of the Conference on the Future of Europe – a series of structured debates, with citizens given a leading role, on the future direction of the EU (Fabbrini 2020). Johansson and Raunio (2022) argue that the EP had an active role in the agenda-setting stage of the Conference. The plenary debate that we analyse in this paper took place, where the EP (1) discussed the proposals from multiple EU institutions on how to organise it and (2) identified a non-exhaustive list of policy priorities for the Conference. It is the latter aspect that makes this debate particularly suitable for this study, as this was an opportunity for MEPs to put forward their views on what the EU should prioritise for developments in the future. As shown in Annex 1, this was a very popular debate, with 109 speeches delivered by 89 speakers.

All parliamentary debates on budgets are necessarily forward-looking, and this debate was no exception. Indeed, the budget was a frequently discussed topic in the debates with heads of state or government of EU member states on the future of Europe, where some leaders argued for the EU to have its own resources (Anghel, et al. 2019). The plenary debate that we analyse in this paper took place after all national governments and/or parliaments in the EU had approved the related proposal. The EP then discussed how to implement this proposal, with an emphasis on its

proposed sources such as the revenues from energy and digital transition, and its hallmarks such as the Next Generation EU programme – both of which contributed to the forward-looking nature of this debate.

Debates on migration and asylum tackled the 2015 migration crisis and its aftermath – including reforming the EU asylum and migration policy. The more recent debates focused on the situation at the EU's external border, i.e. the Greek-Turkish and Polish-Belarusian borders. A total of 18 debates have been analysed, including six on the broad discussion of the future of Europe, six more specifically on migration policy, and six devoted to the Eurozone.

The following sections of this chapter are devoted to the results of our analysis. After discussing *who* participated in the analysed parliamentary debates, we delve into the polity and policy reforms requested by MEPs. The next parts focus on differentiated integration (i.e. differentiation in the EU specifically understood in territorial terms, such as a given member state opting in or out of a policy area) and perceived dominance in the EP, before summarising each EP group's view(s) on the future of Europe.

MEPs' participation in debating the future of Europe

This first section looks at MEPs taking a stand during plenary sessions on the future of Europe. It investigates participation in debates in relation to European parliamentary groups and national party positions vis-à-vis European integration.

Figure 2.3 below shows MEPs' participation in the FoE debates by parliamentary groups. The EPP and S&D groups were the main drivers of the debates. The groups' strong presence in the EP partly justified their important participation in debating the future of European integration, alongside the fact that both groups attempted to push forward their own agenda and proposals on the EU. Indeed, as later explained, both groups expressed diverse views on European integration and presented specific recommendations to reify it.

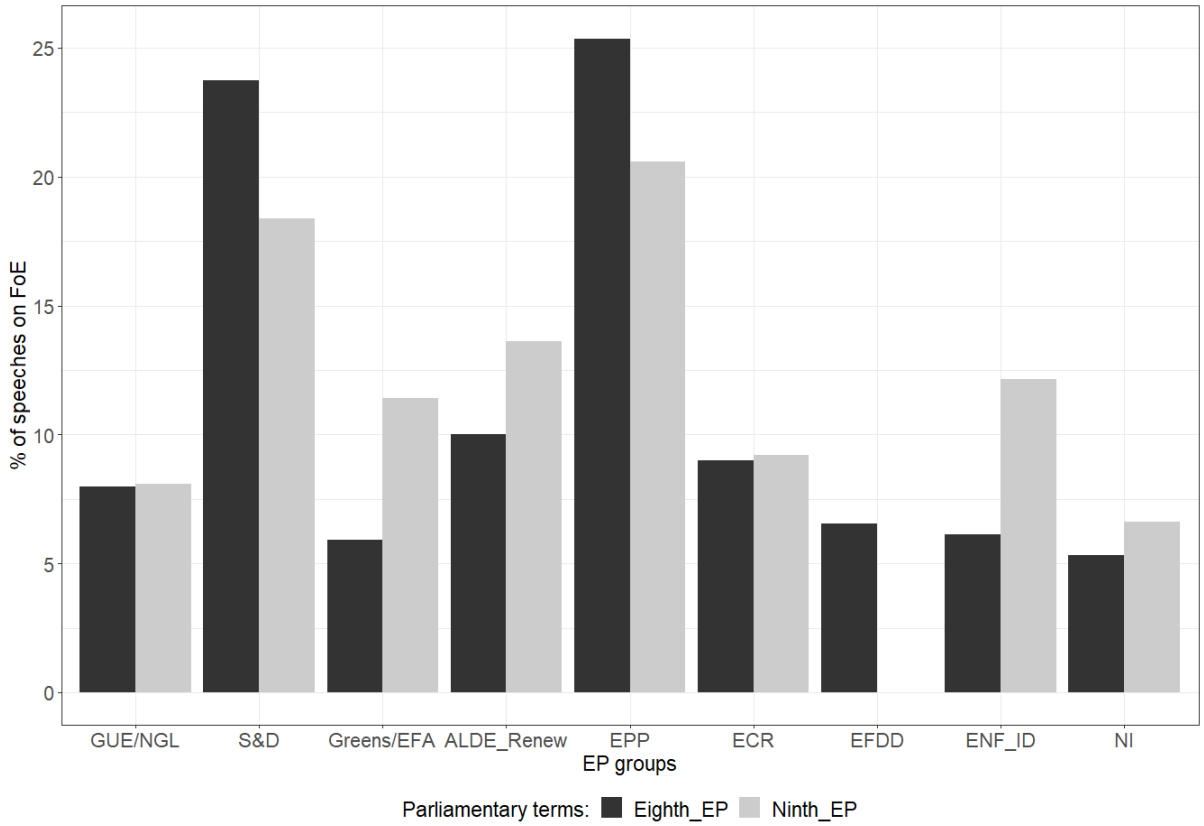


Figure 2.3. MEPs' participation in the analysed debates by EP group affiliation (N=761 – number FoE speeches[67]).

We can also notice the important participation of the far-right ID group in debating the future of Europe: in the ninth EP, the ID group significantly increased its participation (twice as much as the ENF in the eighth EP during the analysed debates). Furthermore, when taking into account the size of the groups (in terms of seats in the EP), Eurosceptics parties were particularly active during debates, notably given their limited number of seats in comparison to the EPP and S&D groups, as shown in Figure 2.4.

[6] A FoE speech is defined as a speech from MEPs containing at least one of the core codes (i.e. related to reforms, democracy, territorial differentiation or dominance) in selected parliamentary sessions related to thematic debates on the future of Europe, the Eurozone and immigration. Speeches from other political actors intervening in debates have not been taken into account in the analysis, as they usually represent other EU institutions, while this chapter focuses on the EP.

[7] In the qualitative analysis the ALDE and Renew groups as well as the ENF and ID groups have been merged, as sharing similar political positions.

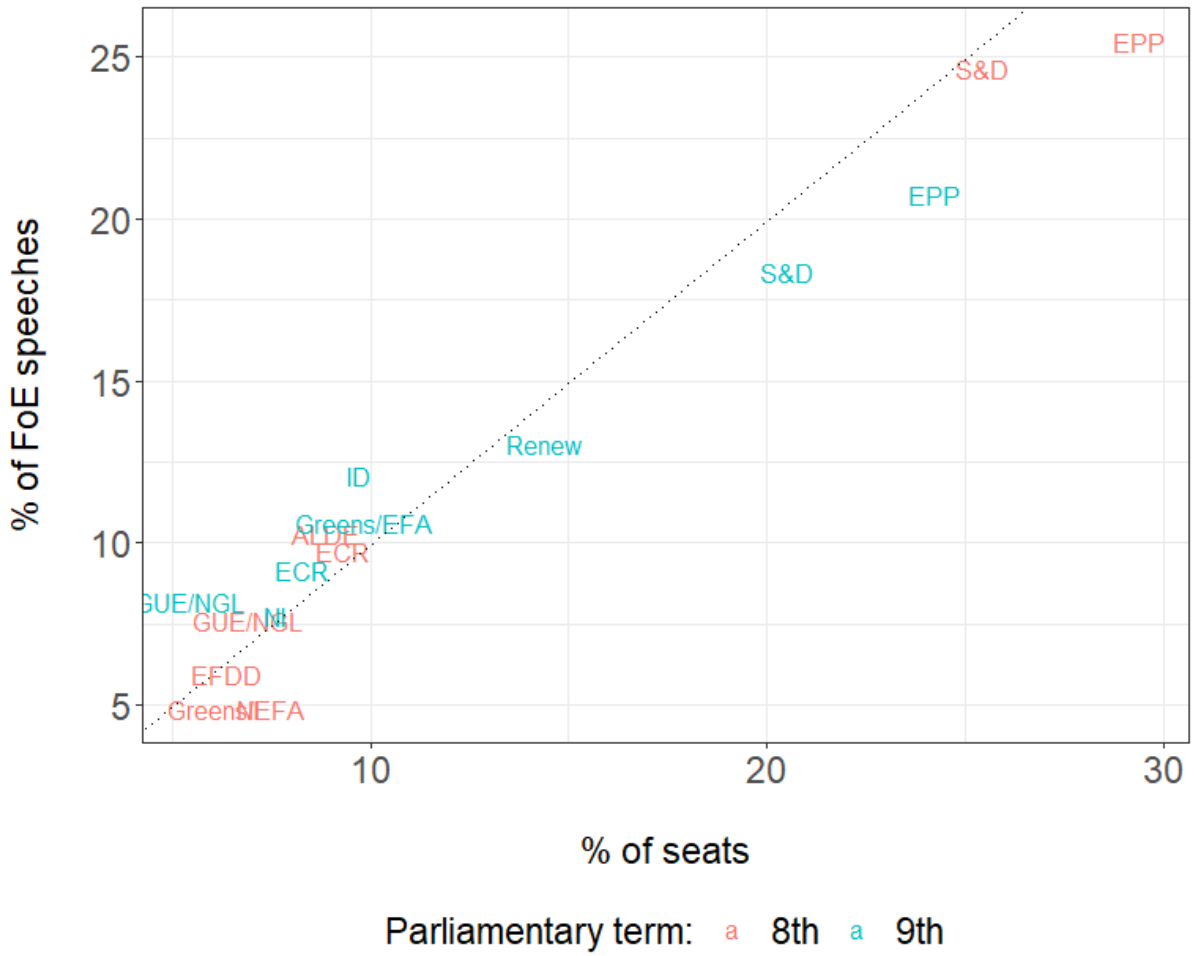


Figure 2.4. MEPs' participation in the analysed parliamentary debates by EP group affiliation and taking into account EP groups' size (N=761 – number of FoE speeches).

If we look at MEPs' participation by topics (i.e. the general future of Europe debate, immigration policy, or the Eurozone – see Figure 2.5), we see that MEPs particularly discussed issues related to migration. The ID group's participation during the ninth term was particularly high on the topic of migration, reflecting the prioritisation of the far right's opposition to immigration in their political agenda, even after the 2015 migration crisis (Gessler and Hunger 2022).

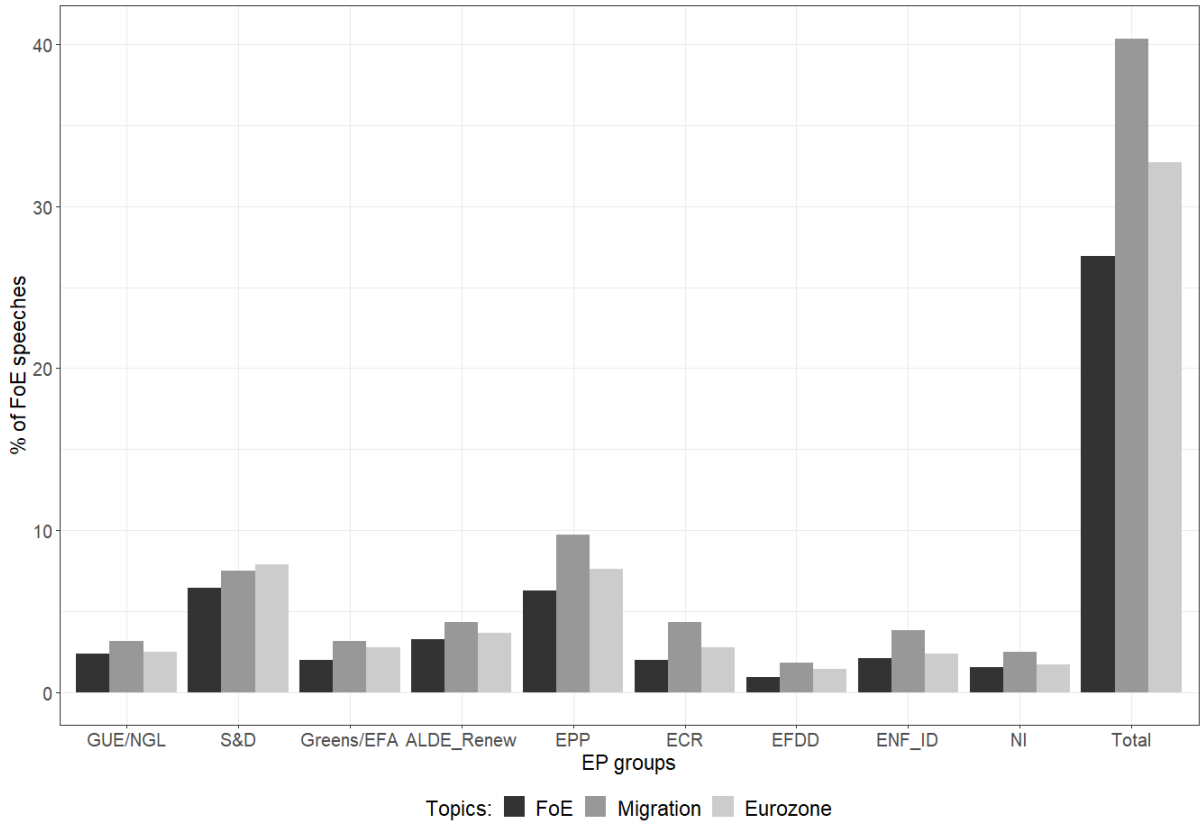


Figure 2.5. MEPs' participation by topic of the analysed parliamentary debates (N=761 – number of FoE speeches).

Overall, the main drivers of the debates on Europe's future were mostly pro-European integration MEPs, in that they spoke more often during the analysed debates. However, groups on the fringes of the political spectrum (GUE/NGL, ENF, EFDD, ECR and ID) were active, especially when taking into account the size of these groups in the EP. The analysis of the content of the speeches will exhibit the various visions of the EU's future that those actors expressed.

Reforms of the EU in a fragmented European Parliament

One of the dimensions explored in this volume regarding the future of Europe pertains to the EU's institutional setup. Indeed, as argued in the introduction (Góra et al.), changes in the interplay between institutions at the EU and/or national level are useful indicators to explore a speaker's vision of European integration.

As shown in Figure 2.6, institutional reforms of the EU occurred in 15% of all speeches related to FoE. The request for EU institutional reforms

was especially made by mainstream groups. Groups on the fringes of the political spectrum – i.e. the left GUE/NGL or the far-right groupings ECR, EFDD, ENF and ID – rather abstained from requesting changes on EU institutional matters.

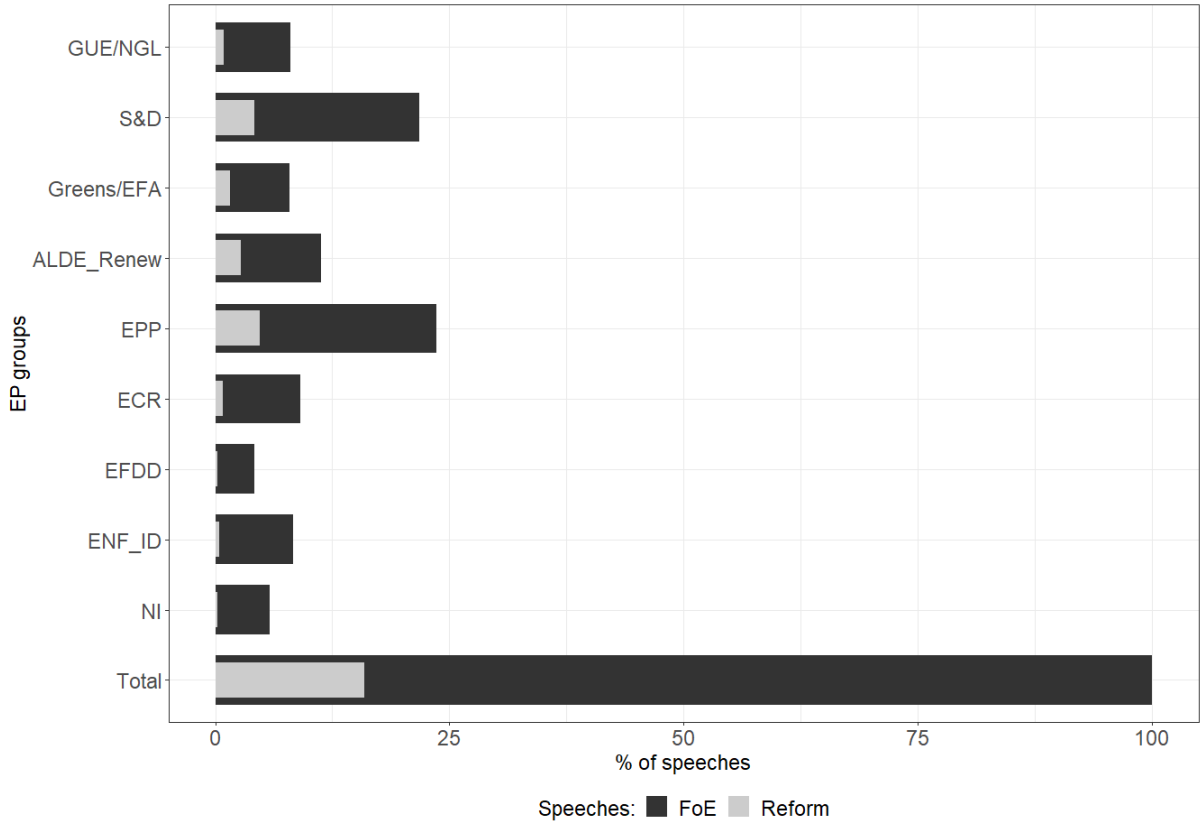


Figure 2.6. Request for EU institutional reforms by EP groups in analysed debates (N=761 – number of FoE speeches; n=121 – number of speeches containing at least one institutional reform proposal).

Zooming in on the different institutional reforms proposed by MEPs during debates, the strengthening of the EP has been the most frequently addressed proposal, as displayed in Figure 2.7. The EPP and S&D groups demanded the development of the EP's powers. The EP was in this perspective considered as the guardian of democracy, being the only directly elected EU institution: '[T]he community method must be made strong. We will only be able to be successful in the future if the European House of Democracy has a say' (Udo Bullmann, S&D, DE, EP_2018-11-13_FoE).[8] Expressing MEPs' own interest in having a greater say on European affairs, the claims to reform and strengthen the

[8] Quotes from the analysed debates were translated by the authors of the chapter and are presented with the MEPs' name, EP group and national affiliations, as well as the code of the debate.

EP notably entailed implementing a right of legislative initiative for the EP. In a similar vein, MEPs also requested a stronger role for national parliaments (NPs) within the EU's functioning:

> It is not the symbolic politics of the summits that help us, but the strengthening of parliamentary structures, because they mean more transparency and participation. This has to be done at Council level and through the involvement of national parliaments.
>
> (Josef Weidenholzer, S&D, AT, EP_2017-02-14_Eurozone)

This strengthening of the EP and of NPs was especially seen as needed when it comes to budgetary overview and Eurozone issues. Further on this point, several MEPs – especially from the EPP group – advocated for having an EU finance minister, alongside a 'common presence in the International Monetary Fund and in the World Bank' (Othmar Karas, EPP, AT, EP_2015-12-15_Eurozone). One MEP further requested setting up 'a euro government, a euro parliament and a budget for the euro zone' (Jakob von Weizsäcker, S&D, DE, EP_2015-12-15_Eurozone). However, far-right groups were fiercely opposed to these requested changes in the institutional setting of the Eurozone: '[T]he European Parliament thinks that all these problems will be solved if the Eurozone gets its own administration with additional money again. That, Mr President, shows that this Parliament has apparently not learned anything' (Auke Zijlstra, ENF, NL, EP_2017-02-14_Eurozone). Likewise, some EPP members disapproved of changes within the administration of the Eurozone, leading to some fragmentation in the group's position on Eurozone governance.

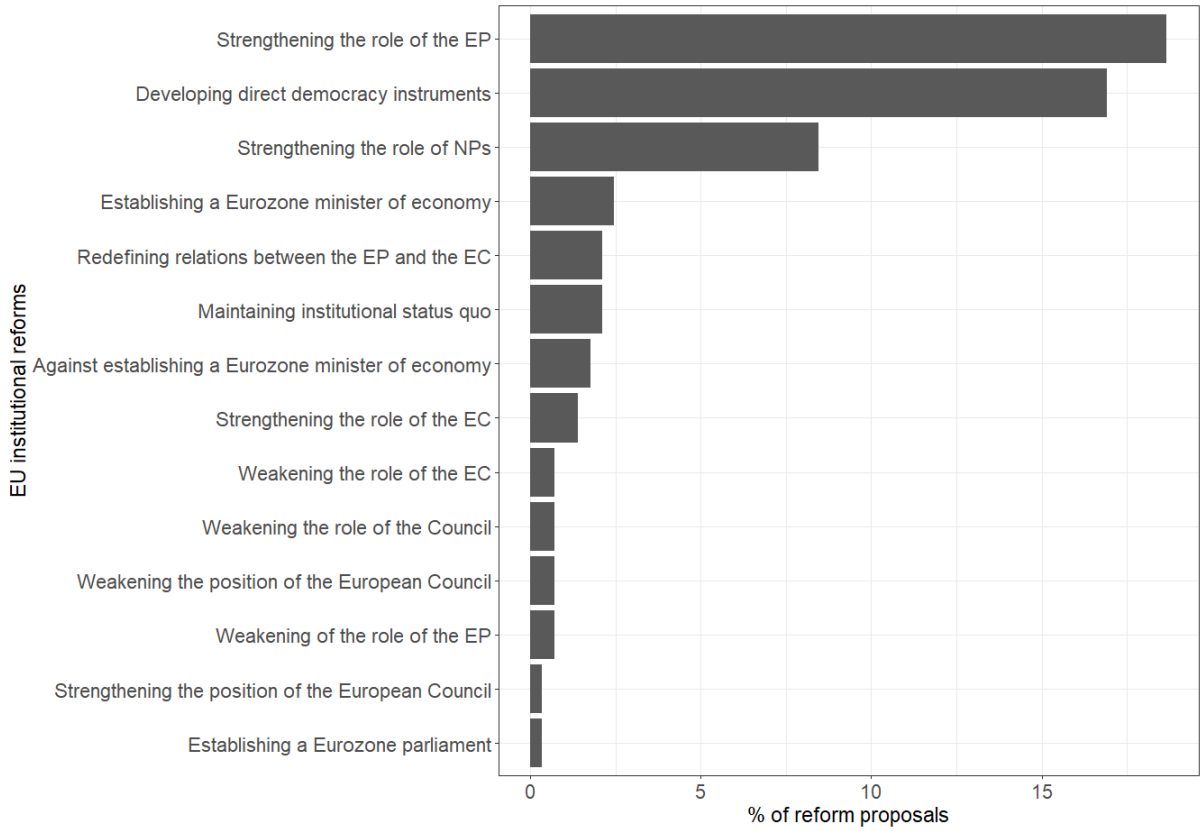


Figure 2.7. EU institutional reforms proposed in analysed FoE speeches (N=284 – number of institutional reform proposals (one speech may contain more than one reform).

Other institutional changes included the implementation of the Spitzenkandidat process to increase the democratic legitimacy of the EU, but also 'the elimination of the veto power of the states in the Council, with the passage to the qualified majority' (Javier Moreno Sánchez, S&D, ES, EP_2020-01-15_FoE). These reforms were supported by S&D and ALDE/Renew MEPs.

With comparable concern for EU democracy, the implementation of direct democracy instruments within the EU institutional system has been seen as a priority for the S&D and Renew groups. Especially discussed in the context of the future implementation of the CoFoE, MEPs highlighted the importance of strengthening the links between EU institutions and EU citizens:

> The first change must be in the way of involving citizens in these European processes, because Europe was not created for Brussels or for an elite or for a bubble, but to serve all citizens. The conference can become a great opportunity to renew Europe if we have the

> courage to get out of our procedural way of thinking and really give a voice to citizens in their diversity.
>
> (Dacian Cioloş, Renew, RO, EP_2020-01-15_FoE)

Comparably, MEPs also stressed the need for EU citizens' vision(s) of the future of Europe to be included when designing new reforms or policy instruments:

> [T]his conference to rebuild the European Union is more than necessary, but citizens must be directly involved in this work, the debate must leave the institutions to irrigate all our societies. How to strengthen our European democracy, how to build a common army, how to establish a common tax system? These questions and so many others must be debated and decided involving as many citizens as possible. It is not just a matter of consulting, but of co-constructing.
>
> (Raphaël Glucksmann, S&D, FR, EP_2020-01-15_FoE)

The involvement of citizens was considered as crucial for the CoFoE to be successful and, more importantly, for the future of European integration. Several MEPs noted the extraordinary moment that CoFoE represented for EU democracy and pushed for more actions in bringing citizens closer to the EU, leading to an EU constitution:

> Let us therefore have the courage and trust in our citizens to commission a directly elected citizens' convention to draft a new EU constitution and let Europeans themselves decide in a Europe-wide referendum on the EU they want to have.
>
> (Patrick Breyer, Greens/EFA, DE, EP_2020-01-15_FoE)

Other MEPs expressed some concerns regarding the way EU institutions will take citizens' recommendations into account: 'This process cannot be reduced to a tokenistic rubber-stamping exercise' (Scott Ainslie, Greens/EFA, UK, EP_2020-01-15_FoE).

It is also important to note that some MEPs advocated for keeping the current status quo rather than proposing institutional reforms. This was the case of both groups on the two-end sides of the spectrum, who considered changes as imposition of a particular vision of the EU, which they opposed. Interestingly enough, several EPP members shared this vision and requested that the EU remain unchanged when it comes to its functioning. By the same token, several EPP MEPs disapproved of the

implementation of transnational lists for EU elections as well as treaty modifications. There were therefore disagreements in the EPP fraction regarding EU institutional reforms.

Conflicts over policies

Among the most discussed policy areas in the EP were migration and asylum, Economic and Monetary Union (EMU)[9], social policy, defence and security policy, and climate and environment – see Figure 2.8 below. This section will focus on these most mentioned policies as crucial for understanding MEPs' visions on FoE, in both its internal and external dimensions. Discussion on the EMU, social and climate policies indeed reflected on the current functioning of the EU, while migration and defence rather pointed to the EU's role and place in the world.

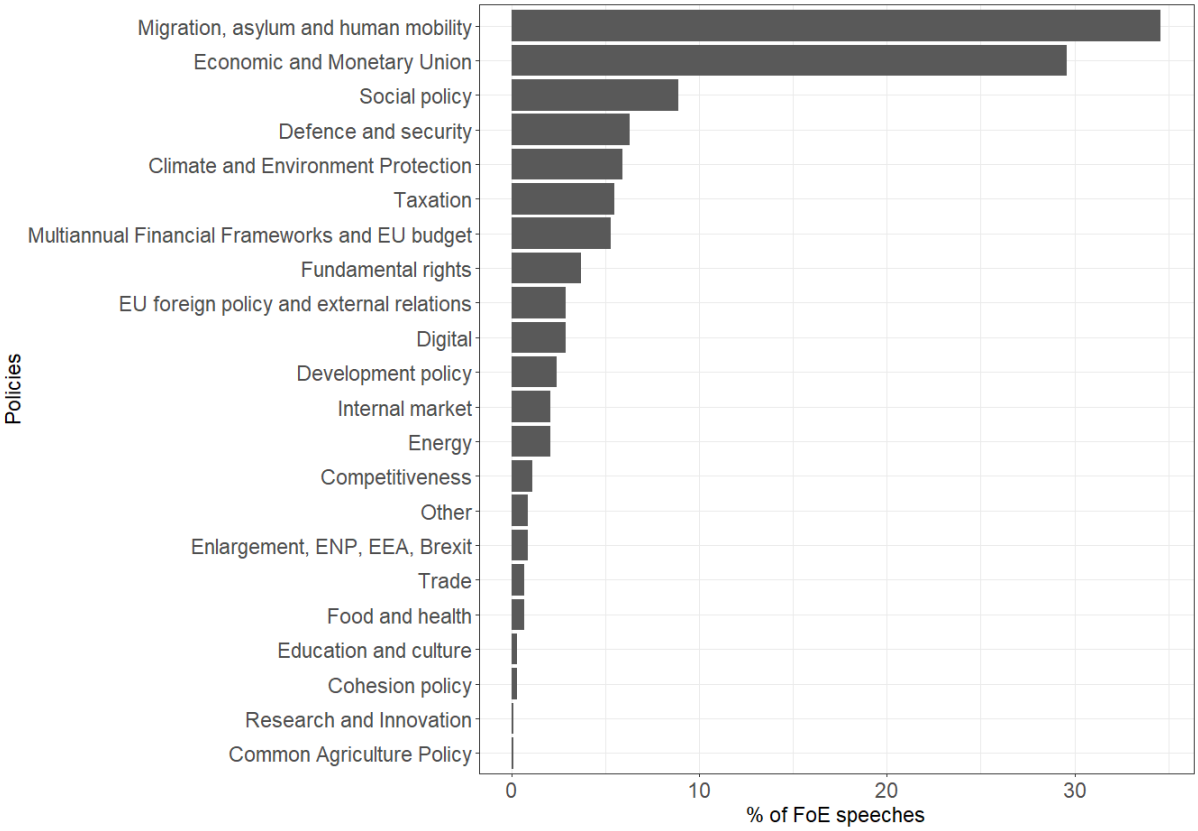


Figure 2.8. Discussed policy areas by MEPs in analysed debates (N=761 – number of FoE speeches; one FoE speech may contain more than one policy area mentioned).

Debates on migration also created a lot of conflict within the EP, between those in favour of a more human-oriented migration policy and those

[9] Both migration and EMU were subject to specific parliamentary debates.

focused on security. This division necessarily impacted policies requested by MEPs. This disagreement extended to the EP forum and sparked fierce opposition of the EP against other EU institutions, especially the EC and the Council. Depending on the parliamentary groups, the reason behind this disagreement among EU institutions differed: S&D and GUE/NGL tended to criticise the Council and the EC for failing short of their expectations of a common and human rights-oriented migration policy, while EPP and far-right fractions criticised the EC for imposing decisions against national interests. Furthermore, the latest debates on the situation at the EU's borders demonstrated a perceived threat and geopolitical game orchestrated by the Turkish, Belarusian and Russian presidents. All of them were seen as using migrants and refugees to destabilise the EU. From a situation rather focused on the EU's response to the arrival of refugees in 2015, the discussion moved to the international level, with migrants and refugees being just a tool in the blackmail coordinated by other world powers.

Generally, debates on migration did not result in a demand for broad EU reforms, but rather specific policy proposals, such as reforming the Dublin regulation or setting up a quota system of refugees. The discussion on the relocation mechanism established by the EC in 2015 in this regard triggered considerable discussion and opposition to the EU from several MEPs:

> I strongly object to the proposal that has been made for the compulsory quota distribution of immigrants on the territory of the member states of the European Union. This would be a violation of the national sovereignty of each of the member states to protect their national borders.
>
> (Angel Dzhambazki, ECR, BG, EP_2015-09-16_Migration)

On the grounds of safeguarding national sovereignty, the 2015 crisis shifted the debate on FoE into specific discussion on DI and dominance, which will be further developed in the following sections. What is worth noting is that the opposition to mandatory quotas went beyond a pro- and anti-immigration or pro- and anti-European integration division, but brought a geographical divide in parliament opposing countries on the borders to member states less exposed to migration. Indeed, as Italy and Greece were particularly struggling over the influx of incoming people in 2015, Greek and Italian far-right MEPs actually supported establishing a mandatory quota system at EU level to help their countries:

> [A] mechanism [Directive 2001/55/EC] that obliges, and I stress obliges, member states to cooperate with each other in transferring refugees from one state to another, but this mechanism has existed since 2001 and has never been activated. You, gentlemen, have never activated it. You fill your mouths with solidarity, you talk about sharing, but you persist in seeing immigration as a problem to be left to Italy, Spain and Greece. Europe is washing its hands of it.
>
> (Tiziana Beghin, EFDD, IT, EP_2015-04-29_Migration)

Similar discussion on EU solidarity occurred with regard to Poland in 2021 in the context of the crisis occurring at the Polish-Belarusian border:

> Today, we must send out a clear message of solidarity with Poland. Poland is not the problem, but is today a frontline country. What we are seeing is not a refugee crisis, but an attack on the European Union, using women and children as human shields.
>
> (Riho Terras, EPP, EE, EP_2021-11-10_Migration)

The notion of solidarity remained highly divisive in the EP. Following a left-right divide, solidarity has been considered either with another EUMS, by right-wing members or with migrants by left-leaning groups: 'Those who are fleeing from a war, those who need protection, and those who are living in unbearable conditions on Greek islands or anywhere else, they need our solidarity' (Ska Keller, Greens/EFA, DE, EP_2020-03-10_Migration).

Policy-wise, debates on the 2015 migration crisis mostly concerned relocation systems and the way to implement solidarity, e.g. by financing countries of origin or cooperating with third countries such as Turkey. Debates on the EU's external borders have been much more focused on border security. Both the Greek-Turkish and the Polish-Belarusian border situations created a deep division in the EP between those wishing to secure borders through increased militarisation and those willing to accept migrants and refugees on European territory. The situation at the Polish border involved discussion about building a wall, which was favoured by ID, ECR and EPP MEPs:

> The external borders of the EU must be hermetically sealed. Why does the European Commission refuse to facilitate financially the construction of a physical barrier on the EU's external border, as requested by many countries and citizens?
>
> (Robert Roos, ECR, NL, EP_2021-11-10_Migration)

The construction of the wall was fiercely disputed by other groups, appealing to EU values and human rights protection. The debate on migration policy thus surpassed a single policy discussion, and actually questioned the position and purpose of the EU on the international arena. Two confronting visions could be identified:

> A strong EU able to defend its borders – 'We have to protect the European borders. And yes, we should always protect European values too. But this is not the time to give in and be weak'.
>
> (Tomas Tobé, EPP, SE, EP_2021-11-10_Migration)

> Opposed to a humanitarian power Europe – 'What has characterised Europe – our contribution to the world – has been precisely humanitarian. Our contribution to solidarity'.
>
> (Maite Pagazaurtundúa, Renew, ES, EP_2021-11-10_Migration)

These two visions of Europe in the world resulted in completely different narratives on Europe's future.

The EMU has been the most discussed policy, with very concrete policy proposals. MEPs, especially from the S&D, for instance approved of setting up a budget for the Eurozone, alongside a common fiscal policy or a banking union. The aim of this deepening of the EMU is to allow the EU 'to grow, to distribute better, to guarantee freedoms, to bring convergence and to be in solidarity with the rest of the world' (Enrique Guerrero Salom, S&D, ES, EP_2017-02-14_Eurozone). These proposals were not supported by far-right groups in the EP:

> The single currency, the euro, was the criminal project that definitively destroyed the peoples of Europe and, instead of talking about dismantling the Economic and Monetary Union, today we are even proposing a budget for the Eurozone, which will sanction the destructive institutionalisation of the troika. With Brexit, the EU and the euro have become walking dead.
>
> (Marco Zanni, ENF, IT, EP_2017-02-14_Eurozone)

Criticism of deepening the EMU came mostly from far-right MEPs due to the perceived dominance of EU institutions in budgetary and economic matters. This point is developed later in the section on dominance. Debates on the EMU exemplified internal conflicts in the EP with

competing discourses in favour of or against deepening EU competences in the economic field.

The GUE/NGL, S&D and Renew groups were especially keen on bringing social policy onto the parliamentary floor, asking to develop the 'European Pillar of Social Rights' by notably setting up a 'EU minimum wage' (Julie Ward, S&D, UK, EP_2019-10-10_Eurozone). With the protection and EU-wide harmonisation of EU citizens' social rights, these groups, along with the Greens/EFA alliance, requested greater EU competences and capacities in climate and environmental protection. Comparatively, the other EP groups rather abstained from expressing concrete proposals in these policy areas.

When it comes to defence and security policy, the majority of MEPs seem to agree that there is a 'need for closer security cooperation' (Syed Kamall, ECR, UK, EP_2018-04-17_FoE). The threat of other political actors – including the United States under President Trump and Russia – in the international arena indeed generated an increased demand to develop security and defence policy in the EU in order for it to play a bigger role in world affairs. Several MEPs stressed the fact that developing EU foreign and security policy would ensure 'to integrate and force a united and strong and just voice for Europe in the world' (Javi López, S&D, ED, EP_2018-11-13_FoE). EPP, ALDE and S&D MEPs strongly supported strengthening the security dimension of the EU, and suggested several proposals in that regard:

> For security – this is the area where citizens expect most of us and where there is still much to be done. Europol, together with national police authorities, must act as a kind of European FBI to investigate terrorists, organised crime and burglar gangs. We need a real European border guard that can act on its own judgement, not what the governments have agreed. And we need the European Union for our security. That is why we need a common security and defence policy that really deserves the name.
> (Alexander Graf Lambsdorff, ALDE, DE, EP_2017-02-14_Eurozone)

GUE/NGL was the group least in favour of developing defence and security in the EU, arguing that it should not be one of the EU's top priorities.

Overall, there was no agreement among EP groups on a common voice for developing a single policy area. These diverging policy positions manifested the diverse visions and understandings of what the EU is and should become.

Different opinions on differentiated integration

As indicated in the introduction to this volume, DI is one of the important aspects of the FoE debate since it was specifically stressed in the White Paper by the EC. However, as shown in Figure 2.9 below, DI remained relatively on the margins of the debate on the future of Europe in the EP – it was mentioned in 12.6% of FoE speeches. DI was especially brought up in debates related to the Eurozone and migration, with respect to the (non-)adoption of the common currency and the implementation of solidarity respectively. In both cases, DI was rather supported by far-right groups as a possibility to decide by themselves on a given policy.

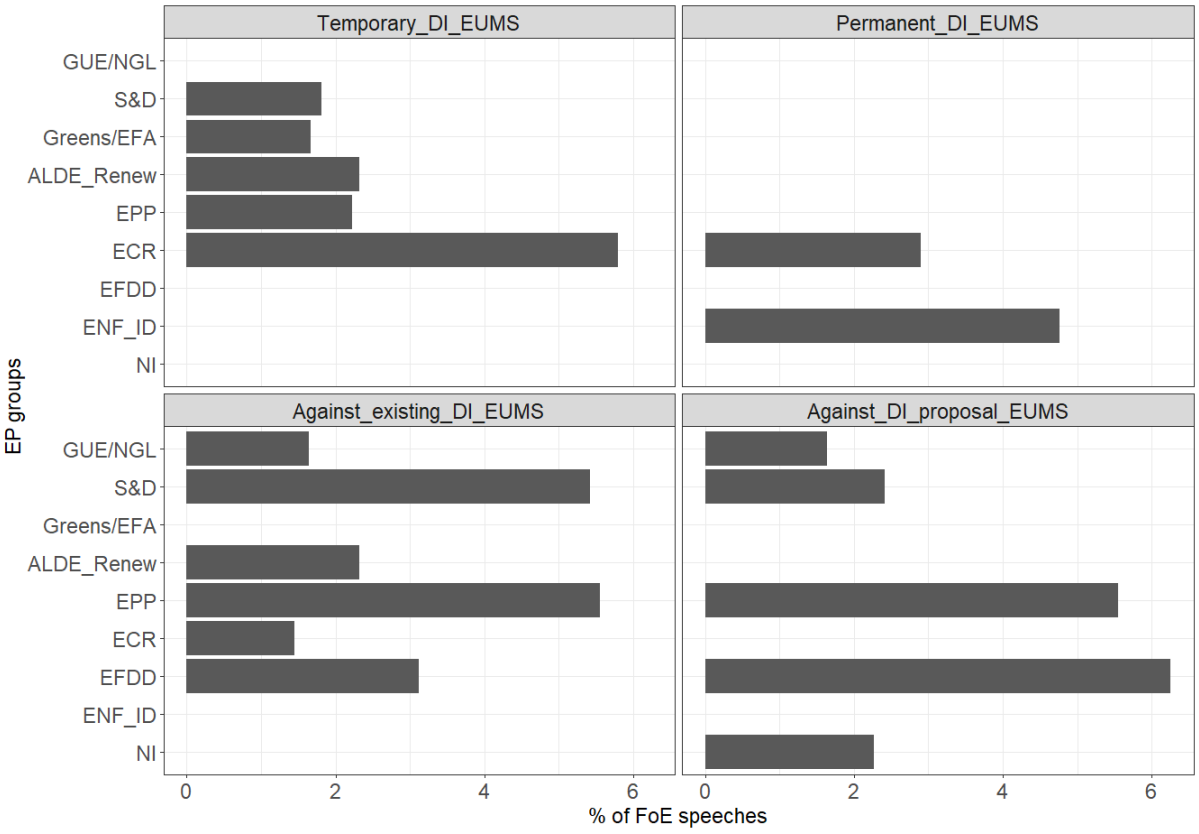


Figure 2.9. EP groups' views on DI (N=761 – number of FoE speeches; one speech may contain more than one mention).

Regarding Eurozone matters, DI has been supported regarding the adoption of a common currency – 'I do not share their enthusiasm and believe that the time has not come close to accepting a common currency'

(Ruža Tomašić, ECR, HR, EP_2019-10-10_Eurozone) – but also the composition of the Eurozone in itself. The participation of Greece was indeed sometimes questioned by MEPs. Overall, ECR, ENF and ID MEPs favoured permanent differentiation of the Eurozone, fearing that: 'The euro will split the EU' (Bernd Kölmel, ECR, DE, EP_2017-02-14_Eurozone). Yet other parliamentary groups, especially the EPP and S&D, disapproved of DI in this particular context: 'we want to strengthen the monetary union, but also expand it to all member states, because our goal is not to divide into the eurozone and others' (Ivana Maletić, EPP, HR, EP_2015-12-15_Eurozone). Seen as an unwanted division, the outcome of DI also raised concerns among MEPs. They indeed stressed the need for a common economic and monetary system for the EU to be strong in the international arena.

DI in the field of migration was especially mentioned in the context of the relocation schemes and the realisation of solidarity between EU member states. Favoured by far-right groups, especially from Central and Eastern European countries, DI in migration policy mostly entailed not accepting a mandatory quota system, but implementing EU solidarity in different forms, up to member states' choice:

> The European Union can only succeed if it is united, and it will only be united if there is room for understanding, even for those countries that want to join in with their solidarity, but voluntary solidarity. It will be all the greater, and I am convinced of this, even in countries that today have, for example, a different approach, such as the Czech Republic.
>
> (Michaela Šojdrová, EPP, CZ, EP_2015-09-16_Migration)

MEPs therefore suggested different proposals to lessen the pressure from the country of entry to the EU, without having to take in incoming people. However, MEPs from countries greatly impacted by the migration crisis or from S&D and ALDE groups did not support this differentiated solidarity: 'Since we are talking about people, we must all be equally responsible towards them: responsibility cannot be shared 'à la carte'' (Eliza Vozemberg, EPP, EL, EP_2015-09-16_Migration).

Visions of DI remained quite conflicted in terms of its extent across the EU, as well as the policy it is implemented in. For parties on the fringes, DI was mostly perceived positively as a way to avoid an all-dominating EU.

Perceived dominance in the EP

By focusing on dominance, we can observe how political actors perceive unjust exercise of power within the EU, as defined by Góra, Thevenin and Zielińska (2023) in this volume. References to dominance were present in 9.5% of FoE speeches in the EP. As shown in Figure 2.10 below, it is of little surprise that dominance was especially mentioned and criticised by far-right factions in parliament, i.e. ENF, ID, EFDD, ECR and GUE/NGL. While some nuances can be discerned among right-wing Eurosceptic groups on their perception of dominance (Styczyńska and Thevenin 2023), a common opposition to the current functioning of the EU can be observed.

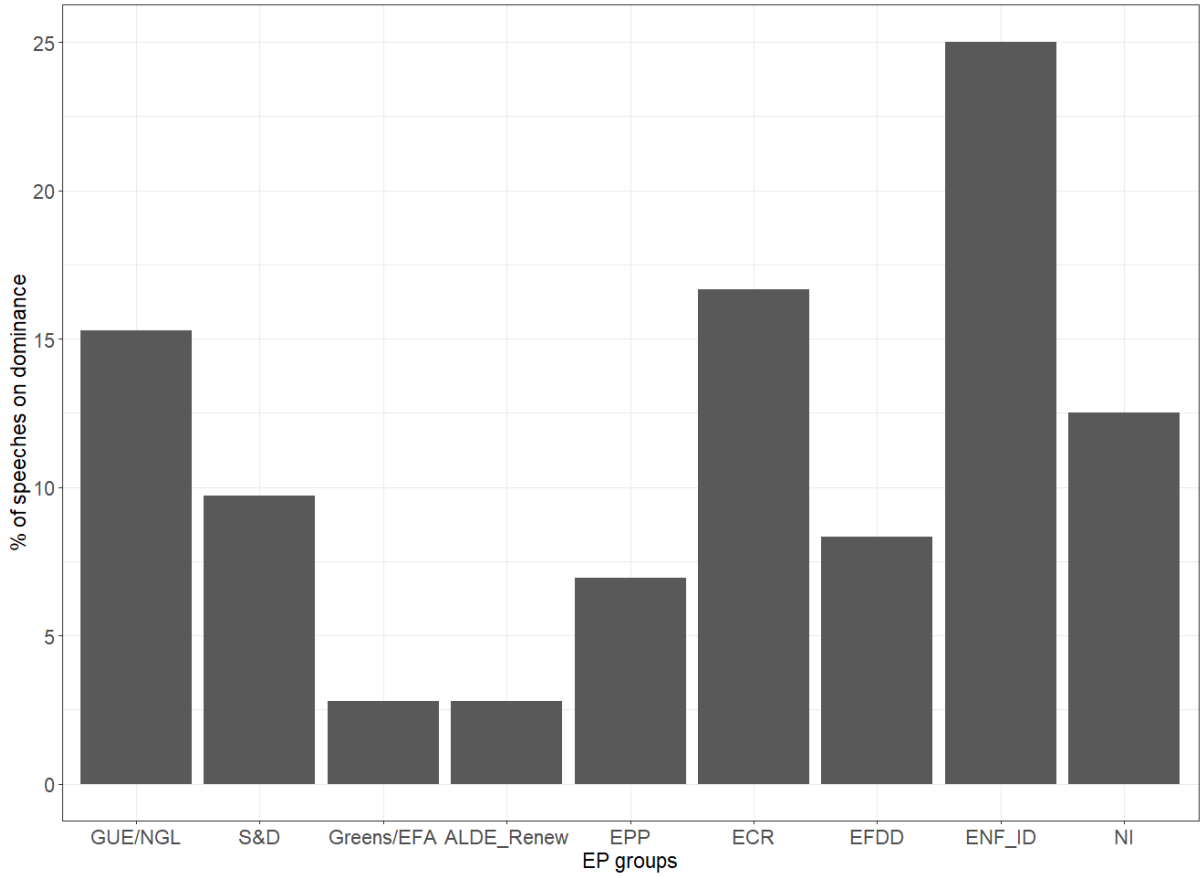


Figure 2.10. Repartition by EP groups of references to dominance (N=72 – number of speeches on dominance).

Perceived dominance mostly pertained to a supposed illicit hierarchy in the EU that resulted in some EUMS, EP or ideological groups feeling excluded from the decision-making process. Due to the EU's 'Diktat(s)' (used by several MEPs from GUE/NGL, ECR and ID), 'imposition(s)' (used by MEPs from GUE/NGL and ENF) or 'bullying tactics' (Francis

Zammit Dimech, MT, EPP, EP_2019-01-15_Migration), voices were left unheard, triggering a profound opposition against the EU:

> Enough of Europe enslaved by banks and multinationals. Enough with the Europe of spread and austerity. Enough with the Europe of Juncker, Merkel, Macron, who want to rule our house and humiliate the Italian people. In Italy, Italian citizens are in charge, not Merkel or Macron.
>
> (Mara Bizzotto, ENF, IT, EP_2019-02-12_FoE)

As shown in the above example, MEPs' speeches addressing dominance in the EU often relied on populist components, notably by stressing the opposition between the European elite and people in Europe – key opposition in populist rhetoric (e.g. Mudde 2004). Depending on groups, national affiliations, but also on policies, the entity on top of the pictured illicit hierarchy varied from being another EU member state or EU institutions. 'German domination' (Diana James, EFDD, UK, EP_2015-09-16_Migration) was often criticised, notably when it came to Eurozone matters, for imposing its own rule:

> The euro has become a German-inspired Roman arena, where the strong impose their will and interests on the weak. It has plunged countries into recession, unemployment and the eurozone in general into stagnation. It has condemned the younger generation to long-term unemployment.
>
> (Nikolaos Chountis, GUE/NGL, EL, EP_2015-12-15_Eurozone)

Analogously, Angela Merkel's decision at the beginning of the 2015 migration crisis was fiercely disputed by far-right MEPs, who called it an 'unconscious and one-sided decision' (Bernard Monot, EFDD, FR, EP_2018-11-13_FoE), through which 'you have [Chancellor Merkel] consciously tried to replace the nation-states with a plethora of supranational organisations' (Lampros Fountoulis, NI, EL, EP_2018-11-13_FoE). The imposition of decisions of one – or more – EU member states against the will of others has been framed by far-right MEPs as a key problem in the EU, which crucially impacted European citizens:

> Austerity politics and austerity dictates were Mephisto's magic potion. The blackmail of sovereign member states and massive encroachments on basic democratic social rights have brought people into existential difficulties.
>
> (Gabriele Zimmer, GUE/NGL, DE, EP_2018-11-13_FoE)

Comparably, the EU was also severely criticised, notably over the lack of transparency in the decision-making process: 'Parliament dictates idiotic and unworkable proposals, like air bridges between Africa and Europe, and then marvels at the refusal of the member states' (Helga Stevens, ECR, BE, EP_2019-01-15_Migration). This lack of transparency did not simply concern the EP, but also other EU institutions, notably the EC:

> Here we have a commissioner, a commissioner who is a representative of the executive body, and the commissioner is telling the Polish parliament and the Polish courts what to do with this and that law, or how this law should be changed. Is that an example of the separation of powers? It is a blatant violation of the separation of powers.
>
> (Ryszard Antoni Legutko, ECR, PL, EP_2018-07-04_FoE)

The perceived dominance by MEPs was often linked with a perceived problem in the EU's democratic functioning, either due to its lack of democratic legitimacy or due to an issue in the relations between EU institutions and the member states.

Debates on migration also showed a perceived dominance by MEPs for opposing reasons. On the one hand, and as mentioned above with the perceived dominance of Germany in the EU, accepting migrants and refugees from foreign cultures was perceived as a cultural imposition:

> They [new reforms] will suffer the same failure as the Juncker plan of 2015, which aimed to relocate 160,000 migrants and which several European states rightly resisted in order to preserve their national identity. The peoples of Europe are mortal, they know it and do not want to die. The Brussels Commission is mortal too, but it seems to ignore it. If it does not want to listen to the peoples of Europe, it will disappear.
>
> (Gilles Lebreton, ENF, FR, EP_2019-01-15_Migration)

On the other hand, the dominance of a security logic in the treatment of migration policy was also perceived by some MEPs on the left of the political spectrum as an unfair hegemonic position:

> Once again it is shown that the dominant circles in the Union do not care about human rights and peace. On the contrary, they are seriously responsible for the current humanitarian crisis: they

> support and participate in the interventions and wars that are bloodying peoples and creating the mass waves of refugees.
> (Neoklis Sylikiotis, GUE/NGL, CY, EP_2015-09-16_Migration)

This opposed perceived dominance resulted in an extremely fragmented parliament, where both sides of the political spectrum accused each other of dominating the debate and political decisions. At the core of the issue lay the question of the prioritisation of EU values or of national interests – which are mostly seen as contradictory. In this perspective, the EU as a system was fundamentally considered to be based either on common values or on diverse sovereign states sharing some common but delimited elements, which resulted in very different visions of the EU's future.

Conclusions: EP groups' different visions of the future of Europe

This chapter analysed the EP groups' position on the future of Europe, i.e. on reforming the EU, as well as the underlying constitutional narratives pursued by the groups. Through analysis of parliamentary speeches, we demonstrated that there is neither a single narrative on the EU in the EP nor a strict opposition between pro- and anti-EU integration, but a variety of visions of the EU – with more or less variation due to national and political differences within parliamentary groups. The analysis of debates in the EP demonstrated that all parliamentary groups pushed forward different visions of the future of European integration – visions that remained more or less coherent and elaborated depending on the groups. Variation within groups was also detected, mostly due to the MEPs' national affiliation. This section summarises each group's positions on FoE in relation to the classification of constitutional narratives (see Góra, Thevenin and Zielińska 2023, in this volume).

The EPP groups each showed a large amount of variation, making it difficult to categorise them. Indeed, differences in reforms and policy proposals could be noted depending on the MEPs' national affiliation and domestic party. Research has already shown the plurality of the EPP regarding internal issues related to Hungary and Poland's democratic backsliding (Meijers, and van der Veer 2019; Herman, Hoerner, and Lacey 2021). In this perspective, we concluded that the EPP's vision of FoE overall followed a republican intergovernmentalism constitutional narrative, with some nuances going closer to either intergovernmentalism

or federalism under certain conditions. This point is clearly exemplified by the discussion on reforming the Eurozone, which remained an ambiguous topic for the EPP group. Several of its members indeed favoured the harmonisation of the Eurozone to a high level (i.e. with a ministry dedicated to Eurozone affairs), while other EPP MEPs rejected this idea completely and opposed deeper centralisation.

The S&D's position on FoE appeared to be quite explicit and coherent among MEPs: the EU's competences, capacities and role in the world need to be strengthened. In this perspective, the constitutional narrative favoured by the S&D is that of a multi-headed federal-type Union, whereby the EU is gradually to become a federation with strong supranational institutions. S&D MEPs also reflected extensively on the EU's role on the international arena and the promotion of values and democracy, and in this way some notes of regional cosmopolitanism could be discerned.

The ALDE and Renew groups advocated for deepening EU integration, which included strengthening of EU institutions – especially the EP and the EC – and consolidation of the euro. ALDE/Renew MEPs strongly focused on economic issues and the need for the EU to develop its economic capacities, notably with a dedicated Eurozone budget and governance. In this sense, the groups share a federalist vision of FoE, edging towards a de-coupled federal-political Union. The group's position on DI was ambiguous, however, with several calls in favour but also against. Consequently, it remains unclear how the governance would function between Eurozone and non-Eurozone members. Overall, the groups stressed the need to boost the EU's (economic) growth and competitiveness.

Similarly to the S&D group, the Greens/EFA favoured a multi-headed federal-type Union for Europe's future. This group's MEPs stressed the importance of reforming the EU to allow more power to supranational institutions, notably the EP, but most importantly strengthening democracy in the EU by further involving citizens. The Greens/EFA especially highlighted the need for the EU to fully take charge in the field of climate and environmental protection, and consequently set standards for the world.

GUE/NGL tended to have a paradoxical and unclear position on the future of Europe. While in the analysed debates the group rather favoured

proposals made at the EU level, notably giving more competences to the EU when it comes to the protection of rights and social matters, it was also extremely critical of EU institutions and the way politics was being done in the EU. Critical of globalisation, the group was also unwilling to develop the EU's economic policy, asking for a human rights and social-oriented shift of the EU. In this sense, it followed a non-linear trajectory between an intergovernmentalist perspective and a multi-headed federal-type union. Indeed, the Left group deeply disapproved of the neo-liberal economic doctrine of the EU and in this area attempted to restrict the EU's competences. However, when it comes to citizens' rights and social policy, GUE/NGL substantially favoured reforms being on the EU level, with the prospect of achieving greater homogeneity and uniformisation amongst member states.

Finally, the ECR, EFDD, ENF and ID groups shared a similar vision of the future of Europe: that power needs to be given back to member states. As noted by Styczyńska and Thevenin (2023), there were very few actual reforms proposed by MEPs from these groups, but rather criticism over the way the EU currently functioned. In this perspective, these groups exemplified a sovereignist version of intergovernmentalism where member states' sovereignty is the prime element to be safeguarded.

As our analysis showed, the discussion in the EP on the future of Europe went deeper than an opposition between pro- and anti-EU. It indeed indicated that many nuances can be seen in EP groups' visions of the EU, with factors such as national affiliation and policy areas greatly influencing – and even fragmenting – the groups' position on FoE.

In every vision of the future of European integration, the question of democracy remains central to all parliamentary groups. While some groups requested reforms specifically designed to counter the perceived lack of democratic legitimacy of the EU (e.g. establishing the Spitzenkandidaten process, strengthening the EP powers – favoured notably by ALDE/Renew, S&D, Greens/EFA and several EPP members), several others claimed that the only way to make the EU more democratic was to give power back to member states (claimed by GUE/NGL, ECR, EFDD, ENF and ID groups, as well as several EPP members).

Although the analysed debates were specifically on FoE, we can note that it was the ECR, EFDD, ENF, and ID groups who proposed fewer reforms of the EU. While firmly opposed to the current state of EU integration,

and adamantly critical of EU institutions, very few actual reforms were requested by these groups, as other studies have also shown (Styczyńska and Thevenin 2023). The other parliamentary groups remained in comparison less critical and more prone to ask for specific institutional reforms and policy proposals – yet the degree of EU integration varied. The EPP group overall aimed at more EU integration while still safeguarding sovereignty in the hands of domestic institutions. GUE/NGL favoured integration of rights and values in the EU, but opposed the vision of a neo-liberal EU based purely on economic gains. The S&D, Greens/EFA, ALDE and Renew groups advocated for the EU to become a kind of federation, with a strong role for the EP. Some differences were observable: while the S&D and the Greens/EFA focused on the EU championing social and climate policies respectively, and setting standards across the world, ALDE/Renew rather aimed to strengthen the EU's competitiveness by reforming and consolidating the Eurozone. Most groups therefore seemed to have a relatively clear vision of what the EU should be and look like in the future – visions that conflict with one another.

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Chapter 3

European Sovereignty and its Criticisms: The French Parliament Debating Europe's Future

Elodie Thevenin

Introduction

'More than ever we need Europe, let's face it' (Macron 2020). These few words from Emmanuel Macron following the United Kingdom (UK)'s withdrawal from the European Union (EU) exemplify the ambitious and assertive vision of Europe that the French president has sought to promote (Kauffmann 2021). From his Sorbonne speech in September 2017 to his lead in setting up the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE, held in 2020–2021), President Macron was very eloquent on the need to further European integration and to reform the EU. With a decisive idea to achieve 'European sovereignty' – a notion that has subsequently gained salience in debates on the EU – in the last few years the French president has become one of the impulses for advancing European integration (Verellen 2020). But is his vision shared across French political actors?

Zooming in on the French parliament, this chapter analyses the discourse on European integration and investigates French political parties' views on Europe's future. By focusing on various dimensions of the debate on the future of Europe (FoE) – i.e. EU polity and policy reforms, differentiated integration (DI), and dominance (as developed by Góra, Thevenin and Zielińska (2023) in this volume) – this research analyses political parties' discourse on European integration and their views regarding the direction the EU should take in the future. It involves a qualitative analysis of French parliamentary debates from 2015 to 2021 on the future of European integration – including specific debates on FoE, as well as on migration and the Eurozone, as key topics for (the future of)

Europe. It thus contributes to the growing debate on FoE, taking place in both the political and the academic spheres.

The chapter starts by reviewing France's tumultuous relationship with the EU, before addressing the specific position of the French national parliament and its constituent parties vis-à-vis the EU. After considering the role of France in the debate on FoE, the rest of the chapter is dedicated to presenting the results. The analysis of parliamentary debates demonstrated a wide scope of views on the future of Europe by French political parties, ranging from building up a federal union to exiting the EU. Yet what prevailed and was common to the vast majority of parties was the view that the democratic legitimacy of the EU needs to be rectified. These rectifying measures would take place either by deepening the EU or by restoring competences to the national level.

France and EU integration

France holds a distinctive role in the process of European integration, although its history with the EU has not always been linear (Parsons 2016). Being one of the founding states of the EU, France's position in Europe has been considered as one of the initial leaders of integration. However, with increasing issues regarding defence, political crises, and the economic development of Germany, the end of *Europe à la française* was sensed (Kramer 2006) especially with regard to foreign policy (Irondelle 2008). In spite of this ambivalent relationship, analysis of presidents' discourses on the EU – the presidential figure being of prime importance in French politics – demonstrates a steady stress on the gains brought by European integration. Indeed, since its beginning, the EU has been praised by French presidents for the economic benefits or leadership position it has given France (Schmidt 2007).

Focusing on public perception of the EU in France, one can note growing polarisation over European affairs since its establishment. This cumulated in the 'no' in the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty for the European Union in 2005. As Vivian A. Schmidt argues, however, the negative outcome of the referendum rather reflected citizens' concerns about globalisation and disapproval of French government than revealing a rejection of the EU per se (Schmidt 2007). Nowadays, public perception of European integration is stable but ambivalent, with 58% of respondents considering France's membership in the EU as valuable (compared to 62% for the EU27) (Eurobarometer 2022).

While France has always been a key player in the development of European integration, many critical voices against the EU can be heard at the national level. Euroscepticism has been witnessed in France throughout the integration process, but has undeniably gained visibility in the past decade, emerging as a cleavage transcending the traditional left-right divide (Mayer and Rozenberg 2021). The cleavage over European integration was at the core of the French elections of 2017 and managed to challenge the otherwise stable two-party system, with an increase in the popularity of far-left and far-right Eurosceptic parties (ibid.). The conflict between proponents and opponents of European integration was exemplified by the opposition between Emmanuel Macron (The Republic on the Move! (La République En Marche! – REM)) and Marine Le Pen (National Rally (Rassemblement national – RN)) in the second round of the 2017 presidential elections, the former embodying a progressist, pro-European stance, and the latter appealing to national sentiments. Immigration – discursively reframed to enable the mainstreamisation of Le Pen's party – has also been a topic used by the far right to disapprove of the EU, leading to substantive political gains for Eurosceptic parties in France (Stockemer and Barisione 2017). This conflict has been continuing since, with similar positions from both political actors during the 2022 presidential elections.

The French parliament's position in the political system

The French parliament comprises two chambers – the Senate, or upper chamber, and the lower National Assembly. The 577 members of the latter are elected through direct elections, while the 348 senators are indirectly elected, by the electoral college (Assemblée nationale 2010). This chapter strictly focuses on the National Assembly as a key legislative actor, but also a deliberative political environment reflecting and influencing the public sphere (Ilie 2006). Members of Parliament (MPs) are elected every five years, unless the president decides to dissolve the National Assembly during the legislature. MPs are elected through a two-round majoritarian system, whereby each constituency elects one deputy. There is no term limit for MPs to run for re-election. While enacting representative democracy, the French parliament has been criticised for its lack of true representation, with a preponderance of white men (Knapp and Wright 2006). Since the 2017 elections, however, a changing trend is underway, with increased presence of women and members from minorities (Kelly 2017).

One lasting problem within the French political system, however, remains the balance between the executive and legislative powers. The parliament indeed holds a weak position in the political system, especially vis-à-vis the executive power (Knapp and Wright 2006). The Fifth French Republic (in place since 1958) was designed as such, to counter unstable parliamentary majorities and governments, as were witnessed throughout the Fourth Republic (1946–1958). When it comes to the legislative process, a bill is prepared either by the government or an MP (deputy or senator). After being discussed and amended in a relevant parliamentary committee, the draft bill is debated in a plenary session, with votes on each article. After being voted on in the first chamber, a similar process occurs in the second chamber. The bill can only be promulgated once both chambers vote and validate the same text. In case of disagreement, the legislative text is sent back and forth between the two chambers until a consensus can be found. In the event of persistent disagreement, a joint committee (*commission mixte parlementaire*) made up of senators and deputies can be called on. If no consensus is found in the joint committee, the National Assembly has the final say.

The French parliament holds several prerogatives when it comes to EU affairs, although its overall involvement remains weak in comparison to other national parliaments (Thomas and Tacea 2015). Apart from discussion in the European Affairs Committee (EAC), the EU is discussed in a plenary setting, mostly regarding European Council or euro summit meetings in an ex ante format (Wessels et al. 2013). According to the classification of the national parliaments' involvement in EU affairs (ibid.), the French parliament can be seen as an 'expert' as well as 'policy forum', i.e. having both plenary debates and an important activity in the EAC, without acting as a government watchdog (Thomas and Tacea 2015). The majority/presidential party in parliament is usually the one the most involved in what has been considered as 'shadow control', i.e. notifying the government of controversial European issues but not interfering with the executive (ibid.). Furthermore, researchers have noted the different roles of the French Senate and National Assembly, with the Senate increasing its participation in EU affairs, and by the same token reinforcing its position in the bicameral parliamentary system (ibid.).

The French (lower chamber of) parliament hence possesses several weaknesses with regard to its configuration in the political system, but

also politically (Alke et al. 2021). The parliamentary majority and the government usually have strong links, with a high level of voting cohesion (Sauger 2009). Comparably to the opposition between government and opposition, the parliamentary majority and opposition have for years been constructed over a left-right political divide, notably strengthened by the two-round electoral system in parliamentary elections (ibid.).

French political parties and their views on European integration

The French political party system has long been described as 'bipolar multipartism' (Knapp and Wright 2001). Indeed, as previously mentioned, the two-round majoritarian system of elections was structured on the basis of the two main parties (left wing versus right wing), with smaller parties on each side, sometimes entering into coalitions (Knapp and Wright 2006). The past few years, however, have seen the emergence of diverse new parties gaining visibility on the political scene, as well as representation in the French parliament. The French political scene shows deep cleavages when it comes to European integration, between parties but also within them (Rozenberg 2011; 2020).

Traditionally, the main party on the left side on the political spectrum remains the Socialist Party (Parti socialiste – PS), which holds a pro-European position and focuses mostly on social issues and social justice. The French Communist Party (Parti communiste français – PCF) has lost major electoral support since its establishment in 1920, but still influences French politics, especially at the local level. Europe Ecology – The Greens (Europe Ecologie Les Verts – EELV) prioritises environmental issues in its agenda, pushing for a greener Europe. Initially close to the PS, the Radical Party of the Left (Parti radical de gauche – PRG) and the Radical Party (Parti radical – PR) both emerged from Radical Republican traditions. The parties attempted to reunited to form the Radical Movement in 2017, but this resulted in the volatility of members changing parties and alliances with the prospect of elections. The aforementioned parties can be considered mostly as pro-European integration parties – although the degree of integration advocated for diverges, as well as the reasons behind their critique of the EU.

The Republicans (Les Républicains – LR)[10] are generally one of the largest parties in France and can be placed on the right side of the political spectrum. The party was created in 2002 with the aim of uniting the right following President Chirac's election. It promotes a 'Gaullist' stance in politics, characterised by pragmatism, social conservatism, and the promotion of national interests, especially with regard to the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). In this perspective, the party remains cautious vis-à-vis the EU.

Diverse parties can be found in the centre/centre-right, mostly emerging from the dissolution of the Union for French Democracy (Union pour la démocratie française – UDF) in 2007. These parties can all be considered as rather pro-European, although some remain more cautious depending on the areas of integration. Several parties have formed alliances with right-wing parties, hence shifting their narrative slightly. The Democratic Movement (Mouvement démocrate – MD) is a pro-European centrist party founded in 2007. REM emerged just before the 2017 presidential elections, founded by Macron, the former (PS) economy and industry minister, and is characterised by a strong pro-EU stance. The Union of Democrats and Independents (Union des démocrates et indépendants – UDI) can be considered as a centre-right party. Pro-European, the party's members in turn have cooperated with MD and UMP. The Centrists – New Centre (Les Centristes – Le Nouveau Centre – NC)[11] have formed diverse alliances with the UMP, UDI and LR parties since the party's creation in 2007. The Centrist Alliance (Alliance centriste – AC) was created in 2009 by a former UDF member. Some smaller parties have also advocated for regional independence, including For Corsica (Pè a Corsica).

At the extremes, several parties can be located on the far left and far right of the political spectrum, usually sharing a critical stance vis-à-vis the EU. On the far left, France Unbowed (La France Insoumise – FI) can also be considered as a Eurosceptic party, opposing the EU's liberalism and globalisation. Populist in essence, the party calls for leaving the European treaties (Castaño 2018). On the verge of the right and extreme right, France

[10] Formerly known as the Union for a Popular Movement (Union pour un movement populaire – UMP), the party changed its name in 2015.
[11] The party was called Nouveau Centre from 2007 to 2016.

Arise (Debout la France – DLF)[12] is characterised by a strong Gaullist and Eurosceptic stance. On the far right, National Rally[13] is a nationalist, populist and Eurosceptic party. It holds a fierce anti-immigration stance and advocates for the protection of French identity. For a long time toying with the idea of exiting the EU, the party resolutely demands limits to EU integration to 'make France "free again"' (Mayer and Rozenberg 2021, 48). Thanks to the politicisation of European integration as an issue, RN has managed to secure its position in the political arena (both European, national and local/regional) and essentially become mainstream in French politics (Kauppi 2022).

With regard to the composition of the parliament, the period analysed in this chapter covered two parliamentary terms, with a change in the party holding the majority in parliament: the 14th (2012–2017) and the 15th term (2017–2022).[14] During the 14th legislature, PS held the majority in the parliament, with 280 seats out of 577, in line with a president and government from the same party. The right-wing party UMP was the main opposition, with 194 seats. The Eurosceptic FN held two seats.

The 15th legislature was marked by several changes. The election of a parliamentary majority (in line with the election of the president) from neither left nor right constituted a turning point: REM obtained 308 seats in the National Assembly. Following this change, the opposition in parliament increased on both the left and right sides of the majority (LR with 112 seats and the PS with 30). Furthermore, the term was also characterised by a greater presence of both far-left and far-right Eurosceptic parties in parliament (FI with 17 seats and RN with 8) (Mayer and Rozenberg 2021).

The future of Europe debate in France since 2015

France plays a key role in the recent debate on FoE. With the former president, François Hollande, already having been keen to develop the EU, President Macron's enthusiastic view of European integration

[12] Formerly known as Republic Arise (Debout la République – DLR), the party changed its name in 2014.
[13] Formerly known as the National Front (Front National – FN), the party changed its name in 2018 in an attempt to dissociate itself from the racist and antisemitic scandals associated with the FN.
[14] See Annex 2 for detailed composition of the parliaments, including parties' position on the left-right scale and their stance on EU integration.

brought a renewed vision and discussion on Europe's future. Centred around the idea of achieving 'European sovereignty', Macron's pro-EU position brings a strong federalist approach to the FoE debate, but also leads to a backlash at both domestic and EU levels. While President Macron managed to put the EU on top of the agenda and return it to the centre of public debates on the domestic level, he has also been criticised for focusing more on European affairs than national ones (Steible 2022).

The French president has been behind diverse initiatives for the EU. Notably, he was a strong advocate for establishing a system of citizens' consultations – following a similar model implemented in France in 2018 in response to the Yellow Vest movement[15] – which eventually led to the CoFoE. To back his proposed reforms, Macron attempted to bring back the French-German fulcrum at the centre of European politics, especially after Brexit. Despite the conflict in President Macron and Chancellor Merkel's visions for Europe, Brexit and the COVID-19 crisis worked as exogenous shocks reviving the Franco-German leadership, at least on certain issues such as the Recovery Plan (Giurlando 2021; Krotz and Schramm 2021).

One of the core reforms envisioned by Macron for the EU is to push forward for a sovereign Union. Set out in his Sorbonne speech in 2017, European sovereignty can be considered as a push for a more federal EU, whereby the bloc would gain more control and greater standing in the international arena. Connected to strategic autonomy (Dumoulin 2020; Lefebvre and Simon 2021), European sovereignty notably entails military capabilities on the EU level, digital regulation and ecological transition. The call to make Europe a sovereign entity is enshrined in the French president's narrative that the continent needs to be saved from internal and external challenges, and deserves to have a greater influence in the global arena (Bouza García and Oleart 2022). Overall, the proposal was well received throughout the EU and entered official EU discourse in the European Commission's strategic digital sphere programme for 2021–2024 (European Commission 2021).

Bouza García and Oleart (2022) show through analysis of Macron's speeches that the French president has sought to politicise the EU, not in term of its policies, but actually with regard to the Union as a polity. Yet

[15] The Yellow Vest movement is a protest movement against the French government which began in November 2018 and lasted mostly until the COVID-19 pandemic.

this re-politicisation of the EU has led to a strict Manichean opposition between pro- and anti-European integration. Furthermore, his extreme pro-European vision has led to other pro-European narratives being delegitimised or side-lined:

> The consequence of Macron's narrative on Europe is that the opposition to his version of 'Europe' becomes 'Eurosceptic'. In contrast to this vision of 'Europe', a different pro-European one could understand it in a fundamentally different way, arguing that there are relations of domination where power within the EU is unevenly distributed by situating them as outside his European narrative.
>
> (ibid., 288)

This pro-European push from the French president enacted a renewal of the idea of France driving EU integration (Steible 2022). However, it also sparked intense debate that revived and reinforced the divide between federalist and more nationalist perspectives on EU integration (Bouza García and Oleart 2022). This chapter will reveal this opposition, which is also observable in the French parliamentary arena.

Who speaks on the future of Europe in the French parliament?

The selection of empirical data includes 18 debates – six on FoE, seven on the Eurozone and economic and monetary issues, and five focusing on migration and asylum – from the beginning of 2015 to the end of 2021. Debates on the future of Europe include diverse topics directly related to European integration, including post-Brexit Europe, the composition of the European Parliament (EP) prior to the elections, and debates prior to European Councils. A specific parliamentary debate on FoE was organised in 2017 (FR_2017-10-10_FoE). The Eurozone debates focused on the consequences of the Eurozone crisis, stability programmes, and, in the later stage of the analysis, post-Covid Europe and the issue of the EU's own resources to finance its recovery. Migration debates dealt with the so-called migration crisis of 2015–2016 and refugee reception, as well as EU asylum legislation.

Figure 3.1 below displays speakers' involvement in FoE debates according to their party family. Conservative, liberal and socialist parties spoke the most frequently during the selected debates, mirroring their presence in parliament.

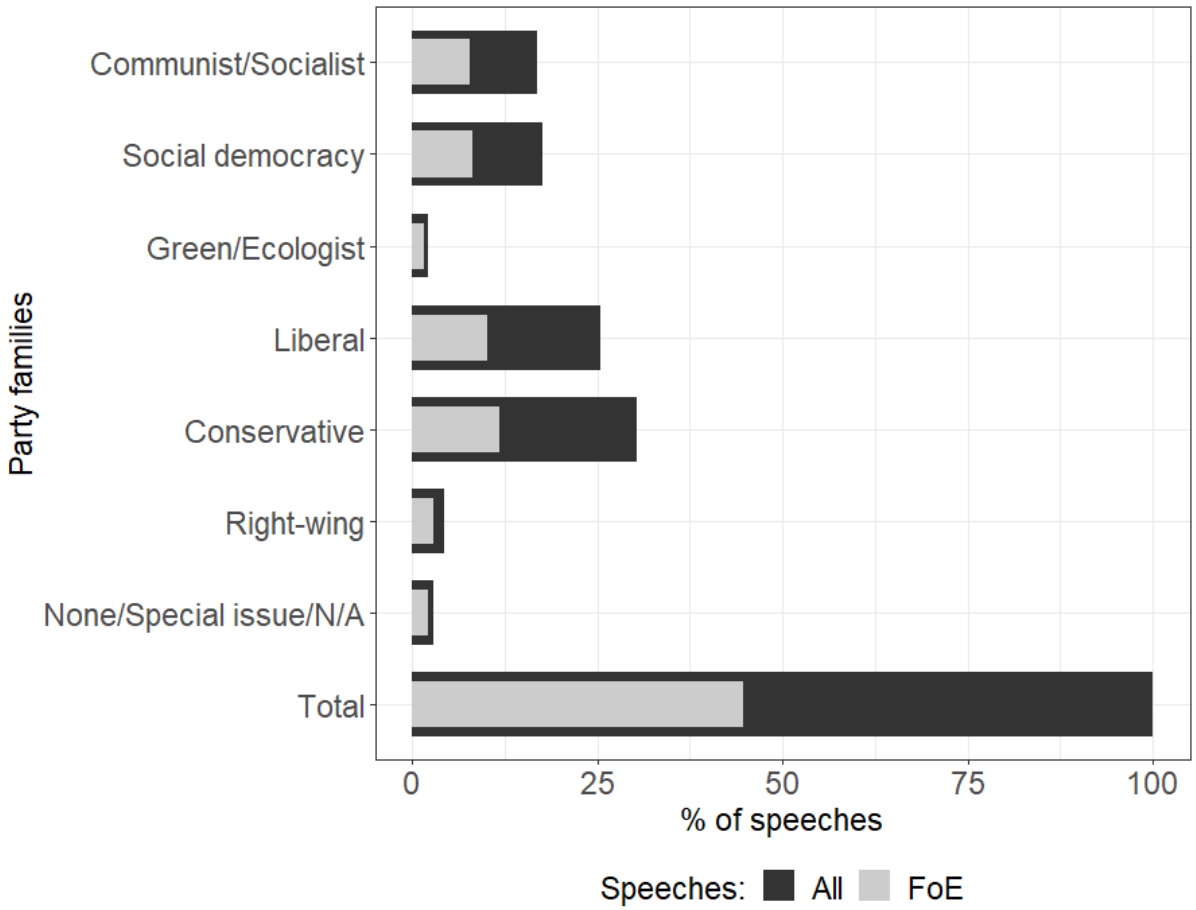


Figure 3.1. Frequency of analysed speeches by party family (m=674 – number of speeches, n=301 – number of FoE speeches).

The most active parties in the selected debates were pro-European integration parties (REM and PS), which held the parliamentary majority during the 14th and 15th parliamentary terms respectively. However, the participation of the opposition remained important, notably with the right-wing party LR, which was particularly active and critical to the French government. Additionally, with increased representation during the 15th term, Eurosceptic parties voiced their concerns regarding the EU more often, notably the right-wing RN and the left-wing FI, especially active on the topic of migration.

Reforming EU institutions: a democratic concern?

The first dimension explored in this analysis pertains to the polity reforms of the EU in the institutional sense, proposed in the French parliament. Bouza García and Oleart (2022) argue that Macron aspired to politicise the EU polity to develop the need for reforms. Against this background, reforming the EU polity accounted for an important part of the debate on

FoE in the French parliament (i.e. institutional reform proposals were present in 19.60% of FoE speeches). As depicted in Figure 3.2 below, reforms were mostly proposed by centrist and right-wing parties (REM, MD, UDI and LR) from liberal and conservative party families.

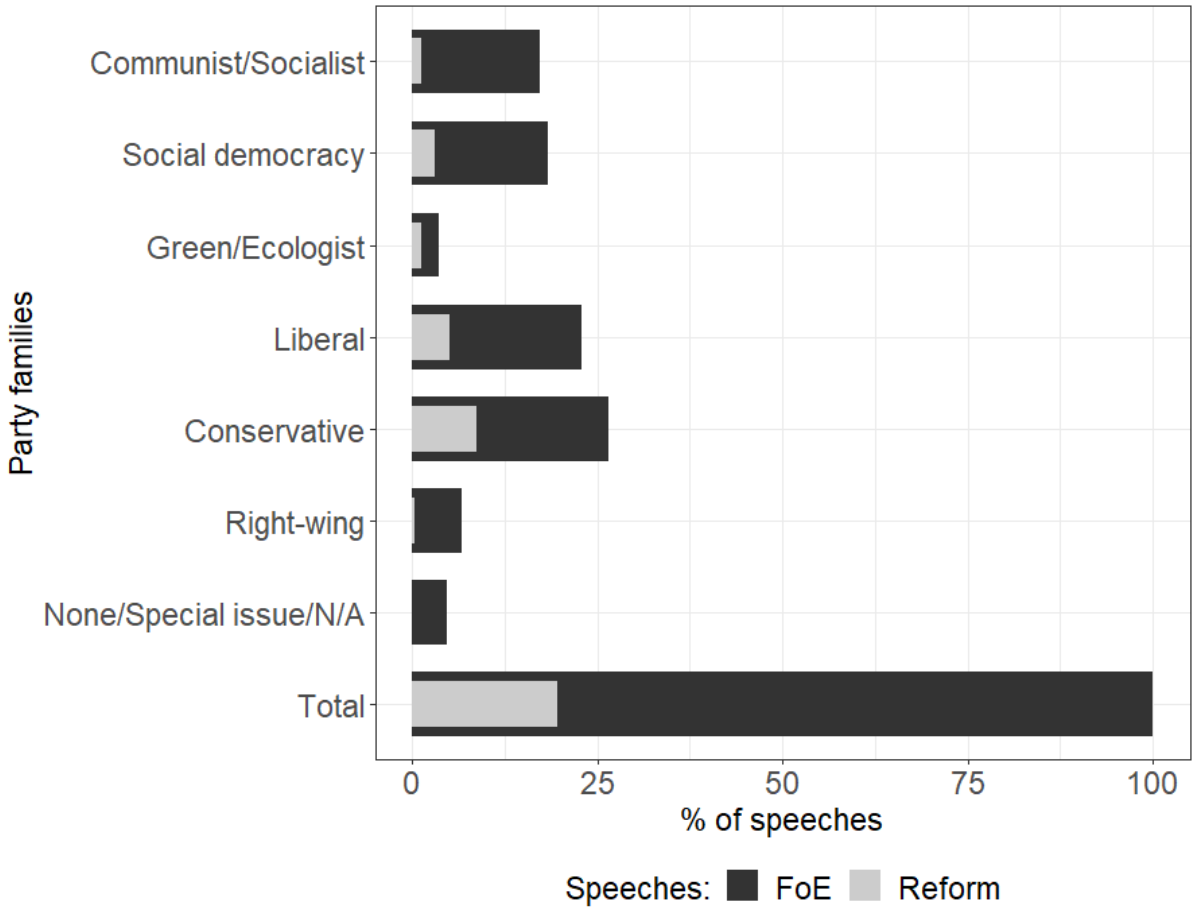


Figure 3.2. Frequency of references to EU institutional reforms in FoE speeches by party family (n=301 – number of FoE speeches, o=59 – number of speeches containing at least one institutional reform proposal).

The main reforms discussed in the French parliament focused on the involvement of citizens in the EU's political life, the role of national and European parliaments, and the administration of the Eurozone, as shown in Figure 3.3.

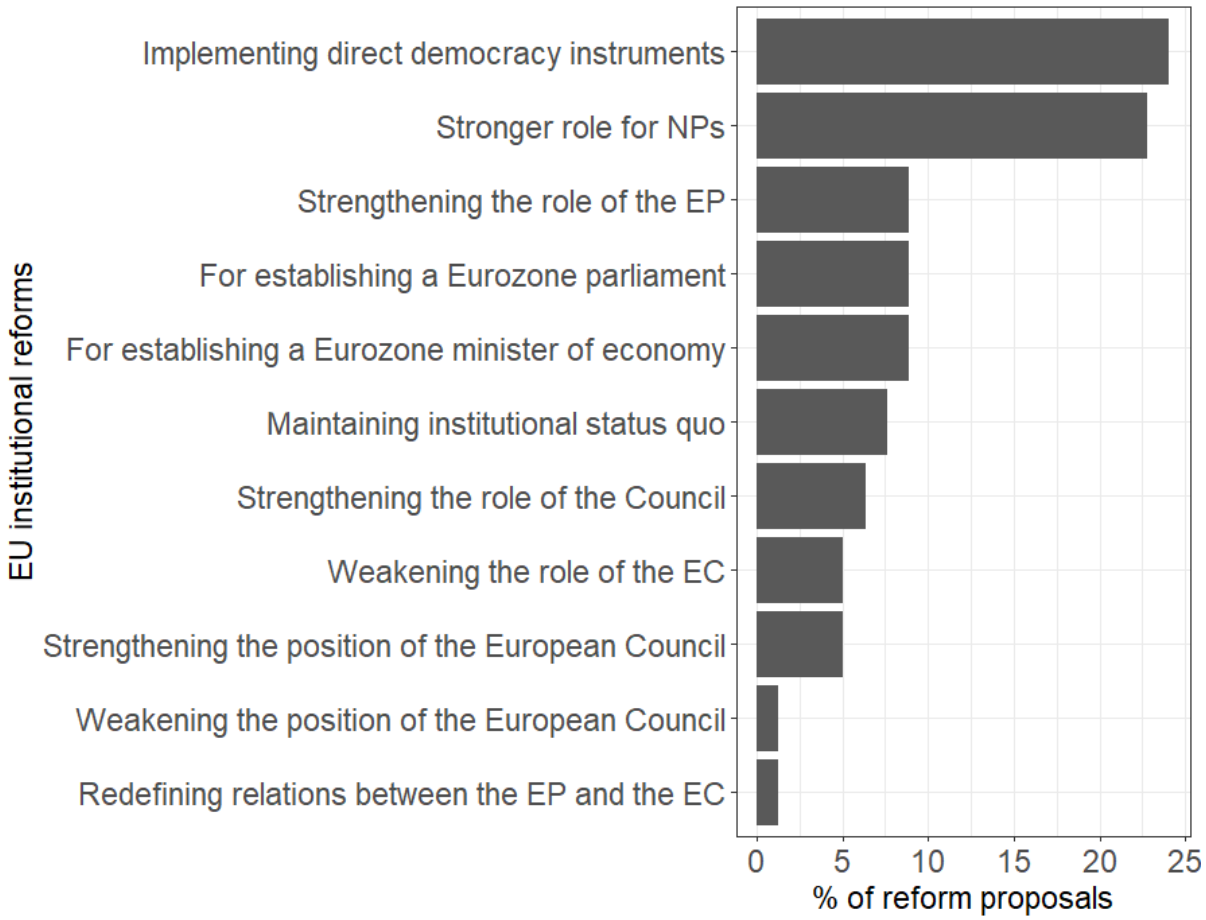


Figure 3.3 Frequency of references to EU institutional reforms (n=79 – number of institutional reform proposals).

Driven by REM MPs, the most discussed EU institutional reform concerned citizens' engagement in European politics. REM MPs demanded the establishment of (permanent) EU-wide democratic conventions as a way to 'enable Europeans to decide, through exchange and discussion, in all the languages they share, on the major areas of transition and to be fully involved' (Thierry Michels, MP, REM, FR_2017-10-10_FoE).[16] The forerunner of the CoFoE set up in 2021, this reform – also supported by MPs from MD and UDI – aimed at making the EU more democratic in the way it functions, as well as putting citizens at the centre of the EU integration process. On a very specific topic, the RN for its part also supported greater involvement of the European people in EU politics, notably by holding a referendum on migration, with the prospect

[16] All translations from French to English were made by the author. Quotes are presented with the name of the speaker, their role in the debate, their national political party affiliation and the debate's code.

of 'putting an end to migratory madness' (Marine Le Pen, MP, RN, FR_2019-10-07_Migration).

The role of national parliaments in overseeing the EU's actions and policies has been discussed at length. MPs from the centre-right parties UDI and MD, as well as the left-wing PS, requested the 'control of European policies by national parliaments' (Christophe Jerretie, MP, MD, FR_2021-03-03_FoE), especially over budgetary matters. National parliaments in this perspective ought to have a central role in the administration of the Eurozone, alongside the EP. The strengthening of national parliaments regarding European affairs seems to have transcended political divisions in being requested by the vast majority of parties in the French parliament (with the exception of the RN, which abstained from discussions on this topic) – surely expressing their own interests as MPs. Views regarding EU institutions showed more disagreements between parties.

Relations between EU institutions and the question of which EU institutions to strengthen or weaken clearly demonstrated opposing views on what the bloc should become in the future. While LR MPs generally called for keeping the current institutional status quo, many parties were in favour of reforming the EU institutional setup. On the one hand, MPs from left-leaning parties (including PS, EELV and PRG) demanded more power for the EP, notably with regard to the EU budget, greater involvement in the European Semester, as well as the right to a legislative initiative. As the only democratically elected EU institution, MPs stressed the need to develop its role and powers, to further the democratic link between the EU and its citizens:

> It is essential, ladies and gentlemen, to bring the people closer to the European institutions, which appear to them as a kind of distant administrative machinery. The Union does not yet obey enough the rules of democracy, according to which citizens must be able to influence decisions, neither at the level of the European Council, whose functioning resembles a diplomatic game, nor at the level of the Commission, perceived as a heavy and invasive 'hyper-technocracy'.
>
> (Roger-Gérard Schwartzenberg, MP, PRG, FR_2016-06-08_FoE)

Without discussing the EP's powers, REM and LR MPs, on the other hand, advocated for a reform of the European Commission (EC), considered as

a 'symbol of technocratic drift' (Laurent Wauquiez, MP, LR, FR_2016-06-28_FoE). While some MPs called for the 'reconfiguration of the EC format' (Nicole Trisse, MP, REM, FR_2017-10-10_FoE), others advocated for its complete suppression: 'The Commission should be abolished as an institution with the power of legislative initiative' (Laurent Wauquiez, MP, LR, FR_2016-06-28_FoE). Linked to the reform of the EC was the reform of the European Council: REM and LR asked for the role of the European Council to be strengthened at the expense of the EC:

> The European Commission and Parliament have never managed to acquire real democratic legitimacy. We must therefore restore the pre-eminence of the European Council and the control of national parliaments.
>
> (François Fillon, MP, LR, FR_2016-06-28_FoE)

In this respect, their vision of the EU's functioning clearly highlighted the important role of EU member states (EUMS) rather than supranational institutions. REM MPs also sought to strengthen the Council by calling for a right of appeal for the Council to the Commission, as well as the end of unanimity in the Council's decisions, especially in fiscal matters, to speed up the decision-making process and avoid blockages caused by the interests of specific EUMS.

The governance of the Eurozone has also been at the core of the discussion on the EU institutional setting, with many MPs from centre-right (UDI, MD) and left-wing parties (PS, EELV, PCF) supporting the 'creation of a Euro[zone] Parliament, responsible for dealing specifically with questions relating to the budgets, debts and deficits of the European States, under conditions of democracy, transparency and co-responsibility commensurate with the European ambition' (François de Rugy, MP, EELV, FR_2015-07-15_Eurozone). The establishment of this new parliament was often considered alongside a genuine and elected economic government for the Eurozone to harmonise economic policies across Eurozone members.

The majority of EU reforms demanded in the French parliament aimed at tackling the lack of democratic legitimacy of the EU, often considered as an issue by French MPs to further advance European integration. Yet these reforms received some criticism from MPs less willing to deepen the EU's competences. The idea of transnational lists for EU elections was, for

instance, opposed by LR MPs, who claimed that it was against EU democracy:

> The European Union is above all the Europe of nations, the Europe of territories and the Europe of citizens. To vote for this bill [on the elections of MEPs] is, I believe, to transform it into a Europe of parties, which the European citizens do not want.
>
> (Eric Diard, MP, LR, FR_2018-02-13_FoE)

Overall, the analysis of requests for EU institutional reforms clearly demonstrated the tension between EU institutions in going in either a more supranational (with the development of the EP) or more intergovernmental direction (with the strengthening of the European Council's position). Yet the perceived urgency of making the EU more democratic was shared by all parties and was the basis for proposing reforms.

Divisions over policy proposals

Within debates on the future of Europe, the five main policies discussed in the French parliament were: 1) taxation, 2) defence and security, 3) the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), 4) migration and asylum, and 5) climate and environmental protection. Facing the COVID-19 pandemic, health policy at the EU level was also discussed. This section looks at the five aforementioned policies, also delving into debates specifically related to the Eurozone and immigration.

Taxation appeared as the policy area causing the least disagreement between political parties. Indeed, the majority considered a higher degree of fiscal convergence within the European Union as 'an absolute necessity to avoid any dumping situation' (Philippe Gomes, MP, UDI, FR_2015-06-01_Eurozone). GAFA (Google, Apple, Facebook and Amazon) tax, financial transaction tax, carbon tax or plastic tax – all of them were overall considered as positive developments to be implemented at the EU level. Linked to climate change mitigation, most parties also supported introducing an EU carbon border tax, hence envisaging the EU as an adequate actor to deal with global problems. The only political party which remained silent on this topic was the RN, illustrating its ambiguous stance on climate change (Hess and Renner 2019).

The discussion on defence and security was related to issues of migration management and terrorism, but also threats from international actors, notably the scepticism of US President Donald Trump regarding NATO, as well as Russian President Vladimir Putin. Concerned by these external factors, several French parties noted the need for the EU to further develop a common defence policy, notably through the 'establishment of a joint European intervention force by 2020' (Nicole Trisse, MP, REM, FR_2017-10-10_FoE). To better combat terrorism on the EU level, REM also supported the 'creation of a European intelligence academy', given that '[t]he security of European citizens and the durability of the Schengen area are at stake' (Aude Bono-Vandorme, MP, REM, FR_2017-10-10_FoE), as proposed by Macron. These measures were seen as positive developments for most parties, with the exception of the far-left FI and the far-right RN – the latter remaining silent on this issue during the analysed debates. Yet some nuances can also be noted. On the left of the political spectrum, the parties stressed that the EU foreign and defence policy should differ from NATO and the US. In their view, an autonomous Europe of defence should not 'be cast in the American mould' but 'act in the service of peace in the world and cooperation between peoples' (André Chassaigne, MP, PCF, FR_2017-10-10_FoE). Conversely, on the right side of the political spectrum, MPs stressed national competences and interests in establishing a Europe of defence: 'While respecting the sovereignty of nations, we must build a European defence alliance that allows for fair burden sharing' (Francois Fillon, MP, LR, FR_2016-06-28_FoE). Finally, FI remained the most open critic in the development of defence and security policy at the EU level. The party leader claimed that defence is not an area that can be shared between countries:

> [W]e must remember that France's defence strategy is based on nuclear deterrence. We can think what we like about it, but it is the ultimate weapon of the French. Nuclear deterrence cannot be shared. You don't put 29 fingers on the button – it's bad enough that only one can press it.
>
> (Jean-Luc Mélenchon, MP, FI, FR_2017-10-10_FoE)

He also noted the irrelevance of developing defence policy in peaceful times, while criticising the EU's stance against Russia:

> Defence is not a common project. Defence is the Europe of war. War against whom? Let's tell it like it is, from one end of the European

> Union's resolutions to the other: against Russia. I do not agree: Russia is not an enemy, but a partner. We do not have to organise ourselves against the Russians.
>
> (Jean-Luc Mélenchon, MP, FI, FR_2017-10-10_FoE)

The development of a common defence and security policy seemed therefore shaped and conditioned by the division among political actors towards Russia and the United States.

Discussion on the EMU focused on the consequences of the euro crisis and the Greek debt (debates in 2015 and 2016), on the Eurozone governance (during debates following Macron's elections and his broad EU reform proposals), as discussed above, as well as on the EU's own resources following the COVID-19 pandemic. The Greek debt was central to the first analysed debates. While the vast majority of MPs supported keeping Greece within the Eurozone, they opposed debt mutualisation, but favoured 'restructuring or even cancelling part of the Greek debt' (Gaby Charroux, MP, PCF, FR_2015-06-01_Eurozone). Left-wing MPs took the opportunity to stress the EU's values when discussing the Greek crisis:

> [T]he Union cannot emerge from any of its crises if it moves away from the essential ideas on which it is based. At the forefront of these ideas is solidarity: solidarity between its members, solidarity between the peoples who make it up.
>
> (Bruno Le Roux, MP, PS, FR_2015-07-08_Eurozone)

In the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis, the French parliament debated the repurchase – and a fortiori annulment – of the public debt by the European Central Bank, proposed by the far-left FI. While the majority of MPs considered it to be an important step, (surprisingly) illustrating a 'desire for federalism' (Sophie Auconie, MP, UDI, FR_2020-06-04_Eurozone) and, requiring treaty change, far-right MPs criticised this proposal, fearing that, 'submitted to Germany and to the European supranational authority, you are precipitating our country into chaos' (Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, MP, DLF, FR_2020-06-04_Eurozone). The discussion on the EU's own resources created similar division. Several MPs, especially from the majority, considered it a historic advancement for EU integration, notably in developing European sovereignty:

> These resources are not only a fiscal instrument for the repayment of the loan. They are likely to change the nature of the European

> political project, because they also respond to a need for equity, for alignment of financial instruments with political priorities and for fiscal autonomy of the Union. In this sense, they contribute to the affirmation of a more political Europe and to the European sovereignty that the President of the Republic calls for.
>
> (Isabelle Rauch, MP, REM, FR_2021-01-26_Eurozone)

MPs from the LR and PS parties showed more vigilance when it came to the EU's own resources, demanding that 'Europe's action should be illustrated concretely for our citizens rather than being lost in an unreadable bureaucratic system' (Michel Herbillon, MP, LR, FR_2021-01-26_Eurozone). Far-left and far-right parties refuted this proposal, stressing the lack of democratic decision by citizens and the dominance of the EU institutions and other EUMS on economic matters – this latter point will be further developed in the section dedicated to perceptions of dominance.

Debates on asylum and migration policy displayed a clear opposition between parties willing to accept refugees and migrants in France (PS, PCF and FI) and give the EU further competences in this field (REM) and those holding both anti-immigration and Eurosceptic positions (LR and RN). The main proposals discussed concerned the reform of the Dublin regulation – seen as a major issue with regard to the 2015–2016 migration crisis – a quota system at the EU level and the EU's external border protection. Securitisation of migration was either supported, mostly by centre-right parties (REM, UDI, UDF and LR), or criticised by left-leaning parties (FI, PS and PCF):

> The arrival of refugees and their care are unmanageable because European leaders have chosen to build a fortress Europe. Europe has locked itself – literally and figuratively – into a purely security-based logic of immigration control.
>
> (André Chassaigne, MP, PCF, FR_2015-09-16_Migration)

For conservative parties, migration policy was seen as a key area to criticise the EU's involvement in matters of national interests and reclaim national sovereignty:

> The inability of the French state to execute these measures, especially the OQTFs [obligation de quitter la France – obligation to leave France], is quite revealing of our powerlessness, of the drift we are undergoing in this matter and of the almost total disappearance of

> our power to decide sovereignly who the Republic welcomes or refuses on the national territory.
>
> (Constance Le Grip, MP, LR, FR_2019-10-07_Migration)

Generally, migration was also a topic used by (pro-migration/pro-EU integration) parties to discuss EU values and appeal to stand up for hospitality and human rights protection. Highlighting the division between pro- and anti-migration views, MPs witnessed a new division in Europe, opposing Eastern and Western Europe in the way of dealing with migration:

> The issue of migrants brings to light another possible divide, no longer between north and south, but between east and west. This split seems to me to be just as dangerous for the stability and cohesion of the Union.
>
> (Bruno Le Roux, MP, PS, FR_2015-09-16_Migration)

This division further involved aspects of DI and dominance, which will be discussed in more detail in the following sections.

Finally, climate and environmental protection was especially discussed by the green party EELV and the two parties that were holding the parliamentary majority, PS and REM. MPs considered the development of this policy area to be crucial for the future of European citizens, but also a way to set standards worldwide:

> Environmental protection must be one of its priorities, and in particular the fight against climate change. In our group, we believe that the European Union must take the lead in climate action at the global level, but for this to happen, its member states must be exemplary.
>
> (Jean-Michel Clément, MP, PS, FR_2019-03-05_FoE)

Policies proposed included increase energy transition investments, the greening of industrial and technological branches, and decarbonisation. Parties on the (far-) right side of the political spectrum usually abstained from formulating proposals related to climate and the environment.

Overall, the analysis of policies proposed in the French parliament during debates on FoE showed diverging visions on which areas the EU should have competences in, mostly structured around a GAL/TAN cleavage (Green, Alternative, Liberal/Traditional, Authoritarian, Nationalism).

The opposition between far-left and far-right Eurosceptic parties against more mainstream parties (including in opposition) remained the main line of divergence structuring the debate. Eurosceptic parties either fiercely criticised proposals or refrained from discussing these issues.

Views on differentiated integration: boosting European integration or retaining control?

This section explores MPs' views on differentiated integration, i.e. on the possibility – or otherwise – for an EUMS to opt in or out of specific policy areas. DI was mostly discussed by parties in government (PS, REM) or conservative parties (notably LR), as shown in Figure 3.4. However, DI remained rather on the side of discussion on FoE: references to DI were contained in 7.64% of FoE speeches.

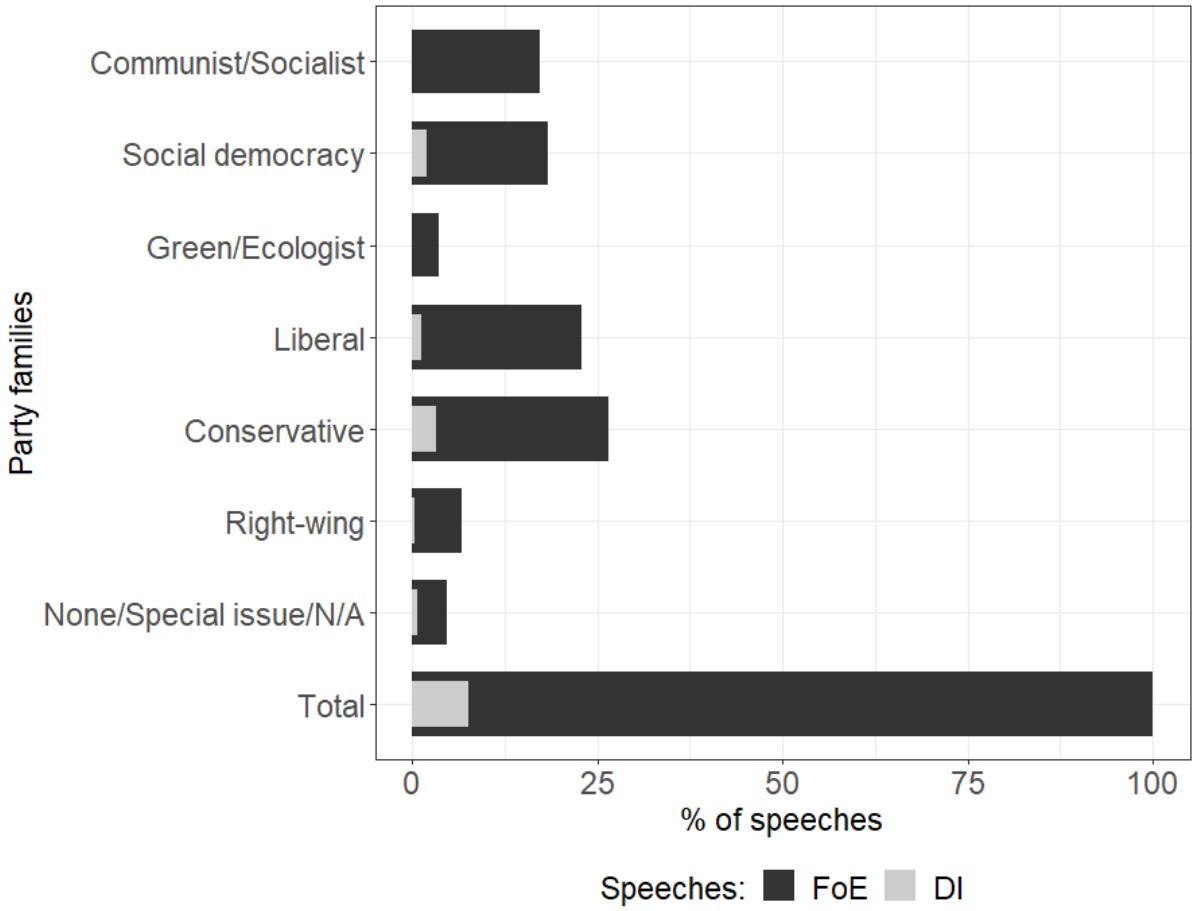


Figure 3.4. Frequency of references to DI in FoE speeches by party family (n=301 – number of FoE speeches, o=23 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to DI).

Supported by the governing parties, those MPs considered 'the project of a multi-speed Europe' as a way of 'allowing those states that wish to do

so to move forward together' (Laetitia Saint-Paul, MP, REM, FR_2017-10-10_FoE). Especially in the field of defence, the possibilities of enhanced cooperation were assessed positively. DI was thus seen as a process aimed at furthering EU competences and capacities faster, while accommodating disparities between EUMS:

> [I]f we have to do with a few people what the 27 are not ready to do, then let's do it! Let's get away from dogma. Europe is not uniformity; there are differences.
>
> (Manuel Valls, prime minister, PS, FR_2016-06-28_FoE)

In this respect, DI was mostly considered as a temporary process boosting EU integration. In relation to a perceived fragmentation in the EU – between EUMS willing to further integrate opposed to less EU-enthusiastic EUMS – DI was conceived as a solution to bridge the gap:

> But on the periphery, many states are dragging their feet, do not want to go any further, or are content to maintain a policy that I would describe as liberal-sovereignist, repugnant to collective disciplines. There is therefore a very important divide that we can only overcome by developing enhanced cooperation.
>
> (Jean-Louis Bourlanges, MP, MD, FR_2021-03-03_FoE).

According to these MPs, with several member states joining forces to develop some specific policy areas, the whole EU will gain and advance – keeping the prospect that other EUMS will join later on.

Yet the right-wing party LR remained ambiguous regarding its discourse on DI. MPs opposed DI in certain instances, on the grounds that all Union members should have the 'obligation to observe the same rules of the game' (Pierre-Henri Dumont, MP, LR, FR_2021-03-03_FoE). Other LR MPs viewed DI as advantageous to changing the current state of the EU. Indeed, they argued that 'the Europe of twenty-seven does not work: too many countries with too few common interests. We need to recreate an effective core group with a smaller number of member states, because we do not do the same thing with Germany and Italy as with Romania and Bulgaria' (Laurent Wauquiez, MP, LR, FR_2016-06-28_FoE). A similar point was mentioned by DLF MPs. DI was indeed considered as an effective solution to counter too much supranationalism:

> Instead of getting lost in the dangerous myth of a supranational Europe that does not work because the people do not want it – every time they are consulted, they say 'no'! – I prefer the concrete construction of a Europe of nations, democracies and projects à la carte.
>
> (Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, MP, DLF, FR_2015-07-08_Eurozone)

External differentiation was only mentioned a few times and concerned post-Brexit EU-UK relations. The governing party REM stressed the need to maintain a close relationship with the UK, with reinforced cooperation and mechanisms when it comes to defence.

In sum, while DI remained in the background of the discussion on the future of Europe, it was overall mostly favoured by French political actors, although the reasons for this varied. While some considered DI to be a boost for European integration, others viewed this differentiation process as a way to remain in control and counter dominance.

Perceptions of dominance: sovereignty as stake?

Dominance is the last dimension explored in this volume as a significant feature when discussing European integration. In the context of analysis of parliamentary debates, dominance refers to MPs' perception of feeling dominated in the EU (e.g. due to being excluded, lack of transparency or inequality in recognition), by the EU or another EUMS. In the National Assembly, dominance in the EU has primarily been perceived by parties in opposition on both sides of the political spectrum, above all FI and PCF on the left and LR and DLF on the right, as demonstrated in Figure 3.5. Dominance in the EU was not addressed by parties in government. References to dominance were present in 8.31% of FoE speeches.

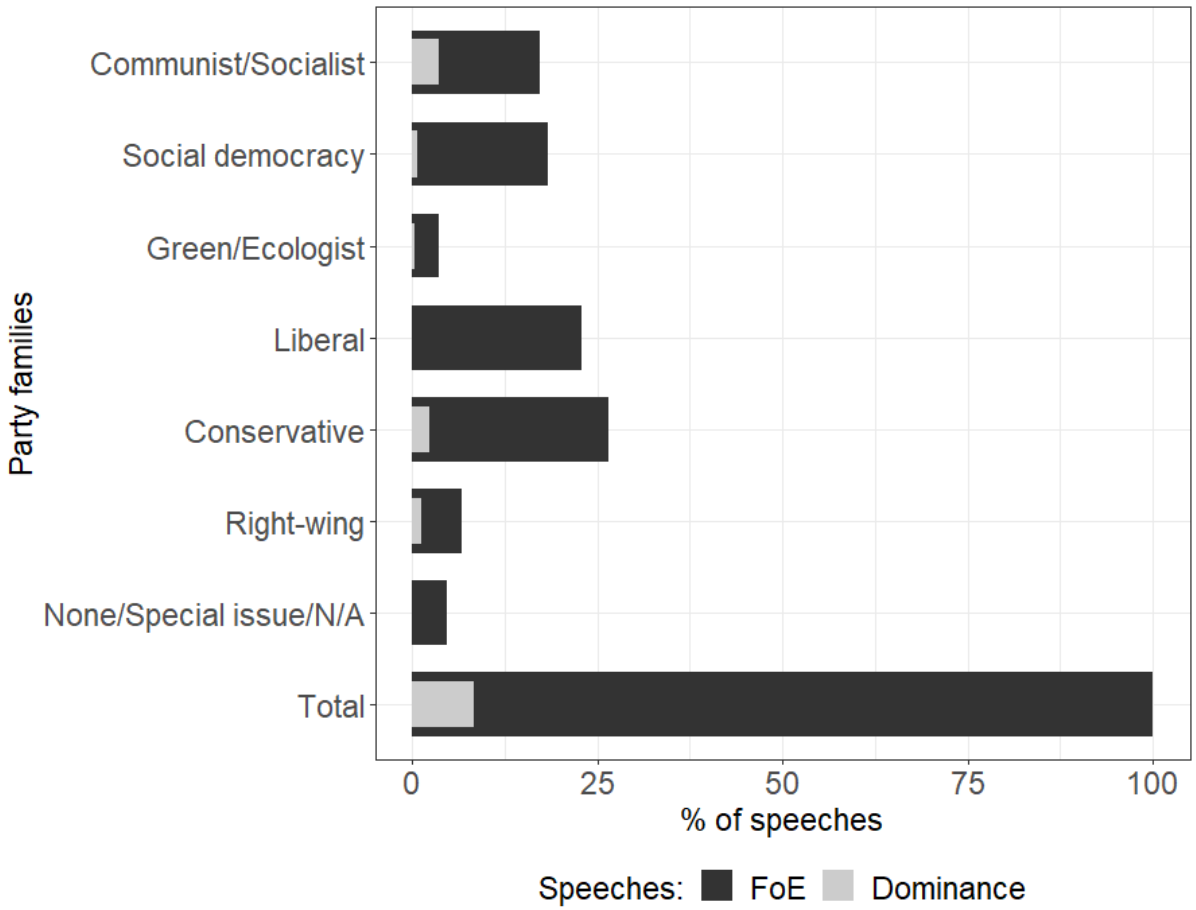


Figure 3.5. Frequency of references to dominance in FoE speeches by party family (n=301 – number of FoE speeches, o=25 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to dominance).

More moderate parties – in opposition in the parliament – at times pointed to the lack of transparency of EU institutions, especially from the European Council:

> We can no longer be satisfied with these interminable meetings behind closed doors, during which heads of state and government decide, in the greatest opacity, on the future of the euro zone, even to the point of knowing whether a state can be excluded from it, whereas the Maastricht Treaty did not provide for this possibility.
>
> (François de Rugy, MP, EELV, FR_2015-07-15_Eurozone)

Unsurprisingly, the main critique principally stemmed from extreme parties, usually sceptical of EU integration. Perceived illicit hierarchy and feelings of exclusion have been particularly addressed in the discussion on migration. Criticising an EU common migration and asylum policy as conflicting with national interests, right-wing MPs (from LR, DLF and RN) considered themselves as 'no longer free to make our own choices',

'no longer the ones who make the law and decide in all independence and sovereignty' (Emmanuelle Ménard, MP, RN, FR_2017-12-07_Migration). In this respect, MPs called for the right to make sovereign decisions regarding whom to accept into French territory without the EU's or anyone else's interference:

> There should no longer be a right of foreigners to immigrate to France, but a right of the state to decide who France wishes to welcome or deny entry to the territory of the nation.
>
> (Guillaume Larrivé, MP, LR, FR_2019-10-07_Migration)

MPs distinguished a great divide in Europe: the Europeanists 'who want to make the nations disappear little by little' (Marine Le Pen, MP, RN, FR_2018-02-13_FoE); opposed to those working to protect the nation-state's interests. The discussion on the future of Europe thus greatly reflects upon national sovereignty and identity.

Furthermore, debates on the Eurozone also prompted some discussion on dominance, notably due to the place taken by some EUMS. Germany – alongside EU institutions – was thus criticised by right-wing parties:

> I regret once again that, submitted to Germany and to the European supranational body, you are leading our country into chaos. One day or another, the truth will come out!
>
> (Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, MP, DLF, FR_2020-06-04_Eurozone)

Against this background, DLF advocated to leave the European Union in its current state to create a 'Europe of free nations and of concrete projects' (Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, MP, DLF, FR_2016-06-28_FoE). Moreover, DLF MPs also felt domination by the United States through the transatlantic alliance and intended to change it: 'A European Europe means a Europe that breaks with the transatlantic treaty and submission to the United States' (Nicolas Dupont-Aignan, MP, DLF, FR_2016-06-28_FoE).

On the left side of the political spectrum, a similar critique against the so-called Frugal Four (Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden) was made when debating the post-Covid European recovery initiative:

> Let's start by talking about this recovery, which, contrary to what has been said, is undeniably a defeat for France. The frugal countries have obtained a lot: a reduction in their contribution to the Union's budget, a reduction in the total amount of subsidies, and above all

> the obligation to carry out structural reforms in order to benefit from European credits.
>
> (André Chassaigne, MP, PCF, FR_2021-03-03_FoE)

The core of the critique continued to be that the interests of the EU and some EUMS seem to conflict with France's national interests, and therefore decisions should be made at the national level. Furthermore, the far-left FI and left-wing PCF parties were deeply critical of globalisation, and therefore opposed the EU's free-trade agreements (e.g. the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement between Canada and the EU).

Overall, extreme (left- and right-wing) parties mostly addressed the issue of dominance in the French parliament, being concerned with France's position in an overly dominant EU. This concern was refuted by pro-European integration MPs: 'Europe is a union, it is not the domination of one over the others' (Bruno Duvergé, MP, MD, FR_2020-06-04_Eurozone). However, picturing the EU and other EUMS as going against French interests when it comes to migration and economic issues created a divide in the National Assembly: MPs rejecting dominance called for a return of sovereign decisions, while others approved the furthering of European integration.

Conclusions: constitutional narratives, democracy and sovereignty

Through the analysis of parliamentary debates, this chapter examined French parties' discourse on the future of Europe. As one might have expected, various visions of European integration were expressed in the French National Assembly, ranging from exiting the EU to transforming the Union to a federation with a fully fledged supranational institutional setting. This concluding section discusses the nuances of the parties' visions of the future of Europe,[17] based on the different constitutional narratives developed in the introduction to this volume (Góra, Thevenin and Zielińska 2023, in this volume).

[17] Parties with less than 1% of participation in all selected debates (i.e. MR and For Corsica) have not been considered in this last section, as their restricted involvement during debates made it hard to assess parties' views on European integration.

Following up on the French president's pro-EU stance, the governing party REM greatly favoured developing EU competences and capacities on most policy areas. As for institutional matters, the party called for strengthening of the European Council and the Council of Europe, rather than the EC, alongside keeping national parliaments central to EU affairs. REM MPs strongly advocated for direct democracy instruments to bring EU citizens closer to the EU – a vision that would to a certain extent be materialised in the CoFoE. What remains significant in REM's vision of the future of Europe was the notion of European sovereignty (initially developed in Macron's Sorbonne speech in 2017). Contrary to a vision of supranational sovereignty conflicting with national interests, REM's vision of European sovereignty actually considered it as a way to protect EUMS' own interests by integrating it to a higher level. REM's vision of Europe was therefore centred around providing the EU with the tools to become more sovereign and thus play a more significant role in world politics. In sum, REM's vision of the future of European integration can be categorised as a federal union, whereby the EU would sovereignly adapt to current challenges and be able to reach out to the world.

MPs from PS (the former governing party) also advocated for deepening EU integration. Alongside a few requests to strengthen the EP, PS MPs strongly advocated for deepening EU competences in social matters, notably by furthering social convergence with the establishment of a set of European social rights. PS MPs – although critical of President Macron – advocated for more solidarity and democracy in the EU. Besides, many of PS's reforms for Europe concerned the Eurozone – especially when the party was in power. In order for the Eurozone to be more competitive on the international arena, REM MPs envisioned a fully fledged governance structure, with a parliament and government. The party's view on European integration therefore came closer to a decoupled political union, with the EU and Eurozone both having developed supranational setups.

LR appeared more prudent regarding developing the EU's competences. They demanded to keep a tight rein on European affairs, notably through a powerful role granted to the European Council and the national parliament or on economic affairs. They advocated for migration policy to remain a national competence only. The MPs favoured economic and trade cooperation, but refused the idea of a federal Europe. Willing to keep a strong sense of sovereign decisions in the EU, LR's vision of the future of Europe was in line with an intergovernmental vision of

integration. LR MPs strongly disapproved of the concept of European sovereignty as shared by Macron, which they saw as illogical and meaningless on political, legal and symbolic grounds.

On the other side of the political spectrum, leftist MPs from FI also shared a critical vision of the European Union. Disapproving of several of its economic, fiscal and trade policies, FI MPs saw the EU as dominating France and going against French society's interests. The lack of democratic legitimacy of the EU was furthermore considered as problematic due to the fact that, according to FI MPs, sovereignty resides in its people, but there one could not see the people of Europe as a single and bounded community. Against this background, the party called for repositioning of several competences on the national level and an end to unrestrained globalisation, but while keeping cooperation in Europe on social rights. In that regard, they expressed a Republican intergovernmental vision of integration, structured around the notion of popular sovereignty.

Other parties from the left share a similar vision. Holding a quite pessimistic vision of the EU's future, the PCF and PRG's views on European integration appeared as comparable. Both parties favoured some cooperation between EUMS – specifically in social policy – but remained critical of the current supranational setting and the EU's position in the globalised world. Disapproving of globalisation and concerned with achieving social justice on the national level, the parties preferred a republican intergovernmental vision of integration, whereby popular sovereignty could be realised through the (sovereign) French nation, willing to cooperate with other nation-states on specific political matters.

The French Green party, EELV, conveyed its attachment to European integration and shared a federal vision of European integration, in which the Eurozone will also have its own supranational institutional setting, and where ecological transition and industrialisation would be reconciled.

The centrist party MD – in government with REM from 2017 onwards – supported Macron's ideas for the EU and advocated for more federalism in the EU.

The centre-right party UDI considered the EU as important to protect France's interests. The party advocated for developing integration, closer to a federation. Moreover, the party paid particular attention to Eurozone governance and requested the formation of a government and parliament dedicated to the Eurozone.

DLF's proposals for the future of Europe included leaving the Union. It therefore called for the current EU to be replaced by a 'Europe of free states', in which each member states keep the control over its institutions and territory. The party also rejected the idea of EU enlargement, especially towards Turkey. DLF thus hold a sovereignty version of intergovernmentalism, in which the protection of France's national sovereignty was considered as being of prime importance.

Similarly to DLF, RN's vision of the future of Europe strongly relied on the protection of national sovereignty. Although the party did not demand to exit the EU per se, RN MPs were extremely critical of EU policies, especially with regard to asylum and migration. The party fiercely opposed the vision of a federal Europe. In their view, therefore, the EU should only take the form of cooperation between sovereign nation-states.

What remained interesting in the French parliament was the place taken by democracy and sovereignty in the discussion on the future of Europe. Visions of EU integration – and subsequent requests to reform the EU – were more often than not linked to a vision that democracy in Europe needed to be improved. While the drive behind reforms remained similar – i.e. the perception of the EU as lacking democratic legitimacy and substantial links to its citizens – the remedy to this democratic malfunctioning differed greatly. Whereas pro-European parties advocated for more Europe to make the EU more democratic, others on the contrary stood up for a Europe of nations, where the nation-state would remain the main component deciding for itself and where democracy would remain anchored at the national level, with national citizens democratically deciding for themselves. Sovereignty appeared as intrinsically linked to this divisive view on democracy in the EU. While some parties joined forces with Macron's call to develop European sovereignty, parties on the right of the political spectrum stressed the need to protect national sovereignty. On the extreme left, parties advocated for putting 'the people' back in the centre of decisions, highlighting a popular vision of sovereignty. These different visions of sovereignty are key to

understanding the narratives on the EU (Góra et al. forthcoming) and were crucial for French parties when debating the future of European integration. As noted by scholars (e.g. Bouza García and Oleart 2022), this proposal to establish European sovereignty appeared to foster a dual pro- versus anti-EU vision, although the analysis showed that several nuances can be discerned on both sides.

On a final note, parties' place in parliament – i.e. from the governing majority or in opposition – seem to have played a significant role in their discourse on Europe. So far, governing parties have been holding pro-EU integration views and promoted in the French parliament their desire to develop the EU further into some sort of federal Europe. Yet the REM government's view on the EU seems to have further created a political divide, especially triggered by Macron's impulse to push European integration forward. To a certain extent, this strong pro-EU view has created a shift in the discourse of some parties, notably the Republicans. LR – keeping a Gaullist posture vis-à-vis European integration – seem to be increasing doubtful regarding reforming and deepening the EU and fiercely critical of the presidency's stance on Europe. Parties on the left were also very critical of the president. The new parliament following the 2022 elections may bring a new dynamic to the debate on European integration. Indeed, with the increased presence of both far-left (FI) and far-right (RN) opposition parties and REM losing its absolute majority in the National Assembly, one can question the impact this new configuration will have on party competition and their visions of the future of Europe.

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Chapter 4

Between Grand Coalition Politics and Ideological Preferences: The Future of Europe Debate in the German Bundestag

Max Heermann and Fabian Tigges

Introduction: Germany & European integration[18]

In this chapter, we analyse how the future of European integration has been debated in the German Bundestag, focusing on the period from 2015 to 2021. A founding member of the European Union (EU), Germany is its largest member state both in terms of the size of its population and its economy, as well as the largest net contributor to the EU budget. For Germany, European integration is a political project that secures peace and stability in Europe. Historically, the country pursued European integration (as well as NATO membership) as a strategy of integrating itself into the Western bloc of the Cold War era. In the post-war years, European integration enabled Germany's reconciliation with its European neighbours, most importantly France (Bulmer and Paterson 2013). Similarly, after the end of the Cold War and German reunification in 1990, Germany was a strong proponent of Eastern enlargement as a way to reunite the torn continent and secure stability and liberal democracy in Central and Eastern Europe (Schimmelfennig 2001). From Konrad Adenauer, the first Chancellor of the Federal Republic, to Chancellors Helmut Kohl and Gerhard Schröder, German leaders have supported both a widening and deepening of European integration. Against this backdrop, Chancellor Angela Merkel took a more 'conservational' approach, which sought to hold the EU together and prevent disintegration in a decade of multiple crises (Heermann et al.

[18] We thank Dirk Leuffen, Magdalena Góra, Elodie Thevenin, Katarzyna Zielińska and Frank Wendler for their helpful comments and suggestions.

2022). From the Eurozone to the migration crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic, Merkel attempted to prevent or bridge rifts between the Northern and Southern as well as between the Western and Eastern member states.

German ('ordoliberal') economic thinking has been influential in shaping the economic institutions of the EU's Single Market and the Economic and Monetary Union (Bulmer 1997). Germany's export-based economy has greatly benefited from the European Single Market and its industry is deeply intertwined with transnational supply chains (Dreger 2021). Germany's preference for Eastern enlargement was thus also motivated by the national economic interest in enlarging the Single Market. In terms of policy positions, Germany can be associated with the more market-friendly camp of Northern member states (Thomson et al. 2012; Lehner and Wasserfallen 2019). During the Eurozone crisis, Germany took a fiscally conservative stance, promoting austerity and structural reforms in exchange for financial assistance to troubled European economies.

In order to safeguard the EU as a political project, however, Germany repeatedly reaches beyond the economic orthodoxies of its Northern camp to build compromises with France, whose more statist economic ideas are usually closer to the preferences of Southern member states (Degner and Leuffen 2019; Krotz and Schild 2013). Through close relationships between its respective leaders – Adenauer and de Gaulle, Schmidt and Giscard d'Estaing, Kohl and Mitterrand, the so-called Franco-German engine has provided ideational leadership for the advancement of European integration (Degner and Leuffen 2021). The joint proposal by Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Emmanuel Macron for the 'Next Generation EU' COVID-19 recovery programme – which breaks with the German taboo of joint EU debt liability – can be seen as the latest instance of this Franco-German leadership (Heermann et al. 2022).

According to Eurobarometer surveys, the EU generally enjoys high levels of public support in Germany and a majority of Germans identify – at least to some degree – as 'European' (Freudlsperger and Jachtenfuchs 2021, 124). However, Germans remain reluctant when it comes to debt mutualisation and overt redistribution between member states. In fact, during the Eurozone crisis the public acted as an important constraint (Schneider and Slantchev 2018). While German business groups were generally in favour of providing financial aid to troubled member states

in order to safeguard the EMU and the Single Market, citizens were less supportive (Degner and Leuffen 2020). Even so, amidst Brexit and the climate crisis, the EU has enjoyed further increases in support in Germany (Böttger and Jopp 2021, 15). In contrast to the Eurozone crisis, German citizens were broadly supportive of Next Generation EU during the COVID-19 crisis (Heermann, Koos, and Leuffen 2022).

It is against this history and recent developments that the debate on the future of Europe (FoE) has evolved in Germany. In this chapter, we examine the dynamics of the FoE debate in the country. We first outline the position of Germany's national parliament, the Bundestag, in EU affairs. We then introduce the German party system, highlighting the main political parties' positions on European integration. Subsequently, we present and discuss the main empirical findings of our analysis of Bundestag debates (see Góra, Thevenin, and Zielińska 2023, in this volume, for details about case selection and methodology). We start by analysing the main dynamics of the FoE debate within parliament using three instances of plenary debates on significant moments for European integration since 2015. We continue by taking a closer look at the actors who participate in the FoE debates, the institutional and policy reform proposals they discuss, as well as the role of differentiated integration in parties' visions for FoE. We then investigate perceptions of dominance expressed by MPs as well as the rectifying measures they envision. The concluding section discusses the extent to which parties employ consistent constitutional narratives or visions for the EU.

The German Bundestag in EU affairs

The Bundestag, Germany's lower legislative chamber, plays a key role in the formation of national preference towards European integration.19 The upper chamber, the Bundesrat, which represents the federated units or Bundesländer, only has a secondary role in EU affairs. The literature on national parliaments in the EU considers the Bundestag to be an active and institutionally strong parliament (Auel, Rozenberg, and Tacea 2015, 79). It has been described as a 'policy shaper' and a 'government

[19] The formal powers of the Bundestag in EU affairs are institutionalised in the 'Gesetz über die Zusammenarbeit von Bundesregierung und Deutschem Bundestag in Angelegenheiten der Europäischen Union' ('Act on Cooperation between the Federal Government and the German Bundestag in Matters concerning the European Union').

watchdog' (Neuhold and Smith 2015, 678; Abels 2016, 130). Beyond its formal veto powers, the Bundestag 'aims to create a large degree of publicity [for EU politics] which forces government officials into coherent behavior in order to keep the faith of the electorate' (Rozenberg and Hefftler 2015, 32). Thus, the Bundestag plenary frequently discusses questions and controversies about European integration, often at the behest of opposition parties – the so-called *Aktuelle Stunden* (literally 'current hours'). These are held at the request of a parliamentary group or at least 5% of the MPs or by agreement in the Bundestag's Council of Elders. In general, these debates are used by the opposition to voice their critique over issues that have not been set on the agenda by the government. Moreover, it is customary that the chancellor regularly defends his or her EU policy choices in front of the Bundestag. These so-called *Regierungserklärungen*, or government policy statements, usually take place right before European Council summits or amidst political events that require a positioning of the governing coalition.

Heermann, et al. (2022) argue that the Bundestag majority forms a 'corridor' of ratifiable policy options, from which the government can choose one in accordance with the chancellor's (ideational) preferences regarding EU integration. However, this majority is not necessarily fixed in a given legislative period. Rather, research has shown that members of the Bundestag (MPs) enjoy a significant degree of independence from their party positions, especially in highly politicised matters. For instance, during the Eurozone crisis, fiscally conservative MPs from coalition parties voted against the government line opposing financial aid packages (Degner and Leuffen 2016). On the other hand, pro-European opposition MPs have voted in favour of the government's position. Given a broad pro-EU consensus among the main German parties, the executive therefore enjoys a certain leeway in manoeuvring parliament majorities when shifting its policy stance.

German political parties and their views on European integration

Figure 4.1 depicts the German party system as a two-dimensional space structured by a left/right and a pro-/anti-EU dimension using data from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al. 2022). The German party mainstream has long been generally in favour of further European integration, albeit with differing positions regarding especially fiscal

integration (discussed in greater detail below). The more economically right-wing Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschland/Christlich-Soziale Union – CDU/CSU) and Free Democratic Party (Freie Demokratische Partei – FDP) parties are supportive of further integrating the European Single Market, but reluctant when it comes to fiscal integration and redistribution between member states. The more left-wing parties, the Social Democratic Party (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland – SPD) and the Greens (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen), are in favour of more integration in the areas of social welfare policies. The socialist Left party (Die Linke) is more ambivalent about European integration, criticising its market-liberalising elements and the fiscal policy regime of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). The most Eurosceptic party is Alternative for Germany für Deutschland (Alternative für Deutschland – AfD), which was founded in 2014 as a response to the financial bailouts of member states during the Eurozone crisis and which first entered the Bundestag in 2017. There is a general agreement among the other parties not to form coalitions with the AfD.

Chancellor Angela Merkel's 16 years in office have shaped the German political landscape in the last decade and a half. From 2005 to 2021, Merkel's Christian democratic CDU/CSU parties were in power, governing in altering coalitions either with the social democratic SPD or the liberal FDP. On questions of European integration, these government coalitions could usually count on the (tacit) support of the Greens. In December 2021, Merkel's successor Olaf Scholz took office. His 'traffic-light coalition' is composed of his own SPD, the Greens and the FDP. The coalition agreement is generally pro-integration in tone and signals the new government's readiness to engage in treaty change. It remains, however, blurry when it comes to questions of fiscal integration. This is unsurprising as the coalition – like the previous CDU/CSU-SPD coalition – includes parties with widely diverging preferences on this issue.

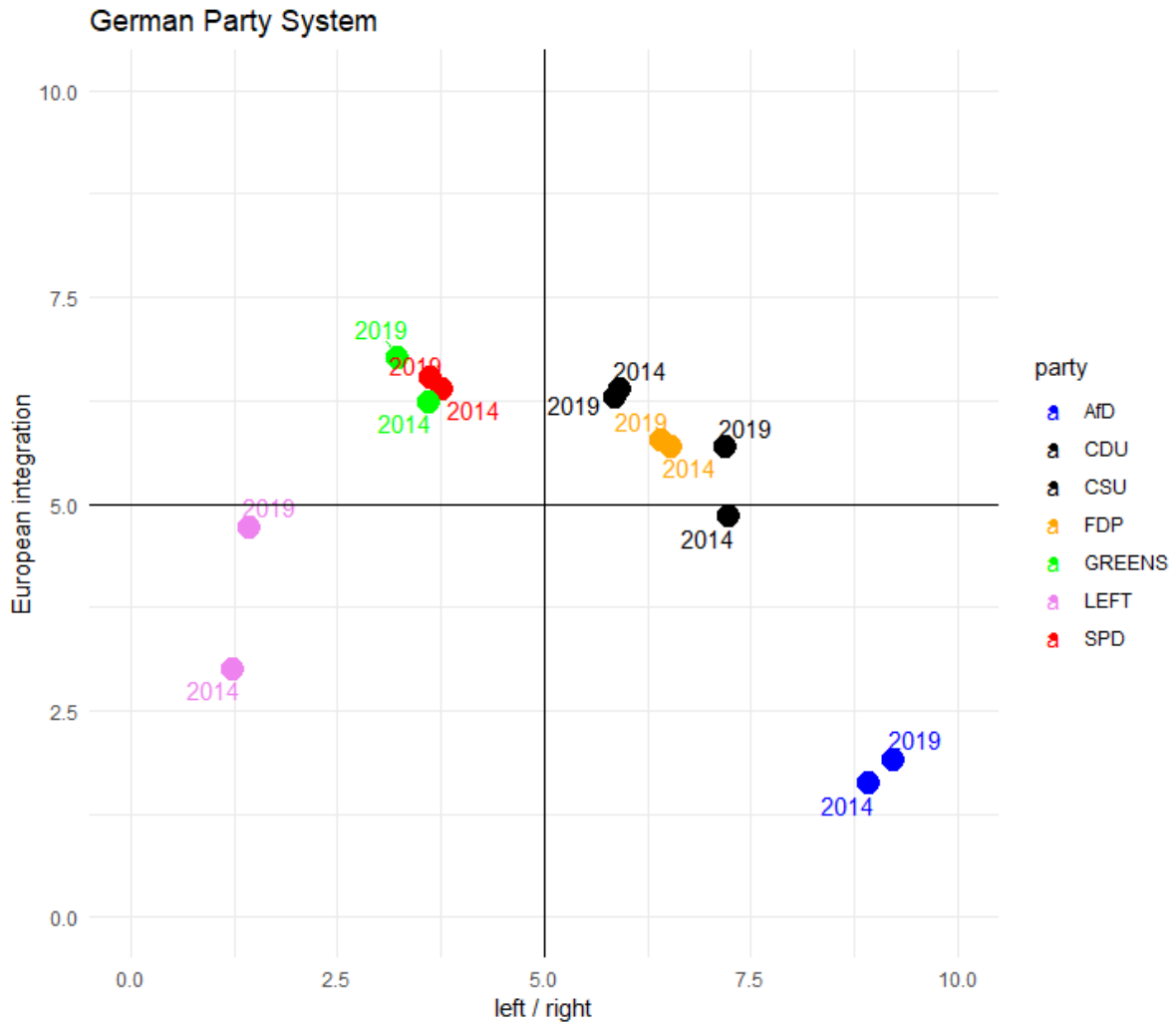


Figure 4.1. Party positions (2014, 2019) of the parties represented in the Bundestag.

The identified dissonance amongst coalition parties in (fiscal) questions on the future of Europe has also been discussed in a vibrant body of literature on German EU politics. Wendler (2019) argues that the former 'Grand Coalition' of CDU/CSU and SPD was caught between a deeply rooted commitment to the European project and increasing costs resulting from political and economic interdependence amongst member states. During and after the Eurozone crisis, the German government therefore opposed integrationist fiscal policies such as the introduction of Eurobonds. Concerning the conflicting German position on European integration, Freudlsperger and Weinrich (2021) make two crucial observations. First, due to the politicisation of European (fiscal) integration, German mainstream parties have developed a general

preference for regulation over capacity-building despite their integrationist conviction (Freudlsperger and Weinrich 2021, 148). Second, with regard to the integration of core state powers, an ideological polarisation of mainstream parties has emerged since the mid-2000s. Centre-right parties understand the EU primarily in economic terms as a 'market-centred community of self-reliant states' (Freudlsperger and Weinrich 2021, 139), granting it first and foremost regulatory power. By contrast, centre-left parties' understanding of the EU goes beyond that of an economic and monetary union, granting it redistributive capacities (Freudlsperger and Weinrich 2021, 138). Especially the building of redistributive capacities at the EU level, like debt mutualisation or taxation policy, has been challenged by the centre-right – not to mention by the Eurosceptic AfD.

Future of Europe debate since 2015

This section explores how the parties in the German Bundestag have positioned themselves in the debate on FoE from 2015 to 2021. We first analyse the dynamics and specificities of the FoE debate in three cases: Brexit, the EU reform proposals made by French President Macron and the COVID-19 crisis. We then examine the actors involved in the FoE debates as well as the institutional and policy reform proposals. Finally, we look at the role of differentiated integration (territorial differentiation) in the Bundestag's FoE debates.

Examining the future of Europe debate in three cases

In Germany, the debate on FoE has been rather subdued. This is in large part due to a lack of engagement from Chancellor Merkel and her party, which has lacked clear programmatic ideas for Europe. Despite its pro-European conviction, the CDU/CSU presented scant concrete proposals for the development of new policy instruments at the EU level. Rather, the CDU/CSU advocated for maintaining the institutional status quo. Most notably, the party relied on its principles of sound fiscal policy and national self-responsibility, opposing any integration steps that would undermine the member states' fiscal autonomy or imply negative redistributive effects for Germany. The CDU/CSU's position politically constrained the SPD, which since 2014 was the junior partner in Merkel's government. In their plenary speeches, SPD MPs nevertheless outlined more ambitious ideas for deeper integration in the economic, social and

migration policy domains. Furthermore, the Social Democrats voiced support for joint European investment programmes. However, the FoE debate in the Bundestag was mostly driven by the Greens, who, despite their opposition status, repeatedly put the question of FoE on the agenda, pushing for a more courageous German EU policy. At the other end of the political spectrum, the AfD tabled a number of Eurosceptic – and often polemical – resolutions, which never found Bundestag majorities.

Three instances illustrate the dynamics of the FoE debates in the German Bundestag well. First, when the Bundestag debated the Brexit referendum in June 2016 (debate DE_2016-06-28_FoE), the CDU/CSU analysed the Brexit vote solely on communicative accounts, while the SPD and Greens called for the development of new European policies to counter the setback in the European project. The CDU/CSU blamed the populist rhetoric of Eurosceptic actors for the outcome of the referendum. The Christian Democrats therefore argued that public communication about EU affairs must be improved. Member states should refrain from blaming domestic policy choices and failures on the EU, especially in areas of national competences such as social, health or labour market policy. In line with the principle of solidarity, the EU should primarily be granted competences in areas in which nation states alone cannot cope, such as the control of the EU's external borders. Yet, instead of proposing programmatic ideas for how to progress with the European project after Brexit, Angela Merkel stated rather blandly that 'any proposal on how to hold the EU27 together is welcome' (Angela Merkel, CDU/CSU, debate DE_2016-06-28_FoE). In contrast, the SPD advocated for the development of new European policies as a response to Eurosceptic voices. The leader of the SPD's parliamentary group even envisioned a 'growth union' to enable large European investments in order to 'create the most up-to-date digital infrastructure on the planet within ten years' (Thomas Oppermann, SPD, debate DE_2016-06-28_FoE). The Greens supported the approach of tackling Eurosceptic voices with 'more Europe', suggesting the development of European standards and regulations to tackle social issues, the climate crisis and tax evasion.

A second instance illustrating the dynamics of the FoE debate in Germany was the Bundestag's response to the election of French President Emmanuel Macron in 2017 and his proposals and visions for

the European project (debate DE_2017-05-18_Eurozone). It was the opposition Greens – not the governing parties – who requested a plenary debate to discuss Germany's response to Macron. The Greens argued that if the German government failed to support President Macron in its proposals, it would risk an eventual victory of the Eurosceptic right under a possible future French President Marine Le Pen. In the plenary debate on 18 May 2017, Chancellor Merkel's CDU/CSU had few of its own programmatic ideas on FoE and focused largely on Macron's ideas regarding the introduction of Eurobonds. Sticking to its fiscally conservative position, the CDU/CSU strongly opposed any sort of debt mutualisation or other policy paths leading to a fiscal union. Moreover, instead of giving own impulses for the debate with the French president, the CDU/CSU argued that before there could be any talks about a German-French initiative, France must 'do its homework' and engage in necessary structural reforms at home. In contrast, the SPD welcomed Macron's proposals for further integration of economic and fiscal policies. For instance, the Social Democrats supported the creation of a Eurozone budget to make European investments in green growth, digitisation and social issues. Among the opposition parties, both the Greens and the Left reacted favourably to Macron's proposals concerning Eurobonds and the creation of a Eurozone budget.

Finally, the question of the future of Europe was acutely at stake when Germany took over the presidency of the Council of the EU in July 2020 in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. While Germany had originally planned to enhance the EU agenda in the areas of environmental, digital, defence and foreign policy, it was now forced to focus mainly on managing the COVID-19 crisis. In an instance of political leadership, Merkel and Macron jointly proposed the creation of a pandemic recovery fund, which would later result in the Next Generation EU programme. This marked a significant shift in Germany's fiscal policy stance. Chancellor Merkel and the CDU/CSU justified this position reversal as a temporary, one-off emergency measure to ensure the survival of the EU in an unforeseeable crisis (Heermann et al. 2022).20 According to the CDU/CSU, Next Generation EU was necessary first and foremost to avoid the risk of disintegration in the face of rising Eurosceptic voices, especially in Italy. Secondly, they stressed Germany's economic self-interest in a quick European recovery. Thirdly, Merkel and her MPs

[20] See debates DE_2020-06-18_FoE, DE_2021-02-25_FoE..

framed the pandemic as an external shock for which no member state was to blame. They thus deliberately contrasted COVID-19 with the Eurozone crisis, which had been framed as a sovereign debt crisis resulting from years of lacking structural reform and mismanagement in the affected member states. Therefore, Merkel's policy shift can be seen as a continuation of an approach to EU policy making seeking to safeguard the present level of integration by engaging in pragmatic crisis measures, without, however, formulating ideas on how to move the EU forward in the medium and long term (Heermann et al. 2022).21 In contrast to the CDU/CSU, the SPD and the Greens responded more enthusiastically to the Merkel-Macron proposal, welcoming Next Generation EU as a first step towards a fiscal union. The liberal FDP showed hesitant support for Next Generation EU, highlighting the importance of conditionality attached to any transfer payments and opposing fundamental change of fiscal policy in the EU in the form of lasting debt mutualisation. In the new German government of Chancellor Scholz, FDP party leader Christian Lindner serves as finance minister, indicating that the Liberals intend to act as a break on the fiscal policy preferences of their more left-wing coalition partners, the SPD and Greens, both domestically and at the EU level. It therefore seems unlikely that the new coalition government is embarking on a paradigmatic change in Germany's EU fiscal policy.

Actors: who speaks on the future of Europe?

MPs' participation and party involvement in plenary debates varied depending on the nature of the debate. During *Regierungserklärungen*, the chancellor, government ministers and leading party politicians took the floor. During *Aktuelle Stunden* and other debates concerned with FoE, it was not necessarily leading party figures, but rather the parties' EU 'experts' or specialists who engaged in the often more technical debates about legislative details. These MPs are usually members of the Bundestag's EU Affairs Committee or of another committee closely related to the debated topic.

Before the Eurosceptic AfD entered parliament in 2017, both governing and opposing parties were generally pro-European (with the partial exception of the rather inconsistent Left party), although to different

[21] Heermann et al. (2022) have labelled this policy approach 'conservatory-pragmatic' as opposed to 'progressive-programmatic'.

extents. Specifically, the Greens repeatedly used *Aktuelle Stunden* to push for a more European 'spirit' or outlook in German EU policy making. For instance, they called debates amidst the 60th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome or the 20th anniversary of the euro. The Left took a more critical stance, calling for plenary debates to emphasise different perspectives of dominance in Germany's EU policy. In general, opposition parties tended to request *Aktuelle Stunden* whenever Chancellor Merkel was not willing to give a *Regierungserklärung* before an EU Council meeting.

After the 2017 general elections, dynamics changed in two ways. First, the Eurosceptic AfD – elected to the Bundestag for the first time – promoted ideas of disintegration, i.e. a reversal of European integration. Second, the liberal FDP, returning to the Bundestag after failing the 5% threshold in 2014, promoted views of fiscal conservatism (previously also defended by parts of the CDU/CSU). While the AfD took rather destructive positions during plenary debates, the FDP frequently requested rather technical debates to share their economically liberal views on issues such as the banking union.

Institutional reforms for Europe's future?

MPs discussed a variety of institutional reform proposals (see Figure 4.2). In this section, we focus on the three most frequently mentioned institutional questions: the role of national parliaments, the desirability of the status quo and the strengthening of the EP.

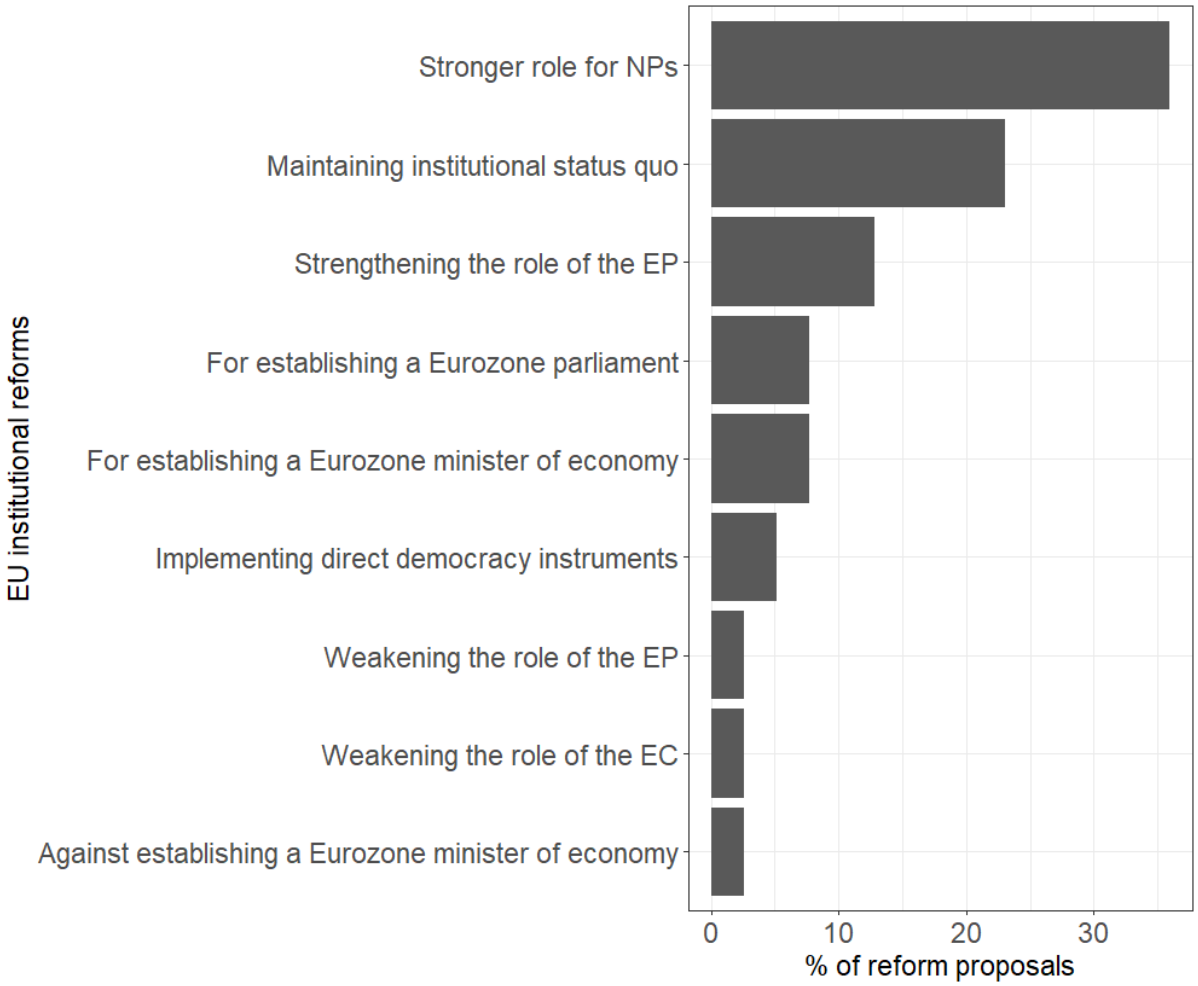


Figure 4.2. Frequency of references to EU institutional reforms (n=39 – number of institutional reform proposals).

Maintaining the institutional status quo

The German government's consensus position seems to have been the maintenance of the institutional status quo. Instead of engaging in detailed questions of institutional reform, Bundestag debates focused on specific policy proposals and their appropriate level of government: is a European solution necessary and efficient, or should it be located at the member-state level following the principle of subsidiarity? CDU/CSU MPs also employed subsidiarity and efficiency arguments to advocate for the status quo and to reject the introduction of new policy instruments that would lead to 'a duplication of institutions':

> Therefore, it is not a question of ever new policy instruments and a new euro zone budget without concrete underpinnings, and in my view, we must not continue to allow any duplicate structures and inefficiencies.

(Eckhardt Rehberg, MP, CDU, DE_2019-03-14_Eurozone)22

Nevertheless, the Greens and the Left – but also SPD members – voiced their support for proposals to set up a Eurozone budget with a Eurozone finance minister, in part as a response to President Macron's Sorbonne speech.

Institutional balance: (European) Council v. European Parliament

Regarding the balance between the European institutions in Brussels and Strasbourg, the opposition parties as well as the governing SPD criticised the European Council as excessively powerful, thus diagnosing a democratic malfunctioning in the EU's institutional construction. The more left-wing parties but also the FDP therefore advocated a strengthening of the EP as a democratic counterweight to the intergovernmental decision making of the (European) Council. The Eurosceptic AfD draws the opposite conclusion from the diagnosed democratic malfunctioning, calling for a reversal of European integration and returning competences to national parliaments, as will be discussed in the next section.

Balancing levels of government: on the role of national parliaments

While the SPD and the Greens focus on strengthening the EP, the other parties explicitly acknowledge (or demand) an active role for national parliaments in EU policy making. The CDU/CSU and the FDP underline the fundamental rights of the German Bundestag in questions related to military action, social insurance, and budgetary decisions. The latter constitute a red line for conservative MPs.

> We as national parliamentarians are not the ambassadors of what is decided in Brussels, but we are part of the decision-making process on how this Europe is shaped.
>
> (Ralph Brinkhaus, MP, CDU, DE_2020-06-18_FoE)

> There will be no further development of the European Union without safeguarding our participation rights.
>
> (Eckhardt Rehberg, MP, CDU, DE_2019-03-14_Eurozone)

[22] All quotes are the authors' own translations from the original German.

At the extreme ends of the political spectrum, both the Left and the AfD heavily criticise decision-making imbalances between European institutions and national parliaments. At one end, the Left condemns how the German government together with the ECB, the European Commission and the International Monetary Fund decided over the heads of the Greek parliament, forcing them into austerity measures and unpopular structural reforms during the Eurozone crisis. At the other end, the AfD opposes any further integration or granting of additional competences to European institutions, which would limit the decision-making power of the Bundestag – be it in the realm of joint military action or monetary union – national sovereignty should always come first in the eyes of the far-right populists.

EU policy change for Europe's future?

In this section, we discuss three policy areas, which were debated prominently in the context of FoE: the creation of a Eurozone budget, the establishment of a European banking union and a reform of the EU's asylum policy.

Eurozone budget

The introduction of a Eurozone budget has been a recurring issue in the Bundestag debates. Chancellor Merkel portrayed a potential Eurozone budget as a policy instrument to improve competitiveness and increase convergence of European economies. However, MPs from her party group expressed worries that a Eurozone budget would limit the budgetary rights of the Bundestag, which would challenge their views of fiscal conservatism (see debate DE_2020-04-23_Eurozone). Similarly, the liberal FDP questioned the financing of such a budget and worried about the mutualisation of liabilities, even though they did not oppose a Eurozone budget per se (see debate DE_2019-03-14_Eurozone). The SPD, Greens, and Left considered the introduction of a Eurozone budget a crucial instrument to realise public investments in the Eurozone. To this end, they proposed to finance such a budget via the introduction of a European transaction tax or digital tax (see debates DE_2015-07-17_Eurozone, DE_2017-05-18_Eurozone, DE_2019-03-14_Eurozone).

Banking union

The creation of a European banking union was another prominent policy in the FoE debates, finding different levels of support. The CDU/CSU and

SPD governing coalition supported the completion of the banking union, arguing that it would contribute to the stabilisation of the Eurozone and to regaining the trust of savers (see debate DE_2018-01-31_Eurozone). In the opposition, the Greens supported the completion of the banking union but stressed the importance of high equity requirements, which would stabilise European banks and minimise the risk of bailouts financed by taxpayer money. The FDP only partially supported a banking union. Since many European banks hold risky assets and non-performing loans, the Liberals feared that a completion of the banking union would become a destabilising factor for the entire Eurozone. Therefore, they did not want to include any form of a deposit insurance scheme in a banking union. The banking union was opposed by the AfD and the Left, albeit for different reasons. The AfD objected to national banks being exposed to risks from foreign banks. The Left argued that the envisioned banking union would favour big banks rather than the interests of ordinary citizens (see debate DE_2019-03-14_Eurozone).

Border protection and asylum

In the debates on migration and asylum, especially at the peak of the 2015 crisis but also in the following years, the governing CDU/CSU and SPD coalition, as well as the FDP, agreed that protecting the borderless Schengen area was the overall objective but required the protection of its external borders. While the CDU/CSU pushed for a reform of Frontex to improve its efficiency, the SPD even went a step further, supporting demands for the creation of a European army. While the Greens in principle supported the attempt to find European solutions for joint challenges such as the migration crisis, they strongly opposed the closure of the external borders. Rather, they suggested that migration is a global issue which needs to be addressed within Europe and beyond its external borders.

Besides proposals related to the protection of the EU's external borders, the creation of a European asylum system has been a widely discussed issue in the context of migration. This policy proposal found support among all pro-European forces in parliament, as it was deemed to fairly and efficiently harmonise the registration, distribution and – if necessary – deportation of asylum seekers. EU asylum policy should further prevent any imbalances in the administration of migration flows and spending on migration across member states. This underlines the consensus of the governing coalition seeking an internally open yet externally protected

Europe. At least in part, however, this consensus seems to have been driven by the need to counter anti-immigrant voices, which were at a peak in German public opinion polls during the crisis of 2015, fuelling the AfD's objectives to curb European competences.

Towards differentiated integration

Differentiated integration (DI) has been a frequent and recurring issue accompanying many debates on the future of Europe in the Bundestag since 2015. Indeed, while no party has expressed a clear vision for the future of Europe, we have been able to observe different ideas for the construction of future integration steps. The governing CDU/CSU and SPD coalition principally expressed their openness towards DI. Although the overarching goal was to deepen integration in a uniform manner, i.e. by having all member states on board, both party groups voiced their preference to form 'coalitions of the willing' rather than not integrate further. They perceive German-French initiatives as a blueprint for such coalitions and for the whole of Europe. The FDP, too, generally supported DI. The Greens were more reluctant, expressing worries that a multi-speed EU could divide the Union. Therefore, the Greens stressed that DI must always be in line with the EU treaties and guarantee that the other member states can join as soon as they meet the relevant criteria. The Left criticised DI on similar grounds, arguing that it would create a 'core Europe' that would divide member states. The AfD opposed any further EU integration. On the contrary, it rather promoted a reorientation towards the nation state, granting more competences to national institutions, while at the same time criticising German-French initiatives as a form of domination vis-à-vis more hesitant member states.

Perceptions of dominance in the EU

What role do perceptions of dominance play in the Bundestag debates on the FoE? The political groups in the Bundestag have expressed a number of perceptions of dominance in the EU – some concerning the EU institutions, and others the role of Germany in the EU. However, the perspectives on dominance are very subjective, so that some instances of dominance were framed in opposite terms by different political actors.

First, all opposition parties mentioned the ***exclusion of national parliaments***, in various contexts. On the one hand, German opposition parties argued that the Bundestag was not appropriately included in

intergovernmental initiatives and bargains. On the other hand, the Greens and the Left criticised the German government for its position on the Greek bailouts and the related conditionality during the Eurozone crisis. By supporting the Troika of the European Commission, ECB and IMF, Germany, according to this argument, excluded the Greek parliament when determining which structural reforms and (domestically unpopular) austerity measures Athens had to implement.

Second, and adding to the perceptions of exclusion, opposition MPs frequently complained that decisions at the European level were taken by democratically ***illicit hierarchies***. For instance, Left MP Gregor Gysi summed up his party's stance on the Eurozone crisis management as follows:

> More and more people in Europe associate Europe itself with terms like coercion, duress, blackmail, 'money above all else', 'unrestricted power of the banks'. The decisive power lies with three institutions which are not democratically legitimised – the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the European Commission – and one government, namely the German government.
>
> (Gregor Gysi, MP, The Left, DE_2015-07-17_Eurozone)

The FDP also heavily criticised the ECB as forming an illicit hierarchy – albeit from a very different angle. Liberal MPs expressed their concerns about the ECB's monetary policies and its effect on German savers, questioning the ECB's competence and (democratic) legitimacy to engage in sovereign bond purchasing programmes and loose monetary policy.

Third, such perceptions of exclusion and illicit hierarchies are often accompanied by claims of a ***lack of transparency*** in EU decision making, but also in bilateral agreements and initiatives, such as the Franco-German treaty signed in Aachen in 2019.

The parties varied in their preferred measures for rectifying these perceived forms of dominance in decision-making processes. The Greens demanded the strengthening of the EP to enhance the transparency and democratic qualities of EU law-making. The FDP added that besides the EP, national parliaments too should be strengthened in order to increase transparency and reduce exclusion and illicit hierarchies. While the Left finds the answer to dominance in elements of direct democracy, the AfD

pledges a shift in power relations towards national parliaments and an overall reversal of European integration. Meanwhile the governing coalition's response to perceptions and claims of dominance varied. On the one hand, concerns over illicit hierarchies at the ECB are also mentioned by conservative MPs. On the other, the CDU/CSU's coalition partner, the SPD, is primarily concerned with a lack of transparency, which is perceived as an exclusion of parliaments and electorate. Therefore, the SPD wants to improve communication and transparency between Brussels and the electorate in member states.

Fourth, dominance in terms of ***fragmentation*** was perceived by both governing and opposition parties. There was a general perception that over the course of the Eurozone and migration crises, two blocs have evolved within the EU. Firstly, the Left and the Greens harshly criticised the management of the Eurozone crisis, which divided the EU into economically booming member states in the North and crisis-troubled member states in the South. Secondly, both the opposition and the grand coalition saw a risk of fragmentation between the same group of Northern member states and the Eastern member states in questions of migration, as well as in concerns over the rule of law and European values.

Fifth, the perspective of dominance in terms of ***redistributive inequalities*** has been raised by all parties of the German Bundestag, albeit from different angles. On the right of the political spectrum, MPs of the governing CDU/CSU repeatedly made the case that Germany, being the biggest net contributor to the EU budget, is 'paying Europe's bill'. Fiscal conservative MPs from the FDP shared this view, stressing the importance of a sound and nationally administrated fiscal policy. The AfD voiced a similar argument but in more populist fashion, pointing out that it is German taxpayers' money that is spent to address the shortcomings of other European economies. On questions regarding the reallocation of refugees across EU member states, the right-wing parties stressed the need for a proper redistribution of refugees as well as their timely deportation when applicable to avoid Germany taking on disproportionately high numbers.

By contrast, parties from the left of the political spectrum referred to experiences of dominance in terms of redistributive inequalities with a more solidarity-based intention. For instance, a strong concern for the Social Democrats was the lack of a social safety net at the European level, as well as the inefficient taxation of large multinational corporations. The

Greens and the Left deplored profound imbalances in the socio-economic situation across European countries. In addition, the Left constantly criticised the disproportionate influence of big corporations on EU policy making.

Conclusion: constitutional visions and narratives

Having analysed the German parties' positions on the future of Europe and their perceptions of dominance within the EU, we conclude this country report by assessing how their expressed preferences align with the constitutional models outlined by Góra, Thevenin, and Zielińska (2023, in this volume).

The SPD and the Greens expressed the clearest visions for Europe in line with a federalist understanding of European integration. The SPD could be classified as following the constitutional narrative of a 'de-coupled federal political union', while the Greens' vision showed elements of both 'cosmopolitan regionalism' and a 'multi-headed federal type union'. The SPD sought European solutions at every level and in every policy area but acknowledged different levels and speeds in the process of European integration. The Greens expressed a rather inclusive stance on DI, urging opted-out member states to adopt integration steps as soon as they met the criteria. Furthermore, the Greens advocated for a strengthening of European institutions (especially the EP), while at the same time endorsing elements of direct democracy to involve European citizens in the policy-making process at all levels.

The CDU/CSU did not express a clear vision for the future of Europe, but rather showed a strong preference for maintaining the status quo. The sister parties therefore fit quite well to the middle-ground model of 'intergovernmentalism'. While the parties' MPs generally expressed a pro-European stance, for them the sovereignty of their national parliament is an undebatable privilege in questions of military and fiscal policy. However, some policy discussions showed inconsistent and divided opinions within their parliamentary group. For example, the CDU/CSU's stance on refugee reallocation contradicts its intergovernmental position in questions of fiscal policy. Furthermore, some conservative MPs did not follow their party line in the debates on a third Greek bailout package, demanding an end to financial assistance.

The FDP in many respects expressed ideas of 'global cosmopolitanism', while at the same time opposing any kind of redistribution or fiscal union. It is therefore difficult to locate the party within one of the constitutional narratives.

The Eurosceptic AfD took a rather unconstructive sovereignist stance in debates on FoE. While it voiced some sovereignist claims (e.g. in monetary or defence policy), in general the contributions of AfD MPs to plenary debates represented ideas of disintegration and the reversal of European integration, (re-)shifting competences towards national parliaments. Since the AfD did not have any realistic prospect of joining a future coalition government, they show little effort in constructive opposition work, including forming a coherent constitutional narrative for the future of Europe.

The Left did not show any clear vision for the future of Europe either. It focused on criticising Germany's EU policies through a lens of their socialist norms and values.

These assessments are based on the Bundestag plenary debates between 2015 and 2021. After the federal elections in September 2021 – and Chancellor Merkel's voluntary retirement – a new governing coalition was formed. Since December 2021, Former Finance Minister Olaf Scholz heads a three-party 'traffic-light' coalition composed of his SPD, the Greens and the FDP. Their coalition agreement includes a number of reform proposals concerning the future of Europe and is generally pro-integration in tone. However, it remains noticeably blurry when it comes to the subject of fiscal integration and the Eurozone. This is unsurprising given the parties' diverging policy positions in this area. The new government coalition as well as the CDU/CSU reorientation in opposition after 16 years in power may lead to new dynamics and debates in the Bundestag, possibly creating new political space for reform proposals on the future of Europe.

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Chapter 5

The Italian Chamber of Deputies and the Future of Europe: Policy-focused and Uncomprehensive Party Positions

Tiziano Zgaga

Italy and European integration

Italy is a founding member of the European Union (EU). Following defeat in World War II, the EU integration process allowed Italy to regain international legitimacy and to embark on an economic recovery. The first post-war Italian prime minister, Alcide De Gasperi (in office from 1945 to 1953), was a strong supporter of the birth of the EU which, under his leadership, formally took place with the Treaty of Rome (1957) (Perchoc and Montanari 2018). The country has taken part in all steps of integration, including the adoption of the euro. In 1984, Altiero Spinelli, considered one of the fathers of the EU, presented a federal project of integration to the European Parliament (EP). The project was adopted by the EP but then rejected by the European Council (EUCO).

In the first three decades, particularly from the late 1960s, a strong 'pro-integrationist paradigm' dominated in Italy (Quaglia 2007). By the end of the 1970s, around 80% of Italians supported EU integration (Isernia 2008). This trend continued during the 1980s, when more than 75% of Italians thought that EU membership was a good thing and almost 70% declared that Italy had benefited from it. In 1974 and 1988, the value concerning 'positivity of membership' even peaked at 83% (Eurobarometer 2022). As Lucarelli (2015, 42) writes, 'support for European integration became a factor unifying most of the political elites'. The EU thus acquired the status of an undisputed component of Italy's foreign policy (Varsori 2010). Before the 1990s, therefore, the EU was overwhelmingly associated with positive implications for Italy. At the international level, the most

notable examples included the end of the Bretton Woods system and the energy crises of 1973 and 1979. The prevailing position at the time was that these events had damaged Italy less than they would have if the country had not been part of the Union. At the domestic level, EU membership appeared as a reassuring factor in the face of domestic terrorism and structural problems in the country, most notably governmental instability, high inflation, rising public debt, and unemployment (Bona 1988).

With the launch of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU), Italy's relationship with the EU changed from true love to becoming represented as utilitarian and necessary. Following the theory of external constraints ('vincolo esterno') (Carli 1993), the EU provided forms of conditionality that triggered Italy to implement domestic reforms that had so far been – and would continue to be – impossible to pursue due to several veto players. Joining the euro was the most notable example: the external pressure for internal [economic] transformation allowed Italy to meet the convergence criteria for adopting the single currency (Dyson and Featherstone 1996).

Crucially, as Lucarelli (2015, 44) notes,

> contrary to what happened in other countries such as France […], the decision did not provoke an immediate significant debate either in parliament or among the public […]. Such a permissive consensus on the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, however, would not persist in the long run.

Two important crises in the first two decades of the 2000s changed Italy's perception of the EU (Barbulescu and Beaudonnet 2014). The first was the European sovereign debt crisis (henceforth: euro crisis) that exploded in 2009 and lasted roughly until 2013. The second is what we could call the 'migration crisis'. While the management of migrants reaching Italy from Northern Africa has represented a challenge for the country for a number of years, the situation became particularly difficult from 2015 onwards. In the first half of the 2010s, public support for the EU and the perceived benefits from integration both reached a historically low value of c. 40% on average (Eurobarometer 2022). To this, a third crisis needs to be added, namely that generated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

This chapter will show how these three crises – the euro crisis, migration crisis, and COVID-19 crisis – have changed Italy's party landscape and strongly shaped the country's debate on the future of Europe (FoE).

General features of the Chamber of Deputies

Italy has a symmetric bicameral system, which means that every law needs the consent of both the Chamber of Deputies (the lower house, with 630 members) and the Senate of the Republic (the upper house, with 315 members). This chapter follows most of the literature in focusing on the lower chamber because, with more members of parliament (MPs), it provides a better platform for analysing the parties' positions on FoE.

Italy's Chamber of Deputies has been classified as having intermediate institutional strength based on the indicators developed by Auel et al. (2015a, 293), i.e.

> access to information (access to documents, explanatory memorandum, ex ante reports on councils), parliamentary infrastructure (type of European Affairs Committees, role of standing committees, share of MPs involved) as well as oversight and influence rights (binding nature of opinions, reserve, scope, ex post reports on councils).
>
> (see also Auel et al. 2015b)

Moreover, in terms of 'parliamentary statements, plenary debates on EU issues, hearing with the Prime Minister, meetings of the European Affairs Committee, opinions issued in the framework of the Early Warning System and the Political Dialogue between 2010 and 2012' (Brack 2021, 54), Italy has been classified as a very active parliament. In terms of control, Italy practises document-based scrutiny, which means that the parliament exercises its main scrutiny on EU legislative acts and documents, while collecting other relevant documents and, where necessary, adopting resolutions. Related to this, like other European parliaments, Italy has a European affairs committee in both the lower and the upper house.

Following the so-called law on European delegation (Law 234/2012), the government is obliged to inform the parliament ex ante of the 'policy position that it intends to take at meetings of the EUCO and, if so requested by the relevant parliamentary bodies, the policy position it

intends to take at meetings of the EU Council of Ministers' (Camera dei deputati 2022b); and inform the parliament ex post of the outcome of meetings of both the EUCO and the Council within 15 days of their taking place.

Debates on the EU in the Chamber of Deputies

In order to analyse the debates on FoE, this chapter refers to the above-mentioned ex-ante duty of the government. It does so by performing a systematic content analysis of 19 parliamentary debates following addresses given by the prime minister (PM) to the Chamber of Deputies in view of EUCO summits. The timeframe considered (2015–2021) covers two years of the 17th parliamentary term (2013–2018) and five years of the 18th parliamentary term (2018–2022).

A PM's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of an EUCO summit is structured as follows. First, the PM makes a rather long intervention in which he/she mentions the topics on the agenda of the upcoming EUCO summit and outlines the position of the government on each of them. Such topics depend on the EUCO's meeting agenda. On some occasions (e.g. the July 2020 debate on the COVID-19 recovery fund), one policy area ends up being at the centre of the EUCO's agenda. In that case, we observe the same topic also being central to the respective parliamentary debate. On other occasions, there are many topics on the EUCO's agenda.

After the opening remarks by the PM, according to parliamentary rules of procedure (Musella 2019) at least one representative per parliamentary group is given the chance to react to the PM's communication. Since parliamentary groups largely coincide with the main parties, in this type of debate parties express their views on a broad range of EU policies. They are free to choose the focus of their intervention. Major parties – which have longer speaking time at their disposal – tend to react to almost all topics mentioned by the PM. Politically, such debates thus represent an ideal setting for parties to compete against each other on a wide spectrum of topics. Analytically, they represent an ideal source for comparing parties' positions on the EU over time.

For Italy, the debates on the PM's communications to the Chamber of Deputies are important for two main reasons. First, 'because Law 234/2012 decrees the government responsible for ensuring that the policy position it takes at the Council or at other institutions or bodies of the EU

is consistent with the policy-setting guidelines it received from the Parliament. If the Government is unable to comply with the Parliament's policy-setting guidelines, the President of the Council of Ministers or the minister responsible must report to the competent parliamentary bodies to explain why' (Camera dei deputati 2022b). Second, as these debates are widely covered by national media, they have the potential to shape the Italian public opinion on the EU. Before moving on to the analysis of parliamentary debates, the following section outlines Italian political parties' main views on EU integration.

Italian political parties and views on European integration

This section deals with the party system and the parties in Italy over the two parliamentary terms analysed in this chapter. However, to better understand the developments during those parliamentary terms, it is necessary to step back to the end of the 1990s. From 1996 until 2011, Italy de facto witnessed a bipolar party system, where a left-wing (Olive Tree – L'Ulivo) and a right-wing (Go Italy (Forza Italia – FI) and Northern League (Lega Nord – LN) coalition alternated in power. From 1996 to 2000, Italy had a left-wing government (first led by Romano Prodi and then by Massimo D'Alema). From April 2000 to June 2001, the country had a technical government led by Giuliano Amato. Between 2001 and 2006, a right-wing government led by Silvio Berlusconi was in power. In 2006 the second Prodi government took office, but it lost the confidence of the parliament two years later. Following a new election, in 2008 a new Berlusconi government (FI), supported by LN, took over. In 2011, this government was forced to step down because – in the light of the worsening of Italy's macroeconomic outlook – the financial markets did not trust the sustainability of Italy's public debt. Therefore, the markets started to increase pressure on Italy, which was reflected in the very high interest rates that the country had to pay to finance itself (Hennessy 2016). Furthermore, the European Commission (EC), and particularly France and Germany, indirectly pushed Italy to embark on a credible path of public finances consolidation. In November 2011, a technical government guided by the former European commissioner Mario Monti entered into office. Supported by both the right wing and the left wing, the Monti cabinet adopted a number of painful austerity measures.

The 2013 election radically changed the Italian party system. A new protest party focused on environmental issues – the Five Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle – M5S) – obtained 25.5% of the votes. The left-wing coalition – comprising the Democratic Party (Partito Democratico – PD), Left Ecology and Liberty (Sinistra Ecologia Libertà – SEL), Democratic Centre (Centro Democratico – CD), and the South Tyrolean People's Party (Südtiroler Volkspartei – SVP) – obtained 29.5% of the votes. The right-wing coalition – including People of Freedom (Popolo delle Libertà – PdL) (led by Berlusconi), LN, Brothers of Italy (Fratelli d'Italia – FdI), and a few others – received 29.1% of the votes (La Repubblica 2022a). Hence, as no party had properly won the election, a new three-party system emerged. Following difficult negotiations, a sort of 'grand coalition' between the PD and PdL gave rise to the Letta cabinet. After the PD scored a very high result (40.8%) in the 2014 EP election (La Repubblica 2022b), its new general secretary, Matteo Renzi, managed to replace Enrico Letta as PM. Thus, when the timeframe of the debates analysed in this chapter starts, Italy found itself with the Renzi cabinet, supported by the New Centre-Right (Nuovo Centrodestra – NCD) (a group of MPs that had split from PdL), the party Civic Choice (Scelta Civica – SC) led by former PM Mario Monti, CD, and a few other minor parties.

The PD has traditionally been a strongly pro-EU party. The party's aim was the creation of a political union ultimately leading to a 'United States of Europe'. It also advocated far-reaching reforms in terms of the EU's fiscal capacity, including debt mutualisation (Eurobonds) and a budget specifically for the euro area endowed with new own resources (meaning new taxes). Similarly, the PD pushed for reform to the Dublin Regulation. Notwithstanding a clear pro-European commitment, PM Renzi voiced his opposition to excessively strict application of the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP). As a matter of fact, under Italy's leadership the European Commission introduced a more flexible approach to the SGP. The Renzi cabinet was forced to step down in December 2016 following defeat in a national referendum aiming to radically change the Italian constitution. The successor to PM Renzi, Paolo Gentiloni (whose cabinet remained in office from December 2016 until the end of the legislature in 2018), developed a more diplomatic attitude towards the EU institutions, not questioning the fiscal rules of the SGP (Fabbrini and Zgaga 2019). Under Renzi, the PD had been charged with adopting market-oriented reforms (e.g. the so-called Jobs Act that liberalised the labour market) and entering into a close relationship with the Berlusconi-led party FI in matters of the

2016 constitutional reform. In light of this, in 2017 the PD's more left-oriented stream formed a new party (Free and Equal (Liberi e Uguali – LeU)) calling for strong Keynesian policies at EU level. This party has advocated for a radical reform of the EU. FI has never been a fully anti-EU party, although it has strongly criticised the supposed EU austerity policy. LN and FdI have traditionally been anti-EU parties. Until 2017, they both called for Italy to leave the EU and the euro. They considered the EU an enormous supranational entity without democratic legitimacy and entailing a sweeping bureaucracy which sets the agenda of national governments. As for the euro, it was seen as the main cause of Italy's economic decline, because it is the spitting image of Germany's Deutschmark. In the light of the negative economic implications that Brexit had on the EU, LN and FdI have abandoned any 'Italexit' position. However, both still clearly oppose a federalising process of the EU and strongly call for repatriating (taking back control of) as many policies as possible at national level. In addition, they want to radically change the European treaties, particularly economic governance (Fabbrini and Zgaga 2022).

In the 2018 parliamentary election, the M5S consolidated itself as a protest party (32.7%). Founded as an ecologist party, the M5S considered itself as being neither left nor right – its main argument is that those are old, 19th-century ideologies. The other parties scored as follows: the PD (18.7%), LN (17.4%), FI (14%), FdI (4.3%), LeU (3.4%), and More Europe (Più Europa – +EU) (2.5%) (La Repubblica, 2022c). Following the election, a cabinet led by PM Giuseppe Conte and supported by LN and the M5S was born, lasting until August 2019. From September 2019 to January 2021, a new government – the Conte II cabinet – embracing the PD and M5S was in place. Ultimately, from February 2021 to October 2022, a government of national unity – led by the former president of the European Central Bank (ECB), Mario Draghi – was in office. The Draghi cabinet was supported by all parties except for FdI.

During the first Conte cabinet, the M5S and LN continued to display tensions with the Commission, with particular regard to the adoption of the budgetary law. In the end, though, both had to follow the Commission's recommendations on the country's deficit (Fabbrini and Zgaga 2019). The participation in government contributed to reducing the Eurosceptic position not only of the M5S (Conte cabinet) but also of the League (Draghi cabinet) (Greene 2016). On the contrary, as it has never

taken part in a government, FdI kept its anti-EU position rather unchanged over time. The party has always aimed to turn the EU into a confederation of states that cooperate on specific policies – most notably security, single market, defence, migration, research, and foreign policy – but are free to self-determine what can be better done at national level. During the 18th parliamentary term, Renzi and some other MPs from the PD formed a new, strongly pro-EU party called Italy Alive (IV), which drew its inspiration from Macron's La République En Marche!.

Future of Europe parliamentary debates and governmental proposals in Italy since 2015: the impact of the crises

Over the timeframe covered, there has been no debate in the Chamber of Deputies specifically devoted to the future of Europe as such. The expression 'future of Europe' has certainly been used by some MPs in their speeches, but there was no debate with this title or in which FoE was the exclusive or predominant point on the agenda (Camera dei deputati 2022a). Nevertheless, the selected debates reflect on the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE). Those where the topic 'future of Europe' is mentioned several times have been classified as FoE debates.

The debate on Europe's future in the Chamber of Deputies was strongly shaped by three crises taking place during the 2015–2021 timeframe. First, the euro crisis. This crisis broke out as an indirect consequence of the global financial crisis of 2007–2008. The peak of the euro crisis took place in the EU approximately from 2009 to mid-/late 2013. During this crisis, several euro area member states (Greece, Portugal, Ireland, Spain, and Cyprus) faced increased pressure from financial markets as they were considered unable to repay or refinance their government debt or to bail out their banks. As a result, these member states had to receive financial assistance from third parties, specifically other member states, the ECB, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Italy was not a receiving country of financial assistance, but in light of its very high public debt, it was forced by markets as well as by other member states to adopt a number of so-called austerity measures. More generally, austerity policies aiming to consolidate public finances were at the heart of the EU's response to the crisis – most notably through the strengthening of the SGP (Zgaga 2020). As this chapter outlines, criticism of EU austerity policies figures prominently in the Italian debates.

The second crisis shaping the Italian debates was the so-called migration crisis of 2015. Also known as the Syrian refugee crisis (because most asylum seekers were Syrians), this crisis marked a period where 'more than in any previous European refugee crisis since World War II' (OECD 2015, 1), refugees and migrants reached Europe. The 2015 migration crisis led to the 2016 EU-Turkey agreement in which Turkey agreed to stop people travelling irregularly to Greece (to the EU) in exchange for €6 billion in funds from the EU to improve the humanitarian situation faced by refugees in the country. As a country of first arrival, Italy has always welcomed a high number of refugees. The 2015 migration crisis represented an even stronger challenge for the country. Calls for the EU to share responsibility for the management of migration grew louder (Panebianco 2019). This chapter shows that this is a constant of the Italian debates over the selected timeframe.

The third crisis is the COVID-19 pandemic. This crisis hit Italy very strongly from the beginning. As a result, the country was among the first – together with a group of other, mostly Southern European member states – to propose a common European approach to tackle the crisis. This approach foresaw sharing the issue of debt at EU level to financially assist member states in their post-pandemic recovery (Schelkle 2021). The chapter demonstrates that some Italian parties have seized the pandemic to advance their long-standing request to overcome EU austerity policies.

Like the parliamentary debates, the Italian government's FoE reform proposals have followed a policy-focused approach. Specifically, they have dealt with two policy areas that have been very salient – and thus strongly politicised – in Italy: the reform of the EMU and the reform of the Dublin Regulation.

In February 2016, the Renzi cabinet published the document *A Shared European Strategy for Growth, Jobs, and Stability*, in which it called for a new policy mix of measures stimulating economic growth while still preserving incentives for consolidation-oriented reforms. Specifically, the government called for flexible design of the SGP in order to allow for investments at both national (for the sake of modernisation) and European (supply of public goods) level. In order to provide those European public goods, the EU should set up a fiscal capacity made of its own resources and managed by a European finance minister (Ministero dell'Economia e delle Finanze 2016a). In a more specific proposal, the government advanced the creation of a European Unemployment Benefit

Scheme (EUBS) that 'should include an appropriate incentive structure in order to limit moral hazard and avoid permanent transfers from some countries to others' (Ministero dell'Economia e delle Finanze 2016b). This EUBS was analysed in greater depth in a further contribution that also called for sharing responsibility for the management of the EU's external borders. In addition, the proposal suggested strengthening the EU's defence and security capabilities. In both cases, financing through bonds issued by all member states was advocated (Ministero dell'Economia e delle Finanze 2016c).

With regard to migration policy, in 2018 the Italian government called for a comprehensive approach to migration, i.e. encompassing the entry, stay, and return of migrants. It argued that the EU should develop a principle of shared responsibility in managing migration flows, enforcing border control, tackling transnational crime, and developing a partnership among countries of origin, transit, and destination (Governo italiano 2018). In 2019, the Italian government published a non-paper in which it presented the possible 'migration compact' between the EU and African countries of origin and transit. The EU should offer investment projects, easier market access, cooperation on security, legal migration opportunities, and resettlement schemes to these countries. In exchange, the EU would ask them to commit to effective border control and reduction of flows towards Europe, cooperation on returns/readmissions, management of migration and refugee flows, and the establishment of an asylum system. The proposal suggested that the 'migration compact' be financed through existing EU external action financial instruments and through so-called 'Common EU Migration Bonds' issued by the EU (Governo italiano 2019).

In 2020, the Conte II cabinet issued its position on the CoFoE in a document welcoming it as an important opportunity for a debate on the political deepening of the EU's integration process. It identified two priorities for the CoFoE. First, the need to reflect on how the EU's decision-making regime could be improved. Second, the need to reform the European policies that have been debated most within member states. In view of both priorities, the Italian government hoped that the debate was as open and as inclusive as possible. With regard to the EU's decision making, Italy proposed stronger involvement of the EP in economic governance. In general terms, the EP should get the right of legislative initiative and should be elected through transnational lists. The proposal

also mentioned the direct election of the Commission's president. Further points regarded the extension of qualified majority voting (QMV) to new policy areas, i.e. social policy, fiscal policy, and – to some extent – foreign and security policy, as well as the strengthening of the EU's external action through a more prominent role of the General Affairs Council.

In terms of fiscal policy, the government supported the completion of the EMU. In view of this, the EU should set up both a common insurance mechanism and a mechanism of macroeconomic stabilisation. It should also create a European finance minister with suitable competences and resources. The EU's fiscal policy should be oriented towards investments, particularly regarding the 'Green Deal'. The other priority of the Italian government concerned migration policy. On this issue, the country relaunched the so-called 'integrated approach', which foresaw that European member states should share the responsibility for migration. Migration should not only focus on asylum, but also on integration through labour policies. To promote the necessary pan-European solidarity, European resources are needed (Governo italiano 2020). In 2020, Italy also sent proposals – together with countries including Greece, Malta, Spain, and Cyprus – for reforming the Common European Asylum System. The cornerstone of the proposals advocated the mandatory distribution of asylum seekers among member states (CY-EL-ES-IT-MT non-paper 2019; Greece, Italy, Malta and Spain 2020).

In 2021, the Draghi cabinet updated the 2020 non-paper on the CoFoE. While confirming most proposals of the first version of the non-paper, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic the government advocated the creation of a 'European Health Union' to fight the systemic causes of shortages and make personal protective equipment, vaccines and other medicines easier to access throughout Euro(pean) countries. For this, the EU would need a stronger spending capacity. Here, the government referred to an extension of the COVID-19 recovery fund, 'Next Generation EU', as the most suitable way to finance its priorities. For the future of the EMU, the Italian government believed that 'there is a clear need to move from the predominant focus on fiscal discipline and financial stability towards a more comprehensive approach, which appropriately values the goals of sustainability, growth and preservation of the social fabric' (Governo italiano 2021, 8).

Main actors in FoE debates in the Italian parliament

The debates covered involved 13 parties (see Annex 2). A distinctive feature of the debates is that all major parties moved from the majority (i.e. being part of the government) to the minority (i.e. being part of the opposition) or vice versa, with the exception of FdI, which has always remained in opposition.

As well as strong differentiation between parties regarding the anti-/pro-EU dimension, those parties moving from opposition to government experienced an increase in their support for the EU – or at least their anti-EU position became weaker. This is because, once in government, they needed to play a more institutional role (Greene 2016) and engage in negotiations both with other member states and with the Commission (Sitter 2001; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2012). In 2018, LN became a nationally oriented party. Hence, the 'Northern' was replaced with a new name: 'League for Salvini premier' (LSP). In the following, I use LN also to refer to LSP except otherwise mentioned.

The table in Annex 2 outlines the role of parties during the two parliamentary terms and the variation of the anti-/pro-EU scale. Based on the anti-/pro-EU values, we can distinguish three groups of parties in the Italian parliament: pro-EU parties, anti-EU or partially Eurosceptic parties, and parties that cannot clearly be classified on an anti-/pro-EU axis. I classify as pro-EU parties those parties with an anti-/pro-EU scale of more than 7 out of 10: PD, SC, UdC, CD, SVP, NCD, IdV, +EU, and IV. Conversely, anti-EU parties or partially Eurosceptic parties are those with an anti-/pro-EU scale of less than 6 out of 10: M5S, LN (LSP), FdI, SEL, and LeU. Ultimately, I classify as not clearly classifiable as either pro- or anti-EU those parties with an anti-/pro-EU scale higher than 6 and lower than 7: this mainly applies to FI in the 18th parliamentary term.

The debates featured 373 substantive speeches. Among them, 329 (88% of the total) were classified as FoE speeches. Figure 5.1 below shows that the two most active party families issuing FoE speeches were the social democratic (PD) and right-wing (LN and FdI) parties. Parties belonging to no family or representing a special issue, followed by Christian democrats (UdC and SVP), were less vocal on the FoE debates. Based on this strong variance in parties' positioning on the EU, we expect the debates to present a broad spectrum of positions and proposals on FoE.

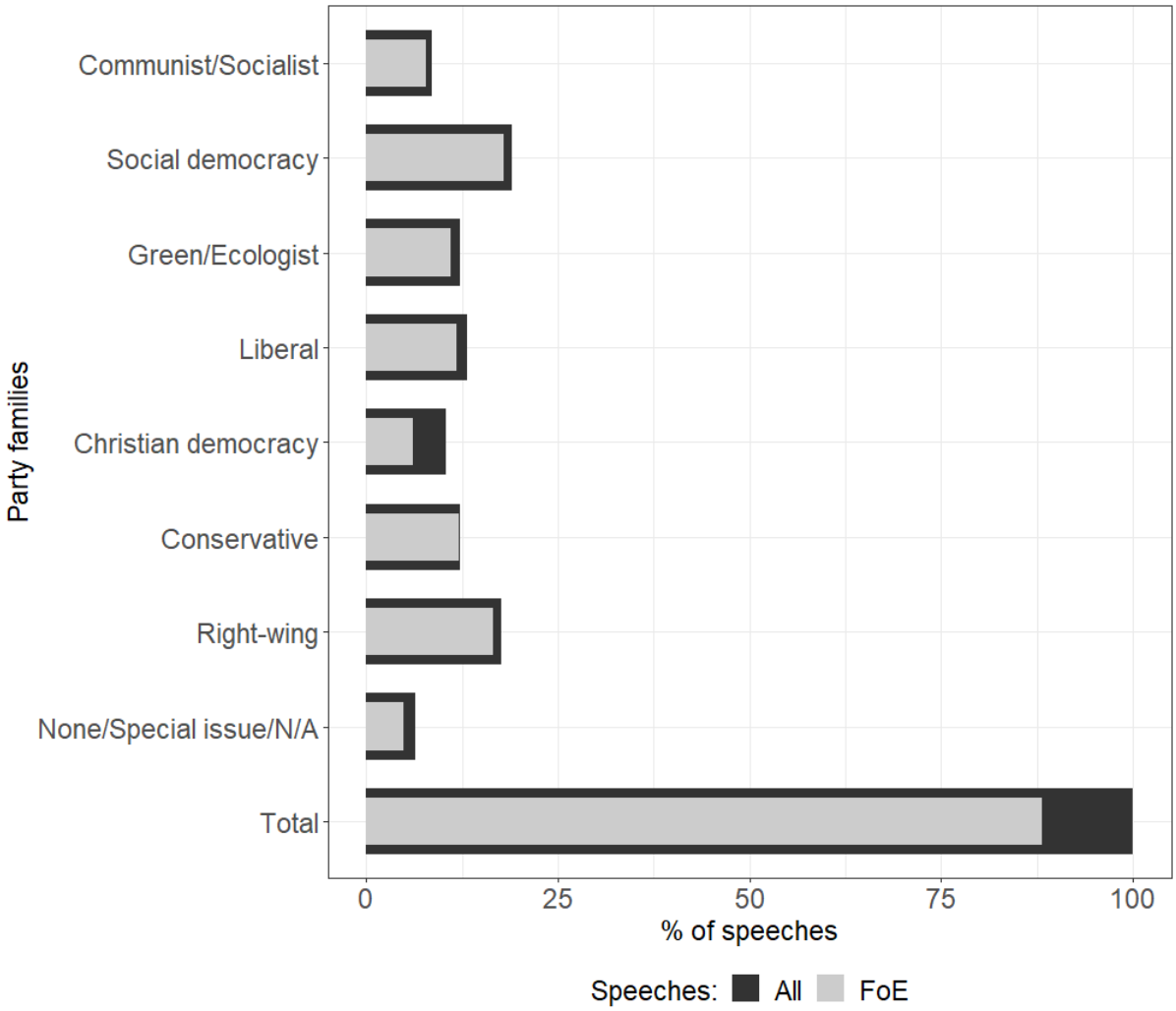


Figure 5.1. Frequency of analysed speeches by party family (m=373 – number of speeches, n=329 – number of FoE speeches).

In the following, the chapter outlines how the Italian parties positioned themselves on polity and policy reforms in the EU, on the relationship between integration and differentiation, and on the question of dominance. This will make it possible to assess whether the Italian parties expressed a concrete and coherent constitutional narrative on the future of the EU, and if so which one (see the Introduction by Góra, Thevenin, and Zielińska).

Italian parties and polity reforms

Among the elements of the Italian debates analysed were polity reforms. Specifically, in numerical terms, Figure 5.2 below shows that 12.16% of the FoE speeches contained at least one institutional reform proposal. Social democracy was the most active party family in making this type of proposals. With the exception of Christian democratic parties, which did

not submit any such proposal, the others were more or less equally active on institutional proposals.

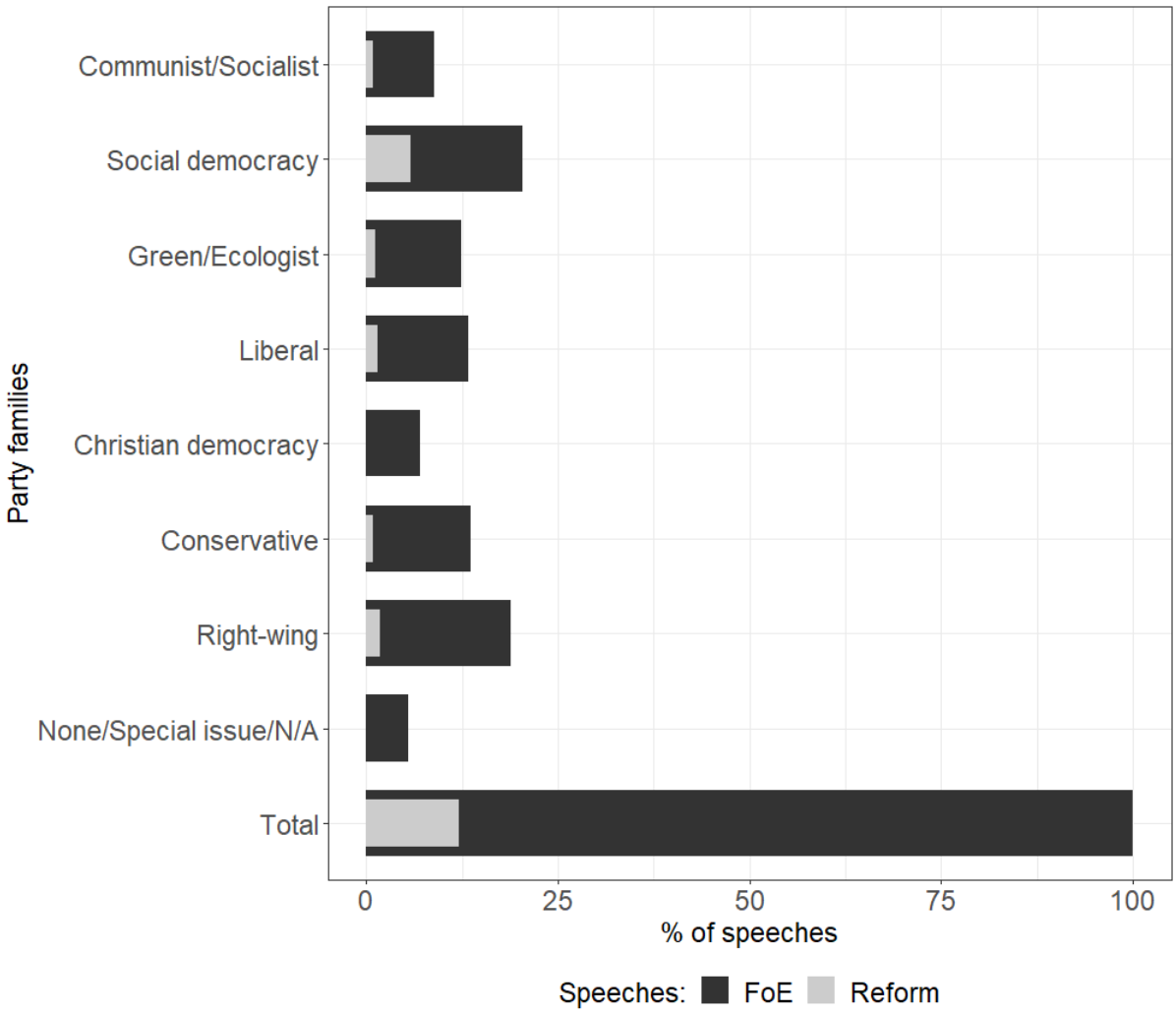


Figure 5.2. Frequency of references to EU institutional reforms in FoE speeches by party family (n=329 – number of FoE speeches, o=40 – number of speeches containing at least one institutional reform proposal, equal to 12.16% of FoE speeches).

Figure 5.3 below presents the frequency of references to EU institutional reforms.

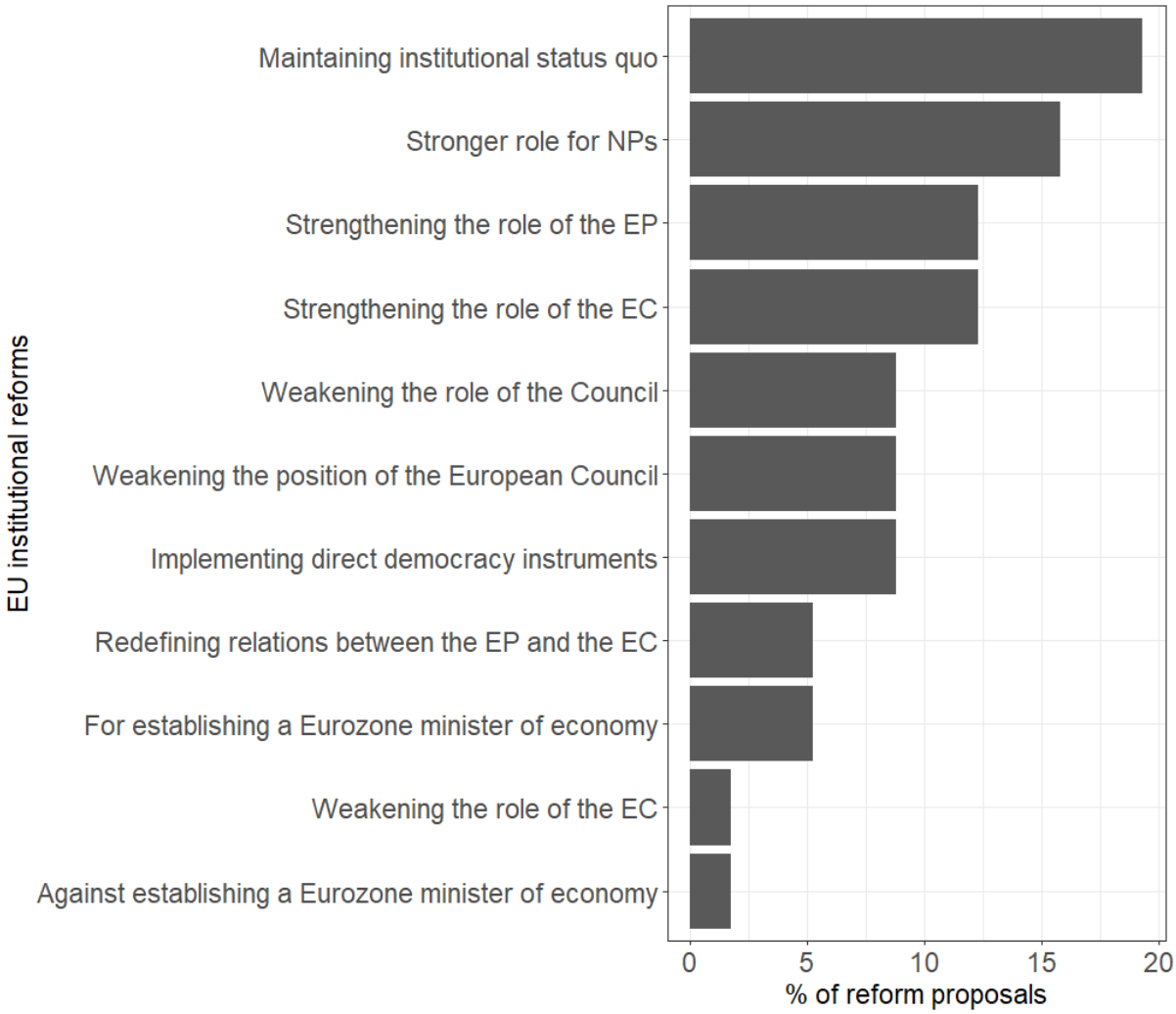


Figure 5.3. Frequency of references to EU institutional reforms (n=57 – number of institutional reform proposals).

The most frequent institutional reform mentioned was actually a 'non-reform', i.e. maintaining the institutional status quo. This is due to FdI, LN, and to a lower extent FI not proposing a strengthening of either supranational or intergovernmental institutions – with the exception of LN, which supported a stronger EP. The explanation is that these parties would prefer taking back control over policies at the domestic level. Given that for many policies this is difficult, if not impossible, their second choice is to maintain the current benefits of European integration. Therefore, FdI and LN tend to support the status quo, which for them is definitely better than the strengthening of supranational institutions. LN instrumentally claims to strengthen the EP as the only directly elected EU institution in contrast to the Commission, which the party depicts as an unelected body far away from citizens' needs. In addition, a stronger role for national parliaments was the second most presented proposal. Again,

such proposals were strongly supported by right-wing parties, but to some extent by the PD too.

The PD, M5S, and LN all supported strengthening the role of the EP, particularly through the right of legislative initiative. In the case of the M5S and LN, this proposal has been advanced starting from their participation in the government in 2018. For FdI and FI, but also for the more centrist and left-wing parties, a stronger EP was not a salient issue.

The PD was also the only party calling for a stronger role of the Commission – which testifies to the party's traditional support for stronger supranational institutions. On the contrary, for LN and FdI the Commission epitomised the bureaucratic nature of the EU as an actor that disproportionately constrained national sovereignty. As a result, in their proposals, the Commission was often targeted as an opponent. Interestingly, in the debate on the COVID-19 recovery fund Next Generation EU (NGEU), even LN and FdI seemed to prefer the Commission to monitor the disbursement of tranches of resources to the member states. Both parties feared that if this power lay in the hands of the Council, Italy's implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan could end up being assessed in a non-impartial way. No major party called for strengthening the role of either the Council or the EUCO. The PD and M5S aimed to weaken the role of both institutions – the other parties did not express this position. For the PD and M5S, the main reasons for weakening the Council and the EUCO were the lack of democratic accountability and the negative implications of intra-state bargaining. In these parties' case, weakening the (European) Council was primarily supposed to occur in procedural terms – by moving decisions on most policy areas (including core state powers with high domestic salience) from unanimity to QMV. LN and FdI, instead, stressed that unanimity should stay in place as an 'emergency brake' for a member state to defend crucial national interests. On the one hand, this demonstrated the parties' unwillingness – or incapacity – to express a comprehensive institutional preference. As a matter of fact, in the case of the PD, apart from the formation process through the *Spitzenkandidaten* system, the call for more influential supranational institutions was not followed by statements on how those institutions should relate to each other in practice. The PD was the only party proposing to establish a Eurozone minister of the economy as a hybrid figure between supranationalism and intergovernmentalism. On the other hand, despite

calling for competence repatriation, the more anti-EU parties did not explicitly support a stronger Council or a stronger EUCO. Hence, their opposition to supranationalism did not seem to correspond to support for intergovernmentalism. Anti-EU parties did not oppose the role of the European Court of Justice (ECJ) either, even though this institution has historically represented a precursor of deeper integration. The reason was that probably the parties did not consider the ECJ as being as influential as in the past. Instead, during the 17th parliamentary term the M5S and LN backed extending the mandate of the ECB from a focus on price stability to include measures supporting economic growth.

In sum, all parties diagnosed democratic malfunctioning and proposed rectifying institutional measures. As a solution, the PD, M5S, and FI, but also LN and LeU suggested strengthening democracy at EU level. However, while for the PD this implied providing the EP and the EC with a louder voice, the other parties called for more direct democracy instruments. Similarly, positions seemed to converge on strengthening democracy at the national level (within national parliaments): this featured prominently on the agenda of anti-EU parties, but the PD also mentioned it a few times. Set up as a regional party, LN backed greater involvement of regions in the European decision-making process.

Overall, the change in competences between the EU and the member states was a salient issue for the PD, M5S, and the right-wing parties. The directions of change they proposed, however, differed radically. The PD, but also the pro-EU parties +EU and IV, were clearly positioned in favour of a shift of competences from intergovernmental to supranational institutions. On the contrary, LN and FdI called for maintaining the institutional status quo (of intergovernmental institutions) but also for competence repatriation (from supranational institutions).

The debates showed that most parties deemed some institutional change necessary in order to improve the democratic functioning of the EU. Their motivations differed. In the first three (2015, 2016, and 2017) years of the debates covered, the M5S, LN, and FdI argued that Italy should leave both the EU and the euro area. At this point, EU institutional change was not even properly on the agenda. Once the negative implications of Brexit became clear, any attempts at Italexit were abandoned. This was further supported through the participation of LN and the M5S in the Conte I cabinet. However, although it has continuously remained part of the opposition, also for FdI leaving the EU became a non-strategy. From that

moment onwards, LN and FdI, but also the M5S, started 'a fundamental critique of the EU *although from within*' (Fabbrini and Zgaga 2019, 2). A key component of this strategy was institutional sovereignism, i.e. harsh criticism of the Commission, marked with calls for the empowerment of domestic institutions. To produce radical changes in EU interinstitutional relations, treaty change was seen as an option. In the case of the pro-EU camp, the quest for institutional change has been motivated by reasons not only of democratic accountability but also of decision-making efficiency. By reducing the power of intergovernmental institutions, more legitimate decisions were supposed to emerge. At the same time, depriving the intergovernmental institutions of their veto power made it easier to take decisions. The PD, UdC, CD, +EU and IV were open to treaty change but did consider it rather unfeasible. They thus suggested prioritising institutional change within the treaties.

The next section shows how in Italy calls for institutional change were strongly linked to calls for policy change.

Italian parties and policy reforms

As in other European parliaments, in Italy too, the debates on FoE were strongly driven by policies rather than by a coherent polity reflection. As mentioned above, the euro crisis, the migration crisis, and the COVID-19 pandemic shaped the proposals for reform presented in the parliament.

The EMU was the most frequently mentioned policy field in the Chamber of Deputies among all speeches analysed. To some extent, this is unsurprising because – next to the FoE and migration debates – I specifically examined Eurozone debates. However, EMU-related topics like the EU's fiscal capacity, particularly the EU budget, which in the analysis featured as 'Multiannual Financial Frameworks and EU budget', were mentioned in most of the speeches analysed. The same applies to migration, asylum and human mobility. Not only was this topic covered in specific debates on migration, but it appeared constantly throughout all debates. For both EMU and migration, the reason for their frequency lay in domestic salience and in the topics being part of the agenda of the EUCO's meetings. This means that on the one hand, those topics *had* to be discussed (they were on the EUCO's agenda); on the other hand, parties *wanted* to discuss them (they were high on their agenda). Other frequently mentioned topics were: 'Enlargement, European Neighbourhood Policy, EEA, Brexit', 'Climate and environmental protection', 'Defence and

security', 'EU foreign policy and external relations', 'Social issues (Social Europe)', 'Digital', and 'Internal market'. This chapter focuses on the two most often mentioned policy areas: fiscal and migration policy.

All parties called for reform of the EU's fiscal policy. Specifically, they all criticised the so-called EU austerity policies implemented during the euro crisis. Criticism varied greatly in intensity. The PD argued that the EU's approach to tackling the euro crisis has prevented growth. It therefore called for growth-oriented policies which complemented the efforts to consolidate public finances. Specifically, according to the PD, the EU should promote investments in European public goods and allow more domestic investments through a flexible enforcement of the SGP. The debates showed that particularly the Renzi cabinet has repeatedly voiced this request. In terms of framing, the PD considered the end of austerity policy as being beneficial for the EU as a whole. Interestingly, pro-EU parties like SC and +EU recognised the need for growth policies, but were the only parties to stress that for a highly indebted country like Italy it is crucial to keep in place some rules on budgetary discipline. But how can the EU spend more resources? The PD stated that the EU budget needs additional resources. Crucially, it needs more of its own resources, meaning new taxes that directly accrue to the EU in order to free the EU budget from dependence on member states. Having long supported forms of risk-sharing, the PD seized the opportunity of NGEU to push for a permanent increase in the EU's spending capacity. Hence, it called for NGEU to become a structural component of EU fiscal policy.

The explicit aim of the M5S in 2015 was to renegotiate the EU's economic governance in order to radically amend the SGP. SEL and LeU had similar positions. In the past, the M5S opposed any increase to the EU budget. The debates showed clearly how criticism of the SGP has remained in place, but with a much more moderate tone. Ultimately, the M5S fully committed to NGEU and underlined the need for a stronger European spending capacity. In sum, the pro-EU parties made the most detailed proposals on which type of new resources the EU budget should get. However, none of the parties articulated how more European resources would impact on national sovereignty.

LN and FdI argued in favour of putting an end to austerity policies in the EU, but without proposing an alternative. For them, the SGP was a senseless construct that illegitimately limits national sovereignty. It was said to meet the interests of some Northern European countries only.

While such countries were pushing for deficit rules, they arguably did not respect trade surplus rules. Both LN and FdI also pointed to those countries – most notably Greece – that became poorer due to austerity policies. A recurrent statement from both LN and FdI was that Italy has contributed too much to the EU budget. This is one reason why both parties refused any increase to the budget. Particularly, they opposed new European taxes, arguing that they would damage the Italian economy. Moreover, a stronger EU spending capacity represented a political step that went against both countries' perspective on FoE. FI was also critical of austerity policies, but was open to a more autonomous EU budget. During the pandemic, LN and FdI's strategy was to delegitimise NGEU as an insufficient recovery programme. A recurrent argument in the debates was that it would bring new forms of conditionality in addition to the European Stability Mechanism. After 2021, LN's position became more moderate due to its participation in the Draghi government. Although FdI did not vote in favour of NGEU in the parliament, in the related debate it also recognised how important the programme was for Italy.

The second topic that figured prominently in the Italian debates was migration. As with the EU fiscal policy, for migration too all parties agreed that the Dublin Regulation has proven to be inadequate. The topic featured prominently in all debates, not only those in 2015 (when the migration crisis exploded). The recipe to reform the Dublin Regulation differed significantly between parties. For the PD, the EU needed a common approach to migration. This approach was first and foremost grounded in sharing responsibility for the management of the migration flow, including the integration of migrants. The PD repeatedly called for establishing mandatory quotas for member states to resettle. During the Conte II cabinet, the M5S also joined this position. According to the PD, migration is a fundamental right which also expresses European identity/values. The party also proposed increasing financial (humanitarian) assistance to countries of origin and strengthening cooperation with third countries. Furthermore, it aimed to support Frontex in its task of controlling the EU's external borders. Last but not least, the PD was the only party to note the importance of further developing possibilities for integration and opening safe humanitarian corridors for migrants. However, during the Renzi government, there were also calls for return policies. At that time, the migration crisis was so politicised that the Renzi government decided to tackle migration

through harsher measures in order to respond to pressures coming from right-wing parties (LN and FdI).

The M5S displayed positions similar to the PD, although the focus was more on increasing financial (humanitarian) assistance, strengthening cooperation with third countries and establishing a mandatory system of redistribution. LN mostly called for protecting EU external borders and increasing return policy. FdI supported both policies even more strongly. The party's specific proposal was to create – in agreement with national authorities – a so-called naval blockade ('blocco navale') in front of Africa's coasts, a measure that opponents have often criticised as being against international law. The rationale was to be to prevent migrants from departing. It was supposed to be a national measure first – if necessary to be implemented also jointly with the EU, even though such cooperation with the EU was not further specified. While FdI mentioned cooperation with third countries, LN did not. Both parties opposed automatic redistribution mechanisms of asylum seekers across the EU. This was in line with their political ties to those Eastern European governments – particularly Hungary and Poland (see Steuer, in this volume; and Góra, Thevenin, and Zielińska, in this volume) – which strongly opposed such redistribution. Return policies also featured prominently on the agenda of both FdI and LN. They were the only parties who considered migration to negatively impact citizens' security and safety or represent a threat more generally. Neither did FdI and LN mention increasing possibilities for integration. SC was a strong supporter of increasing cooperation with third countries, establishing mandatory quotas and increasing financial (humanitarian) assistance, with the latter point also finding strong support among LeU. For FI, the most important measure was to strengthen protection of the EU's external borders.

In sum, whereas the PD and M5S rather advocated for European solutions to manage migration, LN and FdI focused on national solutions to contain migration. Ties with sovereignist governments such as those of Hungary and Poland prevented LN and FdI from pushing them to compulsorily accept asylum seekers, even though LN repeatedly protested against France closing its eastern border to Italy. In terms of resources, the PD advocated more funds from the EU budget or from ad hoc supranational funds. LN and FdI left the question of how to finance migration policies rather unanswered.

In EU foreign policy and external relations, specifically defence and security policy, all parties were in favour of more integration. However, the PD and M5S also supported forms of supranational capacity endowed with European resources. On the contrary, LN, FdI and FI argued that it should be up to the member states to better coordinate defence and security policy – without specifying how such coordination should be organised.

Not surprisingly, all parties were concerned about the rights of Italian citizens living in the UK after Brexit. The PD, M5S, FI, SC, +EU, and IV called for enlargement to the Western Balkans. The PD and M5S (after its participation in the government) were the only parties to link climate and environmental policies with more resources from the EU budget. SEL and LeU, but also the PD, often mentioned the need for the EU to develop its own social policy. Lastly, the debates also showed that all parties dealt with internal market policies. Anti-EU parties stressed the imbalances of the market, whereas pro-EU parties pushed for completing the single market. Completing the single market – together with digital policy – was also at the core of the speeches by SC, UdC, +EU, and IV.

Italian parties and differentiated integration

Differentiated integration (DI) was mentioned in 9.12% of the FoE debates, equal to 30 speeches containing at least one reference. As Figure 5.4 below shows, some parties did not mention DI at all, while others did. Among the former, we found the right-wing, but also Christian democratic parties.

In the case of FdI and LN, the reason was that DI did not represent a political objective for them. As a matter of fact, these parties called for repatriation of policy competences. Hence, they rather advocated differentiated disintegration (Schimmelfennig 2018), i.e. repatriating some policies, 'leaving integrated other policies considered instrumental for the strengthening of their states' (Fabbrini and Zgaga 2022, 5). The catalogue of these policies can vary opportunistically depending on which policies are considered beneficial for the member states. In the debates, repatriation embraced core state powers (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs 2016) with large externalities: foreign policy, security, defence, migration, research and development, internal market. The article shows how the parties did not clarify through which institutions these 'policies left integrated' should be managed. Similarly, until 2020

the M5S mentioned differentiated disintegration with regard to the possibility to opt out from the euro area. The reason why the M5S did not mention DI might be that the party was more concerned with increasing the democratic legitimacy of the EU integration process rather than discussing the depth of integration.

Among the parties mentioning DI, the PD proposed both temporary and permanent DI. In terms of policies to be subject to DI, the PD included fiscal, security and defence but – where necessary – also migration policy. On fiscal policy the PD also made clear proposals for further strengthening DI through a euro area parliament and a euro area finance minister. The PD justified DI in two ways. First, the more integrationist countries – i.e. those willing to deepen political integration in the EU – should be given the opportunity to do so. They should not be blocked by the less integrationist member states, i.e. those unwilling to deepen political integration. In turn, these less integrationist member states should not be forced into deeper integration. Moreover, the PD's argument was that forms of DI did already exist, most notably the euro area. The PD was also the party most in favour of EU enlargement (particularly to the Western Balkans). However, the remainder of this article will show that the PD did not properly engage in a discussion on how the relationship between groups of differently integrated countries should be regulated.

CD accepted both temporary and permanent DI as well as selective participation of third countries in the EU. SEL and LeU opposed existing and future DI because that would create an EU à la carte, which would further enhance internal asymmetry and patterns of dominance. Finally, the strongly pro-EU parties (SC, +EU, and IV) did not explicitly mention DI. The explanation was that these parties pushed for a strongly federal development of the EU where all member states would advance towards deeper integration. However, if comprehensive federal development is not possible, such parties would most likely accept DI.

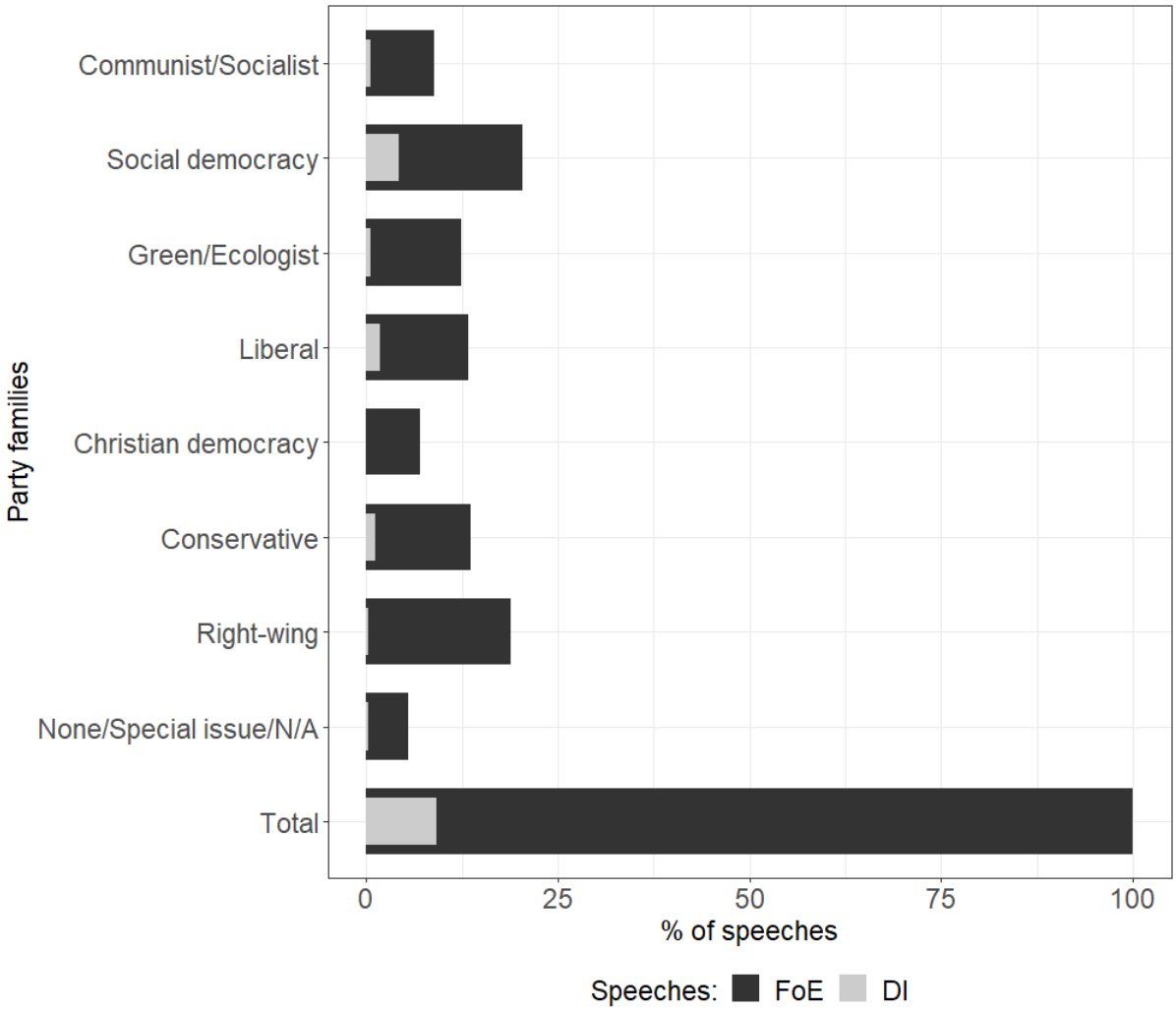


Figure 5.4. Frequency of references to DI in FoE speeches by party family (n=329 – number of FoE speeches, o=30 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to DI).

Italian parties and the perception of dominance

In the covered debates, dominance was mentioned in reference to fiscal and migration policy. In the former case, mostly right-wing anti-EU, but also leftist parties stressed dominance. In the latter, pro-EU parties pointed to dominance too. As Figure 5.5 shows, all parties except for liberal and Christian democratic ones mentioned dominance. Right-wing parties mentioned it most often, followed by the social democratic party (the PD) and the M5S. Overall, dominance appeared in 13.98% of all FoE speeches, which corresponds to 46 out of 329 speeches.

For LN, FdI and the M5S, the EMU is a German construction. Arguably, Germany has imposed its ordoliberal economic approach (Zgaga 2018; Hien and Joerges 2020) on the other member states by framing it as the

only recipe to solve the euro crisis (see Heermann and Tigges, in this volume). As a rule-based approach, ordoliberalism assigns centrality to sound public finances. It also stresses the importance of strong competition between actors. Economic growth is thus mainly obtained through the export of highly competitive goods. This differs from Keynesian approaches, which focus on stimulating internal demand, also through deficit spending (De Grauwe 2014). The right-wing parties argued that, through its economic (highest GDP in the EU) and political (most populous country in the EU) power, Germany has ended up dominating the rest of Europe. This has arguably created an illicit hierarchy in what was supposed to be a system of equals. Institutionally, the parties referred to the euro (modelled on the Deutschmark) and to the ECB (identical to the Bundesbank) as epitomes of such dominance. In the speeches of LN, FdI and the M5S, Germany was thus portrayed as an opponent. The European Commission was too, because arguably it was supportive of austerity policies. Recurrent references were made to the harsh consolidation measures forcefully adopted in Italy, but also to the dramatic economic situation of other Southern European countries, primarily Greece (see Anagnostou and Chatzistavrou, in this volume). As a solution to dominance, in the debates until 2017, LN, FdI, and the M5S called for Italy to leave both the EU and the euro area. Afterwards, this solution was abandoned in favour of strong criticism from within, most notably calls for entirely renegotiating the economic governance, including the abolition of the SGP. All the other parties saw the EU's fiscal policy as inadequate too. When proposing to reform it, however, they did not enter any rhetoric of dominance. They rather argued that austerity policies have created an intra-European division between creditors (Northern European member states) and debtors (Southern European member states). For the PD, the solution to this asymmetry was the introduction of growth-oriented policies because they would also benefit those member states whose economic model is oriented towards demand, not growth based on exports. LeU and SEL radically contested the EMU construction, but they did so without pointing to Germany as a 'dominator'.

In debates on migration, dominance featured prominently as 'inequality/status and recognition' and 'inequality/redistribution'. While it was mostly LN, FdI and FI that mentioned the former, the PD and M5S stressed the latter. The key common point of all Italian parties was that the Dublin Regulation disadvantaged the member states of first

arrival, which created a disproportionate burden on them. Nevertheless, the parties argued that this outcome was not properly acknowledged either by the Commission or by member states that are not countries of first arrival. This situation was considered incompatible with a Union of equal states that are supposed to share both honours and burdens. According to the PD, SC, +EU, IV, SEL, and LeU, it is the lack of a mechanism of redistribution of asylum seekers across member states that causes a deep inequality. LN, FdI, FI, and the M5S more explicitly spoke of dominance: the Dublin Regulation ends up introducing a de facto differentiated status where countries of first arrival find themselves being involuntarily dominated (constrained) by the others. All Italian parties wished to put an end to this pattern of dominance. The recipes for how to do so differed. Those parties with a federalist view (PD, SC, and +EU), but also the M5S, identified some mechanisms of shared responsibility between member states as the main solution. Those parties with a sovereignist version of intergovernmentalism (LN and FdI) opposed any redistributive mechanisms because they represented an interference with national sovereignty. They, therefore, advocated for national measures that limit migration.

The question of dominance also appeared with reference to the single market. LN, FdI, FI, SEL, and LeU criticised the trade surplus that some countries (particularly Germany and the Netherlands) hold. They thus called for enforcing the rules aimed at reducing/avoiding such a surplus. In institutional terms, dominance was also mentioned with regard to unanimity in the (European) Council. The PD argued that the veto power of each member state in the EUCO resulted in an illicit hierarchy – de facto a pattern of dominance – where each member state can discretionally block the adoption of a decision. The party, therefore, called for a move to QMV.

In sum, Italian parties perceived dominance mainly in economic and political terms with regard to the EU's fiscal and migration policy. It was mostly parties in opposition (FdI) – or that spent most of the time of the covered debates in opposition (LN) – that explicitly mentioned dominance. The word 'dominance' was used primarily by these intergovernmental or sovereign-intergovernmental parties as a contestation of alleged threats to – and interference in – national sovereignty. However, patterns of dominance were also implicitly voiced

by federalist parties as an unfair sharing of responsibilities across member states and as an obstacle to deeper European integration.

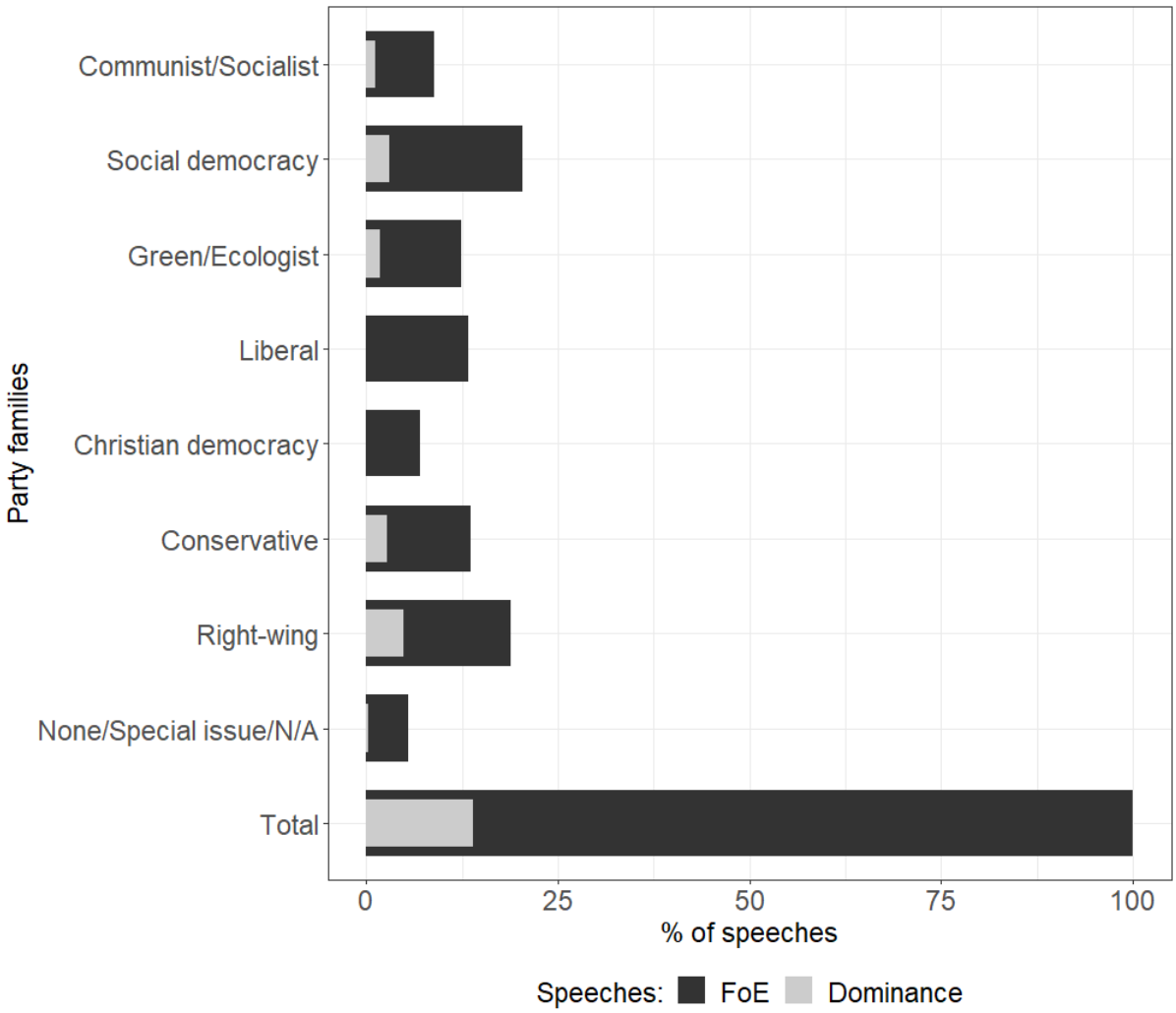


Figure 5.5. Frequency of references to dominance in FoE speeches by party family (n=329 – number of FoE speeches, o=46 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to dominance).

Conclusions: narratives and constitutional models

This chapter analysed debates following PMs' addresses to the Chamber of Deputies in view of EUCO summits over the 2015–2021 timeframe, which corresponds to three years of the 17th parliamentary term and four years of the 18th term. It covered 19 debates, in which 13 parties voiced their positions on the future of the EU. The aim of this concluding section is to assess whether parties' positions on European integration form a concrete and coherent narrative that can fit – wholly or with slight modifications – the constitutional models identified in the introduction to this volume (see Góra, Thevenin, and Zielińska, Introduction).

The PD wanted to strengthen democracy on the EU level. It called for empowering the EP and the Commission, but also national parliaments. It advocated greater EU capacity to act and more competences for supranational institutions. Fiscal and migration policies were the areas where the calls for more integration were loudest. In terms of resources, the PD stressed the need for providing the EU budget with more autonomous resources. Territorial differentiation was envisaged, whereas DI was mentioned with regard to specific policies, most notably foreign, security, and defence. Against this background, the PD held most elements of multi-headed federalism. Although it also proposed integration steps specifically tailored to the euro area as a core group of member states, the party does not claim specific institutional arrangements for the single market. As a result, de-coupled federalism did not apply.

It emerged from the speeches that the PD consistently called for stronger policy competences for the EU. While doing so, however, it did not discuss the implications of further competence centralisation for national sovereignty. Proposals for greater integration were framed as being beneficial first and foremost for Italy, but also for the EU as a whole. In the debates, the PD several times used the expression 'United States of Europe'. Any proposal suggesting the development of a federal EU, however, should deal with the relationship between the two levels of government (centre and units). Especially the discussion on fiscal relations is crucial. If the EU budget gets new autonomous resources as the PD demands, how does this impact the resources of the member states? Since this discussion is missing in speeches by parliamentarians from the PD, the parties' narrative spoke to multi-headed federalism, but what it proposed could be conceptualised as a variant of such multi-headed federalism. As this variant focused on those new competences to be transferred at EU level, I call it supranational centralisation. The PD can be classified under the multi-headed federalist model, with its supranational centralisation variant, for the whole period covered in the analysis.

With its strong call for the repatriation of competences, LN has been clearly sovereignist since 2015. It has repeatedly criticised democratic procedures at the EU level. It has also pushed for weakening supranational institutions while calling for re-nationalisation (particularly in fiscal and monetary terms), de-Europeanisation and

assuming an anti-EU stance. This has involved the use of pejorative language regarding the EU's interventions in domestic democratic orders. At the foreground has been a national, not European, capacity to act. EU capacity was opportunistically accepted when it was seen as politically beneficial. DI was rejected and any decision on citizens' rights should lie in the hands of member states. Therefore, from 2015 to 2021 the positions expressed by the League clearly spoke to the sovereignist version of intergovernmentalism. As with the M5S, however, also for the League more moderate positions emerged later – not with the outbreak of the pandemic (when the League was part of the opposition) but with the participation in the Draghi government (since 2021). Since then, opposition to the Commission has remained in place but has become weaker and less explicit, ultimately accepting the institutional status quo. Greater powers were also advocated for the EP, while stronger instruments of direct democracy were envisaged. LN called for strengthening intergovernmental institutions. For instance, it pushed to keep the unanimity rule. Overall, the post-2021 LN can thus be classified as belonging to the intergovernmental model. This is not meant to argue that the party has fully lost its sovereignist traits, but rather that it has channelled them more towards criticism of the existing EU institutional framework without excessively extensive calls for policy repatriation. The pre-2021 positions expressed by LN apply to FdI too. However, also because it has never been part of the government, FdI has remained sovereignist over the whole period covered in the analysis. As with LN, for FdI too national governments should figure centre stage in the EU. However, FdI made more explicit calls for the EU to be a confederation of sovereign nations that cooperate on specific matters (e.g. foreign and defence). In all other questions, the states should be free to exercise self-determination. Although governments are expected to be key actors, the party did not outline through which institutions such cooperation should take place. It did not explicitly mention intergovernmental institutions. This becomes clear if one considers that, although intergovernmentalism implies pooling of national sovereignties rather than sharing, this too might imply their limitation.

As several studies have demonstrated, the European Council is a highly institutionalised form of intergovernmental coordination and not a traditional diplomatic forum, a feature that contravenes sovereignist expectations (Fabbrini and Zgaga 2022, 25). In light of this ambiguity, for FdI I propose to conceptualise a variant within the sovereignist

intergovernmental model, i.e. the confederal variant as a form of cooperation between MS with the institutional setting left unspecified. FI is to be located within the republican intergovernmental model: it pushed for strengthening democracy at national level first and then possibly at EU level. It did not do much commenting and criticising of supranational institutions, but strongly criticised certain EU policies. FI was definitely not in favour of any federal model, instead advocating stronger intergovernmental institutions. Selective delegation of more competences to the EU might be possible for specific policy areas. During its participation in the Draghi cabinet, FI used NGEU to support a larger EU fiscal capacity. This increased the party's support for the EU, but the available data appears insufficient to assign a more integrationist model than the republican intergovernmental one.

What about the M5S? It was not easy to assess its fit to any of the constitutional models. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the M5S was rather anti-EU. Until 2020 (outbreak of the pandemic), on the one hand it even advocated the possibility of member states opting out from the euro area. On the other hand, the party called for a stronger migration policy managed at EU level. Institutionally, the M5S repeatedly supported stronger powers of the EP coupled with weaker powers for the Council and the EUCO, while at the same time calling for a more influential role of national parliaments. As a matter of fact, the M5S's main concern was to strengthen democracy at the national and European level. New policy competences at EU level were accepted provided that they were managed in a democratically sound way. For the M5S, the strong power of intergovernmental institutions was as problematic as the empowerment of supranational institutions if both undermined national democracy or triggered patterns of inter-state dominance. The expansion of citizens' rights in the EU was key for the M5S, while the party also stressed European values.

However, precisely because European democracy was malfunctioning and produced unequal policies, the M5S called for competence repatriation in the fiscal domain. As Fabbrini and Zgaga (2022, 2) put it, 'the answer to the pandemic prompted some political movements with sovereignist features (such as the […] M5S and the Spanish Podemos) to move towards moderately pro-EU positions'. Since the pandemic and the participation in the Draghi cabinet, the M5S has to some extent supported deeper integration in the fiscal, foreign, migration, and other policy fields.

In institutional terms, the party pushed for strengthening the EP. What remained in the party's post-2020 narrative was the request for specific institutional arrangements governing the single market, even though DI in the case of euro-area vs non-euro-area member states was not mentioned.

In the timeframe of the analysis, the position of the M5S was thus highly inconsistent. It oscillated between radical disintegration and selected integration – both with regard to policy competences and to institutional governance. Whereas before the pandemic the party was not entirely anti-EU, after the pandemic it has not become fully pro-EU. The M5S lacked support for the essential feature of intergovernmentalism – the strengthening of national governments (at home and in Brussels). At the same time, the importance attached to democracy and citizens' rights also at the national level prevented the party from clearly supporting a federal model of integration. However, in spite of the focus on democracy, since the M5S on some occasions pushed for integration and on others for domestication, neither is there a complete fit with the regional-cosmopolitan model. Therefore, I propose to not assign any specific constitutional model to the M5S. It featured elements of all models, including their variants. Yet, as no element clearly prevailed, the inclusion of the party into a specific model was not possible.

In terms of smaller parties, the analysis showed that SC, +EU, IV, but also UdC and CD all push for more competences at EU level. I thus assign them to the multi-headed federal model, with its variant of supranational centralisation, because also in this case a proper discussion on the division of competences in a potential EU federation was not conducted. These parties did not change their position in the timeframe of the debates. Finally, the debates showed that SEL and LeU belonged to the model of regional cosmopolitanism given that democracy on all levels of governance and the expansion of citizens' rights were deemed of utmost importance. SEL and LeU saw the EU as a cosmopolitan, value-based project. More competences on the EU were advocated, but on condition that a radical reform of the existing polity – which had supposedly lost its fundamental values – took place.

The chapter outlined that the Italian debates were strongly policy-oriented. Rarely was the future of the EU polity as such discussed. Instead, the parties' positions were inferred from their stance towards specific policy areas and their respective governance. Fiscal and migration

policy featured prominently given the impact of the euro and the migration crisis respectively in Italy. The parties displayed contrasting positions on the EU, and thus all different constitutional models were applied. However, the ex-ante, deductive models were not always a perfect fit for the Italian case. In fact, the analysis has led to the emergence of two new variants: the model of supranational centralisation as a variant of the multi-headed federal model and the confederal model as a variant of the sovereignist intergovernmental model. Some parties remained under the same model over the whole period, while other parties moved to a new model. Interestingly, when parties did move, it was to a more integrationist model. This happened whenever the party became a member of the cabinet or following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Overall, Italian parties in the Chamber of Deputies had strongly diversified positions on the EU. The positions expressed were coherent, meaning that – with the exception of the M5S – they were relatively stable over time and not contradictory. The key feature of the analysed debates was that positions were never expressed in a comprehensive way. This held true for both pro-EU and anti-EU positions: while the former did not explain the impact of proposals on the member states, the latter did not explain the impact of proposals on the EU, meaning its existing institutional setting. Ultimately, this was the reason for the mismatch between the positions of the parties and the deductive constitutional models, and therefore the need to develop new variants within these models.

At the time of writing, the 19th parliamentary term has started. In the new Chamber of Deputies, FdI, LN and FI hold the majority. The PD and M5S have moved to the opposition. A new government between FdI, LN, and FI has been formed under the leadership of PM Giorgia Meloni. Based on our analysis, this is a government that does not support deeper EU integration. For the first time, FdI is part of the cabinet. It remains to be seen whether, as with LN and FI, also for FdI participation in government will result in more pro-EU positions, or actually fewer anti-EU positions. What is sure is that Italy's position in the debate on the future of Europe is as uncertain as ever before.

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Chapter 6

The Greek Parliament under the stranglehold of the Eurozone and migration crises

Dia Anagnostou and Filippa Chatzistavrou

Overview of Greece's integration in the EU

Greece joined the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1981, six years after it made the transition from a military authoritarian regime into a parliamentary democracy. Its accession was intended to help consolidate its then newly established democratic institutions, promote economic development, and strengthen its position in the Western bloc and NATO. Political and governing elites have largely supported EC/EU integration, as well as the common currency, which Greece joined in 2001. As a small and less developed South European state, Greece has viewed its membership in the EU as a way to augment its power in the region and the world, as well as an engine of economic growth and political-social modernisation.

The global economic crisis in 2008–2010 had profound repercussions in Greece and ushered in a phase of adversity and discontent towards the EU. The Greek economy dramatically contracted over the next decade, and at the end of 2021, the country's GDP stood at -24% compared to its 2008 level (Eurostat 2022). At political level, widespread popular discontent with austerity and the bailout agreements of Greece with the EU, the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) – the so-called 'Troika' – paved the way for the advent of new and anti-EU parties. The outbreak of the economic crisis in 2010–2012 also led to a decline in popular support for EU integration in Greece. Although a strong majority of Greeks (69% in 2022) still believe that their country could better face the future inside the EU, 60% do not trust the EU (Eurobarometer 2022, 100). Meanwhile, a surge in migrant flows through the Eastern Mediterranean route into Greece in 2015–2016

created a humanitarian emergency, as well as prompting a profound crisis of migration and asylum governance at the EU level.

This chapter explores how Greek political parties view the future of Europe and perceive the EU, by examining the parliamentary debates that took place in relation to the Eurozone and migration/asylum policies during the 2015–2021 period. It analyses the extent to which issues of differentiated integration, democracy and perceptions of Greece's subordination and dominance surface in political parties' discourse in parliament.

National parliament's position in the political system

Following the transition to democracy in 1974, a system of presidential parliamentary democracy (*proedrevomeni koinovouleftiki dimokrateia*) was established in Greece with an unusually broad political consensus (Greek Constitution 1975). The constitutional revision of 1985 abolished the substantial powers of the head of state, the president of the Hellenic Republic, and consolidated the parliamentary over the presidential characteristics of Greek democracy. The Hellenic Parliament (Vouli ton Ellinon, or Vouli) comprises 300 representatives who are directly elected for a term of four years (in practice, governments rarely last for the entire four-year term) in multi-member electoral districts. The parliament elects the president and forms the government, legislates and votes on the annual state budget, as well as exercising oversight and control over the government. The parliament also appoints the prime minister (PM) who enjoys the 'express confidence' (the principle of *dedilomeni*) of the majority of representatives, and is usually the head of the political party that enjoys the support of the parliamentary majority (ibid.). The parliament's most important competences are its legislative and executive control functions (ibid.). The specific ways in which parliamentary democracy in Greece has interacted with the electoral and political party system reinforced the predominance of the executive (prime minister and cabinet) over the legislative branch (parliament) in the Greek political system (Alivizatos 1990; Foundethakis 2003, 87).

For most of the post-1974 period, the popular vote was translated into parliamentary representation through an electoral system based on some form of reinforced proportional representation that gave a larger or smaller bonus of seats to the political party that received the highest share of votes. Until 2010, this had contributed to consolidating a system

of two dominant parties that alternated in power, despite the fact that the electoral system was not purely majoritarian. It was also conducive to the formation of single-party governments that enjoyed the support of the majority of parliamentary representatives (with the exception of two short-lived coalition governments in 1989–1990). This latter characteristic rendered the Greek parliament relatively weak in its exercising of one of its main functions, mainly control of the executive.

The Vouli also exercises its legislative and executive oversight functions in areas related to European affairs. It typically does so when the government introduces bills that transpose EU legislation, and more broadly bills that are linked to policy areas in which the EU has competencies (i.e. migration, agriculture, Eurozone, etc.). These functions are exercised by the parliament plenum but also in the meetings of parliamentary committees. The Special Standing Committee on European Affairs (CEA) has substantial formal competences to control EU affairs as the key nexus between the national parliament and EU institutions and decision making, which, however, it does not exercise in practice (Article 32A, Hellenic Parliament Standing Orders). Generally, the Vouli can be characterised as a 'talking' rather than a 'working' parliament.

Greek political parties and their views on European integration

Until 2010, Greece had a two-party system with rarely more than four political parties securing a presence in parliament. The outbreak of the economic and sovereign debt crisis in 2010 ushered in a period of fluidity and structural changes in Greece's political and party system. In the first place, there was a sharp decline in electoral support for Greece's two main 'establishment parties', which from 2010 onwards were blamed for the economic crisis and austerity. This was most starkly evidenced in the case of the Socialist Party (Panhellenic Socialist Movement – PASOK), which saw its electoral fortunes plummet (receiving nearly 44% of the vote in the 2009 elections but just 12.5% in 2012, and less than 5% in 2015).

Secondly, the rise of new or previously marginal parties on the far right and far left of the political spectrum is symptomatic of a fragmentation tendency in the Greek party system. An increased number of political

parties gained parliamentary representation (as many as eight following the 2015 national election, and six in the 2019 legislature). Closely linked to the latter was the advent of coalition governments after 2010, in contrast to the single-party governments that had been the norm in the preceding decades.

Since 2015, Greece has had two national elections that formed parliamentary assemblies (2015–2019 and 2019–2022), with some differences in political party composition. The political parties with a presence in those assemblies can be depicted along the left–right axis and in regard to their position on EU integration (see Annex 2). New Democracy (ND) is one of the old established parties in the right of the political spectrum. Over the years, it has vacillated and repositioned itself between a centrist and a more neoliberal outlook. At present, ND portrays itself as a modern party of the centre right, which puts emphasis on economic reforms and managerial competence. As with most parties on the right in Southern Europe, it is in favour of an advanced welfare state, but it also seeks to limit state intervention in the economy and to promote private and foreign investments. The party takes a restrictive view on immigration and multiculturalism (Teperoglou 2021).

On the far right of the political spectrum, a few new parties have appeared and gained parliamentary representation over the last decade. From 2010, the far-right, neo-Nazi party Golden Dawn (GD) saw its electoral strength rise, and it was in parliament in the 2015–2019 period. The Independent Greeks (Aneksartitoi Ellines – ANEL) was another far-right party that espoused a nationalist ideology and opposition to immigration (it also dissolved after the 2019 elections). Subsequently, another far-right party, Greek Solution (Elliniki Lisi – GS) entered parliament after the 2019 national elections. GS is in favour of a strong role of the state in the economy. It espouses pro-Russian, pro-Orthodox and socio-culturally conservative positions, as well as a law-and-order agenda, and views immigration as a danger to Greek society.

Parties on the left of the political spectrum stand for state intervention and stronger market regulation, more integrative attitudes towards immigration and inclusive civil rights policies. KINAL (former PASOK) on the centre left espouses social-democratic positions and an important role of the state in the economy. It is in favour of redistributive policies, workers' protection and a strong welfare state, while it takes mixed positions in regard to security policies pertaining to law and order.

Smaller parties on the centre left (Potami) and centre right (Enosi Kentroon (EK) also acquired parliamentary presence in 2015–2019, but they were unable to enter parliament in the 2019 national elections.

The Coalition of the Radical Left (Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras – SYRIZA), a previously small party of around 5%, saw a sharp rise in its electoral appeal after 2010 when it gave expression to the strong popular opposition against the bailout agreements. It is in favour of a social market economy and income redistribution from the wealthier to the less well-off, and holds progressive views on immigration, multiculturalism and sociocultural issues (LGBT, gender equality, minority rights).

The Communist Party of Greece (Komounistiko Komma Ellados – KKE) presents itself as the main political force representing the working classes and seeks to be at the forefront of class and labour struggles. It views all injustices as emanating from the capitalist system. It strongly opposed the austerity measures and is in favour of extensive redistribution measures, universal social security, labour protection, and universal public education. Regarding identity issues and politics, KKE is ambivalent or suspicious, considering that these obscure the class nature of social conflicts. On the far left, the Front of European Realistic Disobedience (Metopo Evropaikis Realistikis Anipakois – MeRA25) is an anti-establishment party that advocates radical economic reforms towards income redistribution and the tackling of socioeconomic inequalities.

A distinctive feature of the post-2010 period was the sharpening of a pro-European versus anti-European divide in party positions and political competition in Greece. Such a divide was marginal in the period prior to the economic crisis. It reached a peak around 2015/2016, after which it somewhat subsided. The intensification of inter-party competition and debates regarding membership in the Eurozone and the EU was closely linked to Greece's bailout agreements with its lenders in a context of political polarisation and strong societal opposition. In this context, EU policies related to the Eurozone (and subsequently to the 2015–2016 migration crisis) became increasingly salient in the domestic political system in the 2010s. Among Greek parties, the ND (right) and KINAL (centre-left, formerly PASOK) maintained an unequivocal pro-EU stance and commitment to the values and policies of European integration, despite their ambivalent and contradictory stance vis-à-vis the bailout agreements. SYRIZA, on the other hand, led a highly vocal opposition to

the latter, and in 2015, its left and strongly anti-Eurozone segment split and left the party. Since then, SYRIZA too, along with ND and KINAL/PASOK, have all been in favour of the common currency and of further integration, including in the area of common foreign and defence policies, as well as increased EU powers over taxation.

At the same time, Euroscepticism grew beyond KKE, which was previously the sole party to espouse it. It also acquired expression in political parties on both the far left and the far right of the political spectrum (see Annex 2). Far right parties, such as Golden Dawn and the Independent Greeks (ANEL), saw the EU as largely responsible for the economic crisis and for 'imposing' austerity in Greece. Likewise, Greek Solution (GS, far-right, 2019–2022) opposed EU interference in member states' budgets and generally views participation in the Eurozone as a 'disaster for Greece' (though it has not clarified whether it is opposed to Greece's EU membership as such). On the far left, MeRA25 is also sharply critical of the EU, viewing it as profoundly anti-democratic and in need of radical restructuring.

Uncertain disagreements on the future of Europe since 2015 in Greece

The multiple crises over the past 10 years have sharply increased interest in, and strongly politicised, issues related to EU institutions and policies. In the period under review (2015–2021), the crises that Greece was facing (Eurozone, migration, COVID-19) fundamentally framed discussions on the future of Europe (FoE). The future of Europe as such, however, was not a priority for political parties and it was rarely raised as a distinct topic of discussion in parliamentary debates. Parliamentary representatives and political parties advanced views, ideas and disagreements about the future of Europe mostly indirectly, in the context of exchanges on various issues and policies related to the European Union. Therefore, locating the parliamentary debates on FoE was not a straightforward task.

In anticipation of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE) in Spring of 2021, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) released a concept paper specifically on FoE. Reflecting on Greece's position vis-à-vis different EU policies, it called for a Europe with a strong social agenda, the need for reform of the institutional deficiencies of the EMU, the

strengthening of the EU's global role and security policies, strong climate action and a green economy, and solidarity in managing migration and asylum – all issues of strong interest for Greece and the EU (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2021). This concept paper, as well as the various views and positions advanced by Greek parliamentarians, did not reflect or advance a clear perspective on what the EU as a polity is or should be.

Instead, national representatives' narratives of the EU take the form of general and conflicting views as to what the EU embodies (or should embody) and symbolises (i.e. a community of values and human rights). Political parties and their MPs also disagree on how positive or disadvantageous the EU and its policies are for Greece. Mainstream political parties from left and right are generally in favour of more EU and tend to view the transfer of enhanced functions and powers as beneficial for a small state like Greece. Such pro-EU views, however, are not without contradictions. Most political parties, for instance, are in favour of stronger EU competence in foreign policy, but at the same time against qualified majority voting in this area, concerned that Greece as a small state would be unable to defend its national interests if it were to lose its veto power (Blavoukos and Pagoulatos 2022, 10). All in all, the positions advanced by parliamentarians are rarely underpinned by views and disagreements over different models of EU polity.

Main actors in FoE debates in the Greek parliament

While parliamentary discussions rarely touched directly on the issue of the EU's constitutional architecture, views on the future of Europe still surfaced indirectly, in the context of debates around specific policies and issues that are closely linked to the EU. In the period under study (2015–2021), the sovereign debt and the Eurozone crisis, the management of the 2015 surge in migration and the EU's response to the COVID-19 pandemic were key issues debated by Greek parliamentarians. The relevant debates reflected and advanced, mostly implicitly, diverse views and perspectives on the EU polity and its future. The Eurozone crisis and the surge in migration in 2015 in particular, were at the centre of political contestation because they had direct and profound consequences for the political system and the society at large in Greece. The parliamentary debates around these served the competition between political parties. Typically, opposition parties criticised the

governing party for not doing enough to leverage the EU and to promote national interests related to economic and migration/asylum policies.

In the next sections of this chapter, we explore contested views on the EU reform and the future of Europe, as these are played out in national parliament debates around the Eurozone, migration and the COVID-19 pandemic. The selection of empirical data includes 12 debates – three on FoE, four on the Eurozone and economic matters, and five focusing on migration and asylum – from the beginning of 2015 until the end of 2021. Debates on the future of Europe include discussions on diverse topics, such as the proposed annual state budget for 2017, and a draft law on the ratification of the agreement that amended the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), as well as discussion on a vote of no confidence to the government called by the leader of the principal opposition party (Alexis Tsipras, SYRIZA). Eurozone-related debates also centered around the ESM and matters of economic support for those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, one debate was prompted by questions of the SYRIZA leader to the prime minister (Kyriakos Mitsotakis) regarding the handling of the economic consequences of the crisis (EL_2020-06-12_Eurozone).

Migration-related debates took place in the context of parliamentary control of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) involved in the management of migration and refugee reception, in a discussion on the 'need for an alternative plan for the migration problem' (EL_2016-09-30_Migration), in the context of legislative work to reform national immigration/asylum law and to transpose related EU directives, and on the occasions of discussion on a draft law to ratify the planned operation of a European Union Agency for Asylum office (EASO) in Greece (EL_2020-06-16). Figure 6.1 below displays speakers' involvement in FoE debates according to their party family. We see that conservative (right/centre-right) and communist and socialist parties were most active in these debates, with the volume of communist/socialist party speeches surpassing those of all other political parties.

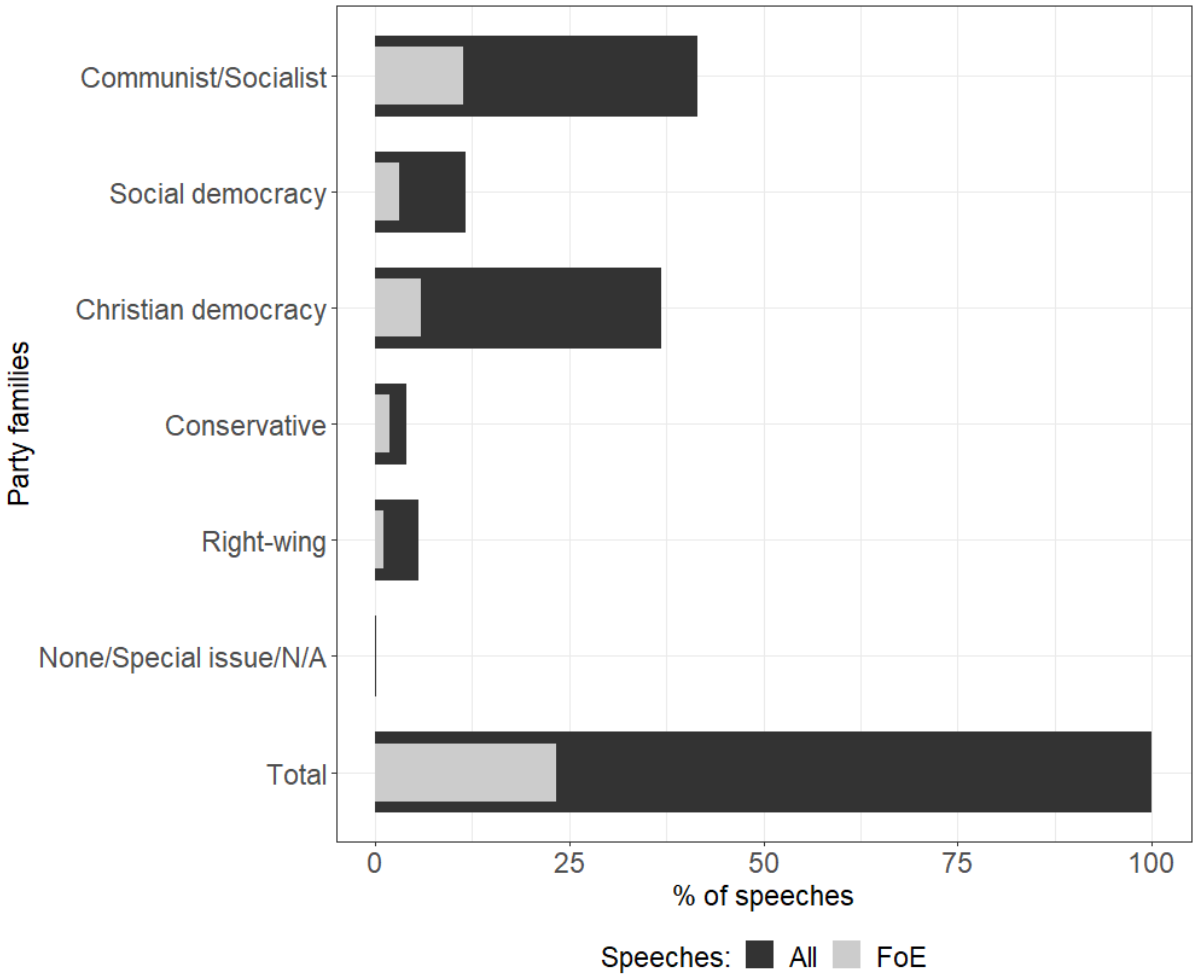


Figure 6.1. Frequency of analysed speeches by party family (n=546 – number of speeches, n=127 – number of FoE speeches).

During the first parliamentary term covered by this analysis (2015–2019), parliamentarians' discussions were shaped by strong political confrontation between the (predominantly left) SYRIZA government (in coalition with the far-right ANEL), which negotiated the third memorandum of 2015, and the opposition parties that accused the government of political mistakes leading to the prolongation of austerity in the country. The memoranda refer to the agreements (three in total in 2010–2015) between the Greek government and the EU, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) (the so-called 'Troika'). They contained a wide range of reforms and structural adjustment measures, to which the Greek government agreed in exchange for restructuring its external debt and receiving aid. Smaller opposition parties criticised the SYRIZA-led government, but also the large political parties that had governed the country in the preceding years and decades (ND, PASOK) as responsible for the crisis. Both government and

opposition parties saw the need to strengthen democracy at the national and European level, and more broadly to change the European Union after the economic crisis.

Political antagonism and the contested role of the EU in migration and asylum

EU migration and asylum policy has always been of high salience for Greece, a state of first entry strongly affected by migration flows. Following the 2015–2016 surge in migration and afterwards, the relevant parliamentary debates became particularly acrimonious and polarised. The right-wing ND party (main opposition in 2015–2019 and in government in 2019–2021) was sharply critical of how the leftist SYRIZA-led government (in 2015–2019, and in opposition in 2019–2021) managed this unprecedented migration wave. More broadly, left and right parties strongly disagreed on the direction of the national and European immigration and asylum policy. On the left, SYRIZA representatives supported a policy based on human rights and a humanitarian approach to handling migrant flows. They saw this policy as being in accord with the EU's fundamental values and with international law (i.e. Geneva Convention), and SYRIZA as being at the forefront of defending such values.

As principal opposition party in 2015–2016, the right-wing ND, on the other hand, advocated restrictive migration and asylum policies. It placed the emphasis on security, the fight against terrorism, and deterrence (measures that make it difficult to cross the border and stay in Greece as a way to discourage more migrants from making such an attempt), and advocated tight border control measures to curb migration. ND representatives argued that the left-wing government's border liberalisation policy worked as a 'pull' factor for more migrants to make the journey to Greece and on to Northern Europe, causing a migration crisis in Europe. ND and other opposition parties further criticised the SYRIZA-ANEL government for incompetence and failure to put in place functional structures and procedures for the reception, identification and accommodation of incomers, for overcrowding in the islands, for lack of transparency in allocating funds to NGOs providing services, and for slowness and inefficiency in handling asylum claims, among others.

Mainstream political parties to the left and right, like SYRIZA, ND and centre-left PASOK/KINAL and Potami, all view the EU as capable of taking effective action to manage the large migration wave. At the same time, they tended to criticise the governing party for not utilising political-institutional channels and bilateral relations to bring the EU to take effective action in the interests of Greece. In 2015–2016, opposition parties charged the left-dominated government with failing to advance national interests in EU negotiations and decision making. They saw the agreement struck by the SYRIZA-led government to take in 50,000 migrants as part of the European Commission relocation agreement in October 2015 as detrimental and unfair for Greece. The right-wing opposition party ND urged the government to use bilateral contacts with the governments of France, Portugal and other EU states to convince them to take in refugees and to reform the CEAS (EL_2016-09-30_Migration).

Political parties from the left and right in parliament were strongly ambivalent about the EU's agreement with Turkey in March 2016 – an instance of (partial) externalisation of migration management – even as they acknowledged its effectiveness in reducing migrant flows. Concluded with Germany's leadership, the EU-Turkey statement was a turning point for the EU management of the migration and refugee crisis, but also for the Greek government's policy. Turkey would readmit all migrants crossing the Greek islands from its territory, in exchange for financial assistance and a variety of other concessions from the EU. Frustration with the EU-Turkey statement stemmed from the fact that it elevated the geopolitical significance and benefits of Turkey – Greece's adversarial neighbour – while rendering Greece a 'hostage' to it. Representatives from most political parties expressed disappointment and concern about Turkey becoming a strategic partner of the EU in migration and Greece's strong dependence on it to curb the flows (Ioannis Kefalogiannis, MP, ND, EL_2016-09-30_Migration).

The governing party representatives countered that the SYRIZA-led government was the first one to Europeanise the migration issue (making the onerous situation faced by Greece an issue of European concern) and to make key alliances with South European countries to advance national positions in the CEAS (Nikos Ksidakis, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, SYRIZA, EL_2016-04-18_Migration). Despite the fact that the EU-Turkey statement was fiercely criticised on human rights grounds, representatives of the governing SYRIZA party defended the EU-Turkey

deal by referring to the situation of crisis that Greece was facing at the time (Dimitris Dritsas, MP, SYRIZA, EL_2016-04-18_Migration). By 2020, when SYRIZA was in opposition, it depicted the EU-Turkey statement as a 'necessary evil' that had been made imperative by the closure of borders in Central and Northern Europe and the refusal of the Visegrad countries to take in refugees. It shifted the blame to the right-wing ND government for arguably failing to pressure its partner parties in the European People's Party and persuade them to accept refugees in their countries through relocation (Giorgos Psychogios, MP, SYRIZA, EL_2020-05-08 Migration).

Whereas mainstream political parties of the left and right saw the EU as having the capacity to take action, and with all its deficiencies, to do so in ways that were beneficial for Greece, far-right and far-left parties outright and thoroughly denied the EU's potential as such, albeit on different grounds. Parties of the far right like GD and GS viewed Europe as being responsible for the rise in (illegal) migration, opposed the EU-Turkey agreement, and advocated building walls, applying pushbacks and sending migrants to uninhabited islands (Kyriakos Velopoulos, MP, Greek Solution, EL_2020-05-08_Migration). They saw all migrants as illegal, incapable of being assimilated into Greek culture, and as a danger to public security. Far-left parties, on the other hand (KKE, MeRA), saw EU action as entirely detrimental to human rights and the EU-Turkey agreement as 'repugnant' (Turkey not considered a 'safe' country). It arguably transformed Greece into the 'EU's prison' and the 'iron gate of Europe' (Dimitris Koutsoubas, MP, KKE, EL_2020-05-08_Migration).

From 2019 onwards, when the right-wing ND government came to power, national policy took a new turn in line with its approach to migration as a threat to national security. It passed new immigration legislation that introduced highly restrictive asylum procedures, maintained closed detention centres in the islands, and made returns and border control a priority. The ND government viewed migration as an instrument for Turkey to blackmail and pressure Greece, as well as a phenomenon shaped by high unpredictability for frontline states in South-Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. From its position as the main opposition party, in 2019–2020 SYRIZA representatives strongly criticised the highly restrictive immigration legislation that the right-wing ND government had passed (significantly shortened deadlines for submitting asylum claims, abolition of the vulnerability criterion, for not

meeting basic procedural guarantees in asylum procedures, and for using systematic detention) for contravening human rights standards and EU law:

> For us European and international legality and solidarity must be applied in all migration and asylum cases. For us, rule of law, whether it has to do with asylum organisation, structures, or with public money, is an accomplishment that must be maintained, not like the way that you [the ND government] approach it.
>
> (Giorgos Psychogios, MP, SYRIZA, EL_2020-05-08_Migration)

The far-left MeRA25 party also strongly criticised the 2020 immigration legislation on human rights grounds, but it distanced itself both from the right-wing ND government and from the left-wing SYRIZA, calling both the 'obedient pupils of Brussels' for staying in line with the Dublin system (Fotini Bakadima, MP, MeRA25, EL_2020-06-16_Migration).

Despite the sharp differences in migration and asylum policies, as well as on the role and capacity of the EU, the discussions in parliament reveal a significant point of convergence of left- and right-wing, centrist, pro- and anti-EU parties as regards the crux of the EU's asylum policy. They all viewed the Common European Asylum Policy (CEAS) and the Dublin Regulation (DR) as profoundly unfair, ineffective and unsustainable, and in urgent need of reform in the direction of mandatory (not flexible) solidarity, strongly advocating a proportionate and mandatory distribution of asylum seekers across member states. Across political parties, MPs specifically maintained that the EU and its member states should not merely support Greece financially, administratively and on a voluntary basis, but equally contribute by taking in a share of asylum applicants. While in government, SYRIZA representatives argued that the burden of incoming migrants and refugees should be shouldered equally by all member states in accordance with their economic condition, and through the adoption of mandatory proportional quotas:

> We as government pressured for a plan contrary to[...] Fortress Europe[...] based on the equal allocation of the burden in refugee crisis. The European People's Party does not want this. Your contribution [of the ND party] would be to pressure [the EPP] in this direction [to accept burden sharing].
>
> (Dimitris Vitsas, MP, SYRIZA, EL_2016-09-30_Migration)

Even strongly pro-EU parties expressed strongly critical views of the EU's inability to display such substantive solidarity and deep frustration with the slow process of relocation (and refusal of some member states to implement it at all). Representatives of the strongly pro-EU ND even questioned whether a common policy existed at all:

> Europe does not have a common policy. It has common conclusions of European Councils, but it does not have a common policy[...] Yesterday Hungary and Slovenia petitioned the CJEU to challenge the decision to relocate refugees from Greece to their countries[...] there are countries that do not want to accept [refugees] that want to raise walls. And this is a reality that unfortunately we cannot deny.
>
> (Dora Bakogianni, ND, Hellenic Parliament Proceedings, 11 December 2015)

Eurozone membership: a tool or an obstacle for popular sovereignty?

In the first half of 2015, the SYRIZA-led government called for a referendum on 5 July 2015. It sparked highly acrimonious and polarised debates within parliament. The SYRIZA-led government at the time advanced the view that the referendum was an important message to the European Union that austerity threatens democracy.

Evaluating the EU's response to the Eurozone crisis, mainstream Greek political parties (ND, KINAL, late SYRIZA), beyond their ideological and strategic differences, embraced the method of 'failing forward' (purposefully and deliberately using failure to find success; see Jones, Kelemen, and Meunier 2016), thus accepting that a painful cycle of crisis followed by incremental reform leads to deeper integration. ND and KINAL considered the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF, €750 billion) a historical decision for the EU, as it was the biggest financial package in the history of the European Union. Radical left-wing party MeRA25, on the other hand, called for 'constructive disobedience' and outlined a plan which would combine the innovation of the Eurobond with a 'New Deal' approach to European development.

In the 2015–2020 period, the anti-capitalist KKE, the far-left opposition party MeRA25 and the far-right GS were the most active in debates regarding FoE and the Eurozone. They expressed strong doubts as to whether the EU's mindset can be changed/transformed in the future in a

way that would be beneficial for the working classes. KKE always took a harsh anti-EU position (hard Euroscepticism) during debates on Eurozone issues. They viewed the EU as a 'reactionary construction', an imperialist coalition whose future operation cannot be positively impacted by either referendums or reform initiatives (Dimitris Koutsoubas, General Secretary, KKE, EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone).

In the 2019–2023 parliamentary term, KKE general secretary Dimitris Koutsoubas stipulated that this 'infamous common borrowing' (referring to RRF) will be accompanied by uniform taxes for all the peoples of Europe; 'whether it is called a 'digital tax', or a 'green tax', or a 'Covid tax', the transfer of the damages of the new crisis and its burdens will go onto the backs of workers' (Dimitris Koutsoubas, MP and Secretary General, KKE, EL_2020-07-29_Eurozone). In contrast to SYRIZA, which considered that the distribution of RRF loans and grants significantly strengthened the countries of the South, KKE representatives stated that foreign conglomerates as well as domestic capitalists (i.e. the Greek Federation of Industries, the banking sector etc.) would capture these funds for their own benefit. In a broader perspective, KKE believes that the alliance of the countries of the South can do very little regarding FoE, since there is an increase in the size of capital over-accumulation, while the gap between the monopolies of Germany, France and Italy is growing, and the compromises between them are temporary and unstable (Dimitris Koutsoubas, MP and Secretary General, KKE, EL_2020-07-29_Eurozone).

Parliamentary debates focus on a broad range of concerns about the policy mix in the euro area. Among the issues that led to intense debate are the loan facility agreement with the European Stability Mechanism in 2015 and the negotiation of the third memorandum of understanding (MoU; bailout agreement), as well as the implementation of the RRF in 2020. Detailed discussions were held on the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund, which the SYRIZA-led government was called to set up in the framework of the third MoU while putting forward a new series of austerity measures. The implementation of the 2014 Juncker investment package and Greece's pandemic recovery and resilience plan (the 2020 Next Generation EU key financial instrument), both requiring structural reforms by EU member states, were also debated. All opposition political parties expressed more or less their concern that (shadow) MoUs and austerity policies would be part of the future design of Greek/EU economic governance. These Eurozone-specific policy debates sometimes

gave rise to more general discussions about the fate of the 2015 referendum results and the (future) preservation of popular sovereignty at national and EU level.

While evading discussions on future debt management solutions, these post-2015 debates implicitly include projections into the future of the Eurozone/EU by providing specific policy-related solutions. Nevertheless, the way political parties and their MPs take positions on a whole range of issues shows that there is evident consent from the majority of MPs to stay inside the Eurozone. This trend is interpreted in two ways depending on the parties' ideological position. For SYRIZA, as long as it held government power, maintaining Greece's Eurozone membership was an antidote to the rapid emergence of the phenomenon of anti-politics – namely, the increase of public disengagement from (technocratic) politics. In a certain analysis that some of its MPs advanced, the rise of an anti-establishment sentiment (labelling politicians as all the same and corrupt) arguably feeds into the 'serpent's egg' (used as a metaphor to describe the process of incubation for Nazism and the far right) (Nikos Filis, MP, SYRIZA, EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone). For ultra-nationalist MPs of the far-right GS, placing all hopes in the stock exchange, banking and fiscal union of the Eurozone makes Greece a region and not a country; it is within this context that the chances of the Eurozone breaking up in the future are much greater (Vasilios Viliardos, MP, Greek Solution, EL_2020-07-29_Eurozone).

In the 2015–2019 legislature, SYRIZA MPs insisted on Greece's capacity to use the third MoU in order to develop an investment capacity at the national level. They supported the idea that the way of implementing it could be more important than the agreement itself. At that time, an 'anti-austerity method of implementing' was proposed. According to such a method, the Hellenic Republic Asset Development Fund (HRADF) would be established in the country to boost the country's capacity for loan reimbursement through production reconstruction, thus postponing privatisations by 10 to 20 years (Euclides Tsakalotos, finance minister, SYRIZA, EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone). As far as the implementation of the third MoU is concerned, the leader of the main conservative opposition at that time, Kyriakos Mitsotakis (ND), clarified that the depoliticisation of economic governance both at European and national level, as well as the technocratic management of the Eurozone, is the only way to increase trust between European partners and develop

the 'feeling' of national ownership of reforms (Kyriakos Mitsotakis, MP and party President, ND, EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone).

Fairer distribution of burdens was at the top of radical-left opposition parties' agenda during the whole period of study. These parties (KKE, MeRA25) explained that the design of economic and fiscal rules did not allow for a fair distribution. On the other hand, the social democratic SYRIZA and the social-liberal KINAL argued that the design of economic and fiscal rules depends on national governance and state capacity to deal with a just distribution of benefits and burdens. Since 2019, the leader of the main opposition, Alexis Tsipras, has raised doubts over the ND government's bargaining capacity, pointing out the change in the ratio between grants and loans at the expense of grants in the RRF plan. Tsipras underlined that 'this change of reducing subsidies was due to the acceptance by the European Council of the positions of the countries of the rich North' (Alexis Tsipras, MP and leader of main opposition party, SYRIZA, EL_2020-07-29_Eurozone). While KKE and MeRA25 agreed on this specific point, they strongly criticised SYRIZA's previous governance as being too consensual, and argued that it consolidated the path for neoliberal economic policies and facilitated the work for ND that came after it.

More generally, SYRIZA and KINAL also supported the idea that European investment packages (Juncker package, Next Generation EU, European structural and investment funds) can be efficient tools for growth prospects. The radical-left parties, on the other hand, considered that prospects for capitalist development could not open the path for the restructuring of sovereign domestic debt. After the outbreak of COVID-19, SYRIZA proposed the joint negotiation of medicine prices between the countries of the European South for the universal access of citizens to cheap and quality medicine (Eirini-Eleni Agathopoulou, MP, SYRIZA, EL_2020-06-12_Eurozone). MeRA25 said that Greece would receive a total amount of just €12.12 billion for three years, which would automatically be added to the country's existing permanent debt. In the current parliament (2019–2023), radical-left parties pointed out that the EU's economic governance of the pandemic presupposes a new series of deregulation reforms. They made repeated references to the fact that the design of the RRF brings new uniform supervision mechanisms with permanent memorandums, even if they are not formally labelled as such.

Faced with these criticisms, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis reassured the parliament that the Greek economy had entered the year 2020 continuing its strong growth momentum, asking them not to confuse the state budget with strategic instruments of economic growth such as the RRF plan, which would primarily finance investments. According to Mitsotakis, Greece was one of the winning countries of the agreement, as the net inflows it would receive are the highest in the Eurozone as a percentage of GDP and among the largest overall in the EU. He assured the house that there would be absolutely no supplementary memorandum for the disbursement of these funds, since the conditions are the same for the 27 member states (Kyriakos Mitsotakis, PM, ND, EL_2020-07-29_Eurozone). Mitsotakis declared that the Eurogroup had decided that in case of necessity this rule would not be applied.

Actually, in the current parliament this was the principal point of contention between the main opposing political parties: to what extent Greece could benefit from the so-called 2020 'escape clause'. The parliamentary left insisted on asking whether there was a target for a primary surplus of 3.5% of GDP in 2021 (which means austerity). They asked repeatedly: 'If there is no stability pact, there are no restrictions, why do you not utilise, front-loading, in time, part of the cash reserves, in order to support small and medium-sized enterprises and labour?' (Alexis Tsipras, MP and party President, SYRIZA, EL_2020-06-12_Eurozone; Gianis Varoufakis, MP and Secretary General, MeRA25, EL_2020-07-29_Eurozone). This point of agreement of the two parties' leaders belonging to the left and centre-left spectrum of Greek politics show two things. First, it shows that there is a strong belief in the left that EU fiscal rules are created by upper governance and then 'pushed down'. Secondly, EU fiscal rules are very tough with diverging results for member states, which is why centre/left parties are ready to embrace a more sovereignist version of intergovernmentalism each time the hard-liners among EU members do it for themselves (such as when they suspended the enforcement of the fiscal rules during the exceptional period of the pandemic).

Dealing with the pandemic

In the first phase of the COVID-19 period, parliamentary discussions were dedicated largely to the national implementation of the RRF and

Greece's absorption capacity of the funds. The main area of disagreement between the political parties concerned how to achieve the 'right kind of growth' in order to stabilise and recover from the economic downturn after the crisis of the last several years and the continuous increase in public debt.

Instead of further privatising health services, SYRIZA called for a new social contract for health given the total resources available since the pandemic (suspension of the stability pact, the new Next Generation programme and the RRF, the European Social Fund, the European Investment Bank, the European Central Bank, the increased European budget 2021–2027) (Pavlos Polakis, MP, SYRIZA, EL_2020-06-12_Eurozone). SYRIZA's position here expresses a more federalised vision of the Union where the development of new financial instruments should primarily serve human needs and social purposes promoting the common interest.

Conflicting perspectives on EU polity reforms in parliamentary debates in Greece

The migration-related debates analysed earlier revealed conflicting perspectives on migration and asylum policy by parties of the left and right, but also substantial agreement on the EU's key deficiency in this area – namely, the failure to implement a policy based on solidarity and burden-sharing among member states. Equally importantly, the migration debates also brought to light contested views of the EU as a polity and how it should/could be reformed. Mainstream political parties mostly expressed support for strengthening EU institutions in the area of migration and asylum. Parties of the left, right and centre (SYRIZA, ND, PASOK, Potami) were all in favour of a stronger presence of Frontex and the establishment of a central European asylum service.

The right-wing ND supported the strengthening of EU agencies like Frontex and the EASO, which it saw as capable of taking on substantial and effective action to manage migration and asylum. At the same time, its representatives expressed some concern about the Greek government's ability to maintain control over Frontex and the extent to which the latter would act on its own. ND representatives also presented in parliament proposals for a reform of the EU asylum system based on a proportionate and mandatory distribution of asylum claimants among

member states. While it advocated mandatory solidarity in conditions of emergency, the ND government also proposed a degree of 'flexibility' for frontline states confronted with the crisis: 'the countries that due to our geopolitical position may be confronted with extraordinary conditions must be able to manage asylum and migration with a necessary flexibility acceptable to our European partners' (Giorgos Koumoutsakos, MP, ND, EL_2020-05-08_Migration). Notably, the right-wing government's reference to 'flexibility' here was understood as the discretion to manage asylum without being bound by human rights principles and procedural guarantees.

Representatives of centre-left parties also supported the strengthening of EU institutions like the EASO and Frontex. They acknowledged the national security exigencies that were created by Turkey's aggressive and instrumental use of migration, in the aftermath of the events in Evros in March 2019.[23] Mainstream and strongly pro-EU parties like PASOK/KINAL were extremely unhappy with the EU-Turkey statement, which, as they noted, 'has no basis in law. It is simply a political commitment', which Turkey de facto abolished with its actions in Evros in March 2019 (Georgios Kaminis, MP, KINAL, EL_2020-05-08_Migration). They also called for thorough revision of the Dublin-based CEAS.

Eurosceptic parties of the far right and far left, on the other hand, opposed the strengthening of agencies like Frontex and the EASO, largely on grounds that they undermined national sovereignty. They declined to ratify the establishment of the EASO in Greece in 2020, which had the aim of providing support to the Greek asylum administration (EL_2020-06-16_Migration). The far-right GS opposed the presence of the EASO in Greece, as the arm of a supranational organisation that embodied a 'German Europe' and an EU that it viewed as responsible for making Greece 'a warehouse of souls' (Kyriakos Velopoulos, MP, GS, EL_2020-06-16_Migration).

[23] In March 2019, a large number of migrants from Turkey (Syrian and other) sought to forcefully enter Greece through the land border in the north-east of the country, apparently propelled deliberately by Turkish authorities. Their entry was prevented by Greek border guards, the incident caused a crisis with Turkey, and the Greek government declared the temporary suspension of the Geneva Convention.

On the far left, parties like MeRA25 and the Communist Party opposed the strengthening of EU supranational institutions, such as the EASO. Unlike far-right parties, far-left parties did so on grounds that they promoted actions and policies that disregarded and violated the human rights of migrants and asylum seekers (in closed detention centres, returns, etc.). Far-left parties also saw the EU as an entity dominated by strong states like Germany and by the powers of imperialism, arguably responsible for the oppression of the working class, the vulnerable and the dispossessed, including migrants. It was on all these grounds that they called for the abolition of the Dublin system. Clearly, far-left parties expressed strong doubt about the EU's will and ability to promote forms of governance in accordance with democracy and respect for human rights. Greek governments (the left-wing SYRIZA-ANEL in 2015–2019 and the right-wing ND government after 2019), claimed far-left parties, did little more than being the 'obedient children' of the EU (MeRA25 labelled Greece as the 'model captive'). In a highly uncompromising (and largely non-pragmatic, one might add) approach, they called on Greek governments to show disobedience vis-à-vis the Dublin-based asylum system (Maria Komninaka, MP KKE, EL_2020-06-16_Migration; Fotini Bakadima, MP, MeRA25, EL_2020-06-16_Migration).

In the Greek parliamentary arena, the question of sovereign debt was not only an issue for technocratic economics, but it was also discussed as a structural problem that can impact the EU's polity formation in the future. In a certain way, all political parties criticised Europe's status quo power by taking up a position in favour of discussing European integration as a dynamic process. In this perspective, left-wing political forces seemed to be converging on the idea that Eurozone interdependence could or even should lead to more federalised economic governance at EU level. In the 2015–2019 parliamentary term, SYRIZA representatives argued that thanks to their activism, they raised issues that are of concern to all Europe, for example opening the discussion on the debt problem in a pan-European perspective (Nikos Filis, MP, SYRIZA, EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone).

The far-left MeRA25, on the other hand, systematically adopted a very critical position of the EU, which they saw as lacking the will and capacity to reform in order to become more equitable and democratic. Without excluding the possibility of positive future reforms (soft Euroscepticism/Eurocritical), it stressed the negative role of specific

European and national agents that purposely obstructed efforts in that direction. In the Greek case, the idea that intra-EU dependency became an implicit guiding precept of enlargement governance seemed to be demonstrated (Chatzistavrou 2022). Varoufakis pointed to the selection of the Irish finance minister as the (new) president of the Eurogroup as arguably showing athe EU's implicit decision to avoid the increase of the EU's own resources, since Ireland is one of the countries vetoing this (Gianis Varoufakis, MP and Secretary General, MeRA25, EL_2020-07-29_Eurozone). In the same vein, he insisted that debt mutualisation in the framework of RRF does not mean the federalisation of public debt; it is not a Eurobond (Gianis Varoufakis, MP and Secretary General, MeRA25, EL_2020-07-29_Eurozone). MPs from the far-right GS party expressed doubt as to whether the EU could solve the problems related to tax havens and cross-border tax disputes within the Union (Vasilios Viliardos, MP, Greek Solution, EL_2020-07-29_Eurozone).

In contrast to the sweeping challenges of the very structure of the EU that the far-right and far-left parties advocate, the mainstream parties competing for power, ND and SYRIZA, but also the social-liberal party KINAL/PASOK, seemed to accept incremental and consensual decision making. They focused more on everyday politics, on pragmatism, fearing the 'revulsion of European partners' (Charis Theocharis, MP, ND, EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone).

Differentiated integration (DI) in the Greek parliament

Territorial differentiation in regard to EU integration is rarely mentioned or discussed in parliamentary debates among political party representatives in Greece. In the few references to it, it is primarily identified with multi-speed Europe, to which all pro-EU parties are opposed, concerned that in such a scenario, Greece might fall outside of the core group of states. In a few parts, however, discussions around migration laws and policies mention the notion of 'flexible solidarity' that is incorporated in the New Pact on Migration proposed by the EU, which, if adopted, will replace the Dublin system. 'Flexible solidarity' refers to the contribution of all member states in the management of asylum, but not in the form of the mandatory obligation of all member states to accept a balanced allocation of migrants and asylum seekers ('mandatory solidarity'). Instead, 'flexible solidarity' is premised on variable kinds of contributions (financial, administrative support, etc.)

that member states would make in EU asylum management, and is shaped by a significant degree of state voluntarism.

Political parties, including strongly pro-EU ones, view 'flexible solidarity' as anathema. They see it as a way to shirk the real problem of the profoundly unequal and unfair burden sharing, the bulk of which falls on the most affected states in the south and south-east periphery. SYRIZA representatives, for instance, strongly criticised 'flexible solidarity' and argued that it goes against EU treaties and the Lisbon Treaty in particular. Instead, Greek political parties are all in favour of mandatory solidarity, which is premised on compliance with common rules for allocating migrants to all member states, with little room for voluntarism and flexibility.

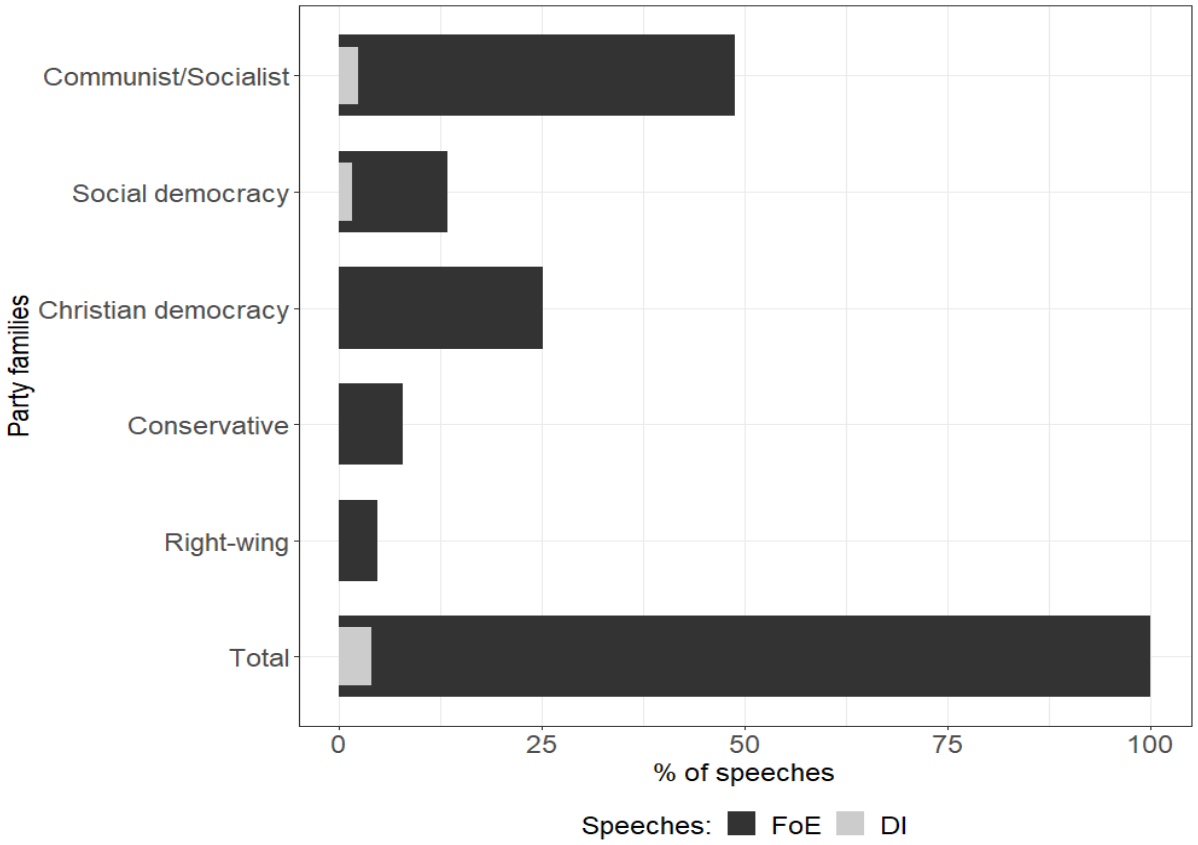


Figure 6.2. Frequency of references to DI in FoE speeches by party family (n=127 – number of FoE speeches, o=5 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to DI).

Greek parliamentarians did not display any interest in DI proposals in Eurozone-related debates either. One reason is that, despite the political upheaval resulting from the debt crisis, Greece is a country with a firm commitment to full membership in the EU. The idea of flexibility is only welcomed when it takes the form of relieving Greece from abiding by

demanding EU fiscal rules. For instance, regarding the management of the COVID-19 crisis, the ND finance minister stated that the country can benefit from the derogation from EU fiscal rules without bearing any kind of additional cost: 'Greece has the same flexibility as the others to face the health crisis without any commitment to a balanced budget in 2021' (Christos Staikouras, finance minister, ND, EL_2020-07-29_Eurozone).

In Eurozone debates we can hardly find any mention of DI. In the previous parliament, then prime minister Alexis Tsipras had already taken a position very clearly by saying that 'The second option was disorderly bankruptcy. I do not want to refer to its consequences. We all know there was also a third option – there is one now – the Schäuble plan for the consensual exit of Greece from the euro and the parallel currency' (Alexis Tsipras, PM, SYRIZA, EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone). For the social-liberal KINAL, the decision of 15 July 2015 was crucial for Greece's continuing membership in the Eurozone (Efi Christofilopoulou, MP, KINAL, EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone). All in all, in the 2015–2021 period, what is at stake for all political parties – with the only exception being the Communist Party – is the strengthening of Greek democracy's resilience while preserving the country's membership within the EU. The mild rhetoric as much of the radical-left internationalist MeRA25 as of the ultra-nationalist far-right party GS proves this. Greek withdrawal from the Eurozone is not on the agenda.

Perceptions of dominance in Greek parliamentary debates

The issue of dominance, namely the view and perception that Greece is subjected to EU decisions, with which it does not agree and which are unfair, emerges distinctly and strongly in parliamentary discussions on migration and Euro-area economic policy, as it is subsequently analysed. While the word 'dominance' (difficult to translate and convey in Greek) is not specifically mentioned in the parliamentary debates on migration and asylum, the perception of Greece being in a situation of dominance in relation to the EU and other member states is widespread. Parliamentarians from all political parties viewed the Common European Asylum System, and the Dublin Regulation in particular, as arbitrary and unfair, assigning to some states a huge burden, while allowing others a free ride. They expressed strong disapproval for what they saw as an EU-imposed system that Greece could not change, but on which it was strongly dependent. Overall, dominance was raised in 60% of speeches concerning

the future of Europe (including related to migration and Eurozone policies) (see Figure 6.3).

There was a generalised perception of profound unfairness of EU asylum policy, widespread mistrust of EU partners, and a persistent sense of Greece being subjected to a system that it cannot change. The reluctance of some member states to implement relocation fuelled such perceptions and frustration. The generalised sense of Greece being trapped in a detrimental common policy, with which it did not agree, was not solely a response to the conditions of crisis and migration surge that was confronting the country in 2015–2016. For many years, national policy makers had viewed it as a system that is imposed upon Greece by states that do not wish to take in more migrants and refugees and to share the responsibility for a functional asylum system, as well as for the integrity of the Schengen area. As early as 2011, opposition parties, including the strongly pro-EU right-wing ND, expressed strong disapproval of the Dublin system, and they had criticised the Socialist government at the time for agreeing to it in 2004 (see Anagnostou 2023 forthcoming).

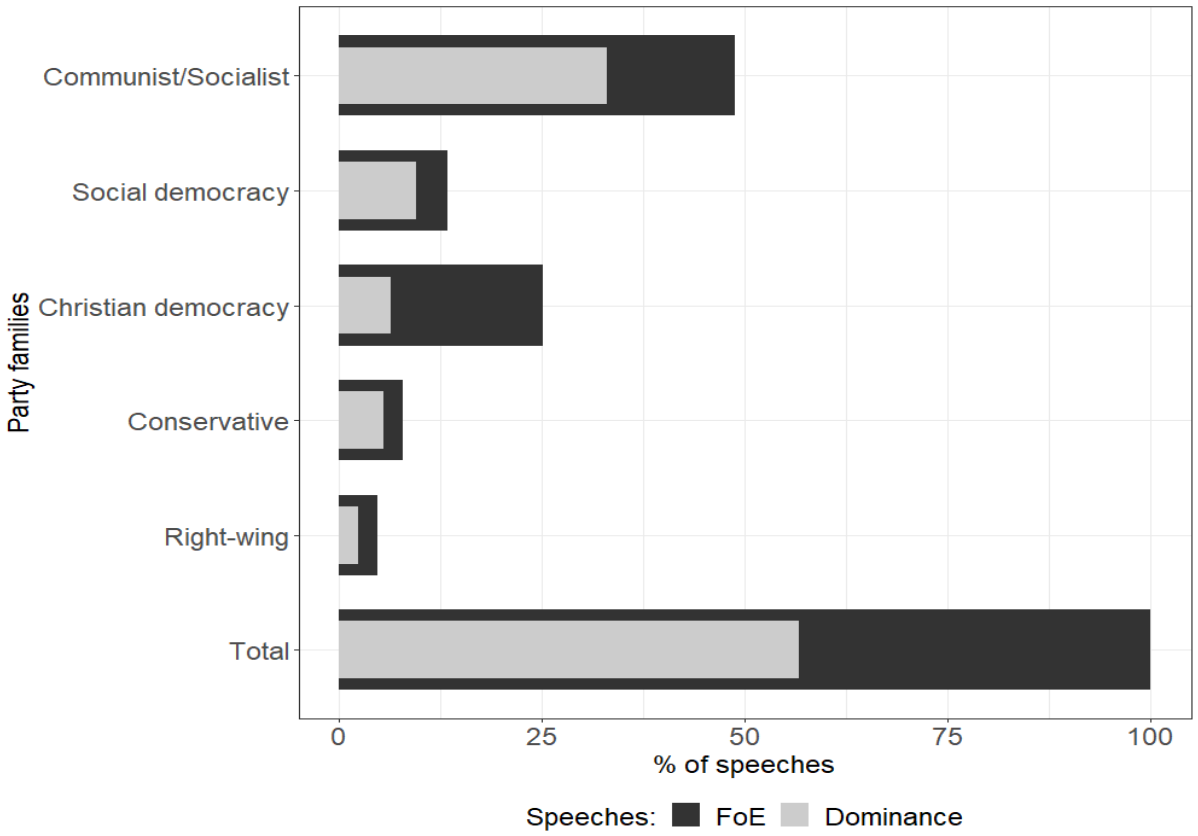


Figure 6.3. Frequency of references to dominance in FoE speeches by party family (n=127 – number of FoE speeches, o=72 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to dominance).

Perceptions of dominance were explicit and especially prevalent among far-right (GS) and far-left (MeRA25 and KKE) parties. They depicted the EU as an organisation that is dominated by the most powerful states, by Germany, and by capitalist and imperialist powers. In such an entity, Greece is depicted as not only powerless but also devoid of will and sovereignty. Mainstream political parties have arguably been reluctant and scared to raise their voice to defend national interests, showing 'blind disobedience to the decisions taken in the absence of Greece' (Sofia Sakorafa, MP, MeRA25, EL_2020-05-08_Migration).

Perceptions of dominance recurrently emerge in discussions around Eurozone issues too, especially with the ratification of the loan facility agreement with the European Stability Mechanism in 2015 and the third MoU. After the decision of 15 July 2015, the SYRIZA-led government expressed a kind of pragmatism, accepting that it was forced to back down, thus opting for manoeuvring instead of rupturing (Dimitrios Vitsas, MP, SYRIZA, EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone). This concession was necessary in order to prevent financial suffocation, banking collapse and the draining of bank deposits (Dimitrios Vitsas, MP, SYRIZA, EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone). The fear of having a new technocratic government imposed on Greece loomed over the discussions. PM Tsipras had to admit that 'the structural measures we are bringing are harsh and I don't agree; I don't believe they will favour the Greek economy and I say it openly. But I say that I am obliged to apply them' (Alexis Tsipras, PM, SYRIZA, EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone). The 2015 SYRIZA-led government accepted that political will is necessary, but not a sufficient condition to overturn the asymmetric balance of power within the EU, thus leading to a hard and painful compromise for a third MoU.

The third MoU sparked a great deal of debate about debt, human rights and anti-democratic authoritarian action. The left-wing opposition group within SYRIZA (comprising 53 of its MPs[24]) saw it as a 'coup' that undermined democracy and surrendered national sovereignty to the strict supervision of EU institutions. Those MPs depicted a situation of profound dominance within the Eurozone: 'Brussels had a goal, to punish Greece, by punishing its government, to bring down the government, so as to send a message to the whole of Europe that the 'left for the first time' in power will also be the last one and soon' (Nikos Filis, MP, SYRIZA,

[24] After the 2015 September legislative election, part of the group of "53" left the SYRIZA party.

EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone; see also Zoe Konstantopoulou, MP, SYRIZA, EL_2015-08-14_Eurozone). SYRIZA MP Nikos Filis added that 'what is at stake are the interests and the democratic choice of the European people and whether the directorate of Europe will close its accounts with democracy' (Nikos Filis, MP, SYRIZA, EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone).

Perceptions of profound dominance were strong among far-right parties too. SYRIZA's coalition partner, the far-right party ANEL, said openly that Greece was a good illustration of bankers' and German hegemony. For example, the leader of the neo-Nazi Golden Dawn pointed to the ECB's freezing of emergency liquidity assistance (ELA) to Greek banks as an instance of asymmetry power (Nikolaos Michaloliakos, MP, GD, EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone). In the 2019–2022 parliament, the far right-wing Greek Solution declared that the EU simply wants to keep Greece as a German debt colony and not as a sovereign country with the same rights as the other member states (Vasilis Villiardos, MP, GS, EL_2020-07-29_Eurozone).

Aside from the rhetoric of this far-right party (GS), perceptions of dominance and asymmetry are mostly implicit in the 2019–2020 legislature (in comparison to the previous one, when they were more direct and explicit). The relevant debates revolved around the suspension of the fiscal compact and the question of 'fiscal space'. Parliamentarians debated whether Greece could enjoy derogations from the general fiscal rules during the pandemic (and from its fiscal commitments for surpluses) even as the country was under enhanced surveillance since 2018. In this context, the far-left MeRA25 coined the term 'fifth memorandum' to challenge the assumption that Greece has the same 'fiscal rights' as the other member states:

> Bankers and oligarchs will be financed with the guarantee of the money of Greek citizens, who will be called to bear the burden of the fifth memorandum that is now prescribed after your commitment to the Eurogroup for primary surpluses in 2021.
>
> (Kriton Arsenis, MP, MeRA25, EL_2020-07-29_Eurozone)

The KKE leader deplored how more mechanisms of EU supervision would be added for the continuous evaluation of the National Recovery Plan, such as instalment disbursement approvals from the Eurogroup, in addition to the supervision of the Commission for the proper absorption

of the RRF funding (Dimitris Koutsoubas, MP and Secretary General, KKE, EL_2020-07-29_Eurozone).

What narratives for the future of the EU?

In the Greek parliament, debates on the future of Europe take place mostly at a level of general ideas and broad views that different political parties advance as to what Europe is and what it should be, rather than elaborate proposals about its institutional architecture. The various parties' competing visions and proposals about Europe's future can further be gleaned from the positions that they take in different policy areas and issues. Pro-EU and mainstream parties to the left and right (SYRIZA, KINAL, ND) were in favour of strengthening the EU institutions, in the area of both migration/asylum (EASO, Frontex) and economic and monetary union (ESM, banking union, etc.). They also placed a strong emphasis on the need for mandatory redistribution of the burden for migration and asylum management, as well as expressing concerns about Brexit and the apparent fragmentation tendencies confronting the EU. Mainstream political parties took moderate positions that oscillated between two visions for the future of Europe: the intergovernmentalist and policy-dependent federal solutions.

For the pro-EU left-wing SYRIZA, its vision of Europe closely resembles that of a regional cosmopolitan government, in which 'moral universalism is seen as the prime regulatory rule' (Góra et al. 2022, 7). Tsipras wished for a return to the EU founding values, the value of solidarity, democracy and mutual respect (Alexis Tsipras, PM, SYRIZA, EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone). For the centre-left parties more broadly (KINAL, SYRIZA), this more and better integrated Europe is seen to be shaped by: a) an overarching vision of a socialist-oriented entity based on solidarity, social cohesion and democracy, committed to redressing socio-economic inequalities through policies that protect the less affluent and more vulnerable social strata, and b) a Europe that respects human rights and humanitarian values (this is more pronounced as a defining principle for the left-wing SYRIZA, and somewhat less for the centre-left KINAL).

Right-wing parties like ND, while similarly in favour of strengthening EU institutions, especially economic and monetary, primarily projected a vision of the EU as an advanced economy that functions as an engine of growth and prosperity for a South European country like Greece. They also viewed the Union as an entity based on common cultural roots of

Greco-Roman and Christian tradition (Giorgos Kassapides, MP, ND, EL_2016-12-09_FoE). The view that the right-wing ND projects for the EU is closer to the constitutional narrative of intergovernmentalism, which 'stresses the role of member states and the importance of sovereignty of each member state but also of EU intergovernmental institutions' (Góra et al. 2022, 7) in policy areas of national interest (foreign policy, defence policy, internal security, border control). Yet, as far as economic market policies are concerned, ND's view could be closer to the de-coupled federal model. ND's enthusiasm for specific institutional arrangements, such as Next Generation EU, the EU digital market, EU energy market etc., falls into this category. Its vision, and that of the centre-left KINAL, appear to resemble more closely the variant of a de-coupled federal political Union.

Anti-EU or Eurosceptic political parties, on the other hand (the left, such as MeRA25, KKE, or the far right, such as GS), viewed the EU as an entity thoroughly defective in its foundations that for the most part cannot be reformed. The far-left MeRA25 has a more elaborate critique of the EU. While it presented itself as a pro-EU party, it viewed the Union and its institutions like the ESM as thoroughly undemocratic, dominated by and serving the interests of powerful states, bankers and big business, and governed by Eurocrats who scorn European and national parliaments. The EU and its institutions were viewed as detrimental to Greece's national interests and must be radically restructured to serve the interests of European citizens. To achieve the latter, MeRA25 called for disobedience and urged the Greek government to use its veto powers to block EU decisions that it considered anti-democratic, including the creation of a banking union. The party commented on the fact that 'PM M. Rutte doesn't mind exercising his veto and [serving] the interests of a certain segment of businesses in the Netherlands' (Gianis Varoufakis, MP, MeRA25, EL_2021-07-06_FoE). MeRA25 does not support any of the constitutional models, but depending on the issues debated, it projects a vision combining elements of republican intergovernmentalism and regional cosmopolitanism.

The views and positions advanced by KKE, but also by the ultra-nationalist GS in the current parliament and GD in the previous legislature, reflect the sovereignist pattern of intergovernmentalism. KKE sees the EU as a capitalist and imperialist bloc that promotes the pauperisation of the less affluent and disadvantaged segments of society.

For the far-right GS, the EU is a German-dominated entity that is plainly inimical to Greek sovereignty and national interests.

In the Greek parliament, political parties extensively debated and contested EU policies of high relevance for the country, such as the common currency and migration/asylum, in the period under study. Yet, they rarely engaged in any explicit or sustained way in issues related to the future of Europe. Parliamentary representatives advanced views, ideas and disagreements about FoE mostly indirectly, in the context of exchanges on policies related to the European Union. In their debates in parliament, national representatives projected different visions and expectations as to what the EU is and should be, but they did not propose specific visions or reforms regarding the Union as a polity and its constitutional architecture. Differentiated integration was also not an issue that was discussed in the Greek parliament; it was rarely mentioned, and only in a very narrow sense, to refer to multi-speed Europe, or to flexibility in the form of derogation from EU fiscal rules and human rights norms. While parliamentary debates on the Eurozone and migration do not directly engage future of Europe issues, they reveal how Greek political parties variably view these EU policies and how their institutional structures and rules must be reformed.

The Eurozone/sovereign debt and migration crises that profoundly affected Greece paved the way for highly critical views of the EU as undemocratic and dominated by powerful states like Germany, the growth of Euroscepticism, and profound discontent with EU policies considered unfair even among strong pro-EU parties. Notwithstanding such challenges, the mainstream political parties of the left and right remained strongly supportive of EU integration and membership in the Eurozone, as well as in favour of transferring more powers to and strengthening EU institutions, which they view as overall beneficial for a small state like Greece. The mainstream political parties of the left and right implicitly and variably projected two visions for the future of Europe – those of intergovernmentalist and policy-dependent federal solutions. The anti-EU parties of the far left and far right, on the other hand, do not believe that the EU can be reformed for the benefit of the people. Their views are underpinned by the sovereignist pattern of intergovernmentalism.

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Chapter 7

Balancing Economic Benefits with the Principle of Subsidiarity: the Danish Parliament and the Future of Europe

Janna van Diepen and Birthe Einen

Denmark as a pragmatic supporter of EU integration[25]

Denmark entered the EU in 1973 as a result of a national referendum after signing the EU Accession Treaty the previous year. Since its entry into the EU, Denmark had a strong focus on regional Nordic cooperation. Researchers argue that it was only due to the realisation that Nordic cooperation would not develop as hoped that Denmark opted for EU membership (Friis 2002, 380). However, the country's membership has been challenged several times and Danish sovereignty continues to be a recurring political issue (Friis 2022). For example, a slight popular majority rejected the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, which resulted in four opt-outs, followed by another referendum where a slight majority accepted the treaty (Neville 2022).

The opt-outs specified that Denmark does not have to adopt the euro or participate in foreign and defence cooperation. If cooperation in the fields of Justice and Home Affairs results in a transfer of sovereignty, it requires a large majority in the national parliament (5/6) or both a majority of the members of the Folketing and a majority of voters in a referendum (Denmark and the Treaty on European Union 1992). These opt-outs undoubtedly define Denmark's relationship with the EU. They have been a topic of consistent public contention by having been subject to several referendums. In 2000, a referendum confirmed the rejection of the euro by a slight majority. Similarly, in 2015, the opt-out from the policy area of freedom, security, and justice was reconfirmed by a majority of more than

[25] We thank Silva Hoffmann for excellent research assistance.

53% (Neville 2022). Unlike the two previously mentioned referendums, a referendum in light of the war in Ukraine in March 2022 rejected the defence opt-out by 66.9% (Danmark Statistik 2022).

The Danish opt-outs and the potential use of popular referendums are frequently brought up in parliamentary debates on EU affairs. There seems to be widespread awareness of the benefits of Danish EU membership, mostly access to the Single Market. On the other side, there also exists widespread caution about extending any powers to the EU level. Despite diverse views on certain policy issues throughout the political parties, the majority argues along the lines of maintaining the EU's institutional status quo, insisting on the subsidiarity principle, and safeguarding national sovereignty.

Overall, the relationship between Denmark and the EU is often characterised as 'pragmatic' support for European integration (e.g., Neville 2022, 5). EU scepticism is evident, confirmed by the popular referendums and opt-outs, except for the latest referendum in 2022. However, general popular support for Danish EU membership has increased since the 1990s (Neville 2022). Nevertheless, no majority exists in favour of *more* power transfers to the EU level (Neville 2022). Having a strong economic approach to membership, identity and values, such as its welfare system and participatory democracy, have not been strongly linked to Danish EU membership (Friis 2002, 381). Like its regional neighbours, Denmark is cautious not to lose the advantages of its 'Nordic Model' by collaborating closely with the European Union (Friis 2002, 381).

The Danish national parliament and the institutionalisation of EU affairs

The Danish national parliament (Folketing) is considered a strong actor in legislative literature. Since it is hardly possible for one party to gain a majority of 90 out of 179 seats, all Danish governments since 1901 have been coalitions or one-party minority governments. This is further enabled by a provision in the constitution that allows a government to take office without a vote of confidence and stay in office as long as it does not lose to a vote of no confidence. In contrast to most other parliamentary systems, a Danish government cannot be sure its legislative agenda will pass, and it must gather a majority for every single piece of legislation (Christensen 2015, 276-278).

The Folketing combines high levels of trust in the population with powerful institutions, both aspects which Rozenberg and Hefftler (2015, 5) link closely to legitimacy. Concerning EU affairs, it is argued that 'Denmark has developed a "textbook example" of parliamentary control' (Christensen 2015, 276). It is mostly impossible for the government to avoid parliamentary influence in this area.

Scrutiny of EU affairs is strongly institutionalised (Christensen 2015, 278-280). The government in office sets the direction for Denmark's EU policy, but parties outside the government also take part in negotiations about future EU policy making. Danish EU policy is determined in an agreement, also called a settlement (*forlig*). Changes to this settlement require renewed agreement by all parties involved. In case of a dispute, change cannot take place until after a new parliamentary election (Folketinget n.d.).

The general task of implementing EU directives falls upon the plenary. Most EU directives are, however, transposed as 'announcements' (*bekendtgjørelser)* and not considered as the Folketing's, but ministerial responsibility. All members have the right to hold interpellations and ask questions concerning EU matters, based on §20 of the Rules of Procedure of the Folketing. The issues must concern the minister's position, and he or she is obliged to respond within six working days (Christensen 2015, 281). In practice, this option is not used frequently on EU matters, and the plenary is usually only used for major decisions such as ratifying treaties. Instead, EU affairs are centralised within the Folketing's European affairs committee (EAC) (Christensen 2015, 277-285).

The Folketing was the first parliament in Europe to set up a negotiating mandate system in 1979, which has been strengthened over time. This requires the government to obtain a negotiating mandate from the EAC of the Folketinget parliamentary committee before important deliberations in the European Council. Should the positions change fundamentally, the government may be required to seek a new mandate (Folketinget n.d.).[26]

Danish political parties and their views on European integration

[26] See also the Danish Parliament's handling of EU matters in their EU note (Folketinget 2021).

The unicameral People's Assembly comprises 179 seats, including four representing North Atlantic members.[27] Parliament members are directly elected in multi-seat constituencies by proportional representation and serve a four-year term unless the Folketing should be dissolved earlier. With a low threshold of 2%, a large number of parties is represented.

Historically, the Danish political left opposed Denmark's membership in the EEC, while several right-wing parties were in favour. Leading up to the national referendum in 1972, a compromise was found between the Liberals, Conservatives and Social Democrats paving the way for EU membership (Neville 2022). This section will first set out the positions of Danish parties before summarising some important patterns, starting with the main ruling parties (as of the last election in the analysed period of 2019) and ideologically similar parties, followed by the main opposition parties.

The Social Democratic Party (Socialdemokratiet – S), the largest party in Denmark, was initially divided on EU membership. They argued against Denmark joining the European Single Act in 1986. Since then, however, they have supported treaties and pro-EU policies, thus perceiving further European integration as largely positive (Leruth et al. 2020, 94). EU-related policy issues in focus include inequality, insecurity, social dumping, cross-border crime, international tax evasion, climate change, migration and terrorism (Socialdemokratiet n.d.). Notably, the government party under the leadership of PM Mette Frederiksen (2019–2022) combined their left-leaning economic policies with strong criticism of mass migration. One of their election promises was to pave the way for asylum processing centres outside of EU territory.

Another generally pro-EU party is the Green Left (Socialistisk Folkeparti – SF). The party advocates more EU cooperation, especially on matters of climate change, refugee flows, tax evasion, social dumping and poverty. They further argue in favour of a more integrated European labour market with a strong focus on workers' rights, as well as improving social conditions and environmental standards across borders. SF wants to

[27] Four of the 179 members are elected from the Faroe Islands and Greenland (two each), often referred to as "North Atlantic members". Neither is a part of the EU (Johansen and Lehmann 1983; Government 2022). According to the Rules of Procedure of the Danish Parliament, these four members do have the right to vote in the plenary chamber like all other members of the parliament (FFO, n.d.). Customarily they do not vote or intervene in EU affairs.

abolish the EU's tariffs on agricultural products, to increase the chances of developing countries selling their goods. (Socialistisk Folkeparti n.d.). The party also argues for more transparency in the work of the European Council to work against a democratic deficit in the EU (Auken 2019). Initially, SF opposed the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, before changing its position given the role it played to draft the Edinburgh Agreement. The party has supported existing Danish opt-outs since the beginning of EU membership (Leruth et al. 2020, 96).

The Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten – EL) is the furthest left on the party scale in Denmark. EL has long opposed the EU, Danish EU membership, and European integration (Leruth et al. 2020, 95). The party demands a shift of EU-level policies from the free market, support of multinational cooperation and capitalism to health, environment, climate and welfare issues. The party criticises the EU as elitist and for being too distant from individual citizens. It argues for more transparency on the EU level, stricter rules on lobbying, democracy closer to EU citizens, with more power for national institutions, especially national parliaments, where single member states can go ahead and adopt stricter rules than on the EU level (Enhedslisten n.d.). EL wanted to keep the Danish defence opt-out that was up for a referendum in June 2022.

On the other hand, the Social Liberal Alliance (Radikale Venstre – RV) is in favour of European cooperation and would like to see all Danish opt-outs from the EU abolished. The party argues for Denmark to strengthen all ties and deepen commitments with the EU, especially in areas such as security cooperation. Other EU policy issues in focus are climate change, migration, banking and the IT sector. RV would like to increase efforts on the European level to deal with refugees and migration by establishing a system where asylum can be sought at the EU border and an ordered distribution system, coupled with a renewed EU-Africa strategy. More investments in green technology, creating European energy self-sufficiency, fighting tax evasion and strengthening data security are also high on the party's agenda. RV does not see the EU as equipped for all future challenges and considers a 'massive effort' necessary to address these. The party also supports a stricter conditionality policy for both EU and future member states (Radikale Venstre n.d.).

Similarly, Alternative (Alternativet – ALT) — also one of Denmark's more EU-positive parties — argues for 'a more democratic, transparent, sustainable and humanistic Europe' and to protect nature and

biodiversity throughout Europe, as well as a 'common European migration policy that ensures a fair distribution key between European countries'. Moreover, the party regarded both the legal and defence opt-outs as standing in the way of Denmark's best policy interests and argued for abolishing these (Alternativet n.d.). The Independent Greens (Frie Grønne – FG) were established in 2020 as a splinter from ALT. FG describes itself as left-wing and a 'responsible, climate-conscious and anti-racist party' and does not have a dedicated Europe/EU programme. The party argued that abolishing the defence opt-out would promote European solutions to global solutions and less dependency on the US (Frie Grønne n.d.).

The Liberal Party (Venstre – V) is the second-largest party in Denmark, typically competing against Socialdemokratiet for the government. The party generally styles itself as a pro-EU party, stressing the benefits of European cooperation that should lead to peace and prosperity, with freedom of movement as a central benefit for individuals. Venstre does not advocate differentiation in EU integration (Leruth et al. 2020, 95) and acknowledges Denmark's dependence on European cooperation and the importance of exporting to the European market and beyond. However, the party draws some clear lines where member states should not experience EU interference. Accordingly, the EU should neither become a social union and determine specific welfare state issues such as parental leave policies nor ever be able to collect taxes from citizens (Venstre n.d.). The party would also like to see EU agricultural subsidies phased out. EU-related policy issues focus generally on security, safety, sustainability and Europe at the forefront of a green transition. Venstre links migration policy directly to terrorism and safety, strengthening border controls, and a stricter return policy, especially for criminals. The party also argues for more free-trade agreements and a more integrated internal market. In line with ALT, it argues for abolition of all Danish opt-outs, asserting that full cooperation in all areas would serve Danish interests better. The party does not see a fixed end goal for the organisation of the EU but wants to remain open for new tools to meet future challenges.

For the Conservative Party (Det Konservative Folkeparti – KF), EU politics has proven to be an ambivalent issue. For example, the party was not initially united on abolishing the defence opt-out (Damsgaard 2022) but arrived at the position that it should be abolished for Denmark to fully participate in European security policy cooperation. In its current EU

programme, the party seeks to find a balance between safeguarding national sovereignty and the principle of subsidiarity on the one hand and emphasising the benefits of a well-functioning EU cooperation on the other. KF does not consider increased European integration an end in itself and argues that EU policy must continue to be limited to meaningful areas. In the party's view, the role of national parliaments should be strengthened, and member states should maintain their national, regional or local decision-making powers (Det Konservative Folkeparti n.d.).

A similar but more critical argument is put forward by the Liberal Alliance (LA). This party argues that too much detailed legislation flows from the EU, which undermines nation-states and popular support for the EU. LA thus seems to project negative attitudes towards further European integration. At the same time, it would like to strengthen the EU's external border to limit migration flows. LA argued in favour of abolishing the Danish defence opt-out and would like to see increased security and defence in the EU with Denmark included, but draws a sharp line at ever joining a hypothetical EU army (Liberal Alliance n.d.).

The Danish People's Party (Dansk Folkeparti – DF), on the right-most side of the political spectrum, has been an EU opponent from its start. DF views the EU as a bureaucratic regime that hollows out the nation-state. DF has historically supported Denmark's de jure EU opt-outs, but after Brexit, the party is split over whether to support a complete Danish withdrawal from the EU or not. Nevertheless, its stated policy has been to remain a member of the EU while working with other parties to transform the EU into a Europe of Nations (Leruth et al. 2020, 96). In later years, however, the party has increasingly expressed wishes for Denmark to leave the EU as a political union (Dansk Folkeparti 2022).

The New Right (Nye Borgerlige – NB), like the Danish People's Party, has a conservative and nationalistic profile and combines this with a very liberal market policy. NB strongly opposes the EU and views it as a controlling, bureaucratic rule. The party wants Denmark to leave the EU, supported by a popular referendum, strengthen free trade agreements and join the EFTA Union instead, thus maintaining access to the EU market with Switzerland as a role model. The party also wants Denmark to leave the Schengen agreement and rejects any interference by the European Court of Human Rights regarding the rights of foreigners in the country (Nye Borgerlige n.d.).

Analysing the parties' views and attitudes towards the EU, particularly regarding European integration and the future of the bloc, some party patterns are identifiable. It appears that the more critical views towards the future of Europe can be found at the far end of both the right and left of the spectrum. At the same time, parties that are in a traditional sense on the left or right scale (see Annex 2) tend to go in different ways on certain policy issues. A prominent example is the Social Democratic Party, which has driven a more restrictive migration policy normally associated with parties on the right, despite earning a score of 3.8 on the ParlGov left-right scale. The insufficiency of the classic right-left axis to provide an understanding of the politics of the parties in key areas is also apparent in the categorisation of LA. When it comes to their economic policy, they are normally perceived as being on the right side of the axis, while their stand on policy related to immigration, equality and foreign aid tends to be placed centre-right. Their ParlGov score, on the other hand, is 6 on the left-right scale, indicating that the economic dimension is not being evaluated in their placement.

Another pattern is the difficulty to calculate the parties' overall placement on the anti-/pro-EU axis, since many attitudes seem to be issue-based even within political parties (see Annex 2). This is apparent, amongst others, with the categorisation of LA, which receives a high ParlGov score when it comes to pro-EU values (8.7). The party does maintain that the Danish defence opt-out should be eliminated. Overall, however, it has tended to convey hostile sentiments towards greater European integration which the scale does not seem to pick up.

The Danish vision for the future of Europe since 2015

As exemplified by the described diverging party positions, the Danish vision for the future of Europe is characterised by 'pragmatic support'. Rather than a commitment to federalism, Denmark joined the EEC because of its ambition to become part of the open European economy. Denmark's general approach to the EU can be viewed as defensive and reactive, with a higher emphasis on maintaining autonomy rather than shaping the bloc's future. Initiatives to maintain the current institutional status quo of the EU continues to be a recurrent theme in discussions about the future of the European Union in the national parliament across political parties. Danish EU policy thus seems to be dualistic; it approaches the integration issue by protecting against political

integration while maintaining an economic perspective on membership benefits. In practice, this is solved by weighing the advantages and disadvantages of integration and choosing to 'opt in' when advantages exist, though with some cross-party variations.

In the following section, we examine Danish parliamentary debates on the future of Europe, the Eurozone, and migration between 2015 and 2021 in order to examine more closely how political actors in national parliaments narrate the reforms of the EU in the context of the future of Europe. To conclude, we also reflect on how these narratives support the potential constitutional models.

Most of the parliamentary discourse on European affairs in the Folketing takes place in the EAC, not in the open plenary. Hence, compared to other countries, there might have been a smaller number of relevant debates to choose from, and moreover, the chosen debates are often of a broader nature and seldomly focus solely on one of the three analysed main themes (future of Europe, Eurozone, migration). The yearly plenary debates following the Danish foreign minister's written statements on the current and last year's EU cooperation provided a good source for analysis, often touching upon all three themes with representatives from most parties speaking. These debates reflect party positions on current EU issues and the parties' general attitude towards the EU. Since Denmark is not a member of the Eurozone, plenary debate on this theme appeared to be limited. The EU budget was, however, discussed more broadly. Migration appeared to be the most salient topic of the three since, like in many other EU countries, this is a topic that is debated heatedly in Danish domestic politics.

As the Folketing plenary is used less for debate on EU affairs, concrete proposals or initiatives for institutional reform on the EU level were an exception in the investigated timeframe. Instead, much discussion focused on making the most out of the current institutional status quo of the EU, safeguarding the subsidiarity principle and Danish national sovereignty. This was especially the case on matters regarding the welfare state and immigration. One of the most stressed benefits of being an EU member appears to be access to the internal market in addition to efforts against the EU becoming a 'social union'.

The main actors in future of Europe debates in the Folketing

The analysis timeframe saw new Danish governments assuming power in 2015 (after elections in 2014), 2016, and 2019. A total of 14 different political parties were represented in the Folketing in this time, 10 of which are relevant to this analysis.[28]

Both pro- and anti-EU parties participated relatively equally in the debates. Out of the 10 political parties represented, six can be categorised as pro-EU (between 6.5 and 9.02 on a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is pro-EU) and four as anti-EU (between 1 to 3.5). In debates relating to the future of Europe, representatives from parties that score below 5 on the anti-pro-EU scale gave 57% of speeches. In debates relating to the eurozone, members of parliament from parties with an anti-pro EU score of 5 or under gave 55% of speeches. In the migration-related debates, parties generally pro-European integration (value above 5 on the ParlGov scale) and those generally critical of European integration (value under 5) gave a roughly equal number of speeches. In speeches relating to the future of Europe, there is equal participation between pro- and anti-EU-minded political parties (anti-EU 48%; pro-EU 52%). Looking in more detail at *party families* in the analysed debates concerning the future of Europe, most parties in the Folketing appeared to participate. As described in Figure 7.1, the division of speeches between the party families was as follows: right-wing 24.5%, communist/socialist 18.7%, social democracy 12.8%, green/ecologist 10.8%, conservative 2.2%.

[28] The four parties with one member of parliament each, from the Faroe Islands and Greenland, can be disregarded since they customarily do not vote or involve themselves in EU affairs as non-EU members. These party representatives did not speak in the analysed debates and therefore were not coded.

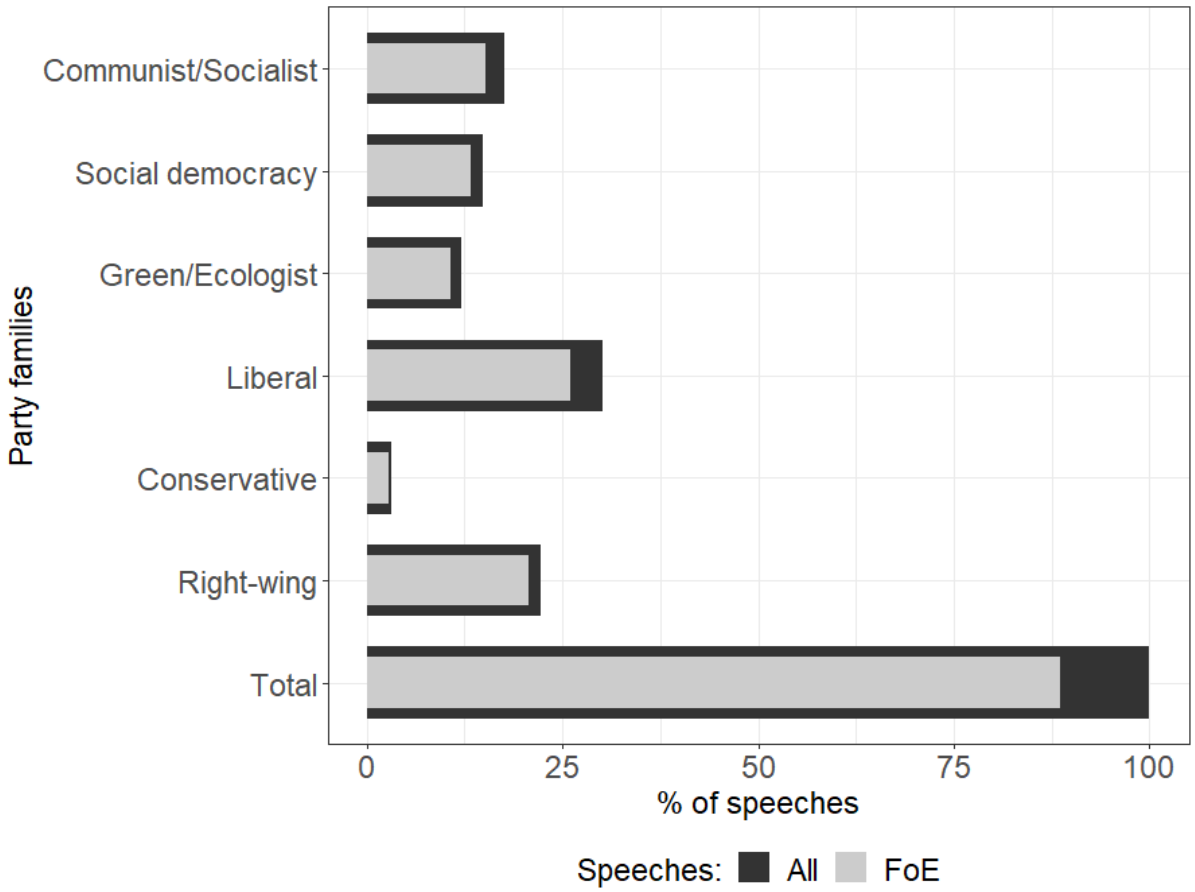


Figure 7.1. Frequency of analysed speeches marked as relevant for the future of Europe by party family (m=1269 – number of speeches, n=1123 – number of FoE speeches).

Concerning the variable *incumbency*, incumbent speakers held about half (48.3%) of the speeches coded as related to the future of Europe. 4.6% were by speakers who are government members (e.g. prime minister, minister for foreign/European affairs, finance minister). Concerning the variable *gender*, most speakers in the coded debates are male. Out of 809 speeches coded as containing remarks on the future of Europe, about 10% were by female speakers. This contrasts with the 38.9% of female members in the Folketing after the 2019 elections, one of the highest percentages in history.

The three government shifts in the timeframe, especially the 2019 shift from right to left, were reflected in the dynamics of the debates. The dependence of minority governments on the parliamentary support of three to four other parties also shaped the debates and fit the image of multiparty but consensus-oriented party politics in Denmark. However, both leading government parties in the analysed timeframe (first Venstre, then the Social Democrats) are generally pro-EU integration, albeit with different policy focuses. Additionally, both among left-leaning and right-leaning parties,

EU-sceptic attitudes can be found. This balance is also reflected in the overall balanced share of the analysed speeches if one looks at the variables of pro- and anti-EU attitudes and party families, as outlined above.

The EU polity reforms proposed in the Folketing

As described in Figure 7.2, the codes on EU polity reform applied in the analysed debates sorted by frequency comprised: advocating direct democracy instruments, advocating for maintaining institutional status quo, advocating the weakening of the European Commission (EC), advocating a more substantial role for national parliaments, and strengthening the role of the European Parliament (EP). In a few instances, the following codes also applied: weakening the role of the EP, redefining the relationship between the EP and the EC, advocating weakening the role of the ECJ or strengthening ECJ and weakening the role of the Council.

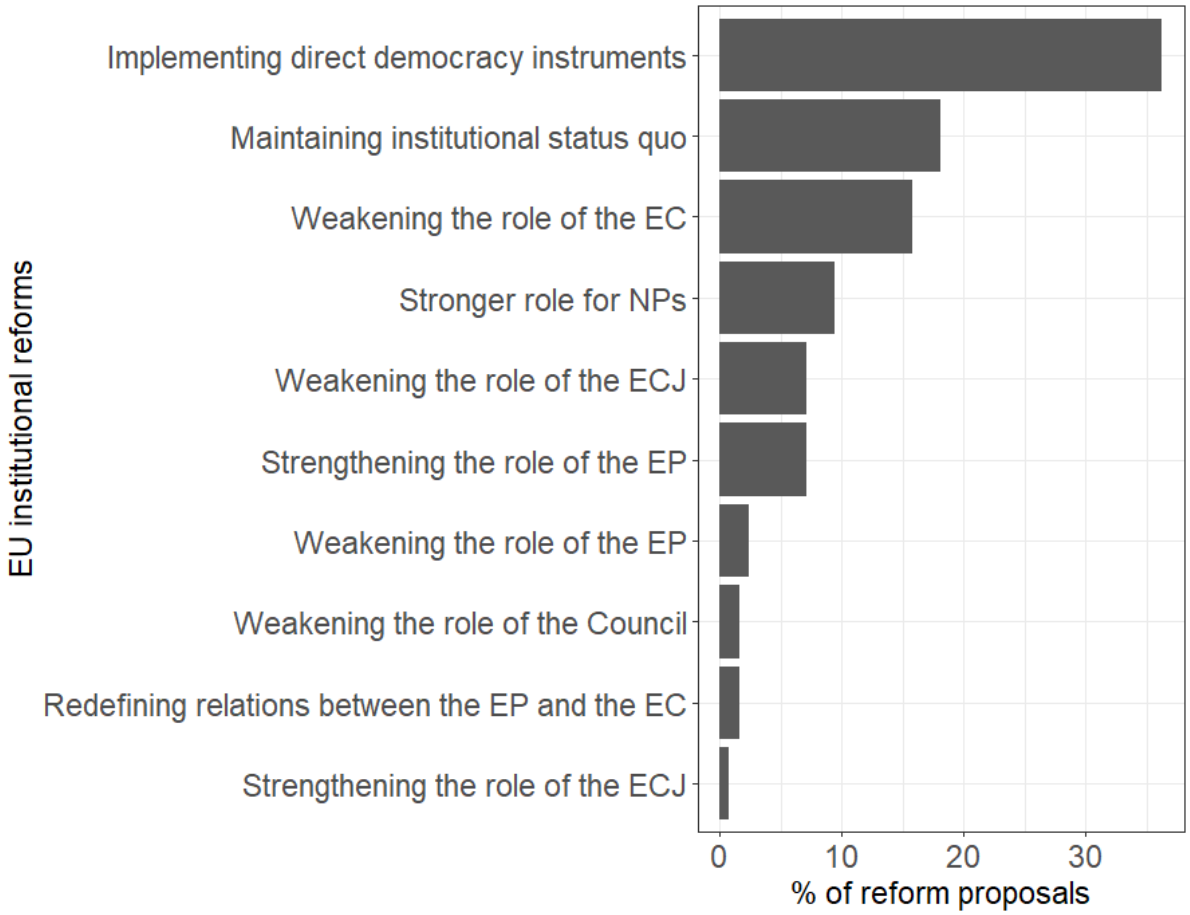


Figure 7.2. Frequency of references to EU institutional reforms (n=127 – number of institutional reform proposals).

Speakers across most parties advocated direct democracy instruments, specifically national referendums on EU affairs. This mainly concerned Denmark, specifically referendums on the Danish opt-outs. The political system in Denmark favours direct democracy instruments where the constitution might be affected and where Denmark would have to share core competencies with the EU. For example, direct democracy instruments were advocated with references to Brexit and the UK referendum. Before the referendum and during the direct aftermath of Brexit, some parties (DF, EL) repeatedly advocated referendums on EU membership and EU issues in general for Denmark and other EU members. DF added that the free movement of people and labour is seen as critical by the public, leading to the rejection of EU integration, and people need direct possibilities to express their views on further European integration (Søren Espersen, 2017; Mikkel Dencker, 2017). For example, EL advocated that further EU enlargement after Brexit would be an illusion and that any changes in this field should be backed by referendums (Søren Søndregard, 2017).

Advocating for maintaining the institutional status quo was another code often applied in the case of the Danish national parliament. Speakers of various EU-friendly parties pointed out Denmark's benefits – such as access to the internal market and EU-secured peace and collaboration in Europe – but also raised concerns over giving the EU too much power. The government party at the time (V) and LA argued in this context that any treaty changes would take too long, would be too complicated and lead to lengthy discussions. They noted that it would be a better use of time and effort to focus on quicker improvements of the EU governmental system and maintained that all involved should instead act more efficiently within the existing framework. Speakers from both parties argued for a stronger, slimmer, more effective EU without changing treaties or the institutional framework. Venstre was also in favour of the development at the time (2017), and the EC appeared to be putting forward fewer law initiatives. Both LA and Venstre stressed how especially the subsidiarity principle needed to be safeguarded (LA, V). Furthermore, LA stressed in 2020 how the EU should deal less with detailed rules and that member states could decide themselves instead. The EU should be more efficient with its existing status but not extend powers and implement existing laws more strictly. Denmark should search for effective alliances within the EU to maintain the institutional status quo and not build an ever-closer union (LA, 2020).

Several parties also advocated weakening the EC. According to the Social Democrats, the EC should not interfere with the Danish welfare state model, not regulate the labour markets and tariffs, and lessen involvement in CAP and structural funds (S, 2017, opposition at the time). DF pronounced that a weakened EC would lead to slimmer EU cooperation and a slimmer EU in general (DF, 2017, support of government role). Neither party ruled out treaty changes to weaken the role of the Commission (S, 2017, opposition: DF, 2017, support of government). SF, then in opposition, argued in favour of conferring the right of initiative for laws from the EC to the EP (SF, 2017). RV argued for less power for the EC, less regulation, and less bureaucracy (RV, 2017, opposition role).

The Eurosceptic, right-wing DF demanded more power for national parliaments and for member states to increase democratic legitimacy. At the same time, it would like to see the role of the EC and the EP weakened (2017, opposition). The Eurosceptic SF would like a strengthened role for national parliaments and the EP and give the EP the right of initiative for laws for more democratic legitimacy and transparency (SF, 2017, opposition). Moreover, the ECJ is regarded as an 'activist' especially by DF, and they would like to see its role weakened. The Social Democrats also mentioned that the ECJ has primarily ruled in favour of an ever-closer union as problematic (S, 2017, opposition at the time).

Overall, there are more speeches coded as arguing for maintaining the institutional status quo, often raised with concerns about guarding the subsidiarity principle, and speeches in favour of weakening the role of certain institutions (Commission, ECJ, Council) than speeches arguing in favour of strengthening the role of EU institutions. Exceptions are several calls to bolster democracy and democratic functions in the EU system, such as the European and national parliaments. The use of direct democracy instruments is also advocated for, as it is common in the Danish political system. The role of opposition versus government does not appear crucial in this context, nor does the left and right scale.

What policies are debated in the context of FoE and why?

The most debated policy area in the analysed debates on EU affairs in the Folketing was migration, asylum and human mobility. The 2015/2016 crisis led to a series of policy changes in Denmark that resulted in some of the strictest measures in migration control compared to other EU countries. The Folketing's national measures and EU-level calls to action are mostly based on the principle of deterrence, e.g. stronger EU external borders, increased Danish border controls, and asylum processing centres outside the EU. Many speeches in the debates dealt with the latter. The potential implementation of external asylum centres became a campaign pledge of the Social Democrats before the elections in 2019. The tenor of the parties favouring this was that Denmark would go about this unilaterally if there were no EU allies to implement it with.

Fundamental rights were also frequently debated, primarily in connection with migration and the treatment of refugees in Denmark and at the EU external border in Turkey and Greece. In 2018, the Folketing discussed renewed support for the EU-Turkey agreement. The then governing Venstre called for renewed support, with more checks on adherence to human rights. At the same time, parties on the left accused the government of deflecting responsibility (SF) and demanded a more active role for Denmark in improving the asylum system within current international law (RV). Connected to this, stricter conditionality on giving loans or any financial support to other countries was debated, including Greece, Turkey and Ukraine. Moreover, human rights violations and a lack of compliance with the rule of law in Poland and Hungary were discussed in connection with the EU Covid recovery fund. Several parties (EL, V, SF) demanded conditionality attached to financial assistance.

Another frequently debated policy area in the Folketing was enlargement, ENP, EEA, and Brexit, which is largely explained by the coinciding timeline of Brexit and the timeframe for this analysis. Subjects of debate included the UK referendum in 2016, negotiations on trade agreements and potential consequences for the EU and Denmark, and the final withdrawal agreement in 2020. Eurosceptic parties such as DF referred to Brexit as a brave, visionary decision and identified with British criticism of the EU. In 2020, DF did not want to back the

negotiations mandate for the Danish government on EU free trade negotiations with the UK.

The EU's potential to undermine the Danish model on social welfare (e.g. labour laws, EU-wide minimum wage, collective bargaining model and widespread union membership, social dumping, and indexing of child welfare grants) was frequently debated. Many debates also brought up defence and security, since much debate on this policy area happened before and in the aftermath of the scheduled referendum on the justice and home affairs opt-out in 2015. Other policy areas brought up frequently in the Folketing debates included the multiannual financial framework and EU budget, the economic and monetary Union and climate and environment protection.

In debates on the Eurozone, several parties in the Danish parliament expressed relief over not being a member and repeated their resistance to joining, first considering the economic situation in Greece and later in discussions on the EU Covid recovery fund. For example, EL argued in 2015 that euro cooperation prioritises economic considerations over others, especially social policies, such as combating unemployment. SF argued that tight EU fiscal policies ultimately damaged Greece rather than helped its recovery. The Social Democrats (2016) argued that monetary policy tools would not be enough to create growth and that a more relaxed EU fiscal policy would be needed.

The evaluation of differentiated integration (DI)

Territorial differentiation seems to be a much-debated concept in the analysed debates. particularly concerning the Danish opt-outs. About 33% of the analysed future of Europe debates contained references to DI.

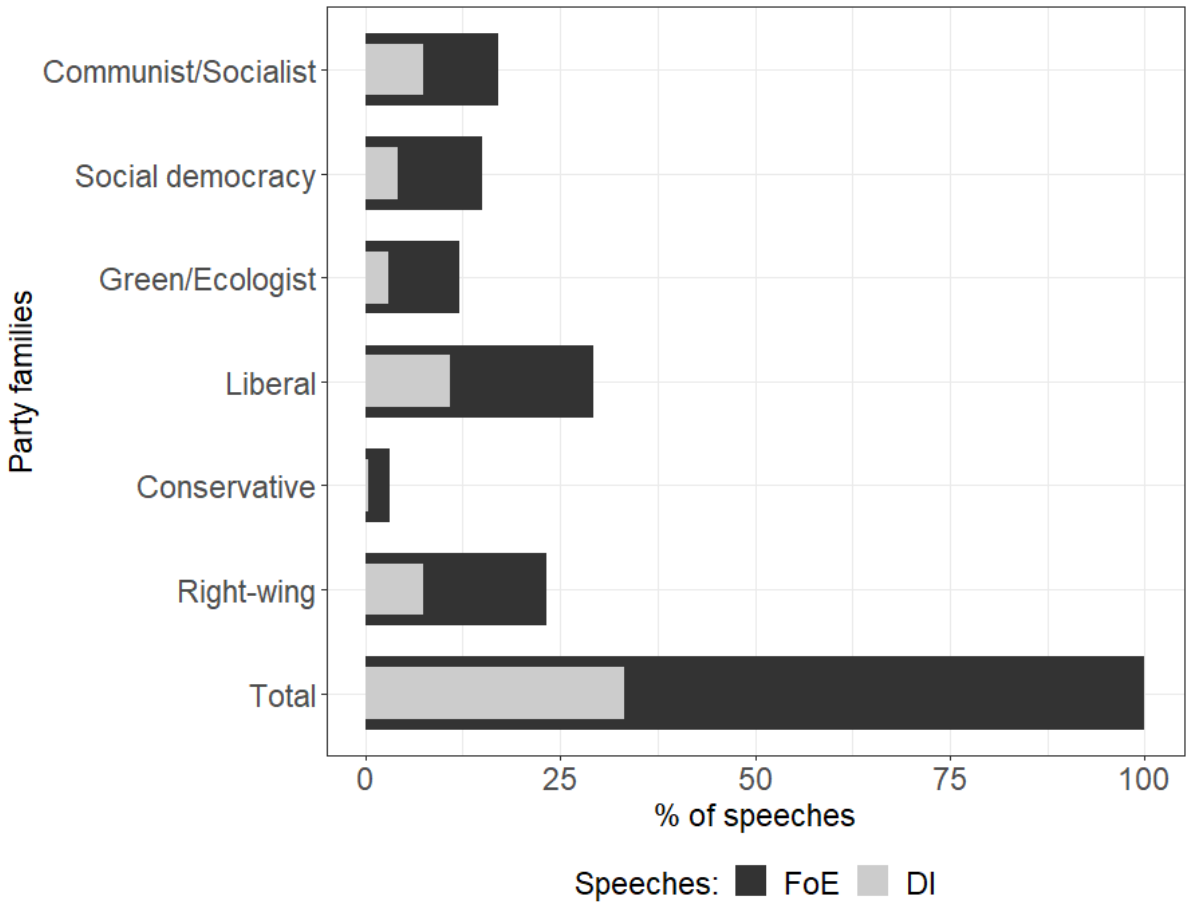


Figure 7.3. Frequency of references to DI in FoE speeches by party family (n=1123 – number of FoE speeches, o=374 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to DI).

Opt-outs were discussed in relation to defence and security, especially both prior to and following the 2015 referendum on the justice and home affairs opt-out. Amongst others, concerns were raised over security policy and too much interference in national affairs and potential obligations if Denmark abolished opt-outs (for example, concerns of having to join a future European Union army). Such concerns were raised by Eurosceptic parties on both the left and right of the political spectrum. In contrast, other concerns were put forward by the main parties in government on either side (V, S). These concerns focused mainly on Danish capabilities to, for example, fight cross-border crimes if Denmark could not fully cooperate on the European level. In the end, the referendum in 2015 did not gather enough public support to abolish the opt-out on justice and home affairs, which would have made continued Danish membership of Europol possible. This was often brought up in later parliamentary debates as a reminder of how critical the Danish public opinion towards further EU integration could be. It was also argued by several parties

that the existing defence opt-out should therefore not be up for discussion. This discourse changed with the war in Ukraine and a different security situation in Europe in 2022. Though not the direct subject of the analysed debates, the referendum in 2022 on abolishing this opt-out on defence did gather enough public support after the start of the war in Ukraine.

Concerning parties' evaluation of territorial differentiation, it is possible to identify some party patterns related to their attitudes towards the EU rather than along the left/right dimension. Pro-EU parties more often rejected existing territorial differentiation among EU member states and proposals for differentiation. Parties expressing such opinions argued along the lines of differentiation hindering Denmark from using its full potential as an EU member. Some also highlighted that Denmark's ability to advocate for its own interest and exert influence decreases by not participating in EU policies.

Anti-EU parties were more likely to suggest territorial differentiation among EU member states. Several MPs suggested that European cooperation has grown too quickly and, in several cases, is not in line with what the population wants to achieve with EU cooperation. Some also argued that flexibility is an excellent quality of the EU, which can allow Denmark to participate in policies that it considers rewarding. Several also cited examples of how existing opt-outs have benefited Denmark and how they must be kept. Also common among arguments for differentiation is the framing of national sovereignty.

At the same time, parties along the anti-pro-EU scale varied in their evaluation of territorial differentiation depending on the policy area being discussed. The lack of consistent party narratives might be explained by differentiation being discussed concerning specific policies rather than on an abstract or conceptual level. This is exemplified by the salience of the topic present in specific debates on welfare or economic issues or as driven by discussions on opt-outs combined with a lack of attention to territorial differentiation on a conceptual level. The latter seems to be a cross-cutting theme in the analysed debates.

On the other hand, there is a cross-party tendency to consider some principles related to fundamental rights as unavoidable and impossible to opt out of. This can be exemplified by looking at statements on conditionality for financial assistance regarding compliance with the

rule of law. Compliance with the rule of law by recipients of EU funds is presented by multiple party representatives as a Danish interest and priority, but also essential for the functioning of the Union and European cooperation. Understood this way, some MPs noted that while one should be able to contest the EU interfering in a country's labour market, the same is not the case when it comes to compliance with the rule of law and other democratic rules of the game.

A consistent national focus in the debates is another recurrent cross-party concern. MPs focused on whether differentiation would be beneficial for Denmark rather than whether it would be beneficial for the European Union and the future of Europe. Similarly, few speakers considered whether other countries should be given opt-outs too. This prominent national focus was, amongst others, evident in MPs' references to national independence when justifying their evaluation of differentiation. Rejection of differentiation and the statements expressing a wish to turn opt-outs into opt-ins were often framed as a way to increase direct Danish influence. On the other side, proposals of differentiation were framed as a strategy to protect national autonomy. The framing of differentiation along national gains, focusing on how the EU and Europeanisation affect Denmark rather than the EU as a political system, thus seems to be a tendency that cuts across any identified party patterns.

Perspectives of domination in parliamentary debates

In contrast, dominance did not appear to be commonly discussed. Overall, 104 speeches contained at least one reference to dominance, equal to 9.26% of the analysed speeches on the future of Europe. However, two parties were more inclined to include reflections on dominance in their statements, namely EL and DF. Both parties can be termed anti-EU parties, but on opposing sides of the right-left dimension (EL on the far left and DF on the far right). At the same time, all parties at least once diagnosed some form of domination in their speeches.

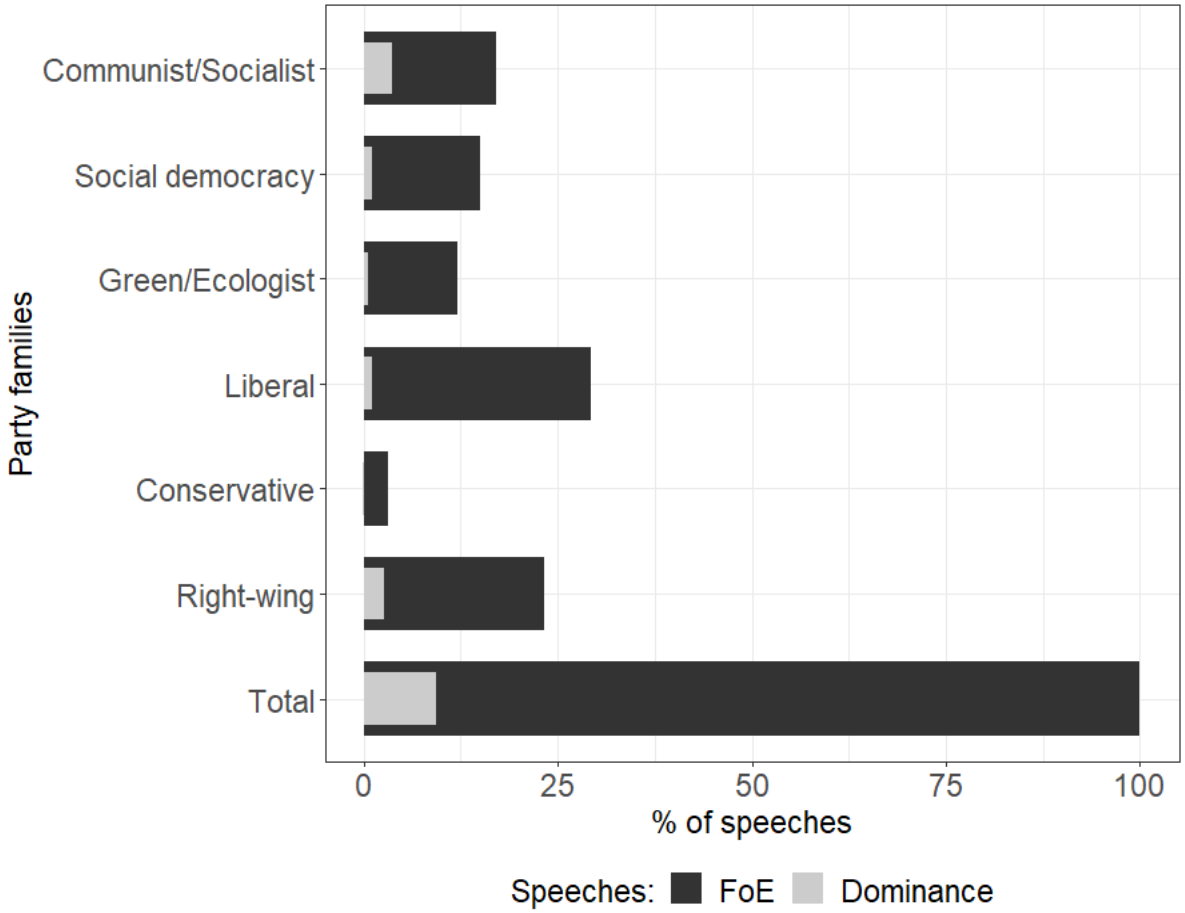


Figure 7.4. Frequency of references to dominance in FoE speeches by party family (n=1123 – number of FoE speeches, o=104 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to dominance).

The EU being dominant over EU member states was a common theme in the parties' diagnosis. Several MPs argued that this domination is limiting political autonomy, indicating asymmetry of power between the EU and Denmark. For example, some stated that political decisions were taken and managed from Brussels rather than nationally. Several also expressed transparency problems, arguing that important decisions are often taken 'behind closed doors'. Especially the EC was perceived as a dominating actor, where some MPs highlighted excessively high regulatory activity. Several described this as something close to micromanagement and something that restricted the Danish political room for manoeuvre and self-determination. This lack of political autonomy was often coupled with mentions of democratic values, several indicating that the latter was understood as something disrespecting democratic decisions.

Similarly, some also mentioned the ECJ and criticised its expansive style of interpretation. Many interpreted this as standing in opposition to

democratic components such as freedom of speech and the rule of law. One perspective of dominance present in the analysed MP statements thus seems to be exposure to arbitrary power caused by illicit hierarchy and technocracy.

The limiting effect on Danish political autonomy following from EU capacity was particularly highlighted within the economic area. In the analysed debates, access to the internal market and economic cooperation was perceived as widely appreciated. At the same time, concerns about the Danish welfare state being undermined by the EU were, as previously noted, expressed across multiple political parties. This is often linked to the fact that the EU sets a narrow framework for the economic policy Denmark can pursue, leading to unwanted consequences such as higher unemployment rates and social dumping. This can be illustrated by EU minimum wages being interpreted as threatening both the Danish labour market model and the Danish welfare state. The latter was also the case within migration policy. Here, several stated that an EU decision to increase the arrival of refugees to Denmark would be understood as something forced upon them and that the influx should be determined in Denmark, not Brussels.

However, solutions for dealing with dominance appeared to be an even less discussed topic. Only 16 statements were coded as offering remedies for domination, extending across the left-right political spectrum. However, some anti-pro-EU patterns can be identified in the few available statements. For more pro-European parties, adhering to the subsidiarity principle was considered a remedy for the identified dominance. More EU-sceptic and anti-EU parties perceived weakening the role of specific institutions or the EU as a remedy. For example, certain statements argued that a power transfer in specific policy areas from the EU to the nation-state would benefit Denmark. Some also suggested leaving the EU to obtain full autonomy over national borders as a solution.

Conclusions on narratives on the future of the EU

A common theme put forward by parties across the left-right continuum is the need for a more 'efficient EU'. At the same time, when looking at when approaches towards efficiency are promoted in detail, parties seem to have a different understanding of what this implies. Overall, MPs were often vague about its concrete meaning. Instead, they advocated

statements such as that Denmark should work to establish a more effective EU which delivers concrete results for the benefit of citizens and businesses in the member states. Others suggest that the Danish parliament should strive to create an EU that is relevant and present, capable of facing challenges and taking care of things that make a difference in citizens' everyday lives. This is expressed as a desire to build a 'leaner and more efficient' EU, or that the EU should be 'big on the big things and small on the small things'.

In the analysed data, this can be exemplified by the previously described statements related to changing the competence between the EU and EU member states; more competence to national institutions in some policy areas such as social policy and more competence to EU institutions in other policy areas such as pollution, counterterrorism, or the single market. Danish parliamentary politicians, therefore, can be understood as dualistic in their view on the relationship between integration, differentiation and interinstitutional relations within the EU. While economic benefits through membership were a common narrative, protecting against political integration, valuing subsidiarity, and arguing for increasing Danish political autonomy were also evident.

In most MPs' statements, increased capacity to member states within some policy areas does not seem to be reflected in an overall scepticism towards the Union itself; rather, the political content that is included in the EU cooperation is contested depending on the policy area. For many, this is coupled with wanting the EU to shift its focus towards the internal market. At the same time, multiple MPs raised concerns about the EU developing in the direction of a social union connected with an across-party scepticism of too much interference of the EU on national welfare and other social issues. Thus, the EU seems to be understood as a tool that creates added value in many areas, but that EU capacity should be limited to solving cross-border challenges or where there are other advantages in solving problems at the EU level. However, it should not be used to solve problems that member states can better solve themselves, such as social policy and welfare.

If a coherent constitutional narrative could be identified from these themes in the Danish debates about the future of Europe, the predominant one would be closer to the intergovernmental vision of EU integration. This follows from the continual emphasis on the role of member states and the coherent national focus on Danish benefits only. In the analysed

data, many MPs express the view that the EU should be granted several capacities in some domains and policy areas, such as those related to the internal market. However, the member state should determine the scope of interference depending on whether it would benefit Denmark.

To further nuance the constitutional narrative, the Danish case may align better with the sovereigntist vision of intergovernmentalism since many argue that competencies should be repositioned at the national level, except for a few policy areas where EU action is considered beneficial. At the same time, identifying further shades of intergovernmentalism is difficult due to the lack of coherent cross-party narratives across policy domains. Within some policy areas, as identified above, some MPs explicitly argue for more competencies for the EU, more in line with the intergovernmental model or even closer to a republican model of intergovernmentalism.

However, views on democracy are less consistent. On the one hand, dominant narratives on strengthening democracy at the national level while also criticising non-democratic practices on the EU level may correspond to intergovernmental visions of EU integration. Conversely, these narratives could also be seen to correspond with some features of federalist constitutional visions. This is seen, among other things, in remarks made by MPs calling for measures to promote democracy at the EU level while endorsing the use of direct democracy instruments. Features of the federalist model might also be apparent in perspectives on citizens' rights, although this seems to depend on the policy area. For example, some argue for rectifying measures on social dumping, indicating a need to protect citizens' rights related to internal market effects. Outside of the economic policy area, however, changes in citizens' rights should be a part of member states' concerns.

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Chapter 8

Sweden: Between Differentiation and Reluctant Euro-optimism

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Introduction

In the post-war era, Sweden's relations with Western Europe remained difficult. On the one hand, the country could not afford to isolate itself due to its heavily reliance on its economic ties with the rest of Europe. On the other hand, however, its governments continued to resist European integration for political reasons. This phenomenon has been referred to as the 'Swedish paradox' (Miles 2019, 10), where the country retained a principle of neutrality in defence policies, especially linked to defence and security policy. The main example of this foreign policy doctrine is that Sweden did not join NATO as the other Nordic countries did.

Neutrality in foreign policy also 'trickled down' to Sweden's stance on European integration. As is the case with other Nordic countries, Sweden's relationship with the European Union was characterised by initial hesitation. Yet neutrality in defence policy did not automatically mean neutrality on other forms of international cooperation and membership in international organisations. From 1960, Sweden was a founding member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), together with its Nordic neighbours as well as the UK (until 1973) and Austria. Swedish governments were concerned that joining the EU would lead to compromises on its welfare and security policies (Tallberg et al. 2010).

According to James Waite (1973, 319), the Swedish perspective on European integration consisted of two dimensions; economic and political. Regarding the economic dimension, Swedish policymakers believed that maintaining close relations with the rest of Europe was vital

for the nation to secure export access to European markets and, as a result, support its own policy and welfare objectives. Sweden thus sought to have a strong partnership with the developing EEC for economic reasons (Miles 2019, 10). The political dimension, on the other hand, was based on the difficulties of reconciling any close economic connection with Swedish values of independence and neutrality. Sweden's governments were wary of participation in any foreign structure that would necessitate a significant transfer of national sovereignty and thus infringe the country's neutrality doctrine. This 'paradox' of economic interdependence with Europe and the need to retain political independence came to define Swedish foreign policy towards Europe and European integration. As a result of this, Sweden earned the reputation for being a 'reluctant European' (Miljan 1977). Swedish governments have attempted to reconcile preconceived notions of national sovereignty and neutrality with the country's historical economic reliance on Europe. However, the development of a successful and expanding European Community (EC) necessitated a more sophisticated Swedish European integration policy (Miles 2019, 11).

During the late 1980s, Sweden's relations with the EC underwent relatively dramatic changes, with the country eventually becoming a full member in January 1995. As geopolitical tides turned with the end of the Cold War, the debate on European integration took a new turn in Sweden's political elite. The previous understanding of Sweden as 'a people apart' was reframed, as the fault lines of European politics changed (Ringmar 1998). In addition, the Swedish economy had taken a big toll at the beginning of the 1990s, rocking the foundations of social justice in the Swedish welfare state model. In other words, a combination of economic and geopolitical reasons lay in the foreground for the decision to pursue full membership of EU institutions (Ringmar 1998, 45-46). Moreover, Ringmar (1998) goes on to argue that these issues of high politics were combined with different arguments of what Swedish identity could be in a future Europe marked by the deepening and widening of integration. The outcome was, then, that the Swedish electorate voted in favour of EU membership in the referendum in November 1994.

During the 2000s, however, Sweden started to show more reluctance towards European integration (Stegmann McCallion 2018). Despite the absence of official opt-outs, the Swedes have pursued differentiated

integration (DI) since joining, electing not to join the European Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM2) or the third stage of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). Even after a successful first Swedish EU Council Presidency in 2001, the euro was categorically rejected in a public referendum in September 2003 (Leruth 2015). Sweden is still outside the Eurozone and ERM2 (Miles 2010, 191). Still, the country's position as a 'euro-outsider' does not mean that the Swedish integration approach is not a mixed perspective. After Sweden's full entry into the EU, it can be considered as dominated by 'selective supernationalists'. For example, they have contributed significantly to the development of a supranational environmental policy. Such notions are reflected in a recent Special Eurobarometer survey in which Sweden remains above the EU27 average when it comes to reporting that Swedish membership is a good thing (76%) and being in favour of the European Union and the way it is working at present (26%) (European Commission et al. 2021). In other words, Sweden remains a near-core insider, but one that practises quite pronounced levels of differentiated informal integration (Miles 2010, 192).

The Riksdag: a national parliament with strong institutionalisation of EU affairs

According to the Swedish Constitution, the Riksdag (the Swedish parliament) is the supreme parliamentary authority. Consisting of a single chamber and made up of 349 members, the Riksdag has legislative and budgetary powers and the government must be backed by a majority in it. A characteristic of parliamentary systems such as Sweden's is that a government is in a strong position if it has a majority in parliament (Hegeland 2015, 426).

Upon joining the EU, the Riksdag stated that it must play a significant role in EU affairs. In 2002, the Swedish Constitution enshrined its role in EU affairs. Over the years, the Riksdag has gone from a reluctant European player to becoming more Europeanised (Hegeland 2015, 438). Now, electoral committees, the European Affairs Committee (EAC), and the plenary are all active in EU issues both ex ante and ex post. Both the sectoral committees and the plenary are involved in the handling of Green Papers and subsidiarity control. During the early stages of the legislative process, sectoral committees consult with the government. As a result, EU oversight is highly decentralised; committees whose composition reflects the Riksdag as a whole are responsible for reviewing EU documents that

belong within their area of expertise (Brack 2021, 22). The government must also consult with the EAC before making decisions in the Council. After each Council meeting, the government sends reports ex post, and the EAC receives oral reports. Before European Council sessions, the prime minister meets with the EAC and reports back to the parliament.

The Riksdag has institutionalised its handling of EU affairs over time (Hegeland 2015, 438). Further rules have been adopted in the Riksdag Act and the Swedish Constitution. One example is the inclusion in 2007 of a need for sectoral committees to review the EU Commission's Green and White Papers. In general, there has been a shift away from regarding EU issues as foreign policy and towards addressing them as domestic policy.

Political parties and views on European integration

According to some scholars, the Swedish system follows a European trend in which party systems have become increasingly 'bipolar', with bloc-based competition replacing more fluid patterns of collaboration (Gallagher 2011, 231–233). In the 2014 and 2018 elections, eight parties won seats in the Riksdag: the Moderate Party (Moderata samlingspartiet – M); the Social Democratic Party (Socialdemokraterna – SAP); the Centre Party (Centerpartiet – C); the Liberals (Liberalerna – L); the Christian Democrats (Kristdemokraterna – KD); the Left Party (Vänsterpartiet – V); the Green Party (Miljöpartiet de Gröna – MP); and Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna – SD).

Until 1985, Sweden had a stable party system dominated by five parties with seats in parliament. The Riksdag had a left/communist party, a social democratic party, a liberal party, an agrarian party, and a conservative party. With the election of the Green Party to parliament in 1985, a wedge was inserted into this system. Since then, Swedish party politics has gone through something of a transformation. A populist party has come and gone (New Democracy), while a more profound right-wing alternative to the classical centre-right parties emerged in the 2010s (SD). In addition, centrist formations like the Centre Party, the Liberals and KD have all gone through significant changes in policy, as well as depending on their support for centre-left or centre-right governments. This was highlighted in the problems with forming a viable majority vote behind what would eventually become a minority government with the SAP and the Greens as major and minor coalition partners.

Differences in indices on the left-right scale are not surprising as they may weight variables in different ways. In Sweden, the welfare state has been at the forefront of public debate for the last two decades. The Reinfeldt government (M, C, L, and KD) that ruled from 2006 to 2014 initiated a series of welfare reforms in social security, unemployment benefits and the health sector. Moreover, they also reformed the Swedish school system, with a new system of financing so-called free schools. At the same time, as a centre-right government, the Reinfeldt period was marked by a continuation of what is often held to be Sweden's liberal position on asylum, migration, and integration.

In other words, Swedish parties are not always easy to pin down on a right-to-left scale. Take SD as an example. This is a relatively new party (founded in 1988) and the last one to establish itself nationally, having been represented in the Riksdag since 2010. The party self-identifies as *social conservative* with a *nationalist core view* that sees *value conservatism* and *a solidaristic welfare model* as the main tools to build society.[29] In other words, then, it is not surprising that such a party which self-identifies not only as conservative and nationalist, but also as solidaristic in terms of the welfare state, plots differently in the Manifesto and ParlGov indices. Yet it is important to underline that leftist policies on the welfare state should not necessarily be understood in terms of expenditure or universal welfare benefits, but also how such policy stances are framed. SD clearly frame their 'solidaristic' welfare policy as part of a value conservative and *nationalist* understanding of society. This means that solidarity is confined to an exclusive understanding of the welfare community as *Swedish*, while left-leaning parties, such as the Left Party and to some extent the SAP, will have a more inclusive understanding of this, with inclusion of migrants and non-citizens as welfare community members.

This party system also affects how European integration is handled by the different parties. While there is considerable Euroscepticism among some parties in the Riksdag (Berg and Bové 2016), there is also a widespread consensus that Sweden should remain in the EU. In other words, compared to an outsider country like Norway, Euroscepticism in Sweden

[29] Sverigedemokraternas principprogram 2019, URL: https://sd.se/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/sverigedemokraternas-principprogram-2019.pdf [accessed: 13 October 2022]

does not manifest itself in any calls for a change in the membership dimension. The Moderate Party is Sweden's foremost conservative party.

The party has its voter base in Sweden's city areas and strong support from business and corporations. The Moderate Party's position on European integration has been largely united: according to them, Sweden should become a part of the EU's 'inner core' and be a full-scale EU member. They therefore do not regard differentiated European integration as a feasible option and want Sweden to join the EMU's third stage. A majority of the party's members, as well as conservative MPs, agree with this position, underlining party unity (Leruth et al. 2020, 94).

SAP has been at the very centre of the Swedish political system since the 1930s. The ruling party for much of the post-war period, it has been a 'catch-all' with support in both central and rural areas. This has also affected party divisions on European integration. A strong internal division has existed over EU membership in particular, rather than European integration in general. On several levels, there are signs of some Euroscepticism: among grassroots members, elites, members of parliament (MPs), and appointed ministers when in government. The question of Sweden's participation in the third stage of the EMU was an example of such divisions, which led the party to adopt a compartmentalisation strategy and allow anti-euro members to campaign for the 'no' camp, which eventually played a key role in shaping the outcome of the 2003 referendum (Leruth et al. 2020, 94).

The Centre Party is Sweden's traditional agrarian party, but has in recent years turned towards a more explicit social-liberal position on many policy areas. The party was in favour of Swedish membership in the EU in the 1994 referendum, but with strong inner divisions on the issue. It continues to be in favour of EU membership, but inner strife on the issue has led the party's leadership to often promote DI by advocating EU membership while refusing to participate in some highly politicised policy areas. Significantly, the party was against Swedish membership of the EMU and adoption of the euro.

The KD is a centrist party, often cooperating with the Centre Party and the Liberals. During the 1990s, the party campaigned for EU membership. They have since supported full involvement in all areas of EU policy, including the Eurozone (Leruth et al. 2020, 95). The party shows little sign

of inner divisions on the EU issue, as is the case for some other Swedish parties, but this has not been a core political issue. Another centrist party, the Liberals, have been rather united in their pro-integrationist approach to European integration. The party can be seen as Sweden's most pro-integrationist party. It favours full integration for Sweden, with no opt-outs and membership of the euro.

The Swedish Left Party is Sweden's radical left alternative to the SAP. It has long been critical of European integration and has nearly unanimously rejected any form of institutionalised collaboration within the EU. The party harbours a left-wing critique of the EU as mainly a market project based on neoliberal doctrines. Such policies are viewed as a threat to the Swedish model for capital-labour relations, working life and welfare arrangements.

SD is a right-wing party that entered parliamentary politics in 2008. The party has grown considerably since then, campaigning on restrictions to migration and asylum, law and order, and what could be called 'Sweden-centric' policies. Previously, the party largely opposed the process of European integration (Leruth et al. 2020, 96). SD have taken an ambiguous position to the Swedish EU debate since the early 2000s, ranging from support for the current de facto Swedish opt-outs to campaigning for a 'Swexit' in 2018 in response to the Brexit referendum (Leruth et al. 2019). Still, it is notable that in their party programme, SD state: 'The Sweden Democrats want to reform the EU in favour of a less supranational and more democratic way of working. If that fails, we should consider reviewing the membership [own translation]'. However, in the ParlGov database, the party only receives a score of 2.3 when it comes to Euroscepticism (see Swedish parties overview in Annex).

EU in crises: Swedish parliamentary debates on the future of Europe

One aspect that characterises the debates in the Swedish case is that several MPs express a sense of urgency. It seems to be a common perception that the EU is in an existential crisis. Most parties emphasise the importance in this situation of the European Union not faltering and being able to stand strong against external and internal challenges. There are obviously different views among the political parties regarding what the most urgent challenges are, but the most prominent ones include:

Brexit and the need for Sweden to find new allies, foreign policy – including security, but also trade and asylum, internal values and the rule of law, as well as different perspectives on democratic deficits. In general, two of the Swedish parties are Eurosceptic: SD (right) and the Left Party (communist). Although the other parties may have different visions of the EU, which I will return to below, they nevertheless express overarching support for European integration throughout the debates. Due to criticism from Eurosceptics as well as this period of trials and tribulations, it seems important for the parties to justify why they believe the EU is worthwhile, and why Swedish membership is valuable. In other words, there is a perceived need to defend the EU project, whether it is in the name of democracy, peace, prosperity, or future potential.

The selected debates on FoE discuss four work programmes of the European Commission (2015, 2017, 2019 and 2020), one government report on the EU's activities in 2016, the Commission's Communication on the Internal Market in a Changing World (2019) and an EU-political debate (2020). One debate also specifically addresses the Commission's report containing a first analysis of the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE; 2020). The debates on the work programmes especially are structured around the priorities set out by the Commission. These debates cover a broad range of topics and reveal which European issues are regarded as important by the various political parties. At the same time, they all address issues related to FoE and democracy in the EU. During the debate on the activities of EU during 2016, particular attention is given to supranationalism and the White Book on the Future of Europe. The debate about the Commission's communication on the internal market revolves around competing principles in governing the internal market. In addressing the CoFoE specifically, MPs express both support and scepticism, but most are cautiously optimistic about the outcome of the conference. In the words of MP Kerstin Lundgren from the Centre Party: 'Regarding the conference, I say: let's see – it will certainly be needed' (Kerstin Lundgren, MP, C, SE_2020-03-19_FoE).

As noted above, the only national election held in Sweden during the period we cover in this chapter was in 2018. While this election did not alter the composition of the government, the seat allocation in the parliament changed quite considerably.

Who is speaking about the future of Europe? SAP and fringe parties as main actors

Throughout the period under study, the SAP were in a minority government together with the Greens. The SAP were also the largest party, followed by the Conservatives and the radical- right SD. In the 2018 elections, the Greens lost nine seats and went from being the fourth to the eighth largest party. The SAP were behind the largest number of interventions, but this also includes cabinet members, who took part in several of the debates coded. Several of the debates were characterised by a back and forth between government and opposition parties. As mentioned above, the parliamentary debates in Sweden are largely directed towards a national audience preoccupied with national issues. This is reflected in the tendency for opposition parties to use these debates to confront the government not only about European issues, but also national ones, such as migration or social policy. At the same time, one of the governmental parties, the Greens, was the party with the second fewest interventions, with only the Liberals having fewer. The much larger SAP held both positions as foreign minister and minister for EU affairs.[30] Although one explanation could be that the Greens lost a lot of seats in the 2018 elections, this in itself does not necessarily imply less activity.

The data material in Figure 8.1 below, which looks at how active each party family is in debates, shows that engagement in the debates does not necessarily reflect the size of a party. Among the most active actors after the SAP were the left and right fringe parties, the Socialists and the right-wing SD. Both these parties have a distinct position on the EU, compared to their mainstream counterparts. They were both critical towards the Union, albeit for different reasons. The Socialists are very active during the debates on the Eurozone, denouncing the EU's handling of the economic crisis and advocating a new economic direction (Amineh Kakabaveh, MP, SAP, SE_2015-02-18_Migration). They were also in favour of releasing countries from the euro, should they want to, and against continued centralisation of economic policy at EU level. The right-wing SD also warned about federalisation of economic politics in Europe (Pavel Gamov, MP, SD, SE_2015-02-18_Migration). However, compared to both the Eurozone and FoE debates, in debates on migration MPs from SD were most

[30] The foreign minister from 2014 to 2019 was Margot Wallström, followed from 2019 to 2022 by Ann Linde. Linde was the minister for EU affairs between 2014 and 2019, succeeded from 2019 to 2022 by Hans Dahlgren.

active in terms of the number of interventions. They are also frequently confronted by other parties about their position on EU-membership. In fact, although leaving the EU is an ambition stated in the Socialists' party manifesto, they decided not to make it an issue during the 2018 election campaign because it was deemed more important to demonstrate their distance from right-wing parties. As stated by previous MP and leader of the Left Party Jonas Sjöstedt: 'The difference against the extreme right is more important than the EU opposition' (Dagens nyheter 2018). In spite of this, other parties continued to point out the similarities during debates:

> I suspect that I disappoint you when I say that the comparison I made between the Left Party and the Sweden Democrats is correct, and I stand by it. If I read the [Socialist Party's] party programme, it is clear that your party believes that Sweden should leave the EU. This is exactly what the Sweden Democrats also believe
>
> (Lars Adaktusson, MP, KD, SE_2018-12-05_FoE).

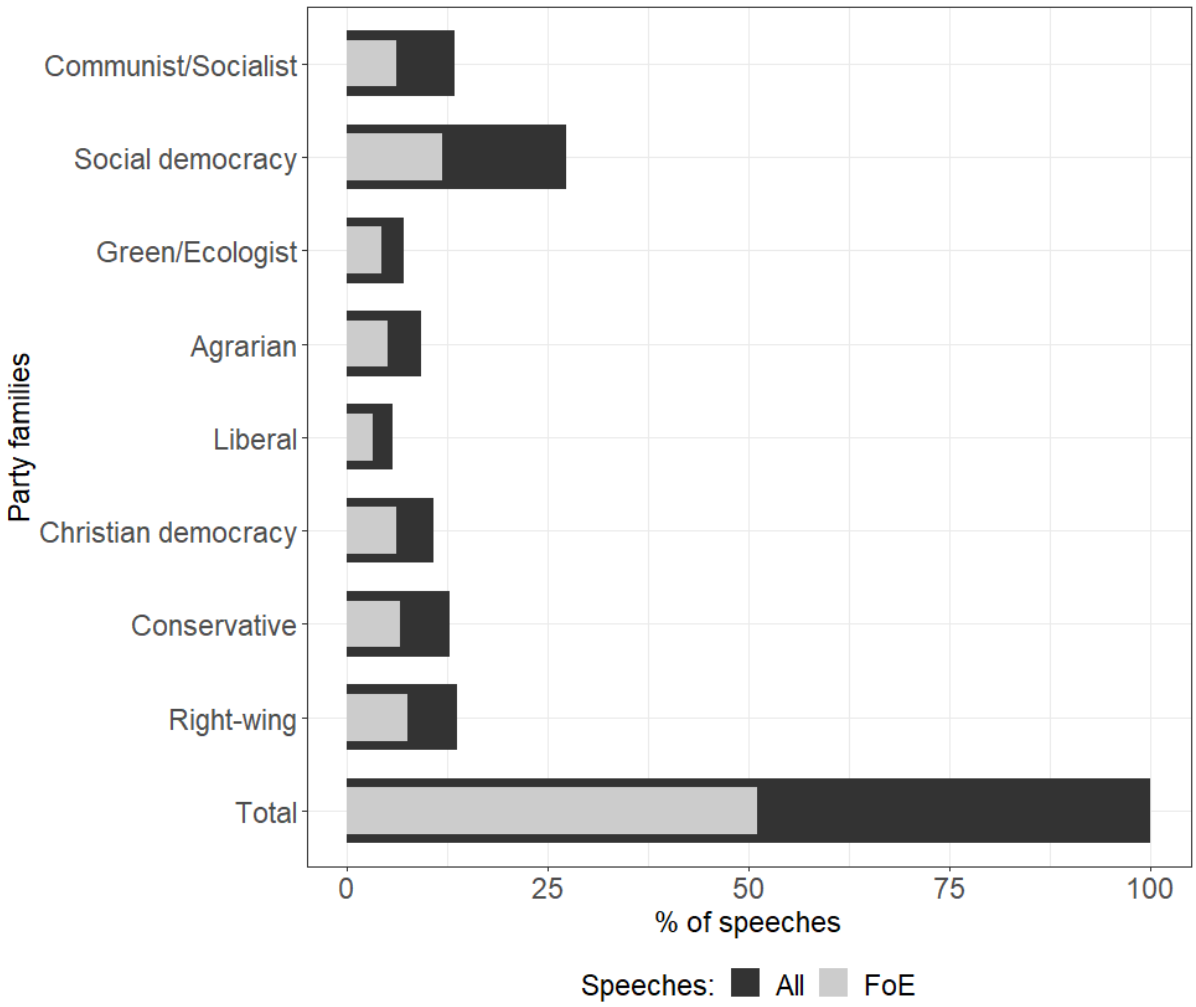


Figure 8.1. Frequency of analysed speeches by party family (m=531 – number of speeches, n=271 – number of FoE speeches).

The data material contains examples of MPs from SD declaring that they wish to take Sweden out of the Union by way of a referendum: 'It is perfectly reasonable that the people, who voted for EU membership, should also make the decisive decision to leave the EU' (Jeff Ahl, MP, SD, SE_2017-03-15_FoE). However, this is not a very frequent demand, and during the debates leading up to the 2018 elections, as well as after the elections, SD were vocal in their criticism of a supranational Union, but they did not make demands for Sweden to exit the EU. In their campaign for the 2019 European Parliament elections, the motto was 'Less EU, more Sweden'. In the 2022 national elections, this message was reiterated in their electoral platform, together with the ambition to '[s]trengthen Sweden's negotiating position in the EU through a referendum instrument that gives the Swedish people the opportunity to take a position on decisive path choices in the EU' (SD electoral platform 2022).

EU polity reforms

An overall impression from the Swedish case was that, perhaps partly due to criticism from Eurosceptics, but also with the period under investigation being one of trials and tribulations, it was important for the parties to justify why they believed the EU to be worthwhile, and why Swedish membership is valuable. In other words, there was a perceived need to defend the EU project, whether it was in the name of democracy, peace, prosperity or future potential. Thus, several MPs opened their interventions with long speeches about the establishment of the EU, pointing to the motivation behind European integration. The minister for EU affairs, Hans Dahlgren (SAP), for example declared:

> I would first like to remind you why the European Union is crucial for us. The reason why we devote time and energy to this collaboration, a collaboration that I believe is more important than ever, is that the EU gives strength to Sweden, a strength that is significantly greater than our own. And the most important thing is that together we can secure peace on our continent.
>
> (Hans Dahlgren, Minister for EU affairs, SAP, SE_2020-01-20_FoE)

Most mainstream parties opened their speeches with similar passages. Sometimes they had almost pedagogical framing, taking the public through the different steps of the EU's historical development. More importantly, it can be seen as a way for parliamentarians and parties to signal that this is their point of departure – they value Sweden's

membership in the EU. At the same time, in polity terms, the Swedish debate during this period was characterised more by a discussion on division of competences between member states and the EU than it was about interinstitutional relations in Brussels. Thus, it was not institutional reforms at the EU level that was the focus: neither the weakening of the Commission, nor the strengthening of the Council of the European Union or the European Council. Rather it was the issue of relations between governance levels. MP Margareta Cederfelt from the Conservatives, for example, stated:

> For us moderates, it is of great importance that the subsidiarity principle is applied within the EU, that the Commission focuses on the issues that are overarching and should be solved at the EU level, and that national, as well as regional and municipal self-determination is preserved. All decisions must be made at the right level.
>
> (Margareta Cederfelt, MP, M, SE_2017-03-15_FoE)

In a similar manner, her parliamentary colleague claimed:

> We Christian Democrats want this crisis to result in a European Union that is prepared to change to better cope with tackling major cross-border challenges, but is also prepared to let go of policy areas that are better suited to decisions at political levels closer to citizens. We believe that it is only in this way that the EU can regain legitimacy.
>
> (Aron Modig, MP, KD, SE_2017-06-12_FoE)

The right-wing Sweden Democrat made a comparable argument, although the rhetorical wrapping and contextual interpretation differ:

> As it works today, the EU is demonstrably not a stable platform for cooperation in Europe. We therefore see it as our task to save the parts of European cooperation that work, for example the internal market, by dismantling the parts of the cooperation that do not work.
>
> (Ludvig Asplin, MP, SD, SE_2018-12-05_FoE)

Thus, the main concrete proposals for institutional reform as a means of rectifying democratic malfunctioning were to allocate more power to national parliaments. In the words of Håkan Svenneling: 'The [Socialist] Party wants to democratise the EU by giving less power to the EU's

bureaucrats, commissioners and judges and more power to us in the national parliaments' (Håkan Svenneling, MP, SAP, SE_2018-12-05_FoE). Margareta Cederfelt from the Conservatives was perhaps seeking a less invasive reform when she argued that national parliamentarians should be allowed to have an impact on the Commission's work earlier (Margareta Cederfelt, MP, M, SE_2017-03-15_FoE). These arguments echoed the calls for subsidiarity cited above. A few MPs also spoke out in defence of the institutional status quo, which did not entail a call for institutional reform, but rather a call to encourage or enforce behaviour in line with existing rules. Cederfelt's statement about observing the subsidiarity principle cited above is again a case in point. In a similar manner, Pyri Niemi from the SAP claimed: 'It is good that citizens become more active between the EU elections, but the current order of decisions must continue to guide us' (Pyri Niemi, MP, SAP, SE_2020-03-19_FoE). The only party that advocated more power to EU institutions was the Liberals:

> The [Liberal Party] wants to see a stronger role for the European Commission in the review of freedoms and rights in the EU. In cases where we discover violations, we must be able to bring countries before the European Court of Justice, which requires that the Court's mandate be extended.

The main debates: external relations, social policy, climate, and migration

The allocation of competences between member states and the EU is also part of the policies debated in the Swedish parliament. The policies most frequently debated in Sweden in the debates selected for analysis were climate and environment protection, social issues, EU foreign policy and external relations as well as migration, asylum and human mobility. The last of these is obviously the main topic during debates that address the EU and Sweden's handling of the migration crisis, but it is also a frequent issue beyond these specific debates. The way these areas are discussed differs, however. Social issues are often discussed in the context of division of competences between member states. A focal point of this debate is the Social Summit for Fair Jobs and Growth, held in Gothenburg in November 2017 on the invitation of Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lövfen (SAP). While holding the EU presidency, social policy was high up on Sweden's agenda. Opposition parties in Sweden, however, expressed concerns about further supranationalisation of social matters.

The KD were 'concerned about the large transfer of power in important areas that this could lead to' (Lars Adaktusson, MP, KD, SE_2021-06-09_Eurozone). The Conservatives declared their opposition to the government's policy on the social pillar, arguing that it was not the EU's business to deal with 'family law, determining the amount of child support and other matters' (Karin Enström, MP, M, SE_2017-06-12_FoE). This contrasted with the perspective of SAP, which is that protection of the Swedish model requires political initiatives at the EU level, and that 'the current system undermines the Swedish labour market model, which is based on collective agreements' (Patrick Björck, MP, SAP, SE_2015-02-18_Migration).

There is also some debate about competences in migration policy, whereas both climate and environment as well as foreign policy are more focused on capacity at the EU level. Few MPs are very specific about what this capacity should entail, which is in line with the finding on polity reforms. Nevertheless, for both climate and environment, as well as EU foreign policy and external relations, EU capacity is a key element. For migration it is also an important component, but not as prominent as with climate and foreign policy. All these areas are described as cross-border issues that require a collective response, but there are also some particular drivers, especially in the realm of foreign policy. In the words of MP Jessika Roswall from the Conservatives:

> Sweden must take the lead in further developing the projects in the field of defence that have been adopted in recent years, not least in the defence industry. If Sweden manages to get the EU to speak with one voice in matters of foreign policy that are central to us, it can make a real difference in the outside world, and Sweden can assert its interests with a force that we cannot do on our own.
>
> (Jessika Roswall, MP, M, SE_2020-01-20_FoE)

As mentioned above, the right-wing SD are very active on migration policy. Although they are not alone in framing migration as problematic, they stand out in the Swedish debate by not describing it as a fundamental right. The Conservatives, for example, also emphasise the challenges of a high number of asylum seekers, to public authorities, civil society and the Swedish economy. At the same time, they are quick to underline that they support the institution of asylum and consider it a fundamental right, which is an equally dominant narrative during the debates.

Representatives from SD also do not make demands for a reform of the European system, whereas the Conservatives do:

> The Commission will also develop a European agenda for migration. It is a big responsibility. The EU's overall goal must be to increase the EU's capacity to receive people fleeing for their lives. There must be more legal ways to seek asylum in the EU and to increase the reception of quota refugees in other countries.
>
> (Sofia Arkelsten, MP, M, SE_2015-02-18_Migration)

In other words, the Conservatives, as well as all the other Swedish parties, link migration to EU capacity, while SD do not. This includes the Eurosceptic Socialists, who argue:

> Sweden should strongly oppose proposals aimed at paying countries such as Libya to keep people in need of protection from Europe's borders. Sweden must be a clear and distinct voice in the EU and show that more people can do more. We do this by continuing to lead the way.
>
> (Christina Höj Larsen, MP, SAP, SE_2015-04-08_Migration)

Still, the debate about migration in Sweden is even more about national conditions. 'Reforming the current national system' is the most frequently used code in the migration debates and concrete suggestions for how to remodel Swedish policies are more numerous than proposals for new European policy instruments.

Differentiated integration from the Swedish perspective

Differentiated integration is mentioned in the context of the Eurozone debates, but to a very limited extent. In Figure 8.2 below we see that the code for DI is only used in 3.69% of all the FoE speeches. The Liberals argue that Eurozone cooperation leads to a concentration of capital in prosperous regions in the EU, which increases inequality within countries. The Socialists claim that leaving the euro should be made easier. But overall, DI was rarely debated in the Swedish parliament. A few MPs express a distinct worry about it, however, and here there is a profound difference between party families: the Socialists advocate permanent differentiation as a move towards dis-integration – returning power to the nation states. On the other side of the aisle, the Conservatives are worried about how differentiated integration will affect Sweden: 'We

moderates do not want to see a development towards a two-speed Europe. Such a development would most likely lead to Sweden being marginalised in the EU' (Karin Enström, MP, M, SE_2017-06-12_FoE). Her party colleague MP Hans Rothenburg links this concern directly to the CoFoE:

> [T]his conference must not be the starting point for an A and a B team in European cooperation. No parallel decision-making bodies, such as a European Parliament, must be created. The inherent inertia of EU cooperation actually has an intrinsic value.
>
> (Hans Rothenburg, MP, M, SE_2020-03-19_FoE)

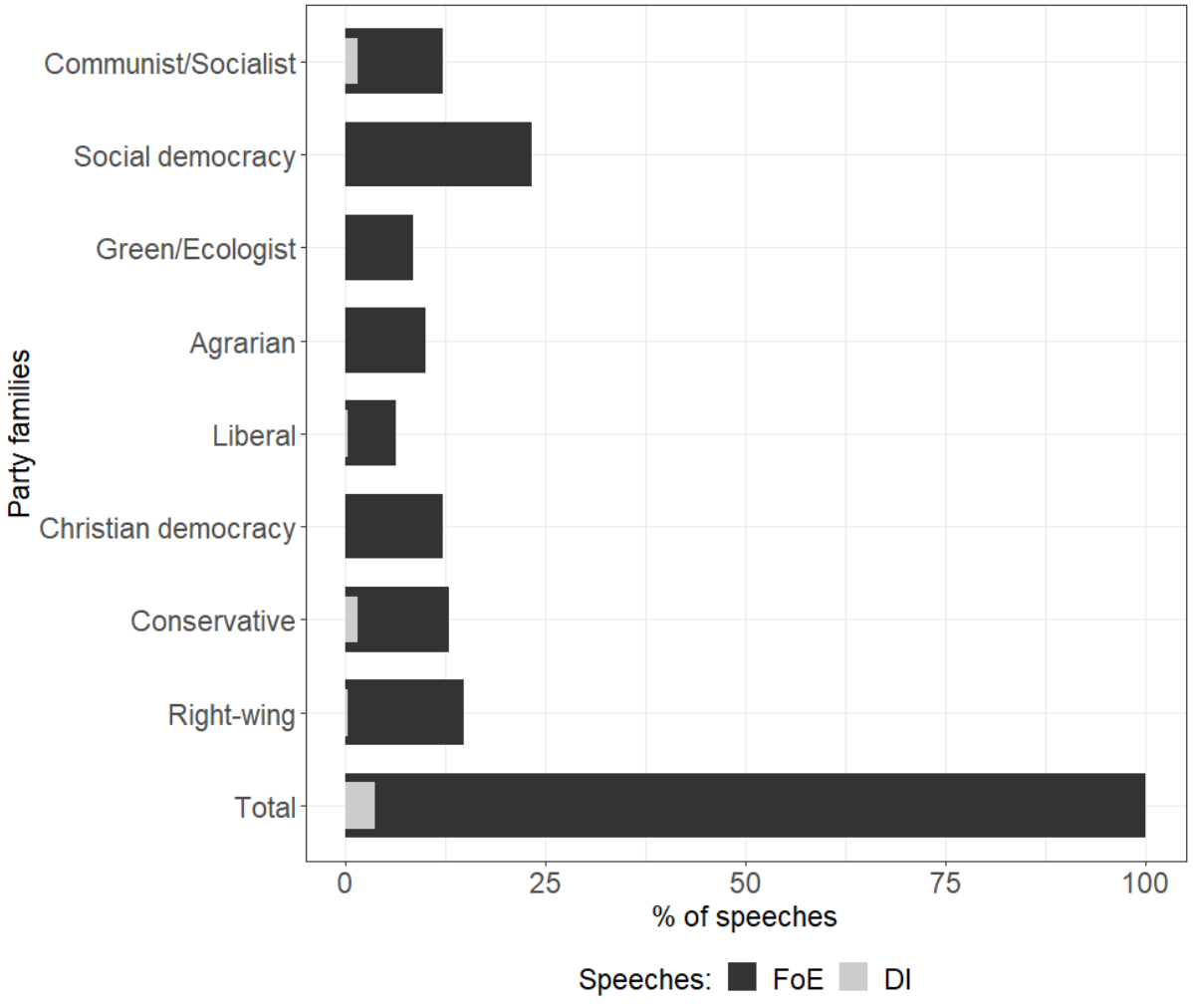


Figure 8.2. Frequency of references to DI in FoE speeches by party family (n=271 – number of FoE speeches, o=10 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to DI).

The Liberals go somewhat further in expressing their concerns:

> In order for Sweden to be able to contribute to this EU and be the important liberal voice that I and many actually stand for – you don't have to be a liberal to be liberal – we need to be a wholehearted partner in EU cooperation, part of the EU's core. But today we rather risk losing influence in the Union. By being outside the euro and the banking union and still outside the public prosecutor's office, which is now coming closer, Sweden is also outside central parts of the cooperation. When the Swedish government also chose a frugal line in the budget negotiations and once again confirmed Sweden's lukewarm attitude towards the EU, Sweden was isolated from most of the Union's countries, which increases the risk that we end up on the sidelines. It won't do. We can do more, and we want more.
>
> (Tina Acketoft, MP, L, SE_2020-01-20_FoE)

Perspectives of dominance

By comparison, dominance is a much more frequently mentioned issue. The parties who use arguments related to dominance most frequently are the right-wing SD as well as the Socialists. The Commission is criticised for, on the one hand, launching an ambition to reduce the number of EU rules, and on the other, not only suggesting a range of new laws, but also that several of these are decided by the Commission, 'totally beyond democratic control' (Pavel Gamov, MP, SD, SE_2015-02-18_Migration). In a similar manner, the Socialists criticise the EU's trade policy and the introduction of an Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) mechanism in the planned agreement between the EU and the US, which, they hold, have been 'negotiated under somewhat Byzantine forms behind thick walls' (Valter Mutt, MP, SAP, SE_2015-02-18_Migration). Thus, lack of transparency is one of the arguments presented by MPs for their diagnosis of dominance, signifying the knowledge that their interests and concerns will be affected, but not by whom, when and how (cf. Góra et al. 2020). SD also convey their worry about the EU's illicit hierarchy, meaning that as an institutional and institutional arrangement it makes binding decisions without being properly democratically authorised (cf. Góra et al. 2020):

> Today we see an EU that is becoming increasingly powerful and that is actively contributing to moving power ever further away from the national parliaments. This means that each nation-state and its people get less and less say. More and more power is instead concentrated in unelected bureaucrats.
>
> (Jeff Ahl, MP, SD , SE_2017-03-15_FoE)

Another frequent mention is dominance linked to inequality and negative redistributive patterns. In Sweden, it is not primarily other member states that are being called out, but the Commission as well as the EU as such: 'Many of the EU's citizens are turning against increased supranationalism and against the Union's way of dealing with the deep economic crises in several member states'(Amineh Kaveh, MP, SAP, SE_2017-06-12_FoE).

Whereas the right-wing SD are vocal about transparency and illicit hierarchy, inequality within and across member states is a particular concern voiced by MPs from the Socialists. The left and right radical parties are not the only ones concerned with topics associated with dominance. The following statement by MP Pernilla Stålhammar from the Greens is an expression of dominance as felt inequality: 'Not everyone has seen a borderless Europe as an asset. They have rather seen it as a threat to jobs, to welfare and to the local markets' (Pernilla Stålhammar, MP, MP, SE_2017-03-15_FoE).

Minister for Europe Ann Linde echoes this observation:

> In many ways, I believe that the populist and nationalist wave has been created because both national governments and the EU have failed to deliver, and above all, not fast enough. Not everyone has enjoyed increased growth; instead, the gaps have grown. When people feel their lives worsen, they look for alternatives and quick answers.
>
> (Ann Linde, Minister for Europe, SAP, SE_2017-03-15_FoE)

These statements address the EU's forms of exclusion. The fact that such statements are made across party ideology indicates that dominance is a broad concern. Far fewer present suggestions for how to remedy dominance, however. Some suggest more competences to member states as the way forward, whereas to parties such as the Socialists an all-encompassing reform of the way the internal market is constructed is deemed necessary.

That said, it follows a similar pattern to that identified above. Most Swedish parliamentarians are not too preoccupied with procedural and institutional structures of EU-level decision making. Most are mainly concerned with policies, and to the extent that democratic remedies are discussed, it is mainly about the role of national parliaments.

Conclusions: constitutional narratives on the EU

As described above, the main concrete proposal for institutional reform as a means of rectifying democratic malfunctioning was to allocate more power to national parliaments. This is an argument raised by several political parties, irrespective of their ideology and position on the EU. This is also evident in the one concrete debate on the CoFoE, where calls for engaging with national parliamentarians are made multiple times. In the words of Kerstin Lundgren from the Centre Party: 'I hope the signals coming from various national parliaments that it is important anchor the discussion about this will be heeded' (Kerstin Lundgren, MP, C, SE_2020-03-19_FoE).

If there is a constitutional narrative of the EU being presented in the Swedish parliament, therefore, the dominant one would be closer to conceptions of intergovernmentalism than understandings of a federal union. However, the Liberals could also be seen as alluding to some features of a regional cosmopolitan model, particularly the importance of citizens' rights:

> [The Liberals] want to see a stronger role for the European Commission in the review of freedoms and rights in the EU. In cases where we discover violations, we must be able to bring countries before the European Court of Justice, which requires that the Court's mandate be extended.
>
> (Maria Weimer, MP, L, SE_2015-02-18_FoE)

In a similar manner, when discussing the developing social pillar, the Liberals argue:

> As you know, the European Commission has proposed a collaboration – not legislation – on a minimum standard for social rights in the EU countries. It concerns fair working conditions, safe workplaces, healthcare and the inclusion of people with disabilities. We are not talking about transferring more power to the EU, if that

> is what you fear. We are not talking about more resources for the EU, if that is what you are afraid of. We are talking about minimum levels of social standards for the citizens of the EU. It is taking moral responsibility.
>
> (Tina Acketoft, MP, L, SE_2017-06-12_FoE)

However, although other parties also support the social pillar, moral responsibility is rarely ascribed to the EU.

Regarding changes in competences between the EU and member states, some parties come closer to a republican model of intergovernmentalism. They want to increase capacity at the EU level, but not at the further expense of national competences. Other parties are much clearer about their ambition to reallocate competences between governance levels. Subscribing to the importance of sovereignty, in the Swedish case at least, is not linked to acceptance of territorial DI. Although it is not a frequent topic in the parliamentary debates analysed in this chapter, several MPs express a worry about developing A and B teams within the Union.

Sweden has been marked by significant transformation to its political culture and party system in the recent decade. The rise of SD as a force in parliamentary politics has reshuffled the classic left-right divide in Swedish politics. This is particularly visible in how the EU and its future is debated in the Riksdag. Debates on the EU are first and foremost centred on the issue of competences between the supranational and the member state levels. This is not surprising, as Sweden is a somewhat reluctant member of the Union, with Eurosceptic tendencies in several parties, especially on the left and right ends of the political spectrum. A more intergovernmental and member-state-centred notion of competences is, in such a political climate, perhaps to be expected.

In terms of policy issues, migration stands out as strongly debated in terms of the future of the EU. The debates link to discussions on competences, but also take place in more substantive terms. Migration (and integration) policy has become central to Swedish political discourse in the recent decade, spurred in large part by the increase in support for SD.

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Chapter 9

Politicised Integration at last? The Future of Europe Debate in the Polish Sejm

Magdalena Góra, Elodie Thevenin and Katarzyna Zielińska

Introduction

Poland's accession to the EU in 2004 finalised the raison d'être of the post-communist state aiming at joining the West, assuring both economic development and security of the newly re-established independent state. Following accession, successive governments attempted to established Poland as an important player in the EU, building a position to correspond with the state's size, political position in the region and political ambitions. However, this position was differently conceptualised by different political actors, seeing the EU either as an unconditional ally or with more suspicion as a supranational entity constituting a competition to the state powers. The recent politicisation of the EU in the national context, observable especially since the right-wing populist United Right (Zjednoczona Prawica – ZP) coalition came to power in 2015, magnified the difference between the two standpoints. In the following chapter we discuss how this dichotomy impacts the way the future of the EU is debated in the Polish parliament, placing it in the wider context of the democratic backsliding observable in Poland since 2015.

Poland and European integration

The Polish road to EU membership has been marked by successful efforts to transform the economy and democratise the political system. Since the end of communism, Polish society has expressed strong pro-Western attitudes supporting integration with both NATO and the European Union (Góra 2015; Sasińska-Klas 2004). However, the high level of support has mainly been motivated by the anticipated economic benefits, while, at least for some more conservative groups, the value shifts and social liberalisation were rather perceived as costs of membership (Góra

and Mach 2010). Overall, more than 77% voted in support of membership in the EU in the referendum in 2003 (Piasecki 2004).

From 2004, European integration continued to be largely supported, although opinions among society and politicians gradually became more nuanced. Eurosceptic voices were expressed more openly, rewarded by voters in national elections (Styczyńska 2018). As early as 2005, the Law and Justice party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – PiS) won elections on a conservative and moderately Eurosceptic ticket. Other more Eurosceptic and right-wing parties, such as the League of Polish Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin – LPR), also gained significant support and eventually formed a ruling coalition with PiS. Initially, Polish society was predominantly concerned with the economic effects of integration and costs of rapid modernisation of the country. Over time, normative issues related to sovereignty and conservative values became an issue for the society, especially with the time when EU membership became normalised (Góra 2015; Styczyńska 2018).

In the decade following Poland's entrance to the bloc, the EU was beset by crises that only partially affected the country. The economic crisis that hit the Eurozone in 2008 spared Poland, at the time the only member state of the EU that maintained positive economic growth (Kałużyńska et al. 2014). Such success stemmed more from several institutional and investment features, and in particular from the uninterrupted flow of cohesion funds to Poland, than from the government's achievement. Nonetheless, the liberal and centrist Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska – PO), in power from 2007, presented its own policies of keeping social spending low and focusing on attracting foreign investment as the key reasons for sailing safely through a financial crisis. This strategy worked for preventing the crisis. However, at the same time it fuelled social discontent, especially among the less privileged social groups, i.e. older Poles and those living in the countryside and small towns, who felt that they benefited unequally (less) from the economic success. The next important crisis that hit the EU, the massive influx of refugees in 2015, also bypassed Poland, as very few of them arrived in the country. However, right-wing parties led by PiS utilised the crisis to depict the EU as weak and unable to deal with threats that endangered Polish identity, safety and sovereignty by bringing (Muslim) migrants (Krzyżanowski 2018). Together with promises of new, generous social

benefits for families and the elderly, this allowed the conservative bloc to win the elections in 2015 (Szczerbiak 2014).

Brexit – another critical point in recent EU developments – also posed a significant threat to Poland and its government at the time. PiS and its governing partners perceived themselves as the closest allies of the UK and the Conservative Party's views on European integration (Taggart et al. 2023). Losing a significant supporter for widening rather than deepening of European integration put the Polish government in an awkward position. On the one hand, the British problems caused by Brexit made that scenario impossible for Poland, especially due to security concerns. On the other hand, remaining in an EU that was federalising under Franco-German leadership was not really a desirable option either, since PiS had already arrived at substantial Eurosceptic positions. This shift accelerated due to PiS's cooperation with more radical right-wing circles (United Poland (Solidarna Polska – SP)) within the ruling United Right coalition. Despite the fact that Poland has been governed by a Eurosceptic coalition since 2015, Polish society has remained massively pro-European, with only a fraction of public opinion openly expressing anti-European sentiments (Eurobarometer 2022).

National parliament and the Polish political system

The Polish constitution of 1997 enshrines the institutional framework of the political system. It stipulates that the system of governance is based on separation and balance between the legislative, executive and judicial powers. A bicameral parliament (the lower-chamber Sejm and the upper-chamber Senate) holds legislative power (art. 10 & 11). The Sejm consists of 460 deputies and the Senate is made up of 100 senators, elected every four years. In both cases, elections are universal and direct, with proportional and majoritarian systems applied to the Sejm and Senate respectively (Barcz and Pudło 2016, 596). The Sejm has the stronger powers of the two chambers as, additionally to its legislative functions, it also holds prerogatives to control the Council of Ministers (art. 157).

The pre-2015 involvement of the Polish parliament in EU affairs is best described as a policy-shaper model that influences government positions. Its activity also met the criteria of a government watchdog, especially with regard to primary EU law making. The parliament also expressed some ambitions to take on the role of European player. However, the insufficient formalisation of the links with the EU institutions, in

particular with the European Commission, the EP and other national parliaments, constrained such ambitions (Barcz and Pudło 2016, 605–8). The parliament's competences in EU affairs are not stipulated in the constitution. The 2004 and 2010 Cooperation Acts establish the framework and practice of the parliament's involvement in this field (Pudło 2015). The Sejm's and Senate's European affairs commissions (EACs) play a major role, with the MPs involved in both commissions tending to be the most involved and interested in EU issues (Barcz and Pudło 2016, 605). Despite the EACs' involvement in EU affairs, EU-related issues are also discussed in plenary sessions. Due to the debating character of the Sejm, such debates play a communicative and identity-presenting role for the political parties. They also tend to be less consensual as the plenary sessions offer a space to the opposition parties to voice their criticism of the government (Auel and Raunio 2014).

The check and balances model as stipulated by the constitution has been challenged since it was established, also due to the model's intrinsic invulnerability to partisan interests (Dunn 2004, 47-61). However, the tensions intensified with the victory of the United Right coalition in 2015, securing a majority in both Sejm and Senate. Ever since, the ruling majority has used the model's invulnerability to its advantage and prioritised the executive power over the legislative one (Maatsch 2021). MPs from the ruling coalition have used member's bills mechanisms (i.e. the legislative may be initiated by a Sejm committee or a group of at least 15 deputies) to speed up the proceedings and avoid consultation mechanisms. Especially between 2015 and 2019, the parliament therefore became a 'voting machine', serving mostly as a legitimation to the government's agenda (Borońska-Hryniewiecka 2021, 708). As a result, the execution of the Sejm's controlling functions rested only in the hands of the disempowered opposition. The dominance of executive power also proved useful for the United Right government in further dismantling of the checks and balances model. It helped to pass through the parliament numerous acts aimed at 'fixing' the Polish legal system. Such acts, officially presented as vital for making the Polish legal system more efficient and transparent, in fact served to subordinate the judicial system (including the Constitutional Court) to the ruling majority and opened a conflict with the EC on the rule of law (Sadurski 2019; Matczak 2020). Both processes – the dominance of the executive and the subordination of the legislative power – are seen as central to democratic backsliding (Raube and Costa Reis 2021) or to establishment of illiberal democracy. The

elections of 2019 sustained the dominance of the executive and further solidified democratic backsliding, despite the opposition gaining power in the Senate.

The illiberal shift and dominance of the executive coincide with narrowing of the parliament's functions as influencer of the government positions or watchdog. The research covering 2014–2019 confirms that in this period the Polish parliament acted mostly as 'a legitimising agent of the government's EU policy' (Borońska-Hryniewiecka and Grinc 2021, 782; Borońska-Hryniewiecka 2021, 708).

Polish political parties and views on European integration

The Polish party system continues to be semi-institutionalised, despite the fact that 30 years have passed since the beginning of the democratic transformation (Walecka 2018; Gwiazda 2016). The system is dominated by right-wing and centrist parties, with new formations appearing sporadically, hoping to attract younger, urban and more progressive voters. Many of these are short-lived initiatives that are quickly merged into the existing structure (e.g. Palikot's Movement (Ruch Palikota – RP), Spring (Wiosna – W)). The left part of the spectrum is – as in many other countries in Central and Eastern Europe – still battling with the long-lived post-communist heritage, and as such often underrepresented in parliament.

Two key political parties have structured the Polish political scene for more than 20 years. Both PO and PiS emerged in 2001, based on previously existing political movements with the idea of unifying smaller parties and stabilising the party system (Markowski 2006). Since its establishment, PO has maintained its position as a centre-right moderately conservative party, with a strong market economy orientation and occasional progressive agenda (mostly enforced by the need to differentiate from its more conservative rival PiS). PO governed in a coalition with the small agrarian Polish People's Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe – PSL) between 2007 and 2015. Since 2015, while in opposition to PiS's increasingly Eurosceptic stances, PO's pro-European position has evolved from the party supporting the status quo to one taking a more federalist position. The party therefore currently supports deepening of EU integration and accepts shifting some competence to the

EU. It also supports joining the Eurozone, even though it did not push for this while in power, when Poland was closer to meeting the convergence criteria in the second decade of the twenty-first century. Currently, PO is strongly advocating against differentiated integration (DI) and deepening ties and institutional structure for the Eurozone, perceiving these processes as further peripheralising Poland (along with the illiberalisation pursued by PiS) (Styczyńska 2018; Cianciara 2014).

The other key party of the last two decades, PiS, has transformed its stance regarding its position on economic issues as well as European integration. Originally founded as conservative and moderately Eurosceptic, it moved to more right-wing positions while embracing and/or tightening cooperation with more conservative circles, individual politicians and movements (e.g. the ultra-right-wing Christian circles of Radio Maryja). PiS currently promotes a very conservative agenda, with a stringent stance on women's reproductive and LGBTQ+ rights and acceptance of the Roman Catholic Church's involvement in politics etc. (Zielińska 2018). The party has also made effective use of populist narratives and rhetorical strategies, especially concerning the migration crisis in 2015 (Krzyżanowski 2018). Such narratives, combined with promises of a novel, generous social benefits programme, were responsible for the electoral victory of the PiS-led coalition in 2015. Over time, PiS has also become a strongly Eurosceptic formation (Markowski 2016). Since being in power, it has utilised the EU as a useful other in constructing its populist narratives. Blaming the European Commission for all wrongs, PiS and its coalition partners present themselves as saviours of the nation and protectors of national sovereignty. Over time, however, PiS also seems to have become more heterogeneous internally, and certainly there are various shades of Euroscepticism within the party. There are proponents of further disintegration with a bloc who ultimately accept or consider leaving the EU, and some other groups that are just pushing the quarrels with the EU to the limits, but object to the prospect of leaving the EU. It is important to note, however, that PiS favours strongly limited European integration, confined to the economic sphere of the single market, and opposes any federalising moves (Cianciara 2014; Tosiek 2019). As noted above, Brexit deprived PiS of its crucial ally in pursuing the Gaullist vision of integration. Instead, perceiving the federalising tendencies pursued by the Franco-German engine as the main internal threat, the party is not afraid of leading the sovereignist camp and occasionally courting Western European far-right movements such as the

Italian Lega, Le Pen's National Rally, or the Spanish Vox (Góra and Zielińska 2022). However, the Russian war against Ukraine provided a reality check on these alliances, and since many far-right leaders openly endorsed Putin's aggression, PiS had to relinquish these pursuits (albeit only temporarily). Nevertheless, strong sovereignism in an economic, political and social sense has characterised the party's position on the future of Europe since 2015. At the same time, PiS rejects any initiatives to permanently differentiate EU members, perceiving it – similarly to PO – as a key threat in the peripheralisation of Poland, destructive for Poland's security.

At the far-right end of the spectrum there are two key parties and movements: SP, led by Zbigniew Ziobro, and Confederation (Konfederacja). The former has been a member of the ruling coalition since 2015 and, despite expressing radical right-wing and Euroreject positions, is indispensable for Jarosław Kaczyński to remain in power. This very small party, with minuscule political support, therefore acquired a pivotal position on the political scene that has also magnified its radical agenda. The SP leader has held the position of justice minister since 2015 and is an architect and implementer of the so-called 'justice reforms'. These changes, which ultimately led to dismantling the checks and balances system in Poland, are a driving force of the illiberal agenda and a key reason for the rule of law crisis with the EC (Sadurski 2019). Confederation, made up of smaller radical parties and movements, especially the neofascist National Movement (Ruch Narodowy) and Korwin party, occupies a further-right position. Their lowest common denominator is an ultra-conservative social agenda, neoliberal economic stance and rejection of European integration. Some of the party's members recently expressed openly pro-Russian views in the context of war against Ukraine, revealing long-suspected Russian links with the movements (Balfour et al. 2019).

On the left side of the spectrum are three key formations, which currently stand together as The Left (Lewica). The oldest is the Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej – SLD), a successor to the Communist Party. In the 1990s, it evolved into a pro-European social democratic party with a moderately progressive social agenda favouring social benefits within a welfare state, yet embracing neo-liberal market policies. After ruling the country for several years in the 1990s and early 2000s, it became the key left opposition in the years

that followed, with usual support of 8-10% of votes. In the meantime, young urbanites expressing more progressive and leftist views grew from small fringe social movements to the modern socialist party Together (Razem). The party supports federalised European integration, and domestically strongly favours social benefits, a welfare agenda and strong trade unions (Kubin 2020). It entered the Sejm in 2019. Another initiative that emerged on the left side of the political spectrum, but with a more centrist position, was Spring. This party was founded in 2019, led by Robert Biedroń, a former LGBTQ+ activist and mayor of the city of Słupsk, together with other CSO activists and progressive politicians. It grew out of dissatisfaction with SLD and PO and their lack of acknowledgment for the progressive agenda regarding women's and LGBTQ+ rights as well as climate change (Kubin 2020). Promoting a strong pro-European and progressive agenda while economically remaining moderately liberal, Spring entered parliament and the EP in 2019. In the face of growing pressure from PiS and its government, the three leftist formations formed a coalition with a shared, rotating leadership.

There is a trend of new parties emerging that attempt to attract educated, liberal electorates living in urban settings. In 2015 a former assistant of Leszek Balcerowicz, Ryszard Petru, created Modern (Nowoczesna – N). This centrist and liberal formation in 2016 joined the ALDE group. In 2018 the party became a member of the Civic Coalition, together with PO, and though more liberal, it shares that party's position on European issues. Finally, recently the TV star and Christian activist Szymon Hołownia formed a new political party called Poland 2050 (Polska 2050). This initiative attempts to fill the still uninhabited centre of the political spectrum and challenge the dominance of the two main parties. It joined the pro-European camp on the political scene, yet refuses to form joint lists with PO and The Left, maintaining a specific 'third way' rhetoric. So far, opinion polls show that it has attracted some voters' support. The party's position has not yet been verified in an election, but it has managed to attract some of the MPs who entered the Sejm in 2019 to join the party, and as of October 2022 had a parliamentary caucus of eight MPs ('Koło Parlamentarne Polska 2050 – Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej' n.d.).

The future of Europe debate in the Polish Parliament

The Eurosceptic United Right coalition's (PiS, PJG and SP) electoral victory in 2015 coincided with the beginning of the future of Europe (FoE) debate and profoundly impacted how the debate unfolded. Firstly, almost from the moment when the PiS-led government was formed, European integration became the centre of the political battle with the opposition parties led by PO. At an unprecedented pace, this led to politicisation of EU integration and contributed to polarisation of the political scene. As a result, the FoE debate was hijacked by partisan narratives leading to increased attention of citizens (Tosiek 2018).

The sequence of crises that hit the EU and its member states also had a significant impact on Poland and, consequently, on how the FoE debate was structured. Even if, as noted above, the Eurozone (and southern debt) crisis was not as significant for Poland, the populist communication style and narratives employed by PiS in 2015 during the parliamentary electoral campaign depicted the EU as incapable of dealing with the mounting threat (in the form of Muslim migrants and refugees) for the EU and its member states. As the following sections will show, migration remained one of the most contentious issues in the Polish debate on European integration and the future of the bloc.

The crisis caused by Brexit, meanwhile, had a very different impact, specifically that the ruling party lost an important and ideologically close ally within the EU. Yet the EU demonstrated unprecedented unity in the negotiations leading to Brexit as well as following the British departure from the institutional setting. As scholars suggest, Brexit seemingly had the biggest impact on Eurosceptic parties (Meislova and Buckledee 2021; Pirro, Taggart, and van Kessel 2018). They had to search for new frames to justify their Eurosceptic (or even Euroreject) positions and at the same time for new visions of European integration to deal with the overall negatively perceived consequences of Brexit among society. This was precisely the problem of PiS and its minor allies in the ruling coalition. Brexit forced them to search for a new consistent vision. Initially, they embraced the Gaullist intergovernmental vision, but soon, triggered by another crisis on the rule of law, switched to sovereignist positions. In 2016 the PiS government opened a new battlefield with the EC over the rule of law. The initial attack on public media and the Constitutional Tribunal was soon followed by attempts to control the judicial branch. This aimed to dismantle the checks and balances

equilibrium and gain a significant advantage for the government (Sadurski 2019). Although this triggered massive street protests and initial actions from the EC, it also facilitated a strategic alliance with Hungary, which was already much more experienced in suppressing pressures from the EU.

The rule of law crisis constitutes another factor shaping the debate on the future of Europe in Poland. Firstly, with the escalation of the conflict between the government and the EU over judicial reforms in the country, the former embraced a more sovereignist position. This became apparent in the Sejm's declaration on the future of Europe issued in 2016 (Senat RP 2016). The Polish parliament's declaration clearly defended the sovereign government's right to pursue reforms as it wishes. It also unfolded a specific majoritarian democracy model pursued by PiS. Some of the elements – in a toned-down form – were visible in the Visegrad Declaration, issued by four leaders from Central and Eastern Europe. The declaration stressed sovereignty as a basis for organisation of the EU. Secondly, the crises had an impact on further politicisation of European integration in Poland. All mass protests organised in defence of judges and courts interpreted the government's actions as attempts to compromise Poland's position in the EU and deprive the country of structural funds, and Polexit was presented as the ultimate goal for the PiS government. It resulted, for instance, in mobilisation of voters (on both sides) in elections to the European Parliament in 2019, leading to a historic increase in voting turnout to almost 46%. This trend is also visible in selected debates in the Sejm on FoE, which were highly politicised and densely entangled with domestic issues and party competition. The state and future of the EU was an issue used to highlight the contrasting positions and articulate antagonism between the ruling United Right coalition and the opposition parties, especially PO and PSL.

The Covid pandemic crisis had a profound impact on Polish society, with one of the EU's highest percentages of excess deaths in the pandemic period. However, the debate triggered by the allegedly 'Hamiltonian moment' of the EU with the proposal of New Generation EU did not really overshadow the rule of law crisis. It therefore remained primarily a debate on further peripheralisation of the country, as presented by proponents of integration versus the calming statements of the government promising higher funds from the EU for Poland and

support for the deal expressed by Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki – specifically against the frugal coalition.

It is the most recent crisis – the Russian war against Ukraine – that has had a really significant impact on the trend politicising European integration in the country. The war, its brutality and closeness to the Polish border, with more than a million Ukrainian refugees settling in Poland and many others passing through, demonstrated the new urgency of the situation and the indispensability of the EU, NATO and American support in these dramatic circumstances. In the days and months following the fully fledged Russian attack, the ruling coalition and opposition announced a truce regarding European integration (and much of the polarising issues). However, this lasted only a couple of months, and the rule of law crisis returned in autumn 2022.

Who is speaking about the future of Europe?

The empirical material for the Polish case was composed of speeches from 18 plenary debates (see Annex 1). In the time covered by our research there were no debates specifically devoted to the future of Europe. Therefore, we chose seven debates in which representatives of the government presented the state of its work in the EU. The sample also included seven debates on migration. Five of them focused on the 2015 migration crisis, while the latest two concentrated on the border crisis with Belarus occurring in the second half of 2021. Finally, we also included three debates on the Eurozone. One was directly devoted to the prospect of Poland's integration into the Eurozone (PL_2017-03-23_Eurozone) and the other two focused on the EU's recovery plans (PL_2020-07-22_Eurozone and PL_2021-05-24_Eurozone). The timespan of the debates covered three parliamentary terms (seventh to ninth), from 2015 to 2021. Altogether we collected 600 speeches, just under half of which were related to the issue of the future of the EU (299 speeches).

Figure 9.1 below displays speakers' involvement in FoE debates by party family. The analysis reveals that the MPs who most often discussed FoE belong to conservative or liberal parties that corresponds with the ideological orientation of the ruling parties (PiS and their coalition partners) or main opposition parties (PO). Also worth noting is the involvement of right-wing parties.

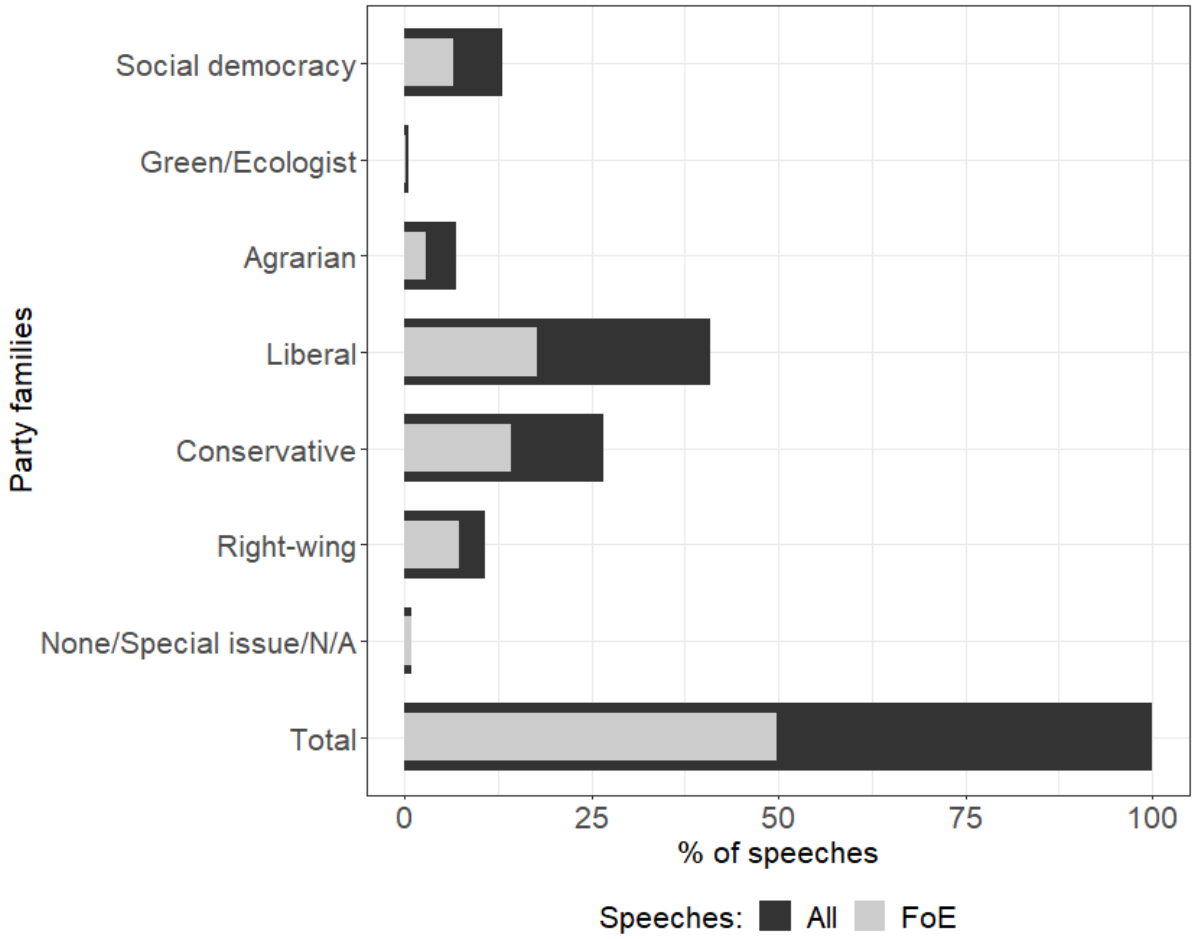


Figure 9.1. Frequency of analysed speeches by party family (m=600 – number of speeches, n=299 – number of FoE speeches).

This reflects the parties' position in the Sejm in terms of their descriptive (number of seats) and symbolic (the ruling or the main oppositional force) presence. However, the overrepresentation of MPs from the main political parties in the discussion on FoE also reveals the role EU integration plays in structuring the dynamics of the political conflict at the national level. The attitude towards EU integration has always been a factor strongly differentiating PiS and PO, otherwise both parties classified as right-wing and conservative, albeit to a different degree and with a significant liberal agenda for PO (Styczyńska 2018). Therefore, after the 2015 electoral victory of the United Right coalition (PiS, SP and PJG), the topic of European integration became an important means to articulate the antagonism between the ruling coalition, representing Eurosceptic positions, and its main opponent, the EU-supporting PO. Keeping in mind that the Polish Sejm is a debating type of legislative (Auel, Rozenberg, and Tacea 2016, 82), the plenary debates served both parties as a handy tool to communicate their diverse positions to their respective

constituencies. As a result, in the analysed debates, the MPs representing the ruling majority frequently framed the EU as a threat to national sovereignty, understood in cultural, political and economic terms. By the same token, the opposition parties (especially PO) were presented as an internal threat who uncritically support the EU in order to secure their own business and position. On the contrary, PO MPs framed the EU as a last resort for Polish democracy as well as a guarantee of Polish sovereignty and independence. The MPs from smaller parties, disregarding their location on the pro- and anti-EU continuum, spoke on the future of Europe less often. This was primarily a consequence of their position in the Sejm (i.e. number of seats, speaking time allocation). However, it could also be seen as a way of avoiding the main cleavage as well as an attempt to negotiate their own position and identity on the highly polarised Polish political scene. At the same time, when needed, they supported the main player's positions in line with each party's own orientation in regard to EU integration. The far-right Confederation, which entered the Sejm in 2019, constitutes an exception to this pattern. Making Eurosceptic or even Eurorejject claims, Confederation attempted to push PiS into the EU supporters' camp. It aimed to redefine the scene of the conflict and to place itself in the position of the main protector of Poland's sovereignty against the EU.

Analysis of the debates, especially those related to the future of Europe, clearly shows that the Sejm was not a forum for in-depth or substantive discussions on the future of Europe. On the contrary, the politicisation of the EU integration and its engagement in the political conflict resulted in a lack of serious reflection or formulation of scenarios for the future.

To reform, or not to reform? Proposals on the EU polity reforms

Due to the superficial character of the Sejm's debates on the EU reforms, the occasional references to the EU or treaty reform neither offer any concrete proposals on the matter nor point to any particular changes in the institutional relations. Generally, the speeches which touched upon the subject follow the logic of politicisation described above. At best, they offered an insight into how the main political groups interpret the status quo and how it is inscribed in the national context. The parties' positions fall into two main frames that could be described as claims for renationalisation in the sovereignist vein or for further federalisation.

The stronger the nation states, the better future for the European Union

In line with the Eurosceptic agenda of the ruling majority, MPs from PiS and its partners were rather critical about the status quo as enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty. This position was expressed in the context of debates on the refugee crisis (especially of 2015) and discussions on the impact of Brexit on the EU as well as Eurozone-related issues. At the most general level, the dissatisfaction with the treaty's provisions came from the fact that it limits the power of the national governments. The EU institutions' attempts to enforce mandatory quotas for acceptance of refugees or a mechanism of financial solidarity illustrated such arguments. For MPs from the ruling majority, this exemplified the breaking of the subsidiarity principle:

> It should be pointed out that this is a kind of pressure on member states reluctant to accept refugees under mechanisms imposed from above. Mr Speaker, Honourable Members of the House, as far as the Bureau of Parliamentary Analyses is concerned, in its opinion we read: the proposed regulation violates the principle of subsidiarity in connection with the envisaged so-called corrective allocation mechanism and the so-called solidarity contribution mechanism.
>
> (Kazimierz Gołojuch, MP, PiS, PL_2016-10-21_Migration)

Similar arguments occurred in the discussion on Brexit, interpreted as a scenario happening in response to the situation when the nation state's aspirations were not met.

The criticism of the treaty provisions also reflected the populist logic characterising the communication style of PiS and its collaborators. Accordingly, the EU institutions were presented as detached from the people and elitist. Due to the lack of democratic mandate, such institutions undermined or limited democracy as well as the sovereignty of the nation state. Therefore, the demands and proposed policies coming from such institutions exemplified unjustified impositions:

> […] at Poland's request, the Declaration of Rome contains a provision about the role of national parliaments in the Union's decision-making process, and that this role should be strengthened. I think this is a very good direction. In my opinion, this cannot be done without opening up the treaties. We know that more and more countries are

> talking about the need for treaty change. This would be an opportunity, among other things, to introduce provisions which would give the national parliaments a real role in the decision-making process and not the absolutely façade role they have today under the Treaty of Lisbon.
>
> (Konrad Głębocki, MP, PiS, PL_2017-10-12_FoE)

The demands to strengthen national parliaments aimed to offer a remedy and a means to limit the power of the EC. In the debates from the first two years of the analysed period, the criticism also involved demands to change the treaty's provisions. In the more recent debates, it seems that the MPs placed less emphasis on the need to alter the existing regulations. They rather called for maintaining the institutional status quo, but with the proper and adequate execution of the existing provisions. This implies that the EU institutions – the EC in particular – stop unjustified overstepping or extending of its competences at the cost of member states.

Demands for renationalisation were also present in the speeches of far-right MPs from Kukiz'15 (2015–2019) and Confederation (2019–2021). Kukiz'15, in contrast to PiS and their coalition partners, used sovereignty-related arguments to a lesser degree. Instead, they raised the arguments about the need to strengthen democracy by empowering people, citizens and nations. Such populist arguments were particularly visible in the context of the 2015 debate on the migration crises. Kukiz'15 MPs demanded that 'citizens decide in a referendum whether or not to accept any tranche of relocated migrants or so-called refugees' (Tomasz Jaskóła, MP, Kukiz'15, PL_2016-03-09_Migration). By the same token, Brexit was an example of what may happen if such will of a nation is not respected (Sylwester Chruszcz, MP, Kukiz'15, PL_2017-10-12_FoE). The demands for a referendum to give a chance to the citizens to decide if they agree to mutualisation of debt also occurred in the context of debates on the recovery plan for Europe (Jarosław Sachajko, MP, Kukiz'15, PL_2021-05-04_Eurozone).

Upon entering the Sejm in 2019, Confederation became the main critic of the treaty in subsequent debates. The party focused on the EU's domination over the national government:

> There is no treaty offensive that was announced at the beginning of Beata Szydło's government. At that time there was so much talk about the European Union needing fundamental reform, treaty

> reform in the direction of a Europe of homelands. What has been done in five years? Nothing. No political offensive. No political offensive and five years of just following everything that comes from Brussels as it comes – this is the reality of the PiS ruling.
>
> (Robert Winnicki, MP, Confederation, PL_2020-11-18_FoE)

This illustrates Confederation's broader political agenda to challenge PiS from the more radical position on the right side of the political spectrum. Consequently, the party attempts to take over the sovereignist agenda and discredit the ruling parties' aim to attract a more radical and Eurosceptic electorate.

To sum up, analysis of the collected debates reveals the critical stances of the right-wing political parties towards the EU. None of the actors offers any specific proposal on how to reform the status quo. At the same time, the contestation of the existing provisions helped to express the Eurosceptic positions of both the ruling PiS-led camp and its more far-right competitors, as well as to express the differences between them.

The more of the EU, the stronger and more democratic Poland is

The second frame identified in the analysed material offered a more accepting and positive perception and evaluation of the EU and its institutions. MPs from all pro-EU parties – PO, Modern, and Together – highlighted the economic and political positives stemming from Poland's membership in the EU. Moreover, the country's participation in the bloc was also seen as a guarantee for rule of law and democracy:

> We expect […] the Union to take firmer action to restore democracy in Poland. And these are not actions against Poland, but against PiS's domination of Poland.
>
> (Stefan Niesiołowski, MP, PO, PL_2017-10-12_FoE)

> This is a deepening of European integration […] Europe, ladies and gentlemen, is the Polish raison d'état. Europe is the best guarantee of democracy and the rule of law.
>
> (Adrian Zandberg, MP, Together, PL_2021-05-04_Eurozone)

The positive evaluation of the EU was not necessarily linked to the claims for further integration or for any specific reforms. On the contrary, the pro-EU parties seemed to accept the status quo and the provisions of the

Lisbon Treaty. In the debates from the early period of the timeline covered in the study, before the conflict of the PiS-led coalition's with the European Commission escalated, MPs from PO and Modern often used references to the treaty to justify Poland's responsibilities or further integration. This was the case during the debate on the migration crises in 2015. Not only did PO MPs refer to the treaty and its provisions regarding solidarity to justify the decisions of the then PO-led governing coalition. They also stressed that the treaty itself had been ratified by Lech Kaczyński, the PiS-affiliated president and twin brother of the party leader Jarosław Kaczyński. References to the accession treaty played a similar role in justifying the claims for Poland's access to the Eurozone. In both cases, the treaties were seen as a chance for further integration (Michał Kamiński, MP, European Democrats (elected from the PO list), PL_2017-03-23_FoE) that would in fact prevent the creation of a Europe of multiple speeds (Adam Szłapka, MP, Modern, PL_2017-03-23_FoE).

Against this background, the pro-EU opposition parties frequently accused the PiS-led coalition of stirring conflicts and building unnecessary tensions with the EC. Such tensions, in the narratives of opposition MPs, constituted a serious threat to Poland's interests and are leading to the marginalisation of Poland's position in the EU. Interestingly, in order to strengthen their arguments, the opposition parties also seized upon sovereignist claims:

> The idea is that we should be an independent state, sovereign always, but in the common family of the European Union, in which we have our own specific weight. This is possible as there is an equals sign between the rule of law and sovereignty. There is no sovereignty without the rule of law.
>
> (Władysław Kosiniak-Kamysz, MP, PSL, PL_2020-11-18_FoE)

> Today, the only thing that is under threat is Poland's raison d'état as a result of your policies. Today, the only thing that is under threat is Poland's presence in the European Union – as a result of your policies. Where will Poland be more sovereign and secure? At the heart of a united European Union or outside the European Union, isolated like Ukraine, which is fighting a lonely defensive war with Russia?
>
> (Kamila Gasiuk-Pihowicz, MP, PO, PL_2020-11-18_FoE).

In such accounts, Polish sovereignty is presented as embedded in the EU integration project. Attempts to present the PiS-led ruling coalition's actions as a threat to Polish sovereignty aim to realign the main antagonism organising the political conflict in the domestic contest. They locate the opposition parties as the defenders of Poland's 'raison d'état', pushing the ruling camp into the position of those who jeopardise it.

Policy-driven EU (dis)integration: Eurozone and migration

Poland is not a member of the Eurozone, and in the analysed period the country did not qualify to join. It was close to meeting convergence criteria at the end of the PO rule in 2015/2016 (European Commission. Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs. 2016). As in other such cases, the debate on Eurozone issues was in Poland primarily reduced to an exchange of arguments for and against membership in the Economic and Monetary Union (Kolodko and Postula 2018; Visvizi and Tokarski 2017). There were thus no clear drivers of the debate on the Eurozone. In addition, in the Sejm the debate on joining the Eurozone and partially on its reforms became, as stated above, an opportunity to further polarise the overall debate on European integration. In most cases, similar arguments were used as in the general debates on FoE described above. Overall, only 25.6% (31 out a total of 121) substantive speeches during the Eurozone debates were linked to the all-encompassing dimensions of the FoE debates.

For PiS and its allies, it became another opportunity to call for the protection of sovereignty in this specifically core state power. The state's ability to issue currency was perceived as one of the last bastions of national sovereignty. In addition, the long-lasting consequences of the Eurozone crisis and southern debt crisis were utilised to further build an image of a weak and incapacitated Union, and specifically its institutions. Finally, the debates were used to reveal the alleged patterns of German dominance through economic tools. Even for PiS MPs, however, any perspective of further integration of the Eurozone was almost automatically perceived as endangering the country's position within the bloc and threatening peripheralisation. Similarly, the far-right parties were rather united in their very negative assessment of the Eurozone's functions. Yet the MPs representing these groups rarely provided any nuances, sticking only to overall agreement on not joining the EMU.

The pro-European opposition parties presented arguments for joining the Eurozone, specifically associating membership with security and moving closer to the centre or core of integration. For instance, a Modern MP stated: 'The trend is visible that Eurozone countries will have more to say. This is why we shall join that zone' (Krzysztof Truskolaski, MP, Modern, PL_2017-03-23_FoE). They used the arguments of the threats stemming from institutionalised differentiated integration and the Eurozone constituting the core concentric circle. Both PO and other pro-European parties offered a uniformly negatively assessment of the further differentiation trends within the EMU, seeing them as leaving Poland outside of the processes. They often stressed the significance of economic integration for political clout within the bloc.

The most recent debates on the NGEU funds held in the Sejm in 2021 were characterised by a different pattern. Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki defended the fund and its possible effects specifically against the arguments that a new fund would lead to debt mutualisation. The debate on accepting the recovery fund also brought to the forefront a discrepancy within the opposition parties, since PO was attempting to topple the government by rejecting the Country Recovery Plan while Morawiecki's government was 'buying' support for it from The Left. In 2021, Adrian Zandberg defended his party's decision to vote on the Recovery Fund with PiS as a vote for a federalised Union: 'anyone who votes today for the ratification [of the NGEU] is voting for a strong Europe, and anyone who does not know how to raise their hand for ratification is voting for a weak Europe, powerless Europe, defenceless Europe' (Adrian Zandberg, MP, Together, PL_2021-05-04_Eurozone). Despite the heated exchange of opinions on the fund itself, the debate was still devoid of any detailed reform proposals or further nuances of the consequences for the EU.

The debates on migration constitute another important context for discussion of FoE. Debates on migration were initiated either by the government itself (PO and then PiS), due to the urgency of the situation (both in September 2015 and September and October 2021), or rather by right-wing parties, notably Kukiz'15, which proposed a law against the EU relocation mechanism. Debates on migration in the Polish parliament have been strongly structured following a government/opposition dividing line. Indeed, debates on the 2015 migration crisis showed a clear opposition between the two main competing parties in parliament – PO and PiS – in the context and aftermath of the 2015 legislative elections.

This opposition surpassed a mere conflict on the way to deal with migration, and emerged as a deep divide on Poland's relations with and place in the EU. In 2021, the discussion in parliament encompassed more parties, and in this sense appeared more fragmented when it comes to issue positions, but there has been a strong opposition between PiS and opposition parties, on both the left and right sides of the political spectrum.

When it comes to discourse on migration as such, the debate has been shaped by an opposition between narratives of securitisation and humanitarianism – both sides amplifying their arguments from 2015 to 2021. During the 2015 migration crisis, parliamentary debates mostly evolved around the relocation mechanism, with parties either opposing or supporting the EU on this matter. PiS and radical-right parties strictly opposed the idea of accepting refugees and therefore refused to implement the quotas set by the EC. In addition to the claim that the incoming people were not refugees but illegal, economic migrants, they also developed a narrative of them being a threat to the safety of Poles (PiS's main argument) or Polish national identity (especially used by Kukiz'15):

> What is happening in Italy? Occupied churches, sometimes treated as toilets. What is happening in France? Constant brawling, also Sharia being introduced, patrols to keep an eye on Sharia compliance. The same in London, and in the strongest, toughest in this respect Germany, this kind of thing is also happening. Do you want this to happen in Poland too, so that we are no longer the hosts in our own country? Is that what you want?
>
> (Jarosław Kaczyński, MP, PiS, PL_2015-09-16_Migration)

PiS's view of migrants as a threat has been a key recurring argument, featuring in the party's campaign for the presidential and legislative elections in 2015 (Krzyżanowski 2018). Opposed to this perceived threat, PO and Modern attempted to stress the humanitarian aspect of the crisis, yet failed to develop a strong and always coherent narrative on migration. Yet both parties clearly opposed the newly elected PiS government from October 2015 onwards, criticising the ways PiS was handling the crisis and Polish-EU relations:

> I would like to start by saying that these resolutions are the quintessence and, unfortunately, a very good summary of the actions

> of the minister for foreign affairs and of Polish foreign policy. These resolutions are proof that Polish foreign policy is based solely on stamping our feet and not on presenting any vision. Polish foreign policy today is based on brandishing a sabre, on saying 'no', without providing answers to the important questions and important challenges facing Europe and the European Union today.
>
> (Agnieszka Pomorska, MP, PO, PL_2016-03-09_Migration)

PO thus mostly opposed the securitisation narrative by opposing the PiS government.

In 2021, various policies were proposed by MPs, from building a wall to welcoming people stranded at the Polish-Belarusian border. The majority of MPs agreed that the border needed to be secured. On the one hand, left-wing parties called for 'a secure border […] where people do not die on either side' (Krzysztof Gawkowski, MP, The Left, PL_2021-11-09_Migration). On the other, the government and radical-right parties favoured the construction of an actual fence at the border: 'It will not only be a physical barrier, extremely solid, but there will be modern electronics, modern equipment' (Mariusz Kamiński, interior and administration minister, PiS, PL_2021-09-30_Migration). The involvement of the EU was also problematic: PiS wanted to deal with the situation at the national level, while left-wing parties called for the involvement of EU and the presence of Frontex at the border. Both stances reflected the more general attitude of both camps towards the role of the EU and EU integration.

Overall, the discussion on migration in the Polish parliament did not result in proposals for EU institutional reforms, but more generally it highlighted the opposition between those willing to deepen EU integration and those who want to refrain from it, partially or completely.

Differentiated integration: similarity in diagnosis, differences in identification of causes

As already mentioned, the references to both DI and dominance occasionally occurred in the debates on the future of Europe. As illustrated by Figure 9.2 below, DI was mentioned in 16.05% of FoE speeches. Its dynamics follows the pattern of the discussion between the conservative ruling majority and the main liberal opposition parties.

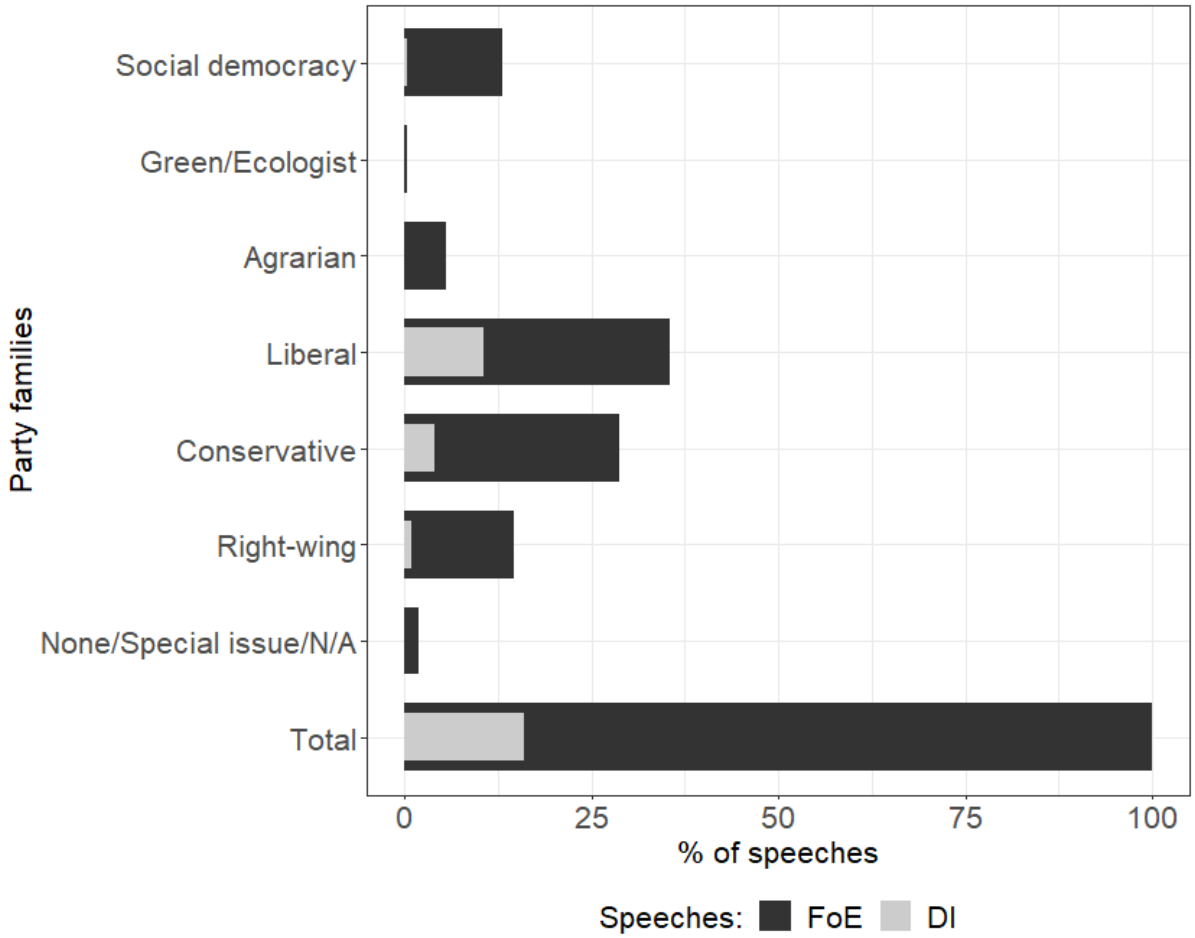


Figure 9.2. Frequency of references to DI in FoE speeches by party family (n=299 – number of FoE speeches, o=48 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to DI).

In the case of DI, both main political players, the United Right and PO, negatively evaluated DI and its consequences for Poland's future. However, the parties offered different diagnoses of the ongoing processes of differentiation. They also offered differing proposals of how to deal with the negative tendencies. The ruling coalition, in line with its critical stances on the EU, considered differentiation as an outcome of the crisis affecting the EU. It was also seen as a factor weakening the prospects of future development of the EU. This potentially meant that it will not be able to deal with its challenges and it will limit the EU's role as a global player:

> We are concerned about the future of the European Union. We are concerned about the fact that some people today, for nostalgic reasons, because of the collapse of ambition, the reduction of optimism, think that instead of reforming the Union, instead of strengthening it in the face of the actually new challenges that have

> appeared on the horizon, they simply divide the Union and close themselves in some small clubs.
>
> (Konrad Szymański, secretary of state for European affairs, PiS, PL_2017-03-23_FoE)

> Today there is talk of a two-speed, multi-speed Union. This unfortunately weakens the European Union in these global relations.
>
> (Izabela Kloc, MP, PiS, PL_2017-03-23_FoE)

The conditionality mechanism linking the EU funds with the rule of law was also seen as an example of DI directed against the interests and future prospects of some of the member states. In the longer run, however, such decisions of the EU institutions might result in the total disintegration of the EU. Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki expressed this concern in a speech:

> It would simply lead to the disintegration of the European Union at a later stage, because this instrument [conditionality], you think, today is directed against us, Hungary, maybe Slovenia, maybe some other country from Central Europe. In a few years, in two or three years, it could be directed against someone else. Think about whether this is the outlook, whether this is the European Union we want, whether this is the European Union that has a chance to survive. No, such a European Union would not have a chance to survive. A Union where there is a European oligarchy that punishes those weaker today and shoves them into a corner, that is not the European Union we entered, and that is not the European Union that has a future.
>
> (Mateusz Morawiecki, prime minister, PiS, PL_2020-11-18_FoE)

At the same time, the United Right government blamed both the EU institutions and its elites (i.e. 'European oligarchy') or the interests of the stronger states within the EU for promoting or introducing DI. The way the government interpreted DI also revealed an interesting paradox. Especially PiS politicians in their criticism expressed their concern about the future of the EU integration. Such self-identification as those who are most concerned about the future of the EU allows the ruling coalition to deal with accusations from the opposition. Identification as pro-EU may therefore also be seen as a way for the government to comply with the overly positive public opinion on the Polish membership in the EU. At the same time, othering of the EU institutions and the elites as well as sovereignist arguments used by PiS MPs, highlighting the need to

strengthen the role for nation states in preventing DI, helps to express the United Right's Eurosceptic or Eurorejectionist stances, needed to adjust their narrative to the divergent voices within the coalition and in their constituencies.

For the opposition, as expressed mostly in the speeches of MPs from PO, DI was also not accepted as it implies the marginalisation of Poland's position within the EU in terms of both recognition (political, symbolic) and redistribution. Along such lines, the lack of progress or political will to join the Eurozone was perceived as pushing Poland away from the core of the EU:

> However, does the government not see that the eurozone is simply about being in the first division, in a first-speed Europe, and that it is worth doing everything to be among these countries? This was shown by the most important meetings of European leaders on the future of the European Union in recent weeks and months, for example in the Versailles format, unfortunately without Poland.
>
> (Norbert Obrycki, MP, PO, PL_2020-11-18_FoE)

In offering their diagnoses of the source of DI, MPs from PO assigned responsibility to the ruling coalition. They were accused of marginalising the country and downgrading Poland's status in the process of decision making at EU level. More generally, the United Right was seen as responsible for actions disruptive for the entire EU.

> Unfortunately, there is such a danger [of DI] with the current policy of the Law and Justice government, because we know that there are such temptations to try, in response to the behaviour of some member states that undermine the competences of the European Union, to create a small Union, which would, incidentally, be suicidal for the European Union.
>
> (Rafał Trzaskowski, MP, PO, PL_2016-10-05_FoE)

Finally, PO MPs also accused the government of leading Poland to exit from the EU. Again this was considered as very dangerous for Poland and the EU, and occasionally the government was also accused of serving Putin's agenda (Artur Łącki, MP, PO, PL_2020-11-18_FoE). To sum up, references to DI in the debates on the future of Europe on the one hand show the consensus in the evaluation of its negative consequences for

Poland. However, at the same its interpretation and the remedies offered follow the logic of conflict underlying all the analysed debates.

Who is dominating whom? With what purpose?

Dominance is another dimension explored in our study. As shown in Figure 9.3, references to dominance occurred in 19.73% of FoE speeches, and the topic primarily concerned MPs from conservative and right-wing parties.

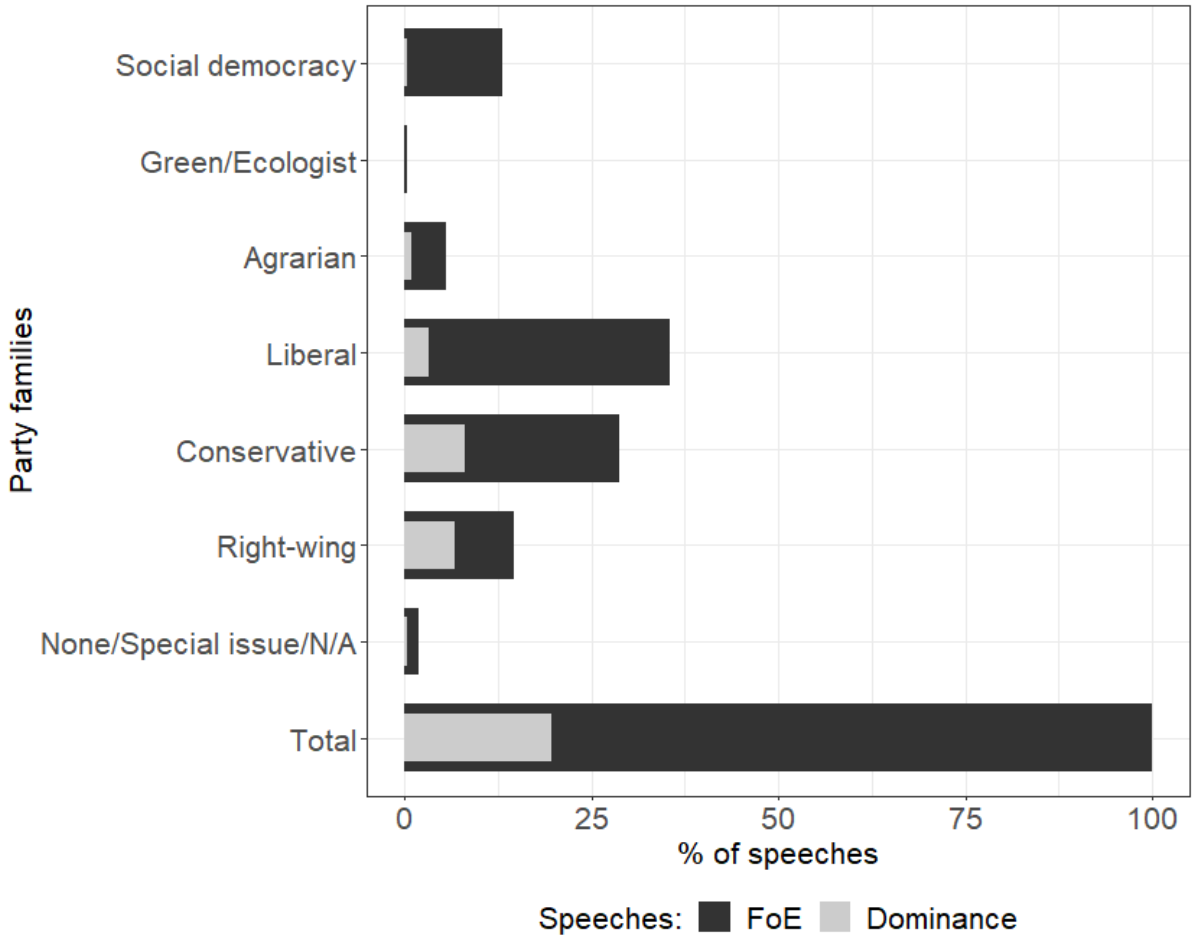


Figure 9.3. Frequency of references to dominance in FoE speeches by party family (n=299 – number of FoE speeches, o=59 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to dominance).

The analysed material revealed a few patterns of conceptualising dominance in the debates on the future of Europe, all very much embedded in the logic of the national conflict. MPs from PiS and their coalition partners most often referred to dominance in their speeches on the future of Europe. A similar argument occurred in the speeches of MPs from Kukiz'15 or far-right groups; however, in line with the logic discussed above, they also

accused the ruling coalition of being too submissive and in fact accepting the dominance of Brussels. The analysis of their speeches reveals interrelated patterns. Firstly, the EU institutions and the European Commission in particular were presented as dominating the nation state and its governments. This became apparent during the refugee crises in the context of the relocation mechanisms proposed by the EU authorities:

> In our view, this project being proposed by the European Union is an absolutely unacceptable project – it is unacceptable to any self-determining state of the European Union. It is an attempt to impose a certain dictate on the member states of the European Union.
>
> (Bartosz Józwiak, MP, Kukiz'15, PL_2016-10-21_Migration)

The argument re-emerged in more recent years in the context of the discussions on the rule of law. Again, the EU, often identified as EU elites, was accused of imposing its decision on democratically elected governments. This is very much related to the sovereignty arguments used by MPs.

The second pattern of speaking about dominance was to stress that Poland is dominated by stronger member states, which use the EU to impose their interests on the country. In this context, occasionally Germany was mentioned. Drawing on the long-nurtured animosity towards this country helped to strengthen the feeling of dominance. In the debates from 2019, references to domination also occurred in the context of the internal market, often in relation to the regulations regarding posted workers. The arguments stressed the protectionism of the stronger countries, which used EU regulations to protect the interests of their own markets and workers.

Finally, dominance also acquires a more ephemeral form when MPs refer to the cultural dominance, as embodied by multiculturalism, as yet another threat posing a challenge to Poland's Christian identity. Such arguments occurred, again with references to Germany, in the context of the refugee crises of 2015:

> We need to say this clearly: the European Union authorities are to blame for this disaster, authorities who have done nothing to defend the borders of the Union. In particular, the German authorities are to blame here, as they have opened Europe's doors wide to Islamic immigrants. In the name of what? In the name of their own interests and their pernicious policy of multiculturalism.

(Anna Maria Siarkowska, MP, Kukiz'15, PL_2016-02-09_Migration)

Not surprisingly, the Belarusian border crisis of 2021 caused some changes in conceptualisation of dominance. In this context, Belarus and Russia were being blamed for orchestrating the crisis and attempting to destabilise the country and the EU, and therefore gained the status of the main Other. Interestingly, the EU remained rather absent in the debate, although still sometimes criticised by radical-right parties:

> Please absolutely do not listen to the opposition's infantile suggestions to turn to the European Union. In the European Union, in Brussels, it is Vladimir Putin who has many friends. Germany and Austria in particular have an interest in meeting Putin's objective.
>
> (Janusz Kowalski, MP, SP, PL_2021-11-09_Migration).

In the speeches of pro-EU parties, if references to dominance occurred, they rather appeared in relation to the ruling coalition's actions. This is mostly understood as lack of recognition of the justified status of the opposition parties and their stances as well as the dominance of the executive power in the Sejm. In this context, the ruling coalition's actions were seen as leading to the marginalisation of Poland. Lack of cooperation with the EU partners or making non-strategic alliances (i.e. focus on the Visegrad countries) meant that the country loses its authority in the international context. In the opinion of opposition MPs, such decisions led to subordination of Poland to stronger, core countries. Furthermore, they fuelled DI processes within the EU, pushing Poland to the status of a secondary member.

Conclusions: narratives on the future of EU

The debate on the future of Europe, as discussed above, has not been very substantial in the Polish parliament. This somehow reflects the broader process the democratic backsliding observable in Poland since 2015 that involves the dominance of the executive and the dismantling of the check and balances model. It also involves a change in the parliament's role in EU affairs from policy shaper to voting machine (Borońska-Hryniewiecka 2021). Hence, the functions of MPs' interventions in the debate are communicative rather than meritocratic and strongly shaped by the antagonism between the ruling United Right coalition and the liberal opposition.

However, analysis of the collected material indicates that the parties promote two main constitutional narratives. Firstly, the PiS-led ruling majority's vision of the EU integration, with their focus on sovereignty and the role of member states in controlling of the EU and re-establishing its democracy, clearly fall into the category of the sovereignist version of intergovernmentalism. However, the coalition's domestic practices, which challenge the liberal democracy institutions and values, open the question of whether such support for the sovereignist version of intergovernmentalism involves democracy at all or if it rather serves as legitimation for the autocratic tendences of the parties in power. In contrast to this, the far-right groups challenging PiS from the right of the political scene represent a radical sovereignist vision. Interestingly, for both types of political actors the demands for state or popular sovereignty are entangled in the mechanism of othering the EU and its construction as the threatening other. This also highlights the underlying logic of these actors' populist repertoire. The Polish case study clearly indicates that the position of democracy within the sovereignist narrative shall be further examined, since in many contexts it is pursued by actors criticising the liberal democratic model.

Finally, the liberal opposition (PO, PSL, left-wing parties) can be located in more pro-federalised visions with a multi-headed federal-type Union. Their case is particularly interesting. Over time and in reaction to the radicalisation of the ruling coalition's Eurosceptic position, PO as well as leftist formations have gradually become more inclined to support openly federalised visions. In the context of the sovereignist narrative pursued by the incumbent government, pro-European MPs have started to more openly accept the limitations of national sovereignty and rearticulate it in European terms. Overall, however, as demonstrated in the analysis, since the debate is superficial, few details are provided as to how the EU should be reconstructed.

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Chapter 10

Hungary: The Munchausen Parliament

Max Steuer

Introduction

> The progress towards a multi-level protection of constitutional values was to a considerable extent an exercise in bootstrapping (and similar to that trick of Baron Munchausen who pulled himself and his horse out of a swamp by holding on to his own pigtail). As long as the supra-national normative expectations were disregarded only by some poor states of lesser significance, the deviation was easy to ignore […]. However, once the same outcasts became influential on the supra-national scene, they could not be dismissed as outliers any more.
>
> (Sajó and Uitz 2017, 464).

The Hungarian deviation from EU values as interpreted via an 'overlapping consensus' (Sabel and Gerstenberg 2010) can no longer be ignored. It is firmly part of the history of the EU and the 'canons' of the evolution of its value-protection mechanisms (Coman 2020). Paradoxically, while Hungary today is drifting away from Europe-wide cooperation, for centuries historically Hungarians wished to belong to Europe. A core idea in Hungarian intellectual discourse is a yearning to overcome the country's peripheral status, which was a source of perceived and real dominance by Western European powers (Gal 1991, 442–47). However, certain elements of Hungarian discourse on Europe have since long emphasised Hungary's location 'in between' the West and the East, discussing how 'Hungarian rural traditions would renew and redeem Europe'. They would enable the dismantling of imperialism, which generated a long shadow of hegemony and oppression by Europeans (Ságí 1994, 69). With such language, Hungarian political actors generated an unusual combination of 'urban cosmopolitanism' and 'authentic populism' (Gal 1991, 446), refusing to see the only way for

Hungary's Europeanisation as entrenching Western European practices (including in the constitution and its interpretation (Batory 2010)). To this, authentic liberal traditions can be added, such as an emphasis on the value of freedom of speech, which translated into higher legal standards of free speech protection after 1989 in Hungary than in any other country in the region (Molnár 2011).

According to a former Hungarian EU commissioner, in 2010 'Hungary performed a total U-turn by re-orientating the country from the western world of values, norms, rules, and institutions towards eastern models of high power concentration' (Balázs 2019, 49). Numerous works have been published on the evolution of the Hungarian illiberal model of governance, which entails the abuse of key public institutions for them to one-sidedly support the ruling regime (e.g. Scheppele 2015; Krekó and Enyedi 2018). The public, however, followed the elites only partially, as was also the trend in Hungarian public opinion in the 1990s and early 2000s (Fölsz and Tóka 2006, 160). A major contemporary debate therefore concerns the extent to which Hungarian citizens or only the political elites can be blamed for the current conundrum (cf. Weiler 2020; Göncz and Lengyel 2021, 90). Recently, a discourse turning away from Hungary's pro-European heritage has permeated from the speeches of key governing elites to the media and broader public reflections (Moreh 2016). The Hungarian rejection of refugee relocation schemes and international asylum protection standards in 2015 counts as an important marker of a shift towards more anti-EU and anti-Western narratives that flood the public sphere through government-controlled media (Demeter 2018; Steuer 2019). Another tool repeatedly employed by the government to fuel anti-EU narratives is national consultations. One in 2017 was titled 'Stop Brussels' (Bocskor 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian invasion of Ukraine may offer similar markers, although the latter is outside the scope of this analysis. Both seem to offer avenues for continuation of the 'war-like' rhetoric, where the government presents itself as the protector of the people against external or internal enemies, including the political opposition (cf. Vegetti 2019). The government has also adopted a distinct position towards the Conference on the Future of Europe, which, it claims, has failed because of adopting overly 'pro-EU' positions (Gyükeri 2022). At the same time, public opinion in Hungary is considerably more positive towards the EU than the EU average; according to the latest Eurobarometer survey (Winter 2021/2022), 58% of

Hungarians tend to trust the EU (EU average: 47%; see European Commission 2022).

The EU institutions have generally been lukewarm in their response to the erosion of democracy in Hungary, with the European Parliament being most active but raising mostly verbal challenges, which fuelled domestic discourse (including in the parliament). While some academics see the EU (particularly EU law) as an external constraint on the regime (Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała 2021, 31; Bogaards 2018, 1492), this is not manifested in tempered rhetoric towards the EU by the coalition. Currently, the Alliance of Young Democrats (Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége – Fidesz) is excluded from the European People's Party, with a partial suspension of EU funds for Hungary approved by the Council in December 2022 (Tamma 2022).

The Hungarian parliament and the EU

The Hungarian parliament (Országgyűlés) operates as a unicameral legislature in an illiberal regime (e.g. Schneiderman 2021, 474–77 and sources therein), raising the question to what extent it can be expected to 'contribute actively to the good functioning of the Union' (Art. 12 TEU) and act as a de-differentiating institution by embodying the principles of accountability, responsiveness and deliberation (see discussion in Bellamy and Kröger 2016; for the idea of parliaments as part of the EU's 'democratic coping mechanism', see Fossum 2015). The trend of 'de-parliamentarisation' was already noted by a Hungarian scholar (Ilonszki 2015, 532) after the 2010–2014 parliamentary term. The parliament became one of the first targets of Viktor Orbán's illiberalisation of the regime in Hungary (Bánkuti, Halmai, and Scheppele 2013, 263, 267–68). Subsequently, its parliamentary majorities have rubber-stamped further illiberal changes while providing a veneer of legitimacy through the parliament's claims of representation (Pap 2017, 15). The frenetic legislative activity in the 2010–2014 period decreased slightly after 2015, but was accompanied by the cementing of formal changes restricting the parliamentary opposition (Ilonszki and Dudzińska 2021), such as a lower threshold for accelerated legislative proceedings and the encouragement of 'omnibus legislation', which allows changes from different policy domains to be bundled up into a single bill (Ilonszki and Vajda 2021, 774–76). Furthermore, interpellations were abused by coalition actors to restrict the number and time for those hailing from the opposition, and

the reduced number of parties in the parliament also contributed to executive dominance and 'bipolarisation' of parliamentary affairs (Szymański 2019, 272).

With respect to EU affairs, formally, the Hungarian constitution addresses the 'cooperation between the Government and Parliament in the course of decision-making in the European Union'.[31] However, the executive is not legally bound to follow the parliament's position (Borońska-Hryniewiecka and Grinc 2021, 6). Moreover, the post-2010 philosophy of law making (legisprudence) in Hungary has revolved around prioritisation of Christian identity, the protection of the family or democracy 'as a service provided by the state' – these, in turn, translate into key law-making activities (including constitutional amendments) that may be used to present an opposition towards EU values (Drinóczi 2020, 234–36).

The European Affairs Committee (Országgyűlés, n.d.) is considered to be relatively inactive, primarily driven by consultations instead of actively encouraging the plenum to scrutinise the executive and (to a lesser extent) EU legislation, and the plenary displays similar trends (Borońska-Hryniewiecka and Grinc 2021, 10, referring to data between 2014 and 2019). This corresponds to the claim that the parliamentary committees in Hungary have had de facto limited powers since the illiberal takeover (Nikolenyi 2021). The Hungarian and other Central European parliaments as a whole have never been seen as particularly active in steering EU integration, and arguably have never been given the capacity to be vocal and effective actors in light of the complexity and high workload associated with the scrutinising of EU policies (Ágh 1999, 56, 63). A challenge for national parliaments at this point was 'to 'publicise' their debates on the Euro-issues on one side and to enhance their democratic legitimacy as one of the major means of Europeanisation on the other' (Ágh 1999, 67). Still, post-2010 we can observe an 'unprecedented disempowerment of the Hungarian parliament [in its] legislative and scrutiny functions' (Ilonszki and Vajda 2021, 771). This

[31] Fundamental Law of Hungary, Article 19: "The Parliament may request information from the Government on the government position to be represented in the decision-making procedures of those institutions of the European Union which operate with government participation, and may take a stand on the draft placed on the agenda thereof. In the course of European Union decision-making, the Government shall act in accordance with the position taken by the Parliament."

means that the opposition can at best be expected to be vocal with alternative positions in debates, but without a notable impact on the outputs of the legislative process. Given this power dynamic, the Országgyűlés can hardly be seen as a 'working' parliament, as opposed to a 'debating' parliament (Lord 2018). Support for differentiated integration, based on a recent analysis, is scarce among both coalition and opposition actors, and has mostly been manifested in references to Hungary's non-participation in the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) (Kyriazi 2021, 4–7).

Political parties: pro-integrationist views nowhere to be found?

Back in 2002, when the 'return to Europe' rhetoric (Kopeček 2019) still dominated party discourse in Hungary and other soon-to-be member states, and when Orbán's Fidesz was seen as closer to a 'cosmopolitan' than a 'national' approach to EU affairs, the first forms of opposition to the EU were already discernible in the partisan discourse, particularly in relation to issues of social protection, as opposed to those concerning markets (Batory 2002, 531–34). In this milieu, 'Viktor Orbán's critical statements about the EU may well have reflected mounting disappointment and frustration with the speed of the enlargement process' (Batory 2002, 533) . A prominent Hungarian sociologist argued shortly after accession that Hungarian mainstream parties perpetuated 'europessimism' in the country, according to which Hungarians would remain second-class citizens in the EU. 'The once strongly held sentiment to belong to the democratic European community gave way to a simplified, provincial, and almost mechanical cost-benefit analysis. A depoliticised, 'objective' interpretation of future short-term advantages and disadvantages framed sporadic discussions regarding Hungary's EU membership. This was dubbed as a common-sense, not value-driven debate. [...] [T]here were only rare attempts to compare the narrow Hungarian approach with the European-wide dialogue on the future of the EU' (Hegedűs 2006, 75, 77). This ambivalence reflects a widespread understanding in Hungary, undisrupted by the post-1989 transformations, 'that from any two alternatives, usually the worse has turned out to be the one realised' (Simai 1992, 52–53). Thus, while radical anti-EU voices were absent, the general party landscape supported citizen passivism in EU affairs, and the rise of Fidesz's Eurosceptic rhetoric post-2010 (Styczyńska 2017, 148) is only part of the story.

The deep-rooted pessimistic party attitudes towards the EU32 are continuously inconsistent with the Hungarian public's generally pro-EU attitudes, particularly after 2012 (Göncz and Lengyel 2021). They do, however, correlate with the limited impact of EU accession on the party system and largely cosmetic impact on individual parties (Batory 2009, 431). Before 2010, the characteristic pattern of party competition was between Fidesz and the Hungarian Socialist Party (Magyar Szocialista Párt – MSZP). Both became members of established European party structures and ensured the inclusion of their EU representatives in party governance structures, yet they scarcely engaged with EU affairs in their manifestos and public communication (Batory 2009, 437–41). More radical anti-EU positions were marginal in the party discourse, and a rather optimistic prediction was that they would be amalgamated into the softer Eurosceptic positions defended by Fidesz (Batory 2008, 275–76).

The landmark 2010 elections led to the dominance of Fidesz in the party system, which continues to the present day. This was accompanied by an increase in the anti-EU narratives pushed by Fidesz, which is today considered as one of the main 'promoter[s] [of] anti-liberal ideas in Central and Eastern Europe' (Coman and Volintiru 2021, 5), alongside Poland (Góra, Thevenin, Zielińska 2023, Polish chapter, in this volume). In contrast, the anti-EU discourse of the far-right party Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom – Jobbik) had certain characteristics setting it apart from Fidesz, notably that it connected it more to 'neoliberal globalism' and Fidesz's incapacity to prevent developments undesirable for Hungary at the EU level, despite the fact that, as the governing party, its representatives have a seat at the table during negotiations in Brussels (Pirro and van Kessel 2017, 412–13).

The 2014 elections were the first in which the modified electoral system that disproportionately favours the winning party was in operation. Fidesz gained an 'overwhelming victory' in coalition with the Christian Democratic People's Party (Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt – KDNP) and

[32] This contribution does not accept András Inotai's claim that Eurosceptic voices are also those which criticise the EU on the basis of too many competences centred in the European Council. This is an inadequate categorisation, as such critiques are sceptical of member state dominance in the EU, rather than the idea of the EU as such. Nor does the text engage with the distinction between "left" and "right" Euroscepticism, given the blurring of the divides between left and right particularly towards the extreme parts of the political spectrum. Cf. Inotai (2021, 59).

a two-thirds majority in the parliament (Várnagy 2015, 135). KDNP placed somewhat more emphasis on 'conservative values' and issues of 'traditional families' and 'heritage', which are allegedly undermined by the EU's fundamental rights agenda, while Fidesz more typically highlighted alternative readings of key concepts pertaining to rules, such as the rule of law or respect towards EU law in Hungary and its relationship to the constitution. A caveat here is that only some debates could have been considered, thus no generalisation on the parliamentary discourse as a whole can be made.

For the 2014 elections, several opposition parties attempted to form a coalition (Unity), but they barely scored a quarter of the vote. The coalition consisted of the previously major MSZP, the Democratic Coalition (Demokratikus Koalíció – DK), which emerged from a split from MSZP and is led by former PM Ferenc Gyurcsány, and Together (Együtt), a centre-left party that ran together with Dialogue for Hungary, a green party established in 2013 (currently co-led by the mayor of Budapest, Gergely Karácsony). Another liberal, pro-EU party, Politics Can Be Different (Lehet Más a Politika – LMP) did not join the coalition, scoring slightly over 5% of the vote. For this party, it is characteristic to highlight the dangers of corporatist domestic and international rule and the evaporation of democracy due to the technocratic tendencies in the EU, seen as undermining global pluralism in favour of forced exporting of Western values. This tendency is viewed as being associated with the connection between key EU decision makers and corporate actors, whose informal powers reach, if not exceed those of states (and EU institutions themselves). Environmental rights and minorities suffer as a result of this spread of corporate power.

The 2018 elections again gave Fidesz-KDNP a two-thirds majority, with the opposition parties (this time running independently) achieving marginal results (11.9% for MSZP as the strongest among them), with the exception of Jobbik, which gained 19.2% of the vote (Várnagy 2019). During the 2018–2022 parliamentary term, especially after its success in the 2019 EP elections, the extra-parliamentary liberal Momentum Movement gained more prominence in public life. In April 2022, the broad coalition of opposition parties, which saw Jobbik collaborate with the centre-left and centre-right opposition actors, failed to prevail over Fidesz/KDNP in the elections, and the new extreme-right party Our Homeland (Mi Hazánk – MHM) entered parliament instead.

The Fidesz/KDNP coalition's shift towards anti-EU rhetoric does not allow for it to use categorisations in 2020–2021 that were developed before the events of 2015. Similarly, the ParlGov database (n.d.) does not capture the positions of the recently established Momentum Movement, which, while indeed adopting more pro-EU narratives, is erroneously labelled as conservative in the latest release of the dataset. A more precise standard is offered by the Chapel Hill expert survey, which documents shifts in the parties' positions and whose latest available edition is from 2019 (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill n.d.). Using this data, Vachudova (2021, 482) offers a comparison of Hungary between 2010 and 2019 in the 'left-right economic position' of the parties. Hence, the recalculations were performed for Fidesz, Jobbik, KDNP and Momentum (see Table A.1 in Annex 3).

The scores for ParlGov are a maximum of 10 (pro-EU or extreme right). The scores for Chapel Hill are out of 7 (pro-EU, variable EU_POSITION) and 10 (extreme right, variable LRECON). Chapel Hill does not distinguish between Fidesz and KDNP, which is a legitimate choice since the two parties have long since formed a coalition and it is difficult to distinguish their discourse. The changes are minor with respect to the left-right positioning of all four parties except Momentum, which is now closer to the left (Jobbik, KDNP and Fidesz are slightly closer to the centre, which tallies with their inconsistent economic policies). Fidesz and KDNP, however, are both considerably less pro-EU (though even the Chapel Hill ratings place them relatively close to the mid-point), whereas Jobbik is significantly less anti-EU (surpassing Fidesz and KDNP in pro-EU attitudes, which matches Jobbik's shift towards the centre in order to gain coalition potential as manifested in the 2022 elections)[33] and Momentum even more pro-EU than in the original ParlGov data.

The Hungarian parliamentary debate (2015–2021) as a space to challenge the EU

The parliamentary discourse has generally been in line with the executive rhetoric generating oppositions between Hungary and the EU (Coman and Leconte 2019).[34] According to previous research, EU values and

[33] Chapel Hill, however, also indicates Jobbik's position on the EU as the most "blurred" of the parties for which they collected data for 2020.

[34] This does not comment on the quality of the discourse before 2010, which may also be questioned and requires further analysis. "Often, however, the parliamentary

narratives are used skilfully by executive actors to, instead of presenting an open opposition towards the EU, reinterpret their content in ways that present the EU institutions and democratic actors as those with intolerant and autocratic tendencies (Mos 2020). Artificial dichotomies are being created, such as between 'proto identity and supranationalism' or 'West and non-West' (Arya 2022, 22). The titles of the analysed debates (18 in total, 515 substantive speeches and 294 FoE speeches) demonstrate the importance of the symbolic initiatives that buttress the government's rhetoric as well as a reactive stance whereby the parliament usually reacted to the EU institutions' decisions rather than aiming at input provided before a decision at the EU level. This symbolic element is exemplified by the removal of the EU flag from the parliament building in 2012 (Pap 2017, 18). It is important to note that this study does not examine the relationship with the Council of Europe, which is an essential actor for discussing the future of Europe. This chapter cannot establish the frequency of references to the Council of Europe, considering that the selection of debates used here was 'EU-biased', associating (only) the EU with the future of Europe (on the frequent omission of the Council of Europe in discussions on the future of Europe, see Steuer 2021).

More specifically, the debates address 'the defence of Hungarian sovereignty' (HU_2018-10-03_FoE), respond to the 'European Parliament's Soros plan' (HU_2017-12-12_FoE), 'support Poland against the pressure exerted by Brussels' (HU_2018-02-20_FoE) or 'defend national identity' (HU_2020-06-04_FoE; HU_2020-06-08_FoE). One of the debates engaging with the future configuration of the EU was on a constitutional amendment (HU_2016-10-17_FoE). This amendment was part of a series of changes solidifying the Hungarian 'Frankenstate' (Scheppele 2013) and illustrating the tendencies of 'over-constitutionalisation', that is, '[a]mending the Constitution/Fundamental Law in order to legitimise unconstitutional legislation' (Pap 2017, 17). Importantly, even those debates categorised as covering the 'future of Europe' (FoE; eight in total, half of which in the eighth parliamentary term starting in 2018), rather than migration/asylum specifically (six in total, three in the eighth term), have frequently addressed migration as a prominent issue for thinking about the EU and its reform, even as

debates themselves, which are broadcast publicly on television and radio, have been a source of disappointment to many voters who for the very first time are able to see their MPs in action" (Simai 1992, 56).

compared to Poland (Csehi and Zgut 2021, 63). Thus, migration looms over the Hungarian debates, at least for the period before the COVID-19 outbreak. This can be seen in light of the Hungarian government's vocal opposition to the EU relocation and resettlement scheme, as well as plans to reform the asylum policy (Majtényi, Kopper, and Susánszky 2019). In practice, even titling the debates as on 'migration' is misleading, as they substantially often cover asylum matters, which are then framed as migration matters for the sake of reducing the emphasis on the internationally guaranteed political rights of refugees fleeing from persecution. Debates on the Eurozone are the least numerous (four, three of them in the eighth term), which is unsurprising given that Hungary is not a Eurozone member.

Despite the diminished speaking time and room for manoeuvre, the opposition generally did not take the opportunity to rhetorically stand up against the government's anti-migration rhetoric. The success and prevalence of the government's position thus also needs to be explained in light of the opposition's inability or neglect towards these narratives, coupled with 'Orbán's ability to dominate the narrative struggles in the public arena' (Dessewffy and Nagy 2021, 4204). The opposition operated primarily with anti-corruption narratives and trying to shift the attention to the government's other policy failures. The latter served as a source of polarisation in the debate.

The following overview indicates how widely the individual proposals were supported, as well as who was their sponsor in the parliament. The data illustrate that quite a few proposals (including a resolution on the defence of 'national identity') were accepted even beyond the (super)majority of the coalition, supported by opposition parties or independent deputies. While not considered during the selection of debates, the sample also includes diverse forms of proposals (legislation/resolutions/debates) and a range of sponsors (including parliamentary committees).

Who speaks about Europe?

The following figures are organised according to party families, whereby Fidesz is represented by the 'conservative' party family, KDNP by 'Christian democracy', Jobbik by 'right-wing', LMP by 'green/ecologist', and MSZP by 'social democracy'. A look at the representation of speakers confirms that the coalition parties (Fidesz and KDNP) together comprise

around half of all interventions in the debates. This is unsurprising given that the speaking time is allocated to political parties according to the number of seats in parliament, providing a disproportionate advantage to the largest party (particularly if it is also part of the coalition). Among the opposition parties, Jobbik was the most active; the two most active democratic opposition parties together (MSZP, LMP) held approximately the same number of speeches as Jobbik representatives (Figure 10.1).

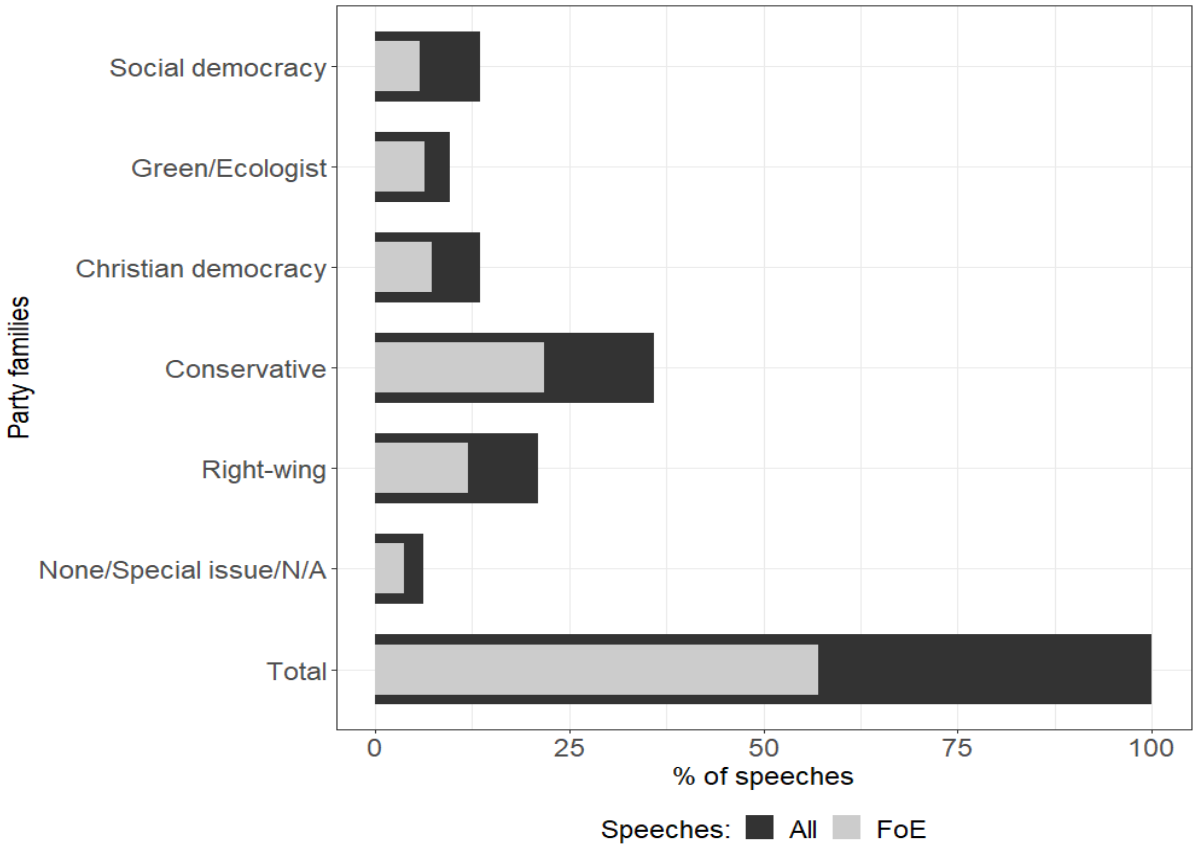


Figure 10.1. Frequency of analysed speeches by party family (m=515 – number of speeches, n=294 – number of FoE speeches).

A look at the distribution of speeches across the three main subject areas indicates a relatively even distribution, with Jobbik but also LMP particularly active in debates on migration, with the coalition parties particularly dominating in FoE debates. Given that migration issues surfaced frequently in FoE debates, no strong trend could be claimed. MSZP was slightly more active in Eurozone-related debates as compared to the other two areas, indicating that in less emotionally charged debates on identitarian issues, some opposition actors might be more able to intervene in the debate. Nevertheless, the dominant position of Fidesz can be confirmed across all three areas (Figure 10.2).

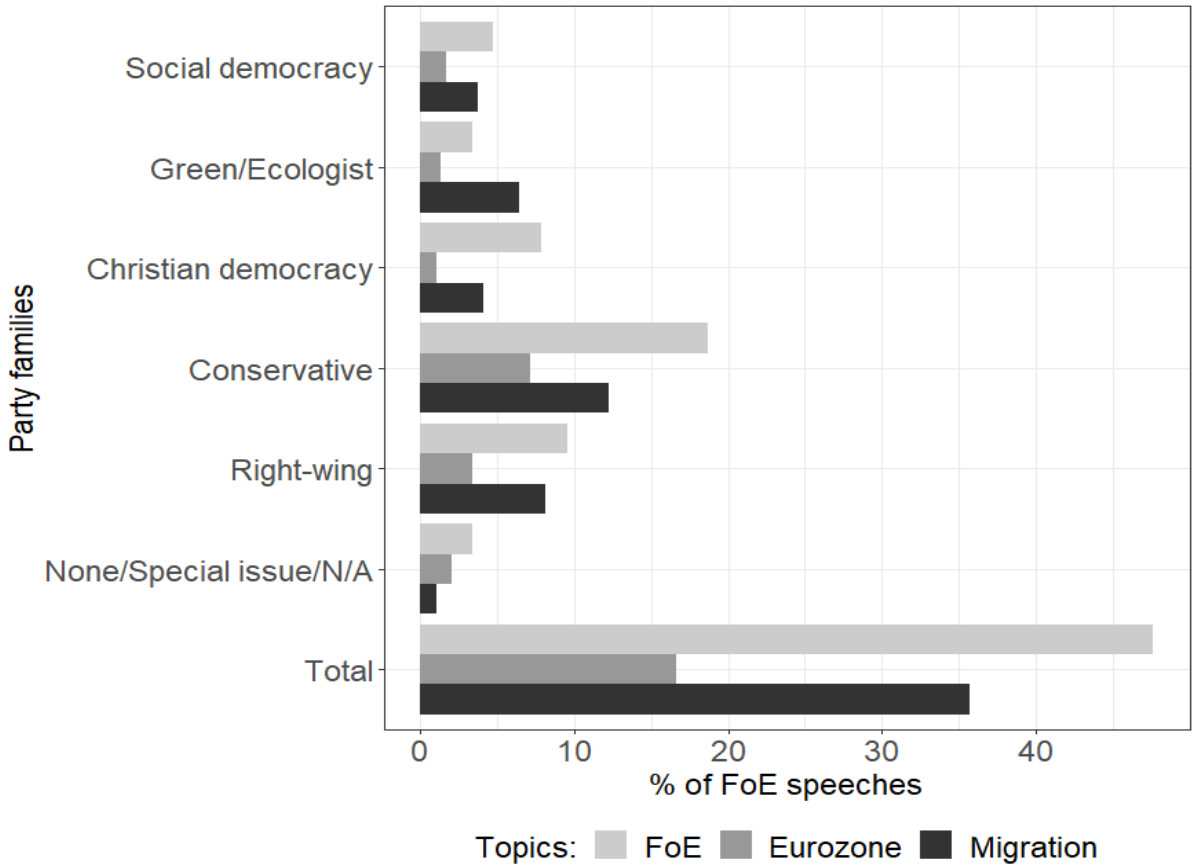


Figure 10.2. Frequency of FoE speeches by topic and party family (n=294 – number of FoE speeches).

A third key trend is that the debate is male-dominated (over 88% of the speeches made by male MPs). Female first-time parliamentarians seem slightly more active than their male counterparts (Table A.3 in Annex 3). The low female representation in the debates (Figure 10.3) could be explained simply by the Hungarian parliament as such being disproportionately composed of male MPs (for 2018 and 2022 data, see Parline, n.d.; Hungary stands out internationally for the low female representation in parliament: Makszimov 2022). Still, it is important to note this trend, given the knowledge of illiberal regimes utilising gender as a 'symbolic glue', emphasising the traditional family as a form of 'biopolitics' (Pető 2021, 318–20), which may translate into the debates on the FoE and underscore why male, instead of female MPs are predominantly represented in it.

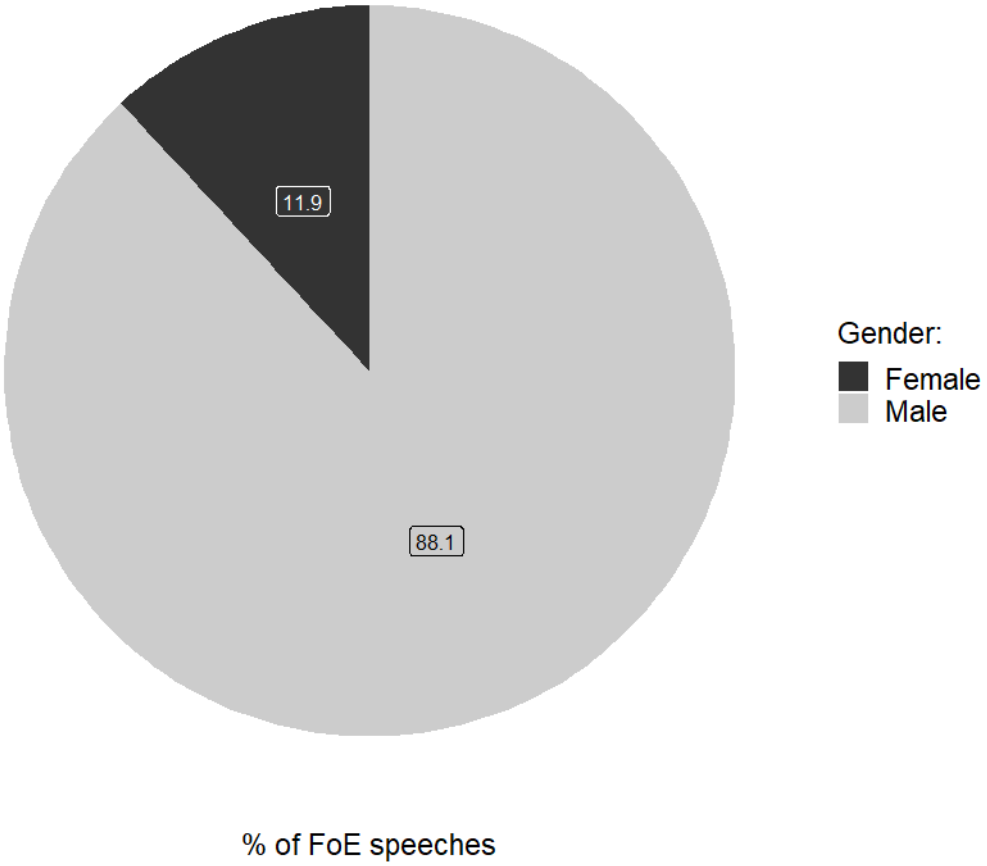


Figure 10.3. Frequency of FoE speeches according to speakers' gender (n=294 – number of FoE speeches).

In terms of the most active individual speakers, ten speakers have ten or more speeches, with KDNP MP Lőrinc Nacsa (elected as one of the EPP vice-presidents in 2021) being the most active with 20 speeches, followed by Dániel Z. Kárpát from Jobbik and Attila Mesterházy from MSZP. Given the varying length of speeches, their number alone does not guarantee significant contributions, but all three MPs belong to the mid-level generation of Hungarian politicians and are active in EU affairs, with some of them educated abroad. It seems that some political parties, unlike Fidesz, have central personalities who speak on EU affairs, namely Nacsa (KDNP), Z. Kárpát (Jobbik), and Mesterházy (MSZP). A representative of the 'veterans' is Zoltán Balczó (b. 1948), another Jobbik MP and former MEP, with Fidesz MP and chairman of the European Affairs Committee Richárd Hörcsik coming sixth.

The next three sections address three key sets of ideas as they appeared in the debates: references to democracy, dominance and policy reform. Before turning to each of those, Figures 10.4 and 10.5 provide an insight into who advocated institutional reforms in the debates. The rationale for

presenting this information is its capacity to indicate more concrete articulations of reforming the EU that are not present in general references to democracy or dominance (though they might appear in the context of specific policy debates). The overall impression emerging from this data is that most actors advocated retaining the 'institutional status quo', if they had invoked references to the EU's institutional structure in the first place. However, that 'status quo' features as a black box that is open to being interpreted in different ways, including via claiming deviations from EU values as permitted by the national identity clause (Art. 4 of the TEU). In proportion to the overall number of interventions, proposals for concrete institutional reform are negligible.

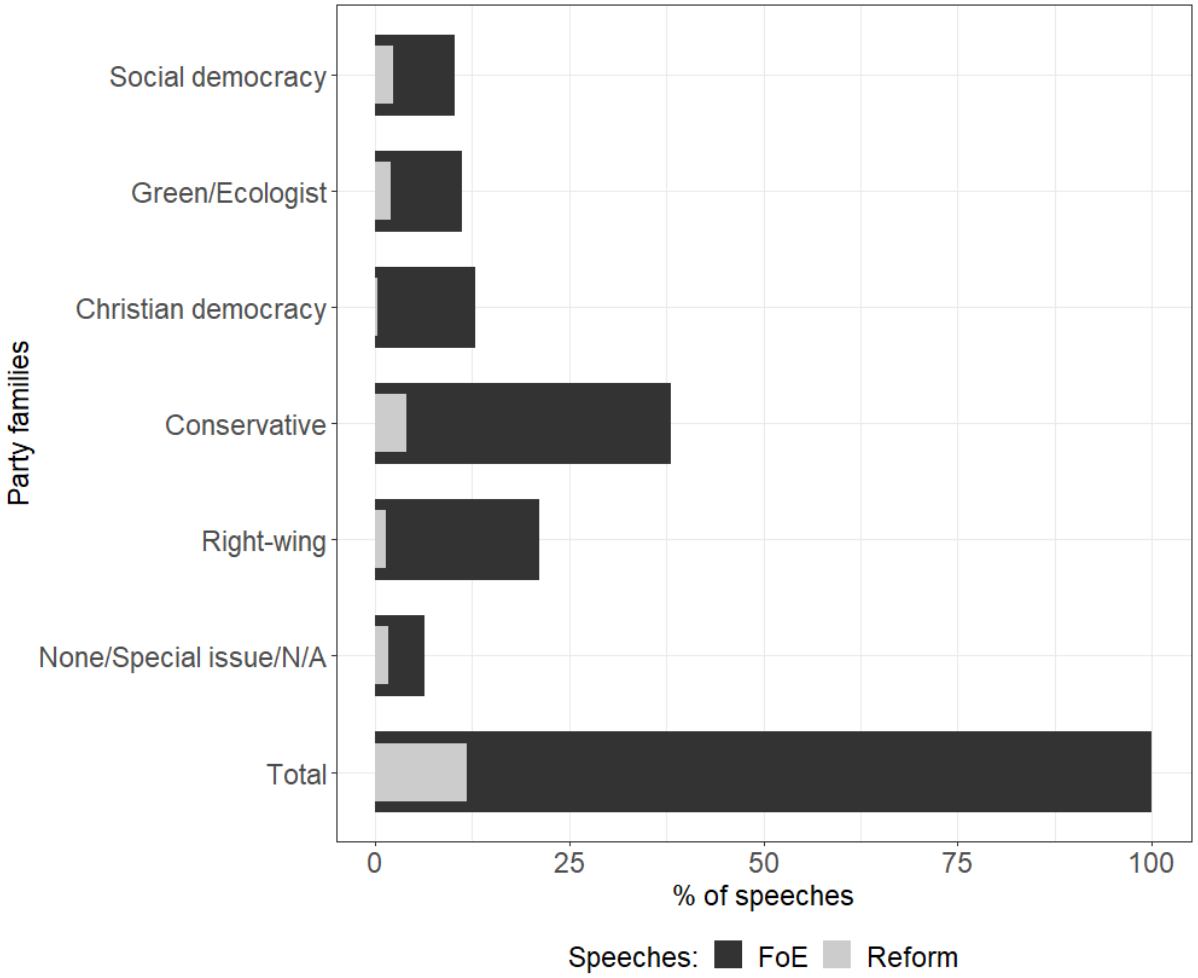


Figure 10.4. Frequency of references to EU institutional reforms in FoE speeches by party family (n=294 – number of FoE speeches, o=35 – number of speeches containing at least one institutional reform proposal).

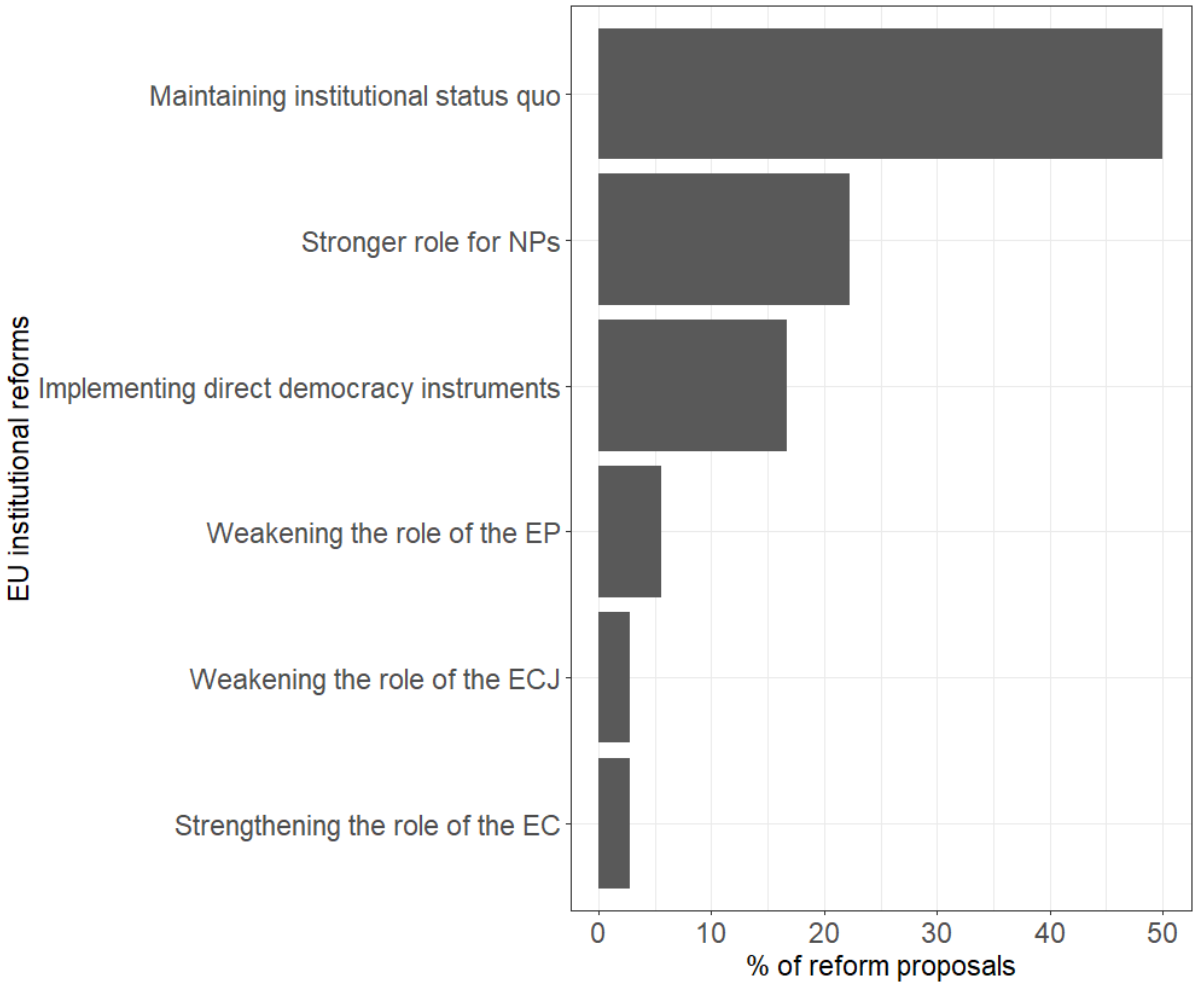


Figure 10.5. Frequency of references to EU institutional reforms (n=36 – number of institutional reform proposals).

Democracy and institutional reform: Constitutions, competences, citizens

References to democracy are relatively more limited compared to some forms of dominance. Most of them occurred in two debates – on the Seventh Amendment to the Fundamental Law (HU_2016-10-17_FoE) and the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) 'Minority SafePack' (HU_2021-04-07_FoE). While one of them pushed for fewer competences at the EU level, the other did the exact opposite.

The former is the only debate on a constitutional amendment, which incorporated several provisions that are at odds with EU law: notably, the 'prohibition on the settlement of alien population' on Hungarian territory, and an explicit articulation of constitutional identity (Drinóczi and Bień-Kacała 2019, 1154). The debate marks a prime articulation of how

> [t]he 'migrant' in the political discourse is separated from its scholarly or legal meaning and is identified with a potential terrorist or at least a criminal, who at the same time threatens to overwhelm the thousand-year-old national 'Christian' culture and replace it with their own.
>
> (Kovács and Nagy 2022, 213, see also 220)

The debate opened with a speech by Viktor Orbán (PM, Fidesz, HU_2016-10-17_FoE), who labelled the question of constitutional identity to be 'the sum total of our argument with Brussels'. A 'battle' is ongoing in Europe, where the stake is whether a 'Europe of nations' will be built, or a 'European empire', that is, a 'united states of Europe'. The latter is the ambition of those who wish to replace the 'responsible and democratic national decision-making process with the directorate of a faceless bureaucracy'.

At the same time, with respect to the ECI on minority protection, MPs castigated the Commission's decision not to initiate legislative changes, primarily due to the lack of competences to do so (Minority SafePack Initiative n.d.). 'Does a community of values exist in the EU, in the Commission, or is the EU merely a community of interests?', asks Fidesz MP Károly Pánczél in the opening statement of the debate. 'What does democracy mean in the EU?', asks Péter Sztáray (state secretary for foreign affairs, Fidesz, HU_2021-04-07_FoE). His response: instead of democracy there is a 'democracy deficit', with the Commission ignoring citizens' demands stemming from the ECI. According to another speaker, instead of focusing on 'illegal migrants', Věra Jourová's department should realise the Commission's responsibility towards minority protection, the lack of which also ignores democracy (Barna Zsigmond, MP, HU_2021-04-07_FoE). The absence of more direct democracy and the emptying out of the limited instruments in place, given the Commission's preference for decisions by the elites, as manifested in the low number of ECIs with a legislative follow-up, is a major deficit of the EU (László Lóránt Keresztes, MP, LMP, HU_2021-04-07_FoE). The claims of coalition MPs were exacerbated by the fact that the initiation of this ECI followed a judgement of the General Court against the Commission's reluctance to even open the ECI for signatures (Tárnok 2017), and that there explanations for the Commission's inaction advanced in the literature other than legalistic ones (Sarfi 2022, 158–59). Several MPs had high hopes of the CoFoE as a means to bring an emphasis on 'original' national

minorities centre-stage (Zsigmond, MP, Keresztes, MP). For Németh, 'hidden in this debate, and perhaps not even so much, is [the question of] the position of the Commission in the EU institutional structure, [its] hierarchy'. The fact that criticism of the ECI-related inactivity is not unwarranted (Greenwood 2019) underscores the flexibility of many Hungarian MPs' reasoning, which does not care too much about consistency in the position vis-à-vis the strengthening of EU competences as a solution to the deficit of democracy. However, the debate on the ECI offers evidence for sporadic voices in support of increasing direct democracy. For example, Keresztes mentioned the Committee of Regions as a potential second chamber of decision making, but preferred an effective ECI as a tool for improving the quality of democracy and removing the public perception that the 'EU's political elite in an ivory tower is completely removed from them'.

The second competence-based change mentioned by a few speakers pertains to strengthening the role of national parliaments. Unlike with the ECI, the references to this change are scattered across debates, and thus do not represent a coherent agenda by any particular MP or party. The violation of the principle of subsidiarity was emphasised with reference to the refugee relocation scheme – according to Gergely Gulyás (MP, Fidesz, HU_2015-11-16_Migration), the Council and the EP adopted the regulation in such a way that prevented national parliaments from conducting a subsidiarity review (he did not explain why this was the case). On the whole, however, it is the *absence* of more systematic arguments in support of a national parliament review that is notable, given the widespread claims of dominance of the EU level over the national one (see below). This confirms earlier work showing that not all national parliaments stand for strengthening their powers in the EU context (Auel and Neuhold 2017; Borońska-Hryniewiecka 2021).

When an explicit institutional reference was made in the dataset, the Hungarian parliament most frequently resorted to a defence of the status quo. Hörcsik (MP, Fidesz, HU_2015-09-21_FoE), the EAC chairman, on one occasion referred to the subsidiarity control mechanism, including the 'red card' proposal that was discussed at the time and the 'yellow card' invoked in relation to the EPPO proposal. This is also the only competence-related moment where a contestation between the coalition and the opposition (excluding Jobbik) is discernible. This revolves around the meaning of the EU's values and Hungary's sovereignty. In the debate

on 'defending it' (HU_2018-10-03_FoE) and on supporting Poland 'against' Brussels (HU_2018-02-20_FoE), several opposition MPs pointed out that Hungary has committed itself to the EU's values, and even Orbán acknowledged the need for the EU as an actor *protecting* sovereignty (Tamás Harangozó, also Szél, Arató, Bárándy, Józsa). Jobbik, while using weaker terms, also objected to the government's practices in failing to acknowledge the excesses of Polish politicians (Márton Gyöngyösi, MP). Still, when it comes to the competences on migration, some opposition actors, such as Márta Demeter (HU_2018-06-05_Migration; HU_2018-06-18_Migration) or László Lóránt Keresztes (HU_2020-12-15_Migration), rushed to emphasise that migration policy needs to remain a national competence. All in all, more than sporadically, it becomes difficult to distinguish between the rhetoric of coalition and opposition MPs on competences, and the government's position against further integration remains virtually unchallenged.

(Differentiated) policy reform: Hungarian parliamentarians fighting for freedom?

Contestations over the EU potentially developing new policies manifested in two contexts: the conditionality requirements attached to the EU budget and debt mutualisation. References surface in two debates, pertaining to the EU's economic response to the COVID-19 pandemic (HU_2020-07-14_Eurozone, HU_2021-04-08_Eurozone). The contexts are related in that Hungarian coalition representatives disagreed with the latter, unless it came with no requirements associated with the former; in other words, they presented and advocated a strict separation between economics (which they understood as the need to maintain a competitive position on the global markets) and politics (where conditionality requirements belong). Coalition representatives were coded as both supporting and opposing debt mutualisation, depending on the conditions it carries. As long as no member states gain a disproportionate advantage and no encroachment on sovereignty is generated (Gulyás, MP, Fidesz), some steps are legitimate to address the grave situation triggered by the pandemic. Yet Hungary's participation is an expression of solidarity towards member states which have been violating the criteria of the Lisbon Treaty (Gulyás, MP). It could manage without this support and generating collective debt is undesirable (Simicskó, MP). The state secretary for finance and EAC chairman both noted the significance of this step, amounting to 'crossing the Rubicon' by the EU (Banai, state

secretary, Fidesz), and even the development of a 'European superstate' (Hörcsik, MP) and fostering 'stealth federalism' (Németh, MP, Fidesz). For the speaker of the National Assembly, László Kövér, 'NextGenerationEU is a mockery, as it will be the next generations who will pay for the expenses made at present'. Thus, the Hungarian discourse aims to portray self-sufficiency and non-dependence on support stemming from EU funds.

There is a close overlap between the speakers who engaged with the COVID-19 recovery strategy and the rule-of-law conditionality mechanism (HU_2021-04-08_Eurozone). Fidesz MEPs have been particularly active in this debate. Tamás Deutsch, as one example, perceived it as 'an arbitrary means of political blackmailing in the hands of the Brussels bureaucracy', which violates Art. 4(2) TEU, and serves the rule of law similarly to how socialist democracy served the ideals of democracy during communism. For Kövér, the mechanism would have implied similar servitude to that historically experienced by Hungary towards Vienna before World War I, just in this case the 'power centre' would be Brussels. For Gulyás, the mechanism was inherently biased as more (!) major issues with the rule of law in Western European countries are overlooked. Simicskó, a KDNP MP, connected the mechanism to a backlash against Hungary's fight for 'European Christian culture against mass migration', a fight that, in fact, could strengthen (!) the Union. The rule of law has been transformed into a 'political weapon' by the left (Hidvéghi, MP). In light of these interventions, the concluding intervention in the debate by the state secretary appears as striking a much more rationalist chord – he asserted that the new mechanism is to be based on 'objective, fair impartial and fact-based criteria' and the rule of law 'does not have an explicit definition'. Thus, the parliament may build a strong case simply by sticking to the requirements of the regulation. Such readings are the basis for a range of measures dismantling the rule of law in Hungary while allegedly adhering to formal regulations (Scheppele 2013).

Moving on with positions vis-à-vis differentiation, Figure 10.6 shows that its presence in the parliamentary debates under scrutiny is akin to references to institutional reform. Only a fraction (12.24%) of speeches contain at least one reference to differentiation, with the frequencies being proportionate to the overall number of speeches for the given party (party family).

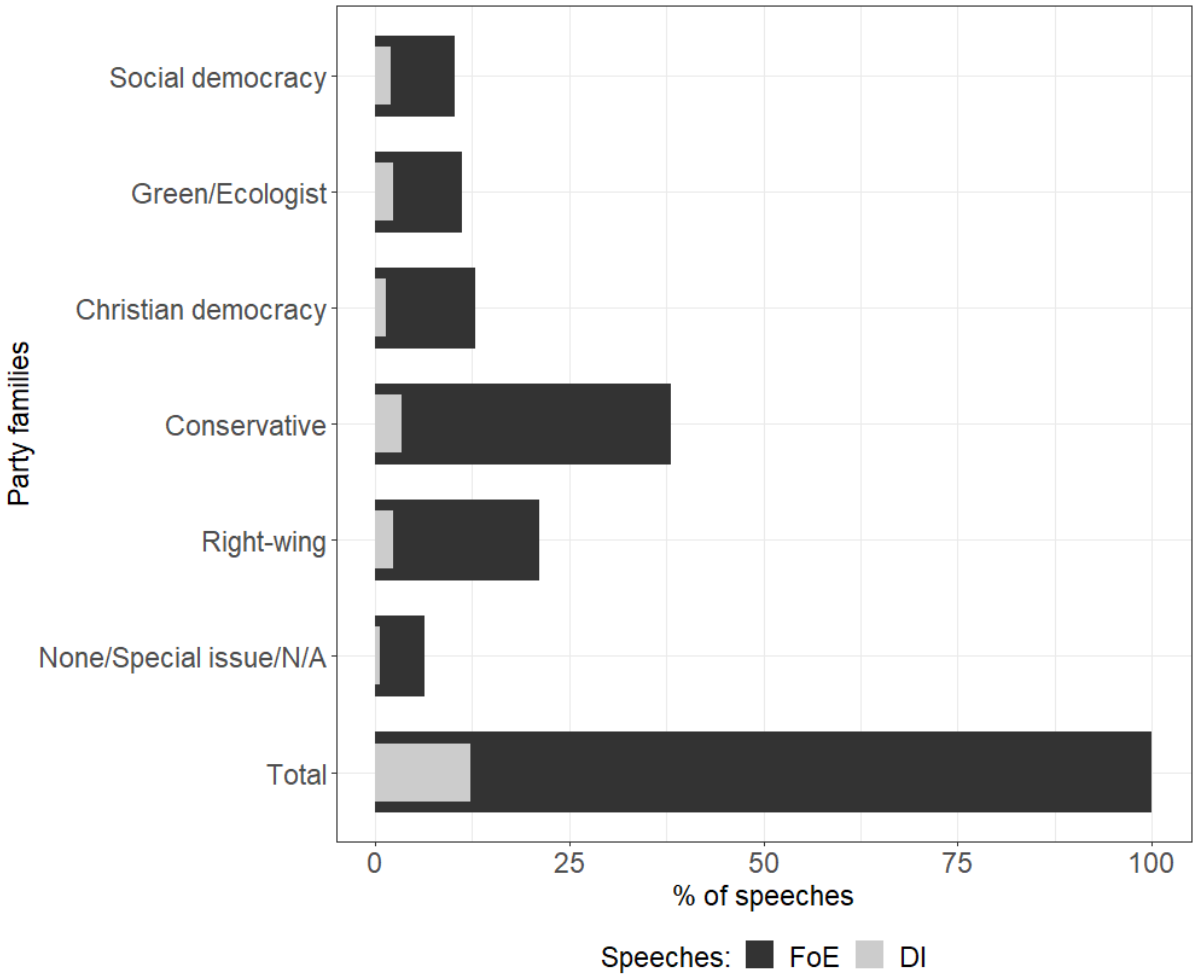


Figure 10.6. Frequency of references to DI in FoE speeches by party family (n=294 – number of FoE speeches, o=36 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to DI).

It is altogether difficult to evaluate positions vis-à-vis differentiation in the parliamentary discourse of an illiberal regime, because the *framing* (cf. Kohler-Koch 2000) of which measures do and do not amount to differentiation is frequently performed via the lens of 'illiberal democracy'. Thus, deviation that amounts to 'value differentiation' (Bellamy, Kröger, and Lorimer 2022) is presented as the maintenance of the status quo. Similarly, the requirement to adhere to fundamental EU values may amount to 'double standards' in the illiberal reading, where some member states receive privileged treatment in their violations of these values being overlooked. An example here is the above reference by Minister Gulyás, on violations of the rule of law in Western Europe being inconsequential for the EU institutions.

The most explicit references to differentiation (rejection thereof), however, appear in the context of the debates on migration (here

encompassing the FoE debates, given their frequent references to migration). There are few references openly advocating differentiation in this context, such as the complete return of external border protection into the purview of national competence (Jobbik MPs Gábor Staudt and Dániel Z. Kárpát). The majority, however, framed their positions as rejecting differentiation, and the contestation between the coalition and the (democratic) opposition unfolded in terms of what such a rejection means in practice. Three areas can be identified.

First and most prominently, a more typical governmental position in relation to the 'refugee crisis' is that a degree of European unity must be retained, to ensure effective border protection, but it cannot translate into solidarity requirements towards countries which themselves do not fulfil their obligations in defending external borders (Hidvéghi, MEP). Thus, beneath the de-differentiating appeal (no distinctions between member states in terms of border protection capacity) lurked a differentiation invitation (generating a deeper rift between member states due to absence of support for those facing the largest numbers of incoming refugees). In this case, unlike in other, less prominent areas, the opposition largely jumped on the government's bandwagon. Keresztes, an LMP MP, while stressing the need for cooperation in border protection, but not in protection of refugees or their integration, presented it as self-evident that 'the member states clearly have to strengthen their own competences in relation to immigration policy'. Such interpretations are important because they demonstrate how alternative possibilities are, at times and whether for strategic or ideational reasons, not even considered in the debate.

This position, extracted from a 2020 debate (HU_2020-12-15_Migration), is slightly at odds with opposition voices from a 2015 debate (HU_2015-09-21_FoE). There, Orbán's rhetoric was viewed as a threat to the EU, which will result not in its dismantling, but in the establishment of a core composed of member states which 'are sane, learned from the mistakes, even tragedies, of World War II', and 'will work quickly, effectively and guaranteeing their citizens' security and well-being', while Hungary will go 'to the C7 track' (Harangozó, MP; support for a more collaborative approach expressed also by the MPs András Schiffer, Mesterházy and Zsuzsanna Szelényi). This dynamic indicates that migration and refugee protection remain relevant even after the topic has ceased to occupy prime attention given more recent 'crises' (Greer, de Ruijter, and Brooks

2021), but the narratives of rights and values were even rarer in it than during the 2015–2016 period. Here, the Hungarian government has succeeded in 'construct[ing] the main opponent against which it must protect the nation as migration itself and, by extension, the diversity that it brings to societies' (Waterbury 2020, 978). Its position vis-à-vis Hungarian minority protection abroad, as described in the 'Minority SafePack' ECI context (HU_2021-04-07_FoE), matched with the need to adopt a different frame for addressing the challenges of Hungarians abroad, many of them emigrants from Hungary due to the conditions there (Waterbury 2020, 966–71).

While migration 'carries the day' in terms of references to differentiation, there are occasional references to other policy areas. Kövér, the speaker, in the context of objecting to the conditionality mechanism in relation to the COVID-19 recovery package, presented the EPPO led by 'agent' Laura Kövesi as initiating 'dozens of political trials' towards the opposition, which violate due process. Thus, Hungary is right to refuse to join the EPPO (HU_2021-04-08_Eurozone). This position was countered by opposition (mainly Jobbik) MPs (Szilágyi, Balczó, Jakab, Harangozó) pledging that Hungary should join the EPPO. Their main reason, however, was driven by domestic politics. In their view, joining would enable the rightful prosecution of government representatives for their corrupt practices, in a situation when the domestic judiciary and investigation services cannot be relied upon to do the same. Klára Dobrev, MEP, goes furthest, explicitly committing her party, DK (not only in the context of the EPPO but also the broader EU COVID-19 response) to an 'ever-closer Union', be it called the 'United States of Europe' or otherwise.

Thirdly, a debate (HU_2021-04-28_FoE) ensued over the CJEU decision that recognised Hungary's violation of EU law due to incapacitating the operations of Central European University (Chronowski and Vincze 2021). Coalition MPs argued that this judgement exemplifies double standards towards Hungary, since in their view similar measures are also in place in other member states (Vinnai, MP), such as Bavaria in Germany. Once again, the government representative (state secretary for innovation and technology) adopted the most rational language, declaring that, while the government disagrees with the judgement as a manifestation of double standards, it intends to comply with it. This matches with the Hungarian government having

> a unique understanding of law (both national and European) and see[ing] it as an obstacle or hurdle for its opponents (which must obey the law) and an opportunity for itself to misuse every loophole and to instrumentalise it for purely political reasons
>
> (Chronowski and Vincze 2021, 706)

The main contender to these claims was Bernadett Szél, who castigated the government's openness towards opening a campus of Fudan University in Budapest (cf. Burnay and Pils 2022) while incapacitating the CEU.

References to enlargement and its process were minimal. Opposition MP Szelényi, for example, argued in support of Serbia being more involved in the EU migration management. Such references may have increased with the invasion of Ukraine, beyond the period under study. Similarly, there are no notable references to Brexit. The opposition voiced concerns about Hungary ending up on the *periphery*, in the context of differentiation, due to domestic, rather than EU politics. For example, MSZP MP Csaba Tóth asserted that the 'defence' of Hungary must unfold against the power-hungriness of their own government (HU_2018-10-03_FoE). Similarly, former Liberal Party[35] chairman Gábor Fodor interpreted the seventh amendment to the Fundamental Law as weakening Hungary, pushing it towards the

> European periphery. If the Union weakens, dismantles, changes into multi-speed Europe, in that process, Hungary can only lose […] let's not forget that. We have an interest in all integration. Everything that is not integration will [cause] Hungary to fall out from the mainstream, and very quickly find itself among the losers.
>
> (HU_2016-10-17_FoE)

Fodor also subscribed to the CJEU's reading of the supremacy of EU law. These two positions should arguably be dissociated, as opposing differentiation does not necessarily require adherence to the supremacy of EU law (see, e.g., Avbelj 2020).

The concept of the periphery assumed one, very different, meaning in an earlier debate (HU_2015-11-16_Migration) – here, Jobbik MP Z. Kárpát interpreted the refugee relocation plans as an effort to 'scatter/disperse

[35] This party did not make it into the parliament on the party lists, however, which is why it is not listed among the parties with seats there.

(szétszór) those who [the Western part of Europe] cannot make use of'. The intervention is an apt reminder of Jobbik's ideological origins, which remain pertinent despite the party having joined the united opposition before the 2022 general elections. It cautions against sharp distinctions between a 'first' and a 'second' Jobbik and claims of a 'pro-EU rhetoric' (cf. Goldstein 2021, 34). The third representation of the periphery comes from Schiffer (LMP), for whom the EU was failing, not on finance-related issues, but on 'people and the environment', as it allowed companies and institutions (such as the IMF) to squeeze the periphery and exploit it in the name of free trade. Uncommonly for a democratic opposition speaker, his speech gathered 'sporadic applause' from Jobbik MPs (according to the debate transcript).

The latter two representations of the periphery are intertwined with concerns over the dominance of primarily Western-centred actors over EU and, by extension, Hungarian politics. Thus, the next section addresses what actors were perceived as dominating in the FoE debates and through which mechanisms.

Dominance: symbols matter

References to dominance, unsurprisingly, featured in those FoE debates which have the most explicit symbolic dimension. For example, 18 speeches encompassed them in the debate on the defence of Hungary's sovereignty (HU_2018-10-03_FoE), and 12 in the debate on the Seventh Amendment to the Fundamental Law (HU_2016-10-17_FoE). Beyond these, references appeared across the board, 'spilling over' to those specifically on migration and the eurozone as well—for example, 14 speeches coded in the debate on the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic (HU_2020-07-14_Eurozone). Almost a third of all the FoE speeches contained at least one reference to dominance (Figure 10.7). Various subcategories of dominance all occurred in the debates, with illicit hierarchy being the most frequent. Yet these subcategories cannot be neatly distinguished from each other; instead, they all point to a broader rhetoric of Hungary's inferiority in EU decision making. Three illustrations are provided here.

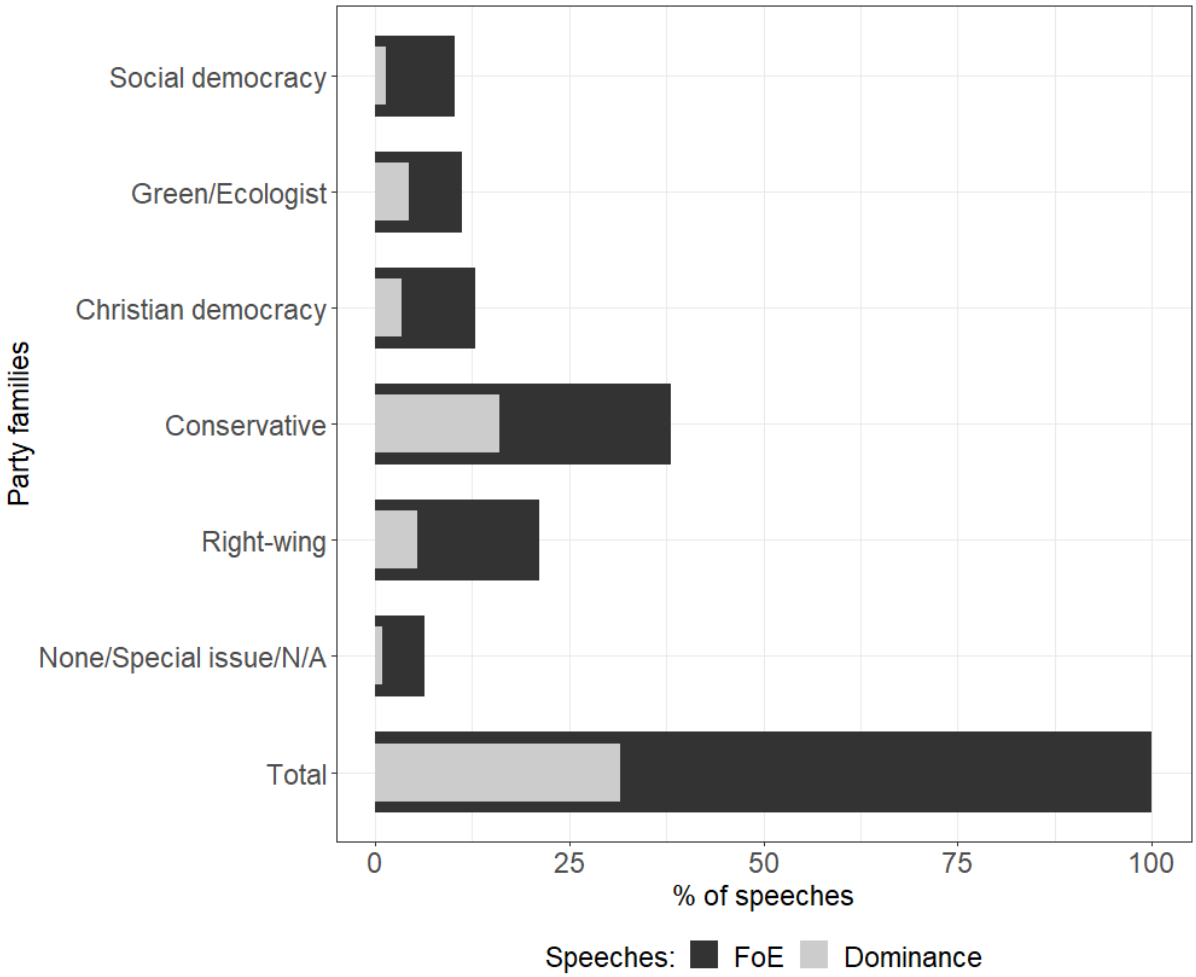


Figure 10.7. Frequency of references to dominance in FoE speeches by party family (n=294 – number of FoE speeches, o=93 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to dominance).

Firstly, prominent Fidesz politician Szilárd Németh claimed that 'they' want to take away Hungary's capacity to protect its borders. He was also critical of Frontex as an 'agency' where 'no one has seen a border guard in flesh and blood. No one [there] has carried out border protection responsibilities'. Hungary, in this narrative, is excluded from decision making on a matter which, according to the 'treaty', belongs to national competence (HU_2018-10-03_FoE). Another Fidesz MP pointed out, similarly to references in other debates, that there was 'no decision' on 'what the EU should be. […] What would it look like if this community had a real constitution, not only a charter?' Instead of an open debate on these questions, a few actors decide 'by stealth' (István Bajkai, HU_2018-10-03_FoE). Such interventions were, on occasion, countered by Jobbik representatives. In the same debate, Balczó pointed out that it was the European Council which ultimately endorsed the quota decision, hence highlighting Orbán's failure to effectively resist it.

Secondly, when referencing dominance via distributional inequality, Jobbik MPs found a common tone with the coalition. Jobbik speaker Balczó pointed to dominance caused by economic inequalities within the EU in eurozone-related debates. In 2016, he argued that, in economic terms, Hungary's EU accession was disadvantageous from several perspectives, particularly 'the triangle of privatisation, deregulation, liberalisation', which has 'destroyed, for example, Hungarian industry' (HU_2016-05-02_Eurozone). A similar point was made by MP Balázs Ander in another eurozone-related debate: 'This country, despite the slogans of peace processes, paid a brutal price for EU membership in the form of quasi-colonial economic subordination. So this money [EU funds, NB] did not come easily at all […]') (HU_2016-05-02_Eurozone). In the 2020 debate (HU_2020-07-14_Eurozone), the divides between the coalition and Jobbik speakers decreased. Jobbik's position on dominance via exploitation manifested in demanding EU support to Hungary on the grounds of unequal effects of the pandemic on the economy of the member states, thus preventing a situation in which 'the eurozone only tries to save its members'. Similarly, Kövér (Fidesz), as speaker, opened the 2020 debate by decrying the injustice in the planned support mechanism, which 'advantages the richer countries as opposed to the poorer ones, punishes those which get their economies in order with wise and disciplined politics, while rewarding those which get themselves into debt because of irresponsible spending politics […] it, once again, concerns only the egos of Brussels bureaucracy, who claim to know better what the solution is than those governments which […] enjoy the support of the majority of their citizens'. His words were echoed by other MPs, e.g. Simicskó (KDNP, MP) and Deutsch (Fidesz, MEP) (HU_2020-07-14_Eurozone).

Thirdly, in the most populous category of 'illicit hierarchy', we find the most ideationally/philosophically driven statements, which identify dominance on the basis of historical or cultural references. Once again, references appeared in all three debate areas (FoE, migration, eurozone), but they were most prominent when directly responding to the EU institutions' actions. The Commission was the most frequent dominant entity in these narratives. For example, Németh for Fidesz: 'if I were to sharpen the question, who writes the Polish constitution after all? Do the Polish people still have the right to write the Polish constitution, or does the relentless European Commission take that over from them as well?' (HU_2018-02-20_FoE). Elsewhere (HU_2020-12-15_Migration), EAC

Chairman Hörcsik used the analogy of David and Goliath to describe the relationship between the Commission and the member states – for him, the Commission was Goliath. Yet, the EP, particularly due to the Sargentini report, got the same label. In the opening speech in this debate (HU_2018-10-03_FoE), Fidesz MP Gulyás referred to 'the worst Bolshevik traditions' in 'political will becoming the legal yardstick' in the EP, with MEPs not hesitating to 'blatantly violate' the Lisbon Treaty and the guarantees of sovereignty therein (similarly MP Mihály Balla). Lajos Kósa went even further, generating an analogy between the EU and 'Stalinist dictatorship' (HU_2016-10-17_FoE). Generally, the KDNP (Fidesz's coalition partner) made more emotional statements than Fidesz MPs themselves, although their substantive content is virtually indistinguishable. For MP András Aradszki, the rule-of-law requirements also applied to the EU and were violated in the Commission starting a 'stealth lawmaking' process,[36] which the EP then endorsed 'in a political attack against our homeland in the interest of weakening our homeland's position, which tries to protect the kind of Europe which we envisioned, joined, and which the founding fathers could imagine as well'. While it is not quite clear whom he was referring to here, it is quite likely that he had in mind Schuman and Monnet, who are frequently referred to as the 'founding fathers' of Europe. Aradszki's colleague, Imre Vejkey, emphasised the defence of Hungary's 'Christian identity', in the name of which Hungary sacrificed 'blood and material resources' several times in history, providing a 'service to Europe'. The aim of the Union, with 'unrestrained migration', is to 'completely redraw the religious, cultural and ethnic map of the continent in the interest of generating a united states of Europe above the nation-states' (HU_2016-10-17_FoE).

Jobbik's statements did not fundamentally differ from the coalition's, but it is worth noting that, particularly in the earlier debates, they added a critical bite concerning what they deem to be the government's uncritically pro-EU position in the past, such as when ratifying the Lisbon Treaty (Gyöngyösi – 'do not be surprised that in the EU, a concentration of power took place [after the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty]'). He made virtually the same point in the Seventh Amendment debate. Z. Kárpát, in

[36] Fidesz MP Attila Tilki, in the Seventh Amendment debate, refers to "stealth federalism". It is not clear to what extent these references derive from Majone's (2005) work, which, however, is hardly compatible with the critiques of "democratic deficit" that some coalition MPs advance (cf. Follesdal and Hix 2006).

a 2015 migration debate, used even harsher words: 'we do not get a stinking penny from the EU!'

The above references to dominance are drawn primarily by coalition actors or Jobbik, but occasionally they feature in the (democratic) opposition's speeches as well. In their parlance, however, the main source of dominance is not the EU institutions, but international non-state actors. For example, for Péter Ungár (LMP),

> […] when the multinational companies influence the EU decision-making bodies, when they engage in lobbying, when Volkswagen or car factories do this, you do not bring this to the plenary […because] you are part of that, you do not defend Hungarian sovereignty there, but represent Audi in the European Council […].

Schiffer (LMP): 'the EU cannot amount to the exploitation of peripheral states, the market theft by core states and multinational companies'. Schiffer from LMP was particularly vocal along these lines. For him, 'the EU cannot amount to the exploitation of peripheral states, the market theft by core states and multinational companies'. Furthermore, he connected the plight of refugees to colonial histories and the exploitation of non-European regions – in this portrayal, Europe is a dominating entity due to its failure to attain global responsibility.

> [T]here is a global injustice, as the source of the refugee crises is largely countries which for a long time were under colonial control by European empires. […] The building of the European welfare state after 1945 has unfolded largely at the expense of these territories, the exploitation of the local workforce. Until Europe faces this head-on, there is not going to be a fundamental solution.
>
> (2015)

Similarly, the EU is a result of a 'technocratic push' that 'does not accept diversity [and] wants to uniformise' (HU_2015-09-21_FoE). While this brought him closer to Jobbik's statements, his solution was different – Hungary must demonstrate solidarity and work together with other member states, otherwise it itself contributes to 'global inequalities', akin to sources of dominance. While Schiffer was clearly its most visible voice in this regard, a similar statement can be identified by another LMP MP, Keresztes, who condemned the government for making Hungary vulnerable to the interests of multinational companies that are supported

by the coalition in this 'European conflict' (HU_2020-12-15_Migration). This language is consistent with LMP, which, categorised as a member of the green party family, is among the most left-oriented parties in the Hungarian parliament.

Conclusion: (un)constitutional models in the Hungarian parliamentary debate?

This contribution has argued that, in the context of debates on the future of the EU, Hungary's parliament is a Munchausen parliament, in two senses. It asks the EU to do the impossible while refusing to provide the supranational institutions with the necessary competences. At the same time, it continues to undermine those institutions by telling 'dramatic and untruthful' stories about them, a phenomenon first described by Richard Asher in 1951 (Turner and Reid 2002, 347). If one were to rationalise the debates, which largely appeal to emotions and symbols instead of presenting constructive proposals, the overwhelming position would be in support of an EU of strong member states. The nation remains the central unit of political organisation in this picture: 'Europe is nice thanks to containing nations, independent nations, strong nations, which establish alliances with each other' (Bence Tuzson, Fidesz, HU_2015-09-21_FoE). The EU may, at best, offer to realise the ideals of national self-determination and 'fight for identity'. Only if the EU has a firm identity based on its nations' identities can it become 'strategically sovereign' (Kövér, on the protection of national identity).

Thus, the Hungarian government fights for Europe, against all who want to 'plunder and eliminate' its nations by 'shattering their identity', 'place [Europe] into debt forever, economically subordinate it, culturally and technologically colonise it, and politically rule it completely'. All nations, including those from Western Europe, are under threat, with 'the idea of national self-determination […] buried in a shared grave with the Hungarians' thousand-years-old country, and on this grave, the poisonous flower of the denial of nations has blossomed' (MP Kövér, Fidesz, HU_2020-06-04_FoE; HU_2020-06-08_FoE).

Yet one should exercise caution when ascribing to such statements an endorsement of the 'intergovernmental constitutional model' (see Góra, Thevenin, Zielińska 2023, introductory chapter, in this volume), as if these were constructive proposals appealing to rational actors. Instead, in an

illiberal context, such ideas may only serve as efforts to justify illiberal policies with a 'veil of reason' based on Hungary's interests or identity.

As another example, a schematic reading could conclude that, via the Minority SafePack debate, Hungarian parliamentarians demand more empowered citizenry via the legally binding effects of the ECI – a position supported by recognised authorities in the EU context (Organ and Alemanno 2021). But these claims appear in a very specific context, where the Commission's justification for rejecting the petition, which was deemed insufficient by several observers (see above), offered an opportunity to effectively challenge and undermine the authority of a particular EU institution. Indeed, the Commission is most frequently targeted as an opponent of Hungary's interests (in the migration debates, on 47 occasions, followed by the EP with 18 occasions[37] and the Councils with just seven occasions). It would therefore be difficult to attribute them to a bourgeoning support for a regional-cosmopolitan or even federal model.

In addition, the regional-cosmopolitan model and, to a lesser extent, the federal model (see Fossum 2021) come with more *specialised* proposals for the future of the EU compared to the other two alternatives. They envision contributions on, for example, the reform of the EU agencies, the ECB or the Court of Justice. Hungarian debates, however, rarely go beyond the 'institutional triangle' of the Commission, Parliament and Council.

More fundamentally, the debates are difficult to interpret in the light of any *constitutional* commitments or acknowledgements (cf. Sajó and Uitz 2017). The EU is typically not seen as a constitutional entity by the parliamentarians, but as a forum for realisation of member states' interests – akin to standard intergovernmental organisations. In this context, even the intergovernmental model risks 'reading too much into' the parliamentarian positions, presenting systematic, organised narratives where there are none. Anti-EU narratives are strong when 'invisible enemies' are created in the parliament's rhetoric, notably Brussels bureaucrats or Western actors who allegedly wish Hungary to fail as a (nation-)state. Nor are there strong dividing lines between the coalition and the opposition. The coherent pro-integrationist voices surface on the opposition's (except Jobbik's) side, but they are few and far

[37] In the Minority SafePack context, the EP was interpreted as an ally since it has also endorsed the ECI.

between. Instead, particularly in the later (2020/2021) debates, the prevalence is of the coalition and opposition competing over who is more credible in 'defending' Hungary from various external threats. For example, MP Szél challenged the government's incoherent position on migration with the argument that it was open to the immigration of 'Gastarbeiters' while rejecting migrants (HU_2016-10-17_FoE). Such an argument, while it may make sense from a partisan-rhetorical perspective, hardly signals a substantive alternative to the government's anti-immigration position. Similarly, in 2020, the coalition and part of the (democratic) opposition jointly supported a resolution on protecting national identity. The approximately two-page resolution is accompanied by a justification of a single sentence: 'We call on the institutions of the EU and the Council of Europe to support the efforts of those European parliaments which, in the 21st century, intend to establish national identity as a fundamental human right' (Kövér et al. 2020). Even MSZP speaker Hiller does not dispute the nation as the founding unit for identity (as opposed to, for example, the constitution) – while, unlike coalition MPs, he pleads for Hungary being part of 'European identity', he does this via constructing a mechanism of exclusion: 'Have you talked to someone from the south of Africa? To someone born in Central America? In Southeast Asia? Have you talked to them and have you heard, what associations do they derive from the same idea, how do they think, what gestures do they have? And have you seen a Pole speaking to a Spaniard, a Hungarian with a Dane, a Pole with a French? Yes, I have to say, there is a European identity' (HU_2020-06-04_FoE; HU_2020-06-08_FoE).

In conclusion, to unwind this rhetoric, the analysis needs to be attentive towards conspiracies lurking behind, including an apocalyptic vision of a broad coalition of enemies that takes the struggle for national identity onto the next – European – level, and demands of recognition and equality, which are nevertheless selective and only include those who are characterised as belonging to the respective nations (e.g. MP Bencsik, Fidesz, HU_2021-04-07_FoE). In Hungary, there is little prospect of the post-2022 parliamentary composition 'setting the record straight', given the success of the coalition parties in them. If anything, with MHM's entry into parliament and the expected deterioration of the economic situation in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the blaming of the EU institutions for Hungary's woes might reach new heights. A continued study of the parliamentary discourse, given Hungarian governing elites'

rhetorical commitment to the parliament, can be expected to offer valuable insights on the ideas and contestations that feature the EU, and thus supplement the studies of public opinion and executive actors' speeches, as well as helping to construct alternative narratives – even though these are a rare occurrence in the Hungarian parliament.

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Chapter 11

Slovakia: A Country of Paradoxes? Case Study of Parliamentary Discourse on the Future of the EU (2015–2021)

Viliam Ostatnik

Slovakia and European integration

After the collapse of the socialist regime in Czechoslovakia in 1989 (the so-called 'Velvet Revolution'), the country set itself on the path to European, or more precisely Euroatlantic integration. The peaceful dissolution of the Czechoslovak federation into the Czech and Slovak republics on 1 January 1993 (the so-called 'Velvet Divorce') meant that the two countries were now each on their own integration path. In Slovakia's case, democratic backsliding, especially in the area of the rule of law and functioning of state institutions, as well as the overall uncertain progress of reforms under the rule of Vladimír Mečiar (1994–1998), halted the integration efforts. Only with the newly formed, pro-reform and pro-integration governments of Mikuláš Dzurinda (1998–2002, 2002–2006) did Slovakia return to the track to join the Euroatlantic community of democratic states.

Slovakia joined the European Union (EU) on 1 May 2004. Since the moment of accession, the country (practically across the whole of its significant political spectrum) has been willing and seeking to become a full member, perhaps from the very beginning fearing peripheralisation more than any integration initiatives that would bring it closer to 'the core' of the Union. Since December 2007, Slovakia has been a member of the Schengen area, and on 1 January 2009 it adopted the euro as its currency (joining the Eurozone). The integration process was practically uncontested in political debates and across the political spectrum. All relevant parties were in support of integration with both the EU and NATO as well as into Schengen and the Eurozone. The integration was also successfully justified by the contrast with Mečiar's government's failed efforts in the 1990s.

The Slovak parliament played a crucial role in the EU integration process. Its role mainly concerned transposing EU law (Figulová 2015).[38] Before the accession, it needed to adapt the national legal order to the European one, passing multiple amendments to the laws. In 2001, the parliament also adopted an amendment to the constitution (No. 90/2001, Collection of laws) required for Slovakia's EU membership (Fridrich and Mokrá 2011). The parliament introduced a rule binding the Slovak Republic by an international treaty to transfer part of its powers to the European Communities and the EU. In effect, the parliament lost its position as the sole legislative body in Slovakia, despite its constitutional position, but gained rights of control over government activities in the EU (Figulová 2015).

A key role in the coordination of the Slovak EU policy is entrusted to the government. A significant position in this system is given to the permanent representation to the EU in Brussels, which communicates with the EU institutions and supports the coordination of Slovak EU policy. Slovakia actively participates in the EU institutional setting. Currently, the country has 13 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). The commissioner nominated by Bratislava to the European Commission (2019–2024) is Maroš Šefčovič, vice-president for interinstitutional relations and foresight. Slovakia has nine representatives on the European Economic and Social Committee and nine representatives on the European Committee of the Regions. It has held Council presidency once since joining, from July to December 2016 – and with tangible results, and this presidency is therefore generally seen (within the country) as a successful one (see Bátora, 2017). The Slovak parliament also actively participates in EU affairs, engaging in multiple parliamentary activities such as statements, plenary debates on EU issues, hearings with the prime minister, meetings of the European Affairs Committee, etc. As will be further discussed below, in comparison to other national parliaments in the EU, it is categorised as intermediately engaged in European affairs, although it remains an important forum for deliberation of EU affairs for political actors (see Winzen 2012).

In addition, Slovak citizens support European integration, and such support and trust in EU institutions rose during the pandemic; in fact, it reached its highest value in 10 years (EB 94, covering winter 2020–2021), Moreover, more than eight in ten Slovaks feel European (part of the EU),

[38] Conducted through the Committee on European Integration.

while half are satisfied with the functioning of democracy in the EU (Úrad vlády SR 2021). Slovaks see the free movement of people, goods and services as the most positive result of the EU's existence and operation. The idea of strengthening the EU's external border has very high support among Slovaks (90%). They trust the European Parliament (EP) and the European Commission (EC) roughly twice as much as their own national parliament and government (Štandardný Eurobarometer 94 2020–2021). In addition, an overwhelming majority of Slovaks (73%) have a positive assessment of being part of the Eurozone (using the euro), while 75% think a common EU recovery plan of €750 billion is a good thing (Flash Eurobarometer 501).

Slovak National Council – the venue for political debates on European affairs

Slovakia is a unitary parliamentary democracy with a multi-party system. The National Council of the Slovak Republic is the country's sole constitutional and legislative body. The state authority and the status of other state bodies in Slovakia is derived from its primary status. As an elected body, it represents the sovereignty of the state and its citizens. There are 150 MPs, elected for a four-year term by universal, equal, and direct suffrage by secret ballot. The National Council considers and approves the constitution, constitutional statutes and other laws and ensures they are upheld. State bodies, established by the parliament, or with its involvement, are responsible for answering and reporting to the parliament. The parliament exercises its power of scrutiny primarily towards the Slovak government and its members (Národná Rada 2022). Issues regarding migration, the Eurozone and the future of the EU (or generally EU affairs) are mostly debated in the plenary sessions of the parliament, where all MPs can participate. The Slovak parliament can therefore be classified as a debating legislature, as the opposition uses the plenary to criticise the government (see Arter 1999, pp. 211-217; also, Auel and Raunio 2014), which also makes it a suitable object of this study. Additionally, the government must obtain a mandate from parliament before taking a position in the Council.

However, the Slovak parliament may also authorise one of its committees to exercise its powers within EU affairs. For this purpose, the European Affairs Committee of the National Council of the Slovak Republic was established in 2004, created by legislation as a powerful committee. This

means that if the National Council (the European Affairs Committee) approves the government's draft position (mandate), an authorised member of the government acts on that draft position (mandate) in representing the Slovak Republic in the relevant EU institutions. The committee also has other powers, such as the power of assessment of compliance of EU draft legislative acts with the principle of subsidiarity, including the adoption of reasoned opinion. The Slovak model therefore employs a so-called mixed system of monitoring EU affairs in the National Parliament (Národná Rada 2022: 2). The Slovak parliament is – as with any other national parliament in EU member states – entitled to participate in the functioning of the EU. It also participates on the IPEX platform and other mechanisms allowed by the Lisbon Treaty (TFEU).

In sum, the Slovak parliament is the prime venue for debates on political issues, also concerning the future of the EU, Eurozone, or international (European) crises. The government must seek a mandate from parliament before taking a position in the Council, with plenary debates offering an opportunity for the opposition to criticise government policies, including in the area of European affairs. Similarly, it is in the parliament that a broad political consensus on a European issue (e.g. migration and asylum policies) can be achieved and demonstrated.

Political parties and their general views on European integration

The Slovak Republic is a parliamentary representative democracy with a multi-party political system. It is considered to be a semi-consolidated system (see, for example, Martinkovič 2020), meaning that the Slovak political parties do not present consolidated and stable forces in terms of either their political programme or their national and regional structures. This translates to a more segmented political scene, in which various smaller parties (often closely tied to the personal leadership of their founder/leader) compete in elections and often cease to exist after one or two parliamentary terms.

The analysed period of 2015–2021 covers three parliamentary terms and three governments in office (2012–2016; 2016–2020; 2020–). Between 2012 and 2016, Direction (Smer) was the sole ruling party, gaining 44.41% of votes in 2012, which translated into a majority of 83 seats. This was the time of being fully oriented as a pro-European, pro-integration party, also

embedded and respected in the camp of social democrats in the European Parliament. It did, however, position itself in opposition (together with Hungary and other member states) to the quota system for migrants arriving in the EU (finding a consensus among practically all political actors in the parliament) in 2015 and 2016. The opposition consisted of the Christian Democratic Movement (Kresťanskodemokratické hnutie – KDH; 8.82% and 16 seats), Ordinary People and Independent Personalities (Obyčajní Ľudia a Nezávislé Osobnosti – OĽaNO; 8.55% and 16 seats), Bridge (Most-Híd; 6.89% and 13 seats), Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia – SDKU; 6.09% and 11 seats) and Freedom and Solidarity (Sloboda a Solidarita – SaS; 5.88% and 11 seats). All the opposition parties had a generally pro-EU, pro-integration approach, with no significant rift between the government and the opposition (also given the consensus on rejecting the quota system proposal by the Commission during the migration crisis).

Between 2016 and 2020, the coalition government consisted of Smer (28.28% and 49 seats), the Slovak National Party (Slovenská Národná Strana – SNS; 8.64% and 15 seats), Most-Híd (6.50% and 11 seats) and Network (Sieť; 5.60% and 10 seats). Coalition parties generally followed the pro-EU, pro-integration course, with the SNS being the most reserved and critical party, although the chronology also plays an important role here. First, the coalition parties positioned themselves in stark contrast to the newly elected, far-right and hard-Eurosceptic People's Party Our Slovakia (Ľudová Strana Naše Slovensko – ĽSNS)), pushing their own position as pro-EU and pro-integration, but at the same time less technical and less consensual. Secondly, Robert Fico's party also wanted to clearly differentiate itself from the main opposition party, the liberal SaS, which gained 12.10% and 21 seats in the election and expressed some soft Euroscepticism (in their language, Eurorealism). Fico therefore positioned himself, the party, and the government as unquestionably pro-integration, embodied by their main motto of getting Slovakia 'to the core' of the EU (i.e. accepting and welcoming possible differentiated integration with Slovakia being among the most integrated member states). This, however, started to change after 2018 due to several developments, mostly in domestic politics (mainly the investigation of a murder of a journalist, which began to uncover various ties between Fico's party and organised crime and led to his resignation as prime minister), with Smer becoming ever more Eurosceptic, abandoning altogether its rhetoric of being among the most integrated states in the EU.

As well as ĽSNS (8.04% and 14 seats), two other opposition parties – OĽaNO (11.02% and 19 seats) and We Are Family (Sme Rodina – SR; 6.62% and 11 seats) had generally pro-EU positions, although with minor opposition to specific instances of further integration (e.g. in cultural and ethical policies).

After the 2020 elections, the government was created and led by OĽaNO (25.02% and 53 seats), SR (8.24% and 17 seats), SaS (6.22% and 13 seats) and For the People (Za Ľudí – ZĽ; 5.77% and 12 seats). All the coalition parties proclaimed and followed a pro-EU, pro-integration course. The opposition was led by Smer (18.29% and 38 seats) and initially also ĽSNS (7.89% and 17 seats), later to split between newly created parties (Voice (Hlas), which split from Smer, and Republic (Republika), which split from ĽSNS). Both Smer and ĽSNS represent Eurosceptic voices now, with Republika being of the same type. Voice is differentiated, with instances of only very soft Euroscepticism, generally being pro-EU.

In the 2020 parliamentary election, the OĽaNO political movement39 won and Igor Matovič became prime minister. Winning the elections was seen as a turning point for Slovakian politics. It challenged the long-lasting domination of two major players – Mečiar and his Movement for Democratic Slovakia (Hnutie za Demokratické Slovensko – HZDS) party and Fico with Smer – who had interchangeably won elections since 1994. The current coalition is led by Matovič's OĽaNO and comprises three other parties: SaS, SR and ZĽ.

To understand the differences between hard and soft Euroscepticism present in the Slovak political parties, we can examine the extent to which individual political parties aim at deconstructing the current EU political system, or, on the contrary, support further integration. A study by Králiková, Világi and Baboš (2020) aimed to answer precisely this question by mapping political parties' expressed views and attitudes before the Slovak parliamentary elections in 2020. They compared election programmes, party leaders' appearances, speeches, and

[39] It is hard to call it a political party, since it does not have proper party bodies, has only 55 (known) members, does not have either regional or nationwide democratic party structures, etc. It is widely regarded as an anti-corruption movement comprising various people from across the political spectrum, running on largely populist, anti-corruption, and anti-elitist rhetoric. Since its foundation, the movement has been led by Igor Matovič, a former businessman and later prime minister of Slovakia (2020–2021).

statements in TV discussions or on Facebook. The results show individual parties and their rates of Euroscepticism being divided into different categories (Králiková, Világi and Baboš 2020). The authors therefore propose to categorise the individual parties into hard Eurosceptics, soft Eurosceptics, Euro endorsers and Euro federalists. I address the Eurosceptics first (and then in more detail in the following part).

The only hard Eurosceptic party – expressing absolute or major deconstruction of the EU political system – is ĽSNS. One of the main aims the party communicates and expresses is to 'restore national sovereignty of the Slovak Republic' (ibid.). Without further details on how to achieve that goal, ĽSNS's long-time aims included Slovakia's exit from the EU altogether. ĽSNS MPs still focus on criticising Brussels and the EU, portraying it as a dominant monolith pushing a liberal and progressivist ideology, and currently aim to restore national sovereignty by rejecting the supremacy of EU law over the national one (abandoning, at least rhetorically, calls for 'Slovaxit' from the EU).

Soft Eurosceptics (characterised as expressing only a partial deconstruction of the EU political system, or in a specific area) in the SaS party generally support the EU and hail it as a great peace and economic project, but occasionally call for a necessary reform (i.e. changing the status quo) (ibid.). In practice, such a push would essentially mean a rollback to the position when the EU was mainly about the common market and free flow of goods, capital, people, and services (the so-called 'four freedoms'). SaS communicates a rather detailed vision of reforming individual EU institutions but very much rejects the idea of Slovakia leaving the Union. Moreover, the party supports limited integration in specific areas such as protection of the EU's external borders or in issues regarding cross-border pollution (ibid.). SR can also be considered as a soft Eurosceptic party, given its general support for the EU, but at the same time its focus on national sovereignty (as the building block of the international system as well as the EU). Although it is unclear if the party supports the status quo or a rollback in competences, its programme lacks any mention of further integration (competence sharing or delegation) or creation of new central institutions (ibid.).

The OĽaNO party is considered to be a supporter of gradual integration. It calls for 'respecting national interests in strategic areas such as energy, agriculture, prosecution and cultural-ethical issues' (ibid.). The contrast

between OĽaNO and SaS lies in the fact that the former does not call for a rollback to, essentially, a common-market EU.

KDH did not offer many specifics on its vision for the future of the EU, but generally supports further integration (especially in the areas of defence and migration) (ibid.). ZĽ is pro-European and pro-integration, offering many suggestions mainly regarding foreign and security policy; however, they do not propose a change in competences, institutions, or overall functioning of the EU as a political system (ibid.). Somewhat similarly, the Progressive Slovakia (Progresívne Slovensko – PS) and Together (Spolu) parties are considered pro-European and pro-integration; they offered the most comprehensive and detailed proposals on transferring competencies and/or creation of new supranational institutions in their programme before the 2020 elections, in which they (together in coalition) did not gain seats in parliament (ibid.).

In sum, ĽSNS can be considered as the only hard Eurosceptic political party gaining seats in the last election. The transformation of Smer would suggest that the party can no longer be considered a proponent of gradual integration, but as a Eurosceptic party. Soft Euroscepticism can be traced in the SR and SaS parties. More or less gradual integration is supported by ZĽ. Although OĽaNO remained unclassified in Králiková, Világi and Baboš's study, it can be considered a pro-EU party in support of gradual integration. There is no political party in Slovakia that could be considered Eurofederalist.

Regarding the Parlgov data, it must be noted that the database inputs mean values for the respective party family to any missing party positions for each dimension. That means that it does not offer any more nuanced picture on the Slovak political party positions, based on more comprehensive as well as detailed analysis. Given this limitation, the Parlgov data on Slovak political parties can be considered at best as a guide. For instance, ĽSNS is seen as very anti-EU (2.3 points on a scale of 10), with the same score being applied to SR (2.3). Yet, as this study of Slovak MPs' speeches and comments presented in the Slovak parliament between 2015 and 2021 shows (and also Králiková et al.'s study of party programmes before the last election), SR could not be considered Eurosceptic in the same way and to the same extent as ĽSNS – it generally supports the EU and does not call for reversing the supremacy of acquis over national law, let alone calling for 'Slovaxit', to name just a few differences. Also, both OĽaNO (7.9) and Smer (7.1697) are presented as

more pro-EU than KDH (t6.698), which again would point to little nuance in the process of evaluation. KDH, although not present in the Slovak parliament (only having two MEPs as of 2022), offers a political programme as well as positions of MEPs pointing in a very pro-EU direction, as we have seen (and will see in the second part of this paper). ZĽ, SaS, and PS-Spolu all share the same evaluation on the pro-/anti-EU scale (8.7). Therefore, based on this study (2022), also using the Chapel Hill Survey (2019) as a baseline, the evaluation of the most relevant political parties was amended (for more details see Table A.4 in Annex 3).

Parliamentary debates on the future of the EU – data analysis (2015–2021)

The main aim of this section is to analyse how political actors in the Slovak national parliament narrate the reforms of the EU in the context of the future of Europe (FoE) and how these narratives underpin possible constitutional models (Fossum 2021). Crucially, this study tries to answer the following question: how does the Slovak parliament envision the constitutional-democratic outline of the EU in future?

Between 2015 and 2021, Slovak MPs generally debated FoE within the larger framework of Slovak foreign (and/or security) policy. Frequently, they voiced their opinions on the need to maintain an (institutional and/or integrational) status quo within the EU, as well as calling for adherence to the rules. In respect to the former issue, many were able to vocally criticise other member state(s) or supranational bodies of the Union for breaking the agreed-upon rules, for instance in regard to migration and asylum or to fiscal and monetary policies.

From the beginning of the selected time period (in the midst of the security crisis on Ukraine (2014), the migration crisis (2015), the Brexit referendum (2016) presenting a case of a disintegrating EU, and the still resonating financial crisis (2009)), the governing Smer party became invested in the idea of Slovakia being part/joining 'the core' of the Union. This was more or less defined mainly in contrast to staying on 'the periphery', i.e. being left out of any further integration – a concept perceived as a threat practically since the 1990s. The vision of being 'in the core', however, was not elaborated on in any further detail or complexity. Some argue that the use of the concept served mainly political purposes, as it was to differentiate Smer from the main opposition party, SaS, which

communicated milder or even more sceptical notions regarding any further EU integration (see, for example, Hanus and Majchrák 2022). SaS was seen as a Eurorealist or even Eurosceptic party by some, maintaining an at best reserved position on any further integration and advocating for the status quo and equal respect for existing common rules by all members. Smer, in contrast, wanted to portray itself as a rock-solid European party that would keep Slovakia in 'the core' of the EU (with Germany and France) should *they* decide to differentiate the Union further. In practice, joining the core as proposed by Smer ministers and MPs would mean further (differentiated) integration across both various policies and states (some remaining 'on the periphery').

These debates sometimes might have produced (and did produce) certain contradictions. For instance, those MPs (mainly from the Smer governing party) who advocated for the necessity to join 'the core' of the two- or multi-speed EU (should this happen) were also eager to speak about national sovereignty, especially in connection with migration or culture. Practically no explanation was offered on how joining 'the core' might impact national sovereignty (as it presents the case of further integration). This could be viewed, as mentioned above, as a political move to differentiate Smer from its main political opponent at the time (SaS; this was a significant issue and a topic roughly between 2015 and 2018).

The results of the 2016 elections shed some new light on the Slovak debate on the future of the EU, offering other characterising features of Slovak MPs' debates on these issues. The far-right ĽSNS as well as the Eurosceptic and populist SR gained seats in the parliament. Issues such as protecting the borders against uncontrolled migration or protecting national sovereignty mainly in social, cultural, and ethical issues became even more relevant. More technical aspects of integration were sometimes discussed but were mostly contrasted with the very general picture of cultural integration (which was, largely and across the political spectrum, frowned upon and rejected on the basis of national sovereignty). The most radical party, ĽSNS, even voiced proposals to leave the Union and thus regain national sovereignty. Such opinions still circulated, albeit gradually with less vigour. In the post-2020 period, these hard-line Eurosceptics have tended to put more emphasis on giving the Slovak national law primacy over acquis, protecting national values and identity, rejecting 'Brussels dictates', etc. These narratives connect to a certain portrayal of democracy as the power of the people, a nation electing and

controlling its own government, as opposed to some distant bureaucratic monolith that does not share 'our' values and governs 'us' as it pleases (i.e. dominates us) (Brubaker 2017 and 2020). However, such comments and critiques were practically always very general, vague, and abstract, and no practical, realistic alternatives or solutions were proposed.

Slovak MPs before 2016 tended to support Slovak membership in the EU and feared being 'left out' on the periphery. After 2016, new parties in the parliament (mainly ĽSNS, but also SR) became more vocal in criticising the EU as such. Portrayals of Brussels (or Berlin or Paris) as a body that supranationally dominates (i.e. dictates to) us and tells us what we should or should not do became more frequent. Another overarching characteristic can be identified: things happen 'out there', and Slovakia can at best only react. MPs only very rarely differentiate between different EU institutions and different policy areas (and the degrees of integration as well as forms of decision making in those areas), and practically never acknowledge the common (unanimous) decision-making process in the Council. For most of them, the EU seems to be a monolithic structure that simply stands against sovereign and democratic decision making (law- and regulation making) on the national level, whether we speak about the foreign policy, cultural policies, or monetary or fiscal policies.

There was a general lack of specific, analytical and/or expert contributions revealing in greater detail what MPs have in mind when they speak of 'greater integration' or 'maintaining the status quo' or call for Slovakia to 'join the core of the EU', or even when they mention the 'Brussels dictate' or hint at EU dominance over nation states (or Slovakia in particular).

Slovak MPs on the future of the EU: debating for… debating's sake?

In this section, individual parties and their MPs are analysed in more detail. All in all, there were 634 speeches analysed, out of which 246 were speeches concerning specifically the future of Europe. All party families participated in debates, as demonstrated by Figure 11.1 below.

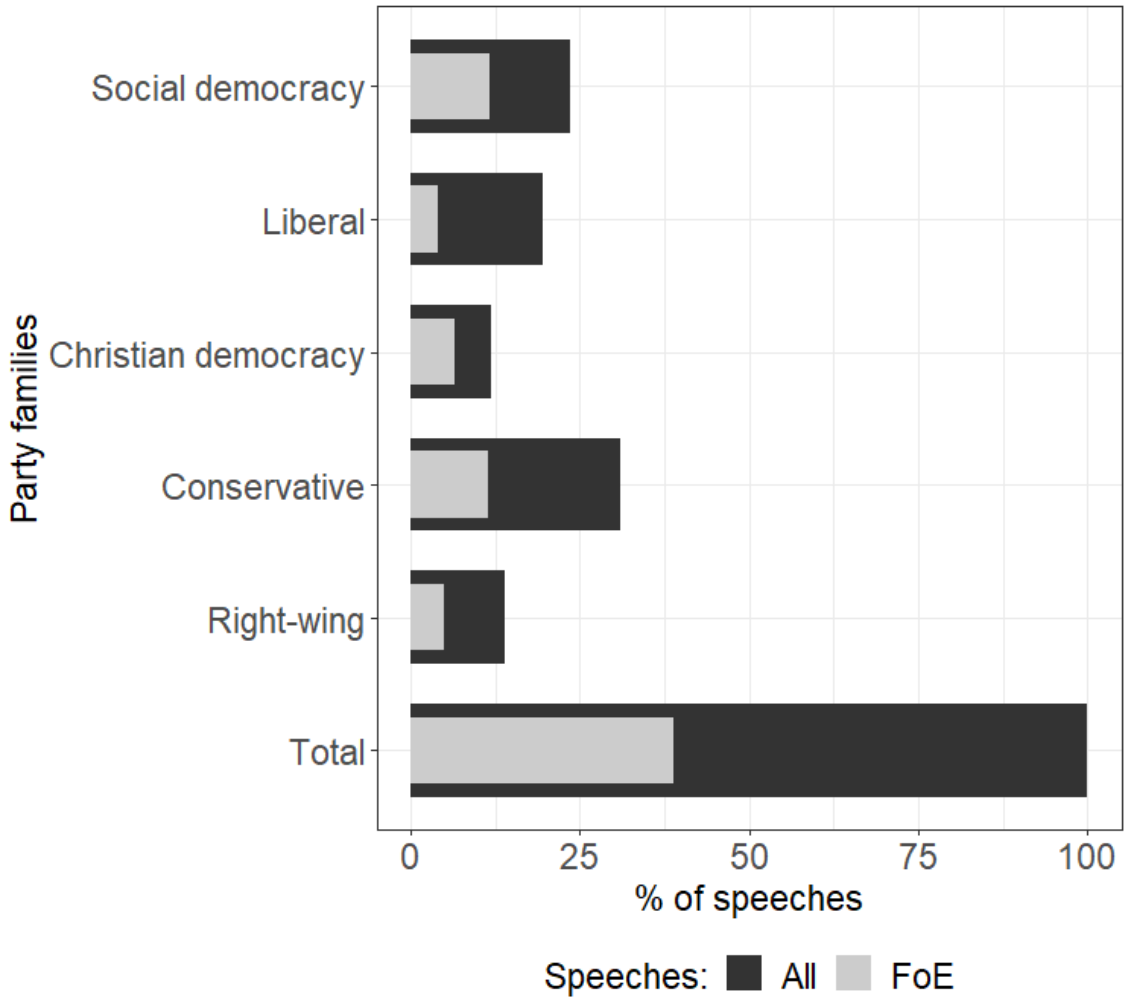


Figure 11.1. Frequency of analysed speeches by party family (m=634 – number of speeches, n=246 – number of FoE speeches).

Polity reforms of the European Union

The following paragraphs provide a detailed analysis of specific views of the main actors, including their references to polity reforms. Overall, only 39 speeches contained at least one institutional reform proposal (15.85% of total FoE speeches). This meant, as is presented below, that the debate on the institutional set up of the EE was very limited.

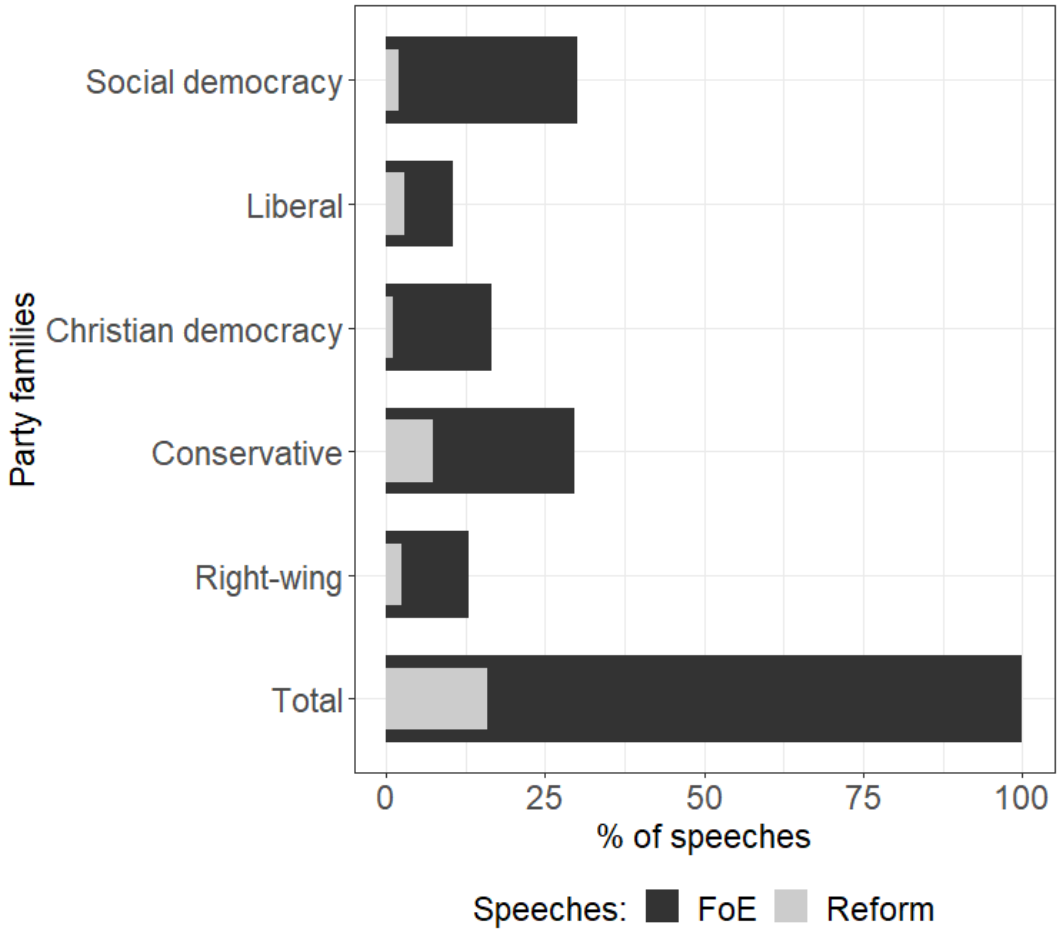


Figure 11.2. Frequency of references to EU institutional reforms in FoE speeches by party family (n=246 – number of FoE speeches, o=39 – number of speeches containing at least one institutional reform proposal).

I begin with the most Eurosceptic debate. MPs from ĽSNS became some of the most active speakers in the parliament on EU issues after gaining seats in the 2016 parliamentary elections. Even without any specifics, whether in their remarks, critique, or proposals, they tend to comment on every issue connected to the EU when it is debated during a plenary session. A certain transformation of their main line of argument can be observed. Early on, they advocated that Slovakia should leave the EU. Perhaps unsurprisingly (given the development of far-right rhetoric elsewhere in the EU), the argument transforms into proposals to make the Slovak national laws superior to acquis communautaire, thereby de facto advocating against the main structural principle and equilibrium of the EU as it works today. Without explicit calls for disintegration (such as proposing 'Slovaxit'), such calls can practically be seen as demands for profound change in the functioning of the EU, with nation states taking back (more) competences, national law having primacy over

acquis, and thus transforming the Union into a rather loose organisation based on the common market and economic cooperation (pre-Lisbon, or even rolling back to a very basic and purely economic community). National sovereignty is echoed here as the main departure point for any future (re)configuration of the EU. As ĽSNS MPs portray it, there is no possibility of having both strong nation (member) states and a strong Union – for them it is either-or, putting the national sovereignty in conflict with the supranational one. Nation states should be strengthened *at the expense* of the Union (i.e. Brussels and the supranational elements). In the studied period, ĽSNS MPs do not provide any more details, elaborations, or more comprehensive proposals. They do not provide any nuanced description of the practical consequences of their calls for reconfiguration being answered. Their target is first and foremost Brussels (portrayed as a hegemonic, dominant monolith; they tend to refer to whatever happens in Brussels as the 'Brussels dictate') and its supranational institutions (mainly the Commission and the Parliament, but they usually do not differentiate). Sometimes, they target other states, depending on the topic. However, once again, this tends to remain on a rather general level, often simply targeting the 'decadent West'. Unrolling Brexit and the post-Brexit developments potentially also played a role in softening their 'exit' agenda. Instead, ĽSNS MPs call for a profound change of the EU from *within* – a change in competences is exemplified through the relationship of supranational and national law, but without any more detailed elaboration.

In March 2021, a new political party named Republika (Republic) was created by some ex-ĽSNS MPs and members. Their rhetoric mirrors that of ĽSNS. For example, Eduard Kočiš (ex-ĽSNS, now in Republika) speaks about economic union being the best option (essentially going back to the status quo from before the Lisbon Treaty), about regaining national sovereignty and about no more integration. Another ex-ĽSNS MP now in Republika, Miroslav Urban, framed EU membership as a beneficial reality for the majority of the Slovak people (e.g. Schengen), although he thinks that the original purpose of the EU is being suppressed. He wonders if the EU will continue to be a 'Europe of free nations', or if it will transform into something like 'the Soviet Union governed centrally from Brussels'. This illustrates that Republika can be considered a new stream firmly embedded in the hard Eurosceptic camp.

Political actors from SR do not engage intensively in debates on the future of the EU. They have a strong stance on migration (defending flexible solidarity and portraying it along mainly cultural-religious lines), which was their main topic before the 2016 election. They also tend to be generally more critical towards Brussels, not refraining – occasionally – from using such concepts as the 'Brussels dictate' and remaining rather sceptical about any further European integration. This party, however, also illustrates the change in rhetoric when in opposition (2016–2020) and then in the government (2020–), with the latter softening their positions to become more pro-EU, although not more pro-integration and still aware mostly of cultural and ethical issues (criticising the EU for its progressivist ethics).

The active MPs who tend to counter hard Euroscepticism and occasionally offer what they call a Eurorealist perspective come from the SaS party. Their speeches differ substantially from the far-right ones presented above. All SaS MPs consider Slovak membership in the EU as essential, and none proposed a reconfiguration of the relationship between supranational and national law. In the selected time period, SaS MPs tend to be more active in 1) general defence of Slovak membership in the EU and support for open discussion on its future, 2) targeting other states, namely Germany, for not following the agreed-upon rules concerning migration, and 3) targeting other states, namely Greece, for not following the agreed-upon rules concerning fiscal stability in regard to the Eurozone crisis. Remaining open for reasonable discussion yet defending the institutional status quo and the existing rules seem to be the two main elements across the SaS party. Some SaS MPs also mention the principle of subsidiarity, understood in practice as meaning that that which is explicitly not delegated to Commission (or other supranational bodies) should stay on the national level, or at least be decided on in the Council. SaS seems to be the only political party in the Slovak parliament in the period that acknowledges and highlights the intergovernmental element (specifically the Council), which is seen as the main decision-making body, thus effectively disproving – or at least attempting to do so – the narrative of the 'Brussels dictate'.

This is demonstrated by a speech given by Eugen Jurzyca, a SaS MEP (member of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group in the European Parliament), joining the debate in the Slovak parliament in 2021 (called within the ongoing FoE debate). Although he is an MEP and

not an MP, he is an influential figure within the party and his positions reflect the party positions, i.e. in line with SaS MPs. Jurzyca calls for specific reforms that are needed in order for the EU to stay relevant globally and function effectively for its own citizens. Although he did not specify the areas or instruments to be used (i.e. reforming which institutions and how exactly), he mentions more transparency (e.g. by making Commission contracts and negotiations as well as the conclusions of Trialogues (EP and Council negotiations) public, and making EP materials and reports, or even Eurostat studies using microdata, which are usually done for the Commission, available on an ongoing basis or in due time, etc). He also proposes making the EU legislation more coherent and understandable to ordinary EU citizens, criticising the number of technicalities, and tying it to less bureaucracy at the EU level, as well as establishing a clear process of best practices learning between individual member states as well as between them and supranational bodies. Jurzyca concludes with a call for a more 'analytical approach'. The SaS MP Ondrej Dostál exemplifies a slightly different approach, advocating for a more proactive role (generally for Slovakia) within the *already existing framework*. In this case, however, more energy seems to be devoted to a basic advocacy of the Slovak membership in the EU and the necessity to debate proposals (see Figure 11.3).

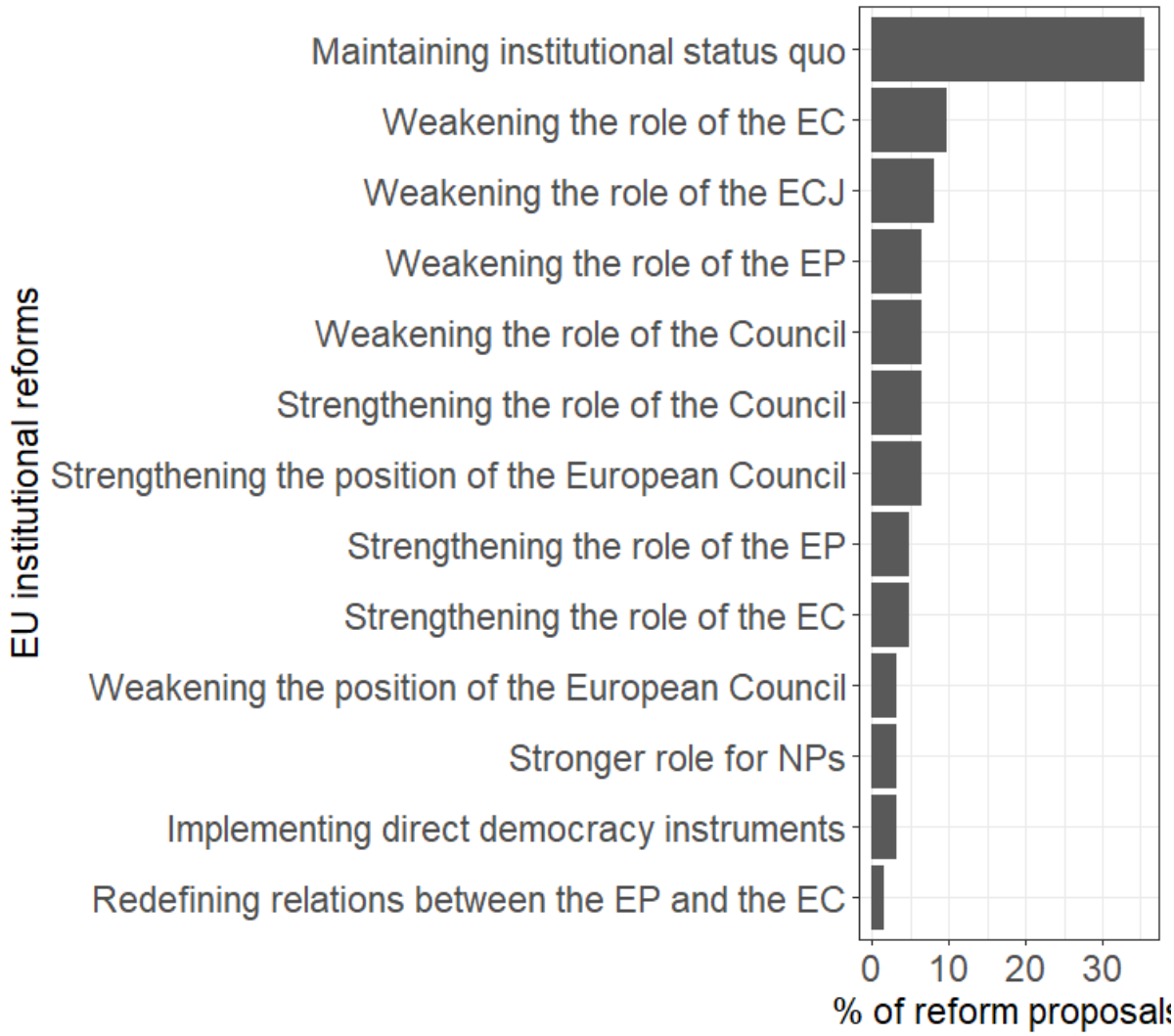


Figure 11.3. Frequency of references to EU institutional reforms (n=62 – number of institutional reform proposals).

In 2021, within the ongoing EU-wide debate on FoE mentioned above, another Slovak MEP stirred the debate in the Slovak parliament. Martin Hojsík, an MEP for Progressive Slovakia (Progresívne Slovensko – PS; a member of the Renew Europe in the European Parliament), advocates openly for a substantial reform of the EU, probably also constitutional (based on the results of the FoE debate) through the opening of the Treaties. No MP supported this explicit call for constitutional change. Hojsík's party colleague Tomáš Valášek, a PS MP (who originally campaigned and entered the Slovak parliament in 2020 on the ZĽ voting list), maintained a rather vague and general approach to this issue. He echoed what SaS MPs were voicing as described above – that Slovakia should rather focus on being more proactive, more 'uncompromising in defining the Slovak interests'. When it comes to voicing Slovak interests

regarding the future of the EU, Valášek offered more questions than more concrete answers: what kind of industrial policy should the EU follow? What should be the principles on which the transatlantic relationships between the EU and the USA are set? What kind of digital policies should the EU adopt? His point is to find answers to these and other questions lying in the Slovak interest. It should be noted, however, that this MP at least pointed out *specific* issues to which he (or the NRSR in general) would like to find answers to.

It is also worth noting that Valášek was the main voice on EU affairs in ZĽ. After he left, the party's more concrete positions on EU affairs are presented only very sporadically (while the party maintains its generally pro-EU and pro-integration positions).

Another insight into the main characteristics of how Slovak MPs debate on the future of the EU comes from the OĽaNO party, which has since 2020 been the most powerful and governing party in the Slovak parliament. However, in terms of voicing its visions for the future of the EU, the party seems rather quiet. Zita Pleštinská is one of very few OĽaNO MPs to enter the debate. She stresses the fact that for Slovakia, being a small country, it is essential to be part of a bigger entity such as the EU – another example of how much energy, space and time is devoted to advocating very basic facts (whether Slovakia should be part of the EU, more generally the West) with little or no time left for more specific visions. By highlighting the fact that decisions are taken together and are binding for all, Pleštinská implicitly defends the institutional status quo and the Council as the most important decision-making body.

It is a very different story with Smer-SD. Analysis of how MPs from this party communicate their main arguments regarding the current state of the EU and its (desired) future could comprise a separate study. Smer was the governing party from 2012 to 2016 (with enough votes on its own and without the need for another party to form a coalition), then again from 2016 to 2020 (in coalition with initially three, then two other, smaller parties) and therefore represents a very important voice in the Slovak parliament.

As noted in the first part of this chapter, based on the analysis of MPs from Smer debating on the EU and its future, the party rhetoric evolved significantly over the selected time period. It is especially visible when studying this party's MPs' remarks and speeches. Generally, the party can

be considered pro-integration in the period between 2015 and 2018, then experiencing a transformation into a gradually more Eurosceptic party in 2018–2020 (and beyond). Ľuboš Blaha, a long-term Smer MP, can perhaps be considered as an element around which the party rhetoric in the parliament changed. His critiques of globalisation and the EU were largely tame and solitary, but from 2018 gradually became more central to the party and its MPs. Blaha is openly sceptical and critical of the capitalism and the West, including the EU in many instances. Another active Smer MP, Juraj Blanár, frequently mentions the nation-state, sovereignty, and migration (always in defence of flexible solidarity).

In the selected time period, Smer MPs' remarks generally tend to support the government EU policies without reservation. This includes the push for more integration, vaguely dubbed the need to 'join the core' of the EU, as it was formulated and advocated by then prime minister Robert Fico. Although Fico never explained with more nuance what exactly this should mean in practice, in essence it would entail more integration as a result of more federalist tendencies (or more specific policy areas to be further integrated) in Germany and France leading to a de facto further differentiation within the EU. Out of fear of becoming a periphery within the EU, Fico, his government and Smer MPs in 2015 and 2016 strongly voiced their support for the 'core of the EU'. After 2020, there are instances when Smer MPs voice support for the NextGenerationEU fund, especially regarding the digital and green transition. For example, Smer MP Jozef Habánik frames the fund as an opportunity for Slovakia to get access to vast resources from the Commission. He warns that if MPs do not support these green and digital initiatives, 'EU, the Commission will leave [Slovakia] out from further negotiations', without specifying what exactly he means by that. However, seeing the EU through the lens of available funds and grants is an overarching topic, sometimes criticised by MPs like Ondrej Dostál from SaS on the basis that Slovak membership should mean more and be advocated using other arguments than strictly financial, beneficial ones.

In September 2020, former Smer MPs (headed by the former Smer prime minister Peter Pellegrini) formed a new party called Hlas-SD (Voice-Social Democracy). Within this party, the strongest voice on the EU, its state, and the future, is the MP Peter Kmec. In his speeches and remarks since 2020, he tends to offer more complex as well as specific proposals. Overarching topics are NextGenerationEU, the Green Deal and

environmental policies as well as innovations. Kmec's speeches and remarks also highlight the fact that the Slovak MPs discuss the future of the EU mainly in connection with the Slovak government priorities and programme, specifically the new government's programme or the annual reports on Slovak foreign policy priorities presented by the foreign minister. It underlines the tendency to debate issues regarding the future of the EU in a reactionary manner, and almost always strictly along political rather than policy lines. Additionally, this debating framework tends to support MPs' speeches, remarks and comments aiming more towards formulating what Slovakia and its diplomacy could do within the given European environment, and not concepts or visions at EU level.

Often when there is a discussion on European topics, foreign policy, security, and international relations, MPs across the spectrum turn to discuss at great length the domestic (political) consensus on the foreign policy orientation, as well as Slovak relations with the USA, Russia, or China. Political divisions exemplified by defence of Moscow's or Washington's foreign policies are a symptomatic division in the Slovak MPs' debates in the period in question. This makes the debates more emotional and ideological and less analytical and concrete. Some MPs (e.g. Tomáš Valášek and Jaroslav Baška) even felt it necessary to start their speeches (in a debate generally aimed at discussing the future of the EU) with a rather ironical declaration that they were Slovak, not Russian, or American. Much energy is dedicated to discussing the future of the East-West divide, specifically tension between USA and Russia or China.

After 2020, another example of generally low levels of more nuanced yet also more complex understandings of European politics, institutions, and mechanisms across the political spectrum in the Slovak parliament is the fact that there is hardly any criticism of the new NextGenerationEU fund, including from the most Eurosceptic MPs and parties (e.g. from Smer or ĽSNS). This mechanism (in essence relying on the common debt as well as empowering the European Commission through ex ante criteria) is a practical antithesis to what Eurosceptic MPs and parties often propose in regard to the EU and its functioning (i.e. no further integration, rollback to purely economic cooperation, etc.). Yet they do not offer any substantial critique or try to mobilise their electorate against such – rather profound – intervention into Slovakia's policy- and decision-making processes. For example, a stark critic of the EU and the West from Smer, Ľuboš Blaha, considers NextGenerationEU one of the two most important national

interests (the other being the migration pact). In his view, the common fund will help Slovakia in the (pandemic) crisis, more specifically its impact. One might speculate that in regard to common EU money (funds), even Eurosceptic parties and MPs are not critical, since they support any money Slovakia can get from Brussels – hinting at a transactional logic and relationship these parties and MPs might be applying in regard to Slovak membership in the EU.

All in all, out of six debates where MPs discussed the future of the EU, one started with a presentation of the Slovak MEPs on the current EU affairs (31 March 2017), one was organised as a parliamentary review after the Slovak EU presidency (16 May 2017), two debates were standard annual debates on the foreign policy priorities of the Slovak Republic (in 2018 and 2019), one started as an initiative of MP Anna Záborská (OĽaNO-KU) to adopt a parliamentary resolution in response to the European Parliament's report on sexual and reproduction rights (28 May 2021), and only one focused specifically on FoE (18 June 2021). MPs debated on the euro crisis in the context of the government's proposal on the national budget in 2015 (plenary) and then very briefly during the hour of questions in 2017 (government ministers and the prime minister answering specific questions from MPs). Two debates focused purely on migration (23–24 June 2015 and 16–17 September 2015), with mentions of migration policies in the debates on Slovak foreign policy (24 September 2020) and Slovak defence strategy (27 January 2021).

With one exception, the debates were plenary, usually kicked off by a report on foreign policy and European affairs. They mainly had an additional political function, and it could be argued that European issues are secondary to the domestic political divisions or wider divisions on international politics and relations (East-West, USA-Russia, etc.).

To conclude, Smer, ĽSNS and SaS seem to be the main actors in the debates, followed by Republika and Hlas after these new parties were created. The most intense discussion was on migration in a 2015 plenary debate, where Smer (as the sole governing party, with as many as 83 seats in the parliament) was the most active, supported across the political spectrum in proposing flexible solidarity and strongly rejecting any quota system proposed by some other member states or the EU institutions. In that context, governing MPs were in strong agreement with opposition ones.

After 2016, the far right (ĽSNS, later Republika) 'hijacked' the discussion on matters regarding the EU, helping to move the Overton window towards a generally more critical tone, although less substantial and nuanced. The discussions thus became more political and divisive between individual parties and also between the governing parties and the opposition (especially after 2020). SaS countered the narratives on the Brussels dictate with what the party calls Eurorealism, since Fico's Smer gradually abandoned the narrative of the 'the core of the EU', transforming himself and the party into a more Eurosceptic one, giving way to more extreme voices like Blaha. Singling out some MPs from parties like ZĽ (e.g. Tomáš Valášek) or OĽaNO (e.g. Zita Pleštinská), these also offered counter-narratives to the Eurosceptics.

Since the MPs devote much energy to defending EU membership rather than proposing more specific polity or policy reforms, these more concrete proposals are presented rarely – for example, by Slovak MEPs giving speeches in the Slovak parliament in 2021. It is a matter of speculation what conclusions can (or should) be drawn about the MPs' meaning when they speak about 'less' or 'more' EU, and how exactly they would propose improving the functioning of democracy within the Union if they criticise it for being 'dominant'. Some, like SaS, refer to maintaining the status quo, but once again, the motivations are hard to analyse. Perhaps maintaining the stability of a bloc on which Slovakia is (economically for the most MPs, politically and culturally for some) dependent is the logic behind the status quo (see Figure 11.3; above).

To conclude, the results (data) gathered in this study show that Slovak MPs in 2015–2021 most frequently mention in their speeches and remarks the diagnosis of dominance (out of 2,259 coded segments of merit in all the studied debates, dominance is mentioned by MPs 303 times, making it the most frequent mention). However, in stark contrast, the remedy for dominance is mentioned only 19 times. This helps illustrate that Slovak MPs across the parties, but mainly in the Eurosceptic ones such as Smer or ĽSNS, often portray the EU as a monolith that dictates to nation states. Little or no nuance is provided in the critique, and little or no remedy for the 'Brussels dictate' is offered (see Figure 11.4).

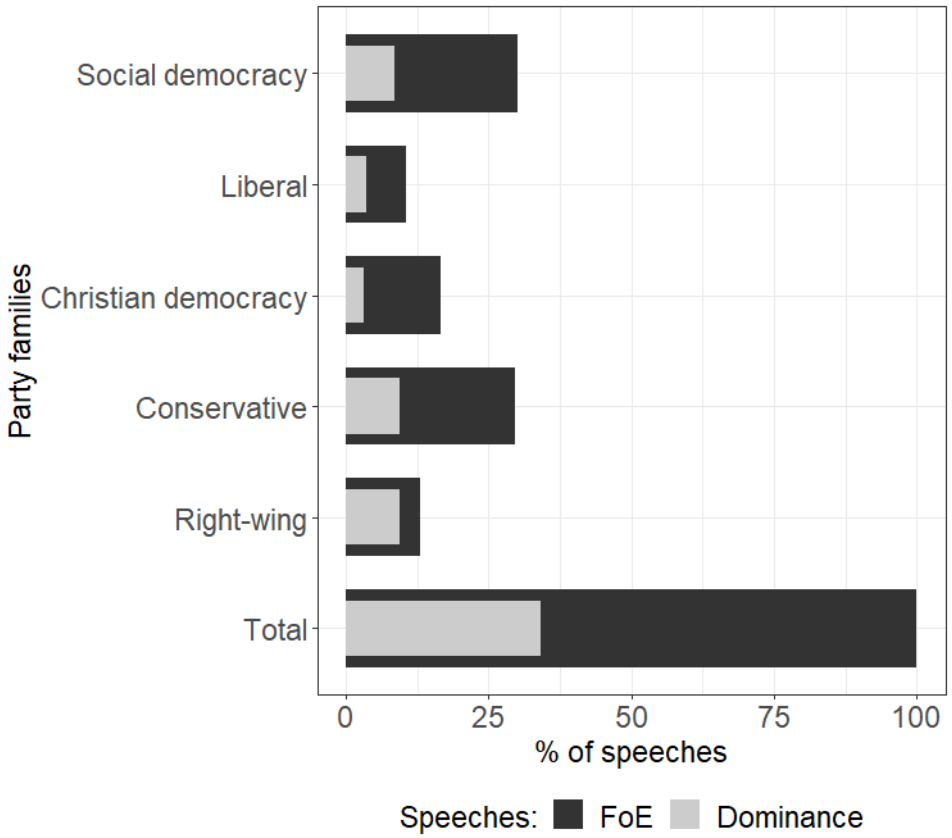


Figure 11.4. Frequency of references to dominance in FoE speeches by party family (n=246 – number of FoE speeches, o=84 – number of speeches containing at least one reference to dominance).

Policy debates in the context of the future of Europe debates

In terms of specific policies mentioned in the speeches, most often there is a remark about migration and asylum policy (47 in total), followed by the EU's foreign policy (37) and defence and security policy (36). Especially in debates relating to the migration crisis or the Eurozone crisis, Slovak MPs across the spectrum (Smer to SaS) target specific member states in their critique, whether we are speaking about Greece in terms of economic mismanagement in the Eurozone crisis or about Germany in terms of their handling of the migration crisis. Another member state is targeted in this way 39 times, whereas the EU as a whole is targeted 29 times as an opponent (in this case it is worth mentioning that a specific EU institution is targeted as an opponent only four times, illustrating a certain vagueness in the MPs' criticism).

In terms of migration, most mentions (36) frame the issue negatively, as it impacts citizens' own security and safety. It also negatively impacts the functioning of the state (29 mentions). Generally, Slovak MPs hold unfavourable opinions on migration, vaguely describing it as a cultural and somehow ethical threat (43 mentions). However, some (25 mentions) were able to express a positive view along the same cultural and ethical lines, framing it as an opportunity to be 'good Christians' and help those in need. The topic of migration, discussed fervently in 2015 and 2016, is also the only one for which MPs were able to formulate specific remedies: most were in favour of strengthening the EU external borders (69 mentions) and increased cooperation with third countries (impacted by war or migration; helping them, some also mentioning the necessity to build asylum centres outside the EU borders (52 mentions, 32 mentioning the asylum process being done outside the EU). Some 38 mentions call for increasing the return policy, while 36 are demands for increased humanitarian assistance to countries outside the EU.

Looking for a vision of future integration?

Several trends and dynamics can be observed and identified. Firstly, when analysing the speeches and remarks given in the selected period by Eurosceptics and hardliners (mostly from ĽSNS or Republika), calls for 'Slovaxit' gradually gave way to arguments regarding the relationship between supranational and national law (that the former should not be superior to the latter). This signifies a change in (political) strategy to opt for a change from within the EU (a call for a rollback to some pre-Lisbon economic union, strictly criticising any cultural or ethical integration).

Secondly, the data indicates that there is practically no presence of Eurofederalists or those proposing more integration in the Slovak parliament. Regarding specifically the issue of migration, this was a topic of parliamentary debates in 2015, at the height of the EU migration crisis (the debates in 2021 did not concern migration per se; MPs only mention this topic in addition to other foreign and security policies). Two dynamics are worth stressing here. Firstly, political parties across the spectrum presented a strong consensus on rejecting the European Commission's proposals on the migration quota system. Some (mainly Smer MPs and government officials, but also some MPs from OĽaNO (Jozef Viskupič and Daniel Lipšic), KDH (Ján Hudacký), and SaS (Ľubomír Galko)) criticise the EU for not being able to protect its borders,

as well as targeting other member states, namely Germany (for its 'welcome culture') and Greece and Italy (for the failure to protect their borders, which are also the borders of the whole of the EU).[40] Different solutions to the crisis were proposed, but again, practically all were in a consensus for so-called flexible solidarity (each member state should decide whom to take in and how, i.e. grant asylum) and better border protection (some also proposed asylum centres outside the EU, e.g. SaS). Secondly, this political consensus was disturbed by the results of the 2016 elections, in which two strongly anti-immigration parties (L'SNS and SR) gained seats in the parliament. L'SNS was the most radical, occasionally putting forward national, cultural, ethical, and racial division lines between Slovaks and 'migrants'. The topic of migration, however, was not a subject of any special, dedicated parliamentary debate after 2015.

Regarding specifically the topic of the Eurozone and its future given the impacts of its crisis, MPs across the spectrum did not dedicate much time to discussing this issue. It has already been illustrated with the number of debates in which this topic is discussed; moreover, both these debates were focused on other topics connected to the Eurozone. This demonstrates MPs' overall lack of interest in matters of a deeply (expert) economic nature. Some (e.g. Ivan Švejna from Most-Híd or Jozef Kollár from Nova/OĽaNO) targeted other member states, specifically Greece, for not fulfilling the Maastricht criteria and praised those who are fiscally responsible, such as Germany.

Smer is an example of a (democratic socialist) political party that changed its views on the European integration significantly over a period of time (including a change in its status from a governing party to an opposition party). Smer went from a pro-integration, even pro-differentiation (in order to overcome any possible integration hurdles) party to one adopting relatively harsh anti-EU rhetoric. This particular phenomenon could perhaps be worth addressing in future studies.

Dominance over national sovereignty is perceived in the NRSR by many MPs as a Brussels dictate (mainly by L'SNS and later Republika,

[40] It is also interesting to note that when analysing the data with MAXQDA software, there were more mentions of other member states being targeted by the MPs as an opponent (39 in total, including the debates on the future of the EU and the Eurozone) than there were mentions of the whole of the EU being targeted as an opponent (29 in total, including the debates on the future of the EU and the Eurozone).

occasionally by SR, gradually by Smer) and mainly along cultural and ethical lines, sometimes also in the economic sphere (criticism offered by SaS for no further integration). Therefore, Brussels as such (without further elaboration) is perceived as a dominating actor and nation states as those that are dominated. No proposals are made other than leaving the EU (L'SNS after the 2016 elections) or a profound change in the political order of the EU (a rollback to a pre-Lisbon state of affairs, namely through rejecting the primacy of the supranational EU law over the national one), advocated by L'SNS later in the 2016–2020 parliamentary term and beyond. SaS symbolises a party mostly advocating for the institutional status quo with some policy-specific reforms.

Overall, no coherent constitutional narratives were proposed in the Slovak context by any party in the studied time period. In other words, the findings presented in this chapter do not allow us to identify and further elaborate on any of the particular constitutional models this volume discusses in connection to the future of the EU. This alone can serve as one of the conclusions of this analysis. When broad, civilisational, and geopolitical aspects overrun any more focused, detailed, expert debate more clearly identifying specific (EU) institutions, policies, or mechanisms and clearly proposing alternative policies or mechanisms, one is left – unsurprisingly – with broad civilisational and geopolitical remarks made by the actors. For some, perhaps an easy way out is to simply support the 'status quo'.

The Slovak parliament can thus, after all, be seen as the venue for debating these issues, yet also as a venue where criticism is offered without specific remedies, where little – if any – differentiation between concrete actors in Brussels is acknowledged, and where calls, proposals and remarks often remain at a very basic level of advocating pro-Western or pro-Eastern policy orientation. MPs that stand against this characteristic are exceptions and are in a minority.

In short, the Slovak parliament seems to be a venue of paradoxes and contradictions when it comes to the topic of European affairs and the future of the EU. It is a venue where identitarian and cultural issues matter far more than any other, more specific, or expert issues and specific policies; one which perhaps illustrates that the very identity of Slovakia as a state might still be something rather unsettled and that Slovakia struggles with formulating larger, yet at least somehow specific visions in general, not just in regard to the future of the EU.

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Chapter 12

Norway: An Integrated Non-Member Views Europe from the Outside In

Espen D. H. Olsen and Guri Rosén

Introduction

Norway has a peculiar place in the European integration architecture. It is a highly integrated non-member through its participation in the European Economic Area (EEA) Agreement, as well as through integration in several other policy domains such as security and defence, asylum, research, climate, and energy, to name a few (NOU 2012, 2). Moreover, a majority of the Norwegian electorate and some political parties have long-held anti-membership views.

In fact, Norway sought to achieve membership in the EU as early as the beginning of the 1960s (Rye 2019), but its plans were blocked mainly due to French geopolitics against enlargement of the United Kingdom and, in effect, other countries. When the possibility of membership negotiations opened, however, Norwegian voters rejected such membership twice: in 1972 (with 53.5% against and a turnout of 79%) and in 1994 (with 52.2%, turnout of 89%) (Fossum and Rosén 2021). As such, Norway stands out among the Nordic states due to its persistent refusal to fully take part in the process of European integration, along with Iceland. In discussions about the UK's potential relationship with the European Union (EU), this attitude has received a lot of scholarly attention (Stegmann McCallion 2018). The Brexit vote in the United Kingdom has rekindled interest in the 'Norway Model' (Fossum and Graver 2018), and moreover, the 'EEA model' has become an important reference point in the debates on third-country attachment to the EU (Gstöhl 2015, 858).

In January 1994, less than a year before the EU referendum, Norway joined the EEA agreement. The EEA is a special international agreement as it is the only strong institutional form of *affiliation* with EU principles and institutions that exists as a specific treaty (Eriksen and Fossum 2014) and does not involve full membership of the Union. Its signatories from the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) gain privileged access to the Single Market and other areas of European cooperation. Jacques Delors, the then-president of the European Commission, had originally intended the EEA Agreement to be 'a new, more structured partnership with common decision-making and administrative institutions to make our activities more effective and to highlight the political dimension of our cooperation in the economic, social, financial, and cultural spheres' (Delors 1989, quoted in Vahl 2009, 13). The EEA agreement covers about 75% of European law and gives Norway access to the Single Market. The EEA agreement is a 'meta-agreement' that enables Norway to be a closely affiliated partner in the 'inner periphery' of the European Union when combined with a number of bilateral agreements in other policy areas (Leruth 2015).

Norway is significantly impacted by participation in European integration in a variety of ways. Since 1994, the country has adopted more than 6,000 EU legal acts with only 55 material exceptions (Gänzle and Henökl 2018). It is estimated that one third of all Norwegian legislation contains elements of EU law. It is also very difficult for Norway to veto new EU legal acts from becoming EEA law in practice, despite the fact that article 102 of the agreement technically allows for such a possibility in legal terms (see Holmøyvik 2015, 139). This is something that has perplexed academics. Although some contend that Norway's trade ties with the EU are close enough to keep it interested in a comprehensive agreement and association that would grant it access to the Common Market, they also contend that the country is sufficiently wealthy and secure to bear the costs of not being a member of the EU (Gänzle and Henökl 2018). However, from a rationalist (institutionalist) perspective, one might wonder why Norway ultimately chose the EEA, which was initially intended to be a temporary institutional arrangement that has significant flaws in terms of political influence, democracy, legitimacy, and accountability (Gänzle and Henökl 2018). One could even argue that by choosing not to participate in EU decision making, Norway has fewer opportunities to establish its own rules and norms than it otherwise might have had.

National parliament's position in the political system

Constitutionally, Norway is a monarchy with a parliamentary democracy. Power in Norway is divided into three branches: (1) the Storting, the legislative branch, (2) the government, the executive branch, and (3) the courts, the judicial branch (Stortinget 2021b). These three branches of the state have different powers and responsibilities. The Storting – the Norwegian parliament – is the legislative, budgetary, and supervisory power. This means that the Storting makes and passes Norwegian laws; determines state revenues and allocates spending through the fiscal budget; and makes sure that the government follows up on the decisions made in the Storting. It is elected through proportional representation from voting districts and is in effect a multi-party system, with nine political parties taking seats in the last two elections.

By the turn of the millennium, the Storting had become increasingly active, and Norwegian governments frequently voted against non-governmental majorities in parliament (Rommetvedt 2004). As a result of this development, when organised interests try to influence public policies, they focus more on the Storting. Over the past few decades, Norwegian politics have become more diverse, which has coincided with the rise of the Norwegian parliament. As businesses and national organisations have increased in number, the concentration of private power has decreased. There is now sterner competition between various interests as a result of the growing number of interest organisations, and less public power concentrated in the hands of the executive branch. The Storting has strengthened its position vis-à-vis the government, and governments have been required to share more of their power with the parliament (Rommetvedt 2004). Part of this development was also a string of minority governments from 1990 to 2005. In the period since 2005, Norway has had either a government with a majority of the seats in parliament, or minority governments forming specific agreements with certain opposition parties, for instance regarding budgetary matters.

How, then, has the Storting addressed European affairs? It has a foreign affairs committee where European politics is part of the portfolio. In this sense, EU issues are largely typically seen as foreign policy. It has been suggested that the Storting, since the turn of the millennium, has taken part in work on EU issues more frequently. In 2006, it unanimously recommended several action points in response to a government white

paper with a view to enhancing the Storting's involvement in European policy (Stortinget 2021a). The objective was to make it easier for lawmakers to do their jobs while also raising awareness of European issues in general.

While Norwegian foreign policy is essentially the government's prerogative, EEA and EU issues also have a sizeable impact on a wide range of national policy areas. While implementation of most EU regulations is decided by the Norwegian government, regulations that require new laws or changes to existing laws to be made, have budgetary consequences, or are of 'particular importance' demand the consent of the Storting. Since 1992, the Storting has given its consent to around 400 regulations (Stortinget 2022). In addition, the government receives advice on EU and EEA matters from the European Consultative Committee.

Political parties and views on European integration

Norway has been described as a unitary state with parliamentary, multi-party minority governments (Allern and Saglie 2012). At the same time, there is a high level of decentralisation, with municipalities playing a significant role, and an appreciation for local democracy and self-rule of these communities (Selle and Østerud 2006; Gänzle and Henökl 2018). Still, according to Rokkan (1987), the power of the regional level was historically limited and tended to become 'squeezed' between the central government and the rural peasant or fisherman populations: in other words between the (central) state and the (peripheral) local levels. According to Tranvik and Selle (2005, 862), the special legitimacy of the municipalities must be understood in the light of the particular Norwegian interpretation of the centre-periphery relationship. This relationship is relevant to EU integration because the bureaucratic elites in Brussels are seen as less qualified and legitimate to address local needs in the periphery. Voters in rural communities have been successfully mobilised by the 'no' campaign on numerous occasions (Gänzle and Henökl 2018).

Unsurprisingly, given the high level of public Euroscepticism and the diversity of party positions on integration, the preferences of the Norwegian governments on the EU show a higher level of support for differentiation (Leruth, Trondal and Gänzle 2020). In fact, because the European issue is so divisive in Norway, internal conflicts over the EEA negotiations played a role in the downfall of the Syse government in 1990

(Leruth, Trondal and Gänzle 2020). Since the results of the 1994 referendum, no government has even brought up the membership issue. For example, the coalition agreements that comprised the second Stoltenberg government explicitly stated that the coalition would not submit an application for membership in the EU, in contrast to earlier post-1994 government programmes that avoided bringing up this issue altogether. Since there was a tacit agreement that 'if a party in a coalition government launches a campaign for EU membership, the coalition unravels', the EU membership question was effectively constrained as a living issue in Norwegian political debate (Fossum 2010, 75).

The Red Party (Rødt – R) is the 'most leftist' party, followed by the Socialist Left and the Labour Party. The Centre Party have in the last two decades increasingly aligned themselves with the centre left, which is visible in its position moving closer towards the Labour Party. Centrist parties such as the Christian Democrats and the Liberal Party also take centre stage in the Parlgov Database, followed by the Conservative Party and the Progress Party as right-wing parties. EU attitudes among the parties do, however, not follow neatly from the left-right spectrum of Norwegian parties. Rather, as we shall see, scepticism towards, for instance, EU membership is spread out across the left-right divide, and additionally, some parties are also internally split on the issue.

An important case in point is the Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet – Ap), which has been a dominant force in post-war politics. In the post-war years, the party steered Norway for nearly two decades, with policy hegemony in most policy areas. Foreign policy and NATO membership were important notions for the party, and its leadership soon also pursued closer integration with Europe. In both 1972 and 1994, however, a large minority in the party (led by its youth branch and internal left opposition) opposed membership. In 1994 an organisation called Social Democrats Against the EU was formed. Such Euroscepticism has, however, not led to an outright rejection of European cooperation. The party stands firmly on the belief in the EEA Agreement as the main form of affiliation with the EU, and there is little opposition to continued efforts at close cooperation in other policy areas. The membership question is still problematic for the party and has not been rekindled since the 1994 referendum.

As in the other Nordic countries, Norway's Conservative Party (Høyre – H) has been a staunch supporter of membership in the EU since the

debates ensued in the 1960s. EEA membership is seen by the party as a necessary but sub-optimal solution compared to full membership. Market access and as close cooperation as possible are important for the party, which typically attracts voters from the private sector as well as support from businesses. Moreover, the party has focused on Norway's role in the European security and defence architecture through NATO membership, with support for the closest possible cooperation with the EU, without being full members. Yet it is worth noting that EU membership has been a non-salient issue for the Norwegian Conservatives since the late 1990s (See Fossum 2010).

While restrictive on migration throughout its history, the Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet – Frp) was also dominated by an economically liberal and at times libertarian policy stance in the 1980s and 1990s. In the 1994 referendum on EU membership, the party campaigned for the 'yes' side. Since then, it has supported Norway's affiliation through the EEA Agreement. In the 2000s, however, the party became increasingly Eurosceptic. It now advocates that Norway should not become a member of the EU and that parts of the EEA Agreement should be renegotiated, particularly the principles related to free movement of persons. The party also now opposes Norway's participation in the common asylum policy. In the Parlgov Database, however, the party continues to plot as more EU-positive than the Liberal Party (Venstre – V), which recently changed its stance on EU membership from 'no' to 'yes'. Moreover, its position towards the EU is also just short of the Green Party (Miljøpartiet de grønne – MDG), which advocates for a more open debate on the EU, clearly with a view to developing arguments in the case of a new referendum on EU membership in Norway.

The Centre Party (Senterpartiet – Sp) is Norway's traditional agrarian party, with strong ties to the periphery and to farmers' organisations. The party is firmly opposed to any institutionalised relations with Brussels, such as EU membership and the EEA Agreement. It favours cooperation between independent nations and sees supranational pooling of sovereignty as alien to Norway's historical notion of self-rule (*selvråderett*). In the 1994 debates, the party campaigned strongly with the view that Norway should not join another union, some 90 years after its union with Sweden was dissolved and Norway gained sovereign independence. In recent years, the party used Brexit as a starting point for the argument that Norway should rethink its relations with the EU and

seek to base it on some sort of free trade agreement that could replace the EEA Agreement.

The Liberal Party has traditionally been in centrist opposition to EU membership. In 1972, however, it was very polarised on the issue. This resulted in an actual party split, where the 'no' camp remained in the Liberal Party and the majority of the 'yes' camp formed the short-lived Liberal People's Party. In the early phase, the party's opposition to the EU was grounded on issues of democracy and local self-determination, while in the 1990s it was linked to EU opposition in the budding green movement. In recent years, however, the Liberal Youth have pushed the agenda on the EU issue, and in 2020, the party convention decided to switch their standpoint from 'no' to 'yes'.

Another centrist party, the Christian Democrats (Kristelig Folkeparti – KrF), opposed EU membership in both referenda and continue to advocate this position. Yet the party has taken a much more pragmatic stance than other 'no' parties by remaining resolutely in favour of the EEA Agreement. Moreover, it continues to support close cooperation in other fields, for instance in defence policy and on asylum, and has been a supporter of Norway's participation in the Schengen system since the 1990s. As such, the Christian Democrats have also held an important role in centre-right coalition governments, where they have favoured stability in the 'inner periphery' over potential polarisation in the case of politicisation of the membership issue.

The Socialist Left Party (Sosialistisk Venstreparti – SV) was founded by defectors from the Labour Party, which opposed Norwegian membership in NATO. The founding idea of the party was, in other words, based on foreign policy. This scepticism towards 'big power politics' followed on from the party's stance on European integration as it opposes both EU membership and Norway's participation in the EEA Agreement. Their arguments regarding this relate to the EU as a (neo-)liberal market project that is seen as a threat to the Norwegian welfare state model and the instruments of an active state in economics and society. The party also opposes the EU on democratic grounds, based on the idea that Brussels is 'too far away', and decisions should be made as close to the citizens as possible.

The Red Party was founded in the aftermath of the counter-culture developments taking place around 1968, as a Marxist-Leninist alternative,

not only to the Labour Party but also to other parties on the left such as the Socialist Left and the traditional Communist Party. In time, the party has become more 'reformist' and has gained representation in the Storting. It shares the same views on both EU membership and participation in the EEA Agreement as the Socialist Left, rejecting both.

The Green Party was founded in 1988 and gained representation in the Storting from 2013. With a background in the green movement and links to climate NGOs, the party was initially opposed to EU membership. In recent years, however, it has been a strong advocate for close cooperation with the EU, for instance on the recent EU Green Deal. Its policy stance on EU membership eschews a clear 'yes' or 'no'. Rather, the party argues that the EU debate should be rekindled in Norway, that it should be debated broadly, and that it should be decided by the people in a nationwide referendum. Moreover, it advocates close cooperation with sister parties in Europe in a push for a democratic and green reform of the EU, regardless of whether Norway is a member or not.

The future of Europe debate in a non-member country: inward-looking parliamentary debates in Norway

Norway's main connection to the EU is through the EEA Agreement. It grants Norwegian businesses access to the internal market with over 500 million people, as well as the free movement of people, goods, services and capital. It also entails the same rights and duties as other EEA countries to trade goods, make investments, banking and insurance, the right to study and work, and the buying and sale of services (Norwegian Foreign Ministry 2015).

The nature of the EEA countries' connection with the EU gives no pronounced legislative power on the EU level. Norway has no direct representation in the EU executive or legislative institutions. The country is, however, represented in different expert groups, where the government and its administration can give input and propose on issues of interest. It is therefore necessary to look at the national parliamentary debates on EU matters in order to map out whether and how the Norwegian parliament is acknowledging and responding to differentiation processes in the EU, as well as whether any changes or reform proposals are presented.

Twice a year, the Norwegian minister of foreign affairs informs parliament on important EU and EEA matters. Following this statement, plenary debates are held. These statements and the following debates make up a large share of this report's data. There are a total of two ministerial statements, two associated debates, as well as one committee proposal on the topic of the future of Europe (FoE).

When the EU more generally is debated, we find that the focus is on how the EU and Europeanisation affect Norway, through laws, regulations and politics. One example is Vidar Helgesen, who in 2015 was Europe minister from the Conservative Party: 'EU regulations and EU policies have a strong impact on Norwegian society. No international player affects Norwegian society more than the EU. This is natural because such a large part of the Norwegian economy is dependent on the EU market' (Vidar Helgesen, Europe minister, H, NO_2015-05-26_Eurozone). In other words, there is almost a semblance of a symbiotic relationship in this quote. Without the EU and close cooperation, for instance on market access, Norway would, according to this understanding, be in a different position as a country in Europe and in the world. This is further highlighted in the same speech by Helgesen:

> When we are faced with major changes in the world around us, of importance to our security, our climate, our economy and our welfare, it is both natural and important that we face these changes in close political cooperation with those who are closest to us in the international society
>
> (Vidar Helgesen, Europe minister, H, NO_2015-05-26_Eurozone)

What is emphasised here is the importance for Norway to take part in close cooperation as partners of the EU. And finally, to quote Helgesen again:

> We cannot opt out of the globalised reality, but we still have a choice: We can shape globalisation, or we can let it shape us. If we prefer the first, we need more international cooperation, more than ever. For Norway, the cooperation starts in Europe.
>
> (Vidar Helgesen, Europe minister, Ap, NO_2015-05-26_Eurozone)

We quote this speech at length, as it highlights how Norway has *actively* sought to integrate closely with the EU, despite rejecting membership in the 1994 referendum. This has been done and achieved through an

understanding of the EU as a market project where the EEA Agreement secures access, and as an actor that is at the forefront of shaping the globalised world.

The Labour Party largely agrees with the Conservative Party on the main lines of Norway's EU policy and affiliation. It is a staunch supporter of the EEA Agreement and, like the Conservative Party, emphasises the need for close cooperation, for instance in debates on EU economic policy and markets:

> […] a notification to the Storting from the government was announced. It should come quickly, if it is to give the Storting a thoroughly worked-out basis to be able to discuss and formulate Norwegian positions on the EU's work in this important, comprehensive and demanding area.
>
> (Svein Roald Hansen, MP, Ap, NO_2015-05-28_Eurozone)

Yet the domestic viewpoint is also important for the Labour Party, which stresses national interests in the discussion on EEA Funds:

> It is worrying that the negotiations on new EEA funds are at a standstill. The government has our support in rejecting unreasonable demands for increases which this time cannot be justified either in membership expansion or in a corresponding increase in the EU's own efforts in the area.
>
> (Svein Roald Hansen, MP, Ap, NO_2015-05-28_Eurozone)

The two main parties, then, emphasise the EU as a voluntary arrangement that Norway takes active part in. This is furthermore debated as a given by the two parties, who criticise opponents of Norway's arrangements. Conservative Party MP Elin Rodum Agdestein underlines this in the following way:

> [T]he EEA agreement is a cornerstone for value creation and welfare in this country. It is therefore with considerable astonishment that I register that some people in this room also want to put this agreement into play, with the dramatic consequences it could have for Norwegian working life and welfare.
>
> (Elin Rodum Agdestein, MP, H, NO_2015-05-28_Eurozone)

Criticism of the EU and Norway's arrangements hint at some form of dominance on the part of the EU. Liv Signe Navarsete from the Centre Party argues that:

> [t]he creation of the euro was a mistake. The question is whether the EU is now making even more and even bigger mistakes. One is in a quagmire. One can go back and undo the mistake of the euro, but Brussels will not agree to such a loss of prestige. One can introduce even more supranational governance, but the people of Europe do not want that. The EU's failed economic policy has not created more reconciliation in Europe – on the contrary. Listen to how Germany and German politicians are talked about in Greece, and vice versa.
>
> (Liv Signe Navarsete, MP, Sp, NO_2015-05-28_Eurozone)

This is typical Euroscepticism from Norway's main party in opposition to further European integration. The Eurozone policy is a top-down system that is failing, but the EU elites fail to see this.

In this policy stance, the EU is not debated as a *political system* of citizens and member states (Hix and Høyland 2022) but rather as a power system that *dominates* over the lives of citizens and states:

> We see an increasing juridification of politics. The EU and EFTA Court is constantly gaining more power to make decisions about people's lives. The decisions are made by lawyers who sit far away, and who are not accountable to those who are governed.
>
> (Liv Signe Navarsete, MP, Sp, NO_2015-05-28_Eurozone)

Yet some critics of Norway's European policies also discuss this in terms of what the EU is, in more general terms. The Socialist Left MP Heikki Holmås alludes to the debate on whether the EU is a market project or a social welfare project:

> Those of us who were against Norwegian EU membership and critical of the EU's common currency and monetary policy have unfortunately been right in our arguments about solidarity and the economic muscles to face the different economic developments in the different parts of the EU. For those of you who are in favour of Norwegian EU membership and the euro, this should be the touchstone of whether the euro project can sustain itself socially.
>
> (Heikki Holmås, MP, SV, NO_2015-05-28_Eurozone)

Who debates?

The Conservative Party have the largest number of interventions (235) in parliamentary debates on the EU (see figure 12.1). Yet here one must bear in mind the fact that several of the coded debates are speeches by the party's Europe minister and foreign minister from its time in government between 2013 and 2021. In Sweden, the data material showed that engagement in the debates does not necessarily reflect size of party. We found the same pattern in Norway, where the Centre Party was very active, with 130 interventions, despite its quite small parliamentary group. This is, however, not necessarily surprising as the Centre Party is at its core a Eurosceptic party which dominated debates on the 1994 referendum and has been the most vocal anti-EU party since then.

The Labour Party had 105 interventions, which is significantly less given its much larger parliamentary group. This may be due to the fact that while it was the largest opposition party at the time of data collection, it also supported the Conservative-led government's main policy line of an 'active' Europe policy.

The other two parties that engage in EU debates to any extent are the Progress Party and the Socialist Left Party. The two parties are Eurosceptic, albeit from different ends of the political spectrum. The Socialist Left generally emphasises that the EU is a capitalist market system which threatens the Norwegian work life and welfare model. The Progress Party, on the other hand, directs much of its attention to problems related to free movement of persons, labour migration and asylum policy. After the party left the Conservative-led government, it increased its focus on such issues, as highlighted by this quote from MP Jon Engen-Helgheim:

> Today's asylum system has completely failed. It has gone from being a system that was intended to provide protection for political dissidents and genuinely persecuted people, to being a system that moves large numbers of people across continents. People are lured into suffering and death in the hope of reaching Europe and the welfare society here.
>
> (Jon Engen-Helgheim, MP, H, NO_2021-05-31_Migration)

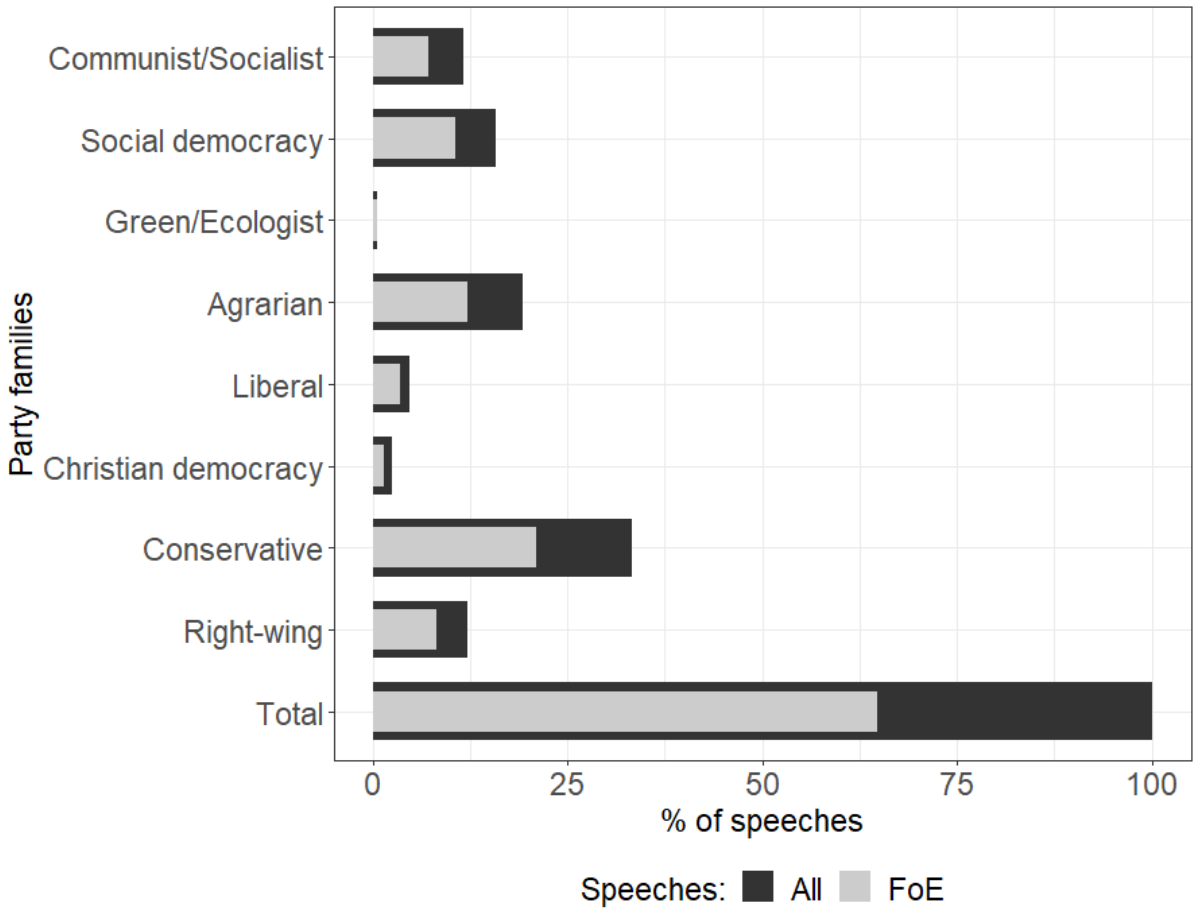


Figure 12.1. Frequency of analysed speeches by party family (m=664 – number of speeches, n=430 – number of FoE speeches).

EU polity reforms proposed in Storting debates

As a non-member country, Norway does not engage extensively in debate on explicit polity reform of the EU. Rather, parliamentary debates tend to centre on questions of reforms of Norway's relationship with the EU. In general terms, this is visible in the fact that, to the extent that Norwegian MPs discuss 'polity reforms', the most frequent code is 'advocates for maintaining the status quo'. This is largely about preserving the EEA Agreement and other affiliations as they are. Moreover, this advocacy is shared by the pro-EEA and EU parties, with the Conservative Party being the most active in taking this stance (see Figure 12.2).

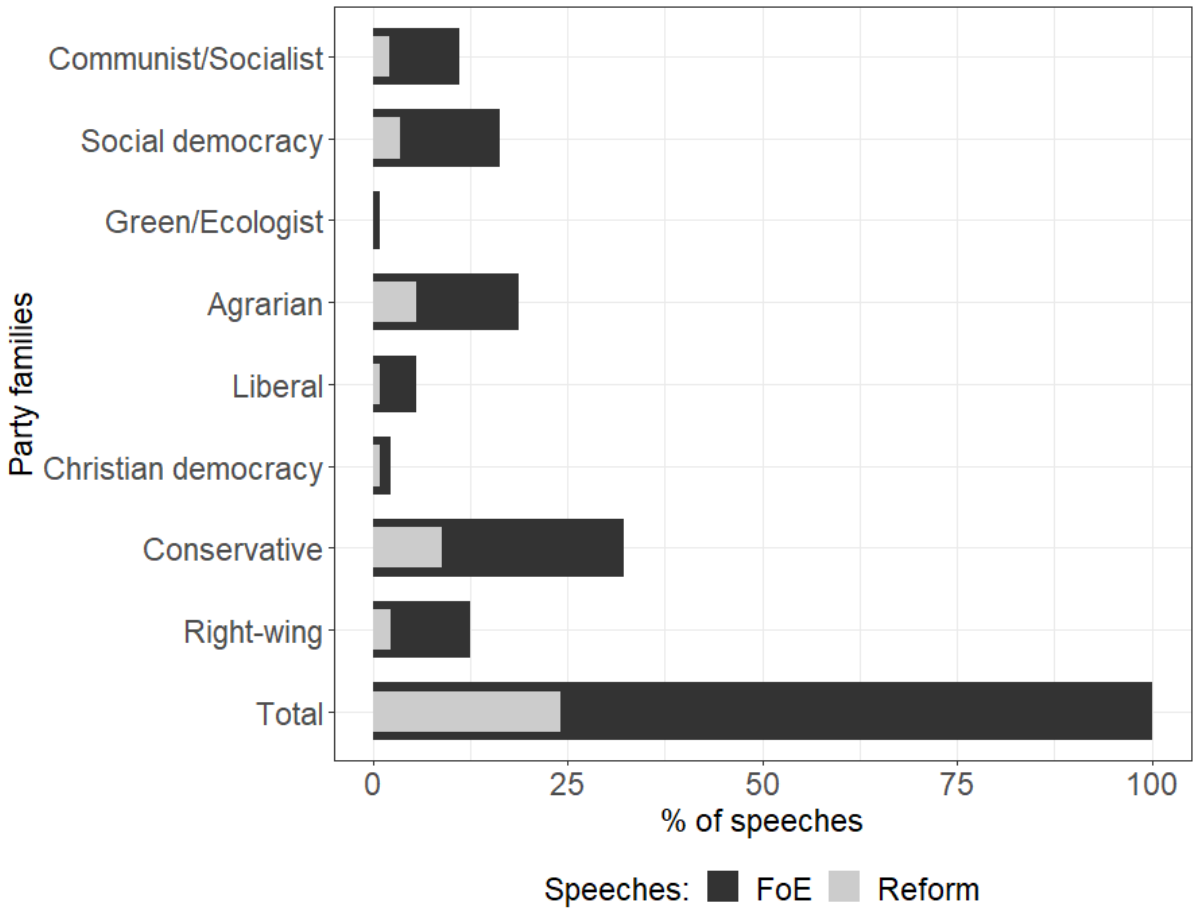


Figure 12.2. Frequency of references to EU institutional reforms in FoE speeches by party family (n=430 – number of FoE speeches, o=104 – number of speeches containing at least one institutional reform proposal).

One example of a status quo-type argument comes from Progress Party MP Per Sandberg at the time that his party was in government:

> Let me say that this is not about yes or no to the EU, or yes or no to the EEA agreement: it is about finding solutions where Norway can meet the major challenges in the best way within the framework of the agreements we have.
>
> (Per Sandberg, MP, Frp, NO_2015-05-28_Eurozone)

There is a pragmatism in this quote which highlights a central line in Norwegian relations with the EU: as membership was rejected a second time in 1994, all governments since have argued for what they call an 'active policy' on Europe, despite the fact that several of them have enlisted parties that are against further integration with the EU and that favour rescinding the EEA Agreement. As Sandberg highlights, there is a need for 'activity', although his party is against the EU and wants to reform the EEA Agreement:

> Once we have a framework and a set of agreements to deal with, it is important that we are proactive and to a much greater extent participate in the preliminary game in order to get the best solutions for Norway
>
> (Per Sandberg, MP, Frp, NO_2015-05-28_Eurozone).

Wholesale reform of Norway's agreements with the EU is not supported by the Liberal Party: 'One of the things I most appreciated in the minister's presentation was that she made it clear that the EEA agreement cannot be renegotiated in the first place' (Abid Raja, MP, V, NO_2017-11-30_Eurozone). Stability is what matters, not only for Norway's relations with the EU as such, but also for the Norwegian economy and its labour market:

> Far too many parties in the election campaign toyed with the idea of shaking up the EEA agreement, and they continue to do so today, and the result would be a disaster for Norwegian business and Norwegian workplaces. We do not need more financial uncertainty; we need security and predictable frameworks.
>
> (Abid Raja, MP, V, NO_2017-11-30_Eurozone)

One should bear in mind that the Liberal Party opposed full Norwegian membership of the Union until 2020, when its party convention switched sides, so to speak. Without being in favour of EU membership as a party in 2017, its MP Abid Raja stood out as a strong supporter of the EEA Agreement, effectively arguing for the strong interest of Norway to remain fully integrated in market terms.

The membership argument is pushed to a greater extent by Labour MP Svein Roald Hansen, who argues that those against the EEA must '(…) define what they mean by better – better for whom, and for what?' (Svein Roald Hansen, MP, Ap, NO_2017-11-30_Eurozone). For most parties opposing the EEA, the alternative is some form of trade agreement, and for Hansen:

> (…) there is no doubt that if you think about business market access and opportunities in our most important export market, there is only one better alternative than the EEA agreement, and that is membership, because then we also gain influence. There is nothing out there that gives the same rights.
>
> (Svein Roald Hansen, MP, Ap, NO_2017-11-30_Eurozone)

The status quo and stability discourse also remained after Brexit. In fact, it could be argued that it was strengthened by the notion that a country would leave the EU:

> After Brexit, it should be clear to everyone: an agreement with the EU has advantages and disadvantages, but there is no realism in the idea that we will be able to get a better agreement than the agreement we negotiated at the time.
>
> (Anniken Huitfeldt, MP, Ap, NO_2019-05-14_Eurozone)

Once again, we find the argument that the status quo may not be seen as optimal, yet it is the best we have considering 'present' circumstances. The pragmatism is crystal clear in Huitfeldt's further intervention:

> No responsible politician can simply take that chance. Spending energy on investigating alternatives now is simply poor positioning of Norwegian interests. Who on earth believes that it is possible for Norway to negotiate better solutions if we open up to changing our relationship with the European market and break with the cooperation that the EEA Agreement represents?
>
> (Anniken Huitfeldt, MP, Ap, NO_2019-05-14_Eurozone)

This argument hints at the notion of TINA (there is no alternative) in terms of Norway's relationship with the EU and the model that was chosen in the 1990s, which has the EEA agreement at its core followed by other agreements. Moreover, as her Labour colleague Espen Barth Eide argues, '[t]he only alternative to the EEA agreement that I can see is full membership. It is not on the agenda now, and that is why we are protecting the EEA agreement' (Espen Barth Eide, MP, Ap, NO_2019-05-14_Eurozone).

Furthermore, among supporters of the EEA solution, there is no notion of this as a dominant relationship. Norway voluntarily entered the EEA Agreement as a member of EFTA. Furthermore, it is supported by a majority of the population, as highlighted by Christian Democrat MP Knut Arild Hareide: 'Our experience is that it has record support among the Norwegian people. There are 20% who are against it, with over 60% who give their support to the EEA agreement' (Knut Arild Hareide, MP, KrF, NO_2019-05-14_Eurozone). Tellingly, his Christian Democrat colleague Steinar Reiten alluded to religious imagery in stating that:

> [W]e are a party that likes to see things in an eternal perspective, and we see that this agreement 25 years later is still very good for Norway. It gives us access to the internal market, and we still have the right to self-determination over our important primary industries.
>
> (Steinar Reiten, MP, KrF, NO_2019-04-11_FoE)

The core of Norwegian parliamentary debates: affiliation and grounds for cooperation

The policy area most frequently debated is what we could broadly call external relations regarding the EU. In other words, migration policy and Eurozone issues are seldom debated explicitly from an 'EU perspective'. Rather, Norwegian parliamentarians on the whole focus on Norway's affiliation to the EU and different grounds for why such affiliation should continue and be deepened, or conversely why this should be rolled back. As with all issues of EU and integration in Norway, this comes down to the generations-old discussion on full membership or not of the Union.

The EEA dimension of Norwegian parliamentarians' understanding of the future of Europe has already been discussed above. Yet, interestingly, the EEA is often frequently mentioned when other issues are addressed, such as Brexit. While Brexit is debated in terms of what it means for Norway's relationship with the UK, it is also used as an example of alternatives to the EEA. The Centre Party is at the forefront of criticism of the EEA in the Norwegian parliament, seeking to usher in new ideas for alternative solutions to Norway's EU relationship:

> As far as the question of market access is concerned, it is in any case the case that the British, through their agreement with the EU, have secured full market access for all goods to the EU – also for further processed fish products, which Norway does not have through the EEA agreement – in addition to having taken back national room for action in important areas.
>
> (Sigbjørn Gjelsvik, MP, Sp, NO_2021-04-13_FoE)

This argument of market access possibilities outside of institutionalised EU-related treaties is then further linked with the issue of alternatives. The Centre Party highlights that there *is* a choice to be made concerning affiliation with the EU:

> What is important in connection with an investigation of alternatives to the EEA Agreement is to look at all the different countries that enter into agreements with the EU. Since Norway entered into the EEA Agreement, not a single country in the world has chosen the EEA Agreement – and the EU has not required it either when agreements have been entered into with a number of countries.
>
> (Sigbjørn Gjelsvik, MP, Sp, NO_2021-04-13_FoE)

In terms of social issues, some MPs and parties argue that the EEA Agreement is vital to the labour market and labour mobility. Others are mainly worried about social dumping. There is also the particular debate in the Norwegian context about the extent to which new EU rules are relevant to the EEA Agreement. Progress Party MP Kristian Norheim underlines that free movement is a core principle of EU cooperation, but that this needs to be centred on *labour* resources, not welfare benefits:

> It must be absolutely clear that the starting point here is, not least, free movement across national borders with work and not welfare benefits in mind. The Progress Party agrees that labour immigration from other EEA countries is generally positive, also for Norway.
>
> (Kristian Norheim, MP, Frp, NO_2015-05-28_Eurozone)

This openness to free movement of persons in terms of labour migration is, however, mirrored by a concern regarding what is referred to as 'welfare tourism', which is the understanding that the right to free movement is misused for the purpose of access to welfare benefits in a country other than that of one's own nationality. The Progress Party harbours this understanding:

> […] we must also follow the debate on so-called welfare tourism, as is known from Great Britain and Denmark. That is why I am very happy that the government is taking the issues related to welfare tourism seriously, and that they will look more closely at the possibility of limiting social security exports.
>
> (Kristian Norheim, MP, Frp, NO_2015-05-28_Eurozone)

In 2019, the so-called 'NAV scandal' erupted in Norway. NAV is the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration, a government agency that handles pensions, sick pay, and welfare benefits. The issue of the scandal was that NAV had misinterpreted EU rules of free movement and litigated against Norwegian citizens and residents that went abroad while

on certain benefits. This highlights how the discourse of welfare tourism arguably affected access to benefits that citizens and residents were due, despite utilising their rights of free movement.

Social issues are more frequently addressed in terms of working conditions and so-called social dumping:

> We know that people are exposed to social dumping – unacceptable pay and working conditions. Not long ago we were able to read about two Lithuanians who had travelled to Norway to work. They had worked here for 209.5 hours. The salary was NOK 3,500. That is NOK 16 per hour.
>
> (Stefan Heggenlund, MP, H, NO_2015-05-28_Eurozone)

This description of what many see as a negative effect of free movement on social conditions in the workplace is echoed by Labour Party MP Marianne Marthinsen, who argues that the EU is working towards a more 'robust' social pillar at the core of integration:

> I am happy that it now seems that there is more weight in the work on the EU's social pillar, and the social summit is an example of that. It seems that a realisation is emerging that the pillar needs to be filled with actual content.
>
> (Marianne Marthinsen, MP, Ap, NO_2017-11-30_Eurozone)

In this sense, there is clearly a notion among Norwegian parliamentarians that the EU is 'more' than a market project, that it can also emerge as a 'market-correcting' project of sorts. Marthinsen from the Labour Party further links this to Brexit and the rise of right-wing nationalism in the European Parliament:

> Although the analyses of course differ, it is quite clear to most that this is a sign of impotence, distance and a faulty distribution of the gains from trade and economic relations, and – not least – working people who feel that the most direct result of free movement is that we compete with each other's working conditions and rights.
>
> (Marianne Marthinsen, MP, Ap, NO_2017-11-30_Eurozone)

In doing so, the Labour Party alludes to the need for some form of at least political awareness of the current conditions for policymaking and institutional development in the EU. It is important, however, to underline that this does not mean direct engagement with a specific

reform agenda for FoE. It seems that Norwegian MPs tend to describe and comment rather than propose some 'vision' for what the future EU should look like.

The commitment to social issues and efforts against social dumping is shared by the decidedly more Eurosceptic Centre Party:

> Of course, we will focus on the ILO [International Labour Organisation] and other prominent organisations when it comes to organising Norwegian working life. But the situation is that the way the system works today, with the freest possible labour immigration from countries outside the Nordic countries, where wage and working conditions – and unemployment – are completely different from Norway, it provides access to labour that is much greater than the need, and that pushes wages and working conditions down for these groups.
>
> (Per Olaf Lundteigen, MP, Sp, NO_2017-11-30_Eurozone)

Social issues are at the core, yet here the focus is more on the perils of such a system of free movement of persons and labour, connecting to how this erodes Norwegian wages and working conditions.

However, EU-positive parties underline that the system as a whole *does* serve the interests of Norwegian workers: 'One can certainly disagree about individual matters, but the sum of it – also in this area – is that it serves Norwegian interests and the interests of Norwegian employees' (Ine M. Eriksen Søreide, foreign minister, H, NO_2018-11-13_FoE). Linking to this, the EU's policies on working conditions and social issues are fronted by the Labour Party as a move in the right direction, indirectly for a more *social* Europe in the future: 'The Commission has put forward a directive on minimum wages, [which] points to the importance of a high degree of organisation and collective bargaining which in a good way ensures decent wages and working conditions' (Svein Roald Hansen, MP, Ap, NO_2020-11-19_Eurozone). In other words, the focus on social issues goes in different directions, largely connected to the general stance on European integration and Norway's affiliation to EU rules and policies.

Finally, Norwegian MPs also frequently address defence and security policy (coded 54 times). In this area, the focus is partly on the relationship to the EU and NATO, as well as relations between the two, but also the defence industry. Here too, however, the debate tends to slide into

arguments and issues for or against the EEA Agreement as well as for or against EU membership.

One example of discussion on defence and security policy is a statement by Centre Party MP Liv Signe Navarsete: 'What happens if a state that is part of a possible EU army, but not in NATO, is attacked? If a conflict is spreading to countries in NATO, this will raise a big dilemma regarding Article 5 of the NATO Treaty' (Liv Signe Navarsete, MP, Sp, NO_2019-05-14_Eurozone). This is not an unknown issue concerning the relationship between EU defence policy and NATO as a defence organisation. Yet it has not been seen as a specific problem in much of Norway's debate on defence specifically, or EU integration generally. This MP's intervention might be said, then, to allude to how Norway's parallel engagement with the EU and NATO may lead to one of these dominating over the other, with a choice to be made by Norway on what is the country's primary allegiance in this policy field.

In contrast, other MPs, such as Christian Tybring-Gjedde from the Progress Party, emphasise the need for Norway to join the European Defence Fund, as this is a key site for technological and systemic developments, with important venues for Norwegian industry and serving Norwegian defence interests in the long run:

> Now I have worked on these issues for many years – the defence industry – and if we are to have technology development and system development, we must join these projects now. It is now that we have the opportunity to be involved […] This is something we can profit from in the long term, and the defence industry and the Armed Forces can benefit from it.
>
> (Christian Tybring-Gjedde, MP, Frp, NO_2020-11-19_Eurozone)

It is significant here that the Progress Party has become increasingly Eurosceptic and opposed to Norwegian membership in the EU, often citing issues concerning some form of undue dominance stemming from the principle of free movement or juridification of Norwegian policies. In defence, however, they emphasise the interests in terms of both policy and industry.

This does not escape the attention of the foreign minister from 2017 to 2021, Ine M. Eriksen Søreide from the Conservative Party, who in her reply to the MP Tybring-Gjedde underlines that the EEA Agreement

opens the possibility of later action in this field and some autonomy on the issue. Moreover, she argues that there is a paradox in the Progress Party's stance on these issues:

> Then I cannot avoid a small, interesting connection, namely that the representative Tybring-Gjedde stood on the podium and talked about how the nation-state and the national, and the EU and the EEA were at odds with each other, and that the national was best. Then it is interesting that he wants to be part of the European Defence Fund, but does not want the EEA agreement, which gives the opportunity to be part of it.
>
> (Ine M. Eriksen Søreide, Foreign Minister, H, NO_2020-11-19_Eurozone)

This is also echoed by Labour MP Svein Roald Hansen in the same debate:

> And representative Tybring-Gjedde thought it was very important to participate in the Defence Fund for the sake of our defence industry. Precisely, the EEA agreement is important for all Norwegian industry, and a prerequisite for being able to participate in the Defence Fund is also the EEA agreement.
>
> (Svein Roald Hansen, MP, Ap, NO_2020-11-19_Eurozone)

Again, it is the EEA Agreement and its role as 'interlocutor' between the rejection of membership and the willingness to be integrated that is at the core of EU discourse in the Norwegian parliament. If there is debate on FoE, in this instance defence policy, it is related to Norway's relationship with EU integration.

Differentiated integration, what? Externalisation and the ever-important membership issue

From our analysis it transpires that Norwegian MPs are mainly preoccupied with *external differentiated integration*. This includes the relationship between Norway and the EU, obviously, but also that between the EU and Switzerland as well as the EU and the UK. Brexit is a frequently debated topic under the heading of differentiated integration (DI).

MPs are less concerned, however, with initiatives for *territorial differentiation* within the Union than they are about the conditions for third

countries. That does not mean that the Norwegian debate is full of examples of MPs arguing for more access to EU markets. As we see it, parties opposed to the EEA largely drive the debate, and the supporters of the EEA Agreement are in something of a 'defence mode'. As a result, how to take the EEA forward is not a very frequent topic. Most of the debates selected are also bi-annual speeches by the foreign minister about EU/EEA topics, which means that the debates also have a type of control function. This might be part of the reason why the debates appear to be oriented towards overarching topics, and little evidence is found of concrete proposals for DI or the evaluation of these.

Dominance for the outsider? For or against close integration with the EU

The trend of the analysis also continues with more explicit examination of dominance. Accusations of dominance are above all part of the rejection of the EEA Agreement, and arguments are directed against parties who support the agreement. In this sense, the EEA cooperation itself is also seen as dominance, with Schengen falling into this category. In this sense, there is a clear yes-no cleavage, with criticism of possible dominance coming mainly from the 'no' parties, such as the Red Party:

> Supporters of the agreement talk about making use of the room for manoeuvre in the agreement. But the Yes parties' willingness to exploit the room for action is starting to look more and more like a unicorn: It is something that is found in fairy tales and in fine speeches in the Storting […] Every single time the EU wants to impose dictates on our heads, which harm Norwegian sovereignty and working life, the Yes parties say yes to absolutely everything that comes from the EU.
>
> (Bjørnar Moxnes, MP, R, NO_2019-05-14_Migration)

We quote this at length as it is one of the most concrete instances of advocating a dominance perspective on Norway's EU relationship. The MP argues that the EU 'dictates' policy to Norway top-down, without any real agency to counter it on Norway's part. The policy is simply just accepted, alluding to a relationship where one party dominates over another that lacks agency. Yet the same MP argues that this is an elite problem which is not shared by the electorate:

> The minister talks about the great support for the government's EU policy. And yes, in the political elite, EU loyalty is massive, and the willingness to submit to any dictate from Brussels is almost complete. But in the population, it is not like that.
>
> (Bjørnar Moxnes, MP, R, NO_2018-11-13_FoE)

This notion of dominance is concretised by the Centre Party, which highlights the sheer magnitude of EU law that is relevant to the EEA and therefore transposed as Norwegian law or statutes – 13,000 of them in 2018: 'The EEA Agreement sets a decisively important framework for Norwegian society. 13,000 EU regulations show that. The framework is becoming increasingly narrow for elected officials. The EEA therefore weakens the Storting's ability to correct capital forces' (Per Olaf Lundteigen, MP, Sp, NO_2018-11-13_FoE). In claiming this, the party underscores the decrease in autonomy for political representatives to enact policy that may go against the main tenets and principles of the EEA Agreement and EU law. This is also argued by Red Party MP Bjørnar Moxnes:

> The fact is that it is the Norwegian people who pay the price for much of EEA membership. It costs both democracy and our independence dearly when decision-making power is moved from Norway to politicians and bureaucrats in Brussels that none of us voted for.
>
> (Bjørnar Moxnes, MP, R, NO_2019-04-11_FoE)

We find that the 'illicit hierarchy' code fits much of this debate in the Norwegian Parliament. The arguments centre on a notion that it is problematic that Norway has acceded to international treaties and arrangements that makes binding decisions, but is not democratically authorised, in this instance by the parliament. A final quote and example of this is from Progress Party MP Per-Willy Amundsen, who links this to globalisation as well as Europeanisation:

> This is just another example of international attempts to drag the nation-state's affairs up to a more global level, thereby undermining national, democratic mechanisms, in order to promote a political view that does not necessarily reflect the population of the individual nation-state. It is a dangerous development. It is undemocratic. It is something that leads to protests, which we see all over Europe. These are protests we must take seriously. The European project has gone

> too far; it leads to the undermining of the nation-state. We have to take that seriously.
>
> (Per-Willy Amundsen, MP, Frp, NO_2019-05-14_FoE)

Conclusions

Norway is in a peculiar position in terms of European integration. It is, in short, a highly integrated non-member state. This has political, legal and economic ramifications for Norway as a democracy and how it relates to issues of Europe's future. As a non-member state, debates on the EU in Norway are often related to the workings of the EEA Agreement, the transposition of contested EU policies, and not to the EU explicitly. If this is the case, debates often revolve around the membership issue. This is, moreover, an issue that has been problematic for several Norwegian parties, as they are divided on membership/non-membership. As a result, there has been little debate on whether Norway should join or not in the three decades since the 1994 referendum.

It is, then, hardly surprising that parliamentary debates in Norway exhibit far less discussion on FoE in general and DI more specifically. FoE is not dealt with to any great extent in terms of specific visions or understandings of what this could entail. Rather, debates centre around Norway's relationship with the EU, often with specific notions about the EEA Agreement and the EEA funds where Norway is a main contributor. Parliamentary debates on the EU and European affairs more generally tend to be interest-based. This means that they deal with how Norwegian interests in different policy domains and as a sovereign state can be safeguarded or promoted. The debates are often reactive and connected to issues such as security, trade negotiations, or migration. As a non-member, Norway is not represented in EU institutions. Not surprisingly, therefore, the future of Europe is less debated in terms of institutional issues and democratic debates than in EU member states. The contrast with, for instance, debates in Denmark and Sweden is striking in this regard.

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Annexes

Annex 1: List of selected parliamentary debates

European Parliament

Title of debate (in English)	Date of debate (yyyy-mm-dd)	Number of speakers	Number of speeches	Link to debate	Code of debate
Debate with the President of the French Republic, Emmanuel Macron, on the Future of Europe	2018-04-17	42	44	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-8-2018-04-17-ITM-004_EN.html	EP_2018-04-17_FoE
Debate with the Prime Minister of Poland, Mateusz Morawiecki, on the Future of Europe	2018-07-04	33	36	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-8-2018-07-04-ITM-004_EN.html	EP_2018-07-04_FoE
Debate with the Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, on the Future of Europe	2018-11-13	38	43	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-8-2018-11-13-ITM-008_EN.html	EP_2018-11-13_FoE
Debate with the President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic, Giuseppe Conte, on the Future of Europe	2019-02-12	32	36	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-8-2019-02-12-ITM-018_EN.html	EP_2019-02-12_FoE
European Parliament's position on the Conference on the Future of Europe	2020-01-15	89	109	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2020-01-15-ITM-006_EN.html	EP_2020-01-15_FoE
State of play of the implementation of the own resources roadmap	2021-06-08	20	22	part1: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2021-06-08-ITM-004_EN.html part2: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2021-06-08-ITM-006_EN.html	EP_2021-06-08_FoE

Euro area recommendation – Completing Europe's Economic and Monetary Union	2015-12-15	79	98	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-8-2015-12-15-ITM-003_EN.html	EP_2015-12-15_Eurozone
Possible evolutions of and adjustments to the current institutional set-up of the European Union – Improving the functioning of the European Union building on the potential of the Lisbon Treaty – Budgetary capacity for the Eurozone	2017-02-14	84	98	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-8-2017-02-14-ITM-003_EN.html	EP_2017-02-14_Eurozone
Economic policies of the euro area	2017-10-25	26	32	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-8-2017-10-25-ITM-013_EN.html	EP_2017-10-25_Eurozone
Employment and social policies of the euro area	2019-10-10	26	32	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2019-10-10-ITM-003_EN.html	EP_2019-10-10_Eurozone
Economic policies of the euro area 2020 – Employment and social policies of the euro area 2020	2020-10-21	29	32	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2020-10-21-ITM-007_EN.html	EP_2020-10-21_Eurozone
European Central Bank – Annual report 2020	2021-02-08	25	27	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2021-02-08-ITM-013_EN.html	EP_2021-02-08_Eurozone
Report of the extraordinary European Council meeting (23 April 2015) – The latest tragedies in the Mediterranean and EU migration and asylum policies	2015-04-29	89	111	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-8-2015-04-29-ITM-003_EN.html	EP_2015-04-29_Migration
Conclusions of the Justice and Home Affairs Council on migration (14 September 2015)	2015-09-16	86	90	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-8-2015-09-16-ITM-009_EN.html	EP_2015-09-16_Migration
Decision adopted on the Common European Asylum System reform	2016-05-11	61	70	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-8-2016-05-11-ITM-014_EN.html	EP_2016-05-11_Migration

Reform of the EU asylum and migration policy in light of the continued humanitarian crisis in the Mediterranean and Africa	2019-01-15	41	44	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-8-2019-01-15-ITM-002_EN.html	EP_2019-01-15_Migration
Migration situation at the Greek-Turkish border and the EU's common response to it	2020-03-10	61	70	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2020-03-10-ITM-012_EN.html	EP_2020-03-10_Migration
The escalating humanitarian crisis on the EU-Belarusian border, in particular in Poland	2021-11-10	55	56	https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/CRE-9-2021-11-10-ITM-012_EN.html	EP_2021-11-10_Migration

Note: Technical interventions by EP presidents and/or EP vice-presidents are excluded from analysis.

France

Title of debate (in original language)	Title of debate (in English)	Date of debate (yyyy-mm-dd)	Link to debate	Code of debate
Débat sur les suites du référendum britannique et la préparation du Conseil européen	Debate on the follow-up to the British referendum and the preparation of the European Council	2016-06-28	http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/cri/2015-2016/20160226.asp#P823706	FR_2016-06-28_FoE
Déclaration du Gouvernement suivie d'un débat sur l'avenir de l'Union européenne	Government statement followed by debate on the future of the European Union	2017-10-10	http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/15/cri/2017-2018/20180005.asp#P1035703	FR_2017-10-10_FoE
Promotion des symboles de l'Union européenne	Promotion of symbols of the European Union	2017-11-27	http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/15/cri/2017-2018/20180072.asp#P1114640	FR_2017-11-27_FoE
Élection des représentants au Parlement européen	Election of representatives to the European Parliament	2018-02-13	http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/15/cri/2017-2018/20180139.asp#P1184654	FR_2018-02-13_FoE
Débat en vue du Conseil européen des 21 et 22 mars 2019	Debate in preparation to the European Council on 21 and 22 March 2019	2019-03-05	http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/15/cri/2018-2019/20190164.asp#P1633878	FR_2019-03-05_FoE
Débat consacré à l'Europe	Debate on Europe	2021-03-03	https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/comptes-rendus/seance/session-ordinaire-de-2020-2021/premiere-seance-du-mercredi-03-mars-2021#2431963	FR_2021-03-03_FoE
Questions sur la situation économique et financière de la zone euro	Questions on the economic and financial situation of the euro area	2015-06-01	http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/cri/2014-2015/20150245.asp#P542649	FR_2015-06-01_Eurozone
Déclaration du Gouvernement sur la situation de Grèce et les enjeux européens	Government statement on the situation in Greece and European issues	2015-07-08	http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/cri/2014-2015-extra/20151010.asp#P577027	FR_2015-07-08_Eurozone
Déclaration du Gouvernement sur l'accord européen relatif à la Grèce	Government statement on the Europe Agreement on Greece	2015-07-15	http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/cri/2014-2015-extra/20151014.asp#P579731	FR_2015-07-15_Eurozone
Débat sur le programme de stabilité 2016-2019	Debate on the 2016-2019 stability program	2016-04-26	http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/cri/2015-2016/20160173.asp#P768044	FR_2016-04-26_Eurozone

Déclaration du Gouvernement sur le projet de programme de stabilité pour les années 2018-2022 suivie d'un débat et d'un vote sur cette déclaration	Government statement on the draft stability program for the years 2018-2022 followed by a debate and a vote on this statement	2018-04-18	http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/15/cri/2017-2018/20180194.asp#P1239606	FR_2018-04-18_Eurozone
Nécessité du rachat de la dette publique par la Banque centrale européenne	Need for the bailout of public debt by the European Central Bank	2020-06-04	https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/comptes-rendus/seance/session-ordinaire-de-2019-2020/deuxieme-seance-du-jeudi-04-juin-2020#2105919	FR_2020-06-04_Eurozone
Ressources propres de l'Union européenne	EU's own resources	2021-01-26	https://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/dyn/15/comptes-rendus/seance/session-ordinaire-de-2020-2021/deuxieme-seance-du-mardi-26-janvier-2021#2377600	FR_2021-01-26_Eurozone
Accueil des réfugiés en France et en Europe	Reception of refugees in France and in Europe	2015-09-16	http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/cri/2014-2015-extra2/20152003.asp#P595574	FR_2015-09-16_Migration
Débat sur l'accueil des réfugiés en Europe	Debate on the reception of refugees in Europe	2016-03-31	http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/14/cri/2015-2016/20160167.asp#P763423	FR_2016-03-31_Migration
Application du régime d'asile européen	Application of the European asylum system	2017-12-07	part1: http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/15/cri/2017-2018/20180088.asp#P1132676 part2: http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/15/cri/2017-2018/20180089.asp#P1133084	FR_2017-12-07_Migration
Application du régime d'asile européen	Application of the European asylum system	2018-02-15	part1: http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/15/cri/2017-2018/20180143.asp#P1188920 part2: http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/15/cri/2017-2018/20180144.asp#P1190006	FR_2018-02-15_Migration
Déclaration du Gouvernement, suivie d'un débat, sur la politique migratoire de la France et de l'Europe	Statement by the Government, followed by a debate, on the migration policy of France and Europe	2019-10-07	http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/15/cri/2019-2020/20200012.asp#P1850288	FR_2019-10-07_Migration

Germany

Title of debate (in original language)	Title of debate (in English)	Date of debate (yyyy-mm-dd)	Link to debate	Code of debate
Regierungserklärung zum Ausgang des Referendums im Vereinigten Königreich	Government Statement on the Result of the Referendum in the United Kingdom	2016-06-28	http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/18/18181.pdf#P.17881	DE_2016-06-28_FoE
60 Jahre Römische Verträge	60 Years of the Treaties of Rome	2017-03-23	http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/18/18225.pdf#P.22538	DE_2017-03-23_FoE
Aktuelle Stunde zur Europapolitik der Bundesregierung zwischen Griechenland-Krise, Brexit und Europäischem Rat	Debate on the European Policy of the Federal Government between the Greek Crisis, Brexit and the European Council	2017-06-22	http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/18/18240.pdf#P.24537	DE_2017-06-22_FoE
Aktuelle Stunde zur Positionierung der Bundesregierung zu Fragen der Ständigen Strukturierten Zusammenarbeit sowie zum Brexit und weiteren Fragen beim Europäischen Rat am 14./15. Dezember 2017 in Brüssel	Debate on the Position of the Federal Government on the Permanent Structural Cooperation, on Brexit and on other Questions of the European Council of 14/15 December 2017	2017-12-12	http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/19/19004.pdf#P.253	DE_2017-12-12_FoE
Zustand der EU– Deutsch-Französische Sonderwege	State of the EU – German-French 'Sonderwerge'	2019-01-17	http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/19/19074.pdf#P.8629	DE_2019-01-17_FoE
Regierungserklärung zur deutschen EU-Ratspräsidentschaft und zum Europäischen Rat am 19. Juni 2020	Government Statement regarding the Council Presidency of Germany and regarding the European Council of June 19, 2020	2020-06-18	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/19/19166.pdf	DE_2020-06-18_FoE
Eigenmittelbeschluss-Ratifizierungsgesetz	Ratification of Own Resource Decision	2021-02-25	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/19/19212.pdf	DE_2021-02-25_FoE
Stabilitätshilfe zugunsten Griechenlands	Support for Greece's Financial Stability	2015-07-17	http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/18/18117.pdf#P.11352	DE_2015-07-17_Eurozone
Aktuelle Stunde zu den Vorschlägen von Präsident Macron zur EU-Wirtschafts- und Finanzpolitik	Debate on President Macron's Proposals for EU Economic and Financial Policy	2017-05-18	http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/18/18234.pdf#P.23634	DE_2017-05-18_Eurozone
Aktuelle Stunde zur Europäischen Bankenunion	Debate on the European Banking Union	2018-01-31	http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/19/19010.pdf#P.742	DE_2018-01-31_Eurozone

Befragung der Bundesregierung : Ausblick auf den Europäischen Rat am 13. und 14. Dezember 2018 in Brüssel zu geben und über die Ergebnisse des G-20-Gipfels vom 30. November und 1. Dezember 2018 in Buenos Aires	Questioning of the Federal Government: Prospects of the European Council of 13/14 December 2018 and Results of the G20 Summit of 30 November and 1 December 2018 in Buenos Aires	2018-12-12	http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/19/19070.pdf#P.8131	DE_2018-12-12_Eurozone
Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion	Economic and Monetary Union	2019-03-14	http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/19/19086.pdf#P.10222	DE_2019-03-14_Eurozone
Regierungserklärung zur Bewältigung der Covid-19-Pandemie in Deutschland und Europa	Government Statement: Overcoming the COVID-19 Pandemic in Germany and Europe	2020-04-23	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/19/19156.pdf	DE_2020-04-23_Eurozone
Europäischer Stabilitätmechanismus	European Stability Mechanism	2021-05-20	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/19/19230.pdf	DE_2021-05-20_Eurozone
Abgabe einer Regierungserklärung durch die Bundeskanzlerinzum Europäischen Rat am 25./26. Juni 2015 in Brüssel	Government Statement on the European Council of 25/26 June 2015	2015-06-18	https://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/18/18112.pdf	DE_2015-06-18_Migration
Abgabe einer Regierungserklärung durch die Bundeskanzlerin: zu den Ergebnissen des Informellen Treffens der Staats- und Regierungschefs der Europäischen Union am 23.September 2015 in Brüssel und zum VN-Gipfel für Nachhaltige Entwicklung vom 25. bis 27.September 2015 in New York	Government Statement on the Informal Meeting of the European Heads of State and Government of 23 September 2015 and on the UN Summit for Sustainable Development of 25-27 September 2015	2015-09-24	https://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/18/18124.pdf	DE_2015-09-24_Migration
Abgabe einer Regierungserklärung durch die Bundeskanzlerin zum Europäischen Rat am 18./19.Februar 2016 in Brüssel	Government Statement on the European Council of 18/19 February 2016	2016-02-17	https://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/18/18154.pdf#P.15129	DE_2016-02-17_Migration
Flüchtlingsschutz in der Europäischen Union	Protection of Refugees in the European Union	2016-04-28	http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/btp/18/18167.pdf#P.16448	DE_2016-04-28_Migration
Regierungserklärung zum Europäischen Rat am 28./29.Juni 2018 in	Government Statement on the European Council of 28/29 June	2018-06-28	http://dipbt.bundestag.de/dip21/bt	DE_2018-06-28_Migration

Brüssel und zum NATO-Gipfel am 11./12.Juli 2018 in Brüssel	2018 and on the NATO Summit of 11/12 July 2018		p/19/19042.pdf#P.4109	
Europäische Flüchtlingspolitik	Debate about EU Asylum Policy	2020-12-17	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/19/19202.pdf	DE_2020-12-17_Migration
Asylverfahren an EU-Außengrenzen	Asylum Procedures at the EU's External Borders	2021-03-24	https://dserver.bundestag.de/btp/19/19217.pdf	DE_2021-03-24_Migration

Italy

Title of debate (in original language)	Title of debate (in English)	Date of debate (yyyy-mm-dd)	Link to debate	Code of debate
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 28 e 29 giugno 2016	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 28/29 June 2016	2016-06-27	https://www.camera.it/leg17/410?idSeduta=642&tipo=stenografico	IT_2016-06-27_FoE
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 9 e 10 marzo 2017	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 9/10 March 2017	2017-03-08	https://www.camera.it/leg17/410?idSeduta=755&tipo=stenografico	IT_2017-03-08_FoE
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 19 e 20 ottobre 2017	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 19/20 October 2017	2017-10-18	https://www.camera.it/leg17/410?idSeduta=873&tipo=stenografico	IT_2017-10-18_FoE
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 18 ottobre 2018	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 18 October 2018	2018-10-16	https://www.camera.it/leg18/410?idSeduta=064&tipo=stenografico#	IT_2018-10-16_FoE
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 21 e 22 marzo 2019	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 21/22 March 2019	2019-03-19	https://www.camera.it/leg18/410?idSeduta=144&tipo=stenografico#	IT_2019-03-19_FoE
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 15 e 16 ottobre 2020	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 15/16 October 2020	2020-10-14	https://www.camera.it/leg18/410?idSeduta=0408&tipo=stenografico#sed0408.stenografico.tit00020	IT_2020-10-14_FoE
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 25 e 26 marzo 2021	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 25/26 March 2021	2021-03-24	https://www.camera.it/leg18/410?idSeduta=0474&tipo=stenografico#sed0474.stenografico.tit00130%20%20	IT_2021-03-24_FoE
Comunicazioni del Presidente del	Prime Minister's address to the	2015-06-24	https://www.camera.it/leg17/410?idSed	IT_2015-06-24_Eurozone

Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 25 e 26 giugno 2015	Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 25/26 June 2015		uta=449&tipo=stenografico	
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 14 e 15 dicembre 2017	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 14/15 December 2017	2017-12-12	https://www.camera.it/leg17/410?idSeduta=899&tipo=stenografico	IT_2017-12-12_Eurozone
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 13 e 14 dicembre 2018	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 13/14 December 2018	2018-12-11	https://www.camera.it/leg18/410?idSeduta=099&tipo=stenografico#	IT_2018-12-11_Eurozone
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 20 e 21 giugno 2019	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 20/21 June 2019	2019-06-19	https://www.camera.it/leg18/410?idSeduta=192&tipo=stenografico#	IT_2019-06-19_Eurozone
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo straordinario del 20 febbraio 2020	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the special summit of the European Council of 20 February 2020	2020-02-19	https://www.camera.it/leg18/410?idSeduta=0307&tipo=stenografico#sed0307.stenografico.tit00110	IT_2020-02-19_Eurozone
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo straordinario del 17 e 18 luglio 2020	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the special summit of the European Council of 17/18 July 2020	2020-07-15	https://www.camera.it/leg18/410?idSeduta=0372&tipo=stenografico#sed0372.stenografico.tit00020	IT_2020-07-15_Eurozone
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo straordinario del 23 aprile 2015	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the special summit of the European Council of 23 April 2015	2015-04-22	https://www.camera.it/leg17/410?idSeduta=413&tipo=stenografico	IT_2015-04-22_Migration
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 15 e 16 ottobre 2015	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 15/16 October 2015	2015-10-14	https://www.camera.it/leg17/410?idSeduta=502&tipo=stenografico	IT_2015-10-14_Migration

Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 18 e 19 febbraio 2016	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 18/19 February 2016	2016-02-17	https://www.camera.it/leg17/410?idSeduta=571&tipo=stenografico	IT_2016-02-17_Migration
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 28 e 29 giugno 2018	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 28/29 June 2018	2018-06-27	https://www.camera.it/leg18/410?idSeduta=020&tipo=stenografico#	IT_2018-06-27_Migration
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 24 e 25 giugno 2021	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 24/25 June 2021	2021-06-23	https://www.camera.it/leg18/410?idSeduta=0529&tipo=stenografico#sed0529.stenografico.tit00020	IT_2021-06-23_Migration
Comunicazioni del Presidente del Consiglio dei ministri in vista della riunione del Consiglio europeo del 21 e 22 ottobre 2021	Prime Minister's address to the Chamber of Deputies in view of the summit of the European Council of 21/22 October 2021	2021-10-20	https://www.camera.it/leg18/410?idSeduta=0578&tipo=stenografico#sed0578.stenografico.tit00060%20%20%20	IT_2021-10-20_Migration

Greece

Title of debate (in original language)	Title of debate (in English)	Date of debate (yyyy-mm-dd)	Link to debate	Code of debate
Συζήτηση επί του σχεδίου νόμου του Υπουργείου Οικονομικών: «Κύρωση του Κρατικού Προϋπολογισμού οικονομικού έτους 2017»	Discussion upon the budget bill of the Ministry of Economics: «ratification of the State Budget of 2017 financial year»	2016-12-09	https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Praktika/Synedriaseis-Olomeleias?sessionRecord=3ed636dc-c4ac-448e-88e0-a6d80019b0f1	EL_2016-12-09_FoE
Συνέχιση της συζήτησης και ψηφοφορία επί της προτάσεως του Πρωθυπουργού κ. Αλέξη Τσίπρα για παροχή ψήφου εμπιστοσύνης στην Κυβέρνηση, σύμφωνα με τα άρθρα 84 του Συντάγματος και 141 του Κανονισμού της Βουλής	Continuation of the discussion and vote upon the suggestion of Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras to provide vote of confidence to the government, in accordance with the articles 84 of Constitution and 141 of the Parliament's Regulation	2019-01-16	https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Praktika/Synedriaseis-Olomeleias?sessionRecord=ef14fd48-d869-42b1-a24b-a9d80000a2ec	EL_2019-01-16_FoE
Μόνη συζήτηση και ψήφιση επί της αρχής, των άρθρων και του συνόλου των σχεδίων νόμων του Υπουργείου Οικονομικών: i. «Κύρωση της Συμφωνίας για την τροποποίηση της Συνθήκης για τη θέσπιση του Ευρωπαϊκού Μηχανισμού Σταθερότητας.. ii. «Κύρωση της Συμφωνίας για την τροποποίηση της Συμφωνίας για τη μεταφορά και την αμοιβαιοποίηση των εισφορών στο Ενιαίο Ταμείο Εξυγίανσης...	Only debate and vote on the principle, articles and of all draft laws of the Ministry of Finance: i. 'Ratification of the Agreement amending the Treaty establishing the European Stability Mechanism. ii. 'Ratification of the Agreement on the amendment of the Agreement on the Transfer and the non-certification of the contributions to the Single Resolution Fund ...	2021-07-06	https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/a08fc2dd-61a9-4a83-b09a-09f4c564609d/es20210706.pdf	EL_2021-07-06_FoE
Νομοθετική εργασία σχετικά με επείγουσες ρυθμίσεις για τη διαπραγμάτευση και σύναψη συμφωνίας με τον Ευρωπαϊκό Μηχανισμό Στήριξης (Ε.Μ.Σ)	Legislative work regarding urgent measures for the negotiation and conclusion of an agreement with ESM	2015-07-15	https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Praktika/Synedriaseis-Olomeleias?sessionRecord=b6be2107-22c2-43b8-a158-a4d70033e109	EL_2015-07-15_Eurozone
Νομοθετική εργασία σχετικά με την κύρωση του Σχεδίου Σύμβασης Οικονομικής Ενίσχυσης	Legislative work regarding the ratification of the Contract Plan of	2015-08-14	https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Praktika/Synedriaseis-	EL_2015-08-14_Eurozone

από τον Ευρωπαϊκό Μηχανισμό Σταθερότητας και ρυθμίσεις για την υλοποίηση της Συμφωνίας Χρηματοδότησης	Financial Support by ESM and implementation of the Funding Agreement		Olomeleias?sessionRecord=07b927d4-3fe2-4f01-bf47-a4f400ded5ba	
Συζήτηση επίκαιρης ερώτησης του Αρχηγού της Αξιωματικής Αντιπολιτεύσεως και Προέδρου της Κοινοβουλευτικής Ομάδας του Συνασπισμού Ριζοσπαστικής Αριστεράς κ. Αλέξη Τσίπρα προς τον Πρωθυπουργό κ. Κυριάκο Μητσοτάκη, με θέμα: «Αποτελεσματική αντιμετώπιση των συνεπειών της οικονομικής κρίσης στην ελληνική οικονομία»	Discussion of a topical question by the Leader of the Claim Opposition and Chairman of the Parliamentary Group of the Coalition of the Radical Left, Mr. Alexis Tsipras, to the Prime Minister, Mr. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, on the subject: 'Effective dealing with the consequences of the economic crisis on the Greek economy '	2020-06-12	https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/a08fc2dd-61a9-4a83-b09a-09f4c564609d/es20200612.pdf	EL_2020-06-12_Eurozone
Μόνη συζήτηση και ψήφιση επί της αρχής, των άρθρων, των τροπολογιών και του συνόλου του σχεδίου νόμου του Υπουργείου Οικονομικών: «Φορολογικές παρεμβάσεις για την ενίσχυση της αναπτυξιακής διαδικασίας της ελληνικής οικονομίας, ενσωμάτωση στην ελληνική νομοθεσία των Οδηγιών (ΕΕ) 2017/1852, (ΕΕ) 2018/822, (ΕΕ) 2020/876, (ΕΕ) 2016/1164, (ΕΕ) 2018/1910 και (ΕΕ) 2019/475, συνεισφορά Δημοσίου για την αποπληρωμή δανείων πληγέντων δανειοληπτών λόγω των δυσμενών συνεπειών της νόσου COVID-19 και άλλες διατάξεις»	Single debate and vote on the principle, of articles, of the amendments and the whole draft law of the Ministry of Finance: 'Tax interventions for the strengthening of the development process of the Greek economy transposition into Greek legislation of Directives (EU) 2017/1852, (EU) 2018/822, (EU) 2020/876, (EU) 2016/1164, (EU) 2018/1910 and (EU) 2019/475, contribution Government to repay loans to affected borrowers due to the adverse effects of COVID-19 and other provisions '	2020-07-29	https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/a08fc2dd-61a9-4a83-b09a-09f4c564609d/es20200729.pdf	EL_2020-07-29_Eurozone
Κοινοβουλευτικός έλεγχος σχετικά με την ανεξέλεγκτη δράση από μη κυβερνητικές οργανώσεις με ύποπτο ρόλο και χρηματοδότηση στους χώρους υποδοχής προσφύγων και παράτυπων μεταναστών	Parliamentary control regarding the uncontrollable and suspicious action of NGOs and financing the refugees' and illegal immigrants' reception centres. Also, regarding the role of NGOs	2016-04-18	https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Praktika/Synedriaseis-Olomeleias?sessionRecord=14eabfae-c5e0-4ef3-95b2-a5ec01645089	EL_2016-04-18_Migration

και σχετικά με τον ρόλο των ΜΚΟ για την αντιμετώπιση του προσφυγικού προβλήματος	confronting the migration crisis			
Συζήτηση με θέμα 'Ανάγκη ύπαρξης εναλλακτικού σχεδίου για το μεταναστευτικό μπροστά στον υπαρκτό πλέον κίνδυνο κατάρρευσης της συμφωνίας Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης-Τουρκίας'	Debate on "The necessity of an alternative plan for the migration crisis due to the danger of the cancellation of the agreement between EU-Turkey"	2016-09-30	https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Praktika/Synedriaseis-Olomeleias?sessionRecord=f073cb7d-3776-4be4-b7fa-a691010db546	EL_2016-09-30_Migration
Νομοθετική εργασία σχετικά με την προσαρμογή της ελληνικής νομοθεσίας προς τις διατάξεις ευρωπαϊκών οδηγιών, με τις απαιτήσεις για την υποδοχή των αιτούντων διεθνή προστασία, τροποποίηση διαδικασιών ασύλου	Legislative work regarding the adaptation of Greek legislation towards European directives, the requisitions for welcoming international protection's applicants, modification of the procedures for asylum	2018-05-08	https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/Praktika/Synedriaseis-Olomeleias?sessionRecord=c6dcaf8a-c017-40f4-ae1d-a8da0186f647	EL_2018-05-08_Migration
Μόνη συζήτηση και ψήφιση επί της αρχής, των άρθρων, των τροπολογιών και του συνόλου του σχεδίου νόμου του Υπουργείου Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου: «Βελτίωση της μεταναστευτικής νομοθεσίας, τροποποίηση διατάξεων των νόμων 4636/2019 (Α' 169), 4375/2016 (Α' 51), 4251/2014 (Α' 80) και άλλες διατάξεις»	Discussion and voting on the principle, of the articles, of amendments and the entire draft law of the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum: 'Improvement of Immigration legislation, amendment of provisions of laws 4636/2019 (A '169), 4375/2016 (A' 51), 4251/2014 (A '80) and other provisions '	2020-05-08	https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/a08fc2dd-61a9-4a83-b09a-09f4c564609d/es20200508.pdf	EL_2020-05-08_Migration
Μόνη συζήτηση και ψήφιση επί της αρχής, των άρθρων και του συνόλου του σχεδίου νόμου του Υπουργείου Μετανάστευσης και Ασύλου: «Κύρωση της Συμφωνίας για την έδρα μεταξύ της Ελληνικής Δημοκρατίας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Υπηρεσίας Υποστήριξης για το Άσυλο (EASO) για τη λειτουργία του επιχειρησιακού γραφείου της EASO στην Ελλάδα»	Single debate and voting on the principle of articles and the entire draft law of the Ministry of Immigration and Asylum: 'Ratification of the Agreement on between the Hellenic Republic and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) for the operation of the EASO operational office in Hellas'	2020-06-16	https://www.hellenicparliament.gr/UserFiles/a08fc2dd-61a9-4a83-b09a-09f4c564609d/es20200616.pdf	EL_2020-06-16_Migration

Denmark

Title of debate (in original language)	Title of debate (in English)	Date of debate (yyyy-mm-dd)	Link to debate	Code of debate
R 8 Udenrigsministerens redegørelse om udviklingen i EU-samarbejdet i 2014	R 8 Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the development of EU cooperation in 2014	2015-02-03	https://www.ft.dk/samling/20141/redegoerelse/r8/beh1/forhandling.htm#speak4	DK_2015-02-03_FoE
R 9 Udenrigsministerens redegørelse om udviklingen i EU-samarbejdet i 2015	R 9 Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on developments in EU cooperation in 2015	2016-03-03	https://www.ft.dk/samling/20151/redegoerelse/R9/BEH1-61/forhandling.htm	DK_2016-03-03_FoE
F 28 Om et slankere europæisk samarbejde	F 28 On leaner European cooperation	2017-03-24	https://www.ft.dk/samling/20161/forespoergsel/F28/BEH1-73/forhandling.htm	DK_2017-03-24_FoE
F 2 Om scenarier for EU's videre udvikling	F 2 On scenarios for the EU's further development	2017-12-01	part 1: https://www.ft.dk/samling/20171/forespoergsel/F2/BEH1-27/forhandling.htm#tE938EC74786F4740AEF33CB26067233Btab2 part 2: https://www.ft.dk/samling/20171/vedtagelse/V6/index.htm	DK_2017-12-01_FoE
R 7 Udenrigsministerens redegørelse om udviklingen i EU-samarbejdet	R 7 Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on developments in EU cooperation	2020-02-27	https://www.ft.dk/samling/20191/redegoerelse/r7/beh1/forhandling.htm#tE938EC74786F4740AEF33CB26067233Btab1	DK_2020-02-27_FoE
R 8 Udenrigsministerens redegørelse om udviklingen i EU-samarbejdet	R 8 The Minister of Foreign Affairs' statement on the development of EU co-operation	2020-11-17	https://www.ft.dk/samling/20201/redegoerelse/r8/beh1/forhandling.htm#speak0	DK_2020-11-17_FoE
14) Forespørgsel nr. F 27: Forespørgsel til økonomi- og indenrigsministeren om økonomisk udvikling og beskæftigelse i Europa og en løsning på gældsspørgsmålet i de	14. Question No F 27: Question to the Minister of Economy and Home Affairs on economic development and employment in Europe and a solution to the debt issue in the	2015-04-30	https://www.ft.dk/samling/20141/forespoergsel/F27/BEH1-85/forhandling.htm	DK_2015-04-30_Eurozone

EU-lande, der er hårdest ramt af krisen	EU countries most affected by the crisis			
R 9 Udenrigsministerens redegørelse om udviklingen i EU-samarbejdet i 2015	R 9 Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on developments in EU cooperation in 2015	2016-03-03	https://www.ft.dk/samling/20151/redegoerelse/r9/beh1/forhandling.htm#speak14	DK_2016-03-03_Eurozone
R 7 Udenrigsministerens redegørelse om udviklingen i EU-samarbejdet i 2016	R 7 Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the development of EU cooperation in 2016	2017-03-24	part1: https://www.ft.dk/ripdf/samling/20161/redegoerelse/R7/20161_R7.pdfpart 2: https://www.ft.dk/samling/20161/redegoerelse/r7/beh1/forhandling.htm#speak162	DK_2017-03-24_Eurozone
F 2 Om scenarier for EU's videre udvikling	F 2 On scenarios for the EU's further development	2017-12-01	https://www.ft.dk/samling/20171/forespoergsel/f2/beh1/forhandling.htm#speak51	DK_2017-12-01_Eurozone
F 66 Om EU's genopretningsfond	F 66 On the EU Recovery Fund	2020-06-24	https://www.ft.dk/samling/20191/forespoergsel/F66/BEH1-136/forhandling.htm#tE938EC74786F4740AEF33CB26067233Btab1	DK_2020-06-24_Eurozone
B 76 Forslag til folketingsbeslutning om flygtningefaciliteten for Tyrkiet.	B 76 Proposal for a parliamentary resolution on the refugee facility for Turkey.	2016-03-02	https://www.ft.dk/samling/20151/beslutningsforslag/b76/beh1/forhandling.htm#tE938EC74786F4740AEF33CB26067233Btab1	DK_2016-03-02_Migration
R 9 Udenrigsministerens redegørelse om udviklingen i EU-samarbejdet i 2015	R 9 Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on developments in EU cooperation in 2015	2016-03-03	part1: https://www.ft.dk/ripdf/samling/20151/redegoerelse/R9/20151_R9.pdf part2: https://www.ft.dk/samling/20151/redegoerelse/r9/beh1/forhandling.htm#speak64	DK_2016-03-03_Migration
R 7 Udenrigsministerens redegørelse om udviklingen i EU-samarbejdet i 2016	R 7 Statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the development of EU cooperation in 2016	2017-03-24	part1: https://www.ft.dk/samling/20161/redegoerelse/R7/skriftlig.htm part2: https://www.ft.dk	DK_2017-03-24_Migration

			/samling/20161/redegoerelse/r7/beh1/forhandling.htm#speak142	
F 28 Om finansiering af tyrkisk grænseværn på grænsen til Syrien	F 28 On the financing of Turkish border guards on the border with Syria	2018-05-31	https://www.ft.dk/samling/20171/forespoergsel/f28/beh1/forhandling.htm#tE938EC74786F4740AEF33CB26067233Btab1	DK_2018-05-31_Migration
F 55 Om at flygtninge- og migrantstrømmen fra Tyrkiet stoppes, inden den når ind over Danmarks grænser	F 55 That the flow of refugees and migrants from Turkey is stopped before it reaches Denmark's borders	2020-06-02	https://www.ft.dk/samling/20191/forespoergsel/f55/beh1/forhandling.htm#speak0	DK_2020-06-02_Migration
F 6 Om et modtagecenter for asylansøgere uden for Europa	F 6 About a reception centre for asylum seekers outside Europe	2020-12-17	https://www.ft.dk/samling/20201/forespoergsel/f6/beh1/forhandling.htm#tE938EC74786F4740AEF33CB26067233Btab2	DK_2020-12-17_Migration

Sweden

Title of debate (in original language)	Title of debate (in English)	Date of debate (yyyy-mm-dd)	Link to debate	Code of debate
EU-kommissionens arbetsprogram 2015	The European Commission's 2015 Work Program	2015-02-18	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/utlatande/kommissionens-arbetsprogram-2015_H201UU4	SE_2015-02-18_FoE
Kommissjonens arbetsprogram 2017	The Commission´s Work Program 2017	2017-03-15	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/utlatande/kommissionens-arbetsprogram-2017_H401UU4	SE_2017-03-15_FoE
Verksamheten i Europeiska unionen under 2016	EU affairs 2016	2017-06-12	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/betankande/verksamheten-i-europeiska-unionen-under-2016_H401UU10	SE_2017-06-12_FoE
Kommissionens arbetsprogram 2019	The Commission´s work program 2019	2018-12-05	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/utlatande/kommissionens-	SE_2018-12-05_FoE

			arbetsprogram-2019_H601UU4	
Kommissionens meddelande om den inre marknaden i en värld som förändras	the Internal Market in a changing world	2019-03-13	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/utlatande/kommissionens-meddelande-om-den-inre-marknaden-i_H601NU10	SE_2019-03-13_FoE
§ 4 Kommissionens arbetsprogram 2020 och kommissionens meddelande om konferensen om Europas framtid	§ 4 Commission work program 2020 and the Commission communication on the conference on the future of Europe	2020-03-19	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/utlatande/kommissionens-arbetsprogram-2020-och_H701UU5	SE_2020-03-19_FoE
§ 1 EU-politisk debatt	§ 1 EU-policy debate	2021-01-20	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/protokoll/protokoll-20202167-onsdagen-den-20-januari_H80967/html	SE_2021-01-20_FoE
Färdigställandet av EU:S ekonomiska och monetära union	Completing the Economic and Monetary Union	2015-11-11	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/utlatande/fardigstallandet-av-eus-ekonomiska-och-monetara_H301FiU13	SE_2015-11-11_Eurozone
Diskussionsunderlag om en fördjupad ekonomisk och monetär union	Discussion paper on a deeper economic and monetary union	2017-11-15	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/utlatande/diskussionsunderlag-om-en-fordjupad-ekonomisk-och_H501FiU18	SE_2017-11-15_Eurozone
Kommissionens arbetsprogram 2018	The Commission´s 2018 work program	2017-12-07	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/utlatande/kommissionens-arbetsprogram-2018_H501UU4	SE_2017-12-07_Eurozone
§ 1 Återrapportering från Europeiska rådets möte den 12–13 december	§ 1 Reporting from the European Council meeting on 12-13 December 2019	2019-12-17	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/dokument/protokoll/protokoll-20192053-tisdagen-den-17-december_H70953/html	SE_2019-12-17_Eurozone
Verksamheten i Europeiska unionen under 2020 Utrikesutskottets betänkande 2020/21:UU10	Activities in the European Union in 2020	2021-06-09	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/betankande/verksamheten-i-europeiska-unionen-under-2020_H801UU10	SE_2021-06-09_Eurozone
EU:s gränskodex	The Schengen borders code	2015-02-18	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/betankan	SE_2015-02-18_Migration

			de/eus-granskodex_H201SfU7	
Migration	Migration	2015-04-08	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/betankande/migration_H201SfU11	SE_2015-04-08_Migration
Särskilda åtgärder vid allvarlig fara för den allmänna ordningen eller den inre säkerheten i landet	Special measures in face of serious danger to the country's public safety and internal security	2015-12-17	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/betankande/sarskilda-atgarder-vid-allvarlig-fara-for-den_H301JuU24	SE_2015-12-17_Migration
Ytterligare anpassning av svensk rätt till Dublinförordningen	Further adaption of Swedish law to the Dublin regulation	2017-05-31	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/betankande/ytterligare-anpassning-av-svensk-ratt-till_H401SfU21	SE_2017-05-31_Migration
Migration och asylpolitik	Migration and asylum policy	2021-04-14	https://www.riksdagen.se/sv/dokument-lagar/arende/betankande/migration-och-asylpolitik_H801SfU20	SE_2021-04-14_Migration

Poland

Title of debate (in original language)	Title of debate (in English)	Date of debate (yyyy-mm-dd)	Link to debate	Code of debate
Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie styczeń-czerwiec 2016 r. (przewodnictwo Holandii w Radzie Unii Europejskiej) wraz ze stanowiskiem Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej	Information for the Sejm and Senate of the Republic of Poland on the participation of the Republic of Poland in the work of the European Union in the period of January-June 2016 (Presidency of the Netherlands in the Council of the European Union) with the position of the European Union Affairs Committee	2016-10-05	http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/4D6FCFA93E71D570C1258043006EDA2C/%24File/27_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf	PL_2016-10-05_FoE
Sprawozdanie Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej o poselskim projekcie uchwały w 60. rocznicę zapoczątkowania procesów integracji europejskiej	Report of the European Union Affairs Committee on the parliamentary draft resolution on the 60th anniversary of the initiation of the processes of European integration	2017-03-23	http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/4E1412BBDD76C840C12580EC007F55F1/%24File/38_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf	PL_2017-03-23_FoE
Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie styczeń-czerwiec 2017 r. (przewodnictwo Malty w Radzie Unii Europejskiej) wraz ze stanowiskiem Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej	Information for the Sejm and Senate of the Republic of Poland on the participation of the Republic of Poland in the work of the European Union in the period of January-June 2017 (Malta's presidency of the Council of the European Union) with the position of the European Union Affairs Committee	2017-10-12	http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/290F0B0341A2D875C12581B7007CD43E/%24File/49_c_ksiazka_bis.pdf	PL_2017-10-12_FoE
Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie styczeń-czerwiec 2018 r. (przewodnictwo Bułgarii w Radzie Unii Europejskiej) wraz ze stanowiskiem Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej	Information for the Sejm and Senate of the Republic of Poland about the participation of the Republic of Poland in the work of the European Union in the period of January-June 2018 (Presidency of Bulgaria in the Council of the European Union) with the position of the European Union Affairs Committee	2018-09-13	http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/D580C61F25713E0BC1258307007CFE54/%24File/68_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf	PL_2018-09-13_FoE
Informacja dla Sejmu i Senatu Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej	Information for the Sejm and Senate of the Republic of Poland about the participation of the	2019-03-13	http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/C4AC0EBBE	PL_2019-03-13_FoE

w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie lipiec-grudzień 2018 r. (przewodnictwo Austrii w Radzie Unii Europejskiej) z komisyjnym projektem uchwały	Republic of Poland in the work of the European Union in the period July-December 2018 (Austria's presidency of the Council of the European Union) with the committee's draft resolution		D0AB979C12583BD000C6500/%24File/78_a_ksiazka_bis.pdf	
Debata nad informacją dla Sejmu i Senatu RP o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie lipiec–grudzień 2019 r. (przewodnictwo Finlandii w Radzie Unii Europejskiej) oraz debata nad informacją dla Sejmu i Senatu RP o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie styczeń–czerwiec 2020 r. (przewodnictwo Chorwacji w Radzie Unii Europejskiej)	Debate on the information for the Sejm and the Senate of the Republic of Poland on the Republic of Poland's participation in the work of the European Union in July-December 2019 (Finnish Presidency of the Council of the European Union) and debate on the information for the Sejm and the Senate of the Republic of Poland on the Republic of Poland's participation in the work of the European Union in January-June 2020 (Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union)	2020-11-18	http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter9.nsf/0/10838D572B2C7CAAC125860F0004B7C9/%24File/21_a_ksiazka_bis.pdf	PL_2020-11-18_FoE
Debata nad informacją dla Sejmu i Senatu RP o udziale Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w pracach Unii Europejskiej w okresie lipiec-grudzień 2020 (przewodnictwo Niemiec w Radzie Unii Europejskiej) wraz z komisyjnym projektem uchwały	Debate on the information for the Sejm and the Senate of the Republic of Poland on the Republic of Poland's participation in the work of the European Union in July-December 2020 (German Presidency of the Council of the European Union) together with the commission's draft resolution	2021-04-15	http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter9.nsf/0/0992B779CB33A66AC12586B800790AEB/%24File/28_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf	PL_2021-04-15_FoE
Debata nad informacją bieżąca w sprawie stanu polskiej polityki zagranicznej wobec Unii Europejskiej, strategii w zakresie integracji Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej ze strefą euro i realizacji zobowiązań wynikających z ratyfikacji traktatu ateńskiego	Debate on the current information on the state of Polish foreign policy towards the European Union, the strategy concerning the integration of the Republic of Poland with the euro area and fulfilment of obligations resulting from the ratification of the Athens Treaty	2017-03-23	http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/4E1412BBDD76C840C12580EC007F55F1/%24File/38_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf#page=34&zoom=78.74,-484,842	PL_2017-03-23_Eurozone
Debata nad informacją Prezesa Rady Ministrów na temat postanowień porozumienia, podpisanego podczas	Debate on the Prime Minister's information on the provisions of the agreement, signed during the extraordinary European	2020-07-22	http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter9.nsf/0/61C79198514935EDC12585B2	PL_2020-07-22_Eurozone

nadzwyczajnego szczytu Rady Europejskiej w Brukseli w dniach 17–21 lipca 2020 roku	council summit in Brussels on 17-21 July 2020		0047D675/%24File/15_a_ksiazka_bis.pdf	
Debata nad rządowym projektem ustawy o ratyfikacji decyzji Rady (UE, Euratom) 2020/2053 z dn. 14 grudnia 2020 w sprawie systemu zasobów własnych Unii Europejskiej oraz uchylającej decyzję 2014/335 UE, Euratom	Debate on the government's draft law on the ratification of Council Decision (EU, Euratom) 2020/2053 of 14 December 2020 on the system of own resources of the European Union and repealing Decision 2014/335 EU, Euratom	2021-05-04	http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter9.nsf/0/F747FAA5E5B69D08C12586CB0080ED96/%24File/29_a_ksiazka_bis.pdf	PL_2021-05-04_Eurozone
Informacja prezesa Rady Ministrów na temat kryzysu migracyjnego w Europie i jego reperkusji dla Polski.	Information from the Prime Minister on the migration crisis in Europe and its repercussions for Poland.	2015-09-16	http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter7.nsf/0/A8CA0F4060DE3B1CC1257EC200722812/%24File/100_a_ksiazka.pdf	PL_2015-09-16_Migration
Sprawozdanie Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej o poselskim projekcie uchwały w sprawie polityki imigracyjnej państwa polskiego na forum Unii Europejskiej	Report of the European Union Affairs Committee on the deputy's draft resolution on the immigration policy of the Polish state in the European Union	2016-02-09	http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/CFEA3265E15B757CC1257F54005D968F/%24File/11_a_ksiazka_bis.pdf	PL_2016-02-09_Migration
Sprawozdanie Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej o poselskich projektach uchwał w sprawie: – polityki imigracyjnej państwa polskiego na forum Unii Europejskiej, – polityki imigracyjnej Polski	Report of the European Union Affairs Committee on deputies' draft resolutions on: – the Polish state's immigration policy on the forum of the European Union, – Poland's immigration policy	2016-03-09	http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/7995B0D85FD508D9C1257F77002F157D/%24File/13_a_ksiazka_bis.pdf	PL_2016-03-09_Migration
Pierwsze czytanie komisyjnego projektu uchwały w sprawie propozycji ustanowienia unijnego korekcyjnego mechanizmu alokacji uchodźców oraz mechanizmu solidarności finansowej	First reading of the committee's draft resolution on the proposal to establish an EU corrective refugee allocation mechanism and financial solidarity mechanism	2016-10-21	http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/6F74FA41DE269CF0C1258053007AE55D/%24File/28_c_ksiazka_bis.pdf	PL_2016-10-21_Migration
Sprawozdanie Komisji Administracji i Spraw Wewnętrznych oraz Komisji do Spraw Unii Europejskiej o komisyjnym projekcie uchwały w sprawie	Report of the Administration and Home Affairs Committee and the European Union Affairs Committee on the draft resolution on the proposal to establish an EU corrective	2016-12-01/02	part1: http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/2C9E4F23C2DFA8EAC125807C006CED3E	PL_2016-12-01_Migration PL_2016-12-02_Migration

propozycji ustanowienia unijnego korekcyjnego mechanizmu alokacji uchodźców oraz mechanizmu solidarności finansowej	refugee allocation mechanism and financial solidarity mechanism		/%24File/31_c_ksiazka_bis.pdf part2: http://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter8.nsf/0/5F19349D33B49EE4C125807D006DD73D/%24File/31_d_ksiazka_bis.pdf	
Rozpatrzenie wniosku Prezydenta Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej w sprawie wyrażenia przez Sejm zgody na przedłużenie stanu wyjątkowego obowiązującego na obszarze części województwa podlaskiego oraz części województwa lubelskiego	Consideration of the application of the President of the Republic of Poland on the consent of the Sejm to extend the state of emergency in force in part of the Podlaskie Voivodeship and part of the Lubelskie Voivodeship	2021-09-30	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter9.nsf/0/0B7388CA8D11F2D5C12587610007414D/%24File/38_b_ksiazka_bis.pdf	PL_2021-09-30_Migration
Informacja rządu w sprawie sytuacji na granicy polsko-białoruskiej i podejmowanych działań	Government information on the situation on the Polish-Belarusian border and on the actions taken	2021-11-09	https://orka2.sejm.gov.pl/StenoInter9.nsf/0/E759260C92FA55C5C125878900001D34/%24File/41_a_ksiazka_bis.pdf	PL_2021-11-09_Migration

Hungary

Title of debate (in original language)	Title of debate (in English)	Date of debate (yyyy-mm-dd)	Link to debate	Code of debate
H/5984 Üzenet az Európai Unió vezetőinek	A message to the leaders of the European Union	2015-09-21	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/orszaggyulesi-naplo-elozo-ciklusbeli-adatai?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=cvFGDHVX&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_irom.irom_adat%3Fp_ckl%3D40%26p_izon%3D5984	HU_2015-09-21_FoE
T/12458 Magyarország	The seventh amendment to	2016-10-17	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/orszaggyulesi-	HU_2016-10-17_FoE

Alaptörvényének hetedik módosítása	the Fundamental Law of Hungary		naplo-elozo-ciklusbeli-adatai?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=1KzpPm73&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_irom.irom_adat%3Fp_ckl%3D40%26p_izon%3D12458	
H/18817 Az Európai Parlament Soros-terv végrehajtásáról szóló határozatával szemben	Against the resolution of the European Parliament on the execution of the Soros-plan	2017-12-12	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/orszaggyulesi-naplo-elozo-ciklusbeli-adatai?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=u2pR4nD0&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_irom.irom_adat%3Fp_ckl%3D40%26p_izon%3D18817	HU_2017-12-12_FoE
H/19861 A Lengyelország melletti kiállásról Brüsszel nyomásgyakorlásával szemben	On supporting Poland against the pressure executed by Brussels	2018-02-20	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/orszaggyulesi-naplo-elozo-ciklusbeli-adatai?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=OLJK2fKv&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_irom.irom_adat%3Fp_ckl%3D40%26p_izon%3D19861	HU_2018-02-20_FoE
H/1487 A Magyarország szuverenitásának megvédéséről és a Magyarországgal szembeni rágalmak visszautasításáról	On the defense of Hungarian sovereignty and the rejection of defamatory statements against Hungary	2018-10-03	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/felszolalasok-keresese?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=u2pR4nD0&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_irom.irom_adat%3Fp	HU_2018-10-03_FoE

			_ckl%3D41%26p_izon%3D1487	
P/10760 A nemzeti önazonosság védelméről	On the defence of national identity	2020-06-04/08	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/ulesnap-felszolalasai?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=mjUwV5sg&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_irom.irom_adat%3Fp_ckl%3D41%26p_izon%3D10760	HU_2020-06-04_FoE HU_2020-06-08_FoE
H/15586 A Minority SafePack elnevezésű európai polgári kezdeményezésről	On the European Citizens' Initiative 'Minority SafePack'	2021-04-07	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/ulesnap-felszolalasai?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=ZkVfdz3S&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_naplo.naplo_fadat_aktus%3Fp_ckl%3D41%26p_uln%3D187%26p_felsz%3D187%26p_felszig%3D226%26p_aktus%3D40	HU_2021-04-07_FoE
T/15909 Az Európai Unió Bírósága C-66/18. számú ítéletének végrehajtása érdekében a nemzeti felsőoktatásról szóló 2011. évi CCIV. törvény módosításáról	The modification of the Act on Higher Education in relation to the execution of the judgment of the CJEU	2021-04-28	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/ulesnap-felszolalasai?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=ZkVfdz3S&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_naplo.naplo_fadat_aktus%3Fp_ckl%3D41%26p_uln%3D193%26p_felsz%3D155%26p_felszig%3D190%26p_aktus%3D29	HU_2021-04-28_FoE
V/10090 A 2007-2013 közötti időszakban Magyarországnak járó uniós források felhasználásáról	On the use of the Union funds allocated to Hungary for the 2007-2013 period	2016-05-02	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/orszaggyulesi-naplo-elozo-ciklusbeli-adatai?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=norm	HU_2016-05-02_Eurozone

			al&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=DMRtLylT&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_irom.irom_adat%3Fp_ckl%3D40%26p_izon%3D10090	
V/18483 A 2014-2020 közötti időszakban Magyarországnak járó uniós források felhasználásáról	On the use of the Union funds allocated to Hungary for the 2014-2020 period	2017-12-04	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/orszaggyulesi-naplo-elozo-ciklusbeli-adatai?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=u2pR4nD0&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_irom.irom_adat%3Fp_ckl%3D40%26p_izon%3D18483	HU_2017-12-04_Eurozone
H/11282 A koronavírus gazdasági hatásaival kapcsolatos európai uniós gazdasági intézkedésekről	On the European Union economic measures connected to the impact of the coronavirus	2020-07-14	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/ulesnap-felszolalasai?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=4rOQoeps&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_naplo.naplo_fadat_aktus%3Fp_ckl%3D41%26p_uln%3D148%26p_felsz%3D31%26p_felszig%3D116%26p_aktus%3D9	HU_2020-07-14_Eurozone
T/15696 Az Európai Unió saját forrásainak rendszeréről és a 2014/335/EU, Euratom határozat hatályon kívül helyezéséről szóló, 2020. december 14-i (EU, Euratom) 2020/2053 tanácsi határozat kihirdetéséről	On the declaration of the Council decision on the system of funds of the EU	2021-04-08	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/ulesnap-felszolalasai?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=ZkVfdz3S&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_naplo.naplo_fadat_aktus%3Fp_ckl%3D41%26p_uln%3D188%26p_felsz%3D202%26p_felszig%3D243%26p_aktus%3D19	HU_2021-04-08_Eurozone

T/5136 A menedékjogról szóló 2007. évi LXXX. törvény módosításáról	On the amendment of the Act (2007/LXXX.) on the right to asylum	2015-06-17	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/orszaggyulesi-naplo-elozo-ciklusbeli-adatai?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=cvFGDHVX&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_irom.irom_adat%3Fp_ckl%3D40%26p_izon%3D5136	HU_2015-06-17_Migration
T/7332 Az Európai Unió Tanácsa által a nemzetközi védelmet kérők kötelező kvóták szerinti elosztásáról elfogadott határozattal összefüggésben indítandó bírósági eljárásról	On the judicial proceeding concerning the decision of the Council for mandatory quotas for the relocation of those requesting international protection	2015-11-16	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/orszaggyulesi-naplo-elozo-ciklusbeli-adatai?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=u2pR4nD0&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_irom.irom_adat%3Fp_ckl%3D40%26p_izon%3D7332	HU_2015-11-16_Migration
T/13976 A határőrizeti területen lefolytatott eljárás szigorításával kapcsolatos egyes törvények módosításáról	On the amendment of certain acts related to the increased strictness of the procedures on the border territories	2017-02-21	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/orszaggyulesi-naplo-elozo-ciklusbeli-adatai?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=cVKeJC55&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_irom.irom_adat%3Fp_ckl%3D40%26p_izon%3D13976	HU_2017-02-21_Migration
T/333 Egyes törvényeknek a jogellenes bevándorlás elleni intézkedésekkel kapcsolatos módosításáról	On the amendment of some acts concerning measures against illegal immigration	2018-06-05/18	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/felszolalasok-keresese?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=u2pR4nD0&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql	HU_2018-06-05_Migration HU_2018-06-18_Migration

			%2Fogy_irom.irom_adat%3Fp_ckl%3D41%26p_izon%3D333	
T/3625 A Hungary Helps Programról	On the Hungary Helps programme	2018-11-28	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/felszolalasok-keresese?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=cVKeJC55&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_irom.irom_adat%3Fp_ckl%3D41%26p_izon%3D3625	HU_2018-11-28_Migration
H/14335 A Menekültügyi és Migrációs Paktumot alkotó öt európai parlamenti és tanácsi rendelettervezet vonatkozásában az indokolt vélemény elfogadása feltételeinek fennállásáról szóló jelentés elfogadásáról	On the acceptance of the report pertaining to the conditions of a reasoned opinion on the five regulation proposals of the European Parliament and Council forming the basis for the European Asylum and Migration Pact	2020-12-15	https://www.parlament.hu/web/guest/ulesnap-felszolalasai?p_p_id=hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_auth=4rOQoeps&_hu_parlament_cms_pair_portlet_PairProxy_INSTANCE_9xd2Wc9jP4z8_pairAction=%2Finternet%2Fcplsql%2Fogy_naplo.naplo_fadat_aktus%3Fp_ckl%3D41%26p_uln%3D176%26p_felsz%3D167%26p_felszig%3D222%26p_aktus%3D78	HU_2020-12-15_Migration

Slovakia

Title of debate (in original language)	Title of debate (in English)	Date of debate (yyyy-mm-dd)	Link to debate	Code of debate
Informácia poslancov Európskeho parlamentu, ktorí boli zvolení na území Slovenskej republiky o výkone ich mandátu a o aktuálnych otázkach prerokúvaných v Európskom parlamente	Information by the MEPs elected on the territory of the Slovak Republic about execution of their mandate and about the current issues debated in the EP	2017-03-31	https://tv.nrsr.sk/archiv/schodza/7/14?MeetingDate=31032017&DisplayChairman=false	SK_2017-03-31_FoE
Správa o priebehu a výsledkoch predsedníctva SR v Rade Európskej únie ; Výročná správa o členstve Slovenskej republiky v Európskej únii – hodnotenie a aktuálne priority vyplývajúce z Pracovného programu Európskej komisie ; Správa o plnení úloh zahraničnej a európskej politiky Slovenskej republiky v roku 2016 a jej zameranie na rok 2017	Report on the progress and results of the Slovak chairmanship of the Council of the EU ; Report on the fulfilment of the aims of the foreign and European policy of the Slovak Republic in the year 2016 and its aims for year 2017 ; Report on the fulfilment of the aims of the foreign and European policy of the Slovak Republic in the year 2016 and its aims for year 2017	2017-05-16	https://tv.nrsr.sk/archiv/schodza/7/17?id=178763	SK_2017-05-16_FoE
Výročná správa o členstve Slovenskej republiky v Európskej únii – hodnotenie a aktuálne priority vyplývajúce z Pracovného programu Európskej komisie ; Správa o plnení úloh zahraničnej a európskej politiky Slovenskej republiky v roku 2017 a jej zameranie na rok 2018 ; Správa o činnosti Výboru Národnej rady Slovenskej republiky pre európske záležitosti za roky 2016 a 2017	Annual report on the membership of the Slovak Republic in the European Union – evaluation and current priorities stemming from the Working program of the European Commission ; Report on the fulfilment of the aims of the foreign and European policy of the Slovak Republic in the year 2017 and its aims for year 2018 ; Report on the activities of the Parliamentary Committee for the European affairs for years 2016 and 2017	2018-05-15	https://tv.nrsr.sk/archiv/schodza/7/31?id=192331	SK_2018-05-15_FoE
Výročná správa o členstve Slovenskej republiky v Európskej únii – hodnotenie a aktuálne priority vyplývajúce z Pracovného programu Európskej komisie ; Hodnotenie priorít zahraničnej a európskej politiky Slovenskej	Annual report on the membership of the Slovak Republic in the European Union – evaluation and current priorities stemming from the Working program of the European Commission ; Evaluation of the priorities of Slovak foreign and	2019-05-14	https://tv.nrsr.sk/archiv/schodza/7/45?id=208917	SK_2019-05-14_FoE

republiky v roku 2018 a ich zameranie na rok 2019	European policy in the year 2018 and its aims for year 2019			
Rokovanie o návrhu skupiny poslancov Národnej rady Slovenskej republiky na prijatie uznesenia Národnej rady Slovenskej republiky k návrhu správy Európskeho parlamentu o situácii v oblasti sexuálneho a reprodukčného zdravia a práv v Európskej únii v rámci zdravia žien, tlač 552	Debate on the proposal by a group of MPs for adopting a resolution of the National Council of the Slovak Republic regarding the proposal of the report by the European Parliament on the situation in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the European Union in the context of women health	2021-05-28	https://www.nrsr.sk/web/default.aspx?SectionId=104	SK_2021-05-28_FoE
Diskusia o konferencii o budúcnosti Európy	Debate on the Conference on the future of Europe	2021-06-18	https://www.nrsr.sk/web/default.aspx?SectionId=104	SK_2021-06-18_FoE
Vládny návrh zákona o štátnom rozpočte na rok 2016 + Návrh rozpočtu verejnej správy na roky 2016 až 2018	Government bill proposal on the 2016 state budget + Proposal for the 2016-2018 public administration budget	2015-11-18/19	https://tv.nrsr.sk/archiv/schodza/6/58?id=153869	SK_2015-11-18_Eurozone SK_2015-11-19_Eurozone
Hodina otazok	Hour of the questions (interpellations)	2017-09-07	https://tv.nrsr.sk/archiv/schodza/7/19?id=182127	SK_2017-09-07_Eurozone
Riešenie migračných výziev, ktorým aktuálne čelí Európska únia	Solving the migration challenges currently faced by the European Union	2015-06-23/24	part1: https://tv.nrsr.sk/archiv/schodza/6/53?id=147294 part2: https://tv.nrsr.sk/archiv/schodza/6/53?id=147568	SK_2015-06-23_Migration SK_2015-06-24_Migration
Informácia o aktuálnej situácii riešenia migračnej krízy v Európskej únii	Information on the current situation of how to solve the migration crisis in the European Union	2015-09-16/17	part1: https://tv.nrsr.sk/archiv/schodza/6/54?id=149000 part2: https://tv.nrsr.sk/archiv/schodza/6/54?MeetingDate=17092015&DisplayChairman=false&page=1	SK_2015-09-16_Migration SK_2015-09-17_Migration
Rokovanie o Zahraničnej a európskej politike Slovenskej republiky v roku 2020.	Debate on the Foreign and European affairs/policy in the year 2020	2020-09-24	https://www.nrsr.sk/web/default.aspx?SectionId=104	SK_2020-09-24_Migration
Návrh Obrannej stratégie Slovenskej republiky	Proposal of the Defence Strategy of the Slovak Republic	2021-01-27	https://www.nrsr.sk/web/default.aspx?SectionId=104	SK_2021-01-27_Migration

Norway

Title of debate (in original language)	Title of debate (in English)	Date of debate (yyyy-mm-dd)	Link to debate	Code of debate
Sak nr. 1 Redegjørelse av utenriksministeren, samferdselsministeren og arbeids- og sosialministeren om viktige EU- og EØS-saker Sak nr. 1 Debatt om redegjørelsen om viktige EU- og EØS-saker (Redegjørelsen holdt i Stortingets møte 8. november 2018)'	Case # 1 Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Transport and the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs on important EU and EEA matters Case # 1 Debate on the report on important EU and EEA matters (The statement was held at the Storting's meeting on 8 November 2018)'	2018-11-08/13	part1: https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2018-2019/refs-201819-11-08/?m=1 part2: https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2018-2019/refs-201819-11-13/?m=1	NO_2018-11-08_FoE NO_2018-11-13_FoE
Sak nr. 4 Innstilling fra utenriks- og forsvarskomiteen om Representantforslag fra stortingsrepresentantene Audun Lysbakken, Solfrid Lerbrekk og Arne Nævra om å utrede alternativer til EØS-avtalen (Innst. 214 S (2018–2019), jf. Dokument 8:58 S (2018–2019))	Case # 4 Recommendation from the Foreign and Defence Committee on Representative proposals from Storting representatives Audun Lysbakken, Solfrid Lerbrekk and Arne Nævra to investigate alternatives to the EEA Agreement (Recommendation 214 S (2018–2019), cf. Document 8:58 S (2018–2019))	2019-04-11	https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2018-2019/refs-201819-04-11/?m=4	NO_2019-04-11_FoE
Sak nr. 1 Redegjørelse av utenriksministeren om viktige EU- og EØS-saker Sak nr. 1 Debatt om utenriksministerens redegjørelse om viktige EU- og EØS-saker (Redegjørelsen holdt i Stortingets møte 9. mai 2019)'	Case # 1 Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs on important EU and EEA matters Case # 1 Debate on the Foreign Minister's report on important EU and EEA matters (The statement was held at the Storting's meeting on 9 May 2019) '	2019-05-09/14	part1: https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2018-2019/refs-201819-05-09/?m=1 part2: https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2018-2019/refs-201819-05-14?m=1	NO_2019-05-09_FoE NO_2019-05-14_FoE
Debatt om utenriksministerens	Debate on the Foreign Minister's report on	2020-05-12	https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-	NO_2020-05-12_FoE

redegjørelse om viktige EU- og EØS-saker (Redegjørelsen holdt i Stortingets møte 5. mai 2020)	important EU and EEA issues (The report was held at the Storting's meeting on 5 May 2020)		og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2019-2020/refs-201920-05-12/?m=7	
Debatt om utenriksministerens redegjørelse om viktige EU- og EØS-saker (Redegjørelsen holdt i Stortingets møte 8. april 2021)	Debate on the Foreign Minister's report on important EU and EEA issues (The report was held at the Storting's meeting on 8 April 2021)	2021-04-13	https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2020-2021/refs-202021-04-13?m=7	NO_2021-04-13_FoE
Sak nr. 1 Redegjørelse om viktige EU- og EØS-saker av ministeren ved Statsministerens kontor for samordning av EØS-saker og forholdet til EU Talere: Statsråd Vidar Helgesen; Sak nr. 1; Debatt om redegjørelsen om viktige EU- og EØS-saker av ministeren ved Statsministerens kontor for samordning av EØS-saker og forholdet til EU (Redegjørelsen holdt i Stortingets møte 26. mai 2015)	Case # 1 Statement on important EU and EEA matters by the Minister at the Prime Minister's Office for the coordination of EEA matters and relations with the EU The following spoke: Prime Minister Vidar Helgesen; Case No. 1; Debate on the presentation of important EU and EEA matters by the Minister at the Prime Minister's Office for the coordination of EEA matters and relations with the EU (The statement was presented at the Storting's meeting on 26 May 2015)	2015-05-26/28	part1: https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2014-2015/150526/1 part2: https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2014-2015/150528/1	NO_2015-05-26_Eurozone NO_2015-05-28_Eurozone
Sak nr. 1 Redegjørelse om viktige EU- og EØS-saker av ministeren for samordning av EØS-saker og forholdet til EU. Talere: Statsråd Elisabeth Aspaker; Debatt om redegjørelsen om viktige EU- og EØS-saker av ministeren for samordning av EØS-saker og forholdet til EU (Redegjørelsen holdt i Stortingets møte 19. mai 2016)	Case # 1 Statement on important EU and EEA matters by the Minister for Co-ordination of EEA matters and relations with the EU. The following spoke: Prime Minister Elisabeth Aspaker; Debate on the statement on important EU and EEA matters by the Minister for Coordination of EEA matters and relations with the EU (The statement was	2016-05-19/26	part1: https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2015-2016/160519/1/ part2: https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2015-2016/160526/1/	NO_2016-05-19_Eurozone NO_2016-05-26_Eurozone

	presented at the Storting's meeting on 19 May 2016)			
Sak nr. 1 Redegjørelse om viktige EU- og EØS-saker av ministeren for samordning av EØS-saker og forholdet til EU. Talere: Statsråd Marit Berger Røsland; Sak nr. 1 Debatt om redegjørelsen om viktige EU- og EØS-saker av ministeren for samordning av EØS-saker og forholdet til EU (Redegjørelsen holdt i Stortingets møte 23. november 2017)	Case # 1 Statement on important EU and EEA matters by the Minister for Co-ordination of EEA matters and relations with the EU. The following spoke: Minister Marit Berger Røsland; Case # 1 Debate on the statement on important EU and EEA matters by the Minister for Co-ordination of EEA matters and relations with the EU (Statement held at the Storting's meeting on 23 November 2017)	2017-11-23/30	part1: https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2017-2018/refs-201718-11-23/?m=2 part2: https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2017-2018/refs-201718-11-23/?m=2	NO_2017-11-23_Eurozone NO_2017-11-30_Eurozone
Sak nr. 1 Redegjørelse av utenriksministeren om viktige EU- og EØS-saker Talere: Utenriksminister Ine M. Eriksen Søreide; Sak nr. 1. Debatt om utenriksministerens redegjørelse om viktige EU- og EØS-saker (Redegjørelsen holdt i Stortingets møte 9. mai 2019)	Case # 1 Statement by the Foreign Minister on important EU and EEA matters The following spoke: Foreign Minister Ine M. Eriksen Søreide; Case no. 1. Debate on the Foreign Minister's report on important EU and EEA matters (The statement was held at the Storting's meeting on 9 May 2019)	2019-05-09/14	part1: https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2018-2019/refs-201819-05-09/?m=1 part2: https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2018-2019/refs-201819-05-14/?m=1	NO_2019-05-09_Eurozone NO_2019-05-14_Eurozone
Debate on the Foreign Minister's and the Climate and Environment Minister's report on important EU and EEA issues (The report was held at the Storting's meeting on 17 November 2020)	Debate on the Foreign Minister's and the Climate and Environment Minister's report on important EU and EEA issues (The report was held at the Storting's meeting on 17 November 2020)	2020-11-19	https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2020-2021/refs-202021-11-19/?m=1	NO_2020-11-19_Eurozone

Innstilling fra utenriks- og forsvarskomiteen om Representantforslag fra stortings-representantene Emilie Enger Mehl, Liv Signe Navarsete, Ole André Myhrvold og Sigbjørn Gjelsvik om å kutte i Norges pengestøtte til EU (Innst. 224 S (2020–2021), jf. Dokument 8:65 S (2020–2021))	Recommendation from the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee on Representative proposals from the Storting representatives Emilie Enger Mehl, Liv Signe Navarsete, Ole André Myhrvold and Sigbjørn Gjelsvik to cut Norway's financial support to the EU	2021-02-16	https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2020-2021/refs-202021-02-16/?m=5	NO_2021-02-16_Eurozone
Sak nr. 6 Innstilling fra kommunal- og forvaltningskomiteen om representantforslag fra stortingsrepresentantene Kari Henriksen, Anniken Huitfeldt, Stine Renate Håheim, Helga Pedersen og Eirik Sivertsen om at Norge må bidra mer for å avhjelpe flyktningsituasjonen i Middelhavet	Case # 6 Recommendation from the municipal and administrative committee on proposals for representatives from parliamentary representatives Kari Henriksen, Anniken Huitfeldt, Stine Renate Håheim, Helga Pedersen and Eirik Sivertsen that Norway must contribute more to alleviate the refugee situation in the Mediterranean	2015-06-18	https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2014-2015/150618/6/	NO_2015-06-18_Migration
Sak nr. 4 Innstilling fra justiskomiteen om Representantforslag fra stortings-representantene Jenny Klinge, Per Olaf Lundteigen og Liv Signe Navarsete om å tre ut av Schengen-avtalens bestemmelser om grensekontroll samt innføre norsk grensekontroll	Case # 4 Recommendation from the Judiciary Committee on Representative proposals from parliamentary representatives Jenny Klinge, Per Olaf Lundteigen and Liv Signe Navarsete to withdraw from the Schengen Agreement's provisions on border control and introduce Norwegian border control	2016-06-08	https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2015-2016/160608/4/	NO_2016-06-08_Migration
Sak nr. 6 [14:32:08] Innstilling fra kommunal- og forvaltningskomiteen om Representant-	Case # 6 Recommendation from the municipal and administrative committee on	2018-05-03	https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Refer	NO_2018-05-03_Migration

forslag fra stortings-representantene Karin Andersen, Petter Eide og Bjørnar Moxnes om inntil videre å ikke benytte Dublin-avtalen for å returnere asylsøkere til Hellas (Innst. 244 S (2017–2018), jf. Dokument 8:92 S (2017–2018))	Representative proposals from Storting representatives Karin Andersen, Petter Eide and Bjørnar Moxnes for the time being not to use the Dublin agreement to return asylum seekers to Greece (Recommendation 244 S (2017–2018), cf. Document 8:92 S (2017–2018))		ater/Stortinget/2017-2018/refs-201718-05-03/?m=6	
Sak nr. 1 Redegjørelse av utenriksministeren om viktige EU- og EØS-saker Talere: Utenriksminister Ine M. Eriksen Søreide; Sak nr. 1. Debatt om utenriksministerens redegjørelse om viktige EU- og EØS-saker (Redegjørelsen holdt i Stortingets møte 9. mai 2019)	Case # 1 Statement by the Foreign Minister on important EU and EEA matters The following spoke: Foreign Minister Ine M. Eriksen Søreide; Case no. 1. Debate on the Foreign Minister's report on important EU and EEA matters (The statement was held at the Storting's meeting on 9 May 2019)	2019-05-09/14	part1: https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2018-2019/refs-201819-05-09/?m=1 part2: https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2018-2019/refs-201819-05-14/?m=1	NO_2019-05-09_Migration NO_2019-05-14_Migration
Innstilling fra kommunal- og forvaltningskomiteen om Representant-forslag fra stortings-representant Bjørnar Moxnes om evakuering av flyktninger fra Hellas, med bakgrunn i den kritiske Moria-situasjonen, i det omfang norske kommuner har kapasitet til og Representantforslag fra stortings-representantene Karin Andersen, Kristoffer Robin Haug og Lars Haltbrekken om å lage en plan for hvor	Recommendation from the Local Government and Administration Committee on Representative proposal Bjørnar Moxnes on evacuation of refugees from Greece, based on the critical Moria situation, to the extent Norwegian municipalities have capacity for and Representative proposal from Storting representatives Karin Andersen, Kristoffer Robin Haug and Lars Haltbrekken on to make a plan for how	2020-12-07	https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2020-2021/refs-202021-12-07/?m=12	NO_2020-12-07_Migration

mange flere asylsøkere Norge skal evakuere fra Hellas i 2021 og at økningen i antall evakuerte asylsøkere innen Europa ikke skal føre til at Norge tar imot færre kvoteflyktninger via FN (Innst. 115 S (2020–2021), jf. Dokument 8:5 S (2020–2021) og Dokument 8:35 S (2020–2021))	many more asylum seekers Norway will evacuate from Greece in 2021 and that the increase in the number of evacuated asylum seekers within Europe will not lead to Norway receiving fewer quota refugees via the UN (Recommendation 115 S (2020–2021), cf. Document 8: 5 S (2020–2021) and Document 8:35 S (2020–2021))			
Sak nr. 16 [13:45:36] Innstilling fra kommunal- og forvaltningskomiteen om Representant-forslag fra stortings-representantene Jon Engen-Helgheim og Christian Tybring-Gjedde om å sikre norsk råderett over egen innvandrings-politikk og si nei til EUs «New Pact on Migration and Asylum» (Innst. 596 S (2020–2021), jf. Dokument 8:206 S (2020–2021))	Recommendation from the Local Government and Administration Committee on Representative proposals from the Storting representatives Jon Engen-Helgheim and Christian Tybring-Gjedde to ensure Norwegian right of disposal over their own immigration policy and say no to the EU «New Pact on Migration and Asylum» (Recommendation 596 S (2020–2021) , see Document 8: 206 S (2020–2021))	2021-05-31	https://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Referater/Stortinget/2020-2021/refs-202021-05-31/?m=16	NO_2021-05-31_Migration

Annex 2: Political parties in European and national parliaments

European Parliament

Name of the Party	Electoral result	Number of seats	Party family
8th (2014-2019)			
Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D)	24,4	191	Social democracy
European People's Party (EPP)	23,8	221	Christian democracy
The Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)	7,3	50	Green/ Ecologist
Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE)	7	67	Liberal
Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD)	6,6	48	Right-wing
European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL)	5,6	52	Communist/ Socialist
European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)	5,2	70	Conservative
Non-attached Members (NI)		52	
9th (2019-2024)			
European People's Party (EPP)	21	182	Christian democracy
Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D)	18,5	154	Social democracy
Renew Europe (Renew)	13	108	Liberal
The Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)	11,7	74	Green/ Ecologist
Identity and Democracy (ID)	10,8	73	Right-wing
European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)	8,2	62	Conservative
Non-attached Members (NI)		57	
European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL)	6,5	41	Communist/ Socialist

France

Party Name in English (Name in original language – English abbreviation)	**Electoral result**	**Number of seats**	**Party position vis-à-vis government**	**EP group affiliation**	**Party family**	**Position left-right scale**	**Position EU integration scale**
			14th (2012 - 2017)				
Socialist Party (Parti socialiste - PS)	40,91%	280	In government	S&D	Social democracy	3,2493	7,9448
Union for a Popular Movement | The Republicans (Union pour un mouvement populaire | Les Républicains - UMP|LR)[41]	37,98%	194	In opposition	EPP	Conservative	7,4997	6,9862
National Front (Front national - FN)	3,66%	2	In opposition	ENF	Right-wing	9,6854	0,2157
Europe Ecology-The Greens (Europe-Ecologie-Les Verts - EELV)	3,60%	17	In government	Greens/ EFA	Green/ Ecologist	3,155	6,4585
Other Left (Divers gauche - DVG)	3,08%	22	In government	-	Social democracy	3,3	
New Centre (Nouveau Centre - NC),	2,47%	12	In opposition	ALDE / EPP	Liberal	6	8,7
changes to Union of Democrats and Independents (Union des démocrates et indépendants – UDI, with members from PR and AC	-	-	In opposition	ALDE	Conservative	7,4	7,9
Radical Party of the Left (Parti radical de Gauche - PRG)	2,34%	12	In government	S&D	Social democracy	4,0813	7,9361
Other Right	1,82%	15	In opposition	-	Conservative	7,6583	5,8333
(Divers droite - DVD), **including Republic Arise | France Arise** (Debout la république | Debout la France - DLR|DLF)[42]	-	2	In opposition		Right-wing	7,4	2,3
Radical Party (Parti radical - PR)	1,35%	6	In opposition	ALDE	Social democracy	3,9896	7,9361
The Left Front (Front de gauche - FG),	1,08%	10	In opposition	GUE/ NGL	Communist/ Socialist	-	-
electoral alliance which includes French Communist Party (Parti communiste français - PCF)	-	7	In opposition	-	Communist/ Socialist	1,3741	2,3595
Regionalist (Régionaliste - R)	0,59%	2	In opposition	-	Special issue	-	-
Centrist Alliance (Alliance centriste - AC)	0,53%	2	In opposition	-	Liberal	6	8,7
Democratic Movement (Le Centre pour la France: MEPs from Mouvement démocrate - MD)	0,49%	2	In opposition	ALDE	Conservative	6,1017	8,8995
Extreme right (Extrême droite - EXD)	0,13%	1	In opposition	-	Right-wing	8,8	2,3
			15th (2017 - 2022)				

[41] Change name to LR in 2015

[42] Change name to DLF in 2014

The Republic Onwards! (La République En Marche! - REM)	43,06%	308	In government	Renew	Liberal	6	8,7
The Republicans (Les Républicains - LR)	22,23%	112	In opposition	EPP	Conservative	7,4997	6,9862
National Front | National Rally (Front national | Rassemblement national - FN | RN)[43]	8,75%	8	In opposition	ENF / ID	Right-wing	9,6854	0,2157
France Unbowed (La France Insoumise - FI)	4,86%	17	In opposition	GUE/ NGL	Communist/ Socialist	1,3	3,3
Socialist Party (Parti socialiste - PS)	5,68%	30	In opposition	S&D	Social democracy	3,2493	7,9448
Europe Ecology-The Greens (Europe-Ecologie-Les Verts - EELV)	0,13%	1	In opposition	Greens/ EFA	Green/ Ecologist	3,155	6,4585
Democratic Movement (Mouvement démocrate - MD)	6,06%	42	In government	ALDE	Conservative	6,1017	8,8995
Union of Democrats and Independents (Union des démocrates et indépendants - UDI)	3,04%	18	In opposition	ALDE	Conservative	7,4	7,9
Other Right (Divers droite - DVD)	1,68%	6	In opposition	-	Conservative	7,6583	5,8333
French Communist Party (Parti communiste français - PCF)	1,20%	10	In opposition	-	Communist/ Socialist	1,3741	2,3595
Others (Divers - DIV)	0,55%	3	In opposition	-	No family	-	-
Other Left (Divers gauche - DVG)	1,45%	12	In opposition	-	Social democracy	3,3	
- France Arise (Debout la France - DLF)	0,10%	1	In opposition	-	Right-wing	7,4	2,3
Regionalist (Régionaliste - R)	0,76%	5	In opposition	-	Special issue	-	-
Radical Party of the Left (Parti radical de Gauche - PRG)	0,36%	3	In opposition	S&D	Social democracy	4,0813	7,9361
Extreme right (Extrême droite - EXD)	0,10%	1	In opposition	-	Right-wing	8,8	2,3
Radical mouvement (Mouvement radical - MR)	-	-	In opposition	ALDE	Social democracy	3,9896	7,9361
Pè a Corsica	-	-	In opposition	-	Special issue	-	-

[43] Party changed name in 2018

Germany

Party Name in English (Name in original language – English abbreviation)	**Electoral result**	**Number of seats**	**Party position vis-à-vis government**	**EP group affiliation**	**Party family**	**Position left-right scale**	**Position EU integration scale**
18th Bundestag (22/10/2013 - 24/10/2017)							
Christian Democratic Union (Christlich Demokratische Union – CDU)	34.1%	253	In government	EPP	Christian democracy	5.9	6.4
Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlans - SPD)	25.7%	193	In government	S&D	Social democracy	3.8	6.4
The Left (Die Linke – LINKE)	8.6%	64	In opposition	GUE/ NGL	Communist/ Socialist	1.2	5.7
Alliance 90/Greens (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen – GREENS)	8.4%	63	In opposition	Greens/ EFA	Green/ Ecologist	3.6	6.2
Christian Social Union (Christlich-Soziale Union – CSU)	7.4%	56	In government	EPP	Christian democracy	7.2	4.8
19th Bundestag (24/10/2017 - 26/10/2021)							
Christian Democratic Union (Christlich Demokratische Union – CDU)	26.8%	200	In government	EPP	Christian democracy	5.6	6.3
Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlans - SPD)	20.5%	152	In government	S&D	Social democracy	3.6	6.5
Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland – AfD)	12.6%	94	In opposition	EFDD	Right-wing	9.2	1.9
Free Democratic Party (Freie Demokratische Partei – FDP)	10.7%	80	In opposition	ALDE	Liberal	6.4	5.8
The Left (Die Linke – LINKE)	9.2%	69	In opposition	GUE/ NGL	Communist/ Socialist	1.4	4.6
Alliance 90/Greens (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen – GREENS)	8.9%	67	In opposition	Greens/ EFA	Green/ Ecologist	3.2	6.8
Christian Social Union (Christlich-Soziale Union – CSU)	7.4%	46	In government	EPP	Christian democracy	7.2	5.7

Italy

Party Name in English (Name in original language – English abbreviation)	**Electoral result**	**Number of seats**	**Party position vis-à-vis government**	**EP group affiliation**	**Party family**	**Position left-right scale**	**Position EU integration scale**
17th parliamentary term (15 March 2013 - 22 March 2018); election day: 25 February 2013; 3 governments: Letta (28 Apri 2013 - 14 February 2014), Renzi (22 February 2014 - 7 December 2016), and Gentiloni (12 December 2016 - 24 March 2018)[44]							
Five Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle - M5S)	25.55%	108	In opposition	EFDD	Green/ Ecologist	2,50	7,83
Democratic Party (Partito Democratico - PD)	25.42%	292	In government	S&D	Social Democracy	2,62	7,83
Go Italy (Forza Italia - FI)	21.56%	97	Mixed/changes	EPP	Conservative	7,14	5,09
Civic Choice (Scelta Civica - SC)	8.30%	37	In government	ALDE	Liberal	6,00	8,75
North League (Lega Nord - LN)	4.09%	18	In opposition	ID	Right-wing	7,80	2,90
Left Ecology Freedom (Sinistra Ecologia Libertà - SEL)	3.20%	37	In opposition	GUE/ NGL	Communist/ Socialist	1,30	3,35
Brothers of Italy (Fratelli d'Italia - FdI)	1.96%	9	In opposition	ECR	Right-wing	7,80	2,90
Union of the Centre (Unione di Centro - UdC)	1.78%	8	In government	EPP	Christian democracy	6,10	7,12
Democratic Centre (Centro Democratico - CD)	0.49%	6	In government	ALDE	Liberal	6,00	8,75
South Tyrolean Peoples Party (Südtiroler Volkspartei - SVP)	0.43%	5	In government	EPP	Christian democracy	5,40	7,60
New Centre-Right (Nuovo Centrodestra - NCD)	0%	0	In government	EPP	Conservative	7,00	7,50
18th parliamentary term (23 March 2018 - 12 October 2022); election day: 4 March 2018; 3 governments: Conte I (1 June 2018 - 20 August 2019), Conte II (5 September 2019 - 26 January 2021), and Draghi (13 February 2021 - 21 July 2022)[45]							
Five Star Movement (Movimento 5 Stelle - M5S)	33.33%	227	In government	EFDD	Green/ Ecologist	2,50	4,10
Democratic Party (Partito Democratico - PD)	18.76%	112	Mixed/changes	S&D	Social democracy	2,62	8,30
-League for Salvini Premier (Lega per Salvini Premier - LSP)	17.39%	124	Mixed/changes	ID	Right-wing	7,80	3,20
Go Italy (Forza Italia - FI)	14.00%	106	Mixed/changes	EPP	Conservative	7,14	6,09
Brothers of Italy (Fratelli d'Italia - FdI)	4.35%	31	In opposition	ECR	Right-wing	8,00	2,90
Free and Equal (Liberi e Uguali - LeU)	3.39%	14	Mixed/changes	GUE/ NGL	Communist/ Socialist	1,25	3,50
More Europe (Più Europa - +EU)	2.76%	2	Mixed/changes	ALDE	Liberal	6,00	8,75
Union of the Centre (Unione di Centro - UdC)	1.34%	4	Mixed/changes	EPP	Christian democracy	6,10	7,12
Italy of Values (Italia dei Valori - IdV)	0.54%	2	In opposition	ALDE	Liberal	4,87	7,12

[44] Party family , Position left-right scale ,and Position EU integration scale : Values for the 17th parliamentary term (debates in 2015, 2016, and 2017)

[45] Party family , Position left-right scale ,and Position EU integration scale : Values for the 18th parliamentary term (debates in 2018, 2019, 2020, and 2021)

South Tyrolean People's Party (Südtiroler Volkspartei - SVP)	0.41%	4	In government	EPP	Christian democracy	5,40	7,60
Democratic Centre (Centro Democratico - CD)		1	Mixed/changes	ALDE	Liberal	6,00	8,75
One-seat	0.58%	1					
Associative Movement of Italians Abroad (Movimento Associativo Italiani all'Estero - MAIE)	0.33%	1	In opposition				
South American Union Italian Emigrants (Unione Sudamericana Emigrati Italiani - USEI)	0.21%	1	In opposition		Conservative	7,40	7,90
Italy Alive (Italia Viva - IV)	0.00%	0	In government	Renew	Liberal	6,00	8,75

Greece

Party Name in English (Name in original language – English abbreviation)	**Electoral result**	**Number of seats**	**Party position vis-à-vis government**	**EP group affiliation**	**Party family**	**Position left-right scale**	**Position EU integration scale**
January 2015-September 2015, Term 1							
Coalition of the Radical Left (Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras - SYRIZA)	36,34%	149	In government	GUE/ NGL	Communist/ Socialist	4	8
New Democracy (Nea Dimokratia - ND)	27,81%	76	In opposition	EPP	Christian democracy	7	9
People's League - Golden Dawn (Laikos Syndesmos - Chrysi Avgi - GD)	6,28%	17	In opposition	NI	Right-wing	8	2,5
The River (Potami - TP)	6,05%	17	In opposition	S&D	Social democracy	3,5	8
Communist Party of Greece (Kommounistiko Komma Ellados - KKE)	5,47%	15	In opposition	NI	Communist/ Socialist	1,5	0,5
Independent Greeks (Aneksartitoi Ellines - ANEL)	4,75%	13	In government	ID	Right-wing	6	2,5
Panhellenic Socialist Movement (Panhellinio Sosialistiko Kinima - PASOK)	4,68%	13	In opposition	S&D	Social democracy	4,5	9,2
September 2015-July 2019, Term 2							
Coalition of the Radical Left (Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras - SYRIZA)	35,46%	145	In government	GUE/ NGL	Communist/ Socialist	4	8
New Democracy (Nea Dimokratia - ND)	28,09%	75	In opposition	EPP	Christian democracy	7	9
People's League - Golden Dawn (Laikos Syndesmos - Chrysi Avgi - GD)	6,99%	18	In opposition	NI	Right-wing	8	2,5
Democratic Alliance (Dimokratiki Simparataksi - PASOK/DIMAR - DISY)	6,29%	17	In opposition	S&D	Social democracy	6	9
Communist Party of Greece (Kommounistiko Komma Ellados - KKE)	5,55%	15	In opposition	NI	Communist/ Socialist	1,5	0,5
The River (Potami - TP)	4,09%	11	In opposition	S&D	Social democracy	3,5	8
Union of Centrists (Enosi Kentroon - EK)	3,44%	9	In opposition	ID	Social democracy	3,5	8
Independent Greeks (Aneksartitoi Ellines - ANEL)	3,69%	10	In government	ID	Right-wing	6	2,5
July 2019-May 2023, Term 3							
New Democracy (Nea Dimokratia - ND)	39,85%	158	In government	EPP	Christian democracy	7	9
Coalition of the Radical Left (Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras - SYRIZA)	31,53%	86	In opposition	GUE/ NGL	Communist/ Socialist	4	8
Movement for Change (Kinima Allaghis - KINAL/PASOK)	8,1%	22	In opposition	S&D	Social democracy	4,5	9,2

Communist Party of Greece (Kommounistiko Komma Ellados - KKE)	5,3%	15	In opposition	NI	Communist/ Socialist	1,5	0,5
Greek Solution (Elliniki Lisi - GS)	3,7%	10	In opposition	ECR	Conservative	7,4	7,5
Front of European Realistic Disobedience (Métopo Evropaikís Realistikís Anypakoís - MeRA)	3,44%	9	In opposition	GUE/ NGL	Communist/ Socialist	1,3	3,3

Denmark

Party Name in English (Name in original language – English abbreviation)	**Electoral result**	**Number of seats**	**Party position vis-à-vis government**	**EP group affiliation**	**Party family**	**Position left-right scale**	**Position EU integration scale**
Parliamentary term (2011-2015)							
Community of the People (Greenland) (Inuit Ataqatigiit - IA)	(42,61%)	1	In opposition	N/A	Communist/ Socialist	1,30	3,3
Forward (Greenland) (Siumut - Si)	(37,22%)	1	In opposition	N/A	Social democracy	3,30	8,1
Union Party (Faroe Islands) (Sbf)	(30,77%)	1	In opposition	N/A	Conservative	7,40	7,8
Liberal Party (Venstre - V)	26,73%	47	In opposition	ALDE	Liberal	7,15	7,292
Social Democrats (Socialdemokratern - S)	24,81%	44	In government	S&D	Social democracy	4,10	7,4311
Social Democratic Party (Faroe Islands) (Javnaðarflokkurin - Jf)	(20,95%)	1	In opposition	N/A	Social democracy	3,30	8,1
Danish Peoples Party (Dansk Folkeparti - DF)	12,32%	22	In opposition	ECR	Right-wing	7,56	1,183
Danish Social Liberal Party (Radikale Venstre - RV)	9,5%	17	In government	ALDE	Liberal	5,29	7,8594
Socialist Peoples Party (Socialistisk Folkeparti - SF)	9,2%	16	Mixed/changes *no longer in government from 03.02.2014*	Greens/ EFA	Green/ Ecologist	2,52	3,5917
Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten - EL)	6,68%	12	In opposition	N/A	Communist/ Socialist	1,05	0,9971
Liberal Alliance (Liberal Alliance - LA)	4,98%	9	In opposition	N/A	Liberal	6,95	8,8
Conservatives (Det Konservative Folkeparti - KF)	4,94%	8	In opposition	EPP	Conservative	7,11	7,7791
Parliamentary term (2015-2019)							
Community of the People (Greenland) (Inuit Ataqatigiit - IA)	(38,5%)	1	In opposition	N/A	Communist/ Socialist	1,30	3,3
Forward (Greenland) (Siumut - Si)	(38,2%)	1	In opposition	N/A	Social democracy	3,30	8,1
Social Democrats (Socialdemokraterne - S)	26,3%	47	In opposition	S&D	Social democracy	3,80	7,4311
Republic (Faroe Islands) (Tjóðveldi - T)	(24,5%)	1	In opposition	N/A	Communist/ Socialist	1,30	3,3
Social Democratic Party (Faroe Islands) (Javnaðarflokkurin - Jf)	(24,3%)	1	In opposition	N/A	Social democracy	3,30	8,1
Danish Peoples Party (Dansk Folkeparti - DF)	21,1%	37	In opposition	ECR	Right-wing	8,23	1,183
Liberal Party (Venstre - V)	19,5%	34	In government	ALDE	Liberal	7,29	7,292
Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten - EL)	7,8%	14	In opposition	N/A	Communist/ Socialist	0,89	0,9971
Liberal Alliance (Liberal Alliance - LA)	7,5%	13	Mixed/changes *entered into*	N/A	Liberal	6,00	8,8

			government 28.11.2016				
The Alternative (Alternativet - ALT)	4,9%	9	In opposition	N/A	Green/ Ecologist	2,50	6,5
Danish Social Liberal Party (Radikale Venstre - RV)	4,6%	8	In opposition	ALDE	Liberal	4,87	7,8594
Socialist Peoples Party (Socialistisk Folkeparti - SF)	4,2%	7	In opposition	Greens/ EFA	Green/ Ecologist	2,13	3,5917
Conservatives (Det Konservative Folkeparti - KF)	3,5%	6	Mixed/changes *entered into government 28.11.2016*	EPP	Conservative	7,22	7,7791
Parliamentary term (2019 →)							
Community of the People (Greenland) (Inuit Ataqatigiit - IA)	(33,4%)	1	In opposition	N/A	Communist/ Socialist	1,30	3,3
Forward (Greenland) (Siumut - Si)	(29,4%)	1	In opposition	N/A	Social democracy	3,30	8,1
Union Party (Faroe Islands) (Sbf)	(28,8%)	1	In opposition	N/A	Conservative	7,40	7,8
Social Democrats (Socialdemokraterne - S)	25,9%	48	In government	S&D	Social democracy	3,90	7,4311
Social Democratic Party (Faroe Islands) (Javnaðarflokkurin - Jf)	(25,5%)	1	In opposition	N/A	Social democracy	3,30	8,1
Liberal Party (Venstre - V)	23,4%	43	In opposition	Renew	Liberal	6,97	7,292
Danish Peoples Party (Dansk Folkeparti - DF)	8,7%	16	In opposition	ID	Right-wing	7,58	1,183
Danish Social Liberal Party (Radikale Venstre - RV)	8,6%	16	In opposition	Renew	Liberal	4,97	7,8594
Socialist Peoples Party (Socialistisk Folkeparti - SF)	7,7%	14	In opposition	Greens/ EFA	Green/ Ecologist	2,39	3,5917
Red-Green Alliance (Enhedslisten - EL)	6,9%	13	In opposition	GUE/ NGL	Communist/ Socialist	0,95	0,9971
Conservatives (Det Konservative Folkeparti - KF)	6,6%	12	In opposition	EPP	Conservative	7,15	7,7791
The Alternative (Alternativet - ALT)	3%	5	In opposition	N/A	Green/ Ecologist	2,50	6,5
The New Right (Nye Borgerlige - NB)	2,4%	4	In opposition	N/A	Right-wing	8,90	2,3
Liberal Alliance (Liberal Alliance - LA)	2,3%	4	In opposition	N/A	Liberal	7,00	8,8

Sweden

Party Name in English (Name in original language – English abbreviation)	**Electoral result**	**Number of seats**	**Party position vis-à-vis government**	**EP group affiliation**	**Party family**	**Position left-right scale**	**Position EU integration scale**
Parliamentary term (2014 to 2018)							
Swedish Social Democratic Party (Socialdemokraterna - S/SAP)	31,01%	113	In Government	S&D	Social democracy	3,60	7,44
Moderate Party (Moderaterna - M)	23,33%	84	In opposition	EPP	Conservative	7,66	8,59
Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna- SD)	12,86%	49	In opposition	EFDD	Right-wing	8,23	2,40
Green Party (Miljöpartiet de gröna - MP)	6,89%	25	In Government	Greens/ EFA	Green/ Ecologist	3,33	0,99
Centre Party (Centerpartiet - C)	6,11%	22	In opposition	ALDE	Agriarian	6,52	5,57
Left Party (Vänsterpartiet - V)	5,72%	21	In opposition	GUE/ NGL	Communist/ Socialist	1,63	1,20
Liberals (Liberalerna - L)	5,42%	19	In opposition	ALDE	Liberal	6,67	9,46
Christian Democrats (Kristdemokraterna -KD)	4,57%	16	In opposition	EPP	Christian democracy	7,34	7,86
Parliamentary term (2018 → 2022)							
Swedish Social Democratic Party (Socialdemokraterna - S/SAP)	28,26%	100	In Government	S&D	Social democracy	3,66	7,44
Moderate Party (Moderaterna - M)	19,84%	70	In opposition	EPP	Conservative	7,80	8,59
Sweden Democrats (Sverigedemokraterna- SD)	17,53%	62	In opposition	ECR	Right-wing	8,59	2,40
Centre Party (Centerpartiet - C)	8,61%	31	In opposition	Renew	Agriarian	6,32	5,57
Left Party (Vänsterpartiet - V)	8%	28	In opposition	GUE/ NGL	Communist/ Socialist	2,42	1,20
Christian Democrats (Kristdemokraterna -KD)	6,32%	22	In opposition	EPP	Christian democracy	7,51	7,86
Liberals (Liberalerna - L)	5,49%	20	In opposition	Renew	Liberal	6,41	9,46
Green Party (Miljöpartiet de gröna - MP)	4,41%	16	Mixed/changes *no longer in government from 30.11.2021*	Greens/ EFA	Green/ Ecologist	3,38	0,99

Poland

Party Name in English (Name in original language – English abbreviation)	**Electoral result**	**Number of seats**	**Party position vis-à-vis government**	**EP group affiliation**	**Party family**	**Position left-right scale**	**Position EU integration scale**
			7th (2011-2015)				
Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska - PO)	39,20%	207	In government	EPP	Liberal	6,2355	9,3705
Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość - PiS)	29,90%	157	In opposition	ECR	Conservative	7,6997	5,4813
Your (Palikot's) Movement (Twój Ruch (Palikota) - RP)	10,00%	40	In opposition	-	Liberal	6	8,7
Polish People's Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe - PSL)	8,40%	28	In opposition	EPP	Agrarian	4,1856	5,3573
Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej - SLD)	8,20%	27	In opposition	S&D	Social democracy	3	8,5667
German minority (Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce - MN)	0,20%	1	In opposition	-	Special issue		
Coalition for the Renewal of the Republic Liberty and Hope (Koalicja Odnowy Rzeczypospolitej Wolność i Nadzieja - KORWiN)[46]	-	-	In opposition	NI	Conservative	7,4	2,4
			8th (2015-2019)				
Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość - PiS)	37,58%	235	In government	ECR	Conservative	7,6997	5,4813
Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska - PO)	24,09%	138	In opposition	EPP	Liberal	6,2355	9,3705
Kukiz'15 (K)	8,81%	42	In opposition	-	Right-wing	8,8	2,3
Modern (Nowoczesna - N)	7,60%	28	In opposition	ALDE	Liberal	6	8,7
Polish People's Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe - PSL)	5,13%	16	In opposition	EPP	Agrarian	4,1856	5,3573
German minority (Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce - MN)	0,18%	1	In opposition	-	Special issue		
Democratic | Freedom | Union (Demokratyczna | Wolności | Unia- D|W|U)	-	-	In opposition	-	Liberal	5,2295	9,7641
National Movement (Ruch Narodowy - RN)	-	-	In opposition	-	Right-wing	8,8	2,3
Free and Solidary (Wolni i Solidarni - WiS)	-	-	In opposition	-	Right-wing	8,8	2,3
			9th (2019-2023)				
Political alliance: United Right (Zjednoczona Prawica - ZP)	43,6%	235	In government	-	-	-	-

[46] Party founded in January 2015

- Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – PiS)				ECR	Conservative	7,6997	5,4813
- United Poland (Solidarna Polska - SP)					Right-wing	8,8	2,3
Agreement / Poland Together (Porozumienie Jarosława Gowina / Polska Razem Zjednoczona Prawica - Porozumienie)				ECR	Conservative	4,1856	5,3573
- The Republicans (Partia Republikańska - PR)				ECR	Conservative	7,6997	5,4813
Political alliance: Civic Coalition (Koalicja Obywatelska - KO)	27,4%	134	In opposition	-	-	-	-
- Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska - PO)				EPP	Liberal	6,2355	9,3705
- Modern (Nowoczesna - N)				ALDE	Liberal	6	8,7
- Polish Initiative (Inicjatywa Polska - iPL)				-	Liberal	5,2355	9,3705
- The Greens (Partia Zieloni - PZ)				-	Green/ Ecologist	2,5	6,5
Political alliance: The Left (Lewica - Lewica)	12,6%	49	In opposition	-	-	-	-
- Spring (Wiosna - WIO)				S&D	Social democracy	3,3	8,1
- Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej - SLD)				S&D	Social democracy	3	8,5667
- Left Together (Lewica Razem - LR)				-	Social democracy	3,3	8,1
- New Left (Nowa Lewica - NL)				S&D	Social democracy	3,3	8,1
Political alliance: Polish Coalition (Koalicja Polska - KP)	8,60%	30	In opposition	-	-	-	-
- Polish People's Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe - PSL)				EPP	Agrarian	4,1856	5,3573
- Kukiz'15 (K)				-	Right-wing	8,8	2,3
Political alliance: Confederation Liberty and Independence (Konfederacja Wolność i Niepodległość - Konfederacja)	6,80%	11	In opposition	-	Right-wing	8,8	2,3
- Coalition for the Renewal of the Republic Liberty and Hope (Koalicja Odnowy Rzeczypospolitej Wolność i Nadzieja - KORWiN)				EFDD	Conservative	7,4	2,4
German minority (Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce - MN)	0,20%	1	In opposition	-	Special issue		
Poland 2050 (Polska 2050 Szymona Hołowni - P2050)[47]	-	-	In opposition	Renew	Liberal	6,5	8,7

[47] Party founded in June 2020 by PO members

Hungary

Party Name in English (Name in original language – English abbreviation)	**Electoral result**	**Number of seats**	**Party position vis-à-vis government**	**EP group affiliation**	**Party family**	**Position left-right scale**	**Position EU integration scale**
7 (6 May 2014 - 7 May 2018)							
Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Union (Fidesz Magyar Polgári Szövetség - Fidesz)	44,87% (with KDNP)	117	In government	EPP	Conservative	5,1382665	5,497626
Christian-Democratic People's Party (Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt - KDNP)[48]	44,87 % (with Fidesz)	16	In government	EPP	Christian democracy	5,5666665	5,107126
Hungarian Socialist Party (Magyar Szocialista Párt - MSZP)	25,57%	29	In opposition	S&D	Social democracy	3,437150000	9,471207
Democratic Coalition (Demokratikus Koalíció - DK)[49]	25,57%	4	In opposition	S&D	Social democracy	3,9833335	8,99897
Together (Együtt) [50]	25,57%	3	In opposition	Greens/ EFA	Green/ Ecologist	3,3	8,1
Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik Jobbik)	20,22%	23	In opposition	NI	Right-wing	6,0666665	3,85408
Politics Can Be Different (Lehet Más a Politika - LMP)	5,34%	5	In opposition	Greens/ EFA	Green/ Ecologist	3,4666665	9,471207
Independent	X	2	Mixed/changes	NI		NA[51]	NA
8 (8 May 2018 - 1 May 2022)							
Fidesz-Hungarian Civic Union (Fidesz Magyar Polgári Szövetség - Fidesz)	49,28 % (with KDNP)	117	In government	EPP	Conservative	5,138265	5,497626
Christian-Democratic People's Party (Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt - KDNP)	49,28 % (with Fidesz)	16	In government	EPP	Christian democracy	5,5666665	5,107126
Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik Magyarországért - Jobbik)	19,06%	26	In opposition	NI	Right-wing	6,0666665	3,85408

[48] For KDNP, Chapel Hill does not have separate scores from Fidesz while ParlGov has both joint and separate scores. Hence, separate scores from ParlGov were used, which establishes a slight distinction between the two parties (KDNP slightly more to the right). In principle, the same values could, however, be used for both parties.

[49] In 2014, MSzP, DK and Together ran on a joint list called 'Unity', alongside a few even more minor parties. However, MSZP was the most successful party among them.

[50] For Dialogue for Hungary and Together, Chapel Hill does not have these parties coded, hence, only ParlGov data were used.

[51] No precise data available. Most of these MPs seem to have voted against the coalition, but some might have supported it on occasion.

Hungarian Socialist Party (Magyar Szocialista Párt - MSZP)	11,91% (with PM)	15	In opposition	S&D	Social democracy	3,43715	9,471207
Dialogue for Hungary (Párbeszéd Magyarországért - PM)	11,91% (with MSZP)	5	In opposition	Greens/ EFA	Green/ Ecologist	2,5	6,5
Politics Can Be Different (Lehet Más a Politika - LMP)	7,06%	10	In opposition	Greens/ EFA	Green/ Ecologist	3,4666665	7,20238
Democratic Coalition (Demokratikus Koalíció - DK)	5,37%	9	In opposition	S&D	Social democracy	3,9833335	8,99897
National Self-Government on Germans in Hungary (Magyarországi Németek Országos Önkormányzata - MNÖO)	X	1	Mixed/changes	NI		NA	NA
Independent	X	1	In opposition	NI		NA	NA

Slovakia

Party Name in English (Name in original language – English abbreviation)	**Electoral result**	**Number of seats**	**Party position vis-à-vis government**	**EP group affiliation**	**Party family**	**Position left-right scale**	**Position EU integration scale**
1. 2015-2016							
Direction (Smer-SD)	44,41%	83	In government	S&D	Social democracy	3	4
Christian Democratic Movement (Kresťanskodemokratické Hnutie - KDH)	8,82%	16	In opposition	EPP	Christian democracy	7,1	7,5
Ordinary people and independent personalities (Obyčajní Ľudia a Nezávislé Osobnosti - OĽaNO)	8,55%	16	In opposition	ECR	Conservative	7,4	7,6
Bridge (Most-Híd)	6,89%	13	In opposition		Conservative	7	7
Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (Slovenská demokratická a kresťanská únia - SDKU)	6,09%	11	In opposition	EPP	Christian democracy	7,4	7
Freedom and Solidarity (Sloboda a Solidarita - SaS)	5,88%	11	In opposition	ECR	Liberal	7,5	6,9
Republic (Republika)			In opposition		Right-wing	2,3	8
2. 2016-2020							
Direction (Smer - SD)	28,28%	49	In government	S&D	Social democracy	3	4
Freedom and Solidarity (Sloboda a Solidarita - SaS)	12,10%	21	In opposition	ECR	Liberal	7,5	6,9
Ordinary people and independent personalities (Obyčajní Ľudia a Nezávislé Osobnosti - OĽaNO)	11,02%	19	In opposition	EPP	Conservative	7,4	7,6
Slovak National Party (Slovenská narodná strana - SNS)	8,64%	15	In government		Right-wing	7	3,8
Kotleba-People's Party Our Slovakia (Kotleba-Ľudová Strana Naše Slovensko - LSNS)	8,04%	14	In opposition	NI	Right-wing	8,8	2,3
We Are Family (Sme Rodina - SR)	6,62%	11	In opposition		Right-wing	7	5
Bridge (Most-Híd)	6,50%	11	In government		Conservative	7	7
Network (Sieť)	5,60%	10	In government		Conservative	7	7
Republic (Republika)			In opposition		Right-wing	2,3	8
3. 2020-							
Ordinary people and independent personalities (Obyčajní Ľudia a Nezávislé Osobnosti - OĽaNO)	25,02%	53	In government	EPP	Conservative	7,4	7,6
Direction (Smer - SD)	18,29%	38	In opposition	S&D	Social democracy	3	4
We Are Family (Sme Rodina - SR)	8,24%	17	In government		Right-wing	7	5

Kotleba-People's Party Our Slovakia (Kotleba-Ľudová Strana Naše Slovensko - LSNS)	7,97%	17	In opposition	NI	Right-wing	8,8	2,3
Freedom and Solidarity (Sloboda a Solidarita - SaS)	6,22%	13	In government	ECR	Liberal	7,5	6,9
For the People (Za Ľudí)	5,77%	12	In government		Liberal	7	7,5
HLAS–SD			In opposition		Social democracy	4	6,9
Progresivne Slovensko			In opposition		Liberal	8,7	6
Republic (Republika)			In opposition		Right-wing	2,3	8

Norway

Party Name in English (Name in original language – English abbreviation)	Electoral result	Number of seats	Party position vis-à-vis government	EP group affiliation	Party family	Position left-right scale	Position EU integration scale
Parliamentary term (2013-2017)							
Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet - AP)	30,84%	55	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Social democracy	3.3706	8.2933
Conservative Party (Høyre- H)	26,81%	48	In Government	(non-EU member)	Conservative	7.8994	9.5074
Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet -FrP)	16,35%	29	In Government	(non-EU member)	Right-wing	8.7595	6.119
Christian Democratic Party (Kristelig Folkeparti - KrF)	5,59%	10	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Christian democracy	5.8516	3.1003
Centre Party (Senterpartiet - Sp)	5,48%	10	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Agrarian	4.6565	0.188
Liberal Party (Venstre - V)	5,23%	9	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Liberal	5.1467	4.0766
Socialist Left Party (Sosialistisk Venstreparti - SV)	4,09%	7	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Communist/ Socialist	1.5839	1.1568
Green Party (Miljøpartiet De Grønne - MDG)	2,79%	1	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Green/ Ecologist	2.5	6.5
Parliamentary term (2017-2021)							
Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet - AP)	27,37%	49	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Social democracy	3.3706	8.2933
Conservative Party (Høyre- H)	25,04%	45	In Government	(non-EU member)	Conservative	7.8994	9.5074
Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet -FrP)	15,19%	27	Mixed/changes *no longer in government from 24.01.2020*	(non-EU member)	Right-wing	8.7595	6.119
Centre Party (Senterpartiet - Sp)	10,32%	19	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Agrarian	4.6565	0.188
Socialist Left Party (Sosialistisk Venstreparti - SV)	6,02%	11	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Communist/ Socialist	1.5839	1.1568
Liberal Party (Venstre - V)	4,37%	8	Mixed/changes *in government from 17.01.2018*	(non-EU member)	Liberal	5.1467	4.0766
Christian Democratic Party (Kristelig Folkeparti - KrF)	4,2%	8	Mixed/changes *in government from 22.01.2019*	(non-EU member)	Christian democracy	5.8516	3.1003
Green Party (Miljøpartiet De Grønne - MDG)	3,24%	1	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Green/ Ecologist	2.5	6.5
Red Party (Rødt - R)	2,41%	1	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Communist/ Socialist	0.4089	0.4511
Parliamentary term (2021→)							
Labour Party (Arbeiderpartiet - AP)	26,25%	48	In Government	(non-EU member)	Social democracy	3.3706	8.2933
Conservative Party (Høyre- H)	20,35%	36	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Conservative	7.8994	9.5074
Centre Party (Senterpartiet - Sp)	13,5%	28	In Government	(non-EU member)	Agrarian	4.6565	0.188
Progress Party (Fremskrittspartiet -FrP)	11,61%	21	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Right-wing	8.7595	6.119

Socialist Left Party (Sosialistisk Venstreparti - SV)	7,64%	13	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Communist/ Socialist	1.5839	1.1568
Red Party (Rødt - R)	4,72%	8	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Communist/ Socialist	0.4089	0.4511
Liberal Party (Venstre - V)	4,61%	8	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Liberal	5.1467	4.0766
Green Party (Miljøpartiet De Grønne - MDG)	3,94%	3	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Green/ Ecologist	2.5	6.5
Christian Democratic Party (Kristelig Folkeparti - KrF)	3,8%	3	In opposition	(non-EU member)	Christian democracy	5.8516	3.1003

Annex 3: Additional materials

Hungary

Table 1. Hungarian political parties's role and location of left-right and pro- and anti-EU.

Party	**Role**	**Left-right (ParlGov → Chapel Hill → average score)**	**Pro-anti EU (ParlGov → Chapel Hill → average score)**
Fidesz	Government	6.5432 → 3.73333 → 5.138315	6.6143 → 3.06667 → 4.38095
KDNP	Government	7.4 → 3.73333 → 5.56665	5.8333 → 3.06667 → 4.38095
Jobbik	Opposition	8.8→ 4 → 6.4	2.3 → 3.785714 → 5.40816
Momentum	Opposition	7.4 → 5.933333 → 6.6666665	7.9 → 6.5 → 9.28571

Table 2. List of debates with legislative details in Hungarian case.

No.	**Debate**	**Type of debate**	**Legislative nature of the proposal**	**Sponsor**	**For/against/ abstain**
1.	On the defense of Hungarian sovereignty and the rejection of defamatory statements against Hungary	FoE	Motion for a resolution	Coalition MPs (Fidesz, KDNP)	129/26/18
2.	The seventh amendment to the Fundamental Law of Hungary	FoE	Constitutional amendment	Executive (minister of justice)	159/5/0
3.	On the amendment of some acts concerning measures against illegal immigration	migration	Legislative amendment	Executive (minister of interior)	159/19/0
4.	On the judicial proceeding concerning the decision of the Council for mandatory quotas for the relocation of those requesting international protection	migration	New legislation	Coalition MPs (Fidesz, KDNP)	154/41/1
5.	Against the resolution of the European Parliament on the execution of the Soros plan	FoE	Motion for a resolution	Coalition MPs (Fidesz, KDNP)	142/3/0
6.	On the use of the EU funds allocated to Hungary for the 2014–2020 period	Eurozone	Political debate	Executive (deputy PM)	-
7.	On the Hungary Helps programme	migration	New legislation	Executive (minister in charge of PM's office)	130/0/0
8.	On the amendment of certain acts related to the increased stringency of the procedures on the border territories	migration	Legislative amendment	Executive (minister of interior)	138/6/22
9.	A message to the leaders of the European Union	FoE	Motion for a resolution	Coalition MPs (Fidesz, KDNP)	112/34/0

10.	On the amendment of the Act (2007/LXXX) on the right to asylum	migration	Legislative amendment	Coalition MPs (Fidesz)	140/14/27
11.	On supporting Poland against the pressure exerted by Brussels	FoE	Motion for a resolution	Coalition MPs (Fidesz, KDNP)	114/13/0
12.	On the use of the EU funds allocated to Hungary for the 2007–2013 period	Eurozone	Political debate	Executive (PM)	-
13.	On the European Citizens' Initiative 'Minority SafePack'	FoE	Motion for a resolution	Committee (for national togetherness[52])	157/1/0
14.	On the defence of national identity	FoE	Motion for a political statement	Coalition MPs (Fidesz, KDNP)	183/0/0
15.	On the acceptance of the report pertaining to the conditions of a reasoned opinion on the five Ps and Council regulation proposals forming the basis for the European Asylum and Migration Pact	migration	Motion for a resolution	Committee (European Affairs)	142/0/0
16.	On the declaration of the Council decision on the system of funds of the EU	Eurozone	New legislation pertaining to an international treaty	Executive (minister of finance)	170/0/0
17.	On the modification of the Act on Higher Education in relation to the execution of the judgement of the CJEU	FoE	Legislative amendment	Executive (minister of innovation and technology)	125/4/54
18.	On the European Union economic measures connected to the impact of coronavirus	Eurozone	Motion for a resolution	Coalition MPs (Fidesz, KDNP)	128/16/1

Table 3. The yes/no divide refers to the incumbency of the MP (whether the MP previously held a mandate) in Hungarian dataset.

Incumbency	**Female**	**Male**	**Total**	**% female**	**% male**
No	17	107	124	48.57143	41.31274
Yes	18	152	170	51.42857	58.68726
Total	35	259	294	100	100

[52] Nemzeti összetartozás bizottsága.

Slovakia

Table 1. Slovak political parties' role and location of left-right and pro- and anti-EU

Party	**Role in government**	**Euroscepticism (0=anti- to 10=proEU)**	**Left-right (0=left to 10=right)**
ĽSNS (+ Republic)	2015–2021 opposition	Hard Eurosceptic (2.3)	Right-wing/far-right (8.8)
Smer	2015–2020 government; 2020– opposition	Eurosceptic (4.0)[53]	Social democracy (3.3)
SaS	2015–2020 opposition; 2020– government	Pro-EU (6.9)	Liberal (6)
SNS	2015 opposition; 2016–2020 government; 2020– outside the parliament	Hard Eurosceptic (3.8)	Right-wing (8)
SR	2016–2020 opposition; 2020– government	Soft Eurosceptic (4.6)	Conservative (7)
OĽaNO	2015–2020 opposition; 2020– government	Pro-EU (7.9)	Conservative (6.5)
ZĽ	2020– government	Pro-EU (8.7)	Liberal (6)
Hlas	2021– opposition	Pro-EU (6.9)	Social democracy (4)

[53] Smer's transformation into a Eurosceptic party can also be illustrated from a 2022 vantage point (although this study analyses debates from 2015 only until 2021). The Ipsos agency conducted a comprehensive survey of political preferences in Slovakia in late summer 2022. Among other things, they looked at the potential of individual political parties, meaning that they surveyed people not only for their first political party preference in the next election, but also their second and third preferences. Ipsos found that Smer would be a second option for half of the voters of Republika (a right-wing, hard-line Eurosceptic party). And vice-versa, nearly a quarter of Smer voters would choose Republika as their second or third option. See Mikušovič, Kerekes 2022.

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