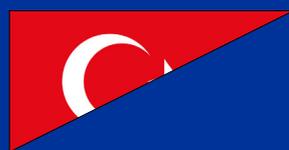
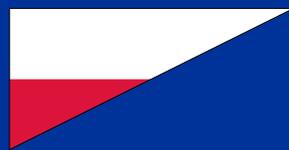
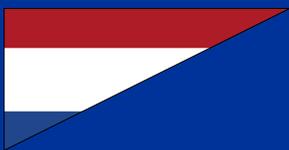
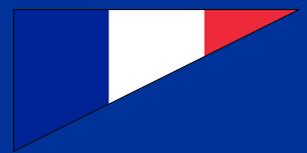
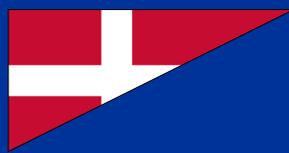
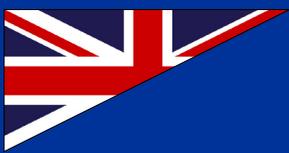

EUROSCEPTICISM

YOUNG EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP



EUROSCEPTICISM

Voices from Young European Leaders

May 2015

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Euroscepticism: Voices from Young European Leaders

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**“No man is an island,
entire of itself; every
man is a piece of the
continent, a part of
the main. If a clod be
washed away by the
sea, Europe is the less.”**

JOHN DONNE, 1624

INTRODUCTION

Adam Lenton

Today in the European Parliament more than one quarter of all MEPs are critical of, or oppose outright, the Union and the broader ideas associated with closer European integration.¹

For arguably the first time in its existence, opposition to the EU has manifested itself clearly in nearly all member states, northern and southern, as well as on local and national levels. Though differing in form and in the extent to which they oppose aspects of EU integration- whether as ‘hard’ or ‘soft’ Eurosceptics,² or ‘Eurosceptics and Europhobes’,³ for instance- one thing is clear: Euroscepticism has become a mainstream issue for Europe and for Europeans.

In light of this it seems apparent that the remainder of 2015 will be no less challenging for Europe than previous years. Elections are set to take place in a quarter of EU member states.⁴ In Britain, voters are set to go to the polls with the prospect of a future in-out referendum on EU membership almost guaranteed, setting the scene for the possible exit of a member state from the EU- unprecedented in its history. Though Europe’s economy in 2015 appears to be turning a corner,⁵ oft-mentioned hopes that economic recovery will deliver a blow to Eurosceptic movements belie

deeper issues of trust, cohesion and identity, a move away from the so-called ‘democratic deficit’ arguments of previous years.⁶

Whether in academia, policymaking or in popular discourse, debates and discussions of these issues will continue to occupy a prominent space in society, and ultimately, will determine the future of the Union. But importantly how do Young European Leaders, who have a stake in the future of the continent, see these issues?

This booklet seeks to continue a process of discussion and analysis, featuring contributions on important questions of Euroscepticism from young people hailing from different countries and backgrounds. It also is an opportunity to gain an insight into national perspectives on a topic which connects all of us across the continent. And, like with Euroscepticism itself, it is only by coming together as Europeans that we can hope to find solutions.

- 1 <http://www.notre-europe.eu/media/euroscepticismmoreeurophobia-bertoncini-koenig-ne-jdi-nov14.pdf?pdf=ok>
- 2 <https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=seiw-working-paper-no-51.pdf&site=266>
- 3 <http://www.notre-europe.eu/media/euroscepticismmoreeurophobia-bertoncini-koenig-ne-jdi-nov14.pdf?pdf=ok>
- 4 <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/30/europe-2015-elections-eu-britain>
- 5 <http://www.economist.com/blogs/graphicdetail/2015/02/european-economy-guide>
- 6 http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR79_EUROSCEPTICISM_BRIEF_AW.pdf



"In order for the sentiment to be comprehensively explained, one also needs to start by looking into its wider historic and cultural context."
BRITAIN (P. 7)

"So, if we want to engage ourselves as Germans and as Europeans, either way we have to understand what drives people to be against Europe and its mission."
GERMANY (P. 13)

"What makes the EU so special is that each member has more or less the same influence on regional and global issues."
POLAND (P. 10)

"63% of French people think the most important issue now facing the European Union is the economic situation."
FRANCE (P. 19)

"Spaniards have not played a significant role representing the EU as President of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Council—to name a few—throughout their history within the EU."
SPAIN (P. 15)

"Greek scepticism towards the European Union cannot be understood without getting to grips with the question of self-determination."
GREECE (P. 24)

Why is the debate on Euroscepticism important in your country and how does it reflect the country's perspective of the European Union as a global actor?



Britain

Britain can be considered as the progenitors of the Eurosceptic sentiment. The very term 'Eurosceptic' was coined in Britain in the mid 80s. Despite the significant levels of support won by Eurosceptics in European Union elections, this success has failed to 'spill over' into the respective political arenas, Britain seems to be particularly prone to turbulence surrounding the European issue. When looking at the development of Euroscepticism in the country it is not sufficient to merely focus upon its reflection on public opinion, the media and national party politics. In order for the sentiment to be comprehensively explained, one also needs to start by looking into its wider historic and cultural context. It can be argued that Britain is characterised by a literal Europhobia (a cultural fear of 'all things European') which adds to the opposition of EU membership. It is suggested by a number of authors that this may be rooted in the country's post war national identity crisis. For instance, 'hating Europeans and championing British' seems to have persistently dogged postwar Anglo-European relations. There is some truth to this, as shown by a striking 71% of Britons who claimed to identify solely with their own nationality and not with Europe.

By Simona Falanga



Denmark

"I'm afraid to openly say I am pro-European" so said a politician friend of mine, clearly depicting the increasing pressure that Euroscepticism is placing on the political scene in Denmark. It has become normal to say that Danish people are not pro-European, and that any ideas or policies even remotely endorsing increased European integration will be met with the political 'death' of their backers. However, this profoundly Eurosceptic atmosphere is only an illusion created by the media. In fact, the latest referendums suggest that more than 45% of people in Denmark still consider themselves pro-European. It is important to have a debate on this subject in my country, as doing so would encourage pro-Europeans to get more courage and potentially even force referendums on the shameful opt-outs.

By Narcis George Matache



France

The French debate on Euroscepticism is important for two reasons. The first one is symbolic: France is a founding member of the European Union, and was very active in all the major treaty changes. Its reconciliation with Germany after the Second World War has always been a strong symbol of broader European reconciliation. In this regard, evidence that the French population is becoming increasingly Eurosceptic is visible in the rise of Euroscepticism in European institutions. The second reason is more concrete: France has 74 seats in the European parliament, giving it has the second largest national delegation after Germany, which has 96 MEPs. Therefore, a rise of Euroscepticism in France means a similar rise in the European parliament. This is what happened during the last European elections: the far-right and Eurosceptic Front National (FN) won in the polls, with 25% of the votes. They were able to elect 24 MEPs, and almost succeeded in creating a political group with other Eurosceptic parties (the Dutch PVV, the Austrian FPÖ, the Italian Lega Nord, and the Belgian Vlaams Belang).

These five parties are still collaborating, and other political groups are forced to acknowledge their presence.

By Jean Comte



Germany

In Germany, we lack a sense of European 'awareness'. By 'awareness' I mean a sense of belonging to Europe on the one hand, and knowledge of the various European Union institutions and their functions on the other. It is in this vacuum that the notion of Euroscepticism can develop; hence, a bold policy of Euro-opposition is succeeding in Germany. Thus the statements and sentiments of Eurosceptics should be included in the policy dialogue insofar as this strengthens European awareness.

In the course of the financial crisis a 'hard' or 'withdrawalist' Euroscepticism was brought to the surface in Germany. This 'hard' Euroscepticism reflects some of those Germans who voted for the Euro-opponents that are currently active in the public eye. The policy of the Euro-opponents stands on shaky ground as it lacks substance and preys on the vague fears of the public.

Still, no matter how regressive and striking the 'hard' Eurosceptics may be, their doubts cannot be dismissed as 'politically confused' so long as they are well supported (at present by 7% of the German people).

The popularity of 'hard' and 'soft' Euroscepticism reflects that there is opposition to the (German) EU policy. Euroscepticism has become more visible and has scattered its seeds into the public and in all political directions. The EU is gaining more attention; European awareness is gradually awakening in Germany.

By Nico Drimecker



Greece

The fairy-tale between the European Union and Greece is a love story gone wrong. In 1981, Greece's application for community membership seemed to be the finish line in a long marathon towards self-determination, a promising moment of recovery following a brutal Ottoman and German occupation, gruelling civil war and a back-breaking dictatorship. Joining the EU was a deliberate choice. At the beginning of Greece's membership, 51% of the population expressed popular sentiment towards the European Community. Today, with unemployment in the country peaking at 26% and over one third of the population at risk of poverty, disillusionment has taken over. The EU's approval rate in Greece dropped to a dismal 16% at the height of its economic crisis.¹

The debate on Greek's disenchantment with the European Union is important. Although Greece might only account for 2% of the Eurozone's GDP, any prospect of a further rift between Greece and the EU would have a stark impact on all actors involved. The EU would lose leverage over a geopolitical stronghold since Greece stands on strategically important borders to Asia. Furthermore, any further discussion on a GREXIT weakens the credibility of the common currency and drives up Greek yields to astronomic heights. Finally, Greek's flirting with populist parties already has strong implications on the political discourse in the national and European sphere.

By Nikolas Papageorgiou

¹ Eurobarometer 2013 & 2014



Italy

Looking back at the results of the May 2014 European elections, Italy confirmed itself as a broadly pro-European country, if compared to France or UK, where Eurosceptic movements won hands down.¹ With more than 40% of votes going to Prime Minister Renzi's centre-left party, Italy declared itself a member of the social-democrat family. From this position, the country is seeking a new deal for Europe, starting from economic investments and growth. In doing so, Renzi's government hopes to convert Eurosceptical arguments against budget retrenchment into calls for institutional change.

Nonetheless, if we consider Italy from a regional perspective, the country does follow the rise of euro-skeptic entities gaining ground across the continent.² Italy's Eurosceptics, like their European counterparts, offer tough, if sometimes facile solutions to Italy's problems — arguing not for 'more Europe', but rather stronger national boundaries and a way back to State sovereignty. A growing section of the Italian electorate is increasingly doubtful about the European Union's ability to act in the interests of the people rather than those of banks or lobbyists. All the while, Eurosceptics blame Strasbourg and Brussels of being authors of schizophrenic, invasive legislation³ or, on the other hand, of leaving citizens stranded to face national security problems and other troubles alone.

The most successful propaganda deployed by Italy's Eurosceptics promotes an Italian exit from the European currency — and in turn an escape from the country's economic crisis. As for the global scenario, the EU is perceived of as being ineffective at controlling immigration⁴ — a particularly sensitive topic given the rise of migrants arriving on Italy's coasts (even though most migrants then move on to other European countries). In addition, European

sanctions against Russia over its actions in eastern Ukraine have been largely opposed,⁵ due to their damaging impact on exports from Italian farmers and SMEs to Moscow.

In essence, Eurosceptics in Italy believe that the EU should take a step backwards and leave European countries free from Brussels diktat. The EU, they argue, should focus less on economic restrictions and more on common values and shared cultural identity.

By Gabriele Rosana

¹ "Eurosceptic 'earthquake' rocks EU elections", <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-27559714>

² Summing up, they received more than 30% of votes: see http://www.policy-network.net/pno_detail.aspx?ID=4669&title=Despite-Renzis-triumph-Euroscepticism-is-alive-and-well-in-Italy

³ According to Lega Nord, the EU proposal to ban high-powered electrical appliance like double toaster would mean unnecessary interference in everyday life, http://www.adnkronos.com/fatti/politica/2014/11/26/tostapane-single-grazie-salvini-contro-che-vuol-mettere-fuorilegge-quelli-doppi_EIWRMHbPaal3nbB96cyqGI.html (in Italian)

⁴ Anti-establishment Five Stars Movement's leader presses for euro exit "not to end up like Greece" as well as calling for undocumented migrants to be expelled from Italy if they are not found to be genuine refugees, http://www.ansa.it/english/news/2014/10/21/grillo-presses-for-euro-exit-after-migrants-out-call_f95ff79b-955a-4bdd-a225-f5f23b33c173.html

⁵ Even MEPs from centrist groups argue that <http://rt.com/op-edge/180332-sanctions-russia-against-eu-interests/>



The Netherlands

The Netherlands is one of the founding fathers of the European Union. With its open economic model the Dutch have profited from the European integration since 1957. Nevertheless, recent Eurobarometer surveys revealed that public trust in EU institutions has decreased. By 2013 only 37% of the Dutch think that the EU is heading in the right direction, while 45% is more negative on current EU policies.¹ This decreasing trust in the EU is also visible in the political debate on Euroscepticism in The Netherlands.

Eurosceptic parties are political organisations who have a "principled objection to the European integration project transferring powers to a supranational body such as the EU" or "opposition to the current or future planned trajectory, based on the further extension of competencies that the EU is planning to make".²

Therefore, the left-wing Socialist Party (SP) and the right-wing 'Partij voor de Vrijheid' (PVV, Geert Wilders) are strong Eurosceptic parties. Also Christian reformist parties such as ChristenUnie are skeptical, as well as more single-issue parties like the '50Plus' party for older people and the 'Party for the animals' (Partij voor de Dieren) qualify to be Eurosceptic parties. By now, these parties and its former politicians (still in the Parliament) have 39 out of 150 seats in the most important part of the Dutch Parliament (Tweede Kamer).³ And therefore, other non-Eurosceptic parties are affected by this influence of Euroscepticism. It does reflect the country's perspective on the European Union much more than on the EU as a global actor. There is very little debate in The Netherlands on the EU as a global actor.

By Ries Kamphof

- ¹ European Commission, Eurobarometer Standaard no. 80, 'Public Opinion in the European Union', Fall 2013, National report The Netherlands, via http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb80/eb80_nl_nl_nat.pdf
- ² Taggart, Paul and Aleks Szczerbiak (2003) 'Theorizing Party-Based Euroscepticism: Problems of Definition, Measurement and Causality', SEI Working Paper No. 69 Sussex: Sussex European Institute
- ³ http://www.parlement.com/id/vhnmt7ijayp/de_huidige_tweede_kamer



Poland

Euroscepticism in Poland has never reached a dangerous level. There are only a few small political groups that wish for Poland to leave the European Union, but we can compare the arguments they use to demagoguery; they are only for internal use. Polish society is mostly pro-European. In fact the Polish establishment sees Poland's independence in two dimensions. The first is the NATO organization, considered as the one who secures the country's territorial sovereignty, and the second is the European Union, which is the institution that creates mechanisms and tools to strengthen economic growth. The difference between them is that nobody wants war in Europe; thus the main interests of all NATO members are quite similar. On the other hand, the EU is described through the prism of particular interest groups whose goals many times stand against Polish interests. The main issues for Poland are the EU's commitments to reducing carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions as laid out in the Europe 2010 targets and the conflict in the Ukraine. The Polish economy is based on coal, meaning that the reduction of CO2 emissions is perceived as a major obstacle to economic growth. Therefore, taking care of the environment must be accompanied with the welfare of the citizens. Also, Poland shares a border with the Ukraine which is in conflict

with the separatists sponsored by Russia. However, the European Union in the peace process is represented by France and Germany, and Poland has been simply omitted in this complex issue which directly concerns its security.

Polish authorities understand that the whole security system in Europe must be covered by the international institutions. The European Union slowly but surely responds to global challenges and threats. Thus the Polish voice is visible in regional affairs. What makes the EU so special is that each member has more or less the same influence on regional and global issues.

By Bartosz Mroczkowski



Russia

Russian attitudes towards Europe have never been straightforward- the collapse of the Soviet Union simply raised this perennial debate as to whether Russia is a Western country (see 'European') or is on a 'special path'.¹ The past few years have heralded the growth of the latter 'vision', characterised by manifestations of cultural distinctiveness, Orthodox nature and non-Western character, with several notable examples one could draw from.² Especially in the past year this has been seen in increasingly strained relations between the European Union and Russia.

Whilst Russia's Permanent Representative to the EU Vladimir Chizhov stated that the problems between Europe and Russia have been 'accumulating over the years'³ it's also worth bearing in mind that back in 2001 Vladimir Putin struck a decidedly more pro-integration tone when addressing the Bundestag.⁴ So what went wrong?

With future Russia-EU integration looking ever less plausible, the issue of Euroscepticism has become one

of hostility towards EU expansion, predominantly in Ukraine but also more recently in Moldova (where recent elections were widely seen as one between pro-EU and pro-Russia parties)⁵ and Belarus, where despite the lack of protests there have been signs of nascent discontent with Moscow's policies in the region.⁶

Eurosceptic parties within the EU have understandably received much media coverage in Russia, and their critical stance on topics ranging from sanctions to gay marriage ensure that they have a relatively legitimate place in discourse, with the 'chaos and degradation' as described by the Northern League's leader Matteo Salvini playing a vital role in the current organisation of the EU.⁷ Despite the EU's geographical proximity to Russia, the USA is predominantly seen as the main player, reflecting a desire to frame the current situation as a symmetric great-power struggle, which it is not.⁸

By Adam Lenton

- 1 Dmitri Trenin, *The End of Eurasia: Russia on the Border between Geopolitics and Globalization*. Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002, p. 280
- 2 Umland, Andreas, 'The Claim of Russian Distinctiveness as Justification for Putin's Neo-Authoritarian Regime.' *Russian Politics and Law* 50.5 (2012): 3-6.
- 3 <http://itar-tass.com/politika/1614902>
- 4 http://www.larouchepub.com/other/2001/2838putin_bundestag.html
- 5 http://www.bbc.co.uk/russian/international/2014/12/141130_moldova_elections_first_results
- 6 <http://www.interpretermag.com/russia-may-lose-belarus/>
- 7 <http://russian.rt.com/inotv/2014-12-01/Italyanskij-politik-Torgovaya-vojna-s>
- 8 <http://www.online812.ru/2014/03/19/011/>



Spain

While there are many voices for the European Union in Spain, Euroscepticism has evolved without many polemics. The scepticism witnessed in Spain conjures up feelings of suspicion, disbelief and distrust in the efficacy or truth about something.¹ Few for-or-against positions are publicly presented as being Eurooptimistic or Eurosceptic, but the trend exists. The economic crisis is strongly linked to the economic regime of the primary raison d'être of the EU, though the overseas crackdown has had a large share of media attention in Spain. In spite of everything, the EU is expected to spearhead the resolution of the crisis. The usual media coverage quotes the EU as speaking for all EU member states by saying, for example: 'Brussels says', 'the EU orders', 'Europe determines' and other similar simplifications when the Spanish national government needs to apply EU law against the higher national benefits. The advantages of EU decisions quoted usually refer to national and supranational coordination. Looking at studies on the topic, a study conducted by Eurobarometer in 2013 found that 23% of Spaniards trusted the European Commission while 65% displayed mistrust.² In addition, 31% of Spaniards were found to have a positive perception about the EU, 46% a neutral opinion and 21% a negative view as a whole.³ To put it in equal measures, the sentence, 'My voice counts in the EU' in 2013 was agreed upon by 26% of Spaniards, while 80% disagreed (Eurobarometer Autumn 2013), while in 2014 the Eurobarometer showed same 26% agreeing and 66% in disagreement (there are always some 'Don't know' options counting as disagreement).⁴

By Emilio Romero García

- 1 Real Academia Española, <http://www.rae.es>
- 2 Eurobarometer Autumn 2013, in http://elpais.com/elpais/2014/05/02/media/1399024429_719671.html
- 3 Eurobarometer Autumn 2014, in http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/quali/ql_6437_sum_en.pdf
- 4 Eurobarometer Autumn 2013 + 2014



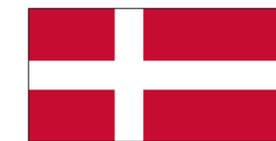
Britain

For the sake of providing a brief yet comprehensive understanding of the issues of Britain's Eurosceptic groups, this short paragraph shall focus on Britain's most successful Eurosceptic party: the United Kingdom Independence Party (henceforth UKIP). Moreover it will also focus on the policies which, according to the electorate, are directed at the issues that affect the country the most.

UKIP's supporters identify immigration, the economy, crime and Europe as the most important issues facing the country, which also represent the core elements of the party's manifestos, campaigns and discourse. The party sees the European Union as a corrupt, elitist organisation and offer an audacious yet simple policy: British withdrawal from the EU altogether. As of 2005, UKIP have published a manifesto for each general election in which it expresses the need to leave the EU in order to regain the country's national sovereignty, as '[The EU] is a political project designed to take control of all the main functions of national governments'. In the same manifesto it is also argued that the EU is not only no longer functioning, but is also a drawback to the British economic dynamism and prosperity, as well as a threat to 'proper democracy', national identity and belonging. UKIP leader, Nigel Farage has stressed in multiple occasions that it is time to leave the 'failed' European project and regain control over its rule of law and borders. UKIP is also renowned for strongly campaigning on

immigration. Nigel Farage tries in fact to appeal to the working class by reiterating the concept that cheap manual labour from Eastern Europe (and particularly Romania and Bulgaria) are creating an oversupply of labour which leads to a decrease in wages.

By Simona Falnga



Denmark

In Denmark, we have two distinct Eurosceptic movements. The first, the Dansk Folkeparti (Danish People's Party), maintains a right-wing social-nationalist orientation with a strong message for "less Europe and more Denmark". They use people's fear that more European integration will entail a loss of cultural identity, with the comparatively small numbers of native Danes being overwhelmed by immigrants from Eastern Europe. They also use people's fear that the welfare state will disintegrate because many immigrants are using the system, leaving the Danish people without the social safety net they are used to. The second main Eurosceptic movement is the *Folkebevægelsen mod EU* (People's Movement against the EU), a socialist-leaning organisation who strongly advocate that Denmark should leave the EU. This is because the Movement believes in an International Union where all are equal, not just Europeans.

By Narcis George Matache



Germany

On the political level the most popular Eurosceptic group in Germany is the AfD Party (Alternative for Germany) and on the civil level it is the Pegida movement. Pegida stands for "Patriotic Europeans against the Islamization of the Occident". Both groups focus on different issues but the linchpin for both groups is fear. They use their claims as a club to hit Europe.

The AfD most notably is "willing to discuss the common currency and European bailout policies", according to the party's leader Bernd Lucke. But several demands of the German Euro-opponents do not fit the construction of the EU. The biggest problem with the AfD is its conveying of public fears with a striking and nationalistic wording and that it has constructed a nationalist policy in which Europe's role is subordinated to German national interests.

Pegida's demand is even more hollow and alarming. They state their desire not to be 'Islamised'. But what does that mean? Usually, it simply means a vague rejection of people who 'look like Muslims'. Pegida is a dangerous brew of different people with similar fears.

So, if we want to engage ourselves as Germans and as Europeans, either way we have to understand what drives people to be against Europe and its mission. Given the fact that there is currently no public debate on European policy, the role of Euro-opponents like the AfD or Pegida as facilitators of the conversation is not surprising: We can only hope that

What are the main issues advanced by your country's Eurosceptic groups? Which elements of these issues have a legitimate place in the debate — and which do not?

their less-than-helpful treatment of the subject will compel others to participate in a more substantive Eurosceptic debate.
By Nico Drimecker



Italy

In spite of the ideological diversity of Italy's political scene, Euroscepticism has gained traction with a number of different parties. The first — and perhaps loudest — challenge to the European Union is raised by the Five Stars Movement ("Movimento 5 Stelle"). Founded by the comic actor Beppe Grillo, the group embodies the anger and fear of many Italians. The movement demands a referendum on the Euro, in order to allow the people to decide once and for all on whether Italy should retain the common currency. Five Stars seeks to abolish the Fiscal Compact, supports the adoption of Eurobonds, and seeks to encourage greater partnership between Eurosceptical parties across the EU. Finally, M5S accuses banks and international credit institutes of wielding excessive power.

Italy's second, equally powerful Eurosceptic party is the Right-Wind Lega Nord. Like the Five Stars, Lega Nord uses its platform to question the validity of the Euro. The party's leader, Matteo Salvini, depicts the Euro as a "criminal tool used by bankers". Instead, he insists that the introduction of an alternative currency would serve Italy's interests far better. As a general rule, Lega Nord strongly prefers protectionist measures to the free market, and advocates the strengthening of national frontiers.

Last, but not least, Eurosceptical arguments also find expression in the voice of Silvio Berlusconi and his party, Forza Italia. Here the main concerns are of a far more political nature, in the form of a distinctly anti-German agenda. Nonetheless, monetary issues also receive their due attention; along with the revision of the Fiscal Compact,

Berlusconi calls for the overhaul of the common currency in favour of a national alternative.
By Francesca Larosa



Netherlands

In my opinion the biggest issues of The Netherlands' Eurosceptic parties reflect the 'globalization divide'. The globalization and the transformation of political space is described by Kriesi et al. (2004) and starts from the assumption that the current process of globalization or denationalization leads to the formation of a new structural conflict in Western European countries, opposing those who benefit from this process against those who tend to lose in the course of the events, so-called 'winners' and 'losers' of globalization.¹

It is these fears of globalization that the Eurosceptic parties in The Netherlands are using in the debate on the European Union: the normal working class, without university degree, does not profit from EU integration and the role of the EU as a global actor. Instead, it would be better to keep The Netherlands as a more autonomously functioning nation. In the election programmes for the European Parliament in 2014 only the PVV from Geert Wilders really campaigned to leave the EU. Other Eurosceptic parties are not going that far, but they feel that the current EU is not positive for jobs and transforming the economy. The Eurosceptic parties also speak out negatively on the technocratic decision-making in the EU and the 'faceless bureaucrats'.² In my opinion, this negative frame is working, because the more EU-friendly political parties are selling the benefits of the EU in very abstract terms such as welfare, peace and international cooperation. The framing of the Eurosceptic parties is working in public discussions because many people feel that the EU (let alone the 'EU as a global actor') is too far-fetched

from their daily work.
By Ries Kamphof

- 1 Kriesi, H., Grande, E., Lachat, R., Dolezal, M., Bornschie, S., & Frey, T. (2006). Globalization and the transformation of the national political space: Six European countries compared. *European Journal of Political Research*, 45(6), 921-956.
- 2 <http://euobserver.com/political/121838>

What are the main issues advanced by your country's Eurosceptic groups? Which elements of these issues have a legitimate place in the debate — and which do not?



Poland

In Poland, there are two levels of Euroscepticism. One dimension includes issues like reforming the structure of the European Union by reinforcing the national states and cutting the current amount of supranationalism that allows the institutions of the EU to make decisions in several policy areas for all their member states. The PiS party (Prawo i sprawiedliwość — Law and justice) as the second most influential party in Poland is part of this movement. In the European Parliament, its deputies form a fraction (ECR — European Conservatives and Reformists) together with the British Conservative party and many other "mild" Eurosceptic parties all across Europe that do not want to dissolve the EU as such, but simply to limit its powers and to strengthen national states. The other dimension is a movement of several small extremist right-wing parties that aim for the deconstruction of the European Union and, most of all, want to get Poland out of it. Their influence is very weak and they cannot pose a clear threat to the rather pro-European face of Poland and its people. According to the recent surveys of the Eurobarometer, the Polish people are the most content citizens of the European Union regarding their country's participation in the European project. In this light, the "hard" form of Euroscepticism seems rather illegitimate in Poland.

By Nico Goller



Russia

European Union expansion — closely associated with NATO expansion — is seen as a mechanism of Western encroachment of Russia and is the underlying issue of Eurosceptics in Russia. There are both legitimate and illegitimate aspects to this.

In my opinion the biggest mistake is to legitimise notions of a great-power struggle between the West (EU + NATO) and Russia. In many cases it is common to see allusions to the Great Game, when the British and Russian empires of the 19th century vied for power in Central Asia.¹ This geopolitical conceptualisation is misguided at best, since it reduces the countries between the EU and Russia to geopolitical pawns, at the same time dismissing pro-EU sentiment as manifestation of 'manipulation' or 'coercion' by larger powers, notably the USA.

Such thinking is by all means not exclusive to Russia but in any case what this thinking does and is doing is sidelining some of the more legitimate concerns about closer association with the EU, such as competitiveness of home industry in a common market, the cost of living and the ceding of national and financial sovereignty.

Having said that, the fear of EU/NATO expansion does have some legitimacy. NATO enlargement did have a profound effect on Russian elites and continues to foment a fear of isolation.² In addition to this an underlying dichotomy by both the EU and Russia on a range of issues, from social to political has led both to seem horribly out-of-touch with one another and unable to reach any sort of compromise without a loss of face. The unfortunate thing is that discussions of long-term cooperation, and what sort of cooperation we want, are effectively being decided before they're even discussed.

By Adam Lenton

- 1 <http://carnegie.ru/2014/07/30/ukraine-and-new-divide/hln1#>
- 2 Trenin, p. 282



Spain

The seniority of Spanish membership to the European Union (since 1 January 1986) is not recognised enough in the institutional distribution of the EU. Spaniards have not played a significant role representing the EU as President of the European Commission, the European Parliament and the European Council — to name a few — throughout their history within the EU. The working languages of the European institutions do not consider Spanish as equally as the other EU working languages which are less widespread worldwide.

Other international actors such as the United Nations¹ along with other institutional bodies, accept Spanish as a working language (e.g. the General Assembly and the Security Council) and currently place Spain at the pinnacle of representation (the Security Council counts with Spain in it now, by working language and country representation).²

In this regard, Spanish public opinion and area of influence by language are represented in a negative light within the EU, while they are positively represented to other international actors. Placing a third actor in the international scene, the World Trade Organization has three working languages, one of them being Spanish.³

Spain's voting representation has equal value to a country with a far smaller population (of around 10 million nationals less than Spain) in the European Parliament. The European Commission does not give any distinction to the Spaniard within the Juncker Commission (Jean-Claude Juncker has seven Commissioners with special character, of which Miguel Arias Cañete is excluded).⁴

By Emilio Romero García

What are the main issues advanced by your country's Eurosceptic groups? Which elements of these issues have a legitimate place in the debate – and which do not?

- 1 <http://www.economist.com/blogs/johnson/2013/04/languages-diplomacy>
- 2 <http://www.unlanguage.org/Careers/Interpret/COV/Languages/default.aspx>
- 3 http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/secret_e/div_e.htm
- 4 http://ec.europa.eu/about/structure/index_en.htm



Turkey

The debate in Turkey on whether or not to join the European Union goes back to 1963, and is still in process. The long length of this debate makes the EU story a dilemma; it consumes the Turkish people's belief in being accepted. This never-ending story helps Eurosceptics to strengthen their criticism of the European Union since it has been an issue in Turkey for many years.

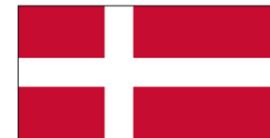
Turkish politics has not built a strong EU perspective in Turkish society for all these years; therefore, the viewpoint of Eurosceptics is easily able to change the European Union's representation in the Turkish media. The main stream media sometimes show joining the EU as representing the loss of cultural heritage, such as 'kokoreç' (a traditional Turkish food made of cow gut), sometimes it shows joining the EU as changing the quality of bazaars and markets positively. Lowering the EU candidacy in such local and narrow manners also causes Turkish society to view EU membership as 'not a big deal'. Therefore, the possible economic and social changes in their deep manners are not infused into the society unless they do not follow alternative media and foreign press. Eurosceptic groups find strong reasons for their 'scepticism', and the lack of knowledge about what the EU is helps them to recruit supporters.

Eurosceptics also claim that EU membership will not bring economic growth, that it is the opposite: the EU needs a dynamic country like Turkey. As president Erdogan said during his ministry, being denied EU membership is

not the end of the world. His government admitted that Turkey wants to expand its markets and it can do this with the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) as well (cf. also http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_being-denied-eu-membership-not-end-of-world-says-erdogan_306191.html)

Hence, local foods and bazaars will change tales, remain more local and less powerful. They are seen as popular media alerts whilst speeches from political powers are more important. Eurosceptics find more legitimacy on those economic grounds.

By Funda Günaydin



Denmark

Euroscepticism is primarily an issue of propaganda, as the economic crisis did not affect Denmark as much as other countries and we do not have a working class that is very vulnerable to market volatility. Average citizens fear that, due to an overwhelming influx of new citizens requiring the assistance of the welfare system, they will lose the economic benefits that the welfare state currently offers them. The Eurosceptic parties exploit this fear in their political campaigns, masking a reality that has been proven countless times: that immigrants have a positive net impact on the economy of the receiving country.

By Narcis George Matache



France

The factors that explain the rise of Euroscepticism in France are clearly economical. The most recent Eurobarometer from the European Commission shows this very clearly: according to this survey, 63% of French people think the most important issue now facing the European Union is the economic situation. In second and third position are unemployment (32%) and the state of Member States' public finance (22%). Immigration is only in the fourth priority, with 20%. Moreover, 63% of French people think the crisis has not yet reached its peak — a proportion higher than every other European country, except Cyprus (cf. Standard barometer, European Commission, Autumn 2014). Marine Le Pen, leader of the FN, understands this very well and has adjusted the economic programme of her party accordingly, implementing a shift from a traditionally liberal, neoconservative outlook towards a more social one — a more left wing style, one might say (cf. « Le projet économique du FN passé au crible », Anne Eveno et Abel Mestre, *Lemonde.fr*, 28/11/2013). Secondly, she has placed the rejection of the euro at the centre of her political platform — a move that her program claims is « a technical challenge, not an economic disaster » (cf. « Notre projet », *Front national*, p.69, 2012).

By Jean Comte



Germany

Recent events such as the crisis in the Eurozone have focussed the German Eurosceptic debate on economic issues — the monetary crisis has given hard Euroscepticism a foot in the door. The European Union's opponents remind the public of threats from the past. However, German Euroscepticism integrates discourse on political, social, environmental and partly cultural issues.

While the AfD Party — which is still the most popular Eurosceptic group — demands economic changes (i.e. exiting the Euro currency, denying a banking union and minimum wage), their party members are at odds with one another on topics of political concern. It would be wrong to say that the AfD is Eurosceptic and other parties are not, since they evaluate the pros and cons of international European cooperation from different viewpoints. For example, other parties try to offer a good quality of life to the huge number of refugees — which is still largely reported from a national perspective in the media.

The public majority is not concerned with exiting the European currency but rather with issues such as the flow of refugees or the Transatlantic Trade Investment Partnership with all its possible consequences for matters such as health care and the environment.

Berthold Franke from the Goethe-Institute in Brussels says that Europe and the EU appear to be stuck in a dilemma as a result of global capitalism encountering an unfinished, unformed compound of nation states. As long as the economic crisis endures and as long as there is no narrative other than 'Pax Europaea', Euro-opponents and Eurosceptics will continue to focus on the economy for their main points of criticism.

By Nico Drimecker



Italy

Euroscepticism can be defined as "attitudes and opinions represented in discourses and behaviours which express doubt as to the desirability and/or benefits and/or long-term viability of European or/and European Union integration as an objective".¹ Clearly this provides ample room for both political and economic critiques of the EU. Nonetheless, broadly speaking, Italian Euroscepticism is now anchored in the rise of anti-austerity sentiment. In other words, an economic argument has muscled in on what was once a far more political debate. The Standard Eurobarometer Surveys published by the EU Commission in November 2014 present an interesting overview of the current situation. Italians are the most Eurosceptical of all the EU citizens. However, such feeling is almost exclusively related to economic aspects of the EU. As much as 47% of the interviewed sample considers the Euro a "bad thing". Italians' top concerns were Unemployment (53%) and the economic situation (45%). However, when asked how satisfactory they considered their lives within the EU, a majority of Italians found their standard of living satisfactory (63%).

Despite this evidence, a clear lack of trust in the EU and its institutions has engulfed the country: 69% of Italians

tend not to trust the EU. This figure has, however, dropped by 7% since 2013. No doubt Euroscepticism's popularity is closely related to most Italians' dim estimations of the Parliament, Commission and other institutions. Europe is seen as being at odds with national interests. This is exemplified by the stark contrast between Italy's immigration policies and the rest of Europe's. According to the Italian Interior Minister Angelino Alfano, "laws should be equally applied, but they are not". Accordingly, the share of powers is perceived by some of Italy's most influential parties as imbalanced and disproportioned.

By Francesca Larosa

¹ C. Flood, *Euroscepticism: a problematic concept*, 2002



Netherlands

Euroscepticism is more of a political(-social) issue than an economic issue in The Netherlands. As regards the economic issue of Euroscepticism the private sector and employers (VNO-NCW) have spoken out positively on the European Union in 2012 by focusing on the large economic gains of 180 billion euro a year¹. This way of looking to the EU in economic (cost-gain) terms is also reflected in the political discussions in the Dutch parliament. It is difficult for Eurosceptic parties to debate in pure economic terms as The Netherlands, as an open economy, gains a lot from export to other EU countries.

Instead, the Eurosceptic parties are especially debating against EU policies on more 'social' political grounds. They point to Eastern European migrants 'taking over' Dutch jobs in transport and agriculture. They point to EU fonctionnaires earning a lot of money and to indebted EU countries such as Greece. Their argument is that Dutch people pay their hard-earned taxes to pay high EU bureaucrat salaries and other

European countries. They use (social) economic terms but Euroscepticism is more of a political issue: the Eurosceptic parties would like to have more national competences as they are afraid to be outvoted in Brussels, especially on issues such as pensions.

Therefore, it can be said that Euroscepticism is more of a political issue than an economic issue in The Netherlands. This has manifested itself earlier in the Dutch 'No' against the EU constitution and it reflects the 'globalization divide' in the country and across political parties on 'winners' and 'losers' of globalization. The Dutch Advisory Council on Social and Cultural Issues (SCP) also spoke recently on 'separated discourses'² of more well-educated versus working-class people in The Netherlands. The most outspoken issue of conflict: The European Union....

By Ries Kamphof

- ¹ <http://www.rtlnieuws.nl/economie/vno-ncw-maakt-reclame-voor-europa>
- ² http://www.scp.nl/Publicaties/Alle_publicaties/Publicaties_2014/Gescheiden_werelden



Poland

In Poland, Euroscepticism is more an economic issue than a political one. Eurosceptics claimed that European Union is an artificial fiscal organization which distorts the idea of a free trade zone in Europe. European decision makers are accused of causing the economic downturn and intentionally and consciously precluding financial growth. The European Union is also said to be building a socialistic economy. Eurosceptics say that the procedures are overly bureaucratic, which inhibits economic freedom. What is paradoxical about the radical Polish Eurosceptics is that Poland is a recipient of EU grants which have enabled the country to develop rapidly in last decade. These sceptics suggest destroying the EU as soon as possible, regardless of whether the membership bears fruit or not. On the other hand, some moderate fractions of Eurosceptics agreed that the membership in EU can be beneficial, but only after thorough reforms. Although economic reasons are the most widely discussed and cited reasons for these fractions' scepticism, they do see some political issues as well. They claim that Euroscepticism is a defense of the independence and sovereignty of the country. In the idea of European unification, they see a threat to their country's statehood. In the view of the most extreme Eurosceptics, the EU is regarded as an invader who robs them of their freedom. The Euroscepticism debate in Poland is a new issue, but the opponents of European unification are becoming more and more supported by society. It is important to separate real problems in EU strategy from populist slogans.

By Patrycja Gliwka



Spain

Euroscepticism in Spain is more related to political matters than economics. The international order outside the European Union reflects more presence of the Spanish language throughout the world. There are in fact many references to the EU in Spanish which describe the situation in Europe from outside the continent, influencing many populations.¹ Around the same number as the entire population of the EU itself speaks Spanish as its mother tongue.

Due to the fact that Spain does not find enough representation within the EU, Spain is compelled to take part in the bureaucracy of the organisational structure of the EU. When Spain's representation shifts to a more active role, the EU will certainly hold Spain in higher esteem.

By Emilio Romero Garcia

¹ See <http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/icap/unpan029908.pdf> p. 12.



Turkey

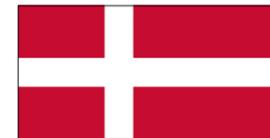
Euroscepticism is more of a political issue in Turkey. Since joining the European Union is a never-ending story for the Turkish people, politicians tend to refer to this issue during their campaigns. The economic outcomes of the EU integration and membership are not being discussed enough with the public. Rather, politicians used the EU candidacy in their political speeches during elections without pointing out the possible economic results for the country, but instead refer to its 'European identity'. Turkey is not a wholly European country, thus, fears of being isolated or concerns

about integration into the West are ambiguous in Turkish society.

To have a varied perspective on the European Union, citizens should be informed about 'what the European Union is' at the local levels as well. Brochures, short movies, neighbourhood visits by EU-based organizations should take place. By doing this, people would know what the EU is and what outcomes might occur in the case of Turkey's full membership. In this way, people will not hear about the EU only through mainstream media but they will also have a chance to discuss, to criticize it on their own. They will be well-informed. A society should know what kind of an issue it is against any manipulation from EU supporters or Eurosceptics.

By publicly debating Turkey's membership in the EU, Euroscepticism would not only be an economic or political issue in Turkey; Turkish society would be given to understand what joining the EU is from both these perspectives.

By Funda Günaydin



Denmark

As I detailed previously, Denmark has two different Eurosceptic movements, one from the right-wing (nationalist) and one from the left-wing (internationalist-socialist). Both of them want to lessen the European Union's influence on Denmark although they use different issues to obtain people's votes. The left-wing does not view immigration as an issue, instead focussing on the excessive bureaucracy and perceived fascism of the EU. In doing so, the left-wing Eurosceptics were only able to attract around 8% of votes during the 2014 European Parliamentary elections. Instead, by focusing on issues such as rising crime rates, less welfare for the people and the loss of a distinct Danish national identity, the right wing was able to top the elections with more than 22% of the vote.

By Narcis George Matache



France

Euroscepticism is mainly a right-wing issue. The only important political parties openly calling to drop the euro or to renegotiate policies on freedom of movement are the far-right Front National (FN) and the conservative Union pour le mouvement populaire (UMP) (especially when the former president Nicolas Sarkozy sought re-election in May 2012).

The far-left Front de Gauche might appear to be very anti-European, as it is vocally critical of the European Union, but a close examination of their program clearly shows that they agree with the basic idea of the European project. They simply want its policies to be more social, and to halt austerity — even if that means not respecting the Maastricht criteria (cf. « Rompre et refonder l'Europe », Front de gauche, 2014 p.19).

As for the center of left-wing parties, they are definitely not Eurosceptic.

By Jean Comte



Germany

German Euroscepticism is an issue of all political directions and public milieus. The topics differ — economic, social, political or cultural — but economic topics dominate the current discourse regarding Euroscepticism. The most popular German Eurosceptic party, the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), is situated in the centre-right to right wing — although it itself claims to be a centre party ("Volkspartei").

In Germany we have not spent much time discussing a European narrative, namely what should succeed the current one of maintaining peace throughout Europe. But a narrative is beginning to emerge as we have begun to ask the parties themselves why we need Europeanization. While traditional left-right politics appears to be fragmenting, Euroscepticism may develop in political wings and public milieus and become a bigger issue.

Nico Drimecker



Greece

Neither the thuggish neo-Nazis of Golden Dawn nor the old-fashioned communists have a monopoly on Greek Euroscepticism. Greek scepticism towards the European Union cannot be understood without getting to grips with the question of self-determination. Occupied by enemies for centuries Greeks have developed a zealous disregard for authorities and all orders dictated from above. This apathy for being told how to behave has been extended to the EU. Recent polls give hints of the feeling of deception; only 23% of Greeks think that their voice matters in the EU.

Greece, however, is not a Eurosceptic country – it is the reluctant European. Greek identity is neatly woven into the narrative of belonging to the European continent. Even though today only 45% of Greeks feel that they are citizens of the EU, the lowest number of any EU Member state, Greeks still identify with Europe and see their future in the European Union. National identities, like all constructed identities, are built around the choice over what to identify with and what not. Greeks don't see themselves related to the Balkans or to their Turkish neighbours; even though they share common features with their neighbours, ranging from food over traditions to music, Greeks enjoy stressing the differences rather than highlighting the numerous similarities. It is commonly believed that the European Union would not be the European Union without Greece. Like any country facing an existential crisis, Greeks however long for hope, self-determination and an olive branch to be extended to them.

By *Nikolas Papageorgiou*



Italy

As euro-friendliness in Italy is supported by moderate parties, which traditionally have large consent, euro-skepticism is ridden by the remaining, anti-establishment political forces. Thereby, we can depict different attitudes in this field, although the majority of euro-skeptic are amongst right-wing or non-party groups, who make use of words such as frontiers or monetary sovereignty as a response to more integration.

Some radical left-wing groups ask for a new start of the European Union, but sometimes they patronize a 'Federal Europe' as well. So, the core of the euroskeptic area is mainly overlooked by populist forces who claim they are focusing on European people's daily needs rather than on institutions (which they plan to destroy from the inside).

The right-wing Lega Nord main aim is to exit from the single currency area. Due to its anti-European campaign, there is an interesting metamorphosis of this party born in the 80s as an association between Northern Italy local movements, once asking for secession from Rome and now federating euro-skeptical organizations from all over Italy and Europe, pointing out Brussels and Islam as common enemies.

Also the Five Stars Movement (non-party group led by the comedian-turned-politician Beppe Grillo), runner-up with 21%, calls for a referendum to leave euro. It is a meaningful case, since this quite heterogeneous movement can't be described by using traditional categories. Even though some of its MEPs claim not to be euro-skeptics, their strong agreement with UKIP in constituting EFDD group makes any further comments unnecessary.

The third element to complete the picture is Forza Italia (17%, centre-right), the party founded by former PM Silvio Berlusconi in 1994 and brought back to life last year. Though part

of EPP, it has often stood out among centrists to be rather heterodox. Mr. Berlusconi also created the suspicion that bureaucratic Germanophile EU elites obtained the downfall of his government in 2011, imposing Italy a severe economic discipline.

By *Gabriele Rosana*

- 1 Barbara Spinelli, GUE/NGL MEP and daughter of Altiero, one of the EU founders, is still dreaming of realising a Federal EU, <http://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2014/06/08/lista-tsipras-barbara-spinelli-andra-in-europa-ma-la-sua-scelta-spacca-attivisti-e-sel/1018207/> (in Italian)
- 2 Representing the 'No Euro' slogan, its symbol was chosen by more than 6% of electors all around the country last May; see: <http://www.liberoquotidiano.it/news/politica/11621820/Ellezioni-europee--Lega-Nord-al.html> (in Italian)
- 3 It has strengthened alliance with the French Front National, rapidly changing its DNA from regionalist into nationalist, in so doing showing the evident decadence of ideologies. According to Professor Lorenzo De Sio (LUISS University, Rome), "it looks like such Europeanization has in part happened, but unfortunately against a further European integration, rather for it", <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/11/24/free-book-on-european-parliamentary-elections-by-country-experts-available-online/>. Some columnists also assert the coalition is the heir of De Gaulle project to create an Europe of Nations, <http://www.forniche.net/2014/11/28/matteo-salvini-centro-destra-parla-gennaro-sangiuliano/> (in Italian)
- 4 Opposing to PM Renzi, Mr. Berlusconi also labeled Forza Italia to be euroskeptic: see <http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/interni/1005632.html> (in Italian)



Netherlands

To keep the definition of Euroscepticism 'broad' and include Eurosceptic parties from strategic and ideological grounds the definition of Taggart and Szczerbiak¹ (2003:8) will be used: Eurosceptic parties are parties who have a "principled objection to the European integration project transferring powers to a supranational body such as the [European Union]" or "opposition to the current or future planned trajectory, based on the further extension of competencies that the EU is planning to make".

If we take this definition it can be said that the left-wing Socialist Party (SP) and the right-wing 'Partij voor de Vrijheid' (PVV, Geert Wilders) are strong Eurosceptic parties. Also Christian reformist parties such as ChristenUnie are skeptical, as well as more single-issue parties like the '50Plus' party for older people and the 'Party for the animals' (Partij voor de Dieren). By now, these parties and its former politicians (still in the Parliament) have 39 out of 150 seats in the most important part of the Dutch Parliament (Tweede Kamer).² Also other parties are affected by this Euroscepticism, both on the right and left wing. Euroscepticism reflects the 'globalization divide' in the country and across political parties on 'winners' and 'losers' of globalization. Both left-wing and right-wing political parties do use these 'globalization' arguments.

By *Ries Kamphof*

- 1 Taggart, Paul and Aleks Szczerbiak (2003) 'Theorizing Party-Based Euroscepticism: Problems of Definition, Measurement and Causality', SEI Working Paper No. 69 Sussex: Sussex European Institute
- 2 http://www.parlement.com/id/vhnnmt7ijayp/de_huidige_tweede_kamer



Poland

In general, Euroscepticism in Poland is divided by right- and left-wing party lines. It all boils down to the issues defining the parties themselves. It is common for rightist parties to have conservative sociological views and these, in Poland, are connected to the idea of the nation, where patriotism is the most important value. The process of integration is perceived by rightist politicians and their supporters as something against the natural national development. According to them the basis on which we should build a community including symbols and traditions, which the European Union lacks.

The most evident problem is the question of sovereignty, which for decades was denied to Poles, thus making us cautious when giving powers to a governing force outside of our country. Only 31% of rightist electorate is considered to be pro-further European integration ('Current problems and events' study by CBOS, May 2013).

Opposed to those views are the leftist movements including the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and the centre-left ruling party, Civic Platform. According to the same study, more than 50% of their electorate is pro-further integration. They perceive the idea of the European Union as strengthening Poland, allowing further social and economical development and international safety.

The issues dividing young Poles oscillate around the ideas of national identity (and whether the EU threatens it) and, very importantly, around the supposedly lax social ideals 'imported' from the west. Those include a more flexible approach to homosexuality, religion and immigration, which in Poland are the subject of fierce debate.

By *Francesca Risso*

Euroscepticism and the Global Financial Crisis, F. Serrichio, M. Tsakatika, L. Qagila, *Journal of Common Market Studies*
 Rightist Populism and Euroscepticism, A. Moroska, *Wydadnictwo Uniwersytetu Wroclawskiego*
 Current problems and events study by CBOS, May 2013



Turkey

Euroscepticism is more of a right-wing issue since it has been taken up in nationalistic speeches. Some Eurosceptics are more likely to use nationalistic arguments about not joining the EU such as 'Turks have no friend but the Turk', 'We, as Turkish people, have not been liked by the Europeans since the Ottoman Empire' and so on. Those sentiments are mainly supported by the right-wing at a nationalist level whilst anti-nationalists remain too weak to oppose those claims.

Apropos of nationalistic discourse, when Turkey lost a seat back in October 2014 for non-permanent membership of the Security Council, and the EU reflected reactions about its worries over freedom of expression in Turkey, the government adopted a 'cooler' approach to the EU membership debate. This demonstrates that Euroscepticism is mainly a right-wing issue. (cf. also <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-30111043>)

By *Funda Günaydin*

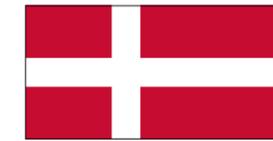
And if Eurosceptics are blaming these issues on groups of people, who is to blame, in their eyes? Is it the elite of their own country, that of another, or another group entirely?



Britain

For the sake of providing a brief yet comprehensive understanding of the scapegoats that recur in British Eurosceptic discourse, this short paragraph shall focus on Britain's most successful Eurosceptic party: the United Kingdom Independence Party (henceforth UKIP). UKIP is renowned for its critique of the establishment and the ruling class. This is not only limited to the British ruling class, but also applies to the European Union establishment, which in the party's opinion does not properly represent Britain's interests. For instance, during the debate against Nick Clegg (leader of the Liberal Democrats) earlier in 2014, Farage lamented that, at the WTO (World Trade Organisation), Britain (along with the other member states) is represented by 'a Dutch bureaucrat whose name no one can remember and who we cannot vote for'. In this statement it is made clear that the party believes that there is a lack of democracy within the EU institutions, as the Europeans cannot vote for their representatives. This concept is reiterated on the party's website, where it is stated that the establishment parties' policies are so similar that the electorate has no real decisional power. On the same subject, laments that [The EU] is undemocratic, expensive, bossy. It's the biggest symptom of the real problem the theft of our democracy by a powerful, remote political 'elite' which has forgotten that it's there to serve the people.

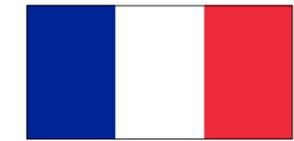
By Simona Falanga



Denmark

The Eurosceptics in Denmark blame different groups of people in their propaganda campaigns. The left-wing Eurosceptics blame the ruling elite in Brussels for taking the power from the citizens, while the right-wing Eurosceptics simply pin the blame on the immigrant population. The right-wing has a massive rhetoric against the Muslim population and, during the European Elections, their focus switched to Eastern Europeans, with a special emphasis on Romanian migrants.

By Narcis George Matache



France

The FN is sharply criticizing the French political elite. Marine Le Pen repeatedly explains that the Union pour un mouvement populaire (UMP) and the Parti socialiste (PS), the two main French political parties, are presenting exactly the same programmes, and that she is the only real alternative. She has stressed this idea by referring to them as one and the same: "UMPS" (from UMP + PS).

The FN is also known to be strongly opposed to immigration — the party's official program describes immigration as a danger to the French economy, claiming it costs the French people €70 billion per year (Front national, op. Cit, p.11). For the FN, immigration is also a security concern, because it leads to instability and community divisions. With regards to this policy, FN members explicitly target the Muslim community. Its official program condemns "uncontrolled immigration, which hurts our national identity and brings about more and more obvious islamisation" (Front national, op. Cit, p.11). Against this communitarianism, the FN puts forward its commitment to fight for the preservation of French identity and national culture, two concepts that are very broad, and by no means concretely defined in the French public sphere...

By Jean Comte

And if Eurosceptics are blaming these issues on groups of people, who is to blame, in their eyes? Is it the elite of their own country, that of another, or another group entirely?



Germany

In general, German Euro-opponents blame the so-called "Berufseuropäer", by which they mean the ambassadors to Brussels. German withdrawalist Eurosceptics focus on any political enemy who seemingly has political power on the European stage but whom, they claim, does not represent the public. Since the last European Commission vote they too are part of this group. So now they blame the lack of surveillance of the European institutions, by which they pretend to be pursuing the strengthening of grassroots democracy. Hence, Euro-opponents focus on presenting themselves as the political seed for representing "the middle" and the "petite bourgeoisie" of the future Europe.

By Nico Drimecker



Greece

As eminent political scientist Sofia Vasilopoulou suggests: the blame game is an essential part of Greek politics.¹ The game, traditionally played by two main parties and recently extended to a few new players on the block, is fairly simple: one must simultaneously affirm their total innocence while shifting blame onto the other party. In the Greek context, blame-shifting is a formidable strategy used to maintain the state of affairs and justify one's own political legitimacy. This practice may be responsible for why few politicians have assumed responsibility for the Greek economic crisis and instead, pointed fingers at external actors such as the Troika and Germany.

The story of the deceit and Troika occupation reflects a culturally eminent Greek narrative: the brave Greek hero David and his confrontation of the big occupant Goliath. Be it against Turkey, Germany or the European Union, Greece is a country that celebrates its victimhood, and draws much inspiration from suffering and collective pain. Just as the Greek blues "Rembetiko" is based on prolonging and wearing one's sufferance around the neck like a light evening jacket, Greek identity proudly exhibits victimhood and rising to collective suffering under foreign occupations.

By Nikolas Papageorgiou

- 1 *Greece in Crisis: Austerity, Populism and the Politics of Blame*; Vasilopoulou, Sofia; Journal of Market Study 2014/52



The Netherlands

Eurosceptics in the Dutch parliament are especially blaming 'elites'. To use a little exaggerated form of their arguments: the Dutch political establishment is blamed for their 'cowardly' performance in Brussels, competences are there 'taken over' by European Union elites, who are earning a lot of money and transfer the money to their own bank account and elites from indebted countries in the EU. It is perceived as if the Dutch are very generous in their EU contributions while they do receive few benefits in return. Instead, the ones benefiting from EU integration are 'elites', according to most of the Eurosceptics in the Netherlands.

It reflects the 'globalization divide' in the country and across political parties on 'winners' and 'losers' of globalization.

By Ries Kamphof



Poland

First of all, in order to answer the question and to be sure you will understand the answer, I will write about the public mood in Poland. I would like to mention here that everything that I wrote is my personal opinion based on my feelings, observations and conversations with other people.

Poland is in a very difficult situation right now. The society is becoming more and more disappointed because of the living conditions in their country. Even though the Polish economy is growing, as well as average salary, young people feel like there are tiny chances for them to have a bright future in their motherland. More and more political affairs are being discovered. It does not help — obviously it makes things worse. Where is the European Union here? — you ask. Actually nowhere. Thanks to our membership in the European Union we have made, as a country, huge progress — in the terms of public transport, education and economy. But people do not realize that, which is quite weird. Usually the first thing associated with „the European Union“ term is the Shengen area — it is easier to leave the country in order to find a better life. The second one is: „There are a lot of programmes and donations supported by the European Union, but they look like undeveloped ones. There are many loopholes that can be exploited (and they are exploited by cunning Poles) or laws that are just ridiculous.“ Poles do not blame the European Union for the lack of well paid jobs or for the widening gap in living standards for different society classes — our government is to blame for those problems. The European Union topic appears only during the „foreign policy“ or „incomers problem in Europe“ discussions. Those are two things that the European Union is blamed for — People do not feel safe in the EU in

And if Eurosceptics are blaming these issues on groups of people, who is to blame, in their eyes? Is it the elite of their own country, that of another, or another group entirely?

terms of security and people think that immigration policy is too „soft“.

By Paweł Sobolewski



Russia

Interestingly many Eurosceptic arguments tend to downplay the role of the European Union in these issues vis à vis the influence of the USA, broadly fitting into the conceptualisation of the European political situation as one of geopolitical vying for influence. In this light the USA is seen as the main adversary, provoking uprisings in former Soviet republics in order to gain geopolitical influence there.

Geopolitics, it must be said, is a popular subject in Russia, much more so than in the EU.¹ Popular books on the subject such as Nikolai Starikov's *Geopolitics: How it's done* and Aleksandr Dugin's *The Foundations of Geopolitics* should affirm that we should be wary of legitimising these views: Starikov is the leader of the ultraconservative Great Fatherland Party and Dugin a far-right figure in (neo-) Eurasianism, who amongst other controversial remarks considers war between Russia and Ukraine as 'inevitable'.² To read too much into the geopolitical aspect of tensions between the EU and Russia is to play to the great power struggles this school of thought is sustained by.

The discourse relating to fascism is particularly concerning in the case of Ukraine, where the events on Maidan and later on have been portrayed in a way both to strip Europe of any moral power (if it's a fascist coup d'état then why does Europe support it?) and rally support for Putin (he's both standing up to fascism and to the West).³ As a result what alternative discourse there is within Russia is under pressure, resulting in an increasingly homogenous, anti-Western stance, varying in degrees,

but still broadly adhering to this discourse of illegitimacy surrounding the overthrow of Yanukovich and/or Western support of this.

By Adam Lenton

- 1 Trenin, pp.14-17
- 2 <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-28229785>
- 3 <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2014/mar/20/fascism-russia-and-ukraine/>

ABOUT THE EUROSCEPTICISM PROJECT

The Euroscepticism project has been kick-started in 2014 and was carried until 2015. For over one year the organisation team has been working on the challenging task of bridging the online and offline world.

Our clear aim has been bringing together young people from many different places through virtual activities, who otherwise probably would not have engaged with each other. Virtual activities are vital in order to connect people from different parts of Europe and even from different parts of the world.

The Euroscepticism project consisted out of three components: two **Virtual Debates**, a **Publication** and an **Eat & Meet** Event in Berlin.

Virtual Debates on the topic of Euroscepticism

As early as spring 2014 there were two (virtual) debates in which the topic has been discussed by European and international voices.

The virtual debates focussed on current issues on the EU, its role, and future. The debates featured a number of participants from a variety of different countries (EU countries for the first debate and non-EU countries for the second one) who all held different views on the discussed subjects.

Our participants were successful young people such as the Vice-Chair of ESN's ICE committee and the representative of the Romanian Conservative Party in the UK.

The first debate mainly focused on pressing internal issues such as the rise of Eurosceptic parties. Other topics included federalism and EU enlargement. The second debate was instead focused on an international perspective on the EU. Topics such as the EU's foreign policy, the Ukrainian crisis, International cooperation and the legitimacy of Juncker as President of the EC were presented to non-EU participants.

Publication about the topic of Euroscepticism

During the second half of 2014 and into the first half of 2015 the organising team members worked on gathering a variety of voices on the topic of Euroscepticism, which were meant to be put together in writing.

Eat & Meet Berlin, 18th March 2015

The topic of Eat & Meet in Berlin was Euroscepticism. Young professionals from Germany met senior guests over breakfast and discussed most important aspects of euroscepticism such as integration, economy, youth unemployment, identity etc.

The event took place at the European House in Berlin, a place where most important politicians from the EU meet when in Germany. The senior guests who took part were:

Matthias Wächter

Director General of Centre International de Formation Européenne

Oliver Hänsgen

Public Relations Adviser of the EU Information Office in Germany

Dr. Wolfgang Merz

Head of Division in the Europe Department at the Federal Finance Ministry







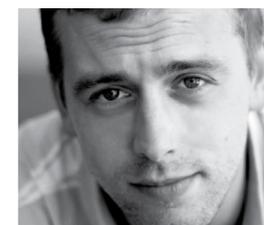
PROJECT TEAM

NAME
CONTRIBUTION
AGE
NATIONALITY



ADAM LENTON
CONTRIBUTOR
UNITED KINGDOM
23

Adam Lenton graduated from the University of Exeter with a BA in Russian and International Relations and currently lives in Kazan, in Russia's Republic of Tatarstan where he studies Russian and Tatar at Kazan Federal University. For the past three years he has contributed to several think tanks and projects related to foreign policy, mainly concerning Russia and the former Soviet republics. His main research interests include Central Asia, Russia-EU relations, and contemporary Russian political thought.



BARTOSZ MROCKOWSKI
CONTRIBUTOR
POLAND

Graduate at the University of Wroclaw, scholar at the London Metropolitan University and intern at the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland. Analyst

at the European Center of Geopolitical Analysis, author of dozens articles and publications inter alia for American think tank Stratfor.com



BETHANY COLLIER
EDITOR
28
NEW ZEALAND

Bethany Collier holds an MA in Political Science from the Free University Berlin. Her focus and research interests lie in the Asia-Pacific region (specifically China), civil society developments, development politics and environmental policy. She was raised in Germany, completed her Political Science BA in New Zealand and spent a year working in Japan before returning to Europe.



CAROLYN THOMAS
GRAPHIC DESIGN
30
CANADA

Carolyn is a graphic designer and art director living in

Berlin, Germany. She has work at Pure+Applied, and Pentagram Design in New York City. In November 2013, she obtained an MSc in Culture & Society from the London School of Economics and Political Science. Additionally, she has a BFA in Communication Design from Parsons The New School for Design. Her research interests include: social and cultural conceptions of power/knowledge in relation to visual cultures, analog and digital maps, and spirographs.



CLAY JOHNSON
EDITOR
28
USA

I am currently doing an M.A. in Interdisciplinary Latin American Studies in Berlin, Germany where, inter alia, I deal with the topic of inequality in Latin America. I also work as a freelance English teacher, mainly at adult educational centers in Berlin. Lastly, every now and again I edit Master's theses written in English and translate texts from German — and to a much lesser extent Spanish — into English. I chose to work on this project because I am interested in the topic of Euroscepticism and also because I wanted to practice my editing abilities.

Project Team



EDWARD SARGEANT

EDITOR

23

UNITED KINGDOM

I am a student of British Politics and Legislative Studies at The University of Hull. I became a student after serving for six years in the British Army and undertaking operational service with NATO. I will be working as a political researcher in UK Parliament in due course and hope to gain future work within politics. Policy areas of particular interest for myself are Europe, defence, and the global economy.



EMILIO ROMERO GARCÍA

CONTRIBUTOR

33

SPAIN

Emilio Romero García, publicist specialised in International Relations and European Studies, now works in the internationalisation of a winery in Granada, Spain. His work has led from local market to international trade from Spain to Belgium and Japan, working in more countries. Also, his studies have regarded to Law of International Organizations (with UNITAR), European

and International Studies (with CIFE-IEHEL), Communication (with different universities in Spain, Netherlands and UK) and, of course, winemaking training. He collaborates with the Webmasters' Association of Granada (the first one in Spain) and other projects. Currently he studies also agronomy in his free time.



FIONA COOKE

EDITOR

25

CANADA

Fiona Cooke is a political science student with a Masters in International Law and Security from the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. She has also completed an undergraduate degree at the University of Ottawa in the field of International Relations. She is currently an Intern for the External Relations division of the International Criminal Court. Her key areas of interest are transitional justice, African security and peace, and development.



FRANCESCA LAROSA

CONTRIBUTOR

ITALY



FRANCESCA RISSO

CONTRIBUTOR

21

POLAND

Student at the Law and Administration Faculty of the University of Warsaw. Passionate about European legal issues, politics and international relations. Participant of various international youth conferences, most recently Student Forum Maastricht 2014 and Young European Council 2014 as well as numerous EU and UN Models. Member of organization team of Warsaw-Beijing Forum 2015. Privately interested in political philosophy, literature and cuisine.

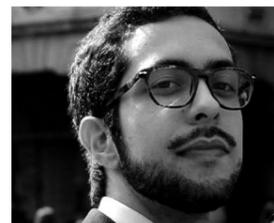


FUNDA GÜNDAYDIN

CONTRIBUTOR

TURKEY

I have studied Television Journalism at the Istanbul Bilgi University, Istanbul, Turkey. Later on I obtained an MA at the Gothenburg University from the School of Global Studies, Gothenburg, Sweden. Currently, I am enrolled in a master's program in History, Bulent Ecevit University, Zonguldak, Turkey while also pursuing studies in a justice program via distant university.



GABRIELE ROSANA

CONTRIBUTOR

24

ITALY

Born in Sicily, with a classical high school background, I moved to Rome to study Law at LUISS University, where I'm graduating with a master's thesis dealing with the constitutional issues risen by the EU competence in criminal affairs. I'm currently developing my project as a visiting student to Utrecht University. When in Rome, I was granted a 5 years merit-based-only scholarship by the Collegio "Lamaro Pozzani", an institution sponsored by the "Federazione nazionale

Project Team

Cavaliere del Lavoro", association among the most successful Italian entrepreneurs. Admitted to the Italian Journalists Register, I have been working as a journalist since 2007.

JAKE HOLLIS

EDITOR

24

UNITED KINGDOM

Jake is a research intern at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific in Bangkok. He is soon to complete an Erasmus Mundus MA in Global Studies, jointly from the University of Leipzig in Germany, Jawaharlal Nehru University in India and the University of Wrocław in Poland. He previously studied History at the University of Cambridge in his native Britain. He is currently writing his MA thesis on global and regional disability policy in Asia and the Pacific.



JEAN COMTE

CONTRIBUTOR

26

FRANCE

Jean Comte is a Brussels-based journalist, specialised in European affairs. He currently works as the EU correspondent of the French Bulletin quotidien. Previously, he collaborated with various media in Europe, including La Croix (Paris), Euractiv, de (Berlin) and Le Quotidien (Luxembourg). When he was still a student, he spent

some time in Romania, for a school project called Newsroom. Very interested by the Euroscepticism issues, he participated last year to the study « The rise of xenophobic eurosceptic movements in Europe », coordinated by the Open Society Initiative for Europe and the Public Diplomacy Council of Catalonia.

KRISTY CHOI

EDITOR

21

UNITED STATES

Kristy will graduate from Brown University this spring with a degree in African-American Studies. She is interested in writing stories, making films, and facilitating dialogue on the experiences and cultural expressions of marginalized communities. She hopes to live and work in Berlin, Germany.

MARA PINKERT

ORGANISER

30



MILENA MICHALOVCIK

ORGANISER

27

SERBIA

Milena was born and raised in Belgrade, Serbia. She has been living in Germany for last two and a half years. She studied International politics in Belgrade and Heidelberg and holds a MA degree in International Security. Her

fields of interest are Common Foreign and Security Policy, NATO, EU Enlargement and Western Balkan. She worked for EurActiv Germany – the only pan-European media network für EU-affairs.



NARCIS GEORGE

MÁTACHE

CONTRIBUTOR

24

ROMANIA/DENMARK

Born in Romania, living in Denmark, a true European at heart. I have a Marketing studies background, and my hobby is politics, in special political campaigns. I am a board member in the Social Democrats Aalborg North party, and I have been an international campaign leader for Lasse Frimand Jensen (Aalborg councilman) and Ole Christensen (S&D MEP). In 2015, I am going to be a campaign consultant for Orla Hav (Danish parliamentary) and local assistant for Rasmus Prehn (Danish parliamentary). In the free time, I am involved in the Integration Council Aalborg, Aalborg Kulturskole, IUVENIS International, International Committee of DSU Aalborg, Frit Forum, JEF Aalborg and YATA Denmark.



NATALIE WARD

EDITOR

29

UNITED STATES

I grew up in the beautiful Rocky Mountains and attended the University of Colorado at Boulder with a major in French. I studied abroad in France and completed internships there and in the UK within the energy sector, and from there moved to Thailand for a little over 2 years to work as a Marketing Officer with the Thai Government's Office of Natural Resources and Environment. Deciding to return to Europe to complete a Masters degree, I recently completed an M.Sc. in Global Change Management at the Eberswalde University for Sustainable Development in Germany. I am interested in environmental policy in particular, and have a desire to work with like-minded individuals.



NICO DRIMECKER

CONTRIBUTOR

34

GERMANY

Nico Drimecker works as editor, writer and filmmaker in Berlin. In cooperation

Project Team

with the German Think Tank „Progressives Zentrum“ he worked on a digital campaign for strengthening the european awareness. In the past he graduated in cultural studies in Lüneburg when he already wrote for websites, magazines and newspapers. He grew up in the north of Germany, also lived in Hamburg, Münster and Dortmund. After four years writing articles and producing videos for a newspaper he moved to Berlin to work as a freelancer.



NICO GOLLER
CONTRIBUTOR
21
GERMANY

Highly motivated student of European Studies in economic, legal and political dimension with a main focus on the foreign policy of the EU and its member states as well as on questions for the future of European integration. Very passionate about his subject. Already studied abroad at the University of Warsaw in the Polish capital. Is able to speak all the languages of the Big 6 countries of the EU. Already took part at several simulations of the United Nations, also at the biggest one in New York. There he gained many experiences in diplomacy and negotiating. Currently gaining practical experience in the fields of Public Affairs and Public Administration and Representation.



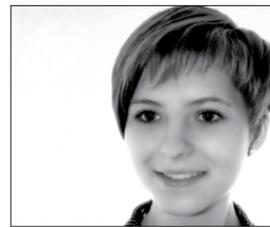
NICOLE BOGOTT
ORGANISER
29
GERMANY

Nicole is a global nomad passionate about international politics and development economics. Besides being a YEL member Nicole currently leads the country office of a political foundation in Namibia. Prior Nicole worked for EurActiv – the only pan-European media for EU Affairs. She interned at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Yemen, the German Council on Foreign Relations and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Morocco. During her gap year she travelled most of the Asian continent. Afterwards she earned a BA in Development Studies and International Relations from universities in the UK, the U.S. and Turkey focusing on the Middle East and East Asia. During a trilingual MA in in France Nicole dealt with the topic of Cosmopolitan Democracy in depth. At the Y8 & Y20s Nicole headed international delegations in Canada and in France.



NIKOLAS PAPAGEORGIU
CONTRIBUTOR
27
GREECE

Nikolas is the Lead Organizer of TEDxCollegeOfEurope 2015. He currently resides in Bruges and follows the postgraduate program at the College of Europe. Before coming to Bruges, Nikolas has worked and studied in The Hague, Straßburg, Göttingen, Brussels and Kyoto. Amongst his workstations are the Directorate General for European Affairs at the German Federal Office and the Center for European Policy Studies for the German Council of Foreign Relatio



PATRYCJA GLIWKA
CONTRIBUTOR
17
POLAND

My name is Patrycja Gliwka, from Lublin, Poland. I am 17 years old and I attend to legal class in secondary school. I decided to take part in the Euroscepticism project, because it is an opportunity to broaden my knowledge about the problem and get some experience. I am highly interested in the law studies and foreign relations. This

year I took part in Lublin MUN and then realized, that I want to get involved in similar activities and seize all opportunity to talk about both local and global policies. I believe that YEL is a place, where I could develop my skills.



PAUL SIMPSON
EDITOR
21
BRAZIL/USA

Paul Simpson is a research professional operating out of Washington DC. He recently achieved a First Class Honours Degree in BA War and Security Studies from the University of Hull, England. He currently provides research support to the DC Books to Prisons Project, a charity that provides free reading materials to prisoners across the United States. His primary areas of interest include counter-terrorism, counter-insurgency, military psychology, climate change, disaster response, and emergency medical care.

PAWEŁ SOBOLEWSKI
CONTRIBUTOR
22
POLAND

I'm 22 years old and I'm studying on the last year of electronics and telecommunications and partially working. I live in the eastern Poland. I like electronics, programming, good beer and to hang out with friends. I'm following

Project Team

the most important political and economical world's news and events. I would like to visit every single country. I've already spent one year in Portugal. Future plans – volunteering in Brazil during the holidays.



SIMONA FALANGA
CONTRIBUTOR
23
ITALY/UNITED KINGDOM

Simona Falanga is currently reading International Studies at St. Chad's College, Durham University. She is the Media Manager of Young European Leadership (henceforth YEL) and was the activity leader of YEL's Virtual Debate project on Euroscepticism. For the last five years she has been involved in a number of projects aimed at raising awareness on European exchange programmes and the importance of foreign language learning. She also has a four year experience in foreign language teaching at Secondary and University level. Her main areas of research include Euroscepticism in Western Europe and EURussia relations.



RIES KAMPHOF
CONTRIBUTOR
29
THE NETHERLANDS

Ries Kamphof is a researcher international relations at the Dutch National Commission on Sustainable Development (NCDO). He is also doing a PhD at Leiden University on the EU as a global actor in climate negotiations (Political Science). Before this, Ries worked as a Policy Adviser EU affairs at the Dutch Senate and as a project leader 'Europe' at a research centre on urban regions and metropolitan areas. Ries studied European Law and Political Science at Leiden University. His master thesis for Political Science was on Euroscepticism in the European Parliament, titled: 'socialization in a consensus-oriented parliament'. He lives in The Hague, The Netherlands and likes (EU) politics and sports.

ABOUT YOUNG EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP

Young European Leadership (YEL) is an international nonprofit and nonpartisan organization dedicated to empowering young leaders and future decision makers from Europe and beyond. Through engaging events, YEL aims to inspire these leaders from all backgrounds to shape the future of Europe, fostering innovative solutions to local and global challenges.

Activities of Young European Leadership

YEL provides aspiring leaders with innovative forms of engagement to directly connect with experienced decision makers from all sectors. YEL has a strong track record to form delegations joining summits and other international events to give its members the opportunity to speak up and provide critical policy input. One of the responsibilities of YEL is to recruit and train the official delegations of the European Union to the annual Y7 (Y8) and Y20 Summits, the official young counterpart to the G7 and G20 Summits. Other international events include the European Development Days, the OECD Forum including the exclusive OECD IdeaFactory, the World Bank/IMF Annual Meetings, the Nuclear Knowledge

Summit, the International Energy Forum, the International Conference of Europeanists, and the Social Good Summit. YEL prepares its delegations with specific trainings and meetings, e.g. with the Prime Minister of Belgium Elio Di Rupo or the G20 Sherpas of the European Union Richard Szostak and António José Cabral.

YEL connects future decision makers with each other as well as senior policy makers also through its own initiatives. These events are created to facilitate leadership skills and to encourage the development of policy recommendations by young people to shape their own future. YEL's flagship event is the Young European Council (YEC). The YEC, organized for the first time in 2014, strives to be a youth counterpart of the European Council and the Council of the European Union. The first YEC brought together over 60 delegates from all over Europe to provide actionable recommendations for European policy making around the themes of sustainability, digital and youth employment. Guests to the event included European Commissioner Connie Hedegaard and European Committee of the Regions President Michel Lebrun. The YEC 2015 will address the topics Energy Union and

Climate Action, Migration and Home Affairs, and Education to Employment.

Other initiatives include Eat & Meet, a unique opportunity to foster the exchange between future leaders, policy makers, and experts in informal dinner setting. Past editions welcomed, among others, the European Commission Director General for Environment Karl Friedrich Falkenberg and World Bank Lead Economist Theo Thomas. YEL has organized Eat&Meet events in Brussels, Berlin, and London and plans further editions throughout Europe. Going beyond borders, YEL has also organized webinars, virtual debates, and other initiatives such as the Euroscepticism project in 2014.

Growth and Aspirations of Young European Leadership

Since its foundation in 2011 YEL's portfolio has steadily increased, cooperating with a multitude of international partners in over 20 countries around the world active in youth policy. The development of the organization is met by a steadily rising interest of external stakeholders and fast growing reach online and offline. To meet these increasing expectations YEL's staff has grown continuously, representing young professionals and students from all over Europe and beyond. YEL aspires to further its standing as a reliable partner in European and global youth initiatives, to provide greater access to its programs, and to continuously deliver relevant and constructive input at all major conferences shaping the lives of future generations.





YOUNG EUROPEAN LEADERSHIP