



EU=Europe? Euroskepticism and European Identity

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forost Arbeitspapier Nr. 45

Juni 2008

Forschungsverbund Ost- und Südosteuropa (*forost*)

Redaktion: Helga Schubert

ISBN 978-3-9810703-9-2

ISSN 1613-0332

forost wird gefördert vom

Bayerischen Staatsministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst

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Vorwort

Schon in seinen letzten Arbeitspapieren hat forost sich verstärkt den Fragen der europäischen Integration und dem umstrittenen Begriff der "Europäisierung" zugewandt. Während unmittelbar nach "der Wende" die Mitgliedschaft in der Europäischen Union für viele der ehemaligen Mitglieder des "Warschauer Pakts" als Garantie für Freiheit und Wohlstand galt, wird in zunehmendem Maß Kritik an dieser Union laut. Die Integration stellt sich in den Augen ihrer Kritiker häufig als Einbahnstraße dar: eine Art der Zwangsanpassung an die fest geschriebenen Inhalte des *Acquis Communautaire*, des "gemeinsamen Besitzstands", die ihrer Meinung nach keine Chance auf Neubestimmung aufgrund der veränderten Bedingungen in Gesamteuropa zulassen. So scheint es, als ob diese Länder vom Regen in die Traufe gekommen wären.

Europa, so die Forderung, darf nicht gleichgesetzt werden mit der Europäischen Union und die Besonderheit einzelner Nationen nicht der "Gleichmacherei" westlicher Prägung geopfert werden.

Auch wenn man diese Meinung nicht teilt, so setzt eine rationale Diskussion doch die Kenntnis der kritischen Argumente und Positionen voraus und der Quellen, aus der die Kritik gespeist wird.

Im vorliegenden Band finden Sie höchst unterschiedliche Perspektiven und Interpretation zur Frage was die oft beschworene "Einheit in Vielfalt" denn ausmacht. Gleichzeitig ist die Heterogenität, die in den einzelnen Beiträgen zum Ausdruck kommt, ihrerseits Zeichen der vielfältigen Variationen dieser Diskussion.

Lesen Sie also im Folgenden kurze Blitzlichter auf die Ängste und Hoffnungen, die Skepsis und Fragen, wie sie sich aus dem Blickwinkel unterschiedlicher Länder und Interpretationen des "Europäischen Prozesses" darstellen.

München, im Juni 2008
Helga Schubert



Contents / Inhalt

Introduction	7
Some Remarks on the Relationship between European Identity and the European Union <i>Vladimir Gvozden</i>	9
Euroskepticism in Slovakia <i>Andrej Nosko Translation Kenneth Hanshew</i>	19
"Europeanism" Czech-style <i>Kenneth Hanshew</i>	27
Norway and the EU: Will Norway become a member? <i>Christoffer Grønstad</i>	35
Reviewing Euroskepticism <i>Kenneth Hanshew</i>	41
forost-Arbeitspapiere	43



Introduction

After a brief glance at this slender volume, one may have the impression that its articles are all too heterogeneous, that the collection itself is a reflection of the European Union's slogan of "unity in diversity." The thematic breadth is, however, not a mistake. The volume does not strive to present a homogenous picture of Europe, Euroskepticism, and the EU from a particular academic discipline in a particular country. Instead, it offers views from four different countries, from both East and West, and many disciplines in an endeavor to provide an adequate, European answer to an only seemingly simple question: Is the EU the same as Europe?

The volume opens with Vladimir Gvozden's very personal study of Euroskepticism and the project of building a common Europe. Gvozden explores central questions of how Euroskepticism arises, what it is responding to, and whether it is possible to find any common ground, any unity in diversity to promote Europe. In the second article, "Europeanism," we turn from general thoughts on European integration to summarize the critical views on the rhetoric of the EU and European thought as it is presented both by Czech "Eurorealists" as well as younger skeptics. This is followed by Andrej Nosko's overview of Euroskepticism as a political phenomenon in Slovakia. Norway, which unlike Slovakia is often mistaken for a member state of the EU, is the topic of Christoffer Grønstad's article. He poses the question whether Norway will soon join the EU and attempts an answer by looking at political programs and some particularities of Norway. The volume concludes with the symbols of Euroskepticism that are so closely tied to negative stereotypes of the EU. Across the boundaries of countries and disciplines one may recognize the questions, fears, and hopes for Europe in the 21st century.



Some Remarks on the Relationship between European Identity and the European Union

Vladimir Gvozden

*She teases with those flashes, yes, but once
you yield to human horniness, you see
through all that moonshine what they really were,
those gods as seed-bulls, gods as rutting swans –
an overheated farmhand's literature (...)
Nothing is there, just as it always was,
but the foam's wedge to the horizon-light,
then, wire-thin, the studded armature,
like drops still quivering on his matted hide,
the hooves and horn-points anagrammed in stars.*

Derek Walcott, *Europa* (1981)

"Europe" is a widely used synonym for the European Union even though many millions of Europeans live beyond the EU's borders. Similarly, we sometimes call the United States of America simply "America." The political, economic and military power of the United States and the European Union may not easily be compared, but the rhetoric of power and the underlying binary opposition of being inside or outside of the "Empire" are, at least as a metaphor, behind both of these names. When we speak of a European identity, we should consider that the phrase has at least two different meanings. It may mean a sense of personal identification with Europe and, more recently, with the European Union or European identity may be taken as an identity possessed by Europe as a whole in a wider, global context. The second meaning is particularly visible in periods of political and intercultural crises such as during the Jyllands-Posten Muhammad cartoons controversy in 2005. Although the cartoon was published in Danish newspapers, the protesting Palestinians evidently saw the cartoons as a *European* issue, more than people in Europe itself.

What does it mean to be European? This seemingly simple question leads to further questions: What was the reason for the unification of Europe – pragmatism, utilitarian calculations, economic reasons, the fear or joy of globalization, cultural idealism? What is it that all European nations share? Is European identity the sum of national identities? Or is it a supplement to national identities? Is there really a "Euro-identity"? All of these questions are connected with the problem of the Other. Is the Other inside or outside Europe, or both inside and outside? Many different versions of European reality are visible, but they still do not form a unified whole. Whenever we discuss European identity, we must always consider whether people living in different countries differ in their acceptance and perception of the possible parallel existence of national and European identities. A. Maurits van der Veen maintains, "It is a well-established pattern that national populations differ in their support for the EU process."¹ They also differ in their perception of European identity and of Europe itself.

In order to understand the nature and scope of Euroskepticism in Central,

¹ A. Maurits van der Veen, "Determinants of European Identity: A Preliminary Investigation Using Eurobarometer Data," Conf. University of Pennsylvania, 19 Mar. 2002 <<http://www.isanet.org/noarchive/vanderveen.html>>.

Southern and Eastern Europe we must first consider two developments coming from Western countries themselves. The first is the intense promotion of the policies of the European Union. This is particularly visible in Eastern Europe, even more so than in Western Europe. The second is Western Europe's criticism of this same European Union, criticism that is hardly registered in the less developed countries of Eastern Europe. I would emphasize that it is a mistake to view Euroskepticism in Eastern Europe as an isolated phenomenon. It should rather be seen as part of a more general skepticism that is tied to certain historical developments after WWII. Thus, the Euroskepticism that comes from Eastern European countries does not have the same powerful background and influence as the Euroskepticism in Great Britain, the Netherlands, or France. A good starting point for beginning our discussion is therefore the following question: To what extent is Euroskepticism present in the European Union itself, particularly among its older members? Necessary brevity does not allow for a broad discussion of Euroskepticism, instead attention will be given to the most important and crucial issues concerning a common European identity today.

The first Euroskeptic I met personally was the British author and anti-EU activist Rodney Atkinson, the brother of the more famous actor Rowan Atkinson, known better as Mr. Bean. He is one of the most radical Euroskeptics. He writes widely on the Nazi origin of the European Union, which he believes to have found in one of Goebbel's lectures delivered during WWII. He thus especially attacks the role of Germany in EU-affairs. I met him in Serbia under Milošević's rule in the mid-1990s. The British author maintained, as he had earlier written in his book *European Full Circle*, that the European Union represents a danger for democracy, freedom, free trade, and national identity. In short, the European Union should never have even come into being. His repertoire of criticism was quite impressive. At the time, I did not take his talk seriously, although I was surprised that the values I considered to be very important for a future, postMilošević Serbia could be attacked in this way. However, I have had cause to repeatedly reflect on his statements; I discovered Mr. Atkinson is not alone in his opinions, but rather shares them, at least in certain aspects, with British, Western, and Eastern European politicians. I am not someone who believes in utopias, and as such, I did not believe that all of Mr. Atkinson's arguments are valid. However, he offered convincing reasons to support his criticism, and I could not always counter properly. Some of his ideas were, of course, quite extreme and unacceptable, especially when he asserted there is a connection between the EU and Nazi Germany and Goebbel's ideas about the future of Europe. The European Union certainly does not exercise totalitarian policy, begin wars, or build concentration camps. Nonetheless, meeting so strong a Euroskeptic was a rather disturbing experience at that time, because I, as many other citizens of Serbia, considered the European Union to be an important political power that could help the country remove Milošević and establish a more prosperous and democratic society. Although Atkinson did not change my mind, his ideas did cast a different light on the European Union and caused me to reconsider my own understanding of it. At the very least, I had to think about the pros and cons of the European Union since the same or similar arguments could also appear in everyday discussion as well as in political discourse.

After reading Atkinson's book, I realized that he is a proponent of strong economic, military and political cooperation between the United States and

Britain. He perceives NATO as an important factor for stability in Europe and worldwide. Some of Atkinson's arguments against the European Union could, however, equally be applied to NATO, especially those arguments criticizing the loss of sovereignty and national identity. When I lived in Poland in 2001, I suddenly realized how important it was for Polish politicians to answer the following question: What is more valuable – membership in NATO or in the EU? I traveled to Dubrovnik this summer. While sailing into one of Dubrovnik's ports on a yacht, I saw the following graffiti on a wall: EU=SFRJ (Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia). These Croatians see any kind of supranational political entity as the same evil as the former socialist Yugoslavia. A similar phenomenon may be noticed in other Eastern European countries. When the country is closer to membership in the European Union and people become more aware of the cost of this membership in the "club," Euroskepticism arises. The idea behind the graffiti echoes the words of the Czech president Václav Klaus, who describes himself as a "Eurorealist": "The enemies of free societies today are those who want to burden us again with layer upon layer of regulations. We had that in communist times. But now if you look at all the new rules and regulations of EU membership, layered bureaucracy is staging a comeback." The EU's 30,000 bureaucrats have indeed produced some 80,000 pages of regulations that the Czech Republic and other European applicants for EU membership must adopt. However, if you ask me about the situation in Serbia after 2000, i.e. one decade after Milošević's rule, I will answer that there is political consensus about the desirability of membership in the European Union, although there is neither readiness nor enough political resources to put theory into practice, especially not quickly. After Romania and Bulgaria became members of the EU at the beginning of 2007, every responsible Serbian politician had to ask himself what place his country should have in the world. Similarly, albeit with a different set of problems in mind, we can ask what place Europe should have in the world, in Germany, or in any other European country. How different can that place be in the case of Great Britain, Germany, France, Portugal, the Czech Republic, or Serbia? Global issues seem to unite Europe more than ever. However, this awareness about the role of Europe in the global economy and global politics is problematic. This article is an attempt to outline the problem of European identity that may not be resolved in a short history of the European Union. This shall neither be a criticism from a Serbian point of view, nor an expression of Euroskepticism or Eurorealism. This is rather an attempt to outline specific issues that unfortunately very often go without saying, obviously not in philosophical papers, juridical discussions or policy-making, but in all-embracing public discourse.

Today's problem of European identity seems to be a much more complex issue than it was thought to have been twenty or even ten years ago. The legitimacy of the institutions of the European Union leaves much to be desired. Of course, there are many research programs devoted to the study of European integration, identity, or freedom of movement that involve many disciplines. Despite these efforts, it is not clear enough whether European integration strengthens a sense of European identity and whether European identity has a strong impact on support for integration. Although the European Union has made some attempts to improve identification with "Europe" (i.e. the European Union) and introduced some well-known European symbols such as a flag and an anthem, early expectations that nation-states and their people would become more European and gradually abandon their national identity, have not

been met. The European Union is not seen as a nation, and patriotism comparable with that of nation-states may hardly be detected.

From the beginning, the Union has been built on the assumption of a permanent diversity of national identities in Europe, the idea of unity in diversity. The institutions of the European Union always have focused more on European integration than on supporting the creation of a European identity. Moreover, at the beginning, the European Union derived legitimacy from being an instrument of national governments. But today, as Van der Veen points out, "with the growing impact of EU legislation on every aspect of national economic life, and the threat it poses to particular national institutional arrangements for fiscal and monetary politics, the welfare state, and even foreign policy, it has become clear to those publics that the European Union can no longer be viewed as an instrument, but instead had become a governing body in need of legitimacy independent from that it receives through national governments."² Europe advances quickly in regards to economic integration, but political or cultural integration comes much slower. The issue of the Union's legitimacy becomes increasingly problematic and a growing number of analysts maintain that the progress of European integration will be impeded by the lack of a common identity. According to recent research, nations do not share as great a sense of community as many had hoped.

1. The question of European identity traditionally touches on issues of historical, geographical, economic, political, legal, and cultural importance. However, when we seriously consider the possibility of a shared history of European people, we immediately see that European history is also the history of animosity and conflicts. Certainly some historical narratives in history textbooks could hardly be considered a bonding experience (look at the treatment of Napoleon, for example). Although many analysts consider that history can therefore not be a basis for European identity, others argue that it not only could but it actually is one of the most important impulses for integration. In fact, that was the leading idea of the European Coal and Steel Community (1951), the forerunner of the European Community. Steel was essential in the production of armaments in World War II and was a fundamental resource of the Western European states. The project was intended to promote cooperation and reconciliation between France and Germany in the aftermath of the war. In a similar fashion, this could be a crucial political argument for integrating countries of the Western Balkans into the European Union.
2. Many authors postulate a common culture as a key part of European identity. They point to ancient Greece, ancient Rome, the feudalism of the Middle Ages, the Renaissance, the Age of Enlightenment, national liberalism of the nineteenth century, and also the negative elements such as colonialism, civil wars, and the world wars. However, it is hard to prove that this is a *common* culture. One may not only recognize shared culture, but also many cultural differences between European countries and in each country itself. Many elements of this proposed European cultural identity are elements of the West in general, so they cannot be considered exclusively European.
3. The debate over the role of Christianity in Europe best exemplifies the

² Veen 13.

issue of cultural differences. The role of Christianity was undoubtedly important for the history and identity of Europe in the past, but it is perhaps the most controversial element of an assumed common heritage today. Pope Benedict XVI clearly emphasized in his lecture "Faith, Reason and the University – Memories and Reflections" in Regensburg in 2006 both the European nature of Christianity and the Christian nature of Europe: "It is not surprising that Christianity, despite its origins and some significant developments in the East, finally took on a historically decisive character in Europe. We can also express this in another way: this convergence and the subsequent addition of the Roman heritage created Europe and remains the foundation of what can rightly be called Europe."³ However, the European convention rejected a reference to Christianity and/or God in the proposed European Constitution. In an attempt to integrate members of political communities, citizenship has always been based on exclusion, by defining clearly who are and who are not citizens. The policy-makers from most European countries were afraid that if they included Christianity in the European Constitution, they would produce the Other inside Europe's borders and make integration even slower and more problematic.

4. Besides history and culture, there is also the idea that a shared language (or languages) might help overcome some of problems of European identity. Some authors have suggested that in the not too distant future citizens of European countries will learn a regional language, a national language (if different) and English. However, we can agree with Van der Veen when he says, "language, too, can be argued to be shared both too broadly . . . and not broadly enough."⁴ For example, how many Europeans will learn Polish or Bulgarian? Similarly, the citizens of many former British colonies speak English, and so it can obviously not be the mark of a separate European identity.
5. European integration itself has an influence on European identity. For example, the free movement of people across European borders has increased due to the Schengen Accords of 1985 and 1990. The European Union has also been sponsoring a program of university exchanges for many years, the Erasmus program, which allows European university students study a semester abroad at a university in another member state. Over the last 18 years, Erasmus has made it possible for 1.2 million students to study at another university in Europe. That is likely the best argument many policy-makers in the European Union give when reacting to criticisms of the lack of attempts to foster common European identity. There is a feeling that beyond politics and institutional battles, the everyday reality of Europe's open borders is quietly forging a European identity.⁵ A growing number of young Europeans study, work and date across the continent – but they also do that in the United States, which usually makes policy-makers worried about the success of European educational programs. Many believe that new generations are more multilingual and multicultural than the generations of their parents.

³ Pope Benedict XVI, "Faith, Reason and the University: Memories and Reflections," Lecture of the Holy Father, Aula Magna of the University of Regensburg, 12 Sept. 2006.

⁴ Veen 4.

⁵ See Katrin Bennhold, "Quietly sprouting: A European identity," *International Herald Tribune* 26 Apr. 2005 <<http://www.iht.com/articles/2005/04/26/news/enlarge2.php>>.

According to a survey by *Time* magazine, almost a third of those surveyed between age 21 to 35 say they feel more European than German, French, or Italian. However, it is necessary to take such claims with caution. We should remember that the term "nation" was once used at mediaeval universities, above all at the University of Paris, to describe colleagues in a college or students, who were all born within a *pays*, spoke the same language, and who expected to be ruled by their own familiar law. The division of students into nations was also adopted at the University of Prague, where from its opening in 1349 the *studium generale* was divided among Bohemian, Bavarian, Saxon and various Polish nations.

6. It is often felt that a common European identity could be promoted by the same compulsory educational systems that previously served the building of national identities. However, some of these attempts proved to be rather unsuccessful. For example, in 1997 the European Commission distributed a comic entitled *The Raspberry Ice Cream War: a Comic for Young People on a Peaceful Europe without Frontiers* and aimed at children in schools. The EU office in London immediately declined to distribute it in the UK due to an expected unsympathetic reception of the book's description of borders in Europe as "mediaeval." Britain had not, after all, signed the Schengen Agreement. Critics say that the problem in all the picture books and in much of the European Union's attempts at connecting with the public is that the EU confuses information with propaganda.

For the purpose of our discussion, I looked at a new brochure, *Let's explore Europe*, intended for children roughly 9 to 12 years old and issued by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Press and Communication in 2005. I was surprised by two things. Participants of the war in South-Eastern Europe, the former Yugoslav republics, Serbia as well as Croatia, Macedonia, and Bosnia were not treated as part of Europe: "But in the last 50 years or so, the countries of this old continent have at last been coming together in peace, friendship and unity, to work for a better Europe and a better world." I am aware that it is of crucial importance to teach children about the bloody and absurd war at the periphery of Europe, but I am still not quite sure that the Balkans are not part of Europe, especially after Romania and Bulgaria became members of the European Union on January 1, 2007. At least 15 million people live in the region and, with only minor exceptions, they all believe they live in Europe. Clearly, the misconception that members of the European Union are Europe is behind this interpretation.

The thing that surprised me much more was the fact that the authors completely avoid mentioning the well-known word "philosophy" while exploring Europe. I can make a reasonable assumption about their educational and pedagogical motives, but I think these reasons are not legitimate. For whom is philosophy so complex that it must be censored? I do not see any reason why children in the European Union should learn that Aristotle was a philosopher and not a scientist as the authors labeled him in their textbooks. This is a false representation of history; even the term "scientist" is modern and not used by the Greeks. Besides that, philosophy, at least under that name, is the invention of ancient Greeks and could be considered a crucial constituent of European identity. One might conclude that philosophy is an unimportant element for forging the new consumerist subjects of a Europe Ltd. under the slogan: *Forget philosophy, let's explore Europe!* I still prefer to think this is merely a

mistake. The answer to the question of European identity as *unitas multiplex*, if an answer is possible, can only come from a philosophical way of thinking.

7. We should also think about the relevance of the "Idea of Europe" in the context of a multicultural and multi-ethnic continent that increasingly draws on the presence and practices of people from non-European backgrounds. The idea of Europe, even in its contemporary use, remains an ideal based on a heritage of Christianity, the Enlightenment, and Romanticism that supporters of European integration created as the bridge between diverse European national cultures. In a Europe of extraordinary cultural interchange and immigration from all corners of the world, this classical view on Europe is strikingly exclusionary and backward looking – a poor motif for the future, especially if compared to those of the United States and Canada. Would it not be better to look at Europe, as Amin Ash proposed, as a migrant space, rather than one based on the enduring cultural values of a body of people called Europeans? ⁶
8. The concept of European identity is more problematic today, when it is fashionable to speak of so-called multiple identities. According to many contemporary theoretical proposals, identities are not easily separable. Different feelings of affinity – ethnic or national group, gender, profession, and politics intersect and overlap in the many contexts of everyday life. There is no linguistic or cultural homogeneity even on a national level. A common European identity can neither be based on Christianity (because of its failure to integrate atheists, Muslims and Jews), nor on economic identity (economies are still very different on national levels), nor on ethnic identity (there are even more ethnic groups than states), nor by presenting history to children in a pseudo-Marxist way as (all dubiously chosen aspects of) a history leading to the present state of the European Union. A genuine European identity, which will be conducive to the integration of its citizens, will not arise from impossible cultural uniformity. Since no European cultural nationalism could be developed, there is a need for a non-national conception of political loyalty, a minimal common denominator to help many European countries develop a post-national political community. As it was historically, European identity is not a matter of the past or the present, but of the future; the matter of becoming, not of being. The fundamental question that needs to be asked is: what is going to unite the people of Europe in the future? Some authors have stressed that common values should be protected by appropriate EU-level rights that can both support and bind cultural pluralism and difference. They propose democratic vitalism as Europe's core political project, an idea of becoming European, read as the process of never-settled cultural invention which results from the vibrant clashes of an equal and empowered multiple public. As one author says, "No myth of origin, no myth of destination, only the commitment to a plural demos." You do not have to be a sociologist to provide the answer: shared values. This answer, however, reveals the essence of the problem that is once again confronting the European Union and its citizens.
9. Finally, some analysts note a lack of citizen participation and speak of a

⁶ Amin Ash, "Multiethnicity and the idea of Europe," *Theory, Culture and Society* 21(2): 1-24.

democratic deficit in the European Union. At the beginning of the 1990s, the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas proposed an alternative foundation for political loyalty towards the EU, European constitutional patriotism. This idea is a key part in theories of post-nationalism and has been influential in the development of the European Union. Habermas popularized the term *Verfassungspatriotism*, coined by the political theorist Dolf Sternberger in the 1970s. According to the principle of constitutional patriotism, citizenship should be based on a shared sense of values rather than a common history or ethnic origin. Unlike a national or regional identity, strongly related to geography and language, for most people being European appears to be a set of shared values. One such value would be democracy, which, according to periodic opinion polls conducted by the Commission, most Europeans associate with a social safety net. Quality of life ranks high on their list of priorities, as do environmental concerns and a reluctance to use military means to achieve political goals. For Habermas, constitutional patriots orient their political action with reference to constitutions that have two central features: The constitutions plainly fall within a class of recognizably liberal constitutions and are the constitutions of and for a historically specific people and nation. The first of these features picks up on the attractive components of liberal universalism. The second limits the move upwards to a common humanity. The second feature picks up on the positive features of post-modernism, the first limits the move downwards to more local identities.

There is, nonetheless, significant doubt whether the radically universalistic option or the inspiration of constitutional patriotism can serve as an identity-shaping force that has both moral legitimacy as well as historical plausibility. This model requires a historical self-understanding of the nation to support a liberal political culture. Furthermore, such constitutional patriotism is based on Habermas's idea of legal persons. He thinks that legal persons should not be imagined as individual atoms; each person must be respected both as an individual as well as in the context of the cultural life-world. The three well-known objections to constitutional patriotism can be formulated as follows: first, there is the claim that constitutional patriotism is in fact a form of "state nationalism," which ultimately tends to replicate the problems commonly associated with nationalism. Second, while constitutional patriotism is not necessarily a variety of nationalism, it is – and this might be normatively and practically even worse – a form of "civil religion." Third, some object that constitutional patriotism is somehow "modernist" in the kind of moral psychology which it requires of citizens, and that such a modernist moral psychology is sociologically *and* normatively inappropriate for a post-modern age of multiple, fluid, overlapping, ever-evolving identities.

Obviously, "it is difficult to know how to engineer affection for a new European patria . . . ", but "the Union cannot just hope and pray that the identity and democracy problems will somehow go away."⁷ If Europe does not want to be an empty myth in global politics, as in one possible reading of our motto from Derek Walcott's poem "Europa," then it must act as a space of common values and their recognition. We may, however, freely ask whether we need common values in today's consumerist culture. Modern European unity started – and

⁷ Jan Zielonka, *Explaining Euro-Paralysis: Why Europe is Unable to Act in International Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1998) 224.

owes everything – to its focus on well-being, power, and security; to its economic integration and the welfare this secured for the European member states. Can we unreservedly say that the post-modern, post-ideological, post-Christian, global society without permanent values has made a major contribution to insure respect for everyone's individual freedoms, tolerance, and peace? In most developed states, we also note separatist and nationalist tendencies, the rise of terrorism, social disintegration and increasing pointless violence, corruption, political self-interest, lack of values, and the decline of standards. Are these developments peripheral phenomena of modern society or signs of a more fundamental crisis and if so, what consequences do they have for promoting European unity? Do politics and economics have a response to this moral crisis or are they contributing to it? What are the causes of this crisis in European values? How relevant are these values to Europe's heritage? Can any kind of universalism still exist in an era marked by individualism and cultural relativism?

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Euroskepticism in Slovakia

Andrej Nosko

Translation Kenneth Hanshew

Euroskepticism may be viewed as a specific form of politics that exists in addition to economic, philosophical or other various political programs in Europe.¹ Euroskepticism is one extreme in the spectrum of views regarding European integration and the European Union as it is. In Central Europe in general and in Slovakia in particular, it was and continues to be part of an alternative populist political program that stylizes itself as the protector of national identity or sovereignty in order to detract from real social problems.

As a result of Euroskepticism's convergence with a political position that opposes reform, Euroskepticism and its proponents have both found and continue to find adherents mostly among those who have benefited the least and lost the most during transition. This part of the population is older, less educated and found in rural areas.² Euroskepticism may not, however, be simply considered to be part of an existing economic borderline between the haves and have-nots.³ Central European Euroskepticism must rather be seen as a political program opposed to a free market. It includes anti-progressive views as a result of differing opinions on how a country should proceed in its transition from a totalitarian past.⁴

It is not the intention of the author to offer a theoretical analysis of Euroskepticism or to analyze the complexities of Euroskepticism in Central Europe. The subject of the following text is rather the development of Euroskepticism in Slovakia in the context of its domestic politics. The first part explores the specifics of this political phenomenon in Slovakia. The second part briefly summarizes Euroskepticism's development in Slovak politics. The

One must view Slovak Euroskepticism in the context of European integration to understand it. Slovakia perceived European integration as a return to Europe, a return to its legitimate place on the world geostrategical map, and a return to where (Czecho-) Slovakia certainly would have been before had a communist totalitarian government not been established. It is necessary to add that the majority of the population viewed the integration into European structures and NATO as an organic whole. It is therefore possible in most cases, at least until Slovakia joined the European Union (EU), to speak of European-Atlantic integration.

¹ Political lines are largely specific to a certain context and depend on the particularities of a political community. The most frequent boundary lines in Europe are those between urban and rural, economic left and right, between a conservative and liberal perspective.

² Karen Henderson, "Euroscepticism or Europhobia: Opposition attitudes to the EU in the Slovak Republic," *SEI Working Paper No 50* [Opposing Europe Research Network Paper No 5] Sussex European Institute, 2001.

³ Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak, "'Parties, Positions and Europe': Euroscepticism in the EU Candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe," Annual Conference of the Political Studies Association, Manchester, 10-12 Apr. 2001.

⁴ See also Herbert Kitschelt, "The Formation of Party Systems in East Central Europe," *Politics and Society* 20.1 (1992): 20.

It is useful to view Slovak Euroskepticism in three stages in order to evaluate it and its development in both regional and national politics. Perhaps the most important factor in the first phase, which was significant for Slovakia's future development, was the actions of the coalition comprised of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS), the Slovak National Party (SNS), and the Association of Workers in Slovakia (ZRS) in Mečiar's third government. In the second period, which may be characterized as an attempt to board a departing train, the most important factor is the rule of premier Dzurinda's coalition government at least in its first and the first part of its second term.

Widespread support for European-Atlantic integration emerged during this time. Expressions of Euroskepticism were both few and sporadic and incapable of explicitly calling the integration process into question. Euroskepticism was rather an attempt to create a unique political profile that differed from the largely held consensus on integration by speaking to an extreme (and marginalized) part of the population. In light of its danger for the country's real membership in the EU, only parties without real political responsibility, the opposition parties Direction (SMER), the SNS, and to a certain extent the HZDS, could indulge in this strategy.

The third phase, which continues to the present, began with Slovakia's membership in the EU and Fico's government. It is characterized by a normalization of political struggles, partial standardization of political questions and an absence of revolutionary questions regarding the Slovak nation in national politics.

Mečiar's optimism

The beginning of Euroskepticism may be dated simplistically with the beginning of contacts with European institutions. A public debate neither preceded the decision to sign associative agreements with the EU nor the application for full membership. The lack of discussion may be seen as the result of the general perception that the European-Atlantic process of integration was a natural development, Slovakia's return to its legitimate historical place from which it had unfortunately been separated.

It may seem that Slovakia's political elite fully supported European integration in the period from October 1993, when the agreement of association was signed, until October 1997, when the EU did not include Slovakia among the possible new candidates for membership, because it had not fulfilled the political requirements of the Copenhagen Agreement. Early Slovak support for integration was, however, merely in word and not of substance.

Mečiar's third government was temporarily excluded from European-Atlantic integration due to its marked deficits and disregard for law and democratic principles. The EU reacted foremost to the unsettling developments in Slovakia regarding human rights, democracy, and general national politics (the relationship to Hungary and ethnic minorities, the kidnapping of the president's son, and the failed referendum on the direct election of the president).

One may view the outcome of the summit in Madrid, where Slovakia's application for membership in NATO was rejected, as the greatest defeat for Slovak foreign policy. It is necessary to emphasize that NATO membership was understood as the first step on the path towards Europe. The rejection of

Slovakia's application for membership in NATO was therefore a clear signal that the politics of demarches with the EU was not simply a game and discouragement as the premier had suggested. It had, in fact, become a real detriment to the European-Atlantic integration of Slovakia.

At the time, the ruling political elite was counting on an extraordinary position and an illusory alternative future for Slovakia as a bridge between European-Atlantic institutions and Europe. Mečiar's declaration "if they don't want us in the West, then we'll turn to the East"⁵ most clearly shows the idea of an alternative, equal path for Slovakia. This was embraced most of all by those suffering from the effects of reforms and the transition to democracy, conditions which led to Slovak Euroskepticism.

Although the ostracism of Slovakia under Mečiar is not directly related to Euroskepticism in this period, it does influence national politics and Euroskepticism in the following period.

Catching the missed train and Euroskepticism

The parliamentary elections in the fall of 1998 were a turning point for the growth of democracy in independent Slovakia. Thanks to an unprecedented mobilization of the civic sector and a high voter turnout (84,24%), the government coalition under Mikuláš Dzurinda received a mandate to jump on the train of European-Atlantic integration.

In this atmosphere it was impossible to have any doubts about the European-Atlantic orientation of the country. Thus, Euroskepticism or any type of criticism or questioning of integration became a general social taboo. Peter Schutz described the situation in the year 2000 as follows: "in Slovakia the nonstandard political system prohibits even the tiniest bit of critical discussion of the touchy theme 'Europe.' Supporters of the EU glorify Brussels and engage in self-censorship to the point of political correctness while on the other extreme 'Euroskeptics' like Malikovej⁶ or the HZDS try to stir up fears."⁷ In this context, any real discussion of possible disadvantages to membership in the EU was impossible. The only critical, albeit discredited voices, came from the opposition, which attempted to make easy political gains by proclaiming populist goals without any real political responsibility.

František Gyarfáš notes in his remark two years after the elections that intellectuals played a specific part in Euroskeptical profiling:

Slovak Euroskepticism is almost ornamental rather than substantial. They don't demand that we don't join the EU. The Euroskepticism of Slovak intellectuals is a position full of agreement. The arguments of our

⁵ The citation is ascribed to Mečiar. See both Daniel Bútora, "Turecký pochod," *Týždeň* <<http://www.tyzden.sk/sk/spolocnost/article52.php>> and Alexander Duleba cited in "Zomrel prvý ruský prezident," *SME* <<http://www.sme.sk/c/3261546/Zomrel-prvy-rusky-prezident.html>>.

⁶ At this time head of the SNS.

⁷ *Domino Forum*, 21-26 Sept. 2000.

Euroskeptics usually sound this way: Yes, we want our country to join the EU, but...⁸

One might expect a certain reservation or mild Euroskepticism in the Christian Democratic Party as a result of its right-wing conservative character. However, due to the situation in Slovakia, it decided to support joining the EU and encouraged its supporters to not only participate in the referendum but also to vote for membership in the EU.

Mečiar's HZDS, Sloto and Malik's SNS, and from 1999 on Fico's SMER represented forgotten opposition parties and nongovernmental opposition. The SNS adopted a revisionist position when it declared, "the SNS was never opposed to Slovakia's membership in the EU and will respect the people's will as expressed in the referendum regarding this question."⁹ This declaration contrasts with the SNS's frequent public appeals for neutrality that most clearly characterized the party's foreign policy.

The position of the Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS) remained ambiguous. Although it also could have profiled itself with this theme, the discredited HZDS did not respond to an email request to explain its position at the time. It is possible, however, to consider the party to be populist with mere verbal attempts at integration in the form of declarations, while it in fact remained opposed to reforms as in its past history of governing.

Róbert Fico's populist group stylized itself in election campaigns as the defender of national interests and expressed the desire to reopen previously negotiated agreements (and thus endanger Slovakia's pending membership in the EU). In a last ditch effort, the group attempted to make political gains by exploiting the poorly informed public. It criticized the outcome of the talks on membership for Slovakia and resorted to vulgar campaign billboards.¹⁰ It was above all Fico's party SMER that attempted to win politically by pointing out the temporary disadvantages to membership in the EU.

Thanks to its successful foreign policy, the general feeling that reforms were necessary, and a little luck, Dzurinda was able to form a second government that successfully completed the process of integrating the Slovak Republic into NATO and the EU.

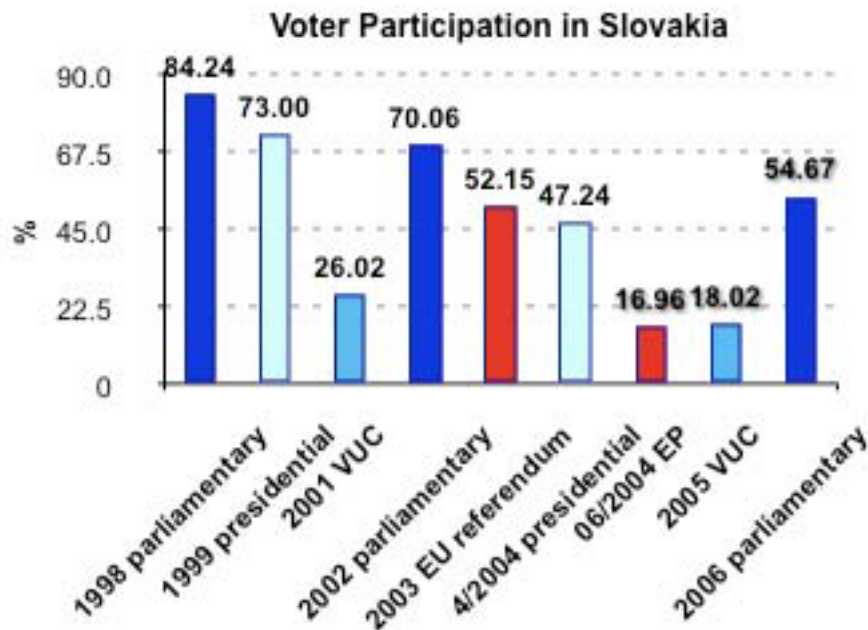
The discourse before the referendum on joining the EU is certainly worth studying. Slovakia's political elite knew that up until that time not a single valid referendum had been held in Slovakia. The greatest risk was not reaching the minimum required voter participation due to the citizens distrusting this democratic form – a result of their previous experience with an unsuccessful referendum – or due to the political elite's talk of alternatives should the referendum fail. The elite had unanimously proposed to enact a law so that membership could be accepted by parliament in case the referendum was invalid. These statements increased voters' alienation from politics and the general disinterest in politics, which may be seen in the level of voter participation that fell in parliamentary elections from 84.2% in 1998 to 54.7%

⁸ František Gyarfáš, "Áno, ale ...' slovenských euroskeptikov," 8 Aug. 2000 <<http://www.inzine.sk/article.asp?art=3853>>.

⁹ From an email from sekretariat1@sns.sk 4 Feb. 2003 at 13:24.

¹⁰ Perhaps the most 'memorable' billboard is the one from SMER showing several bare bottoms in reference to Slovakia's economic development at the time of entering the EU.

in 2006. The increasing disinterest in politics may be seen even more clearly in the elections for higher regional offices (VUC) (26% in 2001 18% in 2005).



Despite an unprecedented media campaign and mobilization of voters, the referendum on joining the EU was barely valid. Voter participation was 52.15%. The government spent a significant amount on the campaign to not only improve voter turnout but also to expressly increase the number of votes for the EU. This was occasionally, but only infrequently criticized. Only 17% of eligible voters cast a ballot in the elections for the European Parliament. This may be viewed as disinterest in European politics, lack of information, and as a result of the elections closely following presidential elections.

Apart from the success in foreign policy and the country's extraordinary gain of credibility internationally, Dzurinda also succeeded in improving Slovakia's economy and making Slovakia an attractive place for investors in Central Europe thanks to radical economic reforms and above all a reform of the tax system.

Reforms, which had often been undertaken and been supported because they had been perceived as a precondition for membership in the EU or a requirement from Brussels (despite the fact that they often exceeded the requirements), led to faster economic development. This began to become visible at the same time Slovakia entered the EU and completely took the wind out of the sails of potential Euroskeptics while at the same time paving the way for the creation of current Euroskepticism in Slovakia.

Slovak Euroskepticism after joining the EU

To a certain degree, political agendas returned to normal after Slovakia joined the EU. The absence of significant questions of state such as direct negative consequences of EU-membership, of which the opposition parties had so often warned, as well as the change from a political agenda to questions of economic and social reforms directly influenced Slovak Euroskepticism.

Slovaks did not perceive the country's joining the EU as something negative.

The freedom to travel and work in the countries that had opened their borders (above all the UK and Ireland) in addition to the positive growth of the domestic economy insured the Slovaks support for membership in the EU.

The measurable improvement in living standards, a result of reforms and EU membership, led to a new form of Slovak Euroskepticism, which was expressed primarily by the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH). It uncompromisingly attempted to have Europe's Christian heritage mentioned in the European constitution and to restrict possible European laws allowing same sex marriages, reproductive rights, and, above all, abortion. Thanks to the words of its minister of finance, the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union (SDKU) stood out by opposing EU attempts to harmonize the tax system, which is perceived in Slovakia as an important motor for new economic growth. Recently, Euroskepticism founded on differences or a perception of the Slovak way as exemplary, an interpretation Slovakia's economic growth supports, have given way to Fico's attempts to win trust internationally by presenting his policies as a modern European variant of European social policy. This influenced Slovak Euroskepticism during the last parliamentary elections in a specific way.

Slovak Euroskepticism since 2006

At the beginning, both the opposition as well as the EU severely criticized the coalition government under Róbert Fico due to its make-up of SMER, the People's Party-Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (ĽS-HZDS), and the SNS. In reaction to the coalition with the nationalist SNS, European socialists suspended the membership of Fico's political party. Foreign investors and other partners feared new destructive politics in Slovakia due to initial inept and undiplomatic statements.

As a result of severe criticism, the necessity to preserve at least a minimum of respect in international politics, and the pledge to enter the European Common Currency Union, premier Fico toned down the rhetoric and silenced Jan Slota, the chairman of the SNS, his coalition partner.

During this period it is possible to characterize Euroskepticism as having two forms. The first is reflected in the present governing coalition and is populist. The coalition attempts to forecast public opinion and react to it in order to profit politically. This form is at the same time limited by the responsibility to govern the country, to plan foreign policy and to continue European integration in the form of the Schengen system and a monetary union. Euroskepticism may hardly be combined with a strategy of intensive European integration. Thus, any attempt to do so is pure populism. This is the reason why Slovak foreign policy appears two-faced. Politicians of the governing coalition present radically different views at home and abroad.¹¹ One example is premier Fico's address concerning the European constitution: "I don't think that this topic interests anyone. They're making a big deal out of it as if it were the most interesting thing in the world."¹² This statement had to be corrected many times by the foreign minister Kubiš.

¹¹ Examples are the discussion of a European constitution or the building of American bases in the region as a part of a radar array.

¹² Róbert Fico cited on 11 Jun. 2007
<<http://aktualne.centrum.sk/zahranicie/europa/clanek.phtml?id=239352>>.

The second form of current Euroskepticism may be considered to be intellectual idealism or economics. It is sometimes present in the statements of the current opposition, most frequently coming from the KDH and concerning the conservative defense of Christian values and attempts to maintain an independent tax system. As in the former cases, it is necessary to note that these are attempts to improve the party's visibility without real political impact.

Conclusion

Euroskepticism is in general a relatively weak political phenomenon in Slovakia. With the exception of occasional Euroskeptical statements or parts of political agendas that may be considered Euroskeptical, there is no Slovak political party that explicitly defines itself as Euroskeptical. The most Euroskeptical party is either the nationalist SNS or the conservative KDH. This is a result of the relatively non-consolidated political system, the all too dominant topic of nation building in the preceding period, and the messianic attempt to return to Europe, which superseded everyday politics.

One may expect that European topics will continue to be absent in national politics in the future and, as in the case of joining the EU, one may also anticipate a lack of public debate before joining the monetary union. Euroskeptical moods may appear during attempts to harmonize social and tax systems on the level of the EU or in regards to cultural politics or minority rights (especially during the current coalition government). In the long run, it is unlikely that Euroskepticism will have more relevance as a political phenomenon than it does today. It will continue to be more appropriate to analyze domestic politics in Slovakia according to social, economic and ideological lines as long as Eurooptimistic-Euroskeptical lines do not reach a sufficient level of political homogeneity and duration.

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"Europeanism" Czech-style

Kenneth Hanshew

In the first article, Vladimír Gvozden muses on the endeavor to more closely integrate the nations of Europe and questions the attempts to find some common basis to either form a distinct European identity or to prove the necessity of the European Union. His article reflects the multiple facets of thought regarding modern Europe. In discussions of the European Union and European identity, these thoughts are frequently referred to as "Europeanism." It comes as no surprise that this term itself should be openly questioned in the Czech Republic, in the former lands of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, where language played a predominant role in creating a specific national identity. While supporters define the merits of Europeanism, critics in the Czech Republic argue that Europeanism is simply another word in the EU's vocabulary of "Eurospeak," which everyone uses, but no one understands. The meaning of such terms is not simply questioned in arcane academic journals with very few readers, but is also discussed in mainstream publications. The debate is not only interesting from a linguistic point of view. It is central to understanding the two overlapping streams of Czech Euroscepticism: the "anti-European," which denies any cultural basis for a common Europe, and the criticism of the European Union's policies.

The publication of Václav Klaus' essay "Co je to evropeismus?" [What is Europeanism?] on April 8, 2006, in *Mladá fronta dnes*, at the time the most widely read newspaper in the Czech Republic, shows not only how important such basic terms are but also that they themselves are grounds for heated debate.¹ By choosing the foreign term *evropeismus* over the Czech *evropanství*, the title differentiates between a European political program and a more general European cultural identity in a way that is not possible in most languages. In his two-page essay, Klaus thus addresses Europeanism as the opposite to national politics. Klaus views Europeanism as an authoritarian "metaideology" that brings together diverse political groups, ranging from social democrats, Christian democrats to even communists, in the name of Europe, although these groups do not share similar views. He then identifies five aspects of Europeanism: economic policy, a policy of integration, a particular way of understanding freedoms and democracy, foreign policy, and a general Europeanist philosophy. Klaus argues, that Europeanism does not accept Adam Smith's economic theories of a self-regulating market, but rather believes in a state run command economy that will control the "anarchy" of the economic market. In his second point, Klaus criticizes Europeanist integration for not being an attempt to eliminate all unnecessary trade barriers or restrictions on the freedom of movement of people and capital. Reforms should instead be undertaken as a result of the natural competition between EU-member countries. Klaus contends that Europeanism is an interventionist model of government. It intends to centralize, regulate, and harmonize all "parameters" of political, economic and social systems; to standardize the conditions of production and consumption; and to homogenize human life. Everything is

¹ Václav Klaus, "Co je to evropeismus," *Mladá fronta dnes* 8 Apr. 2006 D8 and <<http://www.klaus.cz/klaus2/asp/clanek.asp?id=KyyL9Tbap6Vd>>.

orchestrated from above with the aim to create supra-nationalism. In his third point, he maintains Europeanism is a post-democratic institution that strives to forge an alliance between nongovernmental agencies and to erode older European cultural foundations by accepting all progressive, new, nontraditional and anti-conservative movements from feminism to multiculturalism. Europeanists seek to govern as a corporation without the direct control of its citizens. Klaus condemns any European foreign policy as an attempt to destroy the nation state and its democratic political system, essentially a "brave new world in the order of Huxley which will offer rosy hours but neither freedom nor democracy," the idea of a Europe of regions living in a post-governmental Nirvana as a homage to Lenin. He considers all discussion of a common European identity, European people, or "collective psyche of Europe" to be a mere tool for reaching this goal. Lastly, Klaus defines Europeanism as a new naive romantic utopian idea that is not based on human action but on human design. He concludes that Europeanism is the product of an elite, nonproductive minority – like Huxley's Alpha-type figures – that has succeeded in presenting itself as the new, progressive future and all else as backward. They argue the plan is superior to the uncontrolled free action of citizens. Europeanism is – in Klaus' words – "a revolutionary inversion of normality."

In his essay, Klaus certainly does not offer any groundbreaking change from his position in 2001, when he professed Europeanism was a new type of religion that Joschka Fischer was preaching.² However, he expands on this with a remarkable rhetorical strategy to attack and discredit the policies of the EU's Europeanism. He compares the realities and plans of the EU with the fictive worlds of authors of literary dystopias (Orwell and Huxley), alludes to tragic parallels in Czech history, and drops the words revolution, a planned economy, and even Lenin to invoke the specter of the not too distant socialist-totalitarian past. The connections he makes between the EU's ideology and socialism here contradict his "démenti number 23," published on October 3, 2007. In response to an interview in *Lidové noviny*, Klaus states, "I never have compared communist ideology to the ideology of the EU. . . . I do consider Europeanism to endanger freedom and democracy, but I never compared it to communism."³ This strategy of comparison even appears in a seemingly harmless review of the Czech edition of Gordon Bowker's biography of George Orwell in *Lidové noviny* on Dec. 23, 2006. It ends with the statement that:

Although Bowker did not bring Orwell back to life, he did show us his greatness and relevance that has in no way decreased since the fall of communism. Today's Europeanism, which is restricting individual freedoms and reducing individuals' responsibilities, deserves a new Orwell, or at least he is needed by those whom the old Orwell is unable to help to see post-democracy, political correctness, arrogance, and the manipulations of words and language.⁴

While an essay or a book review may seem to be a forum for a rational discussion, Klaus clearly tries to profit from readers' fears and makes use of

² Václav Klaus, Interview with BBC, 11 Dec. 2001
<<http://www.bbc.co.uk/czech/interview/klaus4.htm>>.

³ Václav Klaus, "Co Klaus neřekl, tentokrát o komunismu a Evropské unii – dementi č. 23," 3 Oct. 2007 <<http://www.klaus.cz/klaus2/asp/clanek.asp?id=fYHf7TAOOLjT>>.

⁴ Václav Klaus, "Čekání na Orwella," *Lidové noviny* 23 Dec. 2006
<http://neviditelnypes.lidovky.cz/p_kultura.aspc=A061225_095016_p_kultura_wag>.

common stereotypes.

Many refuted Klaus' long essay. Pavel Palíšek answered polemically in *Mladá fronta dnes* that Klaus expands on his previous notions without offering any real arguments or facts.⁵ He concludes that politicians at the national level do not differ so much from European bureaucrats - Klaus also frequents five star hotels while traveling - and Klaus naively places just as much faith in the power of a free market as others place in the EU's plan. This criticism of Klaus' own ideology can be found almost a year later in an edition of *Britské listy*. Ondřej Rut notes that Klaus seeks to define Europeanism, all "isms," in Marxist terms, as an ideology of a specific society; however, Klaus himself only offers a competing ideology.⁶ David Klimeš echoes Palíšek's second point in his response entitled "Klaus: propagator of isms without content."⁷ Klimeš notes that laissez-faireism is also an ideology with its own problems when it comes to implementation and questions Klaus' faith in political parties over NGOs. He concludes that Klaus' essay shows he should have joined Václav Havel a long time ago, i.e., he should retire from politics. Despite his scolding criticism, Klimeš believes Klaus plays a positive role. He applauds Klaus for being the first to openly criticize the "kidnapping of the Czech Republic from Moscow to Brussels," to question the vague socialist vision for Europe and to disrupt the discourse of power. In "Klaus' questioning of Europeanism," Bohumil Doležal agrees with Klaus' detailed criticism of many ideas and movements that have seized Europe, but notes that his essay simply rehashes his standard ideas.⁸ Doležal correctly remarks that any mention of an attack on national sovereignty plays well with a Czech public due its history of being ruled and longing for freedom; however, Klaus never does determine what a nation-state is. In the end, Doležal's most striking opinion is that while it is true that Czech heads of state, beginning with Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk and continuing through Eduard Beneš, Václav Havel, and up to Václav Klaus have made plans and dreamed of reorganizing Europe, they should all have realized that the Czech Republic is a small, weak country. He concludes "Český politik by měl být skromnější [a Czech politician should be more modest]." The Czech Republic is lost without Europe, Europe is in turn lost without the USA. He argues, that the Czech Republic can only confront the problems, which are much like those in the late thirties and after 1945, as part of a North American-European alliance.

Přemysl Janýr writes perhaps the most enlightening evaluation of Klaus' essay in "Klaus' Europeanism."⁹ Janýr lauds Klaus' attempt to define the multifaceted heterogeneity of Europeanism, but this is a backhanded compliment. For unlike Klaus, who wishes to point out the inherent faults of Europeanism, his critic finds the description to be a "convincing confirmation of shared European

⁵ Pavel Palíšek, "Obchází Evropou strašidlo evropeismu? Tak žhavé to nebude," *Mladá fronta dnes* 22 Apr. 2006: 22.

⁶ Ondřej Rut, "Z oken Pražského hradu ničení planety vidět není," *Britské listy* 27 Mar. 2007 <<http://www.blisty.cz/art/33535.html>>.

⁷ David Klimeš, "Klaus: hlasatel -ismu bez obsahu," *Mladá fronta dnes* 3 Jul. 2006: 3.

⁸ Bohumil Doležal, "Klausovo tažení proti evropeismu," *Neviditelný pes* 12 Apr. 2006 <http://neviditelnypes.lidovky.cz/udalosti-klausovo-tazeni-proti-evropeismu-feg-/p_politika.asp?c=A060411_194756_p_politika_wag>.

⁹ Přemysl Janýr, "Klausův evropeismus," *Britské listy* 12 Apr. 2006 <<http://www.blisty.cz/art/27909.html>>.

values that is at the same time free of any propagandistic intentions."¹⁰ Janýr is thus a Czech adherent of the motto "unity in diversity."

Klaus' political opponents reacted severely to his essay, revealing the parties different view of the EU and Europe. In this context, both the KDU-ČSL and the ČSSD appear to belong to the Europeanists, although they are of a different feather. The KDU-ČSL places Petr Pithart's reaction "Evropa, Evropané, evropanství," previously published in *Mladá fronta dnes* on May 20, 2006, on its homepage.¹¹ In choosing the title, especially the term *evropanství* over the foreign *evropmeismus*, Pithart makes clear that he, unlike Klaus, believes in a common Europe and that his article concerns Europe, not the EU. Although he does concede there are problems in Europe, he believes strongly in a European identity and professes a separate European path to unity that is culturally different than the path of the USA. The EU is hardly mentioned. This contrasts with the ČSSD's publication "The President's European Crossroads" by Zdeněk Jičínský.¹² Rather than speaking of common European values, the article clearly promotes the positive role the European Union has and will have in guaranteeing peace and prosperity in the Czech Republic. Klaus thus succeeds in provoking the enthusiasts for Europe (Pithart) and for the EU (Jičínský).

In addition to published reactions to Klaus' article on Europeanism, it is possible to track readers' responses in the newspapers' Internet forums. Although these do not give a scientific sampling of the overall Czech reaction, they do, nonetheless, provide some indication of how Klaus' views were received. When looking at Czech readers' reactions, it becomes clear that they either knowingly share or unconsciously react to Klaus' signals. One finds remarks such as "Celá EU neustále prokazuje, že to je jen další RVHP [The entire EU consistently shows that it is nothing more than a further COMECON (Council on Mutual Economic Assistance)]" and warnings of the spread of socialism in Europe.¹³ Some even directly recall the tragedy of 1968 when they refer to the EU as a "new socialism with a human face."¹⁴

Perhaps it is therefore somewhat surprising that Klaus' essay also evokes another stereotype: the specter of Munich. The EU is not only interpreted as a mere product of French and German interests, but the Czech Republic's agreement to join the EU is equated with the Munich Agreement as well.¹⁵ One respondent writes that:

výsledkem činnosti evropeistů je Evropa totálně impotentní, neschopná obrany před nepřítelem, který už buší na vrata a má v zemi samé silnou

¹⁰ More explicitly: "Nevím zda to Klause potěší, ale k jeho 'mnohadimenzionální doktríně' hodnotových kulturních systémů se explicitně hlásím. Mimo toho je jeho analýza nesmírně povzbudivá – vlastně jsem se dosud neseťkal s přesvědčivějším potvrzením společných evropských hodnot, které by zároveň tak evidentně vylučovalo jakékoli podezření z propagačních úmyslů."

¹¹ <<http://www.kdu.cz/default.asp?page=311&idr=133&IDCI=15558>>.

¹² Originally published in "Prezidentova evropská křižovatka," *Právo* 27 Apr. 2006 <<http://www.cssd.cz/dokumenty/archiv/archiv-2006/aktuality-clanky-rozhovory-2006/a2186.html>>.

¹³ <http://neviditelnypes.zpravy.cz/diskuse.asp?iddiskuse=A060411_194756_p_politika_wag&razeni=&strana=3>.

¹⁴ <http://neviditelnypes.zpravy.cz/diskuse.asp?ddiskuse=A060411_194756_p_politika_wag&razeni=&strana=4>.

¹⁵ <http://neviditelnypes.zpravy.cz/diskuse.asp?iddiskuse=A060411_194756_p_politika_wag&razeni=&strana=7>.

pátou kolonu. Z tohoto hlediska hrají europeisté naprosto stejně trapnou roli, jakou hráli usmiřovači v době nástupu Hitlera k moci [The result of Europeanists' actions is that Europe has become completely impotent, unable to protect itself from an enemy that is already knocking at our door and has infiltrated our country. Europeanists thus play the same terrible role as those who followed a course of appeasement during Hitler's rise to power].¹⁶

Klaus is himself surprised at this connection, and unlike his tacit comparison of the EU and communism, one is prone to believe him when he remarks, "I never compared the EU's ideology with Nazi ideology. I don't even know where the interviewer got that from."¹⁷

Of course, many in the forums reject Klaus' views and echo Doležal's plea for cooperation. On the other hand, there is a reaction to a common European identity and European patriotism that is not even present in the essay. Coming to the support of Europeanism, one respondent maintains Klaus simply hates Europe.¹⁸ This response in turn provokes the question, whether anyone can be motivated to identify with Europe. Should Czechs feel European at all? The somewhat flip answer is that "when the French consider themselves to be Europeans, then we [Czechs] can begin dealing with our own European identity here"¹⁹ and that although a unified Europe would perhaps be stronger than a nation state, no one can identify with such a supranational entity. The question is then posed of how this *Europeanism* may be related to *evropanství*.²⁰

A lively debate ensues on the pages of a traditionally avid proponent of Klaus' views, *EUportal*.²¹ It deserves special attention due to the quality of the arguments and the renown of those expressing them. Apart from some short, positive responses, a lengthy exchange takes place between "Monika" and *EUportal's* editor, Jiří Zahrádka. Monika attacks Klaus' own "Klausspeak" - who and what are the "Europeanists" anyway? - and his misrepresentation of Kundera's novel *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* in his essay. She does, however, concede Klaus makes some good points. Jiří Pehe, known for his pro-EU and European views, also makes an appearance to comment on Klaus' essay in length in "The President's Mistakes." Pehe rebukes Klaus for arguing without evidence, for contributing to anxieties, but above all he criticizes that "Klaus, who otherwise as a matter of principle opposes confusing the terms Europe and the European Union . . . intentionally mixes them up here in order to criticize the EU." Like Klimeš, Pehe argues that Klaus' essay on Europeanism has nothing to do with Europe.²² Is Klaus a Euroskeptic without any concept of Europe? Why doesn't Klaus deal with the cultural, historical Europe, the theme

¹⁶ <http://neviditelnypes.zpravy.cz/diskuse.asp?iddiskuse=A060411_194756_p_politika_wag&razeni=&strana=1>.

¹⁷ Klaus, "Dementi č.23."

¹⁸ <http://neviditelnypes.zpravy.cz/diskuse.asp?iddiskuse=A060411_194756_p_politika_wag&razeni=&strana=7>.

¹⁹ <http://neviditelnypes.zpravy.cz/diskuse.asp?iddiskuse=A060411_194756_p_politika_wag&razeni=&strana=6>.

²⁰ <http://neviditelnypes.zpravy.cz/diskuse.asp?iddiskuse=A060411_194756_p_politika_wag&razeni=&strana=7>.

²¹ "Co je to evropeismus?" *EUportal* 10 April 2006 <<http://www.euportal.cz/Articles/708-co-je-to-evropeismus-.aspx>>.

²² "V eseji o 'evropeismu' zjistíme, že o Evropu v textu vůbec nejde."

evropanství and instead just address *europeismus*?

The answer is clear for Klaus and others in the ODS: there is nothing to deal with. Apart from being critical of the European Union, this is an anti-European discourse in the sense that it denies the relevance of any concept of Europe. There is neither a common European home, nor does the EU have the right to claim it represents Europe. Europe is a loosely defined geographic region, an intellectually and culturally defined civilization that can only be very generally and abstractly discussed. It is in a constant state of change and so heterogeneous that to speak of any homogeneity, unity, or shared history is very far fetched.²³ Europe is an idea, not a thing, not a government like the EU. One could simply dismiss this again as populism, if it were not so popular and there were not further voices sharing this interpretation.

The Czech historian Dušan Třeštík seems to share this view in his articles in *The Czechs and History in a Postmodern Purgatory*.²⁴ He begins the chapter "Searching for Europe's Soul" with Jacques Delor's statement that Europe is a body without a soul. Třeštík maintains that the Czech Republic did not join Europe, but rather a union motivated by economic pragmatism, in which values take a back seat.²⁵ The average Joe (Čehona) knows that you cannot buy anything with the politicians words about Europe and is rightfully skeptical about all of the EU's billboards. Třeštík begins his collection of essays with the following foreword:

Dear Europeans! One should probably begin with exactly these words and an unusually long and boring speech about European citizenship, but my audience would begin to look around for the dandy and well-to-do Europeans that have arrived once again to preach about the correct "union" morals. We are something different than Europe. We may have been accepted into Europe, but neither Europe nor we are particularly enthusiastic about it. Both Europeans and we think that we did something that we had to do, because there wasn't any other way.²⁶

Třeštík's introduction demonstrates two things. First, no distinction is made between the terms Europe and the EU; they have become synonymous. Second, Europe and Europeans are perceived to be a foreign Other. The author attempts to correct this view in the introduction by imploring his dear Czechs not to look for Europeans, because they are Europeans: "nemusíte se ohlížet po Evropanech, jste jimi."²⁷ However, the heading of the main part of his book "Europe and Us" contradicts this plea by propagating the interpretation of Europe as the Other.

Třeštík, unlike Klaus, not only addresses the subject of Europeanism but also *evropanství*. He expresses the view that many Czechs with their anti-European, not just anti-EU stance are victims of their own history writing, in which Bohemia is so often depicted to be at odds with the rest of Europe. Although he rejects a common, objective European history – as does Klaus – he considers it not only possible, but even desirable, to write this history, though "this would

²³ Václav Klaus, "Turecko, Evropa a Evropská unie," 30 Sept. 2004 <<http://www.klaus.cz>>.

²⁴ Dušan Třeštík, *Češi a dějiny v postmoderním očistci* (Praha: Nakladatelství Lidové noviny, 2007).

²⁵ Třeštík 180.

²⁶ Třeštík 9.

²⁷ Třeštík 15.

be a work of the distant future."²⁸

Czech voices addressing European identity, both political and cultural, may be found not just in the political arena and academic publications, but also in Czech schools. Since the authors of these essays and poems should be Europe's future, a closer step to a European identity, their opinions are especially valuable for judging European integration and the "populism" of Klaus' views.

In an anonymous school essay titled "Co to je vlastně evropanství?" [What is Europeanism] a young author attempts to explain what Europeanism means to him or her.²⁹ It begins with a definition: Europeanism is the belief that one may recognize and perhaps be proud of the characteristics and principles of Europe. The author argues, however, that this is impossible in practice due to the contradictions. The writer asks what Czechs, Russians, Spaniards and others really have in common and finds no answer. An excursion through history points only to the domination of one country by others. In the end, the author remarks that the word has a very individual meaning, even if it is increasingly used to mean something that connects us and "appears primarily in connection with the EU as an opposite to Americanism." Besides being born in Europe, the author does not give the term any particular meaning.

Since 1992 the European Union has also funded an annual school competition in the Czech Republic entitled "Evropa ve škole," in which students from different grades write essays on given European themes. In the past, the topics have been "Living together in Europe," "Our Histories – our European future," and "Being a Citizen in a Changing Europe." The last title itself points to a particular desired interpretation of Europe. Although this contest may have a political goal, the current essays do not always adhere to the ideals of the organizers. Although the theme Europeanism has not been presented, topics such as "Does loving your home mean loving Europe" or "My homeland Europe" come very close. In the first case, the Jan Břehovský, recipient of the third prize, answers the title "Does loving your home mean loving Europe" in a word: "no. Just because I love my Czech pancakes, doesn't mean I love all Czech cuisine. Moreover, comparing one's love for Europe to one's love for one's homeland is too general and has most recently become a very popular cliché which reminds me all too much of something which I fortunately only know from my parents stories: the duty to love the Soviet Union for all eternity. Home is trust, security and love. And Europe? It is still only a great challenge, in part a temptation and a dream chase, in part the unknown, a source of worries and fear. It isn't home."³⁰

The leaders of tomorrow's Europe share the same "populist" views found in the politics of the ODS, see Europeanism simply as a political ploy, yes even refer to the same comparisons of Europe with the Soviet Union. It is perhaps somewhat ironic that in selling the EU as Europe the younger generation has begun to reject a European identity. Perhaps a key step in addressing Euroskepticism and moving the project EU forward would be a differentiation between the EU- and Europe, free from the rhetoric of a common history and culture, and instead a concentration on pragmatic social and economic arguments, arguments even Euroskeptics often accept.

²⁸ Třeštík 180.

²⁹ <<http://referaty-seminarky.cz/co-je-to-vlastne-evropanstvi/>>.

³⁰ <<http://www.evropaveskole.cz/sbornik/sb52uvod.htm>>.

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Norway and the EU: Will Norway become a member?

Christoffer Grønstad

Norwegians have rejected membership in the European Union twice. Why? And why is the question of membership a non-question in the Norwegian government when the Minister of Foreign Affairs is in favor of membership?

Few political issues divide the Norwegians more than the question of membership in the European Union.

"Give Norway the right to vote in Europe," says the European Movement in Norway on their home page.¹ It is precisely this right to vote, or "access to the table" that is one of the crucial points in the membership debate. For example, today, between 80 and 90 per cent of the Norwegian legislation on environmental protection comes from the EU.² In fact, on the web site of the Norwegian Government, we can read "Norway tends to adjust faster to EU-legislation than the EU member states."³ In August 2006 Denmark was the only member state that implemented EU-directives faster than Norway. The 2006 survey showed that it took 6,43 months on average to implement an EU-directive in Norwegian legislation.⁴

The European Movement in Norway sees this as a severe lack of democracy; others are making decisions for Norway while Norwegians have no say on the decisions affecting them. On the other side of the political spectrum, the organization *No to the EU* also opposes membership in the EU, claiming that Norway can do more for the environment as an independent actor outside the EU. Traditionally, the majority

Towards the first referendum

The first time Norway applied for membership in the EU was in April 1962. Back then the Norwegian Government followed the EFTA-countries that applied in 1961 (Ireland in July, Great Britain and Denmark in August).

In January 1963, the French president Charles de Gaulle vetoed the membership process of Great Britain. The negotiations with Denmark, Ireland, and Norway were also put on hold.

In 1967 Ireland, Great Britain, Denmark, and Norway again applied for membership – and Charles de Gaulle once again denied their request.

In 1969 Charles de Gaulle left office, and the membership applications were again taken into consideration. In June 1970 the European Communities started negotiations with the four countries.

In January 1973 Denmark, Ireland, and Great Britain became members of the EU. But Norway did not. A majority of the Norwegians (53,5 per cent of votes cast) rejected the agreement and thereby membership in a referendum in September 1972.

(More: <http://www.eu-norge.org/Norges+forhold+til+EU/historikk/historikk.htm>)

¹ <<http://www.jasiden.no>>.

² <http://www.wwf.no/om_wwf/hvor_jobber_vi/i_europa/index.cfm>.

³ <<http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/krd/dok/NOUer/2005/NOU-2005-06/10/2/3.html?id=390290>>.

⁴ <<http://www.heis.no/Nyheter.aspx?docid=171>>. (16 Aug. 2006)

The EEA Agreement

The Agreement creating the European Economic Area (EEA Agreement) was negotiated between the community, the member states of the EU and the EFTA countries, and was signed in May 1992. The EEA Agreement entered into force on January 1, 2004.

The EEA entitles Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein to participate in the European Single Market, while not assuming the full responsibilities of EU-membership.

The agreement gives the right to be consulted by the commission during the formulation of community legislation, but not the right to a voice in decision-making, which is reserved exclusively for member states.

All new community legislation in areas covered by the EEA becomes part of the agreement by EEA joint committee decisions. It subsequently becomes part of the national legislation of the EEA EFTA countries.

The EEA Agreement makes EFTA members the most closely linked countries to the EU.

The EEA Agreement addresses the four fundamental pillars of the European Single Market, "the four freedoms", i.e. freedom of movement of goods (excluding agriculture and fisheries, which are included in the Agreement only to a very limited extent), persons, services and capital.

(More:
http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eea/index.htm)

of the environment organizations in Norway share this view. Most of them have taken a clear stand against membership and were particularly active in the fight against membership in the political battles before the referendums in 1972 and 1994.

The organization *No to the EU* considers the fact that the Norwegian government has never used the opportunity to veto a directive from the EU, a right that was negotiated into Norway's agreement with the EU under the European Economical Agreement signed in 1992 a still bigger democratic problem.⁵

The use, or more precisely the non-use, of the veto is a repeated issue in the public debate in Norway. It is often claimed that the Norwegian Parliament would have rejected the EEA Agreement without the provision for a veto to EU legislation. Critical voices claim that when the prerogative to veto is never used the agreement as such is also devalued.

Democratic traditions

Democracy, environment, trade, development and independence on the global level have been among the core issues in the membership debate in Norway since the beginning and are just as crucial today.

"They fear their own people!" the organization *Youth against the EU* claims on their web site.⁶ This comment refers to different governments' opposition to the demand for referenda on the new EU constitution.

The lack of participation in EU elections is used as an argument against membership in the EU. Voter participation in Norwegian elections is also decreasing but not with the same speed as in the elections for the European Parliament.

⁵ <<http://secretariat.efta.int/Web/EuropeanEconomicArea/EEAAgreement/EEAAgreement>>.

⁶ Youth against the EU - <<http://www.umeu.no>>.

While voter participation in the EU Parliament elections was only 45,7% in 2004, 77,4% of all registered voters cast a ballot in the elections for the Norwegian Parliament. In the 1994 referendum on Norwegian EU membership, the participation rate was even 89%.⁷

Geography counts

If you turned Norway around with Oslo as it axes, the Northern part of Norway would reach to Rome. There has traditionally been a sense of mistrust in the more rural areas of Norway to everything that is decided upon centrally. A common argument is that the rural areas have less people but more land – and that this is where Norwegian resources are located. This affects the Norwegian Constitution in two ways:

Geographical distance to the capitol is compensated with more seats in Parliament, meaning that a county in the northern part of Norway will have more seats in parliament per vote and inhabitant than does the capitol Oslo.

A high degree of local government autonomy.

The smallest municipality in Norway is Utsira with 214 inhabitants. 13 of these are elected to the Municipal Council. Despite its size, the municipality has all the structures to ensure political independence from the central government in Norway.⁸

Local democracy is further illustrated by the large number of local newspapers, which again leads to Norwegians reading more newspapers than anyone in Europe.⁹

When one considers its population, Norway with its 4.5 million inhabitants is a small country. Although not every Norwegian knows one of the 169 members of Parliament personally, it is said that every Norwegian knows someone who knows a member and everyone is welcomed to Parliament with his or her own

Towards the 1994 referendum

In 1986 the EU changes the decision-making process. The establishment of an inner market is possible.

In 1989 the EFTA country Austria applies for EU membership. Formal negotiations on the EEA Agreement begin in 1990. The Schengen Convention is signed.

Sweden sends their membership application in 1991, Finland in 1992. The EEA Agreement goes into effect in 1992. In a referendum in December, the majority of the Swiss people reject the idea of EU membership.

The Norwegian Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland sends the Norwegian application for a membership in November 1992.

In January 1993, the inner market is established and membership negotiations between Norway and the commission start in April. Norway and Iceland become members of the European Single Market in January 1994, when the EEA Agreement comes into force.

In November 1994 52.5% of the votes cast rejected the Norwegian Government's wish for membership in the EU. The EFTA countries Finland, Austria, and Sweden became members of the EU as of January 1995.

(More: <http://www.eunorge.org/Norges+forhold+til+EU/historikk/historikk.htm>)

⁷ Statistics Norway <<http://www.ssb.no>>.

⁸ <<http://www.utsira.kommune.no>>.

⁹ European Social Survey
<<http://www.forskning.no/Artikler/2005/oktober/1128326919.86>>.

Recent developments

In 2001, the five Nordic countries become members of Schengen. Continued mobility and passport freedom within the five countries is ensured.

With the enlargement of the EU in 2004, the EEA is also enlarged.

The EEA's financial mechanisms were established and aim to reduce social and economic disparities within the European Economic Area and to enable all EEA countries to participate fully in the Single Market. As part of the EEA Financial Program, the three EEA-EFTA states Iceland, Liechtenstein, and Norway will make a total €600 million available to the 10 countries that joined the EU and the EEA in May 2004, as well as to Greece, Portugal, and Spain.

Through the Norwegian Financial Program, Norway will make an additional €567 million available to the 10 countries that joined the EU and the EEA in 2004.

Both programs run over a five-year period until 2009. Norway, the largest of the three donors, will contribute close to 1.14 billion Euro.

The EEA Financial Program will also provide 72 million Euro to Bulgaria and Romania, which joined the EEA in 2007, over a two-year period until 2009, while Norway will contribute an additional €68 million to the two new EEA members over the same period through bilateral cooperation programs.

(More: <http://www.eu-norge.org/Norges+forhold+til+EU/historikk/historikk.htm> and www.eeagrants.org/)

personal history.

This gives Norwegian citizens better access to Parliament and parliamentarians than in most other countries. Moving the power to Brussels will of course influence this power structure and the opportunity to have direct contacts with the people in power.

On top of this, many Norwegians have a picture of the EU as an institution that can only be lobbied if you have an office in Brussels and a powerful organization backing you. Several of the debates concerning different directives to be implemented in Norwegian legislation have also helped create an image of the EU as an institution where power rests in the hands of big companies and their professional lobbyists in Brussels. As a result, more and more civil society organizations as well as Norwegian municipalities and regions have opened their own offices in Brussels.

Desire for local and global influence

Skepticism to moving power out of the country and to European institutions can be seen as part of a prolonged skepticism to the centralization of power within Norwegian borders. But at the same time, the Norwegians also have the strongest confidence in the United Nations of all Europeans: 78,2% of Norwegians trust the United Nations. The European average is 44,4%.¹⁰

In fact, both proponents of as well as opponents to membership in the EU use global responsibility as an argument in debates. While the former claim that Norway should join the EU to have a say in the global arena, the later state that Norway should remain independent from the EU and join forces with developing countries.

¹⁰ European Social Survey
<<http://www.forskning.no/Artikler/2005/oktober/1130147824.37>>.

A more active approach to European policy

How can JEF Norway be one of the most active branches of the *Young European Federalists* (JEF) when Norway is not even a member of the EU? And will Norway join the EU soon?

The position of the current government is that Norway can and shall influence the decisions that affect Norway on the level of the EU. The government, elected in 2005, declared that one of its goals is to participate more actively in the ongoing processes in the EU and to increase the knowledge about the institution both within the Government, within the state administration and the population.

The means for achieving this goal are training ministers and staff in the ministries, a more pro-active approach to different processes going on in the EU and more resources for political parties, civil society and governmental structures to deal with these processes. This is also partly the reason that *Young European Federalists* has activities in Norway every year.

The government is divided

The government is however not at all ready to negotiate Norwegian membership in the EU. Although a majority within the party of the Prime Minister, the Social Democrats, would like Norway to join the EU, the two other parties in the current government, the Center Party and the Socialist Left Party, are against a membership.

In the government declaration adopted as the basis for the cooperation between three parties (The Soria Moria Declaration,¹¹ named after a Norwegian fairy tale), the three parties state, "The government will not apply for Norwegian membership in the EU." If any one of the parties brings up the question of sending a membership application, the coalition government will fall. There are also voices in the two parties opposing membership in the EU and critical of the EEA Agreement, although the Soria Moria Declaration clearly states that the "Government will co-operate with the EU based on the EEA Agreement."

Norway has a majority government¹² for the first time in more than 20 years – and it is not likely that there will be a change in government within the four-year mandate of Parliament. The previous Government also had a similar clause in its declaration that defined its relationship to the EU. The former government consisted of the Conservative Party, the Christian Democrats and the Liberal Party.

In conclusion, not only the general public, but also the political parties (internally and in Parliament) as well as the current government are divided on

EFTA

The European Free Trade Association was established in January 1960.

The members were Norway, Sweden, Great Britain, Denmark, Switzerland, Austria and Portugal.

Iceland became a member in 1979, Finland in 1986, and Liechtenstein 1991.

¹¹ <<http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/smk/Documents/Reports-and-action-plans/Rapporter/2005/The-Soria-Moria-Declaration-on-Internati.html?id=438515>>.

¹² A Government made up by parties that also have the majority in Parliament.

the question of membership in the EU. A full round of negotiations and campaigning related to a referendum on membership has twice shown to be a demanding exercise that leaves little interest in opening the battle over membership again – until there seems to be a clear majority in the population.

Reviewing Euroskepticism

Kenneth Hanshew

The preceding articles explore European identity, European integration, and Euroskepticism in the Czech Republic, Norway, Slovakia, and the countries of former Yugoslavia in both politics and general discourse. Discourse that questions the concept of Europe and/or the type of European integration represented by the EU may, however, not only be read in the words of newspaper articles, political speeches, intellectual musings, and informational pamphlets mentioned in these articles. Similar questioning, similar stereotypes, even the same way of viewing the EU and European integration may also be found in the language of caricatures, cartoons and political campaign posters.

The following is a selection of not only the critical, but often also humorous views of the EU and European integration prevailing shortly before and after the enlargement of the EU in 2004 and continuing to the present. In the first two images, the authors associate the European Union with totalitarianism.

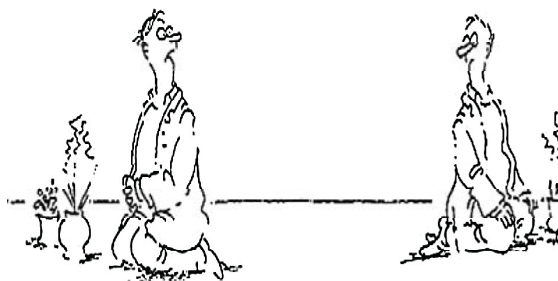


2003

Euroskeptik combines the emblems of the European Union with the hammer and sickle of the Soviet Union thus implying they are one and the same. Czech critics of the EU show their similar view by referring to the EU's socialist nature or by even calling the EU *Evropský svaz* instead of using the official name *Evropská unie* to make the similarity to the Soviet Union (*Sovětský svaz*) clear. In the second, Vladimír Renčín recalls George Orwell's indictment of totalitarianism 1984 by referring to Big Brother, who is no longer in

the East, in the Soviet Union, but has now moved to Brussels. Both show how the new European power revives old anxieties.

The fear of losing one's identity in the wake of European integration and increasing centralization also takes forms independent from the country's historical experience.



ŤÁKÉ SE OBRACÍTE NA VELKÉHO BRATRA? PŘESTĚHOVAL SE, UŽ NESÍDLÍ NA VÝCHODI

Are you also turning to Big Brother? He has moved, he doesn't live in the East anymore.

Právo 18.8.2006

**Evropská
integrace
(EU)**

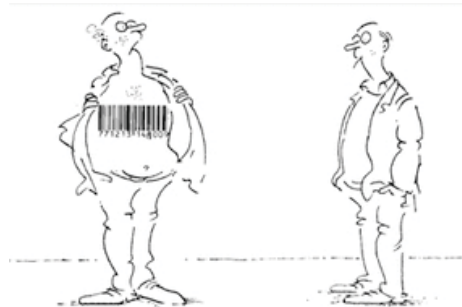


<http://www.nsj.cz/humor.html>

The picture to the left with the title "European Integration (EU)" shows how the right-wing organization Národní sjednocení [National unity] envisions integration. Everyone should have the same uniform appearance, no matter how absurd and contrary to one's nature this may be.

Vladimír Renčín's caricature expresses a similar fear of conformity. The speaker reveals

the bar code on his chest as "one of the new regulations from Brussels." On the one hand, this is simply humorous, for it is rather unlikely that the EU will begin stamping its citizens. But on the other, the bar code suggests that in the vast governmental bureaucracy of the EU, citizens are reduced to the status of mere objects. In both cases, integration is taken as a dreadful form of centralization.



A new regulation from Brussels

Právo 4.7.2003

The examples above target the EU and European integration. Others, however, go so far as to question the existence of any common history in Europe as a basis for a shared European home.



BYL DŮSEM PŘI OBLÉHÁNÍ LA ROCHELLE, ZKORUPČOVÁ DŮSEM SEVEŘĀNKY, VĚTEL SEDĀVĀKY U BRUSELU, PROBĚHL MĚ U LANDSHUTU, PROPĀL DŮSEM VILDŠTEJNA V CHEBU, NE MŀNĚ NIHDŀ NEBŮDE NIC VYKĀDATĚ O NOVĀM EVROPMANSTVĀ.

Právo 30.4.2004

Europe as a basis for a shared European home. The image of a battle reminds us that European history may be read as a series of small conflicts and great wars between rivals, not a harmonious joint venture inspired by shared values. In avoid any confusion on how Europeanism should be interpreted, the soldier remarks:

I was at the siege of La Rocheile, I've raped women from the North, hanged farmers in Brussels, was shot in Landshut, and stabbed Waldstein in Cheb. No, nobody is going to tell me anything about the new Europeanism.

This skeptical attitude concerning the very nature of Europeanism goes beyond a simple critic of the EU, calling any form of European integration into question.

Although the cartoons and posters resulted from the study of Euroskeptical material in the Czech Republic from 1989 until the present, one finds that the ideas are not only particular to the Czech Republic. In fact, the images offer a brief "re-view" of similar ways of thinking and shared skepticism found in all the countries studied, as the careful reader may recognize.

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