

THE RISE OF THE EUROSCEPTICISM AND THE BAD COMMUNICATION BETWEEN ELECTED AND APPOINTED ELITES AND CITIZENS

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ABSTRACT

Alongside the history of European Union there were some members that were traditionally Euro skeptical. But the last events and Euro-barometers indicate a worrying rise of this phenomenon and the consolidation of the anti-system parties. We believe and try to demonstrate that the cause of all these are not only the economic and financial crises but the lack of trust and cooperation, between the two fundamental actors involved in political process of the Union, the political establishment and the European citizens.

Keywords: *Euro skeptical; communication, leadership, European citizens.*

1. Introduction

The European Community has therefore evolved from a dominant economic community to a political and monetary union that has placed the focus on European citizenship on European political parties. The actual treaty, The Treaty of Lisbon puts citizens in the center of the European project².

Our hypothesis is that the relations between citizens and European elites has to be a process of communication, in each field, a constant process of negotiating. So we are speaking about two parts in relations. This relationship should be an ongoing negotiation between voters and elected based on dialogue and transparency and can be punished when citizens feel that their interests are not represented anymore by this politic body.

This ideal and dream should be the aim of the continuators of the founding fathers. Therefore, it is explained that the main message that dominated the discourse on the crisis facing the EU and the Euro zone has been a call for solidarity.

As EU's history shown, the dynamics of EU-citizens and the democratic process evolved gradually and spectacularly. The European Union is one of the institutional constructions very concerned by its democratic legitimacy, the degree of transparency and proximity to national political systems.

Throughout its evolution, the European Parliament made an important contribution to ensuring the legitimacy of the Community's institutional system and

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² www.europeancommission/presidency, accessed on th 15th of October 2017.

successive amendments of the treaties have increased the role of the European Parliament and improved communication with citizens.

The study of European parliamentarianism highlighted the new challenges faced by parliamentary activity and the requirements of its adaptation to the contemporary socio-political context, depending on the diversity of national practices. Contrary to increasing criticism, parliamentarism has strengthened, remaining the cornerstone of European democracy.³

Debates on the democratic deficit of the European institutions have led, first, to an increase in the role of the European Parliament and, subsequently, to measures relating to the transparency of its activities. Another important element was the knowledge and improvement of the parliamentary procedures specific to this original European institution, as well as the Community political system in which it operates, enshrined in the White Paper of European Governance⁴.

Over time, the European Parliament has acquired attributes characteristic of national parliaments: financial independence, internal organization, democratic system of choice, immunity, parliamentary status, unification of European electoral procedures, parliamentary group structure, etc. The European elites and its leaders realized the importance of communication and negotiations in order to get voters.

Giovanni Sartori while talking about the role of the Elites in setting up a dynamic political equilibrium, he writes that the effect is generated by a problem of conception, it is important how the political elites perceived power and the game of power. In order for elites to have a positive influence, it should be perceived the political as a continuous negotiation (politics –as- bargaining), but when the elite perceives politics like conflict, confrontation, war (politics- as -war) there is a great chance for crisis and instability⁵.

EU hard-bargaining of the accession negotiations were bruising to the national sense of sovereignty of countries that had newly regained it. Thus, although becoming members of the EU was in some sense sovereignty and identity-enhancing, it was at the same time a threat to the newly developing identities of these newly-sovereign nations. This may help explain the backlash we have seen in recent years by Central and Eastern European Countries elites against European integration, with the rise of populism accompanying anti-European discourse in some such countries.

Rather, to contribute to more positive attitudes towards European integration, the regional goals achieved in Brussels must be communicated to the constituents at home⁶.

European Democracy is a political founding principle and is the expectation of the millions of citizens like a treasure.

³ Oliver Costa, E. Kerrouche, P. Magnette, *Vers un renouveau du parlementarisme en Europe*, Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2004.

⁴ COM (2001) 428.

⁵ Giovanni Sartori, "Anti-elitism Revisited", in *Government and Opposition*, 1987, p.224 *apud* Vasile Dancu, *Elite fara putere*, pp. 4-5, #*Sinteza* 40, mai-iunie 2017.

⁶ Anna Olsson, *Euroscepticism Revisited - Regional Interest Representation in Brussels and the Link to Citizen Attitudes towards European Integration*, paper prepared for delivery at the 11th Biennial International Conference of the European Union Studies Association, Los Angeles, California, April 23-25, 2009.

The Venice Commission has adopted a similar concept, recognizing the principle of „European electoral heritage”, based on democratic common values: universal, equal, free, secret and direct vote⁷. Most existing studies of voter preferences towards European integration have focused either upon the sources of voter preferences or upon party views towards integration

2. Accessions and rising of the Euroscepticism

Accession appears to be both a blessing and a curse to transition countries. On the one hand, EU membership supports their transformation from authoritarian regimes with centralized planning economies into liberal democracies with market economies.

On the other hand, the accession countries face great difficulties in restructuring their economic and political institutions in order to meet the conditions for EU membership. The systematic involvement of non-state actors in the adoption of and adaptation to EU requirements was thought to be a remedy for the problems of European enlargement towards „weak” transition countries. Companies and civil society organizations could provide the governments of the accession countries with important resources (money, information, expertise, support) that are necessary to make EU policies work.

Rising Euroscepticism and domestic political point-scoring pose an existential threat to the EU.

Britain’s decision to leave has helped dissuade some political leaders from continuing to attack the bloc, said Jyrki Katainen, a commission vice-president. Katainen suggested Britain’s EU referendum result had shown political leaders how dangerous it was to fuel anti-EU sentiment. „Brexit remedied this a bit”, he added⁸. „Many governments saw that you can all of a sudden find you are in a place you never thought you can be – if you order something you most probably can get it”.

„Citizens’ expectation are way higher than what the general perception is. The majority of the people are supporting integration in the eurozone area and the euro as a currency, but there are a whole range of issues, including defence, counter-terrorism, climate change, some social policy issues, where people would like to transfer power from national to EU level.

We can see how voters across Europe are rejecting the EU’s principles and policies in favour of more populist ideals – and fears in Brussels that Brexit could prompt a wave of anti-EU feeling appear to have been realised.

The Czech Republic became the latest EU country to turn on Brussels this weekend after Andrej Babis, a eurosceptic, anti-immigration, pro-Russian billionaire, won the leadership election⁹. Babis, who has been described as the ‘Czech Donald

⁷ Commission de Venice, *Le Patrimoine électoral européen 2002*; Code de bonne conduite en matière électorale, Strasbourg, Conseil de l’Europe, 2003.

⁸ <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/mar/03/brexit-has-put-other-leaders-off-wanting-to-leave-says-ec-vice-president/>, accessed on th 16th of October 2017.

⁹ <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/870029/eu-news-brexit-eurosceptic-europe-map-vote-election-germany-czech-republic-austria-latest-elections/> accessed on th 16th of October 2017.

Trump', won 29.6 per cent of the vote at the weekend, or 78 out of 200 seats in the lower house, in a result that no doubt sent shockwaves through Brussels. Meanwhile the rightwing, anti-immigration Freedom and Direct Democracy party, which wants to quit the EU and stop the 'Islamisation of the Czech Republic', won more than 10 per cent of the vote and could become a coalition partner of the new leader in a move which would show a clear turn away from the EU in Prague¹⁰.

Despite the deadlock between both sides of the Brexit debate and repeated threats about the eye-watering divorce bill Brussels expects Britain to pay, it appears the UK's decision to leave has not prompted the remaining 27 EU members to come together in support of the bloc.

While leaders across the continent try to adopt a united front, voters continue to express their dismay at the European Union with increasing numbers opting for Eurosceptic and populist parties.

Last month, the rightwing AfD party surged to third place in the German election, taking 13 per cent of the vote and marking the first time in almost 60 years that an openly nationalist party has secured seats in the Bundestag. Neighbouring Austria has also made its anti-EU feelings known, electing 31-year-old eurosceptic Sebastian Kurz to become the country's new chancellor.

3. Mapping the Eurosceptics

We present the map of how anti-EU sentiment is spreading across Europe. The source is from the European Parliament. As we can see the map reveals the most Eurosceptic countries on the continent, as a string of European Union member states including Italy saying they have been let down by the bloc.



11

¹⁰ <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/870029/eu-news-brexit-eurosceptic-europe-map-vote-election-germany-czech-republic-austria-latest-elections/> accessed on th 17th of October 2017.

¹¹ <https://www.express.co.uk/news/world/873266/Brexit-Europe-map-Italy-Ireland-Greece-France-EU/> accessed on th 17th of October 2017.

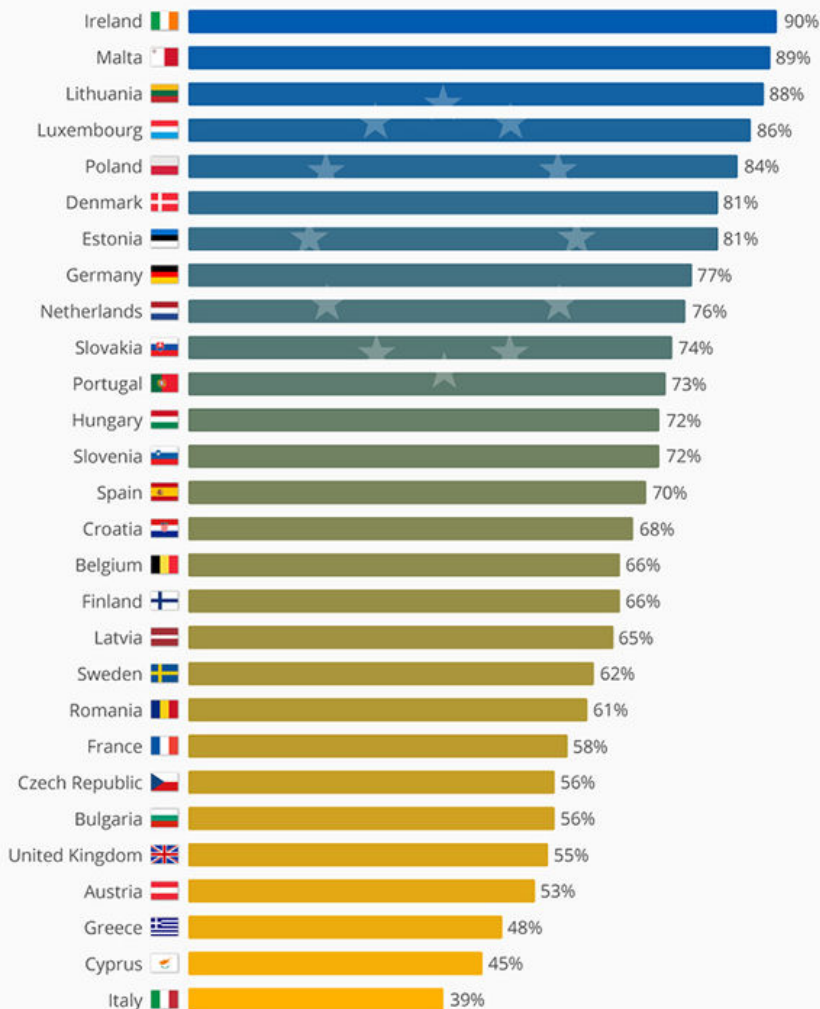
The map shows the three states are now hubs of euroscepticism. According to the 'Parlemeter' survey, based on face-to-face interviews with citizens from all 28 member states, the European Union faces a battle for survival in Italy, Greece and Cyprus.

In total 27,881 EU nationals across the bloc were asked: „Taking everything into account, would you say that your country has on balance benefited from or not from being a member of the EU?“

Italy recorded the lowest percentage of people who responded by saying their country had benefited: just 39 per cent. On the other hand we remark the consistently declining turnout rates in European Parliament elections.

Who Feels EU Membership Has Paid Off?

Share agreeing their country has benefited from being an EU member in 2017



Greece also saw more than a majority of people shun the 'benefited' option, with only 48 per cent of people responding in this manner. Cyprus, too, saw just 45 per cent say their country had benefited due to its membership of the bloc, during the poll which took place between September 23 and October 2 this year.

The UK, France, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Austria all saw less than 60 per cent of respondents say their country had benefited from EU membership. Topping the chart was Ireland, where 90 per cent said the country had benefited. Malta, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Denmark and Estonia all recorded scores of at least 80 per cent.

Despite the low scores of approval recorded in several major EU states, Brussels leaders said they were pleased with the results. European Parliament president Antonio Tajani said the „positive and encouraging“ results actually gave him a greater mandate to push or more influence. He said: „The result of the survey is very positive and encouraging. It shows that the confidence in our institutions and our work continues to grow and that we are leaving the crisis of recent years behind. Naturally, in some areas, views vary from member state to member state. This should inspire us to step up our efforts to tackle the concerns expressed.

„In general, people increasingly see the EU as a key player in tackling the big challenges and protecting them against common threats such as terrorism, unemployment or poverty and exclusion.“For us, as the people's Parliament, that means we need to deliver and that we will work even harder to fulfill people's hopes and expectations. I also take the results of the survey as a mandate for the European Parliament to increase its key role in shaping the EU's future.

And, finally he said: „The best forum for debate on what the EU should look like, what tasks it should perform, or what powers it should have, is here, in the European Parliament¹²“.

4. Conclusions

The citizen support for the EU is of utmost importance to its legitimacy.

Citizens have to have trust in their leaders and parties they represent because they will do the legislation for all of us. The populism (as we saw above) increase the euroscepticism as the populist and nationalist leaders promise a lot and always find the escape goat. It seems that are very good communicators in sending their message and so, in winning the citizens votes.

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