



Rail shot

How populist EU opponents influence national politics

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Key Points

- The European elections of May 2014 turned into a triumph for parties hostile or sceptical towards the EU. Their influence increased not only in the European Parliament but also at home.
- The populist EU opponents instrumentalise the EU for national ambitions, increasingly putting the ruling parties in their own countries on the spot.
- There is no evidence that the ruling parties of Denmark, France, and Great Britain are completely converging with the positions of the EU opponents, but there is reason to conclude that the governments of these countries are responding to the greater strength of the populists.
- The Danish People's Party and the UKIP are reinforcing the old reservations in the two non-Euro countries vis-à-vis membership in the eurozone.
- François Hollande and his cabinet are nursing hopes that they might be able to induce Brussels to relax France's budget discipline in the wake of the electoral success of the Greek austerity opponents and the pressure exerted by the Front National.
- The influence of the populist EU opponents stands out most clearly in the field of immigration and asylum policy. Sustained pressure from the right has induced all three countries to sharpen both the tone and the substance of their immigration and border control policies.

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1. Introduction

The European elections of May 2014 turned into a triumph for parties hostile and sceptical towards the EU. Having increased their return markedly compared to the previous elections, they now occupy – depending on how you count – 118 to 170 of the 751 seats in the European Parliament¹. In France and Great Britain, but also in Denmark and Greece, parties that are sceptical or openly hostile towards the EU even became the strongest political force, leaving behind – at least virtually – the parties that were ruling the country at the time of the European elections. In Greece, as we know by now, the winner of the European elections, the left-wing alliance Syriza, is actually responsible for the government in a coalition with the Party of Independent Greeks (ANEL) that is regarded as national populist².

The motives of the EU sceptics and even the EU opponents are as diverse as their objectives. The left-wing opponents bewail the ‘austerity diktat’ of Brussels as well as the uneven distribution of burdens in the endeavours to contain the sovereign debt crisis. ‘Austerity’ has become a symbol of all the problems from which the highly indebted countries of southern Europe are suffering. Moreover, the left-wingers criticise the EU for being executive-biased, undemocratic, and intransparent in its decision-making processes. To the right-wing EU opponents, the Union constitutes an inadmissible interference with national self-determination. They either want to dissolve the Union either wholly or partially, or they demand that their respective home countries leave the EU or the euro. The extent to which they might possibly succeed in this in or through the European Parliament has been investigated elsewhere³.

In this study we are inquiring into the influence of the EU opponents on politics in their respective countries, using as examples those three countries where the EU opponents became the strongest political force and national elections are still pending: Denmark and Great Britain, where elections will be held this year, and France, where parliamentary and presidential elections are due in 2017. In Greece, the European elections anticipated the outcome of the subsequent parliamentary elections, in a manner of speaking, rendering unnecessary any closer investigation into the *possible* influence of EU critics on concrete politics in Greece. Nea Dimokratia and its prime minister, Andonis Samaras, who remained in office until January 2015, attempted until the day of the election to defend the course of consolidation which they had set, trying to fulfil the pledges made to the European Union and other creditors. Conversely, Syriza and other Greek parties mobilised their voters with a partially defamatory hate campaign directed against Brussels, Berlin, and European top politicians. Today, we are witnessing how hard the new government is struggling with reality, repeatedly asking Brussels to furnish fresh subsidiaries and/or postpone agreed loan repayments instead of putting an end to the ‘austerity diktat’⁴. To be sure, we can hardly assume that particularly the two big opponents of the EU, the Front National and the United Kingdom Independence Party, would climb down that easily. In addition, it is quite possible that the EU is not and never has been the chief target of these two parties, and that they are instrumentalising European elections for their own national ambitions instead. Moreover, drawing sweeping conclusions regarding national politics from the results of European elections or basing forecasts for national elections on them should be done with care. European elections are seen as ‘second-order elections’ or ‘national by-elections’⁵, where voters ‘experiment’ more frequently than in national elections. Because European elections do no immediate harm to the power fabric at home, ruling parties often sustain losses in them. As a general rule, election researchers and winners alike describe this phenomenon as ‘teaching a lesson’.

There is no indication of a complete convergence with the positions of the EU opponents, but governments do react to the greater strength of the populists.

But do such 'lessons' never entail any consequences? Are ruling parties simply passing over the victory of parties sceptical or hostile towards the EU without adopting one or the other of their demands? One possibility is that punch-drunk government parties might try to regain lost ground by occupying positions sceptical towards Europe. The question is whether this is a credible and promising strategy. Another question is whether copycat EU scepticism displayed by parties formerly more friendly towards Europe or a closer approach to the Eurosceptics in other issues, such as immigration questions, border controls, and asylum policy might not have consequences for a nation's (European) policy. If so, the opponents of Europe might reach their true objective by a rail shot, which is to influence the national political agenda and gain ground at home⁶.

These are the questions we are going to pursue in the following. Our experts for the respective countries will consider the (possibly changed) positions of the governing parties in Denmark, France, and Great Britain regarding the European Union as such, the European financial and euro bailout policy, questions of immigration and border controls, and foreign-policy issues.

2. Synopsis

Populism, i.e. to appeal to the public by instrumentalising actual or alleged ills for the purposes of left- or right-wing political entrepreneurs, is regarded by some experts as a 'warning signal' or a 'useful corrective' for democratically legitimised governments and the parties that support them⁷. To avoid further alienation between themselves and their voters, they should react appropriately. In favourable terms, this might be described as 'responsiveness', meaning (re-)convergence between governmental action and the supposed or openly articulated preferences of the electorate⁸. In unfavourable terms, such a strategy of adaption might end in the radicalisation of individual political fields, and in the most unfavourable case, in the radicalisation of politics as a whole at the expense of third parties. Such attempts at strategic and thematic convergence have been made again and again, with varying success⁹. When governments come under pressure, they occasionally succumb to the temptation to seek salvation in adopting populist demands.

In the course of the last two years, border control regulations were tightened under the influence of the Danish People's Party which is equally hostile to immigration and the EU.

This, however, does not wholly apply to the three countries we are considering more closely here. There is no evidence of complete convergence with positions of the EU opponents, although governments do react to the greater strength of the populists. These reactions have been slightest in Denmark, although they are clearly visible. As Roman Senninger explains, the government led by Helle Thorning-Schmidt as well as most of the parties represented in the Danish parliament have remained faithful to their fundamentally pro-European position. Not being a member of the eurozone, Denmark believes that it is less affected by the sovereign debt crisis and the endeavours of the other EU member countries and the EU itself to stabilise the euro. At the same time, membership in the eurozone is out of the question for the country, not least because of the strong position of the EU-sceptical Danish People's Party. Moreover, the DF has influenced the positions of the government parties in the field of border control and immigration, the all-time favourite topic of the EU's right-wing populist opponents. In the course of the last two years, the influence of the Danish People's Party, which is equally hostile to immigration and the EU, has led to more stringent regulations concerning border controls, the law of immigration, and the extension of social benefits to EU foreigners. Based on current poll data which describe the DF as still in the lead in the favour of the voters, Senninger forecasts that the influence of the party on the domestic and European policy of Denmark is going to grow.

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In France and Great Britain, the EU's opponents are even more powerful. Consequently, their influence on national and European-policy positions is greater than in Denmark. The Front National and the UKIP demand nothing less than the resignation of their countries from the EU. While such demands have not yet been heard from the governments and the parties supporting them in either country, there is a 'Brexit' referendum pending in Great Britain that was put on the agenda by the Tories. Moreover, one of the key demands of the two toughest EU opponents, namely that the national level should recover complete authority in border control and immigration issues, has found expression in concrete government action in both countries. 'Immigration remains chief among the fields in which the UKIP endeavours to set the agenda [...] and the Tories [...] are shifting their positions as well as their policies farther towards the right', as Bastian Matteo Scianna says in his analysis.

Moreover, immigration control and restriction have arrived in the Socialist Party of France, and thus in the country's government machine. Even while he was still minister of the interior, today's Prime Minister, Manuel Valls, increasingly regarded immigration as a 'threat', particularly where people from Muslim countries and ethnic Roma were concerned. Regarding the latter, he advocated repatriating them to Romania and Bulgaria. On this issue, Marine Le Pen and her Front National have been scoring for years, mainly among voters of the Socialist Party of France¹⁰. They describe the EU as a 'sieve', as being guilty of mass immigration, immigrant and banlieue criminality, the increasing competition for jobs, and, ultimately, growing unemployment. The FN president persistently argues that the EU is permanently undermining the sovereignty of the republic. This moved the non-socialist parties to adopt the issue (albeit relatively unsuccessfully in recent times), and even the Parti socialiste is now getting tougher in questions of immigration and naturalisation after years of hesitation. Magali Balent argues that the party is oscillating between the traditionally humanist positions of its urban intellectual circles which had increasingly moved away from the views of its voters and the rigid but highly popular views of the FN. In the view of the strategists of the PS, one solution of the problem might be to sharpen the tone and content of the party's positions on immigration and naturalisation.

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Whereas the EU and the euro are 'embodiments of evil' for both the UKIP and the Front National, there are fairly well-marked differences between the influence of the two EU opponents as well as between the positions and position modifications of the governments of Great Britain and France with regard to the EU and particularly the EU's (bailout) policy. Although David Cameron basically supports the consolidation efforts in the eurozone and thus the German government's course in financial and budget policy, he uses the common currency and all endeavours to stabilise the euro as a bogymen with which to show his potential voters what might have threatened the United Kingdom had he not averted the disaster. Unlike the issues of immigration and border control in which the government, as mentioned before, has been successively approaching UKIP positions, there was little reason for convergence as far as the Euro is concerned. Both, the Tories as well as the UKIP, reject the euro, the Tories in their majority, the UKIP on principle.

François Hollande and his socialist government, on the other hand, are being attacked from two sides at once in matters of euro and financial policy. Both the extreme left around the Front de Gauche and the extreme right around the Front National vehemently oppose consolidation efforts within the eurozone: the left wing because it regards this as additional evidence of the dominance of the financial markets and the triumph of global neo-liberalism, the right wing because 'foreign control' from Brussels and Berlin is 'smothering' France. As Magali Balent shows in her analysis, both sides have identified a common enemy in Brussels and Berlin

and, more specifically, in the person of the Federal Chancellor. Influenced by EU opponents from the right and the left wing, the French government has been showing palpable sympathy for the newly-elected Greek government, hoping that in the wake of Syriza's victory some relief might be obtained in the restrictive budget policy which is still supported by a scant majority in the EU.

3. Are the EU opponents exacerbating the tone and substance of politics at home?

The Danish People's Party, the UKIP, and the Front National, of which at least the two named last are ranked among the 'hardline' EU opponents in current typologies¹¹, are driving the governments of their countries before them, growing steadily stronger. Apparently, the EU and the questions relating to it make a good bogeyman with which to mobilise aversions against losses of national sovereignty, 'foreign control' in politics and administration, 'actions of bureaucratic elites', the cost of Europe, or certain political fields and decisions. Asylum, immigration, and border-control questions are being successfully instrumentalised by the EU's opponents. In their view, the EU has robbed nation states of the control over this political field, and its attitude in immigration and border-control questions is too lax. While Margaret Thatcher once wanted 'her money back', Marine Le Pen, Nigel Farage, and Kristian Thulesen Dahl demand full control over 'their' borders back from the EU.

This has political consequences. The social democratic and/or socialist governments of Denmark and France still hesitate to move closer than hitherto towards the demands of the right-wing populist EU opponents in language and substance, fearing that, should the rules of immigration to their countries be tightened further, the injury to their electoral base and their reputation might outweigh any possible gain among right-wing populist voters. Nevertheless, our national studies show that the immigration and border-control policies of all three countries have grown tougher in tone and substance. This would not have happened the way it did without persistent pressure from the right.

The governments' positions in financial policy are similarly coming under the influence of the Eurosceptics. In the two non-euro countries, the Danish People's Party and the UKIP are reinforcing traditional reservations towards membership in the eurozone which, in the view of the UKIP, would anyway be tantamount to capitulating before Brussels and Berlin and should be prevented at all events. In this context, it is remarkable that the attitude of the French left-wing government in questions relating to the euro and particularly to budget consolidation is equally influenced by the FN's fundamental rejection of the euro and the election victory of the Greek Syriza. François Hollande and his cabinet are nursing hopes of inducing Brussels to loosen the country's budget discipline in the lee of the electoral success of the Greek (and Spanish and Italian) opponents of austerity.

At every level, politicians not infrequently display reluctance to hand over competences to the next higher level. Re-nationalising key political fields like immigration regulation and border control or regaining full national sovereignty in questions of monetary and financial policy constitute central demands of the right-wing and national-populist EU opponents, who are on the advance in all three countries covered by this study. In these countries, consequences for domestic and European policy are inevitable. The EU opponents will continue urging their governments to place national interests before European regulations in the European Council. Finding a pro-European consensus as well as arriving at decisions that are uncomfort-

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able for countries that are under great pressure to reform, such as France, is made more difficult or delayed thereby. Apart from the gravitational force of the populist EU opponents in domestic politics, this is one of the most visible consequences of their growing strength.

Thus, the answer to the question asked in the beginning, whether the strengthened EU opponents contribute towards sharpening the tone and substance of politics at home, must be ambivalent. Their influence is noticeable but not ubiquitous. It will be felt not in all areas of European and domestic policy but certainly in central fields. Towards Russia, for which the UKIP and particularly the Front National display sympathy and understanding, the governments of the three countries still follow the line of the EU, which is to sanction open support for the pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine. This is definitely beyond the reach of Moscow's long arm and the verbal strength of the right-wing and national-populist EU opponents.

4. National studies

4.1 Denmark | Roman Senninger

Finding a pro-European consensus as well as arriving at decisions that are awkward for countries under great pressure to reform, such as France, is made more difficult or delayed thereby.

In Denmark as well as in many other member states of the European Union, the European parliamentary elections of May 2014 will go down in the history books as a triumph of Euroscepticism. While critical or negative attitudes towards the EU are nothing new in the Danish population and the country's party landscape, they have never before become apparent to such an extent in election results. More than one third of the votes went to parties that are regarded as EU-sceptical. The key factor in this was the Danish People's Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*, DF) which at 26.6% of the vote not only reached first place but also, in the person of Morten Messerschmidt, fielded an extremely successful top candidate, who at 465,758 personal votes was supported by the electorate to an extent never seen before. The party's key issues during the campaign were immigration (catchword: 'social tourism'), the re-introduction of border controls and wider national competences. Next to the DF, the Popular Movement Against the EU (*Folkebevægelsen mod EU*), a group included in the left political spectrum that does not participate in national elections, once again reached about 8% of the vote.

A second interpretation of the results of the 2014 European elections clearly shows that the Euro-friendly positions of the established parties apparently meet with little approval by now. In Denmark as well as elsewhere, the returns of most pro-European parties are prefaced by a minus sign compared to the last elections¹².

Despite the increased appeal of the European elections of 2014, which was due to the fact that the European parliamentary parties nominated top candidates for the first time, elections to the European Parliament are still seen as ranking second behind national parliamentary elections¹³. Accordingly, they are not regarded as having much influence on the national political day-to-day business. In the past, events that happened on the European plane hardly affected national politics in Denmark. Earlier EU votes were rarely connected with national issues, being rather regarded as a separate political field¹⁴.

However, the victory of the DF in the European elections of 2014 has given rise to a sustained debate about political consequences at the national political level. Although the success of the Danish People's Party can be ascribed to protest votes to a certain extent, and although the turnout in the European elections ranges markedly below

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that of national parliamentary elections, observers interpret the outcome as indicating that the DF will play a crucial part in the next parliamentary elections as well, and that it might well assume responsibilities in a future government¹⁵. In some polls, the party currently appears as the strongest of all. Consequently, its successful (anti-) European strategy represents a challenge to the current government, composed of social democrats (*Socialdemokraterne*, SD) and social liberals (*Det Radikale Venstre*, RV). Supported by the Socialist People's Party (*Socialistik Folkeparti*, SF) and the Red-Green Single List (*Enhedslisten – De Rød-Grønne*), both parties of the minority government are seen as belonging to the Europe-friendly camp, having constantly supported each individual integration step.

While traditional European parties like the Liberals (*Venstre*, V) and the Conservatives (*Det Konservative Folkeparti*, KF) clearly displayed an unmistakably critical attitude towards the EU during the campaign, the elections' possible consequences for the national power fabric give rise to questions about the government's reaction: how will the ruling parties deal with the success of the EU-critical DF? Will they remain faithful to the Europe-friendly course, or will they come closer to the positions of the EU-sceptical parties and the electorate? Will changes affect the parties' basic orientation, or will they focus on individual political fields?

Changes after the European elections of 2014

While people's concerns about social and integration policy are taken seriously, this does not imply a refutation of the pro-European consensus.

A first hint of change may arrive very early after an election, by a change in personnel, for instance. However, the electoral performance did not entail any such consequences in either ruling party. Rather, minister of state Helle Thorning-Schmidt (SD) pointed out in a first reaction that there was no evidence of a clear trend among the population for a desire for either 'more' or 'less' Europe. While it is true that the Europe-sceptical DF emerged as the unmistakable winner of elections, participation in the European patent court was approved by 63% in a referendum held at the same time as the European elections. Because of its success in the elections and the gain of another mandate, the Social-Liberal Party had even less reason to change its position, although foreign minister Martin Lidegaard emphasised that running a pro-European campaign had been handicapped by dissatisfaction with the European Union among parts of the population. However, the EU was the problem solution, and this fact would have to be explained more clearly to the population.

Another sign that clearly contradicts a change of position after the European elections is that an agreement on European policy is being negotiated. Based on a broad consensus among the parliamentary parties, the agreement is intended to mark out Denmark's future position in the European Union. Not only the government parties but also representatives of the liberals and conservatives are emphasising that the negotiations, which were begun in the autumn of 2013, will not be affected by the election result. Although the people's concerns about social and integration policy were being taken seriously, this did not imply a refutation of the pro-European consensus.

A similar conclusion may be drawn from statements made in the Folketing. The Danish parliament is the central scene of the national political dispute over Europe. One of its characteristics is the marked extent to which the government and its activities in European affairs are being controlled, mainly by the European Committee¹⁶. Consequently, the government is frequently confronted by parliamentary questions and hearings.

The majority of the population does not wish the country to distance itself further from Europe.

Directly after the elections, Kristian Thulesen Dahl, the chairman of the Danish People's Party, confronted minister of state Helle Thorning-Schmidt with an interpellation concerning Denmark's position regarding the EU¹⁷. Specifically, Dahl wished to know whether the head of government intended to comply with the wish of the population for less Europe, whether she appreciated that the European Union was interfering excessively with the competences of the nation states, and whether she planned to oppose this misdirected development. In her answer, the minister did not mince words. She confirmed that Denmark's interests could best be asserted within the European Union, leary rejecting the call for less Europe. While the minister of state affirmed that she was taking the concerns and criticisms of the population seriously, and that she intended to strengthen the principle of subsidiarity, she also emphasised that the results of the election and the referendum showed that the majority of the population did not wish any greater distance from Europe.

Thus, a glance at the fundamental positions of the government parties confirms their positive attitude towards the European Union¹⁸. However, a closer analysis of certain political fields also shows that the government was indeed forced to react in certain areas.

As mentioned before, the Danish People's Party relied on the immigration issue in its campaign. Specifically, the party criticised that social benefits were accessible also to EU foreigners, and that actual claims are often checked in a perfunctory manner. Characterised by the terms 'welfare tourism' or 'social tourism', the party shares this focal issue, which is being debated controversially, with numerous right-wing populist (and some conservative) parties in Europe. Even during the campaign, the debate focused mainly on the payment of child benefits to EU foreigners. Sharply criticised by the European Commission for infringement of EU law, the government modified the practice of payment in June 2013 to conform to applicable regulations (EC No. 883/224 and EC No. 987/2009), according to which there is an immediate claim to child benefit even if the child lives in another EU member state. According to Danish law, however, residence in Denmark was a fundamental prerequisite for claiming child benefit. Increasing criticism from the opposition parties and also from within its own party forced the government to change its position in the debate and announce negotiations with the European Commission¹⁹. The objective was to integrate a passage providing that payment should be made on the basis of the cost of living in the member country in which the child lives. However, no agreement was reached, which is why the government has been frequently confronted with criticism regarding the payment of child benefit since the European parliamentary elections. One interesting aspect of this debate is that the Europe-friendly opposition parties, headed by the liberals, are among the sharpest critics of the new child benefit regulation, so that their position is now closer to the Danish People's Party than to the ruling parties.

Another sign indicating that the government is indeed adopting issues pursued by the Danish People's Party is the decision to reform and extend the border police service which, made in October, not only permits the Danish border police to carry out more Schengen-conformable controls but also to use new technologies, such as electronic registration of number plates. Furthermore, the social democrats have mounted deliberate campaigns indicating that they regard the DF as a competitor to be taken seriously on the national political plane. In August 2014, the party presented the potential financial effects of an implementation of items in the DF platform, the objective being to represent the party as economically irresponsible.

While the Danish People's Party pleaded for recognising the referendum in the Crimea, the ruling parties advocated sanctions and a clear-cut position vis-à-vis Russia.

There are two more subjects which have been dominating the political agenda of the European Union since the constituent meeting of the European Parliament in July 2014: the conflict between Russia and Ukraine and the persistent crisis in the eurozone. As far as an approach to solving the armed conflict in Ukraine is concerned, the positions of the ruling parties fundamentally agree with those of the Eurosceptical DF. However, while the Danish People's Party pleaded for recognising the referendum in the Crimea and the majority of its deputies abstained from voting on a motion for a resolution that was passed in the European Parliament in September 2014, the ruling parties advocated sanctions and a clear-cut position vis-à-vis Russia. However, Minister of State Helle Thorning-Schmidt also emphasised that only a solution found at the negotiating table could lead to durable peace in the eastern Ukraine. During a meeting of the European heads of state and government held in February 2015, she welcomed the Minsk agreement and professed herself optimistic that a sustained armistice might be achieved²⁰. Similar statements were heard from foreign secretary Lidegaard (RV), who spoke in favour of greater commitment to ending the conflict on the part of the European Union and promised Ukraine a perspective within the EU. While the Danish People's Party has so far supported in parliament the government's line regarding sanctions towards Russia, the party is sceptical whether these sanctions will ultimately have the desired effect. Moreover, the party's foreign-policy spokesman, Søren Espersen, demanded compensation for Danish companies that were injured financially by the foreign-policy situation²¹.

Unlike the conflict in Ukraine, the political parties have been addressing the euro crisis either little or not at all so far. Having negotiated its own opt-outs, Denmark is not part of the currency union, the common security and defence policy, police and judicial collaboration, and Union citizenship. Moreover, surveys indicate that a majority still opposes the introduction of the euro, one of the reasons probably being the persistent problems within the eurozone. It was Minister of State Helle Thorning-Schmidt who last spoke on the subject in February last year, emphasising that introducing the common currency would be to Denmark's advantage in the long run because it would give the country greater influence on related decisions. The Social-Liberal Party similarly advocated joining the currency union, although there is no prospect of a referendum on the subject because of the prevailing mood in the nation.

Another opt-out clause, namely that which concerns police and judicial collaboration, might be changed in the near future. This, however, is not a consequence of the election success of the Danish People's Party but results from a concern that the country might be excluded from the European Police Office because of the supra-national reorganisation of Europol. In the place of an opt-out solution, the government proposes an opt-in strategy which would permit Denmark to co-operate in police matters without assuming any obligations in other fields, like immigration, for instance.

That the government is reacting is particularly noticeable in the areas of social affairs and immigration.

Conclusion

Summing up, we may say that the Danish government has responded to the success of the Eurosceptical Danish People's Party only to a marginal extent. While remaining faithful to its fundamentally pro-European position, the government has adopted some of the subjects that were placed on the political agenda by the DF and adapted its position in the public debate accordingly. That the government is reacting is particularly noticeable in the fields of social affairs and immigration. However, what the ruling parties and the Europe-friendly opposition have been saying and doing since the elections to the European Parliament in 2014 prompts the conclusion that most of the parties represented in parliament, irrespective of their campaign arguments, are backing the pro-European consensus and intend to express this next

year by holding a referendum about the opt-out from judicial and police collaboration. Apart from this, the success of the Danish People's Party entails enduring consequences in Denmark's domestic policy. With an eye on the parliamentary elections that are pending, the government is paying more attention to DF issues, regarding the party as a serious competitor in the struggle for first place in the voters' favour.

4.2 France | Magali Balent²²

There is a 'Republican Front' against the Front National (FN) which, however, is weakening as the strength of Euroscepticism grows, blurring the sharp distinction between the FN and the left-wingers in government.

History repeats itself incessantly... The by-election to the national assembly that was held in the department of Doubs in February 2015 provided the Socialist Party with yet another opportunity to keep the FN from winning by forming a 'Republican Front'. And indeed, the candidate of the PS succeeded in defeating the *Front National* (FN)²³ in the run-off election. This pattern ties in with an old tradition in French politics that goes back to the third republic. It consisted (and consists) in forming a voter alliance between the parties of the right and left-wing camp against the extreme right, which was regarded as an enemy of the republican constitution. This tendency of strictly separating the republic on the one hand from the extreme right on the other results not least from the fact that ever since the Front Populaire episode in the 1930s, fighting fascism has been part of the foundation and structure of the left wing in France. However, this old tradition begins to crumble under pressure from a twin temptation, first and foremost among the voters who are becoming increasingly receptive towards Eurosceptical positions²⁴.

The fact that the FN at 25.4% emerged first in the European elections of May 2014 highlights its increasing popularity even among voters traditionally inclined towards the government parties. Consequently, the established parties are increasingly tempted to re-appropriate subjects which they neglected and left to the FN for a long time, despite the risk of 'Lepenisation', meaning convergence with the positions of the FN in some fields.

The political leaders of the mainstream camp have often been charged with preparing the ground for the FN and following in its wake²⁵. However, since the election of François Hollande in May 2012, the ruling Socialists appear to have succumbed to the temptation of closing in with FN issues. This situation is not entirely surprising if we recall that the Left partially had to thank the FN for its victory in the presidential elections of 2012²⁶. Beyond that, a phenomenon called 'gaucho-Lepenism' by Pascal Perrineau has been existing since the 1990s. The term describes the tendency of some voters from the left-wing worker milieu who, having been disappointed by their deputies during the crisis, voted for the FN while calling themselves left-wing voters nevertheless²⁷. This is not as devious as it sounds, for after all, the Left and the FN do share certain positions on some European subjects, such as their aversion to free market economy and the so-called European technocrats. Both, moreover, call for strengthening the nation state²⁸.

The positions of part of the French left wing and the FN overlap to a certain extent, which may explain the influence of Eurosceptical thinking on the present government.

Although there is a veritable mental reluctance to admit it, the positions of a part of the French left wing and the FN overlap to a certain extent, which may explain the influence of Eurosceptical thinking on the present government. But what are the political fields where this influence is apparent? For our analysis, I will begin by concentrating on the EU's point of view, as represented by some left-wing Eurosceptical politicians. Next, I will turn to the positions of the government regarding sensitive subjects that might possibly further reinforce Euroscepticism. These include the immigration question, multi-culturalism, and the extension of the EU. All these political fields show evidence of certain left-influenced about-turns by the government and the party that supports it.

During his term as minister, Montebourg also fought against the European austerity policy which he, like the FN, regarded as the real reason for the continued weakness of growth in the eurozone.

Even though the Left in government officially describes itself as pro-European, regularly reminding the public that the EU is the future of France, and that leaving the European Union would be tantamount to a 'departure from history'²⁹, it did support positions that betoken its suspicions of a purported 'Europe of finance' or 'of capital'.

Arnaud Montebourg, minister of economic reconstruction under prime minister Jean-Marc Ayrault and later economic minister under Manuel Valls as for a brief period (April-August 2014), owes part of his public prominence to his vilification of Europe as 'neo-liberal' and his attacks on the austerity allegedly imposed by Germany. In that sense, his position fits in seamlessly with the Euroscepticism equally represented by the FN and the extreme Left. They regard the EU as a force that is destroying the republic and must be confronted by a strong nation. Busily advocating voting 'No' during the campaign on the referendum about a 'draft constitution for Europe' in 2005, Montebourg became the founder of a kind of 'economic nationalism'³⁰. The former deputy chairman of the Green/European Free Alliance Party group in the European Parliament, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, even charged him with planning to establish a left-wing *Front National*³¹.

Montebourg had barely been appointed minister by the newly-elected president, François Hollande, when he began to take aim at the European Union. He accused it of encouraging unfair competition and production relocations and of rendering its citizens more vulnerable to the global financial system. In statements that might just as well have been made by the FN, he advocated protectionism at the EU's external borders through the introduction of taxes and a system of national trade advantages in order to protect French workers from globalisation (for her part, Marine Le Pen suggested complementing national controls by more extensive border controls at the external borders of the Union). During his term as minister, moreover, Montebourg fought against the European austerity policy which he, just like the FN, regarded as the real reason for the continuing weakness of growth in the eurozone. In August 2014, shortly before he left the government, he emphasised again that, in his opinion, there were two problems on the European agenda: first, European budget policy and its peak excretions, the imposition of 'austerity diktats' on all countries of the Union, and second, the ECB's rigid monetary policy³³.

The growth of Euro-scepticism clearly left its mark on issues regarding the extension of border controls in the context of the refugees streaming into Europe and, even more clearly, on issues of illegal immigration to France.

To be sure, Arnaud Montebourg is not the only person swimming on the crest of the wave of Euroscepticism which spread throughout France after the beginning of the economic and social crisis in 2008. While campaigning for the presidency in 2012, François Hollande also demanded that the fiscal pact be re-negotiated. Later on, at a press conference held after his first EU summit as president, he said he was satisfied at having pushed through not only a financial transaction tax, which had not existed until then, but also an additional growth pact to cushion the effects of the stability pact and avoid a looming recession³⁴.

Syriza's victory in the early parliamentary elections in Greece one again provided the ruling socialists with a chance of siding with the opponents of austerity. Receiving the chairman of the Syriza and newly-elected prime minister of Greece, the president declared at a joint press conference on February 4, 2015 that Greece and France were pursuing common objectives for a united Europe: Hollande demanded that Europe should 'show greater solidarity, become more political, and strive harder for economic growth'. He urged respect for the election results in Greece, which he interpreted as an expression of the 'insupportability of the rigid austerity measures'³⁵. Shortly before that, the French financial minister, Michel Sapin, had said that Athens' plans to re-negotiate its debts were 'legitimate', asserting his complete confidence in Greece's ability to implement the requisite reforms³⁶.

The Left and the refugee problem

In its immigration policy, the Left in government also reveals Eurosceptical and rigid positions. Immigration is one of the causes for the deep mistrust felt by the French towards the EU, which the FN incessantly accuses of having become so permeable since the abolition of intra-European borders that it had to be called the 'European sieve'. The gravity of this issue also emerges from surveys about the reasons for the voting behaviour at the European elections of 2014, where the immigration issue ranked first, outranking even the employment situation and the purchasing power³⁷.

Reservations of the socialist party vis-à-vis immigration are nothing new, if we remember that it linked the country's bad security situation to immigration when it took over the government in the spring of 1997. Jean-Pierre Chevènement, then minister of the interior in the Jospin government, did not hesitate to emphasise that immigration was 'absorbable', but only 'in small doses'³⁸. From the time when the Left returned to power in 2012, it was Manuel Valls, the former minister of the interior and current prime minister, who revived the debate with simplistic clichés³⁹. Thus, for example, he claimed at an interview with *France Inter* in September 2013 that only a minority of Roma had the wish of integrating themselves in France: 'There are certainly cases of successful integration, but they concern only a few families... [I]t is illusory to believe that the problem of the Roma population could be solved by integration alone... [W]e have to appreciate that the lifestyle of these people is wholly different and conflicts with our own, which means that the Roma should return to Romania or Bulgaria'⁴⁰. These words – rather unexpected when spoken by a socialist – prove that a feeling of being threatened by a loss of identity is prevailing among a part of the French public which Manuel Valls wants to reconquer for himself.

Fear of such a loss of identity goes hand in hand with increasing hostility towards foreigners, especially immigrants from Islamic countries outside the EU and from new EU member countries, including Romania and Bulgaria, who are seen as a threat. Valls' comments reflect the dissatisfaction of the French citizens with the failure of integration, which is largely thought to be the fault of foreigners who are not making an effort to integrate. In its 2013 report, the National Commission on Human Rights (CNCDH) points out that only 22 per cent of the French blame the French society even a little for the difficulties which people of foreign origin are facing in integration⁴¹. This suggests that Manuel Valls' remarks are the result of political expediency, of an awareness that multi-culturalism is increasingly seen as a threat to which politics must react. The last political survey made by CEVIPOF in February 2015 showed that 69 per cent of the French believe that there are too many foreigners in France. 82 per cent agreed with the view that the republic should be more self-confident, even though some societal groups might dislike that⁴².

Euroscepticism manifests itself particularly clearly where questions are concerned which relate to stepping up border controls in connection with the refugees streaming into Europe and, more particularly, to illegal immigration to France. Even politicians from the left spectrum are seduced into correcting their positions and advocating more resoluteness in these questions. Manuel Valls once again spoke out in favour of adopting a resolute position regarding European border controls. Even when he first attended a meeting of the EU interior ministers in Brussels in June 2012, the then minister of the interior was considering the option of re-introducing police controls at the national border in case of a grave threat to public order and domestic security, i.e. returning their full sovereignty to the Schengen states in case of a crisis or emergency⁴³. One year later, he spoke of misgivings regarding the admittance of Romania and Bulgaria to the Schengen zone on January 1, 2014.

'If conditions are not right, it cannot be done. Currently, it cannot be done', he declared on *Radio Monte Carlo* and on BFMTV in September 2013⁴⁴. Once again, these statements show the growing influence on the government of scepticism towards Europe and immigration, fuelled in particular by the FN. In the European election campaign of 2014, one of the FN's demands was for France to leave the Schengen zone in order to put an end to the 'laxness' of the EU in the field of immigration and to re-establish the sovereignty of France.

To be sure, Valls' statements do not meet with complete agreement in his own camp. When he opened the museum of immigration history, President Hollande supported the Schengen agreement, pointing out that there had always been immigration in the history of France. Despite the growing significance of the issue of immigration for the identity of France and the future of the EU, the government keeps vacillating between adopting the FN's hostility towards Europe and immigration and adhering to the generous and humanist philosophy that is the foundation of its history which, however, is increasingly drifting away from the will of the electorate.

Conclusion

In office since 2012, the socialist government showed itself – despite all professions to the contrary – not unreceptive towards the arguments presented by parties hostile to Europe and immigration, indicating that it is approaching their positions at least where some subjects are concerned. On the one hand, their criticism of Europe and capitalism with its left-wing populist background is the product of tactical considerations aimed at influencing public opinion, which is anyway inclined to mistrust the EU. On the other hand, this pandering to Eurosceptical drifts in France on the part of the left does represent the ideological convictions of some politicians from the *Parti socialiste*. One case in point is that of Laurent Fabius, once European deputy and now foreign minister, who in 2004 and 2005 mounted a campaign against the referendum on the European constitutional treaty, which he said encouraged economic liberality in Europe and the relocation of production facilities abroad, at the same time threatening the public with the spectre that Turkey might join the EU should the referendum have a positive outcome. Once the will to mobilise existing reservations and discontent with the EU reaches its full strength, it appears possible that even a party belonging to the left spectrum might adopt further positions of Eurosceptical populism.

4.3 Great Britain | Bastian Matteo Scianna

Year after year, whenever there is a debate about the EU's budget in Strasburg and Brussels, the question crops up in Great Britain whether membership in the Union is still paying a dividend to the United Kingdom. Finally, early in 2013, Prime Minister David Cameron held out the prospect of a referendum in 2017 on whether Great Britain was to remain in the EU, provided it would be he who would be asking the question. After repeated reports about an earlier referendum in the media⁴⁵, the government confirmed even before the European elections that more time was needed to negotiate a 'better deal' for Great Britain. After the European elections, rumours were heard that an early referendum was being planned at the seat of government after all⁴⁶. There is no doubt that this may be interpreted as a reaction to the showing of the UKIP and its lasting good poll ratings (as well as a tactical move relating to the Scotland referendum).

Like the resistance against the right of the EU parliament to nominate the president of the commission, the summit meeting of the European Council in June 2014 was

Particularly after the success of the UKIP, the demonstration of 'strength' against Juncker and the EU had domestic-policy motives, and David Cameron often appeared as if driven by the UKIP.

presented by the government as a struggle against the unloved bureaucracy of the EU and its alleged democracy deficit as well as an espousal of reforms by the UK. Speaking in the *House of Commons*, the prime minister stated that he had been defending the interests of Great Britain as he had done in connection with the euro bailout policy, and that he would go on pursuing the course of re-negotiation until 2017⁴⁷. Particularly after the success of the UKIP, the previous demonstrations of 'strength' against the designated president of the EU Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, and the EU had domestic-policy motivations, and Cameron often appeared as if driven by the UKIP.

Causing great unrest in November 2014, the possibility that Great Britain might have to make supplementary payments into the EU budget played into the hands of the UKIP in by-elections. From the seat of government, the message was that the late notification exemplified the problems of the EU administration, which is why it was urgently necessary to streamline not only the EU budget but the procedures in Brussels in general⁴⁸. However, these reactions did not differ fundamentally from the 'classic' British position, and the UKIP benefited passively rather than setting the agenda. Consequently, prime minister Cameron stuck to his old line of argument, namely that only the Tories could guarantee a referendum, even if a hung parliament should follow the elections to the House of Commons in May 2015⁴⁹.

As far as a possible enlargement of the EU is concerned, Great Britain retains its historically-motivated positive fundamental position while emphasising the problems raised by new workers and their freedom of movement within the Union⁵⁰. The liberal democrats continue to call for an EU reform to strengthen competitiveness, efficiency, and democratic legitimation. Although they stress British interests and demand greater strength for national parliaments⁵¹, the LibDems still are the most pro-European party in the United Kingdom.

Euro bailout policy and budget consolidation

Conservatives often interpret the euro bailout policy as a warning to learn from the mistakes made in the Labour years. They confront the successful austerity policy at home with the crisis policy of the EU. What the government has to criticise about the euro bailout policy is a lack of long-range strategies, saying at the same time that keeping out of it was very successful. Thus, the government praises the merits of its own approach, the long-term economic plan, considering the 'uncertain economic development' in Europe and/or the eurozone⁵². In this context, however, the UKIP's influence should not be overestimated as it rather aims at labour and an alternative economic policy, and the UKIP is not credited with playing a pioneering role, particularly where alternative economic plans are concerned.

On the occasion of the elections in Greece in January 2015, Nick Clegg, chairman of the LibDems and Vice Prime Minister, published an article in the *Telegraph* in which he invoked the financial emergency of 2010 to justify the coalition with the conservatives. It was only the policy of austerity and consolidation pursued by the LibDems that had saved Britain from becoming a second Greece, which is why it was urgent to pursue it further at home and across Europe⁵³. The prime minister called on his Greek colleague in office, Alexis Tsipras, to search for constructive solutions so as to secure Greece's further membership in the eurozone, although he wished to appear as a neutral mediator⁵⁴. The healthy development of Great Britain's economy should not be put at risk by mistakes and neglect in the eurozone, says Cameron⁵⁵.

The healthy development of Great Britain's economy should not be put at risk by mistakes and negligence in the euro-zone, says PM David Cameron.

Immigration and border controls

In the run-up to the parliamentary elections, harsher penalties for illegal immigration were announced in mid-May 2014. Furthermore, the government presented figures showing that immigration had declined by one third since 2005. Similarly, the immigration act, the core project in the re-alignment of British immigration policy, was introduced on May 14, 2014, i.e. a few days before the European elections⁵⁶.

Similarly, the liberal democrats under Nick Clegg shifted to a stricter line in questions of immigration⁵⁷ after the elections. The exit checks demanded by them were not supposed to touch the fundamental principle of free movement within in EU but to enable the UK to exert better control. Moreover, the LibDems also showed pride in having lowered the immigration rate by one third⁵⁸.

After the by-election successes of the UKIP, there appears to have been another initiative and a policy of more extensive information on combating illegal migration. Early in 2015, the 'deport first, appeal later' approach was highlighted as a success that enabled more than 300 criminal foreigners to be deported⁵⁹. At the end of January 2015, home secretary Theresa May, who frequently occupies the limelight with demands for stricter controls, was involved in new demands by No. 10 for improvements in EU co-operation. The mechanisms existing until then were classed as defective, the pioneering role of the United Kingdom was highlighted, and the need for other EU states to catch up was emphasised⁶⁰.

The conservatives held on to their position of debarring non-EU immigrants for four years from government assistance in questions of employment, taxation, and rental accommodation. EU citizens who have been jobless for more than six months are to be deported and deprived of any claims to support from the Universal Credit even before then. (To put that into perspective: the UKIP wants to allow migrants access to the tax and health insurance system and other governmental benefits only after five years of paying contributions.) The liberal coalition partner wants to allow access to the Universal Credit after no more than six months of regular employment.

As early as 2013, Cameron admitted that his objective of limiting immigration to Great Britain could not be reached because of the massive numbers of people coming in from the new EU member countries. Those 'few tens of thousands' envisaged by the PM turned into nearly 300,000 permanently resident migrants by September 2014, of which 162,000 came from the EU and 190,000 from non-EU countries⁶¹. The Spectator commented that such a promise would have been absurd anyway because it was impossible to control migration within the EU. At the same time, figures emerged which showed that immigrants from Eastern Europe alone would not do as scapegoats. Thus, the migration debate, which is not as much concerned with refugees and asylum seekers as in Italy, for example, but with Eastern European migrants, remains the main field in which the UKIP successfully sets the agenda and the Tories under David Cameron shift their positions and policies further towards the right.

Foreign policy

Before the European elections, the UKIP was often described as Putin's Trojan horse – based on reports of the party being allegedly funded by Moscow (à la Front National). When Russian aircraft caused several provocations at the borders of the British airspace, Nigel Farage declared that one shared the responsibility for this because one had provoked Russia with the expansion policy of NATO and the EU. To him, however, an attack on the Baltic States was a red line that would call for the solidarity of the alliance⁶².

Immigration remains the area in which the UKIP successfully sets the agenda and the Tories under David Cameron shift their positions as well as their policies further towards the right.

Criticism of immigration, 'excessive' in the eyes of the UKIP, retains its anti-EU edge. Immigration will remain a permanent issue until the elections to the House of Commons and a possible EU referendum take place.

Nevertheless, it appears as if the government's position towards Russia was not influenced either by the UKIP or the European elections. Great Britain was for sanctions against Moscow at an early time, it follows a tough zero-tolerance line, and at the end of February, it decided to send military advisors to Ukraine until, perhaps, the USA would take over⁶³. That the country looks to Washington instead of a Franco-German tandem or the 'Weimar Triangle' is deeply rooted in history and not primarily due to anti-European reasons. However, British media, citing a devastating report by the House of Lords, raised the question of whether London was 'sleep-walking' in the Ukraine crisis. Next to mistakes committed by the foreign ministry and dwindling expertise with Russia, the tenor was one of general criticism of the PM for being a 'perpetual campaigner' and opponent of the EU who had lost the will to run a constructive foreign policy, thus giving away British control options⁶⁴.

Conclusion

Great Britain and/or the EU – that has always been a relationship that was fraught with tension. Exacerbated by the euro and sovereign-debt crises on the continent, it has grown more complex recently, with Great Britain's pre-existing reservations towards Europe being strengthened by the efforts of the euro-countries and the EU to stabilise the European common currency. As the country does not itself belong to the eurozone, and as the conservatives have always had a negative attitude towards the euro, the greater strength acquired by the UKIP in last year's European elections has not led to any change or any hardening in the government's policy as far as questions relating to the euro and other financial-policy issues are concerned. The majority of the British reject the euro, and this is also the position of the Tories. Nor can any significant change in the government's line be detected with regard to its positions vis-à-vis Russia and/or its attitude towards the crisis in Ukraine, because on the one hand, the UKIP itself occupies positions critical of Russia, and on the other, because the party holds the 'EU empire' chiefly responsible for the Ukraine crisis. Immigration is a different matter altogether. This is the political field in which the UKIP drums loudest for restoring competences to the nation states and most strongly affects the positions of the other parties, mainly the conservatives.

The UKIP's criticism of immigration, excessive in its view, primarily relates to Eastern European migrants, which gives it an anti-EU edge. In legislation as well as in rhetoric, the line of the Tories is now tougher than it was when the Cameron government came into office. For migration is an issue which, next to all the limitations of the UKIP's influence on the policy of the British government as a whole, consists of a tangle of populist manoeuvres and fears in asylum and immigration questions, rejection of the EU, terror threats, and abuses of social benefits. Immigration (from EU member states) will remain a permanent issue until the parliamentary elections and possibly the EU referendum take place.

- 1] Since there are no binding criteria to define ‚EU opposition‘ and the transition from ‚scepticism‘ to open ‚hostility,‘ and since the reasons as well as the reach of EU criticism or scepticism differ widely, statements regarding the number of EU opponents in the European Parliament differ as well. The EPP party in the EP numbers 118 ‚populists‘ in the EP among the EU opponents, including the deputies of the FN, the UKIP, the FPÖ, and the PVV as well as those of PODEMOS, Syriza, and the Italian Five Stars movement. Other authors, again, include entire party groups among the ‚anti-Europeans‘, thus arriving at 170 deputies. See i.a. Niedermayer, Oskar (2014a). ‚Immer noch eine ‚nationale Nebenwahl‘? Die Wahl zum Europäischen Parlament vom 25. Mai 2014‘, in: Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen, Vol.45, No.3, p. 523-546, here: p.44, and (2014b). ‚Die Europawahlen 2014 und ihre Auswirkungen auf die Zusammensetzung des Europäischen Parlaments‘, in: Gesellschaft. Wirtschaft. Politik, Vol. 63, No.3, p. 351-364, here: p. 361- 363.
- 2] There is no space for far-ranging definitions of the concept of populism and its adjectives. On the theoretical and conceptual aspects of populism and the distinguishing characteristics of ‚left-wing and right-wing populism‘, see Grabow, Karsten and Florian Hartleb (2013b), ‚Mapping Present-day Right-wing Populists‘, in: isd. (eds.): Exposing the Demagogues. Right-wing and National Populist Parties in Europe. Brussels: Centre for European Studies, p. 13-44, here: p. 17-20. Still, it must be noted at this juncture that particularly the right-wing populist parties may rightfully be called right-wing and national-populist because they strongly emphasise the national element and constantly demand the restitution of political competences to the national level.
- 3] Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. ‚I want to destroy the EU‘: EU opponents in the European Parliament – taking stock of the year. Berlin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.
- 4] Vogt, Susanna (2015). ‚Regierung Tsipras wirkt erstaunlich unvorbereitet‘, Rhein Zeitung, February 12, 2015.
- 5] Niedermayer (2014a). Cf. note 1.
- 6] One piece of circumstantial evidence is, for example, the fact that Marine Le Pen demanded the dissolution of the national assembly and, consequently, early elections in France the very day after the European elections. Cf. tagesschau.de (2014). ‚Front National und UKIP legen massiv zu‘, <http://www.tagesschau.de/europawahl/euwahl176.html> (last visited on 18-03-2015).
- 7] For example Decker, Frank (2009). Populismus: Erscheinungsformen, Entstehungshintergründe und Folgen eines politischen Phänomens. Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung. <http://www.bpb.de/politik/extremismus/rechtsextremismus/41192/was-ist-rechtspopulismus?p=all>, (visited on 18-03-2015).
- 8] See i.a. Poguntke, Thomas (2004). ‚Do parties respond? Challenges to political parties and their consequences‘, in: Kay Lawson and Thomas Poguntke (eds.). How Political Parties Respond. Interest aggregation revisited. London and New York: Routledge, p. 1-14.
- 9] Cf. Grabow, Karsten and Florian Hartleb (2013a). ‚Strategic Responses to the Populist’s Advance: Options for Christian Democratic and Conservative Parties‘, in: isd. (eds): Exposing the Demagogues, cf. note 2, p. 399-409.
- 10] Cf. Balent, Magali (2013). ‚The French National Front from Jean-Marie to Marine Le Pen: between Change and Continuity‘, in: Karsten Grabow and Florian Hartleb (eds): Exposing the Demagogues, cf. note 2, p. 161-186.
- 11] Cf. Grabow, Karsten and Florian Hartleb (2013c). Europa – nein danke? Studie zum Aufstieg rechts- und nationalpopulistischer Parteien in Europa. Berlin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.
- 12] Belonging to the government, the social-liberal party (Det Radikale Venstre, RV) is the only Europe-friendly party that was able to make headway (+2.2 percent), which allowed it to return to the European Parliament.
- 13] Schmitt, Herrmann (2005). ‚The European Parliament Elections of June 2004: Still Second- Order?‘, West European Politics 28 (3), p. 650-679, here: p. 651f.
- 14] Raunio, Tapio (2007). ‚Softening but Persistent: Euroscepticism in the Nordic EU Countries‘. Acta Politica 42 (2-3), p. 191-210, here: p. 195.
- 15] Politiken (2014). ‚Selvfølgelig skal DF med in en borgerlig regering‘, Politiken, November 29, 2014.
- 16] Laursen, Finn (2005). ‚The role of national parliamentary committees in European scrutiny: Reflections based on the Danish case‘, Journal of Legislative Studies 11 (3-4), p. 412-427, here: p. 413
- 17] Folketing (2014). §20-Spørgsmål US 93 Om den danske EU-politiske linje, June 3, 2014.
- 18] One additional explanation why the social democrats retained their friendly attitude towards Europe may well have been speculations about a top position for Helle Thorning-Schmidt in Brussels. The head of government was tipped as the successor of Herman Van Rompuy in the office of president of the European Council. Critical statements would have reduced her chances to a minimum and were therefore not to be expected.
- 19] Vibjerg, Thomas and Anna Gottschalk (2014). ‚Helle Thorning: Vi lytter til det, der bliver sagt‘, Jyllands-Posten, April 2, 2014.
- 20] Plougsgaard, Heidi and Steen A. Jørgensen (2015). ‚Thorning er forhåbningsfuld om fred i Ukraine‘, Jyllands-Posten, February 12, 2015.
- 21] Winther, Bent (2014). ‚DF kræver milliarderstatning til sanktionsramte virksomheder‘, Politiko, November 23, 2014.
- 22] Translated from the French by Theresa Saetzler.
- 23] In the first round of the by-elections in the department of Doubs, the FN candidate, Sophie Montel, came in first at 32.6 percent of the votes cast, followed by the socialist candidate, Frédéric Barbier, who reached 28.8 percent, and the candidate of the UMP, Charles Demouge, at 26.5 percent. The latter did not reach the runoff election which was won by Frédéric Barbier with a scant majority of 51.43 percent while Sophie Montel reached 48.87 percent.

- 24] *The polls of December 2014 confirmed this trend. Only 41 per cent of the French affirmed having a positive image of the EU hätten, while 47 per cent stated that they were pessimistic about the future of the Union, EU Commission (2014). Standard Eurobarometer 82, [http:// ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb82/eb82_first_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb82/eb82_first_en.pdf) (last visited on 15-04-2015).*
- 25] See also: <http://www.ldh-toulon.net/spip.php?article1838> (last visited on 15-04-2015).
- 26] *In his most recent book, Pascal Perrineau states that about one million voters who had voted for the FN in the first round opted for a candidate of one of the left-wing parties in the second. The fact that Sarkozy and Hollande were separated by less than 1.14 million votes in the end shows the power of this influence. Cf. Pascal Perrineau (2014). *La France au Front*. Paris : Fayard, here: p. 178-179*
- 27] *Ibid*, p. 184-185.
- 28] *On this subject, politologist Dominique Reynié writes of a 'social-nationalist tendency' which enabled left-wing voters to elect an FN candidate. This had become particularly apparent in votes involving the EU, such as the referendum on the constitutional treaty of 2005, in which 54.6 per cent of the French had voted No. Cf. Dominique Reynié (2005). *Le vertige social nationaliste. La gauche du Non*. Paris: La Table Ronde.*
- 29] See e.g. the comments made by François Hollande on May 8, 2014, *Elysée* (2014). 'L'Europe que je veux', <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/l-europe-que-je-veux/> (last visited on 15-04-2015).
- 30] *Le Point* (2014). 'Almunia tacle Montebourg en dénonçant son 'nationalisme économique', http://www.lepoint.fr/economie/almunia-tacle-montebourg-en-denoncant-son-nationalisme-economique-11-02-2014-1790674_28.php, (last visited on 15-04-2015).
- 31] *Le Parisien* (2011). 'Cohn-Bendit: 'Montebourg fait du FN à gauche', <http://www.leparisien.fr/election-presidentielle-2012/cohn-bendit-montebourg-fait-du-fn-a-gauche-30-11-2011-1746119.php>, (last visited on 15-04-2015).
- 32] For further information, see Leveugle, Jonathan (2012). 'La Démondialisation d'Arnaud Montebourg: un programme pour l'Union européenne?', <http://www.taurillon.org/La-Demondialisation-d-Arnaud-Montebourg-un-programme-pour-l-UE,05056> (last visited on 15-04-2015).
- 33] *Le Monde* (2014). A. Montebourg, 'les choix politiques ne sont pas figés', *Le Monde*, August 28, 2014.
- 34] *Élysée* (29-06-2012). 'Conférence de presse du Président de la République à l'issue du Conseil européen de Bruxelles', <http://www.elysee.fr/conferences-de-presse/article/conference-de-presse-du-president-de-la-republique-a-l-issue-du-conseil-europeen-de-bruxelles/> (last visited on 15-04-2015).
- 35] *Élysée* (04-02-2015). 'Déclaration conjointe à la presse avec M. Alexis Tsipras, Premier ministre grec', <http://www.elysee.fr/declarations/article/declaration-conjointe-a-la-presse-avec-m-alexis-tsipras-premier-ministre-grec-2/> (zuletzt besucht am 15.04.2015).
- 36] *France tv info* (01.02.2015). VIDEO. Michel Sapin : 'La Grèce saura surmonter les difficultés', http://www.francetvinfo.fr/monde/grece/video-michel-sapin-la-grece-saura-surmonter-les-difficultes_813377.html (last visited on 15-04-2015).
- 37] *Sondage CSA* (25-05- 2014). 'Le match des européennes. Comprendre le vote', <http://www.csa.eu/multimedia/data/sondages/data2014/opi20140525-sondage-jour-du-vote-elections-europeennes-2014.pdf> (last visited on 13-03-2015).
- 38] Quoted from Tevanian, Pierre und Sylvie Tissot (2014). 'La lepénisation des esprits ', *LMSI.net*, 05.06.2014, <http://lmsi.net/La-lepenisation-des-esprits> (last visited on 13-03-2015).
- 39] | One feels reminded of something Manuel Valls said at a photo-shooting at the *Marché d'Evry* 2009 when he demanded that only white people should be included in the picture.
- 40] *France info* (24.09.2013). 'Selon Manuel Valls, une minorité de roms veulent s'intégrer', <http://www.franceinfo.fr/actu/politique/article/selon-manuel-valls-une-minorite-de-roms-veulent-s-integrer-285659> (last visited on 15-04-2015).
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