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“Rethinking Euroscepticism and European integration
The relevance of Viktor Orbán’s Hungary”

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“Europe has become an ideology instead of genuine solutions.”

- Viktor Orbán, Prime-minister of Hungary, at the 26th Bálványos Summer Open University and Student Camp in Tusnádfürdő (Baile Tusnad, Romania), 25 July 2015

“That is why we need a new thinking for Europe, a decisive deal for Europe. That is why we need to guide ourselves by the values that are at the heart of the European Union. Europe I believe has a soul. This soul can give us the strength and the determination to do what we must do.”

José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the European Commission, in his State of the Union Address in Strasbourg, 12 September 2012
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1. Background

In April 2014, the Hungarian political party Fidesz acquired a second term in government. Again with an overwhelming majority it secured two thirds of the seats in parliament. Euronews then asked leader Viktor Orbán if the win will result in less tension between Hungary and the European Union (EU), to which the Hungarian Prime-minister replied: “You think this is something extraordinary, which is unnatural. We, however, think it is normal and necessary. The EU is not a super state. The EU is a playing field, with rules and regulations, where every country tries to achieve its best interests, so they get into conflicts with each other and with the EU.” Hungary has been placed in a negative European spotlight since Fidesz came to power in 2010. Criticism on the country particularly surfaced in connection to constitutional changes made possible by the two thirds majority with politicians in the European Parliament calling for suspension of membership rights under Article 7 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) in 2012-2013. The European Commission has initiated several infringements procedures and the European Parliament issued a critical report on the rule of law in Hungary. Scrutiny has not ceased. Concerns existed and exist about the viability of democracy, rule of law and political culture in Hungary. On several policies Orbán’s government received accusations of deviating from EU interests. For instance, Orbán has been criticised for its independent foreign policy such as the so-called Eastern Winds doctrine, including the signing of a nuclear deal agreement with Russia in February 2014 as well as receiving a bilateral visit from Putin to Hungary, while the EU executed sanctions on Russia due to its involvement in the continuing conflict in Ukraine.

Interestingly enough, the Hungarian ruling Fidesz party is part of the constructive European People’s Party coalition in the European Parliament that won the latest EU elections, having its Spitzenkandidat Jean-Claude Juncker in the seat of European Commission President. Above all, the quote of Orbán above points to a fundamental debate within the EU: what is the code of conduct and

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5 Krisztina Than, “Special Report: Inside Hungary’s $10.8 billion nuclear deal with Russia,” Reuters (March 30, 2015), accessed May 25, 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/03/30/us-russia-europe-hungary-specialreport-idUSKBNOMQOMP20150330. The deal of the Paks nuclear plant can however be halted as it is currently under scrutiny to see if it breaches any EU regulations, decision expected in October, 2015.
the relationship between the EU institutions and the Member States? What is the EU’s political model, *modus operandi* and *raison d’être*? Should the EU take more steps in integration, federalize or should the EU be a confederation between sovereign states or even something else? This debate has become more profound than ever. An often heard phrase is ‘Europe is in crisis’, whether its economic, political, democratic or ideological. As a consequence, so called Eurosceptic parties are on the rise all over Europe, as the large win from Front National in France and the UKIP in England in the 2014 European Parliament elections show as well as several national and regional elections in Greece, Poland, Spain and Italy. Discontent, and so to speak Euroscepticism, is abound.

At the same time, due to the conflict in Ukraine, following the rejection of former Ukrainian president Yanukovych of an EU association agreement, the debate on defending and advancing ‘European values’ came to the forefront more than ever. In that context, Russia serves as the ‘Other’ who is in contradiction to European values due to its policies, regime structure and worldview. Notwithstanding, since the last two decades, it might be less clear what European values themselves constitute precisely. The year 1989, the end of the Cold War, opened up new opportunities for the project of European integration, leading to enlargement in 1995 and 2004 and a movement towards a quasi-constitutional structure with the establishment of the European Union in 1992 and the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2007. However, it has paradoxically led to greater uncertainty as to the identity of Europe and its values. Delanty argues that the concept of Europe was the unity of a Europe that was the unity of the West, and he stipulates that it is not an exaggeration to speak of a crisis of European identity since about 1991. The end of the Cold War meant the end of grand narratives and the start of multiple narratives within Europe and the EU. The demand of a renewed *raison-d’être* of the EU

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11 For example, the German Chancellor Merkel stating ‘We must defend European values’. See, accessed January 31, 2015, [http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/Artikel/2014/12_en/2014-12-18-regierungserklaerung.html](http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/Artikel/2014/12_en/2014-12-18-regierungserklaerung.html).

appeared. While the path to become an ‘Ever Closer Union’ was laid down from the 1990s on, it seems that after Enlargement in 2004 the EU has gone from crisis to crisis: constitutional, economic, political and even ideological. This abasement coalesced with the mockery surrounding the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the EU in 2012. European Commission President Barroso called in 2013 for ‘A new narrative for Europe’ as the raison d’être, i.e. peace, had lost the conviction of the current generation. Although he mentioned that “the European Union is fundamentally a political and cultural project based on strong humanist values”, it is striking that his speech ended with the words “Let the debate begin.” It might be obvious then that the term Euroscepticism has become popular in use the recent years. At the same time one could find it also ironic: a term such as ‘euro-optimism’ would be more meaningful as scepticism seem to have become the default mode. In any case, the thought that the EU needs a stronger identity and a consistent political vision has become dominant. The EU needs clear values that underpins and guides the project to keep it sustainable and endow it with legitimacy and meaning. The EU’s motto might be Unity in Diversity but it entails a fundamental paradox.

In the meanwhile Orbán’s Hungary has been called right-wing nationalist, autocratic and foremost a critic of the EU, Eurosceptic and a trespasser of European values by several European

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media, politicians and scholars. Nevertheless, questions can be raised to what extent criticism can be justifiably uttered and the term Euroscepticism used, while in fact there might be no consensus on what the EU constitutes and represents precisely in many fields. The recent constitutional and economic crisis management of 2004 and 2008 respectively, proves moreover that it is a project evolving and adapting from moment to moment with fluctuations in policy and vision. The recent constitutional and economic crisis management of 2004 and 2008 respectively, proves moreover that it is a project evolving and adapting from moment to moment with fluctuations in policy and vision. The recent constitutional and economic crisis management of 2004 and 2008 respectively, proves moreover that it is a project evolving and adapting from moment to moment with fluctuations in policy and vision.

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20 1. The failed constitutional treaty was edited and finally approved as the Lisbon Treaty. 2. The economic crisis was mediated with ad-hoc mechanism such as the bailouts, the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and the European Financial Stability Mechanism (EFSM) that lacked legal basis in the EU treaties and were of temporary character. It was followed by a Treaty of the European Stability Mechanism in 2012 and an amendment of Article 136 TFEU, followed by a Banking Union made up of the Single Supervisory Mechanism (SSM) and the Single Resolution Mechanism (SRM) mandatory for euro Member States, open to other countries. 3. Strict austerity rules were soon watered down with space for investment with a SGP Review and SGP Flexibility. See: EFSF, http://www.esf.europa.eu/about/index.htm, “EFSM”, European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/eu_borrower/efsm/index_en.htm and “Banking Union”, European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/finance/general-policy/banking-union/index_en.htm. Accessed April 15, 2015.

21 E.g. former president of the EU Van Rompuy was against the so called Spitzenkandidaten system in which the next Commission President would be appointed from the largest political family in the European Parliament elections. See Laurens Cerulus, “Van Rompuy scorns direct election of Commission president”, EurActiv (October 23, 2013), http://www.euractiv.com/eu-elections-2014/van-rompuy-underlines-objections-news-531049 Germany and the UK, among other Member States, also had reservations, it was never fully endorsed by the Member States and it has no definite legal basis in the EU treaties. See Suzanne Lynch, “European Commission president election controversy could hasten British exit from the EU”, The Irish Times (June 17, 2014), http://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/european-commission-president-election-controversy-could-hasten-british-exit-from-the-eu-1.1834377. Articles accessed April 10, 2015.
2. Justification of the case study Hungary

Looking at recent debates and developments surrounding the Fidesz government of Viktor Orbán, it is clear that Hungary is an interesting case to study in connection to the concept of Euroscepticism and the understanding of the discourse on European values, the integration project and EU’s consensus, goals and mission.

First, media and European politicians have branded Orbán’s government Eurosceptic or accused it deviating from European standards while Orbán and his officials contest this.\textsuperscript{22} The government’s official Europe policy is also to “be strongly committed to European integration even in a time of economic hardship and the ensuing difficulties in the cooperation within the EU” and support a Union that “takes steps towards more political integration, is effective and focuses on problems. Decisions on the EU should generally be made by the community method; it should take precedence over intergovernmental decision-making.”\textsuperscript{23}

Additionally, as said, Orbán’s government is criticized for breaching European norms while he is political leader of a party that is part of the largest mainstream political family in the EU: the European People’s Party. An ambiguity that creates an incentive to look at Hungary closer.

Moreover, debate between political scientists exist to find the rationale and intention behind Orbán’s provoking statements and policies. Unsure is whether he is pursuing an Europe of Nations concept as other so-called Eurosceptics like UKIP pursue or that Hungary is on its way to a third alternative political model within European integration.\textsuperscript{24} This study can add to this debate and give new insights.

Furthermore, Hungary faced EU related controversy in the economic sphere in dealing with the economic crisis, in domestic (legal) affairs including constitutional changes and also in the political sphere regarding immigration and foreign policy. A comprehensive insight can thus be gained how the discourse of EU commitment, loyalty and values are constructed and safeguarded or could be constructed and safeguarded. To analyse other Member States that are scrutinized over mainly one set of affairs (for example the United Kingdom (UK) and their sceptical attitude against the EU community method in certain fields as justice and home affairs or Slovakia and the Czech Republic attitude’s regarding EU’s external relations and sanctions against Russia) would not offer the same


\textsuperscript{24} Hegedüs, “Hungary’s Ten Years within the European Union” and e.g. Csaba Tóth formulates an own, different kind of Eurosceptic model: “Viktor Orban’s own brand of Euroscepticism,” The Financial Times (May 19, 2014).
comprehensive scope. True, a country like Greece is critically debated regarding its economic and monetary policy as well as its external conduct towards Russia as of recent. However, Hungary under Fidesz is critically examined not only by European media and politicians but also given attention by EU institutions to an incomparable extent. The question remains if this is justified.

Finally, although EU criticism might come from several directions, referring to Foucaudian discourse analysis, power discourse determines the labels and frame of the debate. Hungary is one of the so called New Member States, the countries that joined in the 2004 Enlargement. It is a country situated on the periphery of European politics also due to economic and political power. This makes it interesting to look to Hungary to examine how power might play a factor in the labelling and construction of the conventional EU discourse and the Hungarian controversy.

In other words, Hungary would serve well to reflect on Euroscepticism, European values and EU adherence in a wide array of fields. The more questions a case raises, the more answers can be given. Questions concern the discourse Orbán’s Hungary brings to the table and the effect on the feasibility of a term like Euroscepticism. What is Orbán’s government view and response to the labels of Euroscepticism and breaching European values? What is in fact the discourse that is presented by Orban? Is it indeed anti-EU or anti-Europe or does it add a new narrative? What does it mean to be European or follow European values and commit to the EU? What is Euroscepticism and who defines it? How are these discourses used and how can we approach the fundamental issue of EU adherence?

3. Research question and scope

Therefore, this thesis will examine to what extent the use of a term as Euroscepticism is feasible in determining adherence to the EU and how EU values, the EU political playing field and the commitment of Member States can be evaluated, specifically in the case of Hungary under prime-minister Viktor Orbán between 2010 till the present (June 2015).

To tackle this question the research is divided in three parts. First, a general discussion will be conducted on what Euroscepticism is and to what extent it is problematic and contested. How the term shapes the debate on European values and orientations towards the EU is examined.

Secondly, concerning the controversy and discussion on Hungary’s leadership and policy regime this study will analyse to what extent Orbán’s government advocates some sort of European discourse and what the implications are. The question here is how Hungary presents itself, what its EU vision and strategy is, and what this means for the applicability of the term Euroscepticism.

Finally, the study investigates to what extent we can determine EU values and the pervasive EU’s political model while looking at the concrete steps Orbán’s government has taken in policy, including against the backdrop of European politics in general. The controversies that surround
Hungary will be compared with other countries and the EU institutions reactions will be examined. All three parts bring about a political-linguistic discourse analysis (qualitative and quantitative) and a (comparative) political-legal study to answer above research question.

4. Methodology

4.1. Literature review and Foucauldian discourse analysis.
For the first part of the study a critical literature review will be conducted. Scholars who wrote on Euroscepticism will be discussed and the term will be viewed with a Foucauldian discourse analysis. This means that the term Euroscepticism will be analysed on how it constructs and represents power relations.

4.2. Political-linguistic discourse analysis through Grounded Theory.
For the second part of the study Grounded Theory will be used to make a discourse analysis possible of prime-minister Viktor Orbán’s EU orientation. The prime-minister is chosen as it is the most important public figure that shapes discourse. This hold particularly true for Viktor Orbán as he has risen to prominence since Fidesz’s establishment in the 1990s. Both Fidesz and Orbán started out in the 1990s as genuinely liberal Europe-oriented but under the leadership of Orbán, the party took a sudden turn from the 1994s onwards to the Christian-conservative direction.25 He is characteristically for the vision of the Fidesz government. As there is a discussion about what kind of model or conceptual thinking his government is precisely pursuing within the EU, Grounded Theory can offer insights. It is a method developed by Glaser and Strauss in which there is a constant interplay between theories and data. Rather than starting with one or the other, ideas are used to make sense of data and data are used to change the ideas.26 This resulted in a selection of key speeches and re-occurring themes in those speeches. Using Grounded Theory to analyse the speeches by the prime-minister can result in outlining the dominant discourse on the EU. By creating thematic categories, it is possible to explore the political messages Orbán expresses and the social reality that is created about the EU in the public domain. If we can then look at those categories quantitatively it might be possible to find a pattern. In combination with a broader political qualitative approach we can gain insight in what kind of discourse is presented. Seven categories of an orientation towards the EU or Europe were constructed, based on fragments and excerpts in a selection of speeches.

The categories are as follows:

**Categories**

1. Pro-European.
   
   This category includes appraisal of Europe and the mentioning of European approaches or identification with Europe as such (not specifically the EU).

2. Pro-EU.
   
   This category includes expressions of loyalty to the EU, suggestions and initiatives for European policy and integration, and appraisal to the EU, its officials and institutions. The criterion is that from Orbán’s perspective there is a belief or an expression of EU loyalty and support. We want to grasp the European discourse that is presented (and possibly experienced) by Hungary; whether in this discourse the EU is a positive notion and one that Hungary identifies with.

3. EU criticism.

   EU criticism can entail any criticism on a EU institution, official or existing policy, allowing for constructive debate. That means the EU is not rejected nor mocked but criticised in good faith that it needs improvement or that there is some disagreement. The category becomes more distinct by contrasting it to the category below.

4. EU rejectionist.

   EU-rejectionist implies any expression that outright rejects an EU policy or EU interference. It also entails statements that places the EU in a negative light for the sake of discrediting it as an entity (e.g. mockery).

5. Europe of Nations.

   This category refers to expressions that relate to the idea of a Europe of Nations concept. A Europe of Nations implies a political position that does not favour further federalisation of the EU. It basically defends a position in which to a large degree Member States can conduct sovereign policies. Member states can agree on cooperation on many fields but no (more) substantial sovereignty should be transferred to supranational institutions. This category involves some more interpretation. The phrase Europe of Nations has not been directly expressed, yet from the context and the broader meaning of words such expressions could be signalled in the speeches based on the criteria here. This involves statements on taking an own route within the EU and the emphasis on the nation in an European and EU cooperation. Statements regarding Hungarian domestic policies that take a different route than the EU mainstream are also included.
6. Hungary as an European example.

This encompasses messages in which Hungary is being identified with Europe or the EU as an example to be followed. Either because it has a good solution or policy or passes the test of European and/or EU qualities very well.

7. Nationalism

The fragments categorized here exert nationalistic sentiment of either superiority, struggle and/or independence relating to contemporary political issues in an (international) European context. It includes phrases about the nation on an exalted note or within a polarised context of ‘them against us’, threats and outsiders.

Selection of speeches

In the case study of discourse analysis, a selection of speeches for an European audience and national audience will be analysed. By making both a selection of national speeches and European speeches, it is possible to evaluate whether the discourse presented abroad and at home is different and to what extent a consistent conceptual thinking behind comments on the EU/Europe exist.

To pursue a representative sample, a selection of key European speeches has been chosen that covers both the major part of Orbán’s term as prime-minister throughout the years, as well as a certain diversity of important European audiences and institutions: a total of ten ranging from 2011 to 2015. The sample includes the speech in the European Parliament that marks the beginning of the Hungarian EU Council Presidency, a press conference hereafter, a speech at the Institute of International and European Affairs in Ireland on the conclusion of the Hungarian presidency in 2011, a debate in the European Parliament about Hungary’s internal developments and commitment to European values in 2012, a debate on the critical Tavares report of the European Parliament.

27 Safe for an extreme occurrence this paper could not have foreseen at the time of deciding the sample as of 31 May, 2015.
concerning the rule of law in Hungary in 2013\textsuperscript{32} and four more recent speeches in 2014 that both make the selection of speeches diverse and of relevance for European politics: a press statement and a reconstruction of the meeting of the European People’s Party in Portugal\textsuperscript{33}, a speech at the International conference Visegrád Group – Europe’s Engine of Growth\textsuperscript{34}, a Press Conference following the Session of the European Council that appointed Juncker as Commission president\textsuperscript{35} and the prime-minister’s presentation ‘Hungary 25 years after the opening of the borders – 25 years of democracy and freedom in Europe’ delivered at the event organised by the Hanns Seidel Foundation and the Bavarian-Hungarian Forum in Munich.\textsuperscript{36} The importance of the meeting of the European People’s Party is evident as well as the European Council meeting that appointed Juncker as Commission president.

Regarding the other two speeches: Central Europe and Germany play a key role for Hungary and impacts the EU reality considerably. Concluding, the recent discussion on Hungary in which Orbán spoke in the European Parliament regarding the death penalty and immigration issues on May 19, 2015 is also included as the last important speech.\textsuperscript{37}

For the national speeches a sample of reoccurring speeches on official national days have been selected: the State of the Nation Address and the National Day, the Anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution on 15 March, 1848. Although the full transcripts of speeches for the National Day are only available from 2013 onwards and the State of the Nation Address of 2012 is not available, it allows for an indication how European discourse plays a role in national context. Both speeches are established


traditions for political leaders: the State of the Nation Address concerns a representative speech about the status of the country and their political vision, the National Day involves their interpretation of the revolutionary tradition, even held during Communism. As a reoccurring event, most likely more prominent than spontaneous speeches, it presents an opportunity for Orbán to deliver a certain discourse to a national audience over the years. For the study it has the additional benefit of set points covering the full term of Orbán’s premiership. The sources of the speeches are the governmental website of the Hungarian government and the personal pages of Viktor Orbán\textsuperscript{38}. The easy availability and English transcripts indicate that the speeches are deemed important and that they have a large effect on shaping (public) discourse.

\textit{Reflection on the methodology}

One can criticise the methodology used and point out some weaknesses. Some categories, particularly the more comprehensive conceptual categories such as Europe of Nations or Nationalism, can come across ambiguous. Indeed, the categorization process itself involves a lot of interpretation: first, to conclude these categories and secondly, to assign fragments of speeches to these categories. Additionally, a few fragments of speeches entailed multiple categories. However, categorization has been based on explicit separate sentences and meanings. Although in this study the analysis is based on the knowledge and context of the speech, background information has been used in rare cases when it was relevant. One example is a statement about the interference of ‘imperial bureaucrats’. From political reality it was clear that EU officials were meant and therefore the fragment could be used and assigned to a EU related category\textsuperscript{39}. Still, it is impossible to decide on the knowledge of the audience that could alter the interpretation of certain fragments and therefore how the discourse comes across. However, it is not the aim in Grounded Theory to provide a perfect description, but to develop a theory that accounts for much of the relevant behaviour. The categorization is arguably broad enough to encompass all important EU orientations: included are not only binary negative and positive labels but also conceptual ones. Moreover, fragments only relevant to European discourse are taken into account. There is no mandatory choice: only if fragments are related to the category. Examples of fragments will be given to see how the criteria work out in practice. As a model the categorization cannot represent reality precisely, still as such it can show the direction of the discourse by comparing the categories themselves quantitatively. One can gain insight in the dominant preference within the model and make valuable conclusions in a broader context that helps answer


\textsuperscript{39} For example in the “Ceremonial Speech on the 15 March National Holiday (15 March 2014, Budapest)”, see http://www.orbanviktor.com/.
the research question in this study. Here it is significant if we can find indicators how the use of language in the context of Europe and the EU in relation to Hungary creates a certain social reality that contests the power of existing external labelling of Hungary and/or Euroscepticism. Finally, qualitative analysis will mediate possible deficiencies of the quantitative analysis and put matters in (different) perspective. Naturally, the other chapters of this thesis serve the same goal to make a multi-faceted approach possible with the aim of a comprehensive conclusion.

4.3 Qualitative political-legal comparative analysis.

In the final chapter a comparative approach will be taken with a legal angle. The laws and policies of Hungary will be scrutinized against the backdrop of EU Treaties and law. The allegations of breaching European values will be discussed as well as its possible political and legal solutions. Concluding, a comparison with policy strategies of other EU Member States will be made to determine to what extent Hungary participates in ‘ordinary’ activities and discussions.
Chapter 1

The controversy of Euroscepticism.

“The Hungarian man is, by nature, politically incorrect. That is, he has not lost his common sense.”
Viktor Orbán, prime-minister of Hungary, February 2015

The term Euroscepticism is abound and its existence seems natural today. The notion of Euroscepticism is usually taken to be more or less self-evident, or at most, even in academic discussions, to need only brief definition. It is desirable and perhaps imperative that as a concept Euroscepticism is more carefully evaluated and critically debated. Since it has become so prominent in its use it has great impact on the discourse of European integration and politics in general. Therefore, it is crucial to reflect on the utility of the label in relation to the phenomenon to which it refers. In this chapter a critical review of the term Euroscepticism will be conducted and consequently viewed with a Foucauldian discourse analysis. This means that the term Euroscepticism is analysed on how it constructs and represents power relations. It will be concluded by a critical assessment how academics have aimed to define and conceptualize Euroscepticism better. The term is arguably problematic which has found controversies in its application, definition as well as in its recent prominence.

1. The problematisation of Euroscepticism.

1.1. The heterogeneity of Euroscepticism

The first issue is that Euroscepticism is a term applied to everyone from those critical of specific policies to those opposing the whole idea of the European Union, potentially lumping together a whole array of politics that might be complex, diverse and different. The bearers or receivers of the catch-all generic label are so varied that it is right to ask if it is worth retaining the term. Is the concept Euroscepticism a profound marker to unite them in a meaningful way theoretically or practically? A lot of questions can be raised whether the term has some common meaningful ideology that justifies a label on its own. The fact is that Euroscepticism is heterogeneous.

True, within Euroscepticism there are some common objections to the EU’s overcentralisation, bureaucracy, technocracy, lack of transparency, lack of democratic accountability,
adverse social as well as economic consequences of the Economic and Monetary Union, and the inappropriateness or unworkability of the Schengen provisions on asylum and immigration (although the recent economic and Mediterranean refugee crises make this a concern across the board now) but Euroscepticism “make strange bed fellows by cross-cutting traditional ideological divisions” as Flood mentions. This could in some way justify a label but Euroscepticism is not an ideology on its own. In theoretical sense there is no profound connection between the various Eurosceptics. Euroscepticism is merely an asset or an incorporated component of an existing ideology. It is in the most positive case a partial ideology. Euroscepticism entails various matters of discontent with proposals of different alternatives that cannot always be combined as it concerns oppositional or critique rooted in certain ideologies that could conflict with each other: that is from the political left to the right and the incompatibility of national contexts and traditions. This makes it hard to grasp it as one phenomenon and present as one concept.

Although there has been representation of Euroscepticism in the European Parliament such as a Europe of Nations group (1994-1996) and the Europe of Democracies and Diversities group (1999-2004) these loose alliances do not include all Eurosceptic actors. Currently, Eurosceptics are spread over several factions, among them ‘European Conservatives and Reformists’, ‘Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy’ and a June 2015 launched faction ‘Europe of Nations and Freedoms’. Indeed, Eurosceptics themselves expressing a wish to cooperate mostly find failure. They run up against the fact that they are heterogeneous and although labelled as such do not constitute or cannot constitute a cohesive group. For instance, the movement of Libertas, an ambitious and genuinely transnational Eurosceptical party in 2008 evolving around the Lisbon Treaty, proved unsuccessful. In the case of Libertas Hartleb concludes that there is a lack of unity within transnational Eurosceptical projects and many difficulties in building up a clearly elaborated platform. Paradoxically, if Euroscepticism will have a future, be it as an ideology or as a political strategy, national and European political elites need to successfully campaign for Europe and the EU and take concrete steps to develop an European demos, a common strategic platform. Ironically such a common identity and platform, it seems as for now, can only exist in an even more integrated Europe, something that goes against the grain of Eurosceptics one could say.

1.2. Drawing the line with Euroscepticism.

This brings us to a second critical issue: where do we draw the line with what is Euroscepticism and what is not? Partly this problem exists due to the weakness of Euroscepticism as an ideology on its own. The distinction of what is anti- and pro-European integration is increasingly blurred if we look at even the EU 2004 Enlargement and widening/deepening debate. A traditional sceptical country as the United Kingdom supported enlargement of the EU as a way to prevent deepening of the integration. Yet, albeit in a different way, enlargement itself is of course a huge step forward in the European integration project. ‘Europhiles’ and ‘Eurosceptics’ could then paradoxically be on the same side of both sides of the debate. It looks like we also have the factors of intent, strategy and objective which complicates matters more to brand something Eurosceptic or not. Naturally, we can see Euroscepticism not as an end in itself but a tool sometimes and some political goals can coincidentally coincide with ‘Euroscepticism’. In that case Euroscepticism could be misunderstood or pointed out to prematurely. An example of such a complication is the tendency of European Parliament elections to be used as ‘second order’ polls in which national issues (such as dissatisfaction with the current government) usually dominate. In this case Euroscepticism could in fact be a strict element of a confined game in national politics, used as an instrument of opposition parties.46 On another note, Euroscepticism is often associated with egocentric national interest. The Front National in Belgium illustrated however that no single ideological current absolutely guarantees that a party will be Eurosceptical at all. As Flood states: “Even a nationalist party can hold EU-enthusiastic positions if it chooses to believe that the EU can be shaped to defend national interests more effectively than the nation can alone.”47

Another example of the blurriness of Euroscepticism is that some common features of Euroscepticism, like criticism of overwhelming interference, bureaucratization and lack of democratic legitimacy, will be allegedly mediated by the new European Commission with one of its 10 priorities to cut the red tape or even edit, review and withdraw current proposals and regulation. First Vice-President of the Commission Frans Timmermans explains that it is “in response to all political leaders who expressed this wish in the campaign leading up to the election of the European parliament” while also mentioning withdrawal of proposals, a refit operation and do away with bureaucratization in which SME’s suffer from.48 Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker states in his political guidelines for the new Commission that “several of our Member States are still far away from sustainable growth and adequate levels of investment. In many countries, trust in the European project is at a historic low.

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The measures taken during the crisis can be compared to repairing a burning plane whilst flying. They were successful overall. Yet mistakes were made. There was a lack of social fairness. Democratic legitimacy suffered as many new instruments had to be created outside the legal framework of the European Union. These criticisms are by long voiced by Eurosceptics and, to put it bluntly, it appears that Euroscepticism has become mainstream and ceases to be Euroscepticism. When can we regard something as criticism to improve the EU and when and why is Euroscepticism instrumentalised in other occasions? Would it not be regarded in national politics as a normal, undefined act of politics? Furthermore, were former critics of the growing ineffective Common Agricultural Policy before the MacSherry reform in 1994 Eurosceptics? Were those who in the 1990s foresaw the problems of the establishment of the Eurozone Eurosceptics? The famous Eurosceptic Czech president Vaclav Klaus had his predictions of the negative effects regarding the Economic and Monetary Union which could be viewed as ‘I told you so’ in light of the recent economic crisis. And what about those implementing the principle of subsidiarity and proportionality? Or were they all just ‘ordinary’ political actors trying to find the best common European solution? The EU as an ideological issue is structured by traditional currents, by existing established political thought and it does not structure them.

Euroscepticism is not so much a factor of its own or a representation of an established thought but merely a tool for an opposition label. There is a possible unjustifiable negative implication to that and this brings us to a third critical issue.

1.3. The negative connotation of Euroscepticism.

Unlike nationalism, of which it is sometimes, but not always it’s vehicle, Euroscepticism is a purely negative concept, like anticapitalism, antimilitarism or antisemitism. Indeed, Euroscepticism carries a negative connotation. Constituted with above problems it can be falsely applied to isolate criticism and opposition as unconstructive. It is also perverse to throw together under the Eurosceptical label parties which are fundamentally in favour of some form of integration alongside nationalists who are not. Abuse can potentially happen on three levels. First, suggestions to improve the EU can be


51 Petr Kaniok and Vít Hloušek, “‘I told you so’: Czech Euroscepticism before and after the economic crisis Václav Klaus and the euro during 1999–2002,” in CRonEM Annual Multidisciplinary Conference (Guildford: University of Surrey, 2013). The paper argues that many of Klaus his critique was consistent and foresaw developments correctly on the euro and the monetary union that it does not fit the traditional discourse of Euroscepticism.


53 Ibid., 6 and 8.
narrowly and unjustly branded as Euroscepticism. Secondly, the distinction between European integration and the European Union has often been blurred, despite the fact that these don’t necessarily go hand in hand. The Euroscepticism label could imply anti-European integration while in fact the branded Eurosceptics propose some alternatives modes of European integration or alternatives to the set-up of the EU. Third, as the EU is often blurred with Europe the label could imply for so called hard Eurosceptics, who indeed wish the dissolution of the EU, to brand them as anti-Europeans (as if there is no Europe without the EU). There is a distinction between the EU (a specific, recently originated, developing system of institutions, policies and practices) and Europe (as a geographically situated set of peoples grouped in states). However, a national party against the EU could be pro-Europe. No significant political party, even of extreme right-wing nationalists, admits to being hostile to Europe and Europeans in general. European cooperation is always supported in some form or as an alternative to the EU.

Flood says the problem could be resolved by emphasising that Euroscepticism means EU-scepticism. But if we take it one step further we can argue that even this is still complicated. Because one could put forward that how to define Euroscepticism is related with how you see the EU and its raison-d’être. It is very tricky to use the concept of Euroscepticism, as often it is used in negative opposition to federalist ideas which therefore implies that the EU should be federalist in the first place. The EU is an unique project without a blueprint and this debate is ongoing. Indeed, how Euroscepticism is used and whether it’s used, depends partly on how one envisions the EU. Yet this EU project itself is very hard to phantom. Although the EU is sometimes viewed as a rational, technocratic based project, the complexities of the processes involved in European integration and the multiple factors and hypothesizing alternatives to integration and predictions of its future, mean that the overall costs and benefits of the process are not calculable by any objective measurement. Even if the extreme right Freedom Party in the Netherlands conducts a research on the costs of European integration or the mainstream parties try to point out the trade benefits; ideology is still by large what dominates the debate in which Euroscepticism becomes a manipulative term or odd term at best. Therefore, some ‘hard’ eurosceptics such as UKIP prefer to call themselves euro-realists rather than ‘sceptics’, and regard their position as pragmatic rather than ‘in principle’. The former Czech president Václav Klaus (2003-2013) rejected the term Euroscepticism, with its purported negative undertones, saying that the

54 Hartleb, The New Euroscepticism, 11.
56 Ibid. 7.
expressions for a Eurosceptic and his opponent should be ‘a Euro-realist’ and someone who is ‘Euro-naïve’ respectively.\textsuperscript{59} Europe as an idea and entity is complex and generates many narratives about its past, present and future that is ideologically coloured, whether or not the facts recounted are more or less accurate. The fact that the EU is a hybrid, multi-level, unfinished construction not only invites ideological appropriation, but also poses difficult challenges. It is extremely malleable.\textsuperscript{60} Therefore, Euroscepticism is also extremely malleable and dependent on the ideological appropriation. The recent prominent use of Euroscepticism also obscures an important fact that Euroscepticism has always been there. This brings us to a fourth critical issue.

1.4. The historical continuity of Euroscepticism. The origins of the term Euroscepticism lies in traditionally Eurosceptical Great Britain, where it entered into political and journalistic jargon in the middle of the 1980s. The term was already widespread with the debates over the Maastricht Treaty in which the benefits and costs of further integration were openly discussed. The Oxford English Dictionary then defined a ‘Eurosceptic’ as someone not very enthused by the increased power of the European Community or Union. Debate about the feasibility of the term, that implied opposition towards the European Community/EU and European integration also commenced. Alternatives to describe the phenomenon became ‘Euro-indifference’, ‘Europhobia’, ‘Eurorealism’, ‘critical Europeans’ or ‘Eurocynicism’.\textsuperscript{61}

While a particular public Euroscepticism may arose ‘recently’, that is after the Maastricht Treaty with the establishment of the European Union and a European citizenship notion, an argument to normalize Euroscepticism -make it obsolete and do away with the term- can be constructed by stating that such an European public was formed only with the European Union. Therefore, ironically an European public was formed in par with that same public criticising or rejecting (partly) its creator. One can even argue that in the very first direct universal suffrage European parliament elections of 1979, which already created an European public before Maastricht, public Euroscepticism was a considerable factor for instance in Germany and the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{62}


\textsuperscript{60} Flood, “Euroscepticism: a problematic concept,” 7.


Taking this into account, the term Euroscepticism that was launched in the 1980s could still obscure that the structure of the EU has been an open debate without blueprint since the start, such as the dichotomy supranationalism versus intergovernmentalism proves. ‘Euroscepticism’, perhaps not as the term itself, has always been present and relatively speaking in more vigorous force: from French president De Gaulle’s opposition to supranationality and the empty-chair crisis to the UK’s opposition to the budget, contrary to what the novelty of the term might give the impression to. The recent prominence implies as if there was always a consensus, a clear path and development set out for the European integration project which is obviously not true if one looks to history. Perhaps the intention of Jean Monnet and allegedly master brain of the EU was to create an irreversible spill-over project of European integration, the signers of the Treaty and subsequent politicians may not all had this intention. A review by the Dutch government concluded that the “time for an ever closer union is up” although it was never entirely clear what this meant. In fact, the UK is now seeking to remove the pre-amble in the Treaty of the commitment to work to ‘ever closer Union.’ There is a risk of perversity with Euroscepticism as opposition to some determined EU concept when looking one sided to the results of integration today: the end product. This brings us to a fifth critical issue.

1.5. **Deterministic interpretations.**

Indeed, the potential ‘violence’ by the term Euroscepticism is reinforced by academic discourses of neofunctionalism and in a less degree historical institutionalism and liberal institutionalism. The neofunctionalist discourse sees the process of European integration and the EU as inevitable and automatic, reinforced by (rational, technocratic) ‘spillover effects’ and the upgrading of common interests. Historical institutionalists like to talk about the significance of former decisions and institutional practices and a ‘path dependence.’ Liberal institutionalists emphasize the ‘negotiation games’ and the shaping of national preferences, inspired by game theories. This comes together in the concept of Europeanization, that involves mutual adaption of national and subnational governance systems to one European centre and the common European norms and rules which are consolidated in the making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies. Of course, Euroscepticism itself is also one of those adaptions to one European centre and therefore it is important to keep pointing out that Euroscepticism is

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another political force (rooted in various political traditions) within one European centre, regardless of favouring the EU or another European centre. Consequently, one could say ‘Europassivism’ or ‘Euroapathy’ is the real anti force, as any force influencing an European centre paradoxically to a certain degree sustains it, even if this means the pursuit of the dissolution of the EU (e.g. a transnational cooperation of anti-EU parties). Naturally, the current project of European integration is as much a product of ‘European idealists’ or ‘federalists’ as of ‘Eurosceptics’.

2. Foucauldian discourse analysis

Taking the discussion from above into account, we can observe that Foucauldian discourse analysis is applicable which focuses on power relationships in society as expressed through language and practices, based on social constructivist theories. We can stipulate that Euroscepticism is part of the language of those in power or the language of the prevailing (communicative) political discourse on European integration that exercises dominance over matters related to the EU and European integration and cooperation. Obedience and respect is demanded due to the risk of being labelled Eurosceptic. Following the idea that society is shaped by language that reflects existing power relationships, the constructed European social reality through the use of the term Euroscepticism (that can possibly exclude alternatives in debate) can be contested by different language use, as a form of resistance to this power discourse. These processes definitely occur. As said, UKIP prefers to call themselves ‘euro-realists’ rather than ‘sceptics’, and regard their position as pragmatic rather than in principle. Former Czech President Klaus rejected the term Euroscepticism and has articulated a rich vocabulary with an aim not only to resist the dominant discourse but also to turn it around and effect a gestalt switch, a paradigm shift. For him there is no Eurosceptic but a Euro-realist versus a Euro-naïve and Euro-nihilist.

Another response to Euroscepticism is his constructed term Europeism which he claims is “the dominant ideology of the contemporary Europe” with an “arrogant authoritativeness” that entails as its important component an obsessiveness to Europeanise and supranationalise issues (instead of the term Euroscepticism, used by his opponents, that might be read as entailing an obsessiveness to criticise and/or prevent European integration/supranationalisation). The irony here is that just as the constructed term Euroscepticism, that in fact covers complex and heterogenous factors, Klaus states that his Europeism is also “a highly heterogeneous structure”. Although he adds “but its individual parts are not isolated [...]They have their own, very important internal

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interrelationships (each one of its parts influences and strengthens the others)” as well as that “Europeism is a doctrine which hardly anyone advocates explicitly and, due to this, it is insufficiently specified or systematically formulated.”

Doesn’t this also apply to Euroscepticism? The term Europeism is a direct response to dominant discourse that sustains the label of Euroscepticism. It is an attempt to turn matters upside down and that, one could argue, works in the same way as the discourse it actually contests. Arguably, from a neutral point of view any deficiencies and controversies in the argumentation of Klaus and his concept of Europeism can thus theoretically also accorded to the term Euroscepticism, its concomitant discourse and its users who mark others.

An example of concrete contestation is when Klaus in his capacity as Czech President addressed the European Parliament on 19th February 2009. He expressed that in an ordinary Parliamentary system a fraction supporting a government exists and one supporting the opposition, but that in the European Parliament there was only room for one alternative. Others were branded as enemies. When he set out his criticism on the democratic deficit of the EU many European parliamentarians walked out. Towards the end of his speech he stated that he disclosed all of this “because I do feel a strong responsibility for the democratic and prosperous future of Europe” and “at this moment in time, the most important task is to make sure that free discussion about these problems is not silenced as an attack on the very idea of European integration.” Consequently, due to these contestations and the revelation of dogmatic discourses, Euroscepticism broadly speaking, can therefore also be viewed positively, as a constructive EU realistic thought that could bring an essential contribution to the European debate and which does not imply direct rejection of the European idea (or to the widest extent: an European idea).

3. Academic conceptualisation of Euroscepticism.

In any case, the concept Euroscepticism is so widely used and deeply established that it will probably not wither away, even if it has its various complications and controversies. Several academics have thus set out to better define and conceptualize Euroscepticism. The ideal situation might be replacing the concept of Euroscepticism all together by a new framework that conceptualizes all attitudes towards European integration and that transcends a subjective protagonists and antagonists discourse.

Flood proposes an extended generic concept as follows: “Euroscepticism might be defined in a broad, deliberately laborious way, as attitudes and opinions represented in discourses and behaviours (ranging from participation in organized political action to voting in elections or referenda and

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responding to public opinion polls) which express doubt as to the desirability and/or benefits and/or long-term viability of European or/and EU integration as an objective or in the general framework created so far or in some important aspects of that framework of institutions, processes and policies and/or as it is anticipated to occur in the future.” But there is a need to set parameters which allow distinctions of degree and kind to be made as he admits. The conceptualisation used by Paul Taggart and refined in his collaborative work with Aleks Szczerbiak has been influential. It establishes a distinction between hard and soft versions of Euroscepticism. ‘Hard Euroscepticism’ implies a political goal of withdrawal or non-accession or the promotion of policies so far at variance with those of the EU as currently conceived that they are tantamount to opposition to the whole project or make membership nearly impossible. ‘Soft Euroscepticism’ implies opposition against a certain policy or policy areas of the EU because for example contradicts the national interest.  

As Flood points out, the metaphors of hardness and softness appears a little loose and impressionistic. The ‘hard’ category blurs the distinction of various groups such as those who wish their country outside the EU, those who wish to have opt-outs of EU structures, those which argue for a revision of the Treaty to previous situations and those not necessarily in favour of withdrawal from the EU when their campaign for revision fails. Furthermore, next to Flood’s criticism it is difficult to determine when the advancement of certain policies has indeed either the intent or the consequence of non-membership or opposition to the whole project. That is dependent on on-going political contest and time-bound. One current example could be the debate concerning Greece and the Eurozone. As already discussed above, the ‘soft’ category has the complication that there is scarcely any political party which does not object to some feature of the EU as presently constituted. What is the distinction between a soft Eurosceptic and an EU supporter that wishes to improve the EU by proposing reforms or better alternatives? This definition also makes it impossible to present positions that support the EU in its present form and/or its current direction of development.

3.1. Eurosceptic categories by Kopecky and Mudde

Kopecky and Mudde have therefore come up with a different set of categories that tries to incorporate all ideological positions towards the EU, positive and negative. Ideologically speaking, one can support and commit to European integration as Europhiles, or not as Europhobes. In practice one can see


matters going well with the EU as an EUoptimist, or bad as an EUpessimist. This creates four categories that covers the orientations towards the EU.

- **Euroenthusiasts** who are Europhile and EUoptimist and see their idea of European integration going well.
- **Eurorealists** who are Europhile and EU-pessimist and see their idea of European integration going wrong.
- **Eurocynics** who do not believe in European integration but currently see the benefits in participation.
- **Eurosceptics** who do not believe in the ideal of European integration or in the benefits of belonging to the EU.\(^7^1\)

This seems a more accurate model but appears not that value neutral because of the word choice; Eurorealists seems to imply the only rational actor. Moreover, it still does not solve the issue of ideology as also discussed above. By restricting the categorization as ‘pro’ or ‘anti’ of an undefined ideal of European integration it omits the possibility to present many different conceptions what integration could or should entail and the variation and fluidity between ideological currents towards European integration limits the usefulness of the categorisation. Therefore, Flood proposes descriptive labels which imply no assumptions as to the question of how those positions are reached in terms of ideological or strategic reasoning. Hereby, he tries to solve the problem of ideology, mediating the subjectivity of position in discourse and prevents a pre-determined concept of the EU to exist as protagonist.

### 3.2. Eurosceptic categories by Flood

- **Rejectionist**: positions opposed to either (i) membership of the EU or (ii) participation in some particular institution or policy.
- **Revisionist**: positions in favour of a return to the state of affairs before some major treaty revision, either (i) in relation to the entire configuration of the EU or (ii) in relation to one or more policy areas.
- **Minimalist**: positions accepting the status quo but resisting further integration either (i) of the entire structure or (ii) of some particular policy area(s).

\(^7^1\) Ibid. and Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde, “Empty Words or Irreducible Core? Euroscepticism in East Central Europe,” *Conference paper, 97th Annual Convention of the American Political Science Association* (San Francisco, 2001).
• **Gradualist**: positions supporting further integration either (i) of the system as a whole or (ii) in some particular policy area(s), so long as the process is taken slowly and with great care.

• **Reformist**: positions of constructive engagement, emphasising the need to improve one or more existing institutions and/or practices.

• **Maximalist**: positions in favour of pushing forward with the existing process as rapidly as is practicable towards higher levels of integration either (i) of the overall structure or (ii) in some particular policy areas.

Flood insists here to be value-neutral and prevent metaphorical associations. They are not intended to convey any suggestion of a specific content to the positions which they describe. Finally, Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart attempted classifying and defining Euroscepticism better by basing it on the cause or the roots.

### 3.3. Eurosceptic classification by Taggart and Szczerbiak

An advanced classification of Euroscepticism by Taggart and Szczerbiak is as follows:

- **Identity-based Euroscepticism**: contradiction of national identity and European identity, fear of “being absorbed”, lose national sovereignty.

- **Cleavage-based Euroscepticism**: originates from divisions in society, town–country, work–capital, religion–secularism, etc. transformation “winners” and transformation “losers.”

- **Policy-based scepticism**, or “functional Euro-realism,”; resistance against concrete policies and single issues.

- **Institutionally based scepticism**; legitimacy of national versus EU institutions. Low confidence in national institutions may increase support for EU institutions and for the EU as a whole.

- **National interest-based scepticism**; contradiction between common European goals and national goals. La finalité: national interest in spite of weakening the common project.

- **Experience-based scepticism**; negotiations EU membership have been unfair and asymmetric, results of the negotiations have been imposed.

- **Party-based Euroscepticism**; top-down manner from political parties and charismatic political leaders using neo-liberal (“Thatcherite”), anti-modern traditionalist or left-populist argumentation.

- **Atlantic-based scepticism**; is the feeling of a contradiction or dilemma between pro-Americanism and pro-Europeanism.

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- **Practice-based Euroscepticism.** no principled resistance, Europeanism is defined in a ‘national’ way and different from that of Brussels and demanded by the EU according to the ‘mainstream’ interpretation of the Copenhagen criteria. Few resources have been directed towards implementing the EU ‘acquis communautaire’. Euroscepticism exhibited by ‘reluctant democracies’ such as Slovakia under Meciar and Ukraine under Kuchma.

These classifications illustrate the source of several Euroscepticisms and allow an insightful toolkit to describe Euroscepticism. Although the weight of which classification has the upper hand will be more difficult to argue for than the concepts of Flood. Classifications can of course be combined and occur at the same time. This allows precise description but misses the apt conciseness and comprehensiveness Flood’s model allows.

**Conclusion**

The mere existence of the term Euroscepticism, as a binary concept, implies a problematic deeply felt version of ‘they’-and therefore- against a ‘we’ without knowing what ‘we’ constitutes. It becomes an *a priori* ideological framework into which any further information must be made to fit. The worst consequence could be esotericism. Words cease to be taken at face value. It is also possibly undemocratic, particularly if one notes the rise of Euroscepticism in par with the creation of an European public as demonstrated since the establishment of the European Union with the Maastricht Treaty and the failed Treaty on the Constitution of Europe. The conceptual idea also addressed in this chapter that specific political demands are made to such an extent that it implies anti-EU attitude or Euroscepticism is a manipulative one. In the worst case a political actor could be active in EU politics, build up connections, do research and make proposals, yet these activities can be presented as a mere façade for its true Euroscepticism or anti-Europeanism which has somehow failed to ever find expression in any of its own acts or words. To put it to the extreme: someone is advocating for the improvement of the EU or European cooperation and does express a belief in Europe? Well, that could then just be proof of how carefully the Eurosceptic shielded his true beliefs by rhetoric.

This chapter however, has given a solution through Flood’s labels of ‘Euroscepticism’, that is not a description of Euroscepticism but a model of the various attitudes and positioning towards European integration that replaces the controversial term Euroscepticism altogether. In addition to a

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73 Following the declaration of the June 1993 European Council in Copenhagen, the ‘Copenhagen criteria’ are the rules in combination with Article 49 of the Maastricht Treaty, that define whether a country is eligible to join the European Union. The criteria require that a state has the institutions to preserve democratic governance and human rights, has a functioning market economy, and accepts the obligations and intent of the EU.

74 Riishøj, “Europeanization and Euroscepticism: Experiences from Poland and the Czech Republic,” 508.
possible neutral label of positions in the EU/European discourse we also have Euroscepticism classified by the controversies and tendencies in which it can be found (Taggart, Szczerbiak). These concepts make up for a comprehensive assessment of the standing and dynamic of an European political actor. We can find out to what extent these concepts correspond with, and/or can be of value when assessing, European thought and EU adherence in Hungary under prime-minister Viktor Orbán in the next chapters.
Chapter 2
European integration discourse under Viktor Orbán

“Nations without character and ambitions will not be able to make the European Community great.”
-Viktor Orbán, Prime-minister of Hungary, March 2012

In the previous chapter we have established the controversies and complexities of the term Euroscepticism. The question in this chapter is how we can actually perceive the discourse of Orbán’s government towards the EU and European integration being shaped. Concerning the controversy and discussion on Hungary’s leadership, we will analyse to what extent it advocates an European discourse and what the implications are for a term like Euroscepticism. As stated in the introduction, grounded theory has been adopted to create a set of categories that can provide insight into the discourse that is presented by Viktor Orbán, to explore what kind of social reality about the EU is created in public discourse. If we then look at those categories quantitatively, it might be possible to find a pattern. First, a selection of speeches for an European audience will be analysed. Additionally, a selection of speeches produced for a national audience will be evaluated. Combined with a more qualitatively approach, focusing on some concrete political issues and the official Europe policy of Orbán’s government, we can gain insight in what kind of discourse is shaped. This involves a general analysis on the conceptual thinking and strategic views of Orbán’s government against the backdrop of the concepts of Flood and Taggart & Szczerbiak in the previous chapter.

First, some context is needed here. Hungary acquired international media attention and performances due to its six month Council presidency in 2011 but has mainly been in the spotlights until this day following controversy with EU institutions and European politicians concerning developments domestically. When rising to power in 2010, Fidesz used its two thirds majority to adopt several laws and in even writing a new constitution within the year that became valid January 1st of 2012. Several scholars and lawyers commented that the new constitution, the ‘Szájer constitution’, contains several provisions which radically undermine basic checks and balances from the old constitution. Many European politicians, of which Guy Verhofstadt from the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats group was the most vocal, thought the values laid down in the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) were put in danger. While the possibility to use the Article 7 TEU procedure was


77 Article 2 TEU: ‘The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.'
contemplated by the European Parliament (Article 7 allows for a proposal from any institution whereby the Council -acting by a majority of four fifths of its members after obtaining the consent of the European Parliament- may determine that there is a clear risk of a serious breach by a Member State of the values referred to in Article 2 that eventually could lead to the suspension of certain rights, including voting rights, in the EU), the European People’s Party, of which Fidesz is a member and controls the majority of the Parliament, expressed its reluctance to take action on this ground. The Commission as ‘Guardian of the Treaties’ did initiate separate proceedings on narrow legal grounds in 2012 against three pieces of legislation under the new constitution but not against the constitution as such. In March 2013 the EU Commission did express serious concern over the compatibility of the Fourth Amendment to the Hungarian Fundamental Law with EU legislation and with the principle of the rule of law. The Tavares Report from the European Parliaments Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs, adopted in July 2013, contains however the most substantial critique on the state of fundamental rights in Hungary and recommends the setting up of an independent mechanism to follow the development of fundamental rights in Hungary. On four issues the Hungarian government changed the laws in consultation with the Commission, on two issue the Commission went to Court in which Hungary lost and changed the law. Still, criticism on the state of affairs in Hungary, as a recent debate on May 19 in the European Parliament show, has endured.

Furthermore, Hungary has been vilified on several of its policies in the field of economic affairs, foreign policy and immigration. Against the backdrop of these controversies, Orbán's statements and its government policy seem to be confusing and hard to pin down, as we will see below. Most of the statements are thus not to be taken at face value. Nevertheless, the aim of this chapter is to map out this presented discourse and to find a certain rationale, EU orientation and strategy behind these statements and policies.

1. Orbán’s political communicative discourse 2010-2015: EU audiences

In this paragraph the political communicative discourse of the prime-minister of Hungary for EU audiences will be evaluated. The question is how Hungary expresses itself in relation to the EU and the European discourse in general. As stated in the introduction, this is based on ten important

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These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.’


When we analyse the speeches and categorize some excerpts quantitatively, the results are in sharp contrast to the grim picture painted by European politicians and media on Hungary’s commitment to the EU and European values in the introduction and the start of this chapter. As can be seen clearly in the graph below, we notice that expressions of loyalty to the EU, suggestions for European policy and further integration, and appraisal to the EU or its officials and institutions, are dominant in the speeches compared to all other categories. This is the pro-EU label that amounts to 39%. Even if we leave out the speech marking the Hungarian presidency that obviously mandates a lot of fragments adhering to the EU and suggesting EU policies, the result is still well over 30%. The pro-EU remarks vary from such one evidently as “It is nothing short of a miracle that we did not in fact go under and that the European Union and the IMF saved us from the worst” to less clear cut ones as thanking European presidents and Commission presidents. The criterion is that from Orbán’s perspective there is a belief or an expression of EU loyalty and support. We want to grasp the European discourse that is presented (and possibly experienced) by Hungary; whether in this discourse the EU is a positive notion and one that Hungary identifies with. Thus a mentioning of the discussion with the European Commission, accepting its authority and stating “we have made our entire constitutional system fully compatible with the laws and principles of the EU” is in essence adherence to the EU. Other expressions are suggestions and initiatives for EU oriented policies and support for existing ones, for instance a proposal for an EU wide Roma strategy that hitherto was left to the national governments solely and an expression regarding the discussion on revising the Fiscal Pact: “with regard to the future of Europe is that the treaties must be complied with. Similarly, we think that the financial agreements must also be complied with.”

Additionally, a pro-European vocabulary follows next in the total amount of selected expressions. As described in the first chapter, notions of Europe and the EU are occasionally used interchangeable yet the use of ‘Europe’ could allow for a European narrative that excludes the EU, but

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80 See Methodology in the introduction.
81 Viktor Orban, “Hungary 25 years after the opening of the borders.”
83 Viktor Orban, “Hungary 25 years after the opening of the borders.”
84 See e.g. EU Roma Strategy, “The programme of activities of the Hungarian Presidency of the Council (debate) European Parliament.
not necessarily. European identification can be found on several occasions, including a debate in the European Parliament in 2012: “We Hungarians believe that what makes Europe Europe is its culture. In our view the foundations of European culture are goodwill and benevolence” and “As a 1 000-year-old European nation.” Orbán also praises Europe in his speeches: “Naturally, there is no doubt that today Europe continues to be the world’s most liveable region, and a European would find it hard to imagine life on a long-term basis elsewhere, outside Europe: this is where freedom is perhaps the greatest, tolerance perhaps the highest, privacy perhaps most widely respected; in general, here we have a rich culture – one without which Europeans would see their lives as worthless, or at least limited. About this there is no doubt.”

This position is shared with remarks and hints that convey the idea of a Europe of Nations concept. One example is: “the Hungarians view as important that if Europe wants to renew itself then it must respect its own past and its own roots, which to us means that we must respect Christianity and give all nations their rightful respect.” In other words, the emphasis on nations within a European cooperation is what is expressed here.

Figure 1. Hungarian European discourse

Two negative categories distilled from the speeches are EU criticism and rejection of the EU, its policies or statements. Those together come not even close to the above mentioned: 18% of the categorised expressions. A statement of EU criticism was made for instance after the appointment of Juncker as Commission President: “Hungary is ready to become involved, and we should debate the issue and

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87 Viktor Orban, “Hungary 25 years after the opening of the borders.”.
88 Viktor Orban, “A New Era Requires New Instruments.”
amend the Basic Treaty if required. But that should be done in a transparent, democratic, considered and well thought out manner, instead of using different interpretations to transgress the original intentions of the Basic Treaty as issues arise.”89 Under the label EU-rejectionism is an account where Hungary rejected the EU’s framework of economic recovery: “Hungary did not use the crisis management model put forward by the IMF and the EU; it developed a totally different crisis management model, which led to much debate between the EU and Hungary.”90 Statements of Hungary outright rejecting and criticizing European Parliament and Commission reports were also found as well as pessimistic expressions about the EU’s capability and credibility.91 Under the final category ‘Hungary as an European example’ Orbán’s government policies are recommended to the attention of the other EU Member States such as its reform of the social welfare state and the achievement as one of the few states managing to lower their budget deficit.92 The prime-minister even recommended parts of its controversial constitution regarding the protection of minorities, the protection of sign languages, environmental protection, opposition to GMOs to EU countries.93

Interesting to note is that the Europe of Nations concept is the only one that is consistently expressed at least once in all speeches and amounts to 16% in total. EU criticism, rejectionism and expressions of nationalism together add up to about 23%. These last two larger groupings combined equal the pro-EU remarks. However, lumping together all the fragments of the individual speeches might give a wrong impression. Some speeches have many categorized fragments (e.g. 19) while others have few (e.g. 5). One could argue that what counts is what kind of impression that particular speech leaves behind on the crowd on that moment; which categories are important per speech. Still, if we look at each speech individually and analyse which category is dominant in that particular speech, we notice that seven out of ten is pro-EU. But when we exclude the two speeches evolving around the Hungarian EU presidency and observe that in at least four speeches the amount of criticism,
rejectionism, nationalism and Europe of nations remarks together equals or surpasses the pro-EU remarks, one is tempted to conclude that the Europe of Nations concept plays a considerable role. This is particularly reinforced in combination with the fact that this remark is the only one consistently used at least once in every speech.

Figure 2. European discourse by speech

2. Orbán’s political communicative discourse 2010-2015: national audiences

Having analysed the speeches for an European audience, the established traditions of national speeches by political leaders will now be analysed: the annual State of the Nation Address and the speeches regarding Hungarian’s National Day on 15 March, the anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution in 1848. If we look quantitatively to the fragments of these speeches, we observe the amount of nationalistic remarks as a dominant category. Naturally, the speeches themselves concern national issues since they are, indeed, national speeches. Thus, the mere descriptions of national or national historical issues are not taken into account. The fragments categorized here exert nationalistic sentiment of either superiority, struggle and/or independence relating to contemporary political issues.
(in an international (European) context). It includes phrases about the nation on an exalted note or within a polarised context of ‘them’ against ‘us’, threats and outsiders. These remarks in all the speeches take up 30.3% in comparison to the other categories, as can be seen below in the graph. Examples can be found throughout the years. A combative attitude against outsiders is found for instance in the State of the Nation Address in 2013: “We are building a country in which people don’t work for the profit of foreigners. A country in which we will not be told how to live our lives, what can be in our Constitution and when we can increase wages, by bankers and foreign bureaucrats. A country in which no-one can force the interests of others upon the Hungarian people.”

Hungarian uniqueness and greatness is found also throughout the speeches. In 2015 at the National Day Orbán says: “We must live in the language which we alone understand, in the culture which we alone can give the world.[...] We must always bear in mind that the Hungarian people’s most valuable asset is that which sets it apart from all others.”

However, despite the target of national audiences, there is a visible European context. The category of Hungary as an European example stands at 22.7%. Cases are boasts such as in the 2014 State of the Nation Address: “Who would have thought a few years ago that Hungary would be capable of achieving a higher level of stable economic growth than the European Union average?” or in the 2015 National Day speech: “Today Europe is full of questions, and Hungary is full of answers.” On that same occasion we can also note that international criticism on Hungary’s state of democracy is converted into the idea that Hungary is an example of national democracy. The theme of a Europe of Nations follows immediately after the previous category, amounting to roughly 20%. Again, safe for the 2014 National Day speech (which consists of only one fragment), the Europe of Nations testimonies are presented consistently in each of the speeches, as was the case in the speeches for the EU audiences. An illustration in the National Day speech of 2015 is: “We are part of Europe, and together with the continent’s other nations we wish to shape its future.”

96 “Hungary is at the threshold of a great era of prosperity,” Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address (Budapest: February 16, 2014), accessed March 25, 2015, http://www.miniszterelnok.hu/in_english_article/hungary_is_at_the_threshold_of_a_great_era_of_prosperity_speech
97 Viktor Orbán’s Speech on the Anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848,” (Budapest: March 15, 2015): ‘Hungary was the flagship of freedom and democracy in the western world.[...] Is it any wonder then, if the people of Kossuth and Petőfi merely smile when anyone wants to lecture them on freedom and democracy?’
98 Ibid.
however, there seems to be an emphasis on the limitations of the EU as opposed to what nations can do. The Europe of Nations concept in which the EU is a playing field where nations can compete, is brought out in the 2013 State of the Nation Address in the framework of the EU budget: “...we have never managed to secure as much in funding from the EU budget as now. [...] One of the fruits of this dignified bravery was that we took the opportunity to form an alliance with a dozen countries.”

The boasting of Hungary as an European example corresponds well with the nationalistic remarks but the identification and reference to Europe is extensive and plays a considerable -and somewhat positive- part if one combines the European categories. When the pro-European and pro-EU remarks are added (while leaving out EU-rejectionism and nationalism) it amounts to 61%. In other words, the European identification gains a comfortable majority.

The pro-European and European identification remarks on their own make up 16.7% off the total. Examples are as simple as identifying the Hungarian homeland as the geographical heart of Europe. Surprisingly however, in the narrative of Hungary’s national struggle Orbán has made an inclusive European reference as well: “The Hungarian cause also attracted Poles, Italians, Romanians, Serbs, Germans, and even Austrians; and the heat of its all-inspiring ideal and sentiment forged them into a single whole – regardless of language, culture, financial standing or social status.” More instances of European identification can be found in the State of the Nation Address, such as the one in 2015 where the prime-minister expresses concern and care for Europe: “is (this) already a new world which is tough and unfriendly, and which will painfully degrade our good old continent unless we do something quickly? If this is the case, the free expanse of European life, its attractive and coveted lifestyle, and the magical treasures of European culture will count for nothing: our Europe will inevitably fall behind in the great global race.”

Nevertheless, references to the EU specifically and explicitly are sparse and EU-rejectionism (9%) is dominant, as only one pro-EU notion could be found in this specific selection of speeches. Simply, one cannot deny a negative attitude towards the EU for a national audience. The identification and reference to Europe and a Europe of Nations is less (36.4%) than nationalism and EU-rejectionism (39.4%). We do have to take into account that the speeches include those of the National Day commemoration, an event that spurs talks of national independence by definition. It is an event to

99 Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address” (Budapest: February 22, 2013).
100 “Viktor Orbán’s Speech on the Anniversary of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848,”(Budapest: March 15, 2015)
101 Ibid.
103 Ibid.: ‘As a committed NATO and EU Member State.’
remember the Hungarian struggle for sovereignty after all. Still, it is interesting to notice how it is used in a contemporary European perspective. If we look at the State of the Nation Address only, we see that fervent nationalistic remarks diminish slightly and are ‘replaced’ by testimonies referring to a Europe of Nations idea as well as that Hungary is, or could be, precisely an European example in the way they conduct their things. The European context has a stronger appearance, yet still with a vigorous national sentiment.

*Figure 3. National Hungarian European discourse*

![Diagram showing percentage distribution of National Hungarian European discourse.]

*Figure 4. State of the Nation Address*

![Diagram showing percentage distribution of State of the Nation Address.]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Pro-Europe</th>
<th>Pro-EU</th>
<th>EU-rejectionism</th>
<th>Europe of Nations</th>
<th>Nationalism</th>
<th>Hungarian example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro-Europe</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-EU</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>EU-rejectionism</td>
<td>1,5%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe of Nations</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nationalism</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungarian example</td>
<td>23%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
To conclude and add some context, compared to the speeches for EU audiences it is evident that the national speeches emphasize nationalism, national proud and independence, albeit within Europe and the EU. This is also due to the virtually messianic vision that appears to be behind those speeches. Orbán’s government perceives its two thirds majority election win in 2010 as a revolution in a polarised political landscape. Indeed, Fidesz’s ascension to power in 2010 is placed in the ranks of Hungary’s revolutionary forefathers: “Our grandparents, parents, we ourselves and the adult generation today worked hard for it with blood and sweat. We have fought for this historic opportunity: after the efforts, failures, storms, and occupations, regimes of long decades and after an interim period of twenty confused years.”

The period after the 1989 revolution is referred to as simply ‘post-communism’ and 2010 marks a genuine change, to finally make possible Hungarian’s independence and reorganization of society after communism, doing away with internal and external deficiencies. The use of the two thirds majority to overhaul the 1989 constitution and create many new laws is presented as a moral duty.

Formally, the 1989 constitution was an amendment by an illegitimate parliament to the previous Stalinist 1949 constitution (although the major substantive changes of the Stalinist constitution in 1989 made it EU compatible). In this context of re-organization, Orban introduced (paradoxically) the concept of an illiberal state (a liberal state would seem more logical in response to ‘post-communism’). This is what brought the prime-minister among other matters into a clash with the EU. More about this below when we analyse qualitatively the larger political context behind the speeches.

3. Qualitative analysis of the larger political context: Orbán’s government conceptual European position.

Having compared the speeches for a European and national audience, we can observe a discrepancy in discourse. Referring to the conclusion of chapter one that the Eurosceptic label dogma runs the risks to cease taking matters at face value, we can ask ourselves though, if Orbán uses blatant rhetoric for a European audience that ‘hides’ his ‘true Eurosceptism’ revealed in front of a national audience. On the other hand national speeches seem to entail rhetoric too. One interesting case is that the National Day speech of 2012, that criticises the EU to such an extent that reference is made to the Soviet Union.

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105 “Hungary is at the threshold of a great era of prosperity,” Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address 2014: ‘In 2010 we replaced the system that we had previously attempted to unsuccessfully repair. [...]Was it the right decision not to search for a compromise with the left, the defenders of the post-communist system, or with the foreign interests groups who have a financial and power-related interest in maintaining post-communism, but instead to [...]undertake to achieve the total renewal of Hungary? [...]to undertake (it) is [...]a question of moral responsibility.’
could not be found on the government website or that of Viktor Orbán. Requests for the text of the speech were ignored. Chance is that the prime-minister did want to retract from giving the image that he was criticising the EU to such an extent. A contextual comment is that Orbán is losing votes to the extreme right nationalist party Jobbik. This can partly explain the behaviour of nationalist remarks and opportunistic politics that also implied election billboards and statements that conveyed ‘we have to send a message to Brussels loud and clear: we want respect for Hungarians.’ Orbán might be using national populism to his political advantage but in the end, as prime-minister holding office, how it wishes Hungary to operate with and within the EU needs to be communicated and conducted. So let us look closer to the general context of Orbán’s national and EU politics and pursue a better understanding than the quantitative categorization of the selected speeches so far and examine whether Flood’s labels are of relevance.

3.1. Europe of Nations concept
To begin with, as mentioned above, in every speech except one, an expression of a Europe of Nations could be recognised. This seems consistent with the official Europe policy of Orbán’s government presented on its website in which one can read: “Hungary is intent on establishing a strong and united European Union. Hungary’s Europe policy must strengthen efforts aimed at combating the leadership crisis and restoring the power of democratically elected governments [...] Hungary continues to be strongly committed to European integration even in a time of economic hardship and the ensuing difficulties in the cooperation within the EU: Hungary has faith in the future of the European Union. In line with this, the Hungarian government wants to pursue an active EU policy. Our goal is to strengthen the European Union and the role of Hungary in the European Union.” On the basis of interviews with leading officials from the ministry of foreign affairs Hegedüs concludes that Hungary is interested in a strong and united Europe with social and cultural cohesion and demographic sustainability. It supports the idea that Europe is strong when its Member States are strong (implying acceptance of different national ways within the scope of European integration) and that cohesion can be secured on common

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106 The media at the time of the speech stated that he compared European bureaucrats to Soviet apparatchiks, see “War of words rages between Orban and Barroso,” EurActiv (March 12, 2012), accessed April 19, 2015, http://www.euractiv.com/central-europe/war-words-rages-orban-barroso-news-511557 “Comparing EU pressure with Hungary’s domination by the Soviet Union, Orbán said: ‘We are more than familiar with the character of unsolicited assistance, even if it comes wearing a finely tailored suit and not a uniform with shoulder patches.”


Christian values. Hungary rejects ‘federation by stealth’ but accepts flexible integration, as long as it remains open for later accession.\(^9\)

In addition, there are several political issues, which stirred debate, that provide insight into Orbán’s EU stance. These cases are economic policy, foreign affairs, the issues of immigration and the death penalty and the already mentioned general subject of the ideological view of the structure of the Hungarian state; an illiberal state.

3.2. Economic affairs

Hungary was the first to be hit by the financial crisis in 2008 but in the end Orbán rejected the EU-IMF crisis management model.\(^10\) The European vision by Orbán’s government here implies a Europe of Nations concept, as formulated in the official Europe policy.\(^11\) One can see this articulated when Hungary was holding the EU Council presidency, dealing with the crisis: “We need courage and open-mindedness for the governments and parliaments of the individual nation states to be able to overcome their debt crises.”\(^12\) These ideas are reiterated in the speech following the European Council that appointed Juncker as Commission president\(^13\) as well as in the press conference for the meeting of the European People’s Party in 2014 after discussing various European policies in which Orbán suggests that “national economies must be given greater latitude, because a successful Hungary, a successful Poland or a successful Germany can do more for the EU than if we all follow the otherwise unsuccessful economic policy direction that many countries within the European Union are currently suffering as a result of.”\(^14\) Important to note is that Orbán might on occasion have contested the economic monitoring reports of the EU on Hungary’s state of the economy, or did not choose for bailout mechanisms, he does support the EU financial rules as such. At the Visegrad conference he stood for the Fiscal Compact and defended the position not to reform against a growing sentiment to have a more looser financial policy. In his view “life-threateningly dangerous experiments” that would “endanger the results that we have recently achieved”, stating that his “starting point with regard to

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\(^10\) Orban, “A New Era Requires New Instruments.”

\(^11\) ‘Hungary’s Europe policy must strengthen efforts aimed at claiming governance back from the markets and the credit rating agencies: political actors with democratic legitimacy should control the markets and not the other way around’, see “Europe policy of Hungary,” The EU Policy Website of the Hungarian government.


\(^13\) “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s Press Conference following the Session of the European Council,” (June 27, 2014): ‘We are handling the Hungarian crisis according to a different economic policy philosophy and using a different system of instruments than those usually applied here. [...]’It makes no difference to us what they do, as long as they do it well’.

the future of Europe is that the treaties must be complied with. Similarly, we think that the financial agreements must also be complied with.”

115 Although Hungary is in no rush to join the Eurozone, Orbán’s government supports market integration as such, the prime-minister said that monetary union needs a fiscal union and the single market needed to extend to every possible facet. We can see thus in the terms of Flood both a minimalist and gradualist stance regarding EU economic policy. Hungary’s government is in favour of certain further market integration.

3.3. Foreign affairs.

Orbán has created controversy in the field of foreign affairs, yet implying again a Europe of Nations concept. His government has adopted the so-called Eastern Wind doctrine focusing on building relations with the East, and therefore distanced themselves from the West. Nevertheless, it presents a view of West and East in which the relationship with the West is self-evident and not needing cultivation. In the prime-minister’s words: “We are interested in putting an end to the mentality which always forces us to consider the question of East or West, [...] we are interested in having the opportunity to finally say: East and West, West and East.” He did however receive Putin amidst the conflict in Ukraine and sanctions by the EU on Russia, signed a nuclear energy agreement and criticised the sanctions by saying that Europe “shot itself in the foot”. Still, Orbán has publicly supported the Minsk Agreements and the mechanism of more or less sanctions regarding Russia’s

115 Orbán, “A New Era Requires New Instruments.”
116 Jenny Cosgrave, “Hungary in ‘no rush’ to join the euro,” CNBC (December 1, 2014), accessed June 12, 2015,
117 Viktor Orbán’s speech at the silver jubilee event of the American Chamber of Commerce (November 14, 2014), accessed June 12, 2015, http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/hungary-and-the-united-states-are-political-allies: “We can only stop decline in Europe if we carry forward the stalled European project by giving it new impetus. If the Member States in the Eurozone follow monetary union with the creation of fiscal union. If we continue the standardisation of the European market, and guarantee free movement and employment for our citizens across the entire continent. [...] we should extend the single market to every possible facet of the new industrial revolution that is about to take place.”
118 Viktor Orbán’s speech at the meeting of heads of missions abroad, The Prime-Minister’s speeches (March 10, 2015), accessed April 20, 2015, http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-meeting-of-heads-of-missions-abroad: “Hungary is part of the West, Hungary is itself in the West. We cannot open towards the West because we are in it[...] not a single Hungarian public figure has the right to call western integration into question, given that we resolved this issue with referenda, with decisions by the people.”

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steps towards conflict resolution. He has re-affirmed during Putin’s visit that Hungary would not be a threat to European unity for that matter and he never voted against sanctions.\textsuperscript{121}

Additionally, Hungary has signed on May 29, 2015 with PJSC Ukrtransgaz, the Ukrainian operator of the gas transportation system, an agreement on the merger of cross-border gas pipelines, fully consistent with EU energy legislation and according to the intention of the European Commission it will serve as a model for other interconnection agreements between the gas transportation system operators of the EU member states and Ukrtransgaz.\textsuperscript{122} Moreover, Orbán’s rapprochement to Russia is presented as an European policy in which ”European unity can and must be cemented in parallel with cooperation with Russia” after the violence has stopped.\textsuperscript{123} Above all, Hungary under Orbán pursues by large a sovereign national foreign policy (within a minimal EU framework), implying a minimalist stance towards EU foreign policy.\textsuperscript{124}

3.4. Immigration and capital punishment

Recently, there is anxiety on the critical topic of immigration within the EU. As Hungary reacted controversially on the matter, while at the same time an unrelated discussion on the death penalty took place, the European Parliament saw it fit to scrutinize Hungary. It clearly revealed a revisionist stance by Orbán. He called the immigration quota proposal by the EU to distribute refugees over Member States evenly “bordering on insanity” and was analysing whether Hungary could gain its sovereignty back on the issue of immigration, a situation before it became member of the EU.\textsuperscript{125} As of recent Orbán never attacked the idea of a European dimension so directly but in the case of immigration and border protection he has stated: “You can’t wait for a European solution … maybe they [EU institutions] will send you some money one day, maybe not. I don’t believe in a European solution.”\textsuperscript{126} Hungary is building a wall at its border with Serbia. Natasha Bertaud, a commission

spokeswoman, said it didn’t breach EU rules to build fences to keep out migrants but it was important to ensure that any system allowed people with a legitimate claim to asylum to enter the country.\footnote{Laurence Norman, “EU Commission Critical of Hungary’s Anti-Migrant Fence.” \textit{Wall Street Journal} (June 18, 2015). Accessed June 19, 2015, \url{http://www.wsj.com/articles/eu-commission-critical-of-hungarys-anti-migrant-fence-1434629337}.}

The revisionist position could also be accorded to the issue of the death penalty. A lot of criticism was uttered and threats were made by various political actors to sanction Hungary. It is crucial to note thought that Orbán’s government did not intent to reintroduce the death penalty and if such case would ever arise, the prime-minister was aware that the EU does not allow it and the rules needed to be changed first. Still, soon after, he expressed its wish to see whether the competence to decide on capital punishment could be given back to the Member States.\footnote{“Hungary’s Orban: EU nations should have power over death penalty” \textit{Euronews} (May 19, 2015) accessed May 20, 2015, \url{http://www.euronews.com/2015/05/19/hungary-s-orban-faces-meps-over-death-penalty-stance/}}

\section*{3.5. Ideological view of the state}

Regarding national constitutional issues and the ideological view of the state -although Orbán has clearly took a controversial approach, not to say confrontational - a Europe of Nations is also envisaged. This effected the above mentioned constitutional overhaul and controversial laws that caused debate with EU institutions as noted at the start of this chapter. Even though Orbán brought the controversial concept ‘illiberal state’ to the table, it appears what he presents in words (we will talk about concrete actions in the next chapter) is not the equivalent of illiberal democracy in the classic understanding such as coined by Fareed Zakaria.\footnote{Fareed Zakaria, “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy” \textit{Foreign Affairs} (December, 1997), accessed July 20, 2015, \url{https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1997-11-01/rise-illiberal-democracy}.}

In the notorious speech mentioning an illiberal state, Orbán is depicting a changing world with a shifting discourse in ideas and discussions that pre-2008 would have been seen as shocking. He presents examples of statements of various politicians in the world that refer to currently held discussions on the economic crisis, criticism towards the financial sector, calls for economic patriotism and national control in the face of globalisation and the challenges of multiculturalism and free-riders in the social welfare state. In this context he calls the pre-2008 world, that did not held these vital discussions in public discourse, a liberal world.\footnote{“Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s Speech at the 25th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp,” The website of the Hungarian government, \textit{The Prime Minister’s speeches} (July 30, 2014), accessed July 20, 2015, \url{http://www.kormany.hu/en/the-prime-minister/the-prime-minister-s-speeches/prime-minister-viktor-orban-s-speech-at-the-25th-balvanyos-summer-free-university-and-student-camp} ‘These are all voices, thoughts and statements that would have been unimaginable six to eight years ago.’} This is the framework in which Orbán’s liberal and illiberal connotations should partly be understood. And it also explains why he misunderstood the
views of Joseph S. Nye, who was claiming that in the Near East Islamic autocrats are associating liberalism with corruption, sex and violence that causes American soft power to decline.\textsuperscript{131} Orbán instead wrongly claimed that Nye himself said that liberal values today embody corruption, sex and violence and merged this liberalism with his liberal conception, perceiving it not up for the task in today’s world.\textsuperscript{132}

As mentioned above, when Fidesz won in 2010, Orbán sought to present himself as a revolutionary, one who finds new ways to deal with a new reality in the 21st century following the economic crisis. He wishes to “make the community of Hungarians competitive once again after the era of liberal state and liberal democracy, one that will of course still respect values of Christianity, freedom and human rights.” He proclaims that “we are doing our best to find, (ways of parting with Western European dogmas \textit{not with overall European dogmas!}, making ourselves independent from them) the form of organizing a community, that is capable of making us competitive in this great world-race.” He is building “an illiberal state, a non-liberal state” that “does not deny foundational values of liberalism, as freedom, etc.” but “applies a specific, national, particular approach in its stead.” Important is that in this infamous speech emphasis lies on finding ways to make this possible.

In this understanding debates and conflicts within the EU can be an obstacle in this process but also a natural part: Orbán thinks it’s possible to build an illiberal nation state within the EU, otherwise he wouldn’t aim for it he says. Although he mentions Turkey’s and Russia’s models, what he means exactly for Hungary is not clear. He is pursuing a different model that can still fit EU norms (the concrete steps taken and what this in fact means will be evaluated in the next chapter).

Orbán expresses consistently his adhesion to the EU’s rules and structures when scrutinized and audited by the European Commission, adding that Hungary has created different answers to the difficult dilemmas arising from EU membership which seem to work for Hungary. He has pointed out that the debate on Hungary is a European ideological debate in which his government position of a Christian democracy with support to national sentiment may make it a minority in Europe, but that this position is no less a European position. He claimed legitimacy from an alleged view by Robert Schuman (one of the founding fathers of the EU) that there will either be a Christian democracy in Europe or there will be no democracy at all (Schuman is recorded to have said: “All the countries of

\textsuperscript{131} Joseph S. Nye, “The Decline of America’s Soft Power,” Foreign Affairs (May/June, 2004), accessed July 10, 2015, \url{https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2004-05-01/decline-americas-soft-power} ‘Liberal democracy, as they (the Middle East) portray it, is full of corruption, sex, and violence -- an impression reinforced by American movies and television and often exacerbated by the extreme statements of some especially virulent Christian preachers in the United States.’

\textsuperscript{132} “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s Speech at the 25th Bálványos Summer Free University and Student Camp,”: ‘according to an internationally recognised analyst, the strength of American soft power is in decline and liberal values today embody corruption, sex and violence, and as such discredit America and American modernisation.’
Europe are imbued with Christian civilization. This is the soul of Europe, it must be reborn”).133 Furthermore, following criticism of German chancellor Angela Merkel, he expressed that not all democracies have to be liberal, adding: “Those who say that democracy is necessarily liberal are trying to put one school of thought above others and we cannot grant that.”134 Still, Orbán does not refrain from stating to the European Parliament that he will fight against those who want to turn the EU into an empire, refusing the criticism of the Tavares report on Hungarian’s commitment to European values and democracy and exclaims: ‘’Long live the free nations of the European Union!’135 Nevertheless, again a Europe of Nations concept is showcased, and a minimalist stance can be noted.

3.6. ‘Hidden Europe’

Finally, it is important to realize that a Europe of Nations concept is not only presented to safeguard Hungarian sovereignty but also as a remedy for the EU; to save her from extreme powers. This is for example expressed at the end of the Hungarian EU Council presidency: “we have to make clear that Europe cannot be strong without having strong nations as a member of it. So that space of the political arena should belong to us and must be occupied by us, not to the far right. So if you always accept the European liberal approach, always neglecting national approaches and cultural background issues and emotion as such from politics, if you accept that kind of approach; we have the far right. So that’s my analysis on European perspectives.”136 In the terminology of Taggart and Szczerbiak this also partly implies national interest based scepticism (European interests and policies are in conflict with national interests) and to a larger degree a form of Practice-based Euroscepticism. There is no principled EU resistance but Europeanism is defined in a ‘national’ way and different from that of Brussels and

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136 “Q&A”, Institute of International & European Affairs (Dublin: June 1, 2011). Before that he mentions the fallacy of EU identity: 'To have a common, in any sense a feeling of common..to a political centre which is hundreds of kilometres from their nation, having procedures which are not understandable for them. And only getting news about the bad consequences they suffer because of the decisions made over there. So under that condition it is very difficult to create a community, a political community behind the European Union institutions. So that kind of cultural identity problem, political identity problem is on the table. And the far right has an answer to that. And if the moderates as we are, the Christian democrats are not be able to provide a proper answer to that. You know, the far right get an advantage of it. And that’s the reason why the European Union issue is politically, provide more chances for the far right than for the moderate forces as we are. So we have to change it. And we have to speak honestly on that problem and we have to use national rhetoric..'
demanded by the EU, and perhaps, according to the ‘mainstream’ interpretation of the Copenhagen criteria. In addition, Orbán repeatedly claims that he dares to speak out on valid problems within the EU. He talks about a ‘hidden Europe’ in which political correctness restricts several EU leaders to express sincere opinions. He presents himself as a leader, partly martyr, who breaks through the dogmas and taboos without any reservation in provocative vocabulary to save Europe. Compared to the term Europeism articulated by former Czech president Klaus that seeks to destroy European dogma mentioned in the introduction, Orbán takes a similar approach by attacking ‘political correctness’ and the declaration of a ‘hidden Europe’ saying “Europe no longer concentrates on the problem, but merely considers whether a given solution weakens or reinforces its own closed system of ideologies. Europe has become an ideological obsession.”

Table 1. Orbán’s Europe of Nations concept through Flood’s labels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Economic policy</th>
<th>Minimalist/gradualist</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign policy</td>
<td>Minimalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic policy (constitutional)</td>
<td>Minimalist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(immigration, capital punishment)</td>
<td>Revisionist</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

As demonstrated in this chapter, Orbán’s views and remarks vary and can be contradicting or confusing on several topics. Examples are mentions of an illiberal state and a Christian democracy in response to both a narrative of a Communist heritage and a failing contemporary liberal world view, coupled with pro- as well as anti-EU remarks. Here it is relevant to mention that Orbán and Fidesz started out as liberal, combatting communism, but transformed to conservative in 1994. A clear discrepancy exists between addressing national and European audiences, at the latter Orbán adopts EU terminology instead of vigorous national conservative at the former. Philosopher Gáspár Miklós Tamás stated that Hungary has a new official state ideology which combines eurosceptic nationalism and ethnicism. Socialist politician Csaba Tóth observes an unique Hungarian ‘populist’ or ‘nationalist’ Euroscepticism distinguished from ‘free market’ or ‘liberal’ Euroscepticism. Aside from the labels envisaged in this paper, Orbán’s government views affecting Europe might be above all pragmatic, opportunistic and

137 “Viktor Orbán im Gespräch, ‘Es gibt ein verborgenes Europa’, “ Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (March 4, 2012) and State of the Nation Address 2015: ‘Europe today continues to huddle behind the moats of political correctness, and has built a wall of taboos and dogmas around itself.’
populist with a nationalist bent as to maintain power and not lose to the extreme right opposition party Jobbik.

Still, this chapter would put forward that Viktor Orbán and its government appear to uphold a minimalist EU stance - safe for the issue of immigration border protection and capital punishment it is revisionist- with gradualist tendencies in the economic field. Behind the overwhelming clouds of ambiguity there lingers a consistent European view, both in the speeches and politics in general: a Europe of Nations concept that is in accordance with a minimalist stance defined by Flood, having its cause in a particular view of the EU; practice based Euroscepticism. Here the paradox of pro-EU remarks with nationalist and detrimental EU comments can be put in perspective. What is clear is that this complex discourse cannot fit the problematic label of Euroscepticism. Flood’s and Taggart & Szczerbiak’s labels make Orbán’s political expressions and overall presented position insightful to a certain degree. Included in this position is the opinion, as described in the introduction, that the EU is a playing field, with rules and regulations, where every country tries to achieve its best interests and thereby gets into conflict with each other and with the EU. The crucial question is if the EU is indeed a forum that entails this playing field: whether Orbán’s Europe of Nations concept and Hungary’s activities in it are within the boundaries of what is possible and deemed to fit an EU/European discussion. This can be measured by analysing the EU’s reaction and existing mechanisms in connection to the Hungarian government’s actions. Additionally, by evaluating whether Hungary’s alleged deviations are remarkable in an European context and in fact extraordinary compared to other Member States actions. We can then find out if Orbán’s government actions entail practice based Euroscepticism, that is going against the grain of a certain clearly established EU consensus, and whether it to any extent actually opposes the EU and its goals as rejectionist in practice. This will be analysed in the next chapter.
Chapter 3
European values and positions; EU’s playing field and Hungary’s adherence.

“There have always been and there always will be disputes in Europe, but as long as the arguments in these debates are specific, reasonable and sober, and as long as we assume the other party’s good intentions we will always be able to find a way to resolve these disputes [...] We Hungarians, and I myself, believe in these principles, and it is these principles that guided us to the European Union.”

-Viktor Orbán, Prime-minister of Hungary, January 2012

The previous chapters have discussed the problematic discourse of Euroscepticism and that of Orbán’s Hungary. This chapter will tackle the question if Orbán’s government presented position with its concrete actions fit the framework of the EU, its existing rules and mechanisms and clearly established EU consensus (if there is one) or whether it threatens and damages it. We analyse if it undertakes practice based Euroscepticism (in the meaning of that few resources have been directed towards implementing/supporting the EU ‘acquis communautaire’; euroscepticism exhibited by ‘reluctant democracies’) to such an extent that it exercises a rejectionist position in the term of Flood in practice.

Therefore, first the discussion on the EU’s values and its mechanisms to safeguard them will be evaluated in connection to Hungary. Orbán’s practice of illiberal ideology, his domestic modus operandi will be analysed against what are considered core European values. The question is what the legit measurements are and what they measure. What did Orbán’s government undertook and how does this hold up with existing rules and EU mechanisms? What does it signify for Hungary and also the EU?

Secondly, Hungary's policy positions and actions in the field of economic policy, foreign affairs and immigration, as mentioned in chapter two, will be compared with other Member States attitudes, actions and European political consensus at large. This will overall determine whether Hungary is a rebel within the EU or not. This provides building blocks for the answers on the questions whether terminology and labels used on Hungary are correct, whether EU mechanisms are solid, and finally whether certain current discourses, labels (such as Euroscepticism) and statements are productive.

1. EU’s political model and mechanisms to safeguard European values

The first question is regarding which facts Orbán’s Hungary can be accused of in trespassing the EU’s consensus and principles. Ferenc Kumin, a government spokesman said in response to criticism on Hungary’s policies that: “The opposition has a difficult time attacking us, so what they can do is bring

the discourse from real issues, from figures and facts, into a more symbolic arena where weak concepts are around, like ‘European values.’ Define European values! It’s not easy. It’s a very strong political weapon to use against your enemy if you want to do that.”

These European values are to be found in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) to which its Member States need to adhere to: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities.

Referring to the previous chapter, it is interesting to note that democracy is not further defined: neither as liberal, Christian or illiberal. Former European Commissioner of Justice Vivian Reding has said that respect for the rule of law is in many ways a prerequisite for the protection of all other fundamental values listed in Article 2 TEU and for upholding all rights and obligations deriving from the Treaties. The criticism on Hungary has, no wonder, thus predominantly concerned the rule of law. The importance is clear, the rule of law is a pre-condition for EU Membership, one of the famous ‘Copenhagen criteria’, as underlined by Article 49 TEU, which refers to Article 2 TEU. Walter Hallstein, the Commission’s first President, called the European Community a “Community based on the rule of law” and the Court of Justice affirmed that in a ruling in 1986 where “neither the Member States nor its institutions can avoid a review of the question whether the measures adopted by them are in conformity with the basic constitutional charter, the Treaty.” Since there is an increasing integration of European judicial instruments and systems, such as the common policy in the field of justice and home affairs (since the Maastricht Treaty), and as the rule of law is not only preserved centrally- by the EU institutions and the Court of Justice- but also a duty of each national legal system to uphold the Treaties, it means that the proper functioning of national court systems, the independence of national courts, their efficiency and quality, is essential for the proper functioning of the whole European Union.

Thus, here lies an important part of the framework and boundaries of, in the words of Orbán, ‘EU’s playing field’. Another question is: what is the rule of law precisely? Different interpretations and specifics exist due to national traditions and language nuances. In the words of EU Commissioner Reding though: “we mean a system where laws are applied and enforced (so not only "black letter law") but also the spirit of the law and fundamental rights, which are the ultimate foundation of all laws. The rule of law means a system in which no one – no government, no public official, no dominant


company – is above the law; it means equality before the law. The rule of law also means fairness and due process. It means guarantees that laws cannot be abused for alien purposes, or retrospectively changed. The rule of law means that justice is upheld by an independent judiciary court, acting impartially. It means ultimately a system where justice is not only done, but it is seen to be done, so that the system can be trusted by all citizens to deliver justice.”¹⁴²

The final question is then: who is to safeguard these European values such as the rule of law and determine if they are breached? As a political community the EU and its members agreed on this in the Treaties and only what has been decided in this social contract, to which Hungary consented and is a member of, should the ultimate referee be found with the mechanism agreed on by the same political community. Although obvious, it is important to emphasise that Orbán’s discourse and actions can only be judged by this discourse. Every other judgment not stemming from it cannot be considered valid unless decided by that same political community in its foundations, the Treaties or otherwise. Officially and legally the Commission as ‘Guardian of the Treaties’ in cooperation with the European Court of Justice is the institution to determine if European law and thus values have been breached. Article 258 in the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU (TFEU) provides the Commission the right to initiate an infringement action against any Member State, which has failed to comply with its EU obligations. It can bring the matter before the Court of Justice should the relevant Member State fail to comply with the Commission’s recommendation(s). If a Member State fails to comply with the Court’s judgment it may be brought before the Court of Justice again, which, in this instance, has the additional power of imposing financial sanctions on it. Additionally, the Treaties foresee that the Council of the EU and the European Council can also decide (with a consenting role of the European Parliament) on the matter of European values mentioned in Article 2 TEU. This is laid down in Article 7 TEU. The Council of the EU has the power to sanction any Member State found ‘guilty’, after the European Council determined in unanimity of the existence, of a serious and persistent breach of the EU values laid down in Article 2 TEU. There is also the possibility to adopt preventive sanctions in the situation where there is ‘a clear risk of a serious breach’ of the EU values by a Member State, here a majority of four fifths of the Council’s members and the consent of the European Parliament are required.¹⁴³

1.1. Orbán’s Hungary’s adherence to European values and the EU.

The interesting fact is that Hungary’s new constitution, its amendments and the implementation of controversial laws have been done through entirely legal means and without a formal Article 7 TEU mechanism proposal on the table in the process of finalizing those actions.

The new Hungarian constitution was passed in April 2011. It was severely criticised by civil liberties groups and the Socialist and Liberal European political families for being contrary to EU norms and values and for strengthening the Fidesz one-party rule. Criticism was also voiced by the Venice Commission for Democracy through Law of the Council of Europe. However, the EU commissioner responsible for institutional relations, Maroš Šefčovič (even affiliated to the Party of European Socialists), said in July 2011 that the new Hungarian constitution did not raise issues of compatibility with European Union law.

On 12 April, 2013 the Commission expressed in a letter concern over the Fourth amendment to Hungary’s Fundamental law, the constitution, on three issues: a clause introduced by Article 17 of the Fourth amendment to the Hungarian fundamental law on European Court of Justice judgments entailing payment obligations, the broad powers given by Article 14 enabling the President of the National Office for the Judiciary to transfer cases from one court to another and the restrictions introduced by Article 5.1 to the publication of political advertisements. Orbán however, replied to the letter from Commission President Barroso on the same day assuring his readiness to cooperate and to pay full attention to the concerns raised, reitering his personal commitment to European norms and values. He informed the Commission that he had already initiated the necessary steps to address the concerns and in the following days new drafts were send. By July the first two issues were solved and all of the concerns by 3 September 2013.

Only with ordinary legislation had official infringements procedures been launched on three cases adopted by the Hungarian Parliament in 2012. Two of the cases led to the Court of Justice of the European Union. The concern about a law that would diminish the independence of the national central bank by allowing a Minister to participate in Monetary Council meetings (offering a possibility

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of political influence) was mediated after a formal letter of notice as a commencement of infringement. After the Court said that legislation which proscribed a mandatory retirement age for judges, prosecutors and public notaries at 62 years violated equal treatment rules (Directive 2000/78/EC) by discrimination based on age, Hungary changed its law accordingly. A third case was the decision to create a new National Agency for Data Protection (replacing the current Data Protection Commissioner’s Office as of 1 January 2012 prematurely with the possibility that the Hungarian prime minister and president could dismiss the new supervisor on arbitrary grounds) thus violating EU law that recognizes the independence of data protection supervisors.

Before the solution of the last case, on 4 September 2013, Viviane Reding Vice-President of the European Commission and EU Justice Commissioner said that “Hungary has respected the legal views of the Commission and has brought its constitution back in line with EU law with regard to all the points raised by the Commission.” Additionally, the intergovernmental bodies of the EU, the Council of the EU and European Council, have hardly spoken out about violations of European values. Although calls to these bodies have been made, one can argue that Hungary was and is in full adherence of EU values as the mechanism of Article 7 TEU has not been formally tabled. The Council did not issue one political statement regarding the Hungarian government’s actions.

In other words, the narrative described above depicts that Hungary is in full adherence to European values and also cooperative with and for the EU, safe for two cases going to Court (but that could be normalized by the fact that many infringements procedures on many laws from Member States are conducted within the EU). However, this is not the whole story. In the following two paragraphs another important side will be addressed by analysing the EU’s shortcomings in assessing Hungary’s adherence to European values and the signs of Orbán’s government’s conduct that could imply a different kind of EU orientation.

1.2. Deficiencies of assessing Hungary’s adherence to European values

Indeed, many criticism is voiced by scholars, politicians and organisations that the EU does not have the right tools to really determine trespassing or adherence to European values and to safeguard them. Of significance is that the Commission, as Guardian of the Treaties, also stated this. Former European Commission President Barroso and Justice Commissioner Reding acknowledged that in dealing with the matter “a number of shortcomings in the tools available to remedy a true rule of law crisis” were revealed.\(^{154}\) The German, Dutch, Finnish, and Danish foreign ministers send a letter February 2013 to the EU on the general matter of the need for stronger EU tools to respond to abuses inside its own borders\(^{155}\) and a report on September 2012 of the so-called Future of Europe Group had also mentioned briefly that a new, light mechanism should be introduced enabling the Commission to draw up a report in the case of concrete evidence of violations of the values under Article 2 TEU and to make recommendations or refer the matter to the Council. \(^{156}\)

*The infringement procedure: the European Commission and the Court of Justice*

As mentioned, the Commission did initiate two infringements procedures that led to a Court case against Hungary. However, the infringement procedure has its limits to effectively police and sanction Member States intent on undermining Article 2 TEU. Orbán’s call for an illiberal state according to Kochenov, Pech and Schepele\(^{157}\), among other scholars and politicians, is a call for an illiberal regime that is unsuitable for the EU and also practiced as such, violating Article 2 TEU substantially. Yet the Commission cannot initiate an infringement procedure on this sole basis of Article 2 TEU, even if it is however a legally binding provision that needs to be adhered to. The Commission may only initiate an infringement action against a Member State for a specific violation of EU law. Here the statement of Ferenc Kumin, Orbán’s government spokesman, is relevant: the relatively open-ended nature of the values laid down in Article 2 TEU means that no EU institution, or private party, may institute legal proceedings against a Member State on this sole basis either before national or EU courts. The Commission can only pursue individual instances where national authorities do not implement or correctly apply specific provisions of EU law. There is no competence for the Commission to decide on

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\(^{154}\) “The EU and the Rule of Law – What next?”, Reding.


the rule of law, like the independence and impartiality of national judiciaries, directly. Although the Commission had its concern about the rule of law, it relied for instance only on the EU principle of non-discrimination on the ground of age to challenge Hungary’s legislation regarding the compulsory retirement of judges. Nevertheless, according to Kochenov and Pech, this did not allow the Commission to impose effective remedies that would have prevented the undermining of the independence and impartiality of Hungarian’s judicial system by the national government. In other words, the Commission cannot scrutinize the rule of law as a whole directly, the infringement procedures can only relate to the values of Article 2 TEU indirectly. The infringement procedure is not intended to judge the constitutional order of the state; the European values such as the rule of law and the working provisions are not sufficiently specified to be able to do so.

Article 7 TEU procedure: the European Council, the Council and European Parliament.

The intergovernmental bodies of the EU, the Council of the EU and European Council may have, contrary to the Commission, the means to determine directly and as a whole when European values are violated, and to safeguard them by Article TEU 7 after a proposal by one third of the Member States or the Commission. This is however a ‘nuclear option’. And as Kochenov and Lech point out, this provision has never been used for essentially two reasons: the thresholds for activating it are virtually impossible to satisfy and the existence of a political convention whereby it would be politically counterproductive to do so (a Member State does not wishes to be criticised by its peers, thus refrains from condemning others and in the case of the Austrian crisis with the extreme-right FPÖ party in government ten years ago the provision was not used as it was feared that it would make the Austrian government more bold). One exception is that it has been instrumentalised in the case of Romania and Bulgaria but that was part of an original rule of law mechanism put in place connecting to a pre-accession context of preparing these countries for EU membership. The provision is basically there to deter and not to be used, save an extreme situation such as a coup d’état.

Thus, both the infringement and Article 7 TEU procedures suffer from a number of shortcomings that can prevent the EU being effective to remedy systemic violations of EU values. One can ask, and what about the European Parliament? It has been critically debating Hungary in plenary on occasion until recent, such as June 2015, condemning death penalty statements in Hungary and asking the European Commission to “immediately initiate an in-depth monitoring process on the situation of democracy, rule of law and fundamental rights in Hungary and to report back on this

159 The scope of Article 7 TEU is not confined to the areas regulated by EU law but also allows the Union to act in the event of a breach in which Member States act autonomously, in their own exclusive area of competence.
matter to the European Parliament and Council before September 2015.” In July 2013 it had passed a resolution, the so-called Tavares report, that had gone further in critically assessing many aspects of European values and the rule of law than the Commission dealings have done, calling on Hungary to reform its constitution and address rule of law and European values concerns, echoing the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission opinion on Hungary’s constitution. Nevertheless, officially the Parliament has little power to do something about safeguarding European values, only then admonishing the other institutions, the Commission and Council to do so. The Parliament’s resolution was not binding on Hungary. As a political body it does not have the official legitimacy like the Commission as Guardian of the Treaties or the Council through Article 7 TEU to initiate a decision (only to propose or consent after the Council’s decision) on adherence of EU values. Its potential legitimacy to be an actor in this process is weakened by the fact that the European Parliament is highly exposed to a risk of getting caught in the game of larger politics and interests between the political families, notably between left and right. For example, the Romanian and Bulgarian left orientated governments were backed up by the social-democrats and liberals when it had undertaken controversial domestic steps. Equally so, Hungary is backed up by the European People’s Party to which Orbán’s party is a member of. The party even stated that it denounced an alleged “use of double standards by the European Socialists” blaming them “turning a blind eye to glaring breaches of European values in Socialist-led countries such as Bulgaria and Romania” that “further proves the fact that their continuous attempts to condemn EPP-led governments is biased and politically motivated.”

1.3. Signs of Orbán’s Hungary practice based euro scepticism and rejectionist position.

Although in the end Orbán’s government does not violate core EU values, the second part of the other side of the story is that there are signs that has implications for the credibility of Hungary’s overall ‘pro’ EU values position.

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Signs of non-compliance

For instance, the Commission has repeatedly expressed concern over the years about European values and the rule of law, particularly regarding the Fourth Amendment. It also mentioned to Orbán the importance of a debate and dialogue with the European Parliament that condemned him harshly, as well as the Council of Europe, which opinion was taken into account by the Tavares report. Former Commissioner of Justice Reding, who spearheaded legal action against Orbán’s government, said in a recent interview boldly: “I prevented worse, it did not change dramatically the nationalistic course of the Hungarian prime minister, but at least it stopped him dismantling the independence of the courts and the independent data authority.” Furthermore, former Vice-President Commissioner Neelie Kroes criticised several media laws and called them together a pattern that is deeply worrying; a pattern contrary to the EU’s values. A free and plural media that arguably serves those values was under threat by a law in 2010, establishing a Media Council that could fine media for content that is ‘not politically balanced’ or ‘violates human dignity’, and through restrictions on political advertising in 2013 and an advertising tax that, allegedly, disproportionately affects one single media company (RTL, “one of the few channels in Hungary not simply promoting a pro-Fidesz line”).

The Council of Europe is a body that does judge on the constitutional order of a state, demonstrated by the Council of Europe’s Venice Commission critical opinion on Hungary’s constitution. Even though it is not a EU body, the EU does take its views into account. On 11 March, 2013 President Barroso and Secretary General Jagland issued a joint statement, expressing the shared concerns of both the Commission and the Council of Europe with respect to the principles of the rule of law, EU law and Council of Europe standards. President Barroso has underscored the close cooperation of the European Commission on the matter of safeguarding European values with the Council of Europe and the Venice Commission, even though no infringement procedures were launched on these general matters and no official condemnation has been expressed by the


Of significance is also that the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of the Council of Europe is a protocol attached to the EU Treaties relating to Article 6(2) TEU on the accession of the EU to the Convention. The standards and opinion of the Council of Europe do matter and have certain legitimacy, although states or individuals first have to go to this non-EU court for an individual decision that is ultimately a non-EU decision and non-decisive on the broader European values in article 2 TEU.

Combining all the controversial laws and activities that have been judged by the Commission separately, partially or not, there are signs that Orbán is making a deliberate shift in an unfavourable EU direction, as already mentioned at the start of this paper many media, analysts and European politicians have claimed. These signs are also picked up by assessments from NGO’s such as Human Right Watch, Hungarian Helsinki Committee and Freedom House, and respected scholars such as Krugman, Schepple and Ágh, who argue that the checks and balances, vital for democracy and the rule of law, are being eroded by Orbán’s government, violating European values and antagonizing the EU. One of the allegations is that since acquiring power in 2010, the Fidesz government has undermined the independence of all formerly independent bodies by replacing their personnel with those who owe their jobs to this government.

First, regarding the early retirement of the judges that violated EU law: they were foremost financially compensated not reinstated, as compensation can be considered fair concerning the EU court’s ruling that they suffered from age discrimination. The Commission had to declare Hungary in

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170 The EU has developed its comparative expertise, for example, on sound, efficient and independent legal systems in close cooperation with the Council of Europe, with as result the EU Justice Scoreboard. See “The EU and the Rule of Law,” Reding.


174 “Nations in Transit 2014: Eurasia’s Rupture with Democracy,” Freedom House, accessed June 20, 2015, https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit-2014/nations-transit-2014-eurasias-rupture-democracy Hungary was named one of the worst backsliders. ’Hungary’s multiyear governance decline...remains the most poignant reminder that democratization in post-communist Europe is neither complete nor irreversible.[...] Without counterbalancing improvements, any further deterioration in governance, electoral process, media freedom, civil society, judicial independence or corruption under Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s recently re-elected government will expel Hungary from the category of ‘consolidated democratic regimes.’


compliance with the Court’s decision without successfully challenging the threat to judicial independence, which was the real danger that should have been addressed.

Secondly, it was ruled that the premature termination of the Data Protection Commissioner currently in office breached EU law but there was no remedy to reinstate the Data Protection Commissioner. The new one was already in office: firing him would also mean violating EU law with regard to its independence.

Thirdly, we can point to actions that did not lead to severe EU scrutiny as mentioned before: the government fired Justice András Baka, the President of the Supreme Court, on the theory that his court had been renamed and reorganized so that his old job disappeared. The independent Election Commission was reorganized, all of its prior members fired in mid-term, the OSCE saying the result is a partisan commission.\textsuperscript{178} The independent Media Board was reorganized, renamed and all of its members replaced.\textsuperscript{179} An attempt was also made to prematurely fire the president of the National Bank who is now replaced nonetheless after its official term. The European Central Bank criticised that the independence of the Bank is at risk.\textsuperscript{180} Taken together, having virtually no state institutions left that the Orbán government has not reorganized, it appears that the government was thus able to rid itself of people whom it had not appointed and to replace them with people whom the government preferred. Additionally, laws that were struck down by the Hungarian Constitutional Court were reintroduced by the government through amendments to the constitution itself. The Fourth Amendment to the Constitution in 2013 ended the court’s power to review substantive changes to the constitution, it can review only on procedural grounds.\textsuperscript{181} To be sure, individually, the measures are not breaching EU law or EU values necessarily. But if you would analyse the effect of all measures combined, the argument is that it affects the checks and balances of a healthy rule of law and democracy, violating Article 2 values.\textsuperscript{182}

Nevertheless, to be true to the European values themselves, such as the rule of law, one is innocent till proven: within the EU political community itself it can only and should be decided by an official institution that has the legitimacy to do so. The European Commission has said that in its

\begin{footnotes}
\item[182] Scheppele, “Making Infringement Procedures More Effective.”
\end{footnotes}
dealing it became aware it lacks the tools and expertise to remedy a true rule of law crisis, thus it has officially not encountered one yet.

Lack of sincere cooperation

Still, taken the above together, there are ultimately arguments to make - relating to the terms of chapter one and in view of the discourse presented in chapter two - that in action Orbán’s government reinforces its practice based eurosceptism and possibly could exercise a rejectionist position in the terms of Flood. One dimension which has not been given a lot of attention is that Hungary might not be in violation of Article 2 TEU, as it is difficult to determine with the existing provisions, but it could be said to be of Article 4.3 TEU:

*Pursuant to the principle of sincere cooperation, the Union and the Member States shall, in full mutual respect, assist each other in carrying out tasks which flow from the Treaties.*

*The Member States shall take any appropriate measure, general or particular, to ensure fulfilment of the obligations arising out of the Treaties or resulting from the acts of the institutions of the Union.*

*The Member States shall facilitate the achievement of the Union's tasks and refrain from any measure which could jeopardise the attainment of the Union's objectives.*

Based on this article the Court of Justice has recognised a principle of loyalty with a duty of sincere cooperation as a general principle of Community law. This not only involves interlocking legal orders of the Member States with Union law by imposing serious duties on States to give strong effect to European legal acts. Sincere cooperation also has its application in preventing and resolving conflicts between the Union and the Member States and has its relation to the principles of solidarity, pre-emption, the Union interest, institutional balance, and the unity of international representation.

There are multiple examples that Orbán quite ignores this principle aside from above allegations. While the Hungarian law on the termination of the Data Protection Commissioner was pending in Court, Orbán’s government incorporated the premature termination of the Data Protection Commissioner at constitutional level through the Fourth amendment. This cannot be said to express a sincere cooperation with the EU as to prevent unnecessary further conflict.

Additionally, a part of the Fourth Amendment sought to exclude the norm control by the Constitutional Court and prohibit it from using its former case law in the future. Despite the fact that Barroso, president of the Commission and Jagland, secretary general of the Council of Europe, protested personally to Orbán about the amendment and tried to convince him to give consent to a

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preliminary legal analysis by the Commission prior to adoption, Orbán pushed the law through parliament on March 11, 2013.\footnote{Hegedüs, “Hungary’s Ten Years within the European Union,” 10.}

Moreover, as addressed before, after the Court’s judgement that ruled down the early mandatory retirement policy affecting the independence of the judiciary on the grounds of age-discrimination, it seemed that the affected judges were not reinstated but primarily financially compensated. Only a handful were restored in office, none to acquire their former position: no sincere duty to give full effect to EU legal decisions.\footnote{Kochenov and Pech, “Upholding the Rule of Law in the EU” 4.}

In this context, the statements of Orbán regarding the death penalty can also be pointed to as a lack of solidarity to the Union interest, even if he has no intention to introduce it. For national radio the prime-minister did state however that if capital punishment would work to fight crime, it should be for the Member States to decide and EU rules needed to be changed.\footnote{“Orbán: issue of death penalty should be up to EU member states,” Politics.hu (May 8, 2015) accessed May 10, 2015, \url{http://www.politics.hu/20150508/orban-issue-of-death-penalty-should-be-up-to-eu-member-states/}.} Citizens can already freely discuss topics in a democracy. It is then an odd move at least that the government puts the death penalty on the agenda, possibly undermining a crystal clear consensus, contrary to the more open-ended European values in Article 2 TEU, that the death penalty has no place in the EU.\footnote{The ban is laid down in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and European Convention on Human Rights and its Protocols, particularly Protocol 6 and 13. The Treaty on European Union (TEU)states in article 6 that the EU recognises the rights, freedoms and principles set out in the Charter and that the EU (as a whole) shall accede to the Convention. As part of the acquis, the abolition is also one of the conditions for accession to the EU.}

Finally, one can point out symbolism that hurts sincere cooperation and international representation, for instance the allowance of the removal of the EU flag at the Hungarian parliament building by the extreme-right and the prevention of re-instalment by the socialists.\footnote{“President of Hungarian parliament orders removal of EU flag,” The Budapest Beacon (November 17, 2014), accessed May 22, 2015, \url{http://budapestbeacon.com/news-in-brief/president-hungarian-parliament-orders-removal-eu-flag/15174}.}

\textit{Practice based Euroscepticism, rejectionist and retrospectively conformist}

Consequently, combined with Orbán’s negative comments on EU institutions and policies and ambiguous contradicting statements demonstrated in chapter two, the prime-minister can be said to give not much credit to the principle of sincere cooperation, pushing him in the direction of Flood’s rejectionist label. According to Hegedüs, Orbán’s government policy strategy can be viewed as “two steps forward, one step back”. It adopts a law whose conformity with European standards is questionable and in face of international criticism it then backs down but manages to keep a large part of the benefits or effect of the original legislation. This can also be said to hold true for many
controversial statements such as about capital punishment and on the issue of migration, as can be read below. Orbán and his government can then be considered taking, rather than an Eurosceptic, neither a particular EU position nor rejectionist stance but (retrospectively) conformist as this thesis would put forward. The position entails a trial-error policy discourse in which Orbán is, to put it bluntly, stopped by power only. His mentioned state re-organization, an illiberal state, as a process possible within the EU could be intentionally a never ending process without a real EU political position. In fact, just recently Orbán seems to give this away by a controversial statement on Hungary’s political model and vision: “It’s hard to define. People ask: ‘What the hell is it?’ ... It’s like pornography. No one can define it, but everybody knows it when they see it”.191 This is reinforced by the fact that Orbán is incorporating political issues and standpoints, such as on migration and the death penalty, from the extreme right opposition Jobbik that poses an electoral threat. At the same time, it can be seen as developing a political counter-model based on the re-establishment of the national elite’s sovereignty to the greatest extent possible, offering new impetus for the Europe of Nations concept (that on occasion could entail practice based Euroscepticism).192

1.4. The need for better mechanisms in determining adherence to European values
On a final note, the demand for improved mechanisms to safeguard European values exists against the background of what is happening not solely in Hungary. Overall, rule of law crises have appear to have gained both on intensity and regularity in the past decade. When Commissioner Reding spoke about rule of law crises she did not mention only the Hungarian government’s alleged attempt in 2011 to undermine the independence of the judiciary, but also the French government’s attempt in summer 2010 to secretly implement a collective deportation policy aimed at EU citizens of Romani ethnicity despite contrary assurances given to the Commission that Roma people were not being singled out. The Romanian government’s failure to comply with key judgements of the national constitutional court in 2012 was also mentioned.193 Calls for activating Article 7 TEU have for instance also been made when it was revealed that several EU Member States and some candidate countries colluded in the running of secret CIA prisons after 9/11.194 Hungary might not score as the top student in class on matters of democracy, transparency, media freedom and rule of law in international rankings but it shares poor grades in those rankings with other Member States (including non-post-communist countries195), some perform worse on various issues (although Hungary is currently one of the most

191 “Orban: EU needs 'strong' leaders, not institutions” EUobserver (June 29, 2015).
192 Hegedüs, “Hungary’s Ten Years within the European Union,” 3 and 9.
194 Kochenov and Pech, “Upholding the Rule of Law in the EU,” 3.
195 For example, Hungary is above Greece and Italy in the Freedom Index, see “2015 World Press Freedom Index”, https://index.rsf.org/#1/, Hungary is above Italy, Greece, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, Bulgaria and
rapid backsliders). This a grave concern demanding attention within the EU for what it stands for but it cannot cast judgment or condemnation on Hungary at the moment. The ambiguity and controversy can be said not to lie (only) in Hungary but within the EU itself. The solution is thus profound definitions of European values, improved mechanisms and greater expertise to safeguard them. Indeed, former Commission president Barroso said aware that the EU needs to work on filling “the space that exists at present between the Commission’s infringement powers laid down in Articles 257-260 TFEU, and the so-called ‘nuclear option’ laid down in Article 7 TEU.” Next to furious debates in the European Parliament that led to the Tavares report which asks for better monitoring by the EU on these matters, proposals from both the Council, including letters from some Member States mentioned before, and the Commission have been tabled with the rationale that the current framework is ill-defined when it comes to addressing internal systematic threats to European values.

The European Commission’s pre-Article 7 TEU proposal

The European Commission has proposed ‘A new EU framework to strengthen the Rule of Law’ on March 2014. A revolutionary mechanism however cannot be expected as it would demand Treaty change which seem politically unrealistic at the moment. It is sensible that a proposal would be based on an existing, even though never used, procedure. It reveals the reality that the EU is “currently not mature enough as a democratic constitutional system to move into the highly sensitive business of enforcing relatively open-ended and contested political values against reluctant national authorities.” The Commission’s aim is a procedure that can be used prior triggering Article 7 TEU in assessing threats of the Rule of Law of a systematic nature (instead of individual breaches of fundamental rights or routine miscarriage of justice), implying a structured ‘Rule of Law dialogue’ with the Member State as to prevent escalation. The Commission claims this framework is based on


For example, according to the annual reports of Nations in Transit of Freedom House Romania and Bulgaria were characterised as semi-consolidated democracies, Hungary only this year received this label.


“A new EU Framework to strengthen the Rule of Law,” 6: ‘...where the authorities of a Member State are taking measures or are tolerating situations which are likely to systematically and adversely affect the integrity, stability or the proper functioning of the institutions and the safeguard mechanisms established at national level to secure the rule of law. The new EU Rule of Law Framework is not designed to be triggered by individual breaches of fundamental rights or by a miscarriage of justice.’
existing powers as provided by the Treaties, complementing the infringement procedure of Article 258 TFEU and Article 7 TEU. Interestingly though, the Council’s legal service voiced criticism that the Commission could be overstepping its powers.201

The proposal tackles the problem of the relative open-ended nature of the values in Article 2 TEU. The European Commission’s Communication reflects consensus on the core meaning of the rule of law within the context of the EU legal order and constitutional traditions common to most European legal systems. It essentially entails compliance with the following six legal principles; 1) Legality, which implies a transparent, accountable, democratic and pluralistic process for enacting laws; 2) Legal certainty; 3) Prohibition of arbitrariness of the executive powers; 4) Independent and impartial courts; 5) Effective judicial review including respect for fundamental rights; 6) Equality before the law. Additionally, the rule of law must be understood broadly as a “constitutional principle with both formal and substantive components”, which “is intrinsically linked to respect for democracy and for fundamental rights [...] Democracy is protected if the fundamental role of the judiciary, including constitutional courts, can ensure freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and respect of the rules governing the political and electoral process.”202 The conception thus focuses also on the substantive aims of the law and encompasses elements of political morality such as democracy and substantive individual rights.203 The determination of a threat of systematic nature is less clear. It may result from “the adoption of new measures or of widespread practice of public authorities and the lack of domestic redress.”204 There is also confusion on the notions of systematic threat and systematic violation; whether it is synonymous or substantively different than the “serious and persistent breach” formulated in Article 7 TEU. This is important as the Commission proposal is supposed to be a procedure conducted pre-Article 7 TEU. Furthermore, there are no pre-defined benchmarks when the procedure should be triggered.205 Where there are clear indications of a systemic threat to the rule of law in a Member State, the Commission will initiate a structured exchange with that Member State. The procedure comprises of three stages:

1: A Commission assessment of clear indications of a systemic threat to the rule of law with the opinion send to the Member State concerned. This can subsequently include several meetings and exchanges between the Commission and Member State. The assessment can be based on the indications received from available sources and recognized institutions, including notably the bodies of the Council of Europe and the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights.

203 Kochenov and Pech, “Upholding the Rule of Law in the EU,” 8.
204 Ibid., 6 and “A new EU Framework to strengthen the Rule of Law,” 7.
2: A Commission recommendation to the Member State if it finds that there is objective evidence of a systemic threat and that the authorities of that Member State are not taking appropriate action to redress it.

3: A Commission follow-up to the recommendation, if there is no satisfactory follow-up to the recommendation by the Member State concerned within the time limit set, the Commission will assess the possibility of activating one of the mechanisms set out in Article 7 TEU.

Interesting and essential to note is that the pre-Article 7 TEU procedure is based on the authority of the Commission as Guardian as the Treaties but that third party and/or external expertise may be sought when necessary. The EU Fundamental Rights Agency, the Council of Europe (in particular, the Venice Commission) and judicial networks such as the Network of the Presidents of the Supreme Judicial Courts of the EU can play a role in the first assessment stage to help to provide for a comparative analysis about existing rules and practices in other Member States in order to ensure equal treatment of the Member States and determine the breaching of European values. Additionally, the Commission expects that the Member State concerned cooperates throughout the process. The duty of sincere cooperation set out in Article 4(3) TEU is explicitly mentioned. The Member State should refrain from adopting any irreversible measure in relation to the issues of concern raised by the Commission, pending the assessment of the latter. In the assessment signs of failure to cooperate or obstruction, will be taken into consideration on the seriousness of the threat.

According to Kochenov and Pech, the pre-Article 7 proposal is a step in the right direction but they are sceptical about compliance. The proposal lacks clarification of the notion ‘systematic threat’, clearly pre-defined benchmarks and other EU institutions or national governments and/or national parliaments are not entitled to propose this procedure to compel the Commission to start investigation. Effective monitoring is further hindered by: the confidential nature of the whole discussion to be held between the Commission and the Member State under investigation that prevents successful ‘name-and-shame’ dynamics, the non-legally binding nature of the ‘rule of law recommendation’ and the non-automatic recourse to Article 7 TEU should the recalcitrant Member State fail to comply. An ideologically illiberal state will most likely misuse the new procedure to delay action on Article 7 and the problem of non-compliance with the values of Article 2 could even be exacerbated as a result.

206 “A new EU Framework to strengthen the Rule of Law,” 7-8.
207 Kochenov and Pech, “Upholding the Rule of Law in the EU,” 12-13 and 15.
The Council’s proposal.

The lack of compliance also applies to the Council’s initiative. Rather than supporting the Commission’s proposal, the Council decided instead to establish on December 2014 an annual rule of law “dialogue among all Member States within the Council”, based “on the principles of objectivity, non-discrimination and equal treatment of all Member States” and to be “conducted on a non-partisan and evidence-based approach [...] in its General Affairs configuration, and be prepared by the COREPER (Presidency), following an inclusive approach.” The Council, with not all of its Member’s having tremendous records of the rule of law but also out of conviction, is thus reluctant to the idea to give the Commission or any new EU supranational body the power to look into rule of law matters beyond the area governed by EU law.

Media freedom and pluralism proposal: a support to Article 2 TEU values.

As a last remark to the need for better mechanisms in determining adherence to European values, fits also the earlier criticism by Kroes about media pluralism in Hungary. And again, very significant, it was declared that “Hungary is not the only EU country where such concerns and debates exist”, mentioning Bulgaria, Italy, the UK and ‘others’. The Commission had therefore launched an EU-wide high level group that examined what media pluralism and freedom mean in practice. One of the proposals of the High Level Group chaired by Vaira Vike-Freiberga was put forward. It concluded that “the main responsibility for maintaining media freedom and pluralism lies with the Member States,” but “the link between media freedom and pluralism and EU democracy, in particular, justifies a more extensive competence of the EU with respect to these fundamental rights than to others enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights.” It recommends a monitoring role of national-level freedom and pluralism of the media, either in the European fundamental rights agency or in an independent (academic) monitoring centre funded by EU, that would issue regular reports about any risks to the freedom and pluralism of the media in the EU that the European Parliament could then discuss. Additionally, all EU countries should have independent media councils with a politically and culturally balanced and

209 Kochenov and Pech, “Upholding the Rule of Law in the EU,” 13. E.g. the UK government also stated that ‘There are already mechanisms in place to protect EU common values and a further EU mechanism would risk undermining the clear roles for the Council and the European Council in this area.’
socially diverse membership. The national media councils should follow a set of European-wide standards and be monitored by the Commission to ensure that they comply with European values.  

*Current assessment of improving the safeguarding of EU adherence*

To sum up, compliance might be an issue but the Commission’s proposals with improved definition and legitimising assessments, including from third parties and/or external expertise, judge more comprehensively on European values and will consequently be able to decide more profound on a Member State’s credible EU adherence. Effective compliance and the triggering of Article 7 TEU through the Council and European Council can still be politically hindered. Most likely, a procedure taken by the Commission as Guardian of the Treaties in cooperation with the Court of Justice is the most adequate solution. And indeed, such a procedure is already put forward by Scheppele in which Kochenov and Pech see merit as well. Under this proposal, the Commission should aim to present a ‘bundle’ of infringement cases to the Court of Justice (instead of individual ones that has happened so far) in order to present a clear picture of systemic non-compliance as regards Article 2 TEU. Individual infringements fail to recognize a pattern and a more general concern about deviation from core principles. A systemic infringement action would enable the Commission to signal it and put before the Court evidence in one case of a pattern of violation: that the Member State through its systematic conduct, failed to follow the loyalty principle under Article 4(3) of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU) or that it has directly breached the principles laid out in Article 2 TEU with the sanction of losing entitled EU funds. This would make it possible to address exactly the combined effect of the individual features of Hungary’s non-compliance and the lack of sincere cooperation mentioned above. Scheppele argues this procedure is possible by secondary legislation rather than through Treaty reform.  

Alternative solutions in political discourse are more likely to be manipulative and exposed to unfair power play and political stalemate. Still, in the absence of any realistic prospect of getting the national governments of EU Member States to agree on a fundamental revision of how the EU Treaties organise the internal policing of EU values, Hungary and Orbán have the benefit of the doubt and cannot be objectively condemned as the rules are not profound, the tools not sufficient and the expertise not there yet. In this regard, a recent scandal in which the prime-minister was called a  

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212 “A free and pluralistic media to sustain European democracy,” High-Level Group on Media Freedom and Pluralism.


dictator without justification by the current Commission President Juncker, a representative of the Commission, is unproductive and jeopardizes the possibility to set up improved mechanisms and prescribe and agree on core European values to which Member States have to adhere. It damages the established faith, trust and consensus in the quasi-judicial authority of the Commission as independent Guardian of the Treaties in these matters (even if the remark ‘dictator’ was a joke among friends as spokesmen of Juncker have put it, it is then detrimental from the other perspective. I.e. Juncker upholds controversial Orbán as a friend and doesn’t take concerns of European politicians about Hungary’s government serious).  

2. Comparison with Member States in EU related policy fields.

Hungary’s policy positions and actions in the field of economic policy, foreign affairs and immigration, as mentioned in chapter two, will now be compared with other Member States attitudes and positions to determine whether Orbán’s government is significantly disrupting European political consensus and politics at large or not.

2.1. Economic affairs

First, Orbán has criticised the EU’s economic policy on occasion, including an overall criticism of creeping EU integration outside the treaties and legal framework. It also fiercely stated in a non-published national speech normally done at the government’s website that Hungary “will not be a colony” and rejects “unsolicited comradely assistance” that implied a comparison with the Soviet Union with regards to the EU’s attempts to make Hungary to honour its commitments of fiscal and economic policy. Additionally, Hungary was the first threatened in 2012 with sanctions over economic policy for not heeding the EU deficit rules and was withhold of Cohesion funds in 2013; an unprecedented move. The Commission and the Council had established ineffective action against Hungary within the Excessive Deficit Procedure, a procedure in which troublesome countries end up

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when their economic policy is not expected to produce results that are appropriate within the boundaries of EU rules.\textsuperscript{218}

Thirdly, Orbán’s government did not accept an IMF-EU bailout to help pay its national debt that involved adhering to certain reforms and it rejected recommendations of the European Commission on economic policy, producing its own model dubbed by some as Orbánomics.\textsuperscript{219} As a result it came into disagreement with the Commission and the European Central Bank over among other things a law concerning the independence of Hungary’s Central Bank that led to an infringement procedure. The Commission had identified several breaches of primary law, notably breaches of Article 130 TFEU stipulating full independence of the central bank and of Article 127(4) TFEU requiring consultation with the ECB “on any draft legislative provision in its field of competence.”\textsuperscript{220}

However, the economic policy of the EU on various points have been criticised by other Member States, notably Italy under prime minister Renzi and Greece under prime minister Tsipiras. Furthermore, part of Orbán’s criticism on creeping EU integration outside the treaties and legal framework has also been acknowledged by the Commission herself.\textsuperscript{221} As The Economist also wrote in 2012, Hungarian concerns about national sovereignty are increasingly finding echoes across Europe as more and more citizens start to question how unelected European bodies, such as the European Commission, have become so powerful: “the debt crisis has brought the [European] commission unprecedented powers to intrude into national economic policies. And this raises profound concerns about its legitimacy.”\textsuperscript{222}


\textsuperscript{221} See chapter one, Jean-Claude Juncker, “A New Start for Europe,” 2.

Secondly, safe for Sweden and Estonia, every Member State has ended up at some point in the Commission’s Excessive Deficit Procedure and against the UK and Belgium ineffective action has also been established.²²³ It is important to outline that EU economic policy has been a changing patchwork policy due to the economic crisis, individual Member States bailout mechanisms and the different interpretations and attitudes towards it, as well as that it is mainly a national competence of Member States. In the EU exist foremost fiscal rules, laid down in the Maastricht Treaty and in the following adoption of the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) that limits government deficits to 3% of GDP and public debt levels to 60%, so as to enable a sound balanced economy in the EU. Many countries have broken the fiscal rules however, including Germany and France since the start. Der Spiegel suggested that many politicians have been put off by the numerous rules and regulations that Brussels has already used to intervene in the economic policies of crisis-stricken countries. And the threat of EU sanctions has mainly been confined to smaller Member States on purpose, including Hungary, as not to antagonize larger countries.²²⁴ Enforced monitoring, mechanisms and pacts were agreed upon by the Member States such as Six Pack and Two Pack Regulations that enhanced surveillance in the euro area, yet the flexibility and debate on interpretations of following the key fiscal rules remained in the context of broader economic policy that is predominantly a national competence.²²⁵ In 2014 and 2015, that is after Orbán’s government had left the Excessive Deficit Procedure, the EU had adopted a SGP Review and SGP Flexibility.²²⁶ In January 2015 the Commission stated it granted deficit countries more


²²⁴ Christoph Pauly and Christoph Schult, “Plans For Tougher Rule Enforcement: EU At Risk of Remaining a Toothless Tiger,” Der Spiegel (October 9, 2012), accessed June 10, 2015, http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/edps-30-50/63229666.html. “For example, early this year the Commission threatened to suspend subsidies for Hungary. [...] By contrast, large countries such as Spain, Italy and France have so far had little to fear. Olli Rehn, the European commissioner for economic and monetary affairs in Brussels, knows better than to antagonize certain countries by imposing sanctions.”


flexibility to meet budget rules that present credible reform plans. Still, after the adoption of a more flexible approach, seven countries, including highly indebted Italy and Belgium, were also told that they risked failing to comply with the EU’s Stability and Growth Pact.227 In 2014 France, Italy and Belgium were also threatened to face sanctions, the latter two threatened to be put on a disciplinary program for failing to significantly reduce fresh borrowing, involving setting annual targets for fiscal policy, closer monitoring and eventually fines for non-compliance.228 Therefore, it is difficult to assess whether Hungary has been playing with fire more than others, not to mention it is difficult to compare the unique economic situations and negotiations with the Commission of each country. At least Hungary did manage to comply, albeit on a controversial own economic model, with the rules of the Stability and Growth Pact that forms the solid basis of the EU’s economic policy.229

Finally, Orbán is not alone in dealing in ‘unorthodox’ ways with the Commission regarding economic policy. For instance, the Italian prime-minister Renzi has repeatedly criticised the austerity policy of the EU and in an unprecedented move published a Commission’s strictly confidential letter online in which the Commission outlines how Italy’s budget for 2015 is bound to breach Italy’s requirements under the preventive arm of the Stability and Growth Pact. In a show of contempt he stated not to publish in the future just the Commission’s letters but also the financial data on how much is spent in these EU buildings, saying “It will be a lot of fun.”230 He also linked election results in Spain and Poland, in which movements against the EU won, with the EU’s economic policies and thus that it must relax its insistence on budget austerity.231

Additionally, Greece has been involved in a long standing intense negotiation game with the Commission, the ECB and its creditors, risking the credibility and foundations of the Eurozone and the European market at large, as it has refused to conduct economic policy and reforms according to the terms of the EU and its lenders. The president of the European Commission even accused the Greek

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prime-minister Tsipras of playing "liar’s poker" with the future of Europe. The former Greek finance minister Varoufakis accused the EU of ‘terrorism’. If Greece in the end manages to make a deal, it could be partly due to the fact that the financial situation is far worse than Hungary and it has no room to improve its situation on its own terms, including due to being a euro member, like Hungary did.

Concluding, the economic negotiations and conflicts with the EU cannot be regarded special to Hungary. Even if its government rejected so far as the only one an EU-IMF bailout model: ultimately this is an offer, not a must, as long as creditors are paid and economics are sound. Regardless of the discussion whether this was achieved by Orbán’s policy or other factors, Hungary has achieved that currently. This has yet to be seen by Greece at the time of writing as well as France and Italy that continue to miss deadlines of adherence to the financial rules. However, the conflict with the Commission and the EU in the economic sphere has been more profound due to an infringement procedure and a conflict regarding a law on the Hungarian Central Bank that curtailed its independence, seen as part of economic policy. That an economic conflict with the EU spilled over on several breaches of primary law outside the framework of conventional economic-fiscal-budget policy that resulted in an infringement procedure, offers an argument that Hungary might have taken it undesirably further than most Member States.

2.2 Foreign affairs
In the field of foreign affairs, Orbán has focused on an Eastern opening policy, criticised the EU sanctions on Russia in August 2014, made a gas import deal while hosting a visit with Putin in February 2015 and a nuclear deal March 2015, and supported South Stream and Turkish Stream energy projects involving Russia. He jeopardizes plans of the Commission for an Energy Union. One can claim that Orbán is threatening European solidarity and unity in the face of the conflict with Russia over Ukraine and does not promote European values by strengthening ties with authoritarian regimes.

234 “‘Orbanomics’ confound critics as Hungary’s economy recovers,” Financial Times.
235 “EU gives France to 2017 to cut deficit, Italy, Belgium in clear,” EurActiv (February 25, 2015), accessed July 10, 2015, http://www.euractiv.com/sections/euro-finance/eu-gives-france-2017-cut-deficit-italy-belgium-clear-312421 Since 2001, France had a deficit below 3 percent only in 2006 and 2007 and has repeatedly missed consolidation deadlines. Italy’s public debt has been rising every year since 2008 and is to peak at 133 percent of GDP this year.
Yet, Austria already in June 2014 criticised sanctions on Russia and received Putin in Vienna to sign a contract to build a Russian pipeline, a part of South Stream project, before Hungary’s gas deal with Russia (South Stream was concluded by Russia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Greece, Slovenia, Croatia and Austria, eventually it had to be renegotiated according to the European Commission and subsequently Russia withdrew). Only after Slovakia on August 14, 2014 criticised the sanctions as meaningless did Orbán follow suit a day after as well. Moreover, during the Ukraine crisis several remarks and suggestions for re-engagement with Russia or criticism and reluctance on sanctions have been uttered by several Member States such as Austria, Czech Republic, Italy, Greece, Cyprus, Spain and even the German’s foreign minister, though in the end consensus and unity on Russian sanctions were found.

Additionally, the Cypriot president made an official visit to Russia in February 2015 and signed eight agreements. Italy’s prime-minister Renzi undertook an official visit to Russia in March 2015 as well and even during its EU presidency supported South Stream. Greece undertook a bilateral visit to Russia on April 8, 2015, calling for a reset in relations between the EU and Russia to work together. Spain had an official visit with its foreign minister stating “we need to somehow include Russia’s interests in the association agreement between Ukraine and the European Union - this agreement needs to be complemented by co-operation with Russia.”

Furthermore, regarding the strategic foreign policy of an opening to the East, Hungary is compared to many other countries still predominantly EU market based in trade. Finland has also

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244 Andrew Rettman, “Spain: Russia sanctions ‘beneficial for no one’,” EUobserver (March 10, 2015), accessed June 12, 2015, https://euobserver.com/foreign/127940
245 A figure of Eurostat in 2013 shows that Hungary is ranked 4th concerning intra-EU trade in proportion to the total amount of its trade. Member States have traded goods more with other Member States than with countries outside the EU but there has been some change in recent years. See “Intra EU
made an Energy deal with Russia.\textsuperscript{246} Greece signed into the Russian pipeline project Turkish Stream as well.\textsuperscript{247} Many EU member states have strong and important trade ties with autocratic and authoritarian regimes including Russia.\textsuperscript{248} True, a difference is that Orbán now has an explicit aim to make the share of trade larger, towards one third of its total in 2018, but that does not indicate less; it seeks to find growth elsewhere in addition. This would imply reaching the same share in extra-EU exports as twenty other Member States had in 2013.\textsuperscript{249} In any case, Orbán’s government is not isolated in the conduct of a sovereign foreign policy and pushing a Europe of Nations approach in this regard. It remains loyal to a weak European consensus in which it makes use of the considerable manoeuvre space that is given and used by many.

2.3. Immigration policy

Finally, in the discussion on immigration and the EU’s policy, Orbán is not alone in outspoken comments and positions. Yes, he has opposed the recent Commission’s plan to adopt a system that would distribute asylum seekers equally over the Member States based on population size, national GDP and number of migrants already hosted. Secondly, Hungary did say on June 23, 2015 that it had suspended participation in the EU’s Dublin Regulation that stipulates that the EU country where a migrant first arrives, has prime responsibility for handling the migrant’s asylum claim, angering Austria.

\textsuperscript{246} Simon Tisdall, “Finland set to agree joint nuclear venture with Russian energy company,” \textit{The Guardian} (December 1, 2014), accessed June 8, 2015, \url{http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/dec/01/finland-green-light-joint-nuclear-venture-russian-energy-rosatom}

\textsuperscript{247} Andrew Rettman, “Greece and Hungary sign up to Russia gas pipeline,” \textit{EUobserver} (April 8, 2015), accessed April 8, 2015, \url{https://euobserver.com/energy/128261}


that wished to relocate migrants that initially arrived in Hungary.\footnote{250} And thirdly, the government’s approach to take matters in own hands by building a fence stretching the length of its 175km border with Serbia has been commented on by the Commission who rather sees alternative solutions.\footnote{251}

However, the Minister of Foreign Affairs Péter Szijjártó retracted from the statement on the suspension of the Dublin Regulation a day later, asking for patience that it simply cannot accommodate any new migrants since all its shelters are full. Orbán’s government declared that taking own measures such as building a fence came after growing frustrated with the pace of EU efforts to handle the flow of migrants entering the bloc.\footnote{252} This cannot be noted as merely rhetoric. Hungary ranked in the top five of asylum requests in 2014, second in per capita. As of recent a popular route of migrants from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq to reach the EU has become through the Balkans and via Hungary. In the first six months of 2015 more than 60 000 undocumented migrants entered Hungary and it carries the highest number of asylum applications (3.3 per 1000 inhabitants in the first quarter of the year, compared to 1,1 in Sweden and Austria and 0,9 in Germany) among the EU’s member states.\footnote{253} Indeed, Hungary recently acquired special status in proposals on a redistribution system of migrants across the EU.\footnote{254} The Commission has pledged nearly 8 million euros and experts to help Hungary in processing the influx of migrants. EU Commissioner for Migration, Dimitris Avramopoulos had indicated that Hungary is now just like Greece and Italy a frontline Member State. Although not supporting the plan to build a fence, he said Hungary is allowed to do so.\footnote{255}

Orbán’s government may be considered playing a ‘game’ by controversial actions such as the one day statement about the Dublin Regulation to gain attention from the EU to its problems. Yet it is certainly not alone. First, Greece and Bulgaria already built fences to block illegal entry from Turkey

and Spain did so in Ceuta and Melilla. France has on occasion closed its border with Italy between 2011 and 2015. Secondly, in the face of the alleged lack of solidarity of other Member States, Greece and Italy have made polarizing statements prior the Fidesz government, threatening with actions that “would hurt Europe” and defy the Dublin Regulation such as not to register or maintain the asylum seekers that arrive but forward them to the rest of Europe. Thirdly, criticism on the EU and the Commission plans are manifold. Until very recent there was no single approach to the migration system plan inside the European Union. Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland had jointly opposed the latest proposal of the European Commission to distribute asylum seekers. In total ten countries had signalled opposition including France, its prime-minister saying the plan was “a moral and ethical mistake.” The latest EU refugee deal that was concluded amid foot-dragging and verbal snips has generally exposed deep divisions within the EU. It is safe to say that Hungary has not and cannot be condemned or perceived to be trespassing European values. Several signs also show it remains part of an unsolved debate on the political model and institutional structure of the EU. Hungary’s Eurosceptic labels are thus elements of a political skirmish within media and the EU. Clear signs of practice based Euroscepticism are encountered however and

Conclusion

In sum, this chapter has demonstrated that within the EU it remains difficult to pin down and proscribe European values exactly and to safeguard them, accompanied by a fair, coherent, transparent effective disciplinary mechanism for Member States within the EU: the so-called Copenhagen criteria dilemma. Therefore, Hungary has not been and cannot be condemned or perceived to be trespassing European values. Several signs also show it remains part of an unsolved debate on the political model and institutional structure of the EU. Hungary’s Eurosceptic labels are thus elements of a political skirmish within media and the EU. Clear signs of practice based Euroscepticism are encountered however and

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Orbán’s government can be exposed in deviating from the principle of sincere cooperation on occasion that pushes it towards a rejectionist label. The political stance is however ultimately, as this thesis would call it, ‘(retrospectively) conformist’. This fits an agenda to push a Europe of Nations concept in the institutional framework discussion of the EU that can also be recognized to be supported by e.g. the UK, that is pursuing a minimalist EU membership in several fields.262 The official Europe policy on the government’s website can thus be said to correspond with this reality: “The starting point of Hungary’s policy concerning the European Union is a commitment to European values. Hungarian involvement forms part of a creative contribution to the common debate, and can be characterised as open and ready for compromise. In key issues that affect national interests, Hungary takes the initiative and acts resolutely.[...] (At the same time) Hungary has faith in the future of the European Union [...] Our goal is to strengthen the European Union and the role of Hungary in the European Union.”263

With a closer look to the controversial economic, foreign and immigration policies, we can observe that for those who wish a stronger unity within the EU and increased coordinated and concerted policy, Hungary could be considered working against the Union’s interest. That is if one follows the logic that when others ‘rebel’, it does not imply that you should also rebel and be prevented to be called a rebel. Nevertheless, the theatre of EU interests becomes shaky if its actors in it do not have a clear consensus. If being a rebel seems the norm, eventually the logic does not apply anymore: Hungary in comparison with other Member States is not unique when it concerns the conduct of above mentioned policies. In any case, it should not deserve a Eurosceptic or rejectionist label foremost and solely. On the contrary, these political issues show that Orbán’s Hungary is partaking in general discussions and activities that are held widely in the EU. Thus, in some cases arguably disproportionate negative attention has been given to Hungary on these policies when Orbán was addressed in the European Parliament or media on these matters. Still, one cannot deny that when combined Hungary is surrounded by unclear air. Where there is smoke there could be fire; Orbán’s government might on average be more provocative, contradicting and opportunistic and manages to create controversy in a total of political fields more than any other Member State. Notwithstanding, the real flames have yet to be verified.

263 “Europe policy of Hungary,” The EU Policy Website of the Hungarian government.
Final conclusion

According to the 2014 figures of Eurobarometer trust in the European Union is at an all-time low. \textsuperscript{264} So-called Eurosceptic voices and parties are on the rise all over Europe. The term Euroscepticism is abound and its existence appears natural today. At the same time, due to the violent conflict in Ukraine, following the rejection of former Ukrainian president Yanukovych of an EU association agreement, the debate on defending and advancing ‘European values’ have risen to prominence more than ever.

One country and government that particularly seems to be a matter of debate against the backdrop of these developments is Viktor Orbán’s Fidesz government in Hungary. In this context Hungary has been called foremost a critic of the EU, Eurosceptic and a trespasser of European values by several European media, politicians and scholars. Nevertheless, Orbán’s government, member of the mainstream European People’s Party, contests being Eurosceptic, demanding equal and fair treatment and officially proclaiming it “has faith in the future of the European Union” with the aim “to strengthen the European Union and the role of Hungary in the European Union.”\textsuperscript{265}

Questions can be raised to what extent criticism can be justifiably uttered and the term Euroscepticism adopted, while in fact there might be no consensus on what the EU constitutes and represents precisely in many fields. This thesis has thus set out to research to what extent the use of a term as Euroscepticism is feasible in determining adherence to the EU and how EU values, the EU political playing field and the commitment of Member States can be evaluated, specifically in the case of Hungary under prime-minister Viktor Orbán between 2010 till the present.

First, we can conclude that the use of the term Euroscepticism runs the risk (or has the intention) to obstruct transparent and honest debate on the European integration project. The term categorises a diverse and contradicting spectrum of political thoughts, national traditions and actors under one label that cannot constitute theoretically a credible ideology on its own or practically as a party or political cooperation. It is difficult to draw the line where Euroscepticism and positive suggestions for the European project starts and ends. Simply put, Euroscepticism is an opposition label, a negative concept that is malleable and dependent on the ideological appropriation, to be misused in power discourse. The existence of the term, as a binary concept, implies a problematic deeply felt version of ‘they’ -and therefore- against a ‘we’ without knowing what ‘we’ constitutes. The EU is an


\textsuperscript{265} “Europe policy of Hungary,” The EU Policy Website of the Hungarian government.
unique project without a blueprint from its inception and debate is ongoing. A political actor who believes in Europe and the EU and proposes alternative solutions, risks becoming branded as Eurosceptic and marked as an actor opposing the EU and European project.

Euroscepticism broadly speaking, can (also) be viewed positively as a constructive EU realistic thought that could bring an essential contribution to the European debate and which does not imply direct rejection of the European idea. The ideal situation is replacing the concept of Euroscepticism all together by a new framework that conceptualises all attitudes towards European integration and that transcends a subjective protagonists and antagonists discourse. In light of this, Flood’s labels of the various positioning towards European integration provides a possible neutral analysis of EU/European discourse. Euroscepticism classified by Taggart & Szcerbiak in the controversies and tendencies in which it can be found, can prove to be helpful to engage in constructive debate on the validity of its criticism.

Secondly, although Orbán’s government claims to have faith in the European Union and wishes to strengthen it, we cannot deny that -if we look broadly to Orbán’s political communicative discourse analysed in this thesis- its presentation is contradicting and confusing with a discrepancy between national and European audiences. The prime-minister’s views might be above all pragmatic, opportunistic and populist with a nationalist bent as to maintain power and not lose to the extreme right opposition party Jobbik. Nevertheless, Orbán can also be perceived positively as breaking through dogmas and taboos that Europe has surrounded herself with. In this given situation, one vision does stand out: a Europe of Nations concept that is in accordance with a minimalist stance defined by Flood which has its cause in a particular view of the EU; practice based Euroscepticism defined by Taggart & Szcerbiak. Orbán’s remark stated in the introduction that the EU is a playing field, with rules and regulations, where every country attempts to achieve its best interests in which they get into conflicts with each other and with the EU, fits in this narrative.

Thirdly, when we investigate whether Orbán’s Europe of Nations concept and the government’s activities following up on it are within the boundaries set by the EU and fit an EU/European discussion, Hungary reinforces its practice based Euroscepticism and the idea to develop an alternative political model within the EU that re-establishes the sovereignty of the political and economic national elite. Here we can note tendencies of a rejectionist position if we analyse the lack of sincere cooperation towards certain EU values and policies. However, officially Orbán’s government engages in discussion on European values and it is not in violation of those values. The issue is that within the EU it is still cumbersome to pin down and proscribe European values exactly and to safeguard them, accompanied by a fair, coherent, transparent effective disciplinary mechanism for Member States within the EU. Considering the policy field in the EU on foreign affairs, economic policy and immigration, Hungary’s government is
participating in an European wide debate. Hungary can thus not be condemned or recognised as uniquely upsetting a weak-if not non-existing- EU consensus. The indications are that controversy forms part of an unsolved discussion on the political model, institutional structure and policies of the EU. New proposals to create consensus on European values as described in Article 2 TEU and mechanisms to safeguard them are prove. Although in sum Orbán’s government appears to have managed creating controversy in many fields, possibly like no other. Nonetheless, this thesis would not use the term Eurosceptic for the orientation and position of Orbán’s government. Hungary’s Eurosceptic labels are part of a political struggle within media and the EU. The thesis observes furthermore a lacuna in Flood’s labels, thereby proposing the term ‘(retrospectively) conformist’ for the position of Hungary’s government with a minimalist agenda to push a Europe of Nations concept. Something that can also be said to be supported by for example the UK, that is pursuing a minimalist EU membership in several fields.

In a rare but not inconceivable case, Hungary could be one of the front-runner’s of developing a new political model of the EU. The Spectator claims for instance that Orbán is emerging as a diplomatic dancing partner or a bridge for the two principal powers in the talks on European reform: the United Kingdom and Germany. Orbán sympathises partly with the UK reform agenda and has interests with Germany and connections through the European People’s Party. It could also be that Hungary will (need to) retract and EU consensus and a political model is established on different grounds.

Concluding, the term Euroscepticism is not very fruitful in a discussion about determining adherence to the EU. The general positioning towards the EU political playing field and the commitment of political actors towards European integration can be evaluated by replacing the term Euroscepticism all together with the labels of Flood, enriching this vocabulary in the case of Hungary with -next to an overall minimalist-a (retrospectively) conformist position. Regarding European values and policies, the case of Orbán’s government remains a matter of debate. How EU values and the commitment of Member States can be determined more appropriate is through a -still missing- clear consensus within the EU which is based on legal procedures, safeguarded by an EU institution with a profound mandate: a systemic infringement procedure by the European Commission in cooperation with the European Court of Justice in view of the European values of Article 2 TEU. What is certain, is that the use of Euroscepticism in politics and media is not helpful, nor a public comment of European Commission President Jean Claude Juncker calling Orbán a dictator which jeopardizes progress and the faith in the quasi-juridical authority of the Commission. Instead, a honest debate and a productive

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approach towards achieving and analysing a concrete consensus on what the EU is and what it stands for can be facilitated by using labels like those of Flood, by superior legal proposals that define and safeguard European values and by demonstrating the following attitude of Vice-President of the European Commission and High Representative of the European Union Federica Mogherini, who said: “65 years after the Schuman declaration of 9 May 1950, which proposed to create a new form of organisations of states in Europe, the future of the EU could not be abandoned to the simple confrontation between pro-europeans and eurosceptics. The elections’ results in Poland and Spain, albeit very differently, and news from Greece and the UK, tell us that there is a real need of rethinking our being European if we want to save the project of our founding fathers.”

This thesis has argued that Orbán’s Hungary as a case should not be isolated, but included in the need of rethinking -if not, then at least thinking better- our being European.
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Rajoy’s Losses


Russia.”


Other


Annex

1. Categorization of European speeches

The number behind the fragments resemble the categories as stated in the introduction.


Ladies and gentlemen, for this reason, I feel that we Hungarians can rightly claim that we have contributed a great deal to Europe becoming unified once again. For Hungarians, it is therefore a historic justice of sorts that the Prime Minister of Hungary may speak here today as the President-in-Office of the Council. I would like to assure you that we are following in the footsteps of the revolutionaries of 1956 and intend to serve the cause of European unity through their ideals and faith (1)

Ladies and gentlemen, we in Central Europe, including us Hungarians, have always been interested in a unified Europe, and remain so to this day. However, creating and maintaining European unity needs strength too. Twenty years ago, Europe could muster the strength to overcome dividedness and become unified. It had realised that this was an historic moment it had to seize in order to reunite Europe. This strength is recalled in the motto of the Hungarian Presidency: ‘Strong Europe’. (1,2)

today we are facing a challenge of similar proportions to that of twenty years ago, and thus it is perhaps no overstatement to pronounce that the European Union is facing its most challenging period of the past twenty years. Today, we must overcome the storms of a global crisis and find Europe’s place in a global economy that is undergoing complete transformation and rearrangement. I am of the opinion that, in order to be able to stand its ground, Europe must remain unified, and even today, unity needs strength. I am convinced that all Member States of the European Union, including my home country, can only become strong and successful if the European Union itself is strong (2)

Well, ladies and gentlemen, our true resource for the future lies in the traditional European mentality, which values work. It was the European mentality of valuing work that has made our civilisation successful. We have a European code of conduct, one of the cornerstones of which has, for centuries, been the principle of prudent economics, meaning that we must not spend more than we are able to produce. Another fundamental European value is that we must not pass on our debts to our children and grandchildren. (1)

Ladies and gentlemen, the Hungarian Presidency believes that the direction set out by the Council, that is, the direction of crisis management, is the right way, but further efforts will be required, and we are therefore convinced that the Treaty will need to be amended and that a legal basis must be created for the current temporary crisis management mechanism to be replaced by a permanent stability mechanism from 2013. The Hungarian Presidency will do everything in its power to this end. Furthermore, at the core of the Hungarian Presidency’s thinking are the strengthening of economic policy coordination, the facilitation of economic growth and the promotion of sustainable economic growth for job creation. It is therefore a special goal for our Presidency, and in this I would also like to ask for your cooperation, to create six laws that will facilitate the achievement of this goal, that is, economic policy coordination. I would like to ask for your committed cooperation in this regard. The Hungarian Presidency will be a Parliament-friendly Presidency, and so I ask you to do everything to ensure that these six laws can be adopted as soon as possible in cooperation with us (2)

The European Semester has begun and this is something new for everyone; not just for us Hungarians, but for you as well, as it is a completely new programme of the European Union. The Semester has begun with the Commission’s annual macro-economic growth report, and I would like to congratulate Mr Barroso on this excellent document, which is suitable for taking the first step, and which lays out the directions and issues that will serve as the basis for the debates that will be conducted in the various Council configurations during our Presidency (2)
Ladies and gentlemen, national credibility is, of course, also required when one intends to propose a common economic policy for Europe. [...] In 2011, Hungary’s budget deficit will be below 3% and we will be one of the two EU Member States whose national debt will decrease in 2011. This will be crucial for the credibility of our Presidency programme.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Hungarian Presidency considers it especially important that we strengthen the single market. We believe that the strengthening of the single market is one of the potential sources of economic growth. Our intention is to remove existing barriers, implement deregulation and extend the single market to new areas, such as digitalisation. We support the favourable business environment that is to be created for small and medium-sized enterprises.

I would like to inform you that Hungary is of the opinion that it is crucial for us to remove any existing regulatory barriers in the field of energy policy and to establish the missing infrastructural links in order to create a real and interoperable energy market in Europe. A similarly important objective of the Hungarian Presidency is to ensure that Europe possesses diversified supply lines in the field of energy.

This provides the grounds for presenting a European strategic answer to the Roma issue, which otherwise falls under national competence, and I would personally be very proud if we could jointly manage to adopt a common European Roma strategy by the end of the Hungarian Presidency in June.

We would welcome it if the European Union found that we have unfinished business before us, as not all European nations that could be integrated into the European Community are currently part of the European Union. Furthermore, I personally find it unfair that a country like Croatia, for example, which has shown better performance over the past years than Hungary, a Member State of the EU, is still left outside and is not allowed to join the circle of Member States. The Hungarian Presidency would therefore like to see Croatia’s accession negotiations through to the signing of the treaty, the period of conclusion.

I am aware that the extension of the Schengen area is a controversial issue. The countries concerned here are Romania and Bulgaria, but as someone who knows this region well and also lives in a country bordering it, I know with certainty that these countries are ready, and although I know that the Hungarian Presidency must expect debates, I will always stand up, I will personally always stand up for Bulgaria and Romania being included in the Schengen area as soon as possible, that is, without delay.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are aware that an extremely difficult six months lie before Europe, but I am optimistic and believe that Europe is up to the task. After World War II, Europe managed to build cooperation between the peoples of Europe amidst hatred and ruins. In 1989 and 1990, it managed to reunite Europe, and so I have reason to assume that it will also be capable of responding to the similar historic challenge we are facing now. [...] The Hungarian Presidency will carry out its day-to-day work in the spirit of this great, far-reaching European goal, will accord due respect to all of us, and will show the utmost humility to the cause. Thank you for honouring me with your attention.

Response

I would therefore like to make it clear that I am sorry to see you have been so badly misled and deceived. I can now see clearly that in this debate, I cannot even hope to be treated fairly, and instead have to trust that the European Parliament will be able to form an unbiased, objective opinion, which, as a matter of fact, I personally will gladly accept, and will proceed according to the stated procedure.

Listening to the debate about the media law, I unfortunately had to conclude that it is not really the media law you are having a problem with, but with the fact that, in an act of solidarity unprecedented in Europe, the Hungarian people voted a two-thirds majority to a political force in Hungary. This is, without doubt, a very exciting and interesting question and I am convinced that this can be used for the benefit of Europe.

What is this if not an insult to the Hungarian people? And, I must make this clear, I will always stand up to protect my home country, Hungary. This is not a matter of media laws!

As regards European issues, if you will allow me, I will now put on my other hat as well. I consider the issue of the bond market, as referred to by Mr Verhofstadt, to be an important one, and I would like to state that the
Hungarian Presidency believes that the formation of a bond market is necessary and inevitable in the long
term. We therefore support the European policies that guide Hungary and EU Member States within the euro
area, and the whole European Union, in this direction (2)

We are not happy that critical opinions directed at Hungary are being jumbled up with matters of European
policy, but we do not regard this situation as unnatural. Europe, too, is governed by democracy, and we are
having democratic debates (2).

accessed March 10, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9ZQMDVjvtGQ.

Thank you very much President. It is a great honour to be invited here to the European Parliament [...]One of the
main features of the Hungarian program will be, hopefully, that it will be a Parliament friendly presidency. That’s
the reason why this early morning we started this day with president of the Parliament and Baroso, president
of the Commission to discuss how the Parliament, the Commission and the Presidency can cooperate in the
future and we made some very important agreement how we will conduct our activity in the future. And we have
great hopes that the internal institutional tensions which is somehow inherited or being involved the essence sui
generis, being involved in the essence of the European Union as such, can be treated, handled and the institutions
can cooperate well in the forthcoming half year (2)

I think we have a good chance to conclude even during the Hungarian presidency somewhere in June. We will be
able to conclude the six pieces of legislative which a basis for economic governance and better integration,
cooperation and coordination of the economic policies. The kick-off was already successful because the
Commission was...(2)

At the same time I would like to underline that the Hungarian presidency will not solve all the problems. [...] after
modification of the treaty, crisis mechanism[...]then the real step, real part of the job when the national
governments must do their job. Because in my understanding [...]We have a sovereign debt crisis which relates
to the member states of the European Union, especially the members of the Eurozone... (5)

To speak about the European Union economy, requests some national credibility, national economic policy
credibility. And may I just inform you that this year budget deficit in Hungary will be less than three percent and
Hungary will be one of the two countries in the European Union which will be able to reduce the state indebtedness.
I think that creates a credibility for the Hungarian presidency when we are speaking about the necessary national
economic policy and structure reforms, everybody could take it seriously but there is some credibility behind it,
based on the Hungarian economic policy of this year

Proposals, Energy project from Baltic to Adriatic. (2) 3. Roma, new proposal, First European strategy. (2)
Without a heart we cannot be Europeans. I am aware that the Roma policy clearly belongs to the national
authorities. But at the same time you should understand that [...]So I’m absolutely convinced that all European
countries has or have an interest for the Roma communities being integrated [...]very proud to say that the
chance is that by the end of the Hungarian presidency in June, we together can accept it the first time every
Roma strategy of the European Union.

4. Remarks on Enlargement. That there is a very negative approach to Enlargement...etc...when the question of
Enlargement is in a negative approach, it means the European Union has lost its dynamism. ....Croatia should be
involved as soon as possible. The goal of the Hungarian is to sign a conclusion. Same with Romania and Bulgaria
with Schengen. (2x: 2)

Then about discussion. (internal Hungary) very inspiring, almost felt like home. I’m ready to take any discussion.
Hungary will be under constant criticism during the Presidency. I will take it to decrease it but it will be not all in
my hand. [...]We feel confident to run the two discussion at the same time (European and internal). [...] I will be
absolutely sure that the European Union will be stronger than it is now. This half year will be the most successful
half year of the European Union. We are ready to cooperate with president EP, Commission and Rompuy.

I use to evaluate my behaviour is the President of France. I behave in the same way, following the same logic as
your President do when any time, any occasion, somebody attack France without having a legitimate reason to
do so. I appreciate that kind of understanding. I was part of many meetings when he made very clearly that criticism is okay, but to insult the French nation is not okay. And he is right. And I would just like to underline that probably it sounds ridiculous to some of you. That a prime minister from the nowhere, from the Pushta, as you like to characterise sometimes my country, you know, coming here to say “No, we need equal treatment. And we don’t accept any kind of lecturing on democracy just because we lived in a totalitarian system for forty years. No I cannot accept that. We have equal basis. You accepted Hungary as member of the European Union. So please treat us, as we treat you. So that’s my..how to say..you know that’s my basic regulation of my behaviour. Its not about criticism, this is okay. (5)

3. “Hungarian Prime Minister speaks in Ireland on Challenging Times for the EU” and “Q&A”, Institute of International & European Affairs (Dublin: June 1, 2011), accessed March 10, 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c3MyMxHslzE and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlOuf2LKVUI

Outlining many developments: so I think central Europe in the future has a strong mission for the European Union as well (2)

Orban criticises EuroPlus of France and Germany who wishes own eurogroup. Hungarian presidency proposed a Europe wide programme. Choose not for Europlus framework which he could join because;...why should I be a difficulty for those who want to defend their own currency. To make unnecessary burden from my out of euro country considerations. The second thinking of harmonization of tax, a small towards that. Basis corporate tax. Hungary does not like that. We need tax competition. Without less developed countries cannot catch up, and the effectiveness and competitivenss of EU will be lower. (5,4,3)

Croatia was never part of any Balkan, you know. Croatia is belong to another area..but not to the Balkan. Even when you are so kind to say Western Balkan anyway. So I think we have a historical mistake previously done. Let’s say several years ago because Croatia was basically ready to be integrated to the European Union even several years ago (2)

we have to identify ourselves with a problem with the European Union. We should not neglect it, we should not hide it. So there is a problem which is the identity. It is very difficult for the people who are not politicians, are not invited to Brussels every week but doing their life and job at home. To have a common, in any sense a feeling of common. [...] And the far right has an answer to that. And if the moderates as we are, the Christian democrats are not able to provide a proper answer to it. You know, the far right get an advantage of it. [...] So we have to change it. And we have to speak honestly on that problem and we have to use national rhetoric [...]So we have to make clear that Europe cannot be strong without having strong nations as a member of it. So that space of the political arena should belong to us and most be occupied by us not to the far right. So if you always accept the European liberal approach, always neglecting national approaches and cultural background issues and emotion as such from politics, if you accept that kind of approach; we have the far right. So that’s my analysis on European perspectives (5)

Herman van Rompuy is a very qualified man etc (2)


Although we still have to face plenty of serious economic difficulties, for the first time Hungary’s budget can be considered stable and in compliance with European norms. We are in the process of reducing our sovereign debt, and our balance of payments is showing a long-term positive result. We have outlawed and eliminated paramilitary organisations, and as a result Hungary now offers protection to all minorities, including national minorities, the Roma, as well as Jewish minorities, and the Hungarian Government will continue to protect these minorities in the future (2)

We were the last of the formerly occupied countries to enact a new constitution in place of the Communist one adopted in 1949. I would like to make it clear to you that the reform and reorganisation of Hungary took place
on the basis of European values and principles. We drew upon both the good practices of the EU Member States and the fundamental documents of the European Union. Considering the extent and rate of the transformation I, together with everyone else in Hungary, consider it natural for disputes to emerge (2)

Today I sent a letter to President Barroso. In that letter I expressed my opinion that the issues raised by the Commission can be remedied in an easy, simple and swift manner. I anticipate quick results from our meeting scheduled for next week. At the same time I would like to inform Parliament that none of the passages which were sent to us by the Commission and with regard to which legal objections have been raised so far concern the Hungarian Constitution. Notwithstanding what newspapers publish, there has not been a single objection to the text of the Hungarian Constitution as adopted on 25 April. We adopted the constitution on 25 April last year. The Commission has raised objections regarding two of the temporary provisions related to the constitution, and I am at their disposal in order to remedy these two deficiencies, but I would like to point out that thus far no one has expressed any doubts of a legal nature in respect of any passage of the Hungarian Constitution (2)

Ladies and gentlemen, I am grateful to you for allowing me to explain all this. I ask you to kindly continue to support in the future, in the spirit of European values, the major transformation and restructuring that we are in the process of completing in Hungary. Hungary is counting on the European Parliament’s support. Thank you for your attention (1)

I therefore only ask those who made comments and criticised or accused Hungary and the Hungarian Constitution to please be so kind as to read that constitution. It is an exceptionally valuable document and one can find several novel things in it. The protection of minorities, the protection of sign languages, environmental protection, opposition to GMOs – these are all things that I believe are worthy of consideration by any European country. (6)

Ladies and gentlemen, I also had the impression that this debate, which was about Hungary, had a European aspect as well, and was an ideological debate of sorts. People like me, and our political community, must accept that unfortunately the ideals we represent do not enjoy majority support in this House either. Our ideals are undoubtedly Christian and based on personal responsibility; we find national sentiment to be an important and positive thing, and we believe that families are the foundations of the future. It may be that a great many people believe otherwise, but that makes our position no less a European one. It may be that with this we are in a minority in Europe, but this position is no less a European position, and we are free to represent this conviction. You may disagree with what I will quote now, but I personally profess Schumann’s view that there will either be a Christian democracy in Europe or there will be no democracy at all. This, ladies and gentlemen, is a European position (1.5)

and to us this is therefore not a matter of the justice system but a matter of the pension system, and we will gladly consider the position of the Commission. We are ready to accept all the comments made in respect of the independence of the National Bank but one. At this point there remains only one point in this matter where we are in sharp conflict with the Commission. The Commission is asking us to refrain from having the President of the National Bank and the members of the Monetary Council swear an oath before parliament and on the constitution. I suggest that we think this over. Other than that, it seems to me that we are of the same opinion in all matters. Whether we will need to concede on this latter issue — I ask that we leave that discussion to another time. (3, due to disagreement)

We Hungarians believe that what makes Europe Europe is its culture. In our view the foundations of European culture are goodwill and benevolence. There have always been and there always will be disputes in Europe, but as long as the arguments in these debates are specific, reasonable and sober, and as long as we assume the other party’s good intentions we will always be able to find a way to resolve these disputes. […] We Hungarians, and I myself, believe in these principles, and it is these principles that guided us to the European Union, and we ask everyone to return to the European way of resolving disputes (1)

As a 1 000-year-old European nation we expect everyone to show us the respect and European manners that we accord to all nations. Should any of you have doubts, feel free to visit Hungary, acquaint yourselves with us; acquaint yourselves with the Hungarian people. Thank you for your attention. (1)
Tisztelt elnök úr, tisztelt hőlgyeim és uraim! Először is átadom a magyar polgárok üdvözlését az Európai Parlament képviselőinek! Kifejezem nagyrabecsülésemet az Európai Bizottság elnökének, és köszönöm a Bizottságnak a nyílt és terményes dialógust, amellyel a vitás kérdéseket eddig megoldottuk. (2)

Tudom, hogy ezen a tényen a szavaim nem változtathatnak, mégis azért jöttem ide ma Önökhoz, hogy megadjam és kifejezjem az Európai Parlament és a választott képviselők iránti tiszteletet. Ki akarom fejezni az Önöknek megadott tiszteleten keresztül azt a barátságot, amit a magyarság – az Önök választói – az európai polgárok iránt éreznek. Az Önök döntésétől függetlenül a magyarság tisztelettel és barátsággal gondolnak az európai emberekre.. (1)

Tisztelt hőlgyeim és uraim! A Magyarországot súlyosan sértő jelentésre adott választ, amit a magyar kormány dolgozott ki, most memorandumként átadjam a Parlament elnökének. Ez a jelentés mélyen igazságtalan Magyarországgal és Magyarország népével szemben. Nyíltan kettős mércét alkalmaz, nem ismeri el, lebecsüli és leminősíti azt a hatalmas munkát, amelyel a magyarság megújított hazájukat, pedig a magyarság nagy erőfeszítéseket tettek és keményen dolgoztak, hogy kijussuk aból a csődből, ahova a pénzügyi válság elégedetlenül jutottunk. Mélyről indultunk, még Görögország előtt elsőként omlott össze a magyar gazdaság. Csak az IMF és az Európai Unió pénzügyi lélegeztető gépe tartotta életben Magyarországot. (4,2)

Tisztelt hőlgyeim és uraim! Csak két ország van, amely eddig képes volt kijönni a segélyprogramból. Az egyik Magyarság, amely ma már teljes egészsében a pénzpiacokról finanszírozza magát. Elmondhatom Önöknek, mi olyan nép vagyunk, amely nem akar más országok adófizetőinek pénzén élni. A saját lábán áll, és maga működteti a gazdaságot. Az államadósságot minden évben csökkentettük. Most kerültünk ki a tőzsdedeficit-eljárásból. A külkereskedelmi és fizetési mérleg erőteljesen pozitív, a gazdaság nő, a munkanélküliség csökken, a munkában álló emberek száma nő, a nyugdíjak és a bérek vásárlóértéke emelkedik, joggal érezzük tehát úgy mi, magyarság, hogy a saját házi feladatunkat elvégeztük. (6)

Igen, mi, közép-európaiak jól ismerjük milyen az, amikor nem tisztelik nemzetünk függetlenségét és szabadságát. Én azért ismertem az antikommunista ellenálláshoz és a szabadságért harcolókhoz, hogy ennek végét vessünk, és soha több ne kelljen hasonló dolgokat megéljünk, és most azért jöttem ide, hogy elmondjam, ezekből a tapasztalatokból okolva mi magyarság nem akarunk olyan Európát, ahol a sikeres országokat büntetik ahelyett, hogy elismernének! Nem akarunk olyan Európát, ahol a kézharmados többségben kifejezódő egységet eltélik, ahelyett, hogy tisztelnének! Nem akarunk olyan Európát, ahol gyámágya alá helyeznek, a szabadságot korlátozzák, és nem kiteljesítik! Nem akarunk olyan Európát, ahol a nagyobb visszaél az erejével és a többség visszaél a hatalmával! Nem akarunk olyan Európát, ahol kettős mércét használnak, ahol csak a kisebbségek kell tisztelnie a nagyobbat! Tisztelt hőlgyeim és uraim! Ezért mi küzdeni fogunk mindenikivel, aki kettős mércét alkalmaz, aki visszaél a hatalmával, és aki másodrendű polgároként akar ámbilleni velünk. Mi küzdeni fogunk azok ellen, akik egy birodalmat akarnak csinálni a mi Unióinkból! Mi azok közté szerezzünk – és sok millióinnyi vagyunk ily Európában –, akik nem az alávetettség Európáját, hanem a szabad nemzetek Európáját akarják. Eljön a szabad nemzetek Európai Uniója! (5)

**Response in debate**

Megadóztatjuk a bankokat, csökkentjük állami eszközökkel a reziszt költségét, és egy méltányos kötelezviseletet vezetünk be. Ez helyes dolog szerintünk. Akkor is, ha Önnek és az Ön által képviselt üzleti csoportoknak ez nem
tetszik. Magyarország továbbra is adóztatni fogja a bankokat és összel is tovább fogjuk csökkenteni a rezsiköltséget Magyarországon – a gáz és a villany árát is – állami, kormányzati eszközökkel akkor is, ha ez a bankoknak és a nagy nemzetközi cégeknek nem tetszik. (7)

Magyarországon egyértelmű alkotmányos szabályozásunk van. A házasság és a család azt jelenti, hogy férfi és nő, és mindegyikből egy. Egy férfi, egy nő. Ez senki ellen nem irányul. Arról van szó, hogy mi egy 4000 éves tradíciót védünk. Vittatkozhatunk arról, hogy ezt a tradíciót font kell-e tartani, de egy dolgot, kérem, Önök is fogadjanak el. Ez egy 4000 éves tradíció. 2000 év a zsidó kultúrában és 2000 év a kereszténységében, és ezt a tradíciót egész egyszerűen szeretnénk főnnéztetni, és nem értem, hogy miért gondolja bármely európai parlamenti képviselő, hogy ennek a tradícióknak a főnnéztetéséhoz való jogunkat korlátozhatja Magyarországon. A magyar alkotmány senkit nem bánt, de világosan fogalmaz. (5)

Következőképpen hangzik: „a magyar parlament először a demokratikus és szabad Magyarország történetében demokratikus eljárással, intenzív parlamenti vita révén, és a magyar civil társadalom hozzájárulásával módosította az együttéte alkotmányt, egy új és modern alaptörvényt hozott létre.” Végül magától a Velencei Bizottságtól idézem a következő mondatot: „az országgyűlési képviselők választását 2014-től kezdődően módosító törvény jó alapot nyújt a valódi és demokratikus választások lebonyolításához”. Ezért tisztelt magyar ellenzéki képviselők, méltatlanannak érzem, hogy a Magyarországon működő pártok baloldal és jobboldal között folyó vitáit itt kell folytatniuk. Ezért tisztelt magyar ellenzéki képviselők, hogy ezt ne tegyék. Szeretném emlékezettet Önöket, hogy mi megnyertük az érünköt egy választáson 2010-ben, és én szeretném azt hinni, hogy 2010-ben azért kapott a mi kormányunk kétharmadot, mert az erényeink ilyen hatalmasok voltak, de sejtem, hogy ez nem így van. Ehhez mindazok a hibák is kellettek, amiket Önök követték el. Miért hozzák elő újra ezt a vitát, amikor ezt már egyszer a magyar választók eldöntötték. (4)


6.3 “Orban: more room to manoeuvre needed for EU economies” Politics.Hu (June 16, 2014), accessed March 17, 2015, http://www.politics.hu/20140616/orban-more-room-to-maneuvre-needed-for-eu-economies/ I will be recommending a radical reduction of European energy prices, which coincides with the logic of
Hungary’s reduction of utility prices. And secondly, I will be recommending that the state plays a role in job-creating development projects (7)

I will also be putting forward arguments in favour of boldly interfering with the regulation of the banking sector (2)

will recommend is that Europe should take the initiative with regard to the crisis in Ukraine. We should convene a Russia-EU conference to discuss not only the situation in Ukraine, but also to determine the most important points with regard to the next twenty to twenty-five years of our cohabitation with the Russians, and sign an agreement on these. (2)

I will be arguing in favour of today is that national economies must be given greater latitude, because a successful Hungary, a successful Poland or a successful Germany can do more for the EU than if we all follow the otherwise unsuccessful economic policy direction that many countries within the European Union are currently suffering as a result of. So latitude, imagination, a national approach and independence. (5)

Viktor Orbán criticized the European Commission country report on Hungary calling it harmful from the political point of view; than, he added that "sooner or later these country reports should be taken under political control." (4)

Mr Orbán made the following points: • Ukraine: Europe had to show more initiative and play its role to the full. The current crisis could only be resolved with Russia’s help. • Competitiveness: Member States’ indebtedness and the price of energy threatened the economy of the whole of the EU. The market ought not to be a goal in itself. Cheaper and more competitive energy were what were needed. • Governance: the institutions ought to make more space for countries that are not members of the euro area, just before he painting a worrying picture. (3. ‘pessimistic’)


Hungary, was the first country within the European Union to suffer an economic collapse. Hungary did not use the crisis management model put forward by the IMF and the EU; it developed a totally different crisis management model, which led to much debate between the EU and Hungary. (4)

to thank President Barroso for these debates and for his presidential conduct during the course of those debates, because he was one of only a few leaders who, although he too had clearly also lost patience, insisted throughout that those disputes must be conducted only within the legal framework of the treaties currently in force and that politics should be excluded from them (2)

our starting point with regard to the future of Europe is that the treaties must be complied with. Similarly, we think that the financial agreements must also be complied with (2)

the Hungarians view as important is that if Europe wants to renew itself then it must respect its own past and its own roots, which to us means that we must respect Christianity and give all nations their rightful respect (5)

We must practice a particularly forceful migration reduction policy while showing unwavering support for the free movement of labour within the EU. (West mixes migration with free-movement as in free movement means migration (East-Europe) (2)

The prevailing school of thought in Europe today is that we must first put the economy in order and that will then will lead to the creation of jobs. Our opinion is the exact opposite: we think that we should first provide work to everybody and that is what will put the economy in order (state plays greater role) (7)

It is perhaps understandable if someone behaves with a certain reverence for ten years following their accession: they have only recently been accepted into the fold, they want to catch up to their more developed peers, we receive development funding from them and that justifies restrained, prudent and civilised behaviour. But now that an era has come to a close it is clear that the engine of European growth is in Central Europe; ..... I think it is time for the countries of Central Europe to also raise their voices a little more courageously than before with regard to the most sensitive issues such as the ones I have just mentioned. Hungary at least will be (5)

8. Viktor Orban, “Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s Press Conference following the Session of the European
We shall not consent to the boundaries of the Basic Treaty being sometimes overstepped in the, otherwise commendable, interests of achieving a consensus. And I gave voice to this during my speech. If we feel that the framework is too constraining and the Basic Treaty does not provide enough room for movement and we need new regulations, then we should put forward this problem, Hungary is ready to become involved, and we should debate the issue and amend the Basic Treaty if required. But that should be done in a transparent, democratic, considered and well thought out manner, instead of using different interpretations to transgress the original intentions of the Basic Treaty as issues arise. (3)

The second reason this is important to us is that compliance with the Basic Treaty is always in the interests of the smaller parties: [...]of authority have come to be questioned by Brussels precisely because of the practices that have become prevalent as a result of the ‘stealthy amendment’ of the Basic Treaty. (3)

I stood up for something that in addition points beyond our own personal interests, meaning even beyond the interests of the European People’s Party. One must always stand up for our national interests, and sometimes one is alone in doing so (7)

We are handling the Hungarian crisis according to a different economic policy philosophy and using a different system of instruments than those usually applied here, and accordingly this debate on crisis management here is not relevant to Hungary....regardless of the fact that we are practicing a different economic policy to theirs, the state of affairs here, and especially because of export relations, also has an effect on Hungary. It makes no difference to us what they do, as long as they do it well. (5,7)


Looking back from here, today, the European powers’ acceptance of Germany’s reunification was a wise decision serving the widest pan-European interests. (1)

in 2014 we speak of Hungary – or of any Central European country – it is always worth bearing in mind that we are speaking of countries which are still working hard day after day to make up for historical disadvantages in an environment within the European Union where we must live together and compete with countries which have an enormous competitive advantage over us (4)

We can now say that there is only one nation in Europe – a single country – which has been fully audited with regard to democratic values by a body authorised to do so (namely, the European Commission, which officially bears the title of Guardian of the Treaties). That country is Hungary (2)

that there were five issues of debate between the European Commission and Hungary: we agreed on four, went to court over one issue and lost, drew the necessary conclusions and made the required changes to our laws. As a result, we have made our entire constitutional system fully compatible with the laws and principles of the EU. (2)

reaffirmation of the decision taken by Saint Stephen one thousand years ago to align with the West. Once again, Hungary chose the West. This is where we belong; we belong in the West, in the community of Europe. (1)

we can see that Europe accounts for an eer declining percentage of the world economy, [...] We believed that we were joining a community which is one of the world’s fastest growing [...]Today, 25 years after reunification, the European community finds it a problem to face this fact. [...] there is no doubt that today Europe continues to be the world’s most liveable region, and a European would find it hard to imagine life on a long-term basis elsewhere, outside Europe: this is where freedom is perhaps the greatest, tolerance perhaps the highest, privacy
perhaps most widely respected; in general, here we have a rich culture – one without which Europeans would see their lives as worthless, or at least limited. About this there is no doubt. We must, however, look at the trends

(1,4)

I am convinced that if European countries struggling with high unemployment rates do not undertake solutions of a similar nature, they will find it hard to escape the rut they are in. I believe that merely relying on the creation of jobs on the open labour market is no longer a valid approach in today’s world (6)

They (muslims) form a small fraction of one per cent, and that is how we would like to keep it. Many find this a most uncivilised position, but I disagree. I dislike hypocrisy, and this is a time for straight talk: right now, Hungary would not be able to resolve the widespread problems that accompany immigration. .. who are being persecuted on political grounds must be given help – as follows naturally from European and Christian morality.. no one can seriously think that all the refugees flooding Europe are political refugees. ...We therefore support, and at a European level promote, the approach of sealing our borders against immigration, economic immigration; we must also launch a policy which does not provide funds to refugees inside Europe, but channels them to those people’s home countries: problems must be solved at root (1,2,3)

We must also speak about the issue of energy as a European problem. This is yet another taboo.....The Hungarian government takes the view, which it asserts in Europe, that price is the most important factor related to energy: how to produce energy cheaply enough for Hungarian and European industry to be able to compete with overseas industry (1,2,3)

Few of you may remember, but Greece was not the first Member State in the European Union to buckle financially in response to the crisis; the first was Hungary. In 2008 Hungary was facing collapse, and if the IMF and the European Union had not come to our aid at the time, we could have buried the entire country. It is nothing short of a miracle that we did not in fact go under and that the European Union and the IMF saved us from the worst....Therefore, we must not give up on financial discipline, we must not give up on the just distribution of burdens, and we must not give up on a tax system that serves to boost performance (2,2)

We may stand before the court of European opinion with sufficient self-confidence and may claim that over several years Hungary has, with careful and laborious effort, developed a set of different answers to the difficult dilemmas arising from EU membership which seem to work for Hungary: the country has done its homework, so to speak. As a source of possible solutions, we respectfully recommend Hungary to the attention of the other Member States of the European Union (5,6)


Hungarian decided by referendum to join EU and we are still proud to be members of the EU (2) Europe wants to hear how far we have come with Hungary, we reduced debt, we have growth. (6) Regarding political issues I can inform you that Hungary is a Member State that has been examined the most number of time with rule of law. The issues to our common interests. It concerns questions on what kind of EU we will give to our children (2)

Hungarians talk straight and frank. So we speak open about refugees, death penalty. Political correctness have not brought us further.

- We want Europe to be a continent for Europeans, and Hungary a country for Hungarians, and I think it is compatible with beliefs of our founding fathers (5)

- we have to make distinction between asylum seekers and economic migrants [...] 
- we cannot jobs to all immigrants [...] 
- Hungary and the EU has every reason to deal with the economic migrants [...] 
- my conviction is that the EU commission proposal is absurd and borders to insanity. not open the doors to migrants (4)

we have to revision the current rules and agreements and Member States have to have the right to protect to their own borders. That is practical and viable solution. It is insane to accept refugees, Not opening doors and dividing refugees, quotas. Quotas is an incentive for smugglers and immigrants to come. (3)
I think it is an issue that should be dealt on the national level. I’m happy that we are discussing this, instead of quota system we should let MS decide themselves (5)

the treaty on the EU does not stipulate on what we can or cannot talk about. [...] 
-I think anyone trying to tell us what we Hungarians can talk about ,is simply a violation of the founding Treaties [...] 
-if you got the number of asylum applications, then Hungary is number two, in terms of GDP. If we can compare this to the number of inhabitants, we are after Sweden. We think the EU does not pay enough attention to the problems in the Balkan (3)

As far as capital punishment is concerned, we cannot put our head in the sand, I don’t want to live in the Medieval ages that we cannot talk about topics, this is about freedom of thought. We should talk about it , but any changes should be according to EU rules and Hungarian rules. Rules can be changed, written by man, we can decide on it, this is democracy (2)

everyone who expressed something, it is individual opinion, we are on the side of freedom and we will fight for the fundamental European value of freedom and freedom of thought (1)

2. Categorization of national speeches

Below the amount of fragments assigned to each category by speech, with the share in the total by percentage.

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A: State of the Nation Address


Is the era we Europeans live in today a continuation of the crisis period that began in 2008, or is this a new world after the financial crisis? ... Dare we hope that this is still only a period of recession, after which
European life can return to the pre-crisis order which today seems like the good old days? Or do we have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that this is already a new world which is tough and unfriendly, and which will painfully degrade our good old continent unless we do something quickly? If this is the case, the free expanse of European life, its attractive and coveted lifestyle, and the magical treasures of European culture will count for nothing: our Europe will inevitably fall behind in the great global race. (1)

How did we lose and how can we regain the common European homeland to which every nation of the Union – including the Greeks and the Germans – can say “yes”? Can we prevent the return of the spirit of the Cold War, and the prospect of a Russia, excluded from Europe, as our enemy once again? And can we Hungarians stand up at one and the same time for the independence of Ukraine, the security of the Hungarians of Transcarpathia, Hungary’s energy security and its economic interests? (1,5).

As a committed NATO and EU Member State it is our duty (2)

Therefore, in 2010 we could only pursue a foreign policy of adaptation...
By 2014 the situation had changed. Hungary had become an economic success story, which Europe, too, is slowly beginning to acknowledge. (6)

This sovereign, proactive foreign policy is, of course, surprising for many; our new and independent Europe policy is surprising (1,5)

It is time for us to learn to look upon other countries as our equals, and to look upon ourselves as their equals. We must abandon this mentality as no longer being worthy of a country seeking to become Central Europe’s front runner once again in the near future. [...] three prime ministers and nine foreign ministers have visited our country. .... They had good reason to come here, as Hungary has been placed on the map of European politics. This is what the socialists and the liberals call our “isolation” in foreign affairs. (1,6)

Europe today continues to huddle behind the moats of political correctness, and has built a wall of taboos and dogmas around itself. There are things from past periods which are worth keeping, such as democracy – as far as possible in a form which needs no modifying adjectives [...] we let go of liberal social policy which does not acknowledge the common good and denies Christian culture as the natural foundation – and perhaps the only natural foundation – for the organization of European societies [...] We decided to face the barrage of unfair attacks and accusations, and also let go of the dogma of political correctness. (6)

we must understand that liberal politics only ever recognizes two kinds of opinion: its own and the wrong one. You yourselves may clearly remember this; this is how these considerations led to Hungary taking a new direction in 2010, and a new era of national politics began. (7)

Every nation attempts to cut from the fabric of history a social and economic model adjusted to its own body. We are familiar with the Finnish model, as well as the Austrian and Bavarian models. This is also what we strive for. We cannot yet tell whether the job we have been doing for five years will deserve the term “Hungarian model” [...] The modern world sees economic facts as the ones that truly count. It may be right, but I would attach higher priority to facts related to life. Above all, the facts which determine our biological survival and continuance (5)

that the Hungarians pursue their freedom fights, one after another. They are not happy, but they understand that the Hungarians do everything differently. They are a special species, and this is what comes naturally to them [...] Seen from the outside, Hungarians are a people with strange notions, who petition Brussels with complaints against their own government on a daily basis, but also a people who eventually solve their own problems. It is true that they do not take kindly to double standards, which make them angry sometimes, but everyone has their own hobbyhorse. However, at least they do not ask for easy terms or status as a special case (5)

And one other thing that has escaped no one’s attention: the Hungarian economy grew by 3.5% in 2014. This is well above the EU average, bringing us among the nations of Europe’s economic elite. (6)
the number of visitors coming to Hungary increased by 13%, while a general decline was seen in the rest of Central Europe. The Hungarian GDP growth rate is three times the EU average (6)

National sovereignty is a fundamental question. National sovereignty gives us a better life, which is our core interest. (7)

We must protect hardworking Hungarians from being exploited and cheated. [...] We shall therefore achieve full accountability in the banking sector, and shall also defend the reductions in household utility expenses against cunning machinations in Brussels currently being hidden in plans for the energy union (4)

- 2014; “Hungary is at the threshold of a great era of prosperity,” Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s State of the Nation Address (Budapest: February 16, 2014), accessed March 25, 2015, http://www.miniszterelnok.hu/in_english_article/hungary_is_at_the_threshold_of_a_great_era_of_prosperity_speech

About the fact that while it is on the whole falling in Europe, the employment rate is increasing here in Hungary. About the fact that it has been decades since inflation was this low. About the fact that everyone is forecasting sustained growth for Hungary; more growth than even we ourselves anticipate. About the fact that we have successfully introduced the second largest increase in the minimum wage in Europe (6)

The nation and the national interest had neither an embodiment nor a representative. Instead, the pro-establishment lobby controlled the state of affairs in Hungary according to the whim of their superiors in the name of checks, balances and the free market. Summa summarum, it was already clear in 2010 that the post-communist system was incapable of proving its economic, social and moral superiority to its predecessor. The country felt that we had moved backwards and were in a worse position. Until in 2010, the country had had enough and voted for another regime change (7)

The disaccorded Hungarians had to be reorganised into a new, national and political community, and in a modern democracy only the Constitution is capable of achieving this goal. This is why we needed a new Fundamental Law. Thank you to Pál Schmitt! Sovereignty and the protection of national interests had to be set right to counter external and international power groups (7)

Thank you to the Peace March! (5) sovereignty within EU event.

Was it the right decision not to search for a compromise with the left, the defenders of the post-communist system, or with the foreign interests groups who have a financial and power-related interest in maintaining post-communism, but instead to shoulder the tough domestic and foreign battles and undertake to achieve the total renewal of Hungary? (7)

We are living in a world in which only nations who have self-esteem can get ahead. [...] Or remember the time when the Brussels bureaucrats attacked Hungary roughly and threateningly. Just because we had the audacity to tax the banks and big corporations, because we didn’t want to take money away from those who are rather more in need of being given some. Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets in peace and dignity to send the world the message: Hungary is not a colony and will not allow itself to be made into one (4,5)

The solution of Brussels, that tells you to cut off your toes if your shoes are too tight, does now seem a well-thought-out one. (4)

Who would have thought a few years ago that Hungary, of all countries, would be capable of slashing inflation and pushing the deficit to below 3 percent, an eminent achievement within the European Union? [...] ? Who would have thought a few years ago that Hungary would be capable of achieving a higher level of stable economic growth than the European Union average? [...] By changing our present, we have changed our future. We will have a different future to the one foretold for us by the priests of the London and Brussels oracles. (4,6)
In 2010, the choice we had to make was on whose corner of the ring we should enter the fight, and we chose the red white and green corner. The balance of power has changed significantly since then; we have won several rounds, but the fight is not over (7).

And finally, historic opportunities are opening up before us in view of the fact that the whole of Central Europe is gaining importance. […] We can set as an objective to have the cheapest energy in Europe. (1)

Let us show that we will follow our own path. Please do not forget, if we do not control our own lives, somebody else will. And so what must we do fifty days before the elections? Blow the bugles and saddle up, because tomorrow morning, we march! (7)


Therefore, we can or perhaps even should, albeit with the necessary modesty but also supported by substantial reason, in the reservedly prideful manner of a caring housewife, deem it a success that our homeland reduced its level of debt in 2012; of the twenty-eight EU member states, only five of us managed this. We succeeded in keeping our finances under control; and in fact our country outperformed most European nations. Do not be confused by the European Union’s current prognosis; they have for example not once managed to correctly forecast our budget deficit. We’re keeping our fingers crossed for them, perhaps they’ll get it right eventually. What’s more, we’ll gladly give them a clue: the deficit will be below three percent again this year (6,4)

We Hungarians have contributed a great deal to the world but seldom talk of our outstanding accomplishments, Hungarians’ accomplishments to the world (followed with extensive list) (7).

Then, at long last, in 2010 Hungary took its fate into its own hands. We, Hungarians started doing and accomplishing things that are in our interests instead of doing what others expect of us. We stopped following the advice of busybodies. We ignored them politely – we are, after all, a civic party – but decisively. Rather in the manner of Mark Twain, who wrote that he occasionally goes to the doctor for an examination because the doctor too must make a living, then to the pharmacy with the prescription to fetch the medicine, because the chemist must also make a living. Then he pours the medicine down the drain – because he wants to keep on living (7) his was the turning-point; it was under these conditions and for this reason that Europe’s only two-thirds parliamentary majority came into being, which serves as clear proof of national co-operation visible even from distant capitals. (5)

We are building a country in which people don’t work for the profit of foreigners. A country in which we will not be told how to live our lives, what can be in our Constitution and when we can increase wages, by bankers and foreign bureaucrats. A country in which no-one can force the interests of others upon the Hungarian people. (7).

the task faced by the Hungarian Government is not this simple. Our task is far more complicated than this. Nevertheless, I am able to report to the attentive Hungarian public, that Hungary is performing better than previously and is more effective in finding a solution to the economic crisis than most European nations (6)

the success of Hungary, the achievement of the people living here, in other words, of all of us, even the opposition, because regardless of political convictions, it will be beneficial to all, everyone will be a winner. I know it is difficult to win over generations brought up on internationalism for the national thought, but maybe once they will understand that although our parties may be in opposition, the homeland cannot (7)

Since our accession to the European Union, we have never managed to secure as much in funding from the EU budget as now. And this is despite the fact that the total size of the EU budgetary framework has fallen, meaning that we can pour ourselves more from a smaller barrel. One of the fruits of this dignified bravery was that we took the opportunity to form an alliance with a dozen countries (5)
Hungary is doing better than the majority of European countries in the field of protecting pensions, too. While the value of pensions decreased in several European nations due to the crisis, Hungary succeeded in protecting and even increasing the purchasing power of pensions. (6)

In a move unprecedented in Europe, we reduced the number of politicians by half. In this area, we have not only improved our performance but are already doing well. (6)


Today Hungary, the Hungarian and the European economy, the two-third majority hardened in parliamentary battles, the radically reorganized public administration is in the position and I myself am in the position to feel that we are indeed capable of responding to this urging question. (5)

We could also say that renewal is about being born again. A nation being born again […]This is when Western nations really performed truly great deeds: the French enlightenment, the English industrial revolution, the American independence, the German unity and the changes of the political system in Central Europe (1,5)

We Hungarians also know this wonderful feeling, the uplifting feeling of spiritual greatness, the inebriation of common and great deeds and the happy soaring feeling of pride over creation. Yes, we know the wonderful manifestations of the Hungarian spirit, the thousand-year Christian state organization, the valiant protection of Europe, Rákóczi’s liberation movement, the nation building by Széchenyi, the ‘48 and ‘56 revolutions, our world famous scientists, artists and athletes (1,7)

Thus renewal in this context means that with the liberated strength of the Hungarian spirit can revive the nation and then Hungary will be able to occupy its worthy place in the 21st century. (7)

We Europeans can defeat the crisis by understanding and accepting that it has also swept away our blunders; therefore we can now open a new sheet. Europe has declared war on the crisis. (1)

However if we are successful in our struggle, then we can again be the first in a few things in Europe, like we were with our tax system (6)

N: National Day


Turning to the West, we see the German-speaking world, an ever-orderly realm of emperors and iron chancellors, turning all to its advantage – even economic crises that shred other nations. To the East the empires of martial, Slavic peoples a hundred times larger than ours. To the South we may behold the People of the Crescent in their multitudes, the wasp nest’s unrelenting hum and ferment. Vienna, Berlin, Moscow and Istanbul – and here we stand between them, here in the Hungarian homeland: at one and the same time the geographical heart of Europe, the borderland of empires, and a meeting point of cultures. (1,7)

We must live in the language which we alone understand, in the culture which we alone can give the world. Constitution, legal codes, national assembly, government, academies, national economy: all these serve but one end. We must Always bear in mind that the Hungarian people’s most valuable asset is that which sets it apart from all others. If we were the same as others, what purpose would we serve in the world, and on what grounds could we seek God’s assistance in the face of our opponents? (7)

If we do not find our self-esteem, stand up for ourselves, and take control of our lives. If we fail to do these things, all our efforts will be in vain, because the fruits of our hard work will go to speculators, corporate conglomerates and financial empires; the fruits will be enjoyed in other countries, just as when we were the Habsburg Empire’s backyard. It has taken us twenty years to come to this realisation, but on this we finally
reached an accord. We agreed that it is honourable to live from work, and this is something that one should take pride in. We agreed that we must openly stand up for ourselves, and that we must stand up for the interests of the country. We agreed that our families and children are the ultimate meaning of our labour, and that they therefore deserve protection. And we also agreed that we Hungarians, wherever we may live in the world, constitute a single nation, and that therefore every Hungarian has a responsibility towards every other Hungarian. (7)

The Hungarian cause also attracted Poles, Italians, Romanians, Serbs, Germans, and even Austrians; and the heat of its all-inspiring ideal and sentiment forged them into a single whole – regardless of language, culture, financial standing or social status (1)

We should not be ashamed to say out loud that Hungary was the flagship of freedom and democracy in the western world [...] Is it any wonder then, if the people of Kossuth and Petőfi merely smile when anyone wants to lecture them on freedom and democracy? (6)

We are part of Europe, and together with the continent’s other nations we wish to shape its future. Today Europe is full of questions, and Hungary is full of answers. (1,5)

-2014; “We are the Most Unified Country in Europe. Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s Ceremonial Speech on the 15 March National Holiday,” (Budapest: March 15, 2014), accessed March 27, 2015, http://www.miniszterelnok.hu/in_english_article/we_are_the_most_unified_country_in_europe

Our revolutions are usually quelled by foreigners from abroad. [...] They are the enemies of freedom, the enemies of our freedom. They may be hitting us, but it is the spirit of revolution and freedom that they want to do away with; a hopeless task. Nobody has ever succeeded in doing away with freedom, because it was never present here or there, but everywhere. Each year, the fire of ’48 was ignited in the souls of more and more people, taking form in the 1956 Revolution, in the 1990 regime change, in rebellion or in the earth-shaking election victory with a two-thirds majority. Is it not possible, my dear Friends, that the Hungarian believers in freedom have been fighting the very same revolution since 1848? (7)

And if today, after 166 years, we clamber up onto the shoulders of the Hungarians of the March revolution, and we stop to survey what is around us, we can see that we are standing in the gateway to a new era that holds the promise of magnificence. If we step through it, we will become a free and strong country. A country that sets serious goals for itself and that has the strength to achieve them. A country that stands firmly on its own two feet, that puts its debts in order and joins the ranks of proud and successful countries. A country that is capable of putting a stop to the dwindling of the Hungarian peoples and can help the populating begin to grow again. A country that does not allow others to whisper about it behind its back and that does not allow what it has worked hard for to be taken away from it. A country that provides work for everybody and that gives all of its citizens a chance to get ahead. A country in which life, although hard-working and sometimes difficult, will be dignified and just, will have meaning and will be happy. (7)

We are unified and the name Hungary will once again be a good one; worthy of its glorious reputation of old. We have stood our ground and we have fought our battles. Against opponents who often seemed bigger and stronger than we were: the world of finance, imperial capitals and natural disasters. It sometimes seemed impossible, but those who do not attempt the impossible can never achieve even the possible. We have shown that we will protect Hungarian families from being exploited by debt, from the monopolies, from the cartels and from imperial bureaucrats who want to rise above nations. (2)

We are the most united country in Europe. [...] Every nation represents its own interests, is living its own life and is building its own future. (5)

My Respected Compatriots! Please accept my best regards on this, the day of Hungarian freedom. This is the day on which the whole world hears the voice of Hungarian freedom. This voice says that freedom belongs to those who are brave enough to achieve it. We Hungarians have achieved it. The Hungarian peoples have struggled much over the past centuries for this to be possible today.

During recent years, we have launched our nation on the path of cross-border unification. It is in this way that we become more and we become stronger. We must use this strength just as bravely and decisively, just as cleverly and ingeniously as our forefathers did. The sense of reuniting the nation is precisely that everyone who professes to be Hungarian may take part in the construction of the Hungarian nation and of Hungary. Those who live beyond our borders may take part in the reinforcement of Hungary, and a strong homeland can do more for them there, where they live.

It has been a long time since we have been so close to realising the goals of the Hungarian peoples and to expanding Hungarian freedom both within and beyond our borders. It has been a long time since we have been so unified. Let us make use of the opportunity we have created together. Let us be worthy descendants of the heroes of the 1848 revolution.

To this end, on the day of Hungarian freedom, I wish every Hungarian strength, faith and courage! (7)