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ЗБОРНИК НА ТРУДОВИ

Штип, 2017

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СОЦИАЛЬНЫЕ ИЗМЕНЕНИЯ В ГЛОБАЛЬНОМ МИРЕ

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Штип, 2017

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Law on Compulsory Health Insurance (Official Gazette No 80/13).

Law on Social Welfare (O.G. 157/13).

Law on Health Insurance of Foreigners (O.G. 80/13).

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Law on Regulated Professions and Recognition of Foreign Qualifications (O.G 82/2015).

Law on Pregnancy and Parental Support (O. G. 85/08, 110/08).

Law on Child Allowance (O .G. 94/01, 138/06, 107/07, 37/08, 61/11, 112/12).

Law on Education in Elementary and Secondary schools (O.G. 87/08, 86/09, 92/10, 105/10, 90/11, 5/12, 16/12, 86/12, 126/12, 94/13).

Law on Social Welfare (O. G. 33/12).

THE THREAT OF CONTEMPORARY EUROPE: POPULISM AND EUROSCEPTICISM

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Abstract

Eurosceptic and populist parties and movements have shown tendencies to win elections and set the political agenda for the last decades in several countries of the European Union. The elections in some of those countries have shown that these parties and movements did not achieve their goals, but they won significant number of votes, which indicates that Euroscepticism and populism are not dead.

The paper presents a theoretical overview of some of the key authors that reveal the concepts of populism and Euroscepticism. It presents the election results of some Eurosceptic and populist movements in several EU member states and it searches for an answer to questions such as what are the roots of populism and Euroscepticism, what is the ideological background of the legitimacy crisis in the EU, how do these parties and movements relate to classical political ideologies and what is the response of the mainstream politicians. These dilemmas are enhanced with the author's contribution of recommendations about what are the possible convincing alternatives that should be put forward to counter this phenomenon and to overcome the threat to the European project.

Keywords: *Euroscepticism, Populism, Ideology, European Union.*

Introduction

The "populist" and "eurosceptic" movements and parties have been on the rise for the last decades in several EU countries. Although these parties are not part of the governments and are unable to set the political agenda, their active presence and participation in elections means that they are making serious attempts to gain power and shape the European future. The European Union has faced numerous crises in the last decade, from constitutional to economic and fiscal crisis, the refugee

crises. Brexit, the results of the 2014 European Parliament elections, as well as the increasing support for extremist parties in many Member States are just a few cornerstones that indicate a popular backlash to future European integration. The constitutional referendum in Italy and its vote against the proposed reforms by the former Prime Minister Matteo Renzi, was one of the next big populist threats to the political establishment after Brexit and the election of Donald Trump as the US President.

This year will be marked by the elections in three key EU countries: the Netherlands, France and Germany, the results of which are expected to shape the European future and to show the directions in which the mainstream politicians will respond to the threats of populism and Euroscepticism.

The elections in the Netherlands at the beginning of 2017 were considered a litmus test for populism in Europe. The EU governments considered the victory of the centre-right Prime Minister Mark Rutte as a relief in the process of facing a big wave of nationalism. Although the anti-Islam and anti-EU party of Geert Wilders did not win the elections, it became the second biggest party in the Netherlands by the number of seats in the parliament. As it seems, its far-right politics will not immediately fade away since the coalition talks on forming new government have begun, but it might take months to finalise since at least three coalition partners needed to form a government. The election manifesto of Wilders was based on closing borders to immigrants from Muslim nations, closing down mosques, banning the Koran, and taking the Netherlands out of the European Union[1]. It encouraged the support of the former UKIP leader Nigel Farage, who stated that "through the Dutch elections, the French elections and more, Europe will see a continuance of this revolution against global governance". On the other hand, the Prime Minister Rutte considered the victory of his party as an obstacle to resurgent nationalism, claiming "The Netherlands said 'Stop' to the wrong sort of populism." The results in the Netherlands were greeted warmly by the political establishment in Europe and were seen as "very pro-European" by the German chancellor Angela Merkel, and as "clear victory against extremism" by French president, François Hollande[2].

The recent French elections ended with a victory of Emmanuel Macron over the anti-EU far right candidate Marine Le Pen. The political establishment of the

[1] Graham, C. *Who won the Dutch election and what does it mean for Geert Wilders and the far-Right in the Netherlands and Europe?* The Telegraph., 2017. URL: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/16/won-dutch-election-does-mean-geert-wilders-far-right-netherlands/. Accessed: July, 2017.

[2] *Dutch elections: Rutte starts coalition talks after beating Wilders into second – as it happened* .The Guardian, 2017. URL: https://www.theguardian.com/world/live/2017/mar/15/dutch-election-voters-go-to-the-polls-in-the-netherlands-live. Accessed: July, 2017.

Union immediately stated the undoubted support for the European oriented policies. German chancellor, Angela Merkel, acknowledged Makron's advocacy in the election campaign for a united and cosmopolitan European Union. The decision of the French voters is thus also a clear commitment to Europe. Francois Hollande, the outgoing French President, stated that "Macron's victory confirms France's "attachment to the European Union, as well as to the openness of France to the world[3]".

The upcoming German elections probably will remain resistant to the populist movements as well. Although a rise in the Eurosceptic movement across the region has also spilled over into Germany, it currently looks unlikely political trends in Germany will change dramatically. Namely, the polls show that the Bundestag majority will be held by a moderate government, besides the fact that the major groups keep losing power through the years of governance.

But Euroscepticism is not dead and buried. This paper presents an overview of the rise of the populism and Euroscepticism in the EU throughout the strong influence of the radical political parties.

The roots of populism and Euroscepticism

Euroscepticism is commonly defined as "the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration"[4]. Scholars often focus on distinguishing "hard" and "soft" Euroskeptics[5] the latter, also called "Eurorejectionism"[6] reject both the principle of ever closer union as well as the current state of the EU institutions.

For over twenty years, the citizens of western European countries have shown a lack of confidence in the institutions and politicians leading their democracies. The European Union has been a subject to this process, too. Few years

[3] Johnson, A. *French Election: Macron's Victory Hailed — and Decried — as Boost for United Europe.* NBC News. URL= http://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/french-election-macron-s-victory-hailed-decried-boost-united-europe-n756086. Accessed: July, 2017.

[4] Taggart, P. *A Touchstone of Dissent: Euroscepticism in Contemporary Western European Party Systems,* European Journal of Political Research, vol. 33 no. 3. 1998, p.366.

[5] Szczerbiak, A. and Taggart, P. *Theorising Party-Based Euroscepticism: Problems of Definition, Measurement and Causality.* Sussex European Institute Working Paper No. 69, 2003.

[6] Kopecky, P. and Mudde, C. *The Two Sides of Euroscepticism. Party Positions on European Integration in East Central Europe.* European Union Politics 3, 3: 297-326, 2002.

ago, the crisis of the European Union has led to a decline in citizen support and confidence to the Union and its institutions, thereby confirming this statement. Only one third of Europeans said they trust the community's institutions, i.e. the lowest level ever reached. The majority of citizens believe that their voice is not being heard by them[7]. The ideas for Euroscepticism and Europhobia have found a fruitful ground for their development and were accompanied by the rise of the populist and radical movements.

A review of existing definitions and typologies of Euroscepticism leads us to two categorisations. The first one identifies four substantive roots of Euroscepticism: democracy, national sovereignty, liberalism, austerity, and solidarity and identity. Arguing along these four lines, Eurosceptics criticise or reject the European Union as a political system, as a free movement area, and increasingly also as an economic and monetary union. We further distinguish two degrees of the phenomenon: Eurosceptics are the more moderate political forces expressing vocal criticism against the Union and its policies and calling for reform. Europhobes refer to those that reject European belonging and call for an exit from the EU, the Euro, and/or the Schengen area[8].

The term Euroscepticism is very often used in conjunction with populism, and although these phenomena intersect, they should be distinguished. Populism is a much broader term that is used in the context of national political games and primarily refers to the rejection of an elite or 'political class' in favour of the interests of the people. Different authors define populism as an ideology, a movement and a syndrome[9], but there is a lack of scholarly agreement on the defining the attributes of polulism. But. 'all forms of populism without exception involve some kind of exaltation and appeal to "the people," and all are in one sense or another anti-elitist'[10]. Hence, populism can be defined 'as a thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic camps, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite," and which argues that politics should be an expression of the volonté générale (general will) of the people'[11]." As a thin-centered ideology, populism necessarily appears attached to other concepts or ideological families, which normally are much more relevant than populism on its

[7] Chopin, T. *Euroscepticism and Europhopbia: the Threat of Populism. European Issues,* n.375. Foundation Robert Schuman, 2015, p.1.
[8] Bertoncini, Y. Koenig, N. *Euroscepticism or Europhobia: Voice vs. Exit?* Policy Paper 121, Jaques Delors Institute, 2014, p.1.
[9] See more at: *Populism: Its Meanings and National Characteristics* by Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner, American Politcal Science Review, 1970.
[10] Canovan, M. *Populism.* London: Junction Books, 1981. p.294.
[11] Mudde, C. *The populist Zeitgeist, Government & Opposition*, 39 (3): 541–63, 2004, p.543.

own[12]. "Populism is not a world-wide movement and in order to explain its emergence and development, it is necessary to take into account both the demand-side and the supply side of populist politics. As Marc Stears notes, "it might be the case that in specific moments in time many people do adhere to populism, but in most cases the main political actors do not sympathize with populism and no political entrepreneurs have been able to exploit it successfully[13]." Therefore, the populism might be perceived as a thin-centred ideology that can be shared by different political actors and constituencies and it usually appears attached to other concepts, which play a key role in the rise and durability of populism.

The populism has emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, with the almost simultaneous occurrence of the so-called Narodniki in Russia and the People's Party in the United States, but they were unconnected. The narodniki were intellectuals who idealized the Russian peasants and saw the village commune as a political model for the country as a whole. They also advocated "going to the people" for political advice and guidance[14].

On the other hand, People's Party emerged from a true mass movement in the American heartland. It was a rural response to industrialization, and it affected the American economics, politics, and society, fundamentally changing it. The American Populists also considered industrialization as threatening the values and economic power of the peasantry, as people connected to the earth and living virtuously, and rightfully they combined both progressive and reactionary ideas, and became a powerful regional and even national political force[15]. Eventually, the main populist ideas were integrated into the Democratic Party and the populist movement and party disappeared in time.

A second wave of populism developed in Latin America in the twentieth century and it was mostly associated with the Argentine military officer and politician Juan Domingo Perón. This so-called socioeconomic populism had different manifestations in Latin America, but they shared the same view about the role of the state in the field of economy. They preferred the so-called 'import-substituting industrialization' model, which was based on the idea that Latin American countries should become more self-sufficient through the local production

[12] See more at: Stears, Marc. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies (Oxford Handbooks in Politics & International Relations)*. iBooks.
[13] Ibid, p. 1496.
[14] Muller, Jan-Werner. *What Is Populism?*. iBooks, University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. p.37.
[15] Postel, C. *The Populist Vision.* Oxford: Oxford University Press. 2007.

of industrialized goods[16]. This model was considered as efficient in short run, but on the long term it fostered the state expansion and fiscal deficit, and therefore it created conditions for deep fiscal crisis.

The third wave of populism has appeared in the past decades and it is known as xenophobic populism. It is associated wit the radical parties in Western Europe (such as National Front of the longtime president Jean-Marie Le Pen, Austria's Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ)), although Western Europe does not have a long tradition of mass populism. Only in the 1980s did populist radical right parties start to establish themselves, largely as a consequence of a variety of social transformations, not least of mass immigration[17].

Populist radical right parties share a core ideology of nativism, authoritarianism, and populism[18]. Their core ideological features are related to political issues such as immigration, crime, and corruption. They campaign against 'the establishment' in the context of different types of elites, such as political, economic or cultural, which they accuse for not respecting the general will of the native people and putting the interests of other groups (such as immigrants) above them.

Each wave of populism is not only related to a specific geographical area or time period, but also to particular accompanying ideological features, such as agrarianism in the first type, in the second type it was related to specific socioeconomic project, and in the third wave it was connected with a xenophobic type of nationalism. All these types are described as ideal models and they present just a small part of the populism diversity all over the world.

The idea of Euroscepticism was born in the early 1980's with the British mistrust in the process of deepening the European integration and it was spread all over the countries that were skeptical on further development of the European project.

The idea of Moravcsik, that the states continue to be the decisive actors in the 'widening and deepening' of the European Union, attacked the authority given to the European Union to promulgate laws which had direct effect in the member states and were affecting the principle of national sovereignty.

[16] Stears, Marc. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Ideologies (Oxford Handbooks in Politics & International Relations)*. iBooks. p.1454

[17] See more at: Betz, H.-G. *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe.* Basingstoke: Macmillan. 1994.

[18] Mudde, C. *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2007.

For a long time, some thought that European law could be rejected by the member states in the national interest. But, in practice, no state resisted the judgements of the European Court of Justice for very long and European law grew in scope and importance[19].

Developments in public opinion regarding European issues can be characterised by three main stages[20]. Firstly, a structural change occurred starting from the 1990's with the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. The 'critical moment' for Euroscepticism was really a protracted period marked by the deepening of European integration on the one hand, the end of the Cold War on the other, and the death of the permissive consensus[21] as a consequence[22].

The second stage, was related to the French and Dutch "no" to the Constitutional Treaty in 2005, followed by the Irish "no" to the Lisbon Treaty in 2008 that challenged the foundations of the permissive consensus theory. This has led to the development of the "constraining dissensus" theory which was characterized by an increase in the divisive nature of European questions and by their use by political players to partisan ends[23].

Thirdly, the crisis affecting the European Union has led to a decline in citizen support and confidence to the Union and its institutions. In fact, even with the introduction of the Maastricht Treaty, which contained provisions introducing the single currency, common foreign and security policy, and closer cooperation in the fields of justice and home affairs, a nationalistic backlash was created, or more correctly characterized, by a term which gained currency in France, as a

[19] Anderson, M. *States and Nationalism in Europe since 1945*. Routledge. London and New York. 2001. p.43.

[20] Chopin, T. *Euroscepticism and Europhopbia: the Threat of Populism. European Issues,* n.375. Foundation Robert Schuman, 2015, p.1-2.

[21] The integration process in the European Union was characterized for a long time as 'permissive consensus' meaning that the process was passively approved by public opinion or at least not actively disapproved. It also means that national leaders were entrusted by citizens to pursue policies at European level, regardless the imbalance between the power and accountability at European level. The term "permissive consensus" appeared for the first time in *Public Opinion and American Democracy* by Key, V.O., Jr., (1963) p.32.

[22] Topaloff, K. Li.. *Political Parties and Euroscepticism*. Palgrave Macmillan, London. 2012. p.40.

[23] Hogge, L. and Marks, G. *A Postfunctionalist Theory of European Integration: From Permissive Consensus to Constraining Dissensus,* British Journal of Political Science, Vol. 39 Issue 01, 2008, p.1-23.

'sovereigntist' revolt[24]. The objections were mainly targeting the process of granting more power to European institutions which were considered as too remote, dominated by technocrats, less accountable, more corrupted and less democratic compared to national institutions. Less than a half Europeans tend to trust the European Union (47%) and this percentage is slowly increasing[25]. The fact that a majority of citizens believe that their voice is not being heard by the EU's institutions strongly affects the legitimacy of the European project. According to David Easton's systems theory in political science, the inputs of the political system consist of demands and supports of the citizens, and the outputs are decisions and actions by the institutions[26]. When the voice of the citizens is not being heard, and the institutions act on their own, certainly there is a deep legitimate crisis. The outputs are not responding to the demands and the support of the citizens of the Union. The content of the EU Treaties, which are considered over-complicated and incomprehensible to the ordinary citizen, additionally impact the development of Euroscepticism.

Another element to consider is that Euroscepticism tends to develop more intensively under in crisis. For example, Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal, which were strongly affected by the economic crisis, have shown higher levels of mistrust in the European institutions[27]. But the most recent research shows that Euroscepticism was developed not only in countries that have been strongly affected by the economic crisis, but also in countries which economic results have been on a good track. This can be found in Germany where public opinion shows concerns that a downturn in economic and budgetary conditions (high levels of unemployment and public debt) in other Member States (for example in Greece or Spain) may have a 'spillover effect' and a negative impact on their domestic economy and on the Union's ability to achieve positive economic results[28].

The European Union has been through several types of crisis. Now, when the economic and social indicators show positive development, the Union is going

[24] Anderson, M. *States and Nationalism in Europe since 1945*. Routledge. London and New York. 2001. p.43.

[25] Eurobarometer, Special 461, *Designing Europe's future: Trust in institutions Globalisation Support for the euro, opinions about free trade and solidarity.* April, 2017, p.4.

[26] Easton, D. *A Systems Analysis of Political Life*. New York: Wiley, 1965.

[27] Muro, D. Vidal, G. *Political mistrust in southern Europe since the Great Recession.* Mediterranean Politics. Taylor&Francis Online, 2016.

[28] Chopin, T. *Euroscepticism and Europhobia: the Threat of Populism. European Issues,* n.375. Foundation Robert Schuman, 2015, p.2.

through the process of Brexit. Instead of EU enlargement, the Union is concerned about the process of shrinking.

Legitimacy crisis in the EU and the political landscape

It has been common practice in Europe to identify populism with the new radical right parties. Today the new populism not only comes from the right, but increasingly from the anti-liberal protectionist left as well. One of the actual problems is that the new anti-globalisation populism is no longer restricted to the relatively small 'home constituencies' of the far-right parties. The populist discontent with established politics and with the perceived disruption of internationalisation (global neo-liberalism, mass migration, the destruction of national borders) is extending to great parts of the middle-class electorate[29] .

The ideological interconnection between the populism and right parties is partly a result of the drift to the right in the European political discourse regarding issues of immigration, terrorism, Islam and the concept of a multicultural society. The ongoing transformation on the party-political landscape in Europe is a result of few factors.

The first one is the end of the traditional mass parties that have ruled since the end of the Second World War, that have lost members, voters, élan, and a monopoly on ideas. Due to changes in labour, family and cultural lifestyles, the Christian Democratic (conservative) and Social Democratic pillars of civil society are eroding, leaving behind 'people's parties' with shrinking numbers of people. The traditional emancipatory mass parties are losing their masses.

The second issue related to the European crisis is the question of ethnic diversity. Intellectual discourse was long characterised by a post-Holocaust and post-colonial political correctness which praised multiculturalism and 'the foreigner' as enriching society while turning a blind eye to the de facto segregation and marginalisation of many new immigrants, as well as the stress they placed on the welfare system in many nations. The potential cultural conflict between Europe's liberal-permissive societies and orthodox Islam was also ignored[30]. What makes this populist discourse right-wing is its strongly xenophobic character, and the fact that in all cases immigrants are presented as a threat to the identity of the people, while

[29] Cuperus, R. *Populism against globalisation: a new European revolt.* 'Rethinking Immigration and Integration: a New Centre-Left Agenda' Policy Network. 2007. URL= http://www.policy-network.net. Accessed: July, 2017.

[30] Ibid.

multiculturalism is perceived as being imposed by the elites against the popular will. In most cases this populism also contains a strong anti-EU element, European integration being identified with the authoritarian strategy of the elites[31].

A third element of the crisis is the process of European integration. At the beginning, the process was considered as a successful cooperation between nations in the post-war period, but the European integration became a stumbling block after the enlargement in 2004 when ten new member states were added. This resulted in public opinion developing against further expansion. Besides that, the concept of European integration has changed dramatically, regardless of the process of enlargement of the Union. From largely a process that included a small number of economic areas, the EU has evolved into an all-encompassing regulator, as well as re-distributor. The challenges of EU policy gridlock such as the low level of popular legitimacy and a lack of democratic accountability, according to Simon Hix, are symptoms of the shift in the policy agenda of the EU: from market building to the challenge of economic reform. Hix, points out that in practice most European regulatory policies have significant redistributive consequences and besides, the challenges now facing the EU are very different from those it faced at the time of its foundation. As Hix observes, the issues of economic and social reform of the EU are inherently political and they produce winners and losers. The redistributive policy by the Union creates tensions and therefore, "this more "mature" phase requires a different style of politics, one that legitimizes redistributive outcomes through enhanced political contestation"[32]. To date, however, the EU has failed to adapt its formal rules and informal habits to match the new policy context. There is no common European demos that can decide, but rather 27 various national publics. The resulting gridlock has additionally fueled public perceptions regarding the EU's illegitimacy[33].

The recent growth and diversification of the so-called 'Eurosceptic' movements require a review of the substantive elements of Euroscepticism. Substantive elements may lead us towards revealing the common grounds against European integration and other policies related to it and they are linked to party political ideology. Although there is an existing causal interconnection between party ideology and Euroscepticism, there are exceptions when it comes to appearance of radical parties that promote more extreme versions of Euroscepticism.

[31] Mouffe, C. *The 'End of Politics' and the Challenge of Right-wing Populism* in Populism and the Mirror of Democracy, Verso, London, 2005. p.69.

[32] Hix, S. *What's Wrong with the European Union and how to Fix It.* New York: Wiley, 2008.

[33] Cuperus, R. *Populism against globalisation: a new European revolt.* 'Rethinking Immigration and Integration: a New Centre-Left Agenda' Policy Network. 2007. URL= http://www.policy-network.net. Accessed: July, 2017.

However, some authors distinguish four main roots of Euroscepticism and they are linked to democracy, national sovereignty, economy and national identity, 'while being aware that parties from different ideological camps may adopt crosscutting positions or manifestos'[34].

The first root of Euroscepticism centres on the issue of democracy and is close to the populist ideology and rhetoric. With a normative connotation, criticism is often directed at the Union's democracy deficit and the EU is decried for a lack of transparency in decision-making as well as for its elitist, inflated, opaque, technocratic, overbearing, and costly bureaucracy. Commonly proposed solutions include more direct democracy or a substantial downsizing of Europe's bureaucracy.

The second root of Euroscepticism is related to national sovereignty. It is closely linked to the first one but focuses more on the transfer of power between the member states and the EU and views it as a 'loss' of sovereignty rather than a 'pooling and sharing' mechanism. This dimension of Euroscepticism is fed by the 'compliance costs' linked to the implementation of EU laws and rules, under the control of the Commission and the Court of Justice, often accompanied by the pledge for a full or partial return of competences and powers to the national level[35].

The third root of Euroscepticism focuses on the economy. It has a utilitarian connotation and it is related to the free market liberalization of the EU since the Single European Act was adopted in the 1980's. This document has affected the Union not just by market liberalization, but also with strengthening the principle of solidarity with the structural funds. The Eurosceptics have addressed numerous critics regarding this issue and they were even reinforced and at the same time diversified with the economic and fiscal crisis since 2008. There were divided positions between the left and the right. The radical right was opposing the financial transfers to the most affected countries by the crisis and the radical left accused the EU and the euro for boosting the globalization and supporting neoliberal politics that lead to rising inequality and wage cuts. This was accompanied by strict austerity measures by the EU and high rates of unemployment within the Union.

The fourth root of Euroscepticism revolves around national identity. The European Union is founded on the principle of free movement of people and therefore it is very often blamed for increase in migration (internally, within its borders and international migration in the EU[36]). The Eurosceptics criticize the

[34] Bertoncini, Y. Koenig, N. *Euroscepticism or Europhobia:Voice vs. Exit?* Policy Paper 121, Jaques Delors Institute, 2014. p.5.

[35] Ibid.

[36] For example, a total of 4.7 million people immigrated to one of the EU-28 Member States during 2015, while at least 2.8 million emigrants were reported to have left an EU Member

Union on the basis of fears of erosion of national identity due to numerical dominance of the different ethnic groups or different religions. Bertocini discusses also for another type of criticism, which carries a more utilitarian than xenophobic connotation and can be referred to as 'welfare populism'. This phenomenon has been observed in more prosperous Northern European states where fears are fuelled that immigrants will abuse and hollow out national social systems[37].

Ideological Diversity of Euroscepticism and Populism

The mainstream political phenomenon is that the Eurosceptics and populists have moved from the periphery towards the centre of political power. Labeling the extreme right parties as the only populist parties in Europe is a stereotype.

The analysis show that the Eurosceptics constitute the larger and ideologically more diverse political force in the European Parliament – so diverse that it can hardly be perceived as a united force. They express their discontent of the European Union and its institutions organized within the far-left and more or less moderate right political groups[38].

The rise of radical populist, eurosceptic and even europhobic trends, emphasizes the deep political crisis in European liberal democracy. The findings of the political theorists Mouffe and Laclau, that if democracy wants to preserve its superiority among other political systems, it must return to the people, became central in the focus of the scholars. That forms the essence of populism. Mouffe does not consider populism as an ideology but rather as a political form capable of articulating identities, interests, and needs that have been delegitimised by centre-right and centre-left parties. She believes that the populist politicians do not act exclusively to gain political power, but it is also a necessary way to overcome the lack of alternatives embodied by the traditional parties of the past decades[39].

As a consequence of framed democracies, populism has become the only productive form to take into account the demands of the people and to promote

State. These total figures do not represent the migration flows to/from the EU as a whole, since they also include flows between different EU Member States. Source: Migration and migrant population statistics, Eurostat, March 2017, Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics#Migration_flows. Accessed: August 2017.

[37] Bertoncini, Y. Koenig, N. *Euroscepticism or Europhobia:Voice vs. Exit?* Policy Paper 121, Jaques Delors Institute, 2014. p.6.

[38] Ibid, p.18.

[39] Shahid, W. *America in Populist Times: An Interview with Chantal Mouffe*, The Nation. 2016. URL= https://www.thenation.com/article/america-in-populist-times-an-interview-with-chantal-mouffe/. Accessed: July 2017.

collective participation[40]. With an analogy to the right and left-wing policies, there has developed rightist and leftist populism with different concepts that shape each of them. Right- wing populism was used by the most exposed figures such as Donald Trump and Nigel Farage who have used their political programs to promote the "politics of fear" in Hobbes terms, using emotional approach to convince people that national identity should be restricted to the people, excluding immigrants, refugees and foreigners in general, and strengthening the nationalism, as a fundamental response to the crisis of identity[41]. This feature of exclusion of certain categories is present in the left-wing populism and its most prominent exponents, Bernie Sanders and Pablo Iglesias. Their criticism is towards some sectors of the establishment that are in service of neo-liberal global corporations. Sanders is standing for breaking up the big banks, and Iglesias is against the Spanish "caste" that includes the two major political parties, left and right-wing.

The elections have shown success on the side of the right-wing populism, whose represents are elected to the positions of power and defeat of the left-wing populism. The last attempt of the Labor leader Jeremy Corbin in the UK ended with a defeat on the parliamentary elections, when his left-wing populism program was second ranked at the elections.

EU Facing the Threat of Populism

Eurosceptic and populist parties have shown strong tendencies to win power and set the political agenda for the last decades in several EU countries. The elections in some of those countries have shown that they did not achieve their goals, but they won significant number of votes, indicating that Euroscepticism and populism are not dead.

The EU is facing strong lines of fragmentation and polarization between liberals and populists, nationalists and internationalists. Some long-established parties are vanishing and some so-called "anti-establishment" populist movements are gaining more support all over Europe. The migrant and economic crises in the Union have additionally accelerated these processes.

[40] Zabala, S. *The difference between right and left-wing populism.* Al Jazeera. 2017. URL= http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2017/01/difference-left-wing-populism-170112162814894.html. Accessed: July 2017.

[41] Smith, A. D. *Nationalism and modernism*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2003. p.97.

Although the Union seems affected by the political changes of the Eurosceptic and populist parties, it has certain mechanisms for rejection or at least postponement of the effects of these changes in general.

One of them is the time lag between the political changes on national and EU level. There is a constant battle for power between the national and EU politics, but new parties gain power at the EU level once they enter national government. In the meantime, new parties may establish their network and gain power at local or regional level, so that they can affect the national politics, but the old parties still have positions in Brussels where they represent their countries. The advantage of this lag is that EU can keep the stability, regardless of turbulence at the national level. At the same time, the European Union law and policies are protected from extremism.

The disadvantage is the fact that EU is slow in changes and protects the establishment in power. It is also less flexible in adopting new forms of democratic participation due to the fact that the representation in its institutions is gained through the big party families.

This time lag in political changes between the national and the EU politics protects the EU from direct reflection of the threatening policy agendas of populist movements. As an example, the xenophobic populists oppose the EU goals and principles because they claim that national sovereignty should be absolute, pluralism should be rejected and majority should be supported. This is against the EU concept for common project, with interdependent member states, that decide on the basis of negotiations, compromise and convergence of views and that stand for protection of human rights.

The European Union needs political stability in order to provide functional political system that is based on cooperation between member states. To achieve this goal, the EU has developed different response mechanisms, but they need to be permanently revised due to the new challenges it has been facing. There are a few specific actions that the Union can undertake in order to combat the rise of populism.

One of them is not to have isolating approach towards all populist movements. The EU cannot compromise with grups such as Greece's far-right Golden Dawn party that advocates violence and racism, or any other xenophobic or fascistic group that opposes the core values of the EU, or to compromise with the fundamentalist antiglobalization representatives on the Far Left. Apart from these extreme cases, the EU should try to consolidate the consensus in European societies

around tolerance, rights, and pluralism. According to Bréchon and Gonthier[42], the surveys show that Europeans have not become more significantly illiberal or xenophobic in the past years and extremist voting does not appear to be strongly in relation with wider public attitudes. Voters support populist parties for different reasons, often due to fears about their chances for employment and welfare states.

In the same direction, the EU should observe the case of some populist parties that convert once they enter national governments and should work on integrating this kind of actors, once they assume governmental responsibility. Many cases show that once in office, the parties drop their extreme positions and become more moderate and closer to the mainstream policies. To launch this process, the EU should give signals that it does not belong exclusively to the old political establishment, but is ready to integrate political actors as newcomers who can learn to use the system to achieve their objectives. EU experience has a positive example of integrating the Greens, whose critical positions were replaced with integration ideas.

Citizens need to feel safe and at the same to be free and have the feeling of belonging to a community. The history presents facts that if these requests of the citizens are not taken into account, there is a danger that they might be taken by radical and anti-European forces. The mainstream parties should work on restoring the trust in the European institutions and to revive euro-enthusiasm, which is not an easy task with a high level of democratic deficit and the recent developments after Brexit. Their political offer should be more problem-solving oriented and should be directed towards tackling issues such as security, migrant crisis, great influx of migrants to many EU societies, terrorism, globalization and social issues such as unemployment, education and prevention of radicalization of young people. The political actors in the European union should work together on creating a strong policy agenda that will retrieve the trust of the EU citizens and create more euro-optimistic environment. The priorities need to be adjusted to the citizens' demands and should tackle their discontent of the policies.

The most critical issue is building an enhanced security policy with further commitment by all Member states of the Union. This refers to strengthening of the common asylum system in the EU and better-coordinated management of the external borders of the European Union. This goes together with restoring the full functionality of Schengen after lifting the temporary border controls. Another way

[42] See more at Bréchon, P. and Gonthier, F. *European Values Trends and Divides Over Thirty Years*. Brill Online Books and Journals, 2017.

to affect the level of security of the European Union caused by massive migrants influx is to reform the Dublin system, which is responsible for the examination of asylum applications together with reforms for enhanced cooperation and information exchange between Member States of the Union with the Prum Treaty for cross-border cooperation. It provides an opportunity for automatic comparison of data such as DNA, fingerprints, vehicle registration data, which are crucial in the fight against crime in the process of gathering evidence and prosecuting the perpetrators. This framework applies only to a very small number of Member States that meet the legal and technical conditions for its implementation, although it may give very good results in fighting organized crime and terrorism.

In addition, EU citizens need to feel that they belong to the community and to develop the connection with the EU institutions and policies. There is a need for more representative European Parliament and closer participation of the citizens in the process of public policy creation. The conditions for usage of the European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) where EU citizens may call on the Commission to make proposals are almost unreachable. For an ECI to be triggered at least 1 million signatures from at least 7 of the 27 EU countries are required and in very exceptional cases initiatives from EU countries remain possible.

Conclusions

Populism and Euroscepticsim pose a serious threat on national level and it is reflected with a strong impact in the European Union. The EU needs to show consistency on its core values and flexibility on certain issues and policies. If the EU creates a political agenda with the right priorities, then this process will be successfully undertaken.

Populism is a threat to the EU due to the fact that it is a political system, liberal-democratic project, but not a state as a territorial entity. EU is not a conditio sine qua non for the nation-states, its institutions are not necessary as the national ones, and if it abandons its key values, its existence would be pointless. That is why the Union is more vulnerable to different critical political actors.

Therefore, the EU should find new approach to face the challenges posed by the populist and Eurosceptic parties. That means that the EU should change the way of doing politics. It should show inclusiveness, but not isolation to the parties that are critical to EU policies, agendas and institutions, if they at least support the integration principle and don't show racist or xenophobic approach. By inclusion of some anti-establishment parties, the Union will send a strong message for its readiness for diversity in the political landscape and that it in on the side of citizens rather then the political elites.

The EU political representation does not always reflect the national political

actors due to the time lag. This can be considered as a guardian of the stability of the EU policies and laws, but it can also make the Union look pro-establishment and with outdated representation.

The Union needs wise leadership with strong and intelligent rhetoric and tangible political and economic outputs at the national as well as European level. There must be a political and economic reconstruction of the EU, strengthening its common identity and becoming more competitive actor on the political and economic scene. Stronger institutions must accompany common legislation.

The challenge for the future is how to preserve the European project and put forward new politics of cooperation in Europe.

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