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**OPPOSITION TO EUROPEAN INTEGRATION:  
ANALYSIS OF EUROSCEPTICISM AT THE  
ELECTORAL AND CITIZEN LEVEL FROM A  
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE**

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## **Agraïments**

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## Abstract

The legitimation crisis that is facing the European Union endangers its integration project. Eurosceptic deputies have steadily increased, being the current European Parliament the most Eurosceptic in recent decades. In the same way, European public opinion makes its vote of protest felt at the polls. Considering this, Euroscepticism has become a generic term used by the academic literature that is not always useful to capture the nuances of the different types of opposition to the integration. Two complementary approaches have been used to measure integrationist attitudes at political and citizen levels. A qualitative methodology through a *framing* analysis of the selected electoral programs has been used to present the different forms of opposition or criticism that political parties use towards the European Union. Likewise, I use a quantitative —empirical— analysis of the European public opinion through a binary logistic regression to find those variables that can best predict the Eurosceptic sentiment in citizens. The findings obtained overcome the reductionist and simplistic distinction between “*hard*” and “*soft*” Euroscepticism, showing that Euroscepticism does not constitute a homogeneous ideology, but rather a transversal ideological phenomenon that differs in intensity and in the arguments used when criticizing or opposing the current level of integration. Furthermore, it is appreciated a correlation between the dominant discursive practices of Eurosceptic political elites and those key areas that best predict the probability of a citizen being Eurosceptic. In this sense, it would be convenient to determine in future lines of research the ascending —*bottom-up*—, descending —*top-down*— or bidirectional nature of this relationship.

**Keywords:** European Union, integration project, Euroscepticism, European public opinion, political parties, European Parliament, *framing* analysis.

## Resum

La crisi de legitimitat que afronta la Unió Europea amenaça el seu projecte d'integració. Els nombre de diputats euroescèptics ha augmentat constantment, sent l'actual Parlament Europeu el més euroescèptic de les últimes dècades. De la mateixa manera, l'opinió pública europea ha fet sentir el seu vot de protesta a les urnes. Tenint en compte això, l'euroescepticisme s'ha convertit en un terme genèric utilitzat per la literatura acadèmica que no sempre és útil per captar els matisos dels diferents tipus d'oposició a la integració. S'han utilitzat dos enfocaments complementaris per mesurar les actituds integracionistes a nivell polític i ciutadà. D'una banda, s'ha utilitzat una metodologia qualitativa a través d'una anàlisi del *framing* dels programes electorals seleccionats per tal de presentar les diferents formes d'oposició o crítica que utilitzen els partits polítics envers la Unió Europea. Així mateix, he realitzat una anàlisi quantitativa —empírica— de l'opinió pública europea a través d'una regressió logística binària per trobar aquelles variables que millor poden predir el sentiment euroescèptic dels ciutadans. Les troballes obtingudes superen la distinció reduccionista i simplista entre euroescepticisme “*hard*” i “*soft*”, mostrant que l'euroescepticisme no constitueix una ideologia homogènia, sinó un fenomen ideològic transversal que difereix en la intensitat i en els arguments utilitzats a l'hora de criticar o oposar-se a l'actual. nivell d'integració. A més, s'aprecia una correlació entre les pràctiques discursives dominants de les elits polítiques euroescèptiques i aquelles àrees clau que prediuen millor la probabilitat que un ciutadà sigui euroescèptic. En aquest sentit, seria convenient determinar en futures línies de recerca el caràcter ascendent —*bottom-up*—, descendent —*top-down*— o bidireccional d'aquesta relació.

**Paraules clau:** Unió Europea, projecte d'integració, euroescepticisme, opinió pública europea, partits polítics, Parlament Europeu, anàlisi del *framing*.

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## 1. Introduction

The current situation of the European Union is far from those times in which the integration project was indisputable and was perceived as unquestionable. Currently, the European project is no longer enthusiastic in the same way as before and there are more and more critical or sceptical voices towards the Union, being opposed to the transfer of quotas of national sovereignty to a supranational entity such as the European Union. In the face of this crisis of legitimacy that threatens the Union, more and more political parties are presenting themselves in the European elections with clearly Eurosceptic proposals, supposing a clear threat to the stability of the European integration project, as well as to the founding values of this. The clearest sign that voters in Europe are beginning to care more about European issues has been the rise in popularity of those political parties that proposed a radical reform of the European Union or even leaving it (Hobolt, 2018). In the same way, the number of Eurosceptic deputies in the European Parliament has steadily increased election after election, proving that the current European Parliament is the most Eurosceptic in recent decades.

However, this increase in the attractiveness of the Eurosceptic parties has not occurred alone but has advanced in accordance with a European public opinion that increasingly expresses doubts or apprehension about the integration process. European citizenship has made its vote of protest, frustration and scepticism heard at the polls. We can say, then, that from the citizen level the conception of the Union has changed significantly during the last years. Citizens are increasingly suspicious of the European Union's institutions. This dissatisfaction with politicians, and the lack of political options, have contributed to growing support—from the national and European level—for radical and more Eurosceptic alternatives, both on the left and on the right. In fact, voting behaviour in European Parliament elections is often considered to be a protest vote given the “Second Order” nature. This defining character of European elections allows voters to express their discontent by protesting against the incumbent national government, or even against the course of European integration.

To measure integrationist attitudes, I have found it useful to design a research methodology based on two complementary approaches. On the one hand, I have used a qualitative methodology through an analysis of the discourse and content—framing analysis—of the selected political formations' electoral programs. On the other hand, a quantitative—empirical—analysis of the opinions and attitudes of citizens towards the European Union, with the aim of evaluating European public opinion regarding the integration project.

## **1.1. Research Questions**

Therefore, my intention is to focus on the phenomenon of Euroscepticism at the political and citizen level from a comparative perspective, that I am going to study from these two research questions:

- What different forms of opposition to European integration exist in the electoral programs of the Eurosceptic parties that run for the European Parliament elections?
- What is the ideological and sociodemographic profile of the Eurosceptic European citizen?

## **1.2. Theoretical and Practical Relevance**

Bearing all these facts in mind, I think it is especially relevant to focus my research on carrying out an exhaustive analysis of the electoral programs of those parties that are Eurosceptic in order to try to determine the basis that makes up the different current Eurosceptic discourses, as well as the motivations that lead citizens to give confidence to these parties. In addition, the genre of the electoral program has been scarcely studied, however, it is necessary and relevant to know to analyse the political language in all its manifestations through the framing theory approach. That is why it will also be of special relevance to focus the study, not only on the Euroscepticism of the political elites but also on Euroscepticism at the citizen level through an analysis of European public opinion to determine the evolution of the political community and European public sphere, taking into account the perceptions and preferences of citizens about the EU political regime in order to accurately describe the profile of that European citizen who has Eurosceptic preferences and understand their motivations.

## **1.3. Research Objectives**

In order to do so, this research pursues the following objectives:

- Perform a comparative analysis of the electoral programs of different Eurosceptic political parties to estimate and determine which elements support their Eurosceptic discourse. In other words, it is about carrying out an exhaustive study of the concept of "Euroscepticism", paying particular attention to the meaning given to the term by the different formations through their political programs, presenting the dominant

discursive practices, the narrations and the arguments used by the opposition political formations of the integration project

- Understand the meaning and perception that the Eurosceptic political parties have assigned to the European integration project through a content analysis of their electoral programs in the framework of the 2019 European Parliament elections.
- Facilitate the comparison of Eurosceptic approaches made by the different selected political parties with the aim of determining the degree of affiliation of each party to Eurosceptic approaches, capturing the nuances of the different types of Euroscepticism, understood as political opposition to the current process of European integration.
- Describe the Eurosceptic European citizen's profile, analysing key issues of public opinion and sociodemographic elements to understand what motivations cause some of them to be classified as Eurosceptics. In other words, it is about studying Euroscepticism from the citizen level, capturing those most relevant factors that influence more and more citizens to vote for Eurosceptic formations.
- Capture those ideological and sociodemographic variables that are statistically more significant when predicting Euroscepticism at the citizen level.
- Theorize the possible motivations or causes that lead part of the European electorate to support Eurosceptic approaches.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1. Understanding Euroscepticism**

#### **2.1.1. The notion of the concept: “Euroscepticism”**

We can locate the origin of the term "Euroscepticism" in the mid-1980s as a distinctively British phenomenon due to the criticisms and reservations that Premier Margaret Thatcher had of the European Community. Since then, its usage has been synonymic to emphasize the discontent and distrust generated towards the European Union and its integration project. Although in the origins of the term, the phenomenon tended to be observed as a British singularity and exceptionality, “it became generalized in other community members, which helped to reinforce the fortune of the term, especially since it has become a permanent structural reality of the European political landscape” (Rodríguez-Aguilera, 2012: 23).

Even though the origin of the term is not academic but journalistic, specialists in European politics have continuously endowed it with meaning, using an empirical and theoretical corpus that defines it, going from being a simple journalistic expression to a formal concept characteristic of political analysis. This progressive accumulation of a broad academic research base has helped refine the concept, although it does not yet have fully closed and definitive categories.

The term ‘scepticism’ by itself means an attitude related to doubt or disbelief. It should be remembered that, in current political, academic and media discourse, Euroscepticism is equivalent to different forms of criticism, opposition and mistrust of the European integration process. "It expresses doubts or apprehension regarding European integration, manifesting itself in a wide range of critical positions that include, among others, frontal and open opposition to the EU" (Hooghe & Marks, 2007: 120).

Therefore, Euroscepticism is often used as a synonym to define some kind of opposition to the implementation of the institutional and political development of the European Union, thus expressing a contingent and qualified opposition to the European integration process. Accordingly, the term ranges from opinions that simply express doubts about the European Union to those that directly reject being part of the integration process. It is precisely at this point where we find one of the greatest operational difficulties since trying to draw the line between those opinions that are critical of the Union but do not question its legitimacy and those that seek to completely delegitimize the European project.



But the truth is that it is not only a matter of gradations or intensity of the arguments but of the different existing motivations that are used to justify support for Eurosceptic approaches. Considering the above, it should be noted that "the term has more congruence if it is applied to those with a strict view of European intergovernmental cooperation and a rejection of the supranational delegation of responsibilities of the *sovereign* State responsibilities" (Hooghe & Marks, 2007: 120).

Indeed, it would be reckless and inaccurate to equate destructive opposition —mostly concentrated on the radical right— with constructive opposition —mostly present on the radical left—. Or what is the same, we cannot assimilate the invocation for the abandonment and dismantling of the EU with the proclamations that demand a greater degree of integration than currently exists because, although both put the focus on the current integration project, they are completely opposite and differ in their purpose and motivation. For this reason, "classifying any type of criticism of EU policies or institutions as "Eurosceptic" is to contribute to the loss of the conceptual value of the term, which is essential for academic analysis" (Rodríguez-Aguilera, 2012: 25).

### **2.1.2. The nature of the phenomenon**

Taking into account that it is a "highly elusive and encompassing concept" (Álvarez, 2018: 29), we can understand the phenomenon from three dimensions. In the first place, it is a dynamic phenomenon, which makes difficult its apprehension: it has been changing over time as it has evolved with the integration process itself (Leconte, 2010: 4). Secondly, Euroscepticism is not the exclusive domain of one type of actor or group: there are numerous actors whose preferences show Euroscepticism, not only citizens and political parties but also the media, national institutions, interest groups or civil society (Álvarez, 2018: 30). In this way, we can say that it is not an isolated or singular phenomenon of a certain type of context, but rather a phenomenon characterized by enormous complexity, which interacts with different actors. For the same reason, it has ceased to be a marginal phenomenon, as it was in the origins of the term, to become, since the 1990s, a very present element in the European orbit, with an extraordinary and notorious impact on its integration process. Finally, Euroscepticism is a notion compatible with different ideologies, extending from the extreme right to the extreme left and even part of some major center parties. So, it does not constitute a single or homogeneous ideology (Leconte, 2010: 5). For this very reason, it is said that

Eurosceptic parties may differ in the intensity of their opposition to European integration or in the arguments they use to oppose it.

Taking all of the above into account, we can define the Eurosceptic phenomenon as a transversal ideological phenomenon that crosses the left/right axis and that we can find within the political parties themselves and in public opinion, ranging from those sovereign nationalists —unwilling to ceding more power to the Union or even supporters of recovering powers previously ceded— to those supranational federalists —those who criticize the current integration process for considering it insufficient, proposing an alternative construction of Europe—.

### **2.1.3. A new *cleavage*?**

On the one hand, it is true that European integration does not have a strong internal projection on the national politics of the Member States. These seldom give a major role to Eurosceptic arguments to win elections in their respective countries. Rather, it has been suggested that exists a partisan and strategic use of the term. In other words, there is a partisan strategic Euroscepticism, understood as a political tool used to mobilize voters by appealing to national identity and feelings (Benderfeldt, 2019). In fact, Euroscepticism can be easily confined to certain political areas, being more visible in sensitive and politicized areas, whereas in other areas, national governments support most of the EU's proposals, suggesting that Euroscepticism is often instrumentalized on politicized issues.

However, if we understand Euroscepticism as the confrontation between national sovereignty versus supranationality, for example, it could be considered a new cleavage, since it clearly reflects the emergence of a new dimension in competence policy, where we could find a clear division of voters into different blocks separated by "cleavages" (Lipset & Rokkan, 1967). Apart from the defense of state sovereignty over European sovereignty, the same would happen with other key issues on which Euroscepticism is largely based, such as the defense of national economic interests over community ones, the defense of the native people interests over the rights of immigrants, the trust or distrust in the institutions that make up the European Union, as well as the support or opposition to the political agenda defended in the European spheres.

Therefore, Euroscepticism itself can be considered a cleavage because it focuses on a redefinition of all these controversial issues being found in the foreign policy of the different

member states and reflects the emergence of a new dimension in political competition. That is why some experts describe it as a new transnational cleavage.

## 2.2. A historical overview of the phenomenon

The concept of Euroscepticism is relatively recent. During the beginning of the European integration project (from the mid-1950s to the end of the 1980s), the majority —although not unanimous— sentiment of those countries that participated in the integration project was favourable to it, with Euroscepticism being clearly marginal. However, although the concept was not used in the first decades of European integration, this did not mean the inexistence of movements and actors being critical of the process or opposed to it from its very origins, even though the majority of the population and the elite supported the integrationist process in what was called the *permissive consensus* (Lindberg & Scheingold, 1970). It is said in the literature that there was a consensus since there was a shared belief among the main existing political currents of the need to promote European integration, and it was permissive due to the high levels of trust placed in European institutions and elites, a fact that promoted the majority adherence of citizens to their commitments (Mair, 2007: 1).

It is especially from the 1990s that European integration becomes increasingly controversial, not only in public opinion but also in national political parties (Hooghe, 2007: 5). In fact, it is important to point out that citizens' opposition to European integration has occurred in parallel with the appearance of openly Eurosceptic movements and parties with positions manifestly opposed to some community policies. An event that showed for the first time a symptom of distancing and mistrust between the pro-integrationist elites and public opinion, being, at the same time, a clear detonating for Eurosceptic positions at the political and citizen level, was the intense debate on the Treaty of the European Union, which increased the powers of the European institutions and added a strong impetus to the idea of integration. These two elements were rejected by national public opinion, both for economic reasons —with very negative evaluations of the cost-benefit analysis— and for identity reasons —due to a weak and almost non-existent community feeling as well as strong national roots—, as well as a political disaffection and mistrust towards the Union —known as the “democratic deficit” of the EU—.

These events led to the end of the *permissive consensus*, turning the old passive support for European integration into restrictive dissent —*constraining dissensus*—. “Gone were the days when relatively isolated ruling elites negotiated grand treaties in the shadow of a disinterested

and generally indulgent public.” (Hooghe, 2007: 5). In this context, the Eurosceptic phenomenon became very evident in European political life, as well as in the public opinion of several Member States, manifesting itself, especially, in the European Parliament elections and those referendums of European issues. Events such as the Danish "no" in the referendum for the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and the difficulty in ratifying that treaty in France, were the first examples of a phenomenon that was clearly breaking out (Álvarez, 2018: 31).

There are those who dare to speak of a third stage in this historical evolution of Euroscepticism, although it is still very premature. This is a context marked by the financial crisis that the Union went through in 2008 and the humanitarian refugee crisis experienced, to a large extent, in 2015. A simple analysis of the evolution of public opinion in the EU in recent years allows us to identify, in general terms, how the succession of crises and the failures of the EU to overcome them made a dent in the trust and image that citizens had regarding the supranational entity and its institutions (Álvarez, 2018: 31). Specifically, it was in the second stage of the crisis, the well-known sovereign debt crisis, when the European institutions became more involved in managing the crisis and new institutions were created for it. Trust in EU institutions then became a (slightly) more important factor than in the past in explaining Eurosceptic tendencies (Serricchio, Tsakatika & Quaglia, 2013: 62). Regarding the humanitarian crisis that hit the Union, there were many citizens and the Member States of the European Union who perceived the massive influx of refugees as a security threat rather than a community challenge. Thus, many national positions arose that, in the face of the migration crisis, adopted an openly Eurosceptic and xenophobic discourse, instrumentalizing the humanitarian crisis as a pressure medium on the European Union, setting off public opinion alarms. The lack of coordination within the Union, with the absence of an assertive community migration policy, the inexistence of a competence capable of binding the States in this matter, and the breakdown of consensus within the Union by certain States that refused to accept the mandatory refugee quotas imposed by the EU, have illustrated a situation of fragility and hostility towards Brussels.

## **2.3. The two sides of Euroscepticism**

### **2.3.1. Social Euroscepticism**

There are a wide variety of causes that contribute to introducing the Eurosceptic phenomenon into European public opinion. Among them, a weak feeling of the European community, a

popular distrust towards the political representatives of the establishment, a concern about the migration crisis, the economic crisis that reinforces the trend towards protectionist measures, or the difficulty of the pro-EU elite to convince and enthuse to the European public about the integration project, are the ones that stand out the most (Rodríguez-Aguilera, 2012: 23). However, these causes are not easy to spot. Even experts contradict themselves when it comes to establishing those explanatory factors of the latest Eurosceptic tendencies.

Traditionally, experts tended to explore the link between financial crises and Euroscepticism, in order to know whether the crisis has caused a rise in anti-European sentiment. In other words, one of the empirical regularities found by some public opinion analysts was based on the idea that support for the European integration process was closely linked to the economic cycle, highlighting the positive correlation between rates of economic growth and support for the EU. The latent hope in this statement is that, as growth returns and macroeconomic variables improve, Euroscepticism will weaken (Álvarez, 2018: 35).

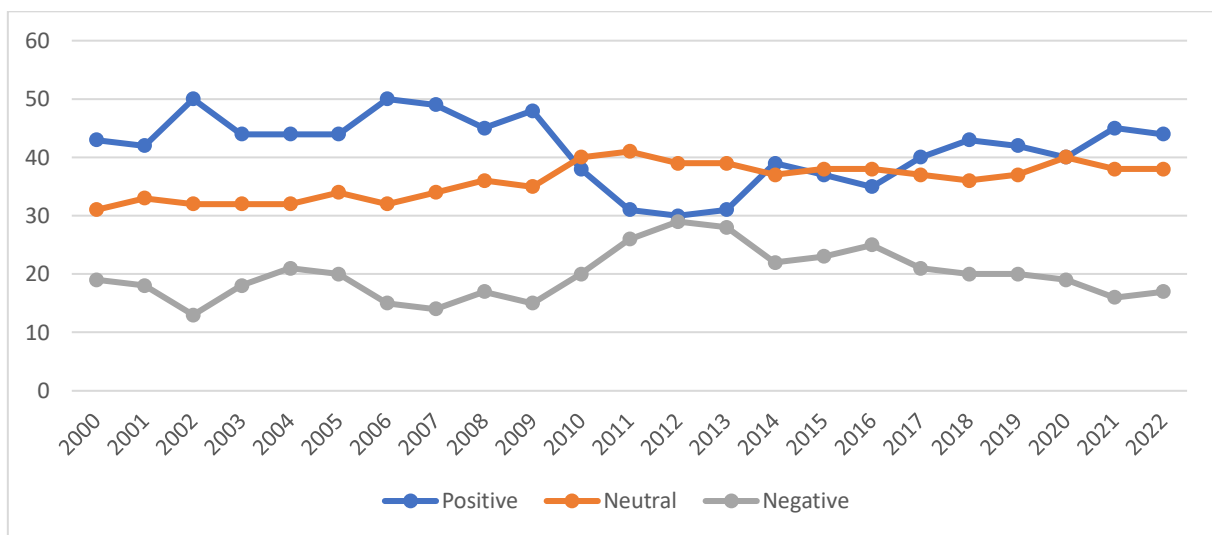
However, more and more experts affirm that, although it is true that Euroscepticism may have fluctuated in its origins according to the decline and rise of the economy, the economic explanation has a limited analytical influence (Serricchio, Tsakatika & Quaglia, 2013: 58). Thus, these authors affirm that the financial crisis did not make the economy one of the most determining sources or causes of Euroscepticism, but that the post-1992 trends show that the Eurosceptic phenomenon had already established itself regardless of the transitory economic conditions and it had been ingrained in longer-term cultural insecurities that have the potential to “suppurate” indefinitely (Baronia, 2017: 8). In this way, national identity and national political institutions play an increasingly important role in explaining Euroscepticism among citizens, significantly overcoming the previous positive correlation between the rate of economic growth and support for the EU. As Gottfried (2014) exposes, in quantitative terms, concern about the EU for economic reasons "is equivalent to a 47 percent chance of being Eurosceptic, while concern for cultural reasons increases this probability to 57 percent" (Gottfried, 2014: 20). The same author points out the concern about immigration and mistrust of the main political parties as key factors to consider.

In addition, according to other experts, the latest advances in Euroscepticism can be linked to the increase in discontent at the domestic level. According to this line of research, the growing presence of Eurosceptic approaches in the European public sphere is "a clear manifestation of the profound national democratic malaise that is also expressed at the

European level" (Álvarez, 2018: 35). Political scientists such as Peter Mair (2007), link the rise of Euroscepticism with a deep-seated scepticism movement present throughout Europe, which ends up also affecting national politics so that it is increasingly difficult to distinguish those causes of scepticism and political disaffection motivated by national or European factors.

Either way, what is clear is that it is becoming more and more manifest the Eurosceptic public opinion that makes its vote of protest and frustration felt in the results of the elections of recent years, both at a national level—in the legislative or presidential elections—and at European level—in the European elections—.

**Figure 1: Evolution of the public opinion's perception of the European Union**



Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Standard Eurobarometer.

As can be seen in the following graph, those who had a "positive" perception of the European Union have been drastically reduced—although it has recovered positions during the last years—. On the contrary, those who have a "neutral" image of the Union have been slightly climbing their positions until almost reaching the previous group. Finally, I consider that we can assimilate that part of public opinion that has a "negative" perception of the European Union with a Eurosceptic sentiment. In this way, it is clearly appreciated how in recent years the Eurosceptic positions of the population have increased very considerably, although stabilizing in recent years.

### 2.3.2. Political parties (elites) and Euroscepticism

The constant expansion of the European political agenda has not been able to accommodate the interests of all sectors, nor of the political parties. After having burst onto the European political scene in a manifest way in the 1990s, the increase in Eurosceptic discourse among the different political groups is currently unquestionable (Ray, 2007: 153). Today, in most European Union's member states, there are different types of Eurosceptic parties that compete in national and European elections, even in countries traditionally considered "Europhiles", such as those of Southern Europe, where the levels of support for the integration process have usually been high compared to other countries (McElroy & Benoit, 2011: 6).

Most of the literature adheres to Taggart's (1998) definition when classifying the different types of Euroscepticism present in political parties. The classification proposed by the author differentiates between a contingent or qualified opposition and an absolute or total opposition to the European integration process (Taggart, 1998: 365). In other words, Eurosceptic parties may differ in the intensity of their opposition to the European project and in the arguments used to oppose it. Thus, although they may differ in these variables, they converge in criticism—of greater or lesser intensity— of the integration process, coming to propose, at one extreme, certain reforms that modify the values on which the integration process is based— without intention to question its legitimacy—, and in the other, the total dissolution of the EU or the intention to abandon the club (Leconte, 2010: 8). Therefore, Euroscepticism, according to this classification, can take two main forms: a clear opposition to the European integration project or a simple criticism of certain elements that make up this integration process. This classification is also known for its famous distinction between "*hard*" Euroscepticism and "*soft*" Euroscepticism, the most widely used so far in the academic literature.

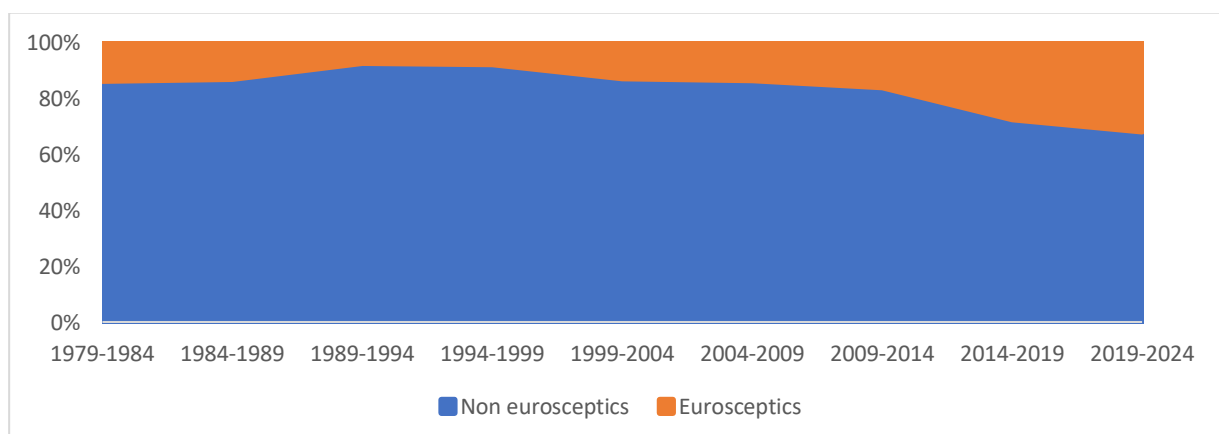
As I indicated earlier, the Eurosceptic phenomenon is characterized by uniting parties and movements of different ideologies, although it predominantly constitutes a phenomenon of extremes (Álvarez, 2018: 38). It is only at the extremes—both extreme right and extreme left— where we find political parties with clear Eurosceptic positions, expressing a "*hard*" Euroscepticism. Consequently, those parties that are most favourable and tolerant of European integration are situated, to a great extent, in the centre of the political-ideological spectrum.

Another element to take into account is that the elections to the European Parliament have traditionally been described as second-order national elections. It is precisely this nature that

has favoured the transfer of Euroscepticism from the national to the European political arena, favouring a peculiar and infrequent electoral behaviour that is used as a platform for Eurosceptic demands, where the national government in power is punished and voters bet on minority, extremist or alternative formations. In fact, this scenario has been used as a window of opportunity by those Eurosceptic political formations that pursue a populist strategy with the use of the term to attract votes, as I have previously developed. In this sense, Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012) points out that it is almost “natural” that the national parties critical of the EU are those of structural opposition—in terms of Panebianco—, being used as an electoral strategy to win votes. “In principle, the more distant the likelihood of being the ruling party, the easier it is to appeal to Euroscepticism as a distinctive element of protest against the ruling political elites” (Taggart, 1998: 382).

All this has led to an increase in the role and presence of Eurosceptic parties in the European Parliament, a phenomenon that has occurred in parallel with the collapse suffered by traditional European parties. Years ago, European politics was dominated by three great political families, all of them made up of traditional parties: the Christian Democrats, the Social Democrats and the Liberals. However, this situation has now been reversed, with the appearance of new Eurosceptic political families that challenge the hegemonic position of those traditional political groups, such as “Identity and Democracy”, “European Conservatives and Reformists” or “The Left in the European Parliament – GUE/NGL”.

**Figure 2: Eurosceptic and non-Eurosceptic political families’ temporal evolution in the European parliament**



Source: Own elaboration based on European Parliament website.



The previous graph shows, in an evolutionary way, the sum of all the Eurosceptic and pro-European political families that have existed in the European Parliament. I believe that it is especially relevant to highlight the rapprochement tendency that can be seen between the two categories, which means a considerable rise of those national political parties that are grouped into Eurosceptic political families once they are elected Eurodeputies.

On the other hand, there is some difficulty in establishing the link between the Eurosceptic discourse promulgated by political parties and Eurosceptic public opinion. On the one hand, there are those authors who affirm that it is the Eurosceptic discourse that emerges from political formations that influences the preferences and attitudes of citizens since it is unrealistic to think that citizens have strongly structured opinions that can serve as an incentive for the determination of political positions (Marks & Wilson, 2000: 435). On the other hand, there are those authors who argue that the process happens completely in reverse, that is, it is the Eurosceptic public opinion that influences the political parties positions on European issues, responding to the preferences of the electorate, well adapting their programs, or modifying their ideological positions (Otero Felipe, 2011: 270).

## **2.4. Varieties of Euroscepticism**

### **2.4.1. Academic contributions**

The academic literature on the study of Euroscepticism is rich because in recent years there has been a proliferation of classifications and new non-coinciding concepts about the term, a fact that has caused an important scientific debate that has been outlining and refining more and more the Eurosceptic phenomenon, by perfecting the empirical methods of evaluation and treatment of the data used (Rodríguez-Aguilera, 2021: 26). However, although there have been important advances in the matter, there are still problems with operationalizing the concept, a fact that explains why the academic literature has not offered a unanimous interpretation of it.

Although it is true that there is no other classification in the academic literature that has obtained more use and has not been replaced by any other, the dichotomous distinction proposed by Szczerbiak & Taggart (2002) between "*hard*" and "*soft*" Eurosceptic parties, described above, does not fully satisfy me since it is not capable of capturing all the nuances between the different types of Euroscepticism. This was expressed by authors such as Crespy & Verschueren (2009: 382), Kopecky & Mudde (2002) or Katz (2008), highlighting the need to establish more sophisticated and precise criteria when approaching the study of the term.

However, it should be remembered that Sczerbiack & Taggart (2002) were the ones who conducted the first large systematic study comparing the Eurosceptic phenomenon in various EU countries, resulting in very useful theoretical contributions for the academic community, despite their reductionist schematism.

Therefore, given the weakness of this previous classification, I must draw on to other classifications proposed by the academic literature that allows me to achieve a richer and more complete approximation of the phenomenon in question.

Authors such as Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012) also present the different forms of opposition to the EU, affirming that these differ in the forms and in the elements on which they fall. The author in question differentiates between: 1) direct opposition to any type of integration, 2) opposition to the current level of integration, considering it excessive, and 3) opposition to the current level of integration, considering it insufficient (Rodríguez-Aguilera, 2012, p.26). In other words, the first ones are explicitly anti-integrationist —negative rejection—, the second ones do not reject the principle of integration but consider that the current EU is forcing integration —the EU is too inclusive—, while the third ones do not reject the principle of integration —quite the opposite—, but they believe that the EU is going too slowly —the EU is too exclusive—, which is a positive rejection. To refine it further, Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012) classifies as "*Europhobes*" those who reject any type of integration, while those who oppose the current EU are "*Eurocritics*" since, although they repudiate the current level of integration for insufficient, its hope is that the EU will move decisively towards a supranational direction (Rodríguez-Aguilera, 2012: 42).

This last idea is closely related to what Taggart (1998) stated when he said that "all those who oppose the EU are, in short, sceptics, but not all sceptics are necessarily opponents of the integration process" (Taggart, 1998: 366).

In the same line, authors such as Kopecky & Mudde (2002) presented a very practical and visual scheme that groups four main variables and relates them in two dimensions —the attitude towards the principle of integration and the attitude towards community policies—. Regarding the first dimension, he distinguishes between "*Europhiles*" and "*Europhobes*". On the other hand, regarding the second dimension, it establishes a differentiation between "*Euro-optimists*" —they believe that the current integration process is correct since there is no alternative— and "*Europessimists*" —they believe that the EU is not moving in the right direction in accordance with its historical premises—. From now on, the different variables

are grouped into four positions: 1) “Euro-enthusiasts” (“Europhiles” and “Euro-optimists”), 2) “Euro-sceptics” (“Europhiles” and “Europessimists”), 3) “Euro-rejectors” (“Europhobes” and “Europessimists”) and 4) “Euro-pragmatics” (“Europhobes” and “Euro-optimists”). We can see it more clearly in the following table:

**Table 1: The fourfold model of party-based Euroscepticism**

		SUPPORT FOR INTEGRATION	
		<i>Europhiles</i>	<i>Europhobes</i>
SUPPORT FOR EUROPEAN UNION	<i>Euro-optimists</i>	Euro-enthusiasts	Europragmatists
	<i>Europessimists</i>	Euro-sceptics	Euro-rejectors

Source: Author’s own elaboration based on Kopecky & Mudde, (2002) classification.

But it was Flood (2002) who provided the academic literature with the most complete theoretical framework, made up of six main categories with their respective internal subcategories in order to cover "the entire potential range of positions related to European integration" (Rodríguez-Aguilera, 2012: 27). It stands out for its exhaustive conceptual character:

- 1) *rejectionist*:
  - a. as opposed to EU membership
  - b. opposition to participate in some of its basic policies
- 2) *revisionist*:
  - a. return to the state basic policies transferred
  - b. do so only with some very specific policies
- 3) *minimalist*:
  - a. accepted as the maximum current status quo for the entire community structure
  - b. only for some areas
- 4) *gradualist*:
  - a. supporting a greater integration for the whole
  - b. only for some areas
- 5) *reformist*: in favour of greater European commitment and a gradual increase in integration
- 6) *maximalist*:
  - a. for maximum integration of the entire structure of the EU,
  - b. for certain areas

Leaving aside the theoretical framework created around the term, there are also classifications that emphasize the different Euroscepticism prototypes according to the legislative behaviour

of Eurosceptic Eurodeputy. One of the most complete is the ones offered by Brack (2015), whose objective is to determine how these Eurosceptic Eurodeputy deal with the existing tension between having been elected for a platform from which they do not coincide and the expectations that their voters have deposited transmitting their confidence at the polls. Specifically, the author distinguishes between “*the absent one*” —characterized by low involvement and with the objective of dismantling the EU—, “*the public speaker*” —with the objective of breaking the consensus by permanently defending his cause—, “*the pragmatist*” —they want to achieve results without compromising their beliefs about the EU— and “*the participant*” —who seeks to influence the legislative process by participating in political deliberation—.

### 3. Hypothesis

After reviewing the existing academic literature on the research topic, the following hypothesis has been proposed for this research:

***Hypothesis 1:** There is a correlation between the dominant discursive practices of Eurosceptic political elites and those key areas where European public opinion shows greater support for Eurosceptic approaches.*

This is the hypothesis that I will test by comparing the two methodologies —the qualitative one for the study of Euroscepticism at the political level and the quantitative one for the study of Euroscepticism at the citizen level— that I will use in my fieldwork.

Likewise, I have added a couple of hypotheses for each of the levels of investigation —one referring to the Euroscepticism of the political elites and the other two referring to the Euroscepticism present in public opinion—:

***Hypothesis 2:** Euroscepticism can be easily confined to certain political areas, being more visible in sensitive and politicized areas, whereas in other areas, political parties support most EU proposals, suggesting that Euroscepticism is often instrumentalized on politicized issues.*

***Hypothesis 3.a.:** The Eurosceptic phenomenon has established itself in public opinion regardless of the transitory economic conditions and finds its motivations in a wide range of social, political, and national factors.*

***Hypothesis 3.b.:** Euroscepticism can be linked to the increase in discontent at the domestic level.*

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1. Techniques Applied in the Analysis of Information**

To measure integrationist attitudes, experts have used different methodological sources. I believe it is important to design a research methodology that allows me to capture both ideological and strategic variables—in Eurosceptic terms—. Consequently, this research will combine two complementary approaches. On the one hand, I will use a qualitative methodology through an analysis of the discourse and the content of the chosen political formations' electoral programs (see below). On the other hand, a quantitative analysis of the opinions and attitudes of Europeans towards the European Union, with the aim of evaluating European public opinion regarding the integration project. In this way and taking into account the wide projection of the study of Euroscepticism, not only its "magnitude"—quantitative criterion— but also its "motivation"—qualitative criterion— will be evaluated.

I will focus my research on the framework of the ninth parliamentary term of the EP (2019-2023) and, consequently, in the European elections of 2019. Although it is true that I am working on a legislature that is still in progress and has not ended, I have chosen this specific time period since my intention is to base my research on the most up-to-date data collection possible. In addition, the fact that the legislature is still in progress will not be a problem for my research because, in the case of qualitative research, I focus only on the electoral programs—published before the 2019 European elections, which would initiate the legislature object of study—, and in the case of quantitative research, I use a post-election voter study as a database, so it is not a problem either.

### **4.2. Data Collection and Justification of Case Studies**

#### **4.2.1. Qualitative Analysis**

Regarding the qualitative analysis—discourse and content analysis of the electoral programs—, I will focus on how the different Eurosceptic parties—from the entire political spectrum— differ in the "intensity" of their opposition to European integration—taking into account the different classifications presented in the theoretical framework— and in the arguments used to oppose it. The selected parties to carry out my investigation are the following:

- Rassemblement National (France)
- Brexit Party - UKIP (United Kingdom)

- Lega Norte (Italy)
- Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – PIS (Poland)
- Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia - KSČM (Czech Republic)
- Volt-Nederland (Netherlands)

I have selected the following list of parties since they are popularly known as "Eurosceptics", trying to make them differ in their intensity and arguments used to oppose the European integration project, as well as being part of different member states of the European Union so that the sample of parties analysed is sufficiently representative.

In this way, I will be able to capture this wide range of critical positions towards the EU, or in other words, I will be capable of pointing out and distinguishing the different forms of opposition or criticism to European integration that the different political parties carry out in the context of the European elections.

In order to do that, I will use the following table (see below) that I am going to fill in by collecting data from the electoral programs of each of the selected political parties:

**Table 2: Own-based table design to systemize and codify the different political parties' electoral programs (*Framing* method):**

<b>Different forms of opposition/criticism of political parties to European integration</b>	
<i>Political party:</i>	
<i>Country:</i>	
<i>Political ideology:</i>	
<i>Political family in EP:</i>	
<i>Source of data collection:</i>	
<b>CASE ANALYSIS</b> ( <i>boxes to fill</i> ):	
<b>EU's conception</b>	<i>Party's view of the EU, support or not for the principle of integration</i>
<b>Position on the current level of integration</b>	<i>Distinction (Rodríguez-Aguilera, 2012) between:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Europhobes (negative rejection): those who reject any type of integration.</i></li> <li>• <i>Eurocritics (positive rejection): those who reject the current level of integration (for insufficient or excessive).</i></li> </ul>
<b>Arguments used</b>	<i>It is about highlighting those conflictive areas (frames) that each</i>

<b>to oppose/criticize the current level of integration</b>	<p><i>political party uses as an instrument to express its Eurosceptic position:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ <i>e.g., national sovereignty, primacy of community law, democratic deficit, immigration, neoliberal project, imperialist positions, political agenda, economy, common market...</i></li> </ul>
<b>Intensity in opposition/criticism towards the EU</b>	<p><i>It is about classifying the political party according to the three different models that measure the Eurosceptic intensity presented in the theoretical framework:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>hard/soft (Szczerbiak &amp; Taggart, 2002)</i></li> <li>• <i>rejectionist/revisionist/minimalist/gradualist/reformist/maximalist (Flood, 2002)</i></li> <li>• <i>euro-enthusiasts/europragmatics/Eurosceptics/eurorejectors (Kopecky &amp; Mudde, 2002)</i></li> </ul>

Source: Own elaboration

In the same way, I am going to perform a quantitative *framing* analysis by highlighting those keywords (*frames*) which are more mentioned by the political party in its electoral program. In order to do so, I am going to use the WordStat program, which allows me to graphically represent the results obtained for each of them. Additionally, I will use a set of *framing* devices to operationalize the selected electoral content. In the following table, I expose the tools that will assist me in this regard:

**Table 3: Framing devices to analyse the content of the electoral programs:**

	<b>Framing methods</b>
Rhetorical, technical, discursive, and written devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Key words (number of repetitions)</li> <li>✚ Key areas of criticism towards the integration project</li> <li>✚ Metaphors, linguistic resources, and discursive techniques</li> <li>✚ Sentences which provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgement</li> <li>✚ Concluding statements and paragraphs</li> </ul>

Source: Own elaboration



#### 4.2.2. Quantitative Analysis

On the other hand, I will carry out a quantitative analysis, specifically, a binary logistic regression using "RStudio" software from a database extracted from the following questionnaire published by the *Leibniz Institute For The Social Sciences* (GESIS): European Parliament Election Study 2019, Voter Study: [https://search.gesis.org/research\\_data/ZA7581](https://search.gesis.org/research_data/ZA7581)<sup>1</sup>. The 2019 European Election Study (EES) Voter Study is a post-election study, conducted in all 28 EU member states after the elections to the European Parliament were held between 23 and 26 May 2019. The main objective of the 2019 EES Voter study is to study electoral participation and voting behaviour in European Parliament elections, but more than that. It is also concerned with the evolution of an EU political community and a European public sphere, with citizens' perceptions of and preferences about the EU political regime, with their evaluations of EU political performance, through questions that refer to electoral participation and party choice at the EU and national level; general political attitudes; interest in politics; background characteristics such as gender, age, education, religion...

Here we will try to understand the binary logistic regression as a predictor of those citizens with a greater tendency to support Eurosceptic approaches. In other words, using the estimations offered by the regression designed, I will obtain the probability that an individual is Eurosceptic depending on each one of the selected independent variables, which I want to test in relation to Euroscepticism. I have selected this dataset over Eurobarometer on the basis that the ESS is the most up-to-date dataset that includes the numerous variables I want to test in relation to Euroscepticism.

The dependent variable that I have selected to represent Euroscepticism and that I will make dichotomous is based on the following question (Q22) in the ESS, which refers to the respondent's perception regarding his/her country's membership in the EU:

*'In general, do you think that for your country the fact of being a member of the European Union is...?'*

*1 A Good Thing*

*2 A Bad Thing*

*3 Neither good nor bad*

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<sup>1</sup> Schmitt, Hermann, Hobolt, Sara B., Brug, Wouter van der, & Popa, Sebastian A. (2022). European Parliament Election Study 2019, Voter Study. *GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA7581 Data file Version 2.0.1*, <https://doi.org/10.4232/1.13846>.

To simplify the model, facilitate its interpretation and be able to perform a binary logistic regression, I will recode the selected variable in binary (dichotomous) form: 1 for ‘being Eurosceptic’ —those who had responded ‘A bad thing’— and 0 for ‘not being Eurosceptic’ —those who had responded ‘A good thing’ or ‘Neither good nor bad’—.

On the other hand, I have carried out an exhaustive review of the questionnaire to decide which questions of it I can use to configure new independent variables and test, in this way, what effect and significance they have on the dependent variable. I will also reconfigure these variables in order to be able to work better with them. In this way, I will pay attention to what relationship is established between these and the dichotomous dependent variable that measures Euroscepticism.

In order to work more comfortably, I will perform two binary logistic regressions. The first one will collect those independent variables of an ideological nature —general political attitudes and perceptions—, while the second one will include a set of independent sociodemographic variables. In this way, I will be able to analyse and describe the profile of the Eurosceptic European citizen from two outlooks: the ideological and the sociodemographic perspectives.

- 1) Ideological variables (general political attitudes and perceptions):
  - a. Satisfaction with how democracy works in his/her country (Q4)
  - b. Approval of the government’s work of his/her country (Q5)
  - c. Participation in the European Parliament elections (Q6)
  - d. Self-placement on the left-right ideological scale (Q11)
  - e. Same-sex marriage (Q14.3)
  - f. Immigration (Q14.5)
  - g. Environment (Q14.6)
  - h. Importance of living in a democratically governed country (Q16)
  - i. Trust in the European Parliament (Q18.2)
  - j. Perception of the general economic situation in his/her country (Q19)
  - k. Interest in politics (Q21)
- 2) Sociodemographic variables
  - a. Education level (D2)
  - b. Gender (D3)
  - c. Age (D4)

- d. Employment status (D6)
- e. Social class (D7)
- f. Rural-urban gap (D8)
- g. Religion (D9)
- h. Socioeconomic status of his/her family (D11)

## 5. Analysis

### 5.1. Comparative framing analysis of the different electoral programs selected

Starting from the premise that every political speech is fundamentally an argumentative text full of discursive strategies to capture the vote of citizens, I consider that it is especially important to pay special attention to the electoral program—one of the most prototypical political speeches—. It is for this reason that I consider it necessary to know and study the electoral program's genre in order to be able to analyse the political language in all its manifestations, knowing the tools, resources and strategies used by political formations when capturing the attention of their potential voters.

A possible approach to its study can be carried out through the *framing* approach, which can shed light on the discursive strategies of this genre. It should be recognized that the analysis of the *frame* of an electoral program offers advantages and disadvantages. Among the advantages, it should be noted that the applied methodological approach is valid for studying a party's positions with respect to the European Union since it allows the study of the Eurosceptic phenomenon as a whole—qualitatively and quantitatively—. However, one inconvenience to recognize is that electoral programs are predictive texts—simple electoral promises and slogans—and this circumstance can prevent the analysis of political party's true and sincere position regarding the European integration project—for this, the most appropriate thing would be to carry out an analysis of the legislative behaviour of Eurodeputies through their votes on key issues, for example—.

Thus, in this section, I will use a methodological approach based on the definitions of *framing* proposed by Entman (1993), and Gamson & Modigliani (1989). In this case, we can define the *framing* method as a mechanism that political parties use to reduce the complexity of an issue—such as membership in the European Union—, characterizing it in such a way that it can influence the perception of it by part of the audience—the voters, in this case—. In other words, the way in which a scenario is presented and treated by political elites can influence the preferences, perceptions, and conceptions of citizens about the Union and what it entails. *Framing*, therefore, consists of "selecting some aspects of perceived reality and making them more relevant in a communicative text, so as to promote a certain definition of the problem, an interpretation of its causes, a moral evaluation and/or a treatment recommendation for the matter described" (Entman, 1993: 52). In the same way, according to Gamson & Modigliani

(1989), *frames* are "interpretive packages" which give meaning to a certain subject. According to the authors, at the core of this "package", there is a "central organizing idea" or *frame*, which gives it meaning from a certain approach.

In this section, a methodology is offered that makes it possible to identify the most relevant elements, arguments and discursive techniques when criticizing or opposing European integration by six Eurosceptic political parties that participated in the 2019 European elections. It is therefore a matter of using the analysis of *framing* as a basis to study the *frames* used by the different Eurosceptic political parties in their electoral programs. In this sense, depending on how each political party formulates and presents its country's membership in the Union, voters will tend to support or reject it. If the framework used in the electoral program is, for example, to understand Union membership as a threat to national sovereignty, voters will tend to think that it is preferable to abandon it, while if, on the contrary, the frame used by the political formation emphasizes the enormous benefits — economic, commercial or security— that the fact of being part of the European Union means for the country, the voters will be proud and satisfied to be part of it.

In order to materialize the *framing* theory in my particular case study and with the intention of being able to work more comfortably, I have designed a table for each political party, in which I structure all the relevant information into various indicators —the conception of the European Union, the position regarding the current level of integration, those arguments used to oppose/criticize the current level of integration and the intensity of this opposition— making a brief summary of the content of each electoral program on European integration and accompanying it with several direct quotations taken from the program itself, which perfectly exemplify all those linguistic techniques and tools used by Eurosceptic political discourse to address and convince their audience.

In the same way, using the WordStat program, I have designed a graph for each electoral program showing those keywords (*frames*) that are most frequently repeated throughout their electoral programs, with the intention of seeing what the general and predominant approach is —positive or negative connotations— that they use when talking about the European Union.

However, due to the long extension of these six tables, I have designed the following table that operationalizes, synthesizes, and structures in a brief and clear way all the information that I have extracted after having carried out an exhaustive analysis of each of the selected electoral programs:

**Table 4: Own-based table design to systemize and codify the different political parties' electoral programs<sup>2</sup>:**

	<b>European Union's conception</b>	<b>Position on the current level of integration</b>	<b>Arguments used to oppose/criticize the current level of integration</b>	<b>Intensity in opposition/criticism towards the EU</b>
<b>Rassemblement National (France)</b>	EU: Transitory state of a link between European nations that has not yet found its definitive political form. It constitutes one more step towards the subjugation and dissolution of the Nations that compose it.	According to the distinction established by Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012): <b>'Europhobe'</b> (negative rejection).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The EU despises national identities (the denial of peoples and their sovereignty)</li> <li>• Criticism of European institutions (illegitimate authorities).</li> <li>• Violation of the rights of citizens in the name of defending the rights of minorities.</li> <li>• Criticism of the economic system and the euro (low growth rate, endemic unemployment, economic bankruptcy).</li> <li>• The EU does not watch over the security of its members (migratory avalanche, radical Islamism, mafias, criminal gangs).</li> <li>• Criticism of the European market (need to rebuild it to protect it from globalization).</li> </ul>	According to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the distinction established by Szczerbiak &amp; Taggart (2002): <b>'Soft Euroscepticism'</b>.</li> <li>➤ the classification established by Flood (2002): <b>'Revisionist'</b>.</li> <li>➤ the classification presented by Kopecky &amp; Mudde (2002): <b>'Eurorejector'</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Brexit Party - UKIP (United Kingdom)</b>	EU: A broken, undemocratic, illegitimate, and arbitrary political system that conspires against the United Kingdom and threatens its interests and sovereignty. A form of 'political establishment' that tends to perpetuate the status quo.	According to the distinction established by Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012): <b>'Europhobe'</b> (negative rejection).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outside the Union, Great Britain would be a more prosperous nation since it would save them from the budget in foreign aid and in general payments to the EU.</li> <li>• Liberate Great Britain's commercial policy from the control of the European Union, this being a great opportunity to increase trade and employment.</li> <li>• Control their national security without having to follow the EU's integrated immigration policies (fighting illegal immigration).</li> <li>• The EU threatens its national sovereignty (in favour of regaining control of its own laws, putting an end to European jurisdiction to build a sovereign, independent and autonomous state).</li> </ul>	According to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the distinction established by Szczerbiak &amp; Taggart (2002): <b>'Hard Euroscepticism'</b>.</li> <li>➤ the classification established by Flood (2002): <b>'Rejectionist'</b>.</li> <li>➤ the classification presented by Kopecky &amp; Mudde (2002): <b>'Eurorejector'</b>.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup> For an extended analysis of each electoral program, check out section 8.1 of the Appendix.

<p><b>Legia (Italy)</b></p>	<p><b>Norte</b></p> <p>EU: A gigantic supranational organization, devoid of true democratic legitimacy and made up of bureaucrats and speculators who set the agenda of their government at the expense of the physical and economic protection of their citizens.</p>	<p>According to the distinction established by Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012): <b>'Eurocritic'</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The euro has been an experiment that has not worked, being the main cause of the economic decline in the EU.</li> <li>• Fight against illegal and non-community immigration.</li> <li>• As a guarantee of national sovereignty, they are committed to the recovery of several transferred powers, as well as restoring the subsidiarity rule. Any European law or Treaty that conflicts with the Constitution must be rejected.</li> <li>• Criticism of the complexity of the EU Internal Market rules system (simplify it to achieve more potential).</li> <li>• Guarantee greater democratic control over institutions (avoid centralization in decision-making).</li> </ul>	<p>According to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the distinction established by Szczerbiak &amp; Taggart (2002): <b>'Soft Euroskepticism'</b>.</li> <li>➤ the classification established by Flood (2002): <b>'Revisionist'</b>.</li> <li>➤ the classification presented by Kopecky &amp; Mudde (2002): <b>'Europragmatist'</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Prawo Sprawiedliwość – PIS (Poland)</b></p>	<p><b>i</b></p> <p>EU: A union of States (union of homelands) that configures a certain integrated economic structure, resulting in a platform to live in peace, stability, and prosperity. Europe needs normal social relations based on the traditions of the European peoples.</p>	<p>According to the distinction established by Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012): <b>'Eurocritic'</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue with the reform of the judicial power according to the principle that the Constitution is the highest legislative act in Poland (above the EU treaties).</li> <li>• They demand the maximum increase in the reserve of structural funds in cohesion policies for their country.</li> <li>• An increased obtaining of funds for rural development from the EU's Common Agricultural Policy.</li> <li>• Harsh criticism of 'Euroenthusiasm' (meaning not respecting the obvious interests and subjectivity of Poland).</li> <li>• They reject the demands of the European Union (above all of Germany) regarding migration.</li> <li>• EU climate neutrality is too expensive for the countries.</li> <li>• Maintain the zloty as the national currency of Poland and oppose giving an ideological meaning to the euro.</li> <li>• Overcome the democratic deficit of the EU institutions.</li> </ul>	<p>According to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the distinction established by Szczerbiak &amp; Taggart (2002): <b>'Soft Euroskepticism'</b>.</li> <li>➤ the classification established by Flood (2002): <b>'Minimalist'</b>.</li> <li>➤ the classification presented by Kopecky &amp; Mudde (2002): <b>'Europragmatist'</b>.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia - KSČM (Czech Republic)</b></p>	<p>EU: A community of sovereign states that provide mutual benefits without harming each other. An opportunity to negotiate bilaterally advantageous and balanced conditions for every country. They pursue a Europe of peace and cooperation that belongs to its citizens and works in the interest of the different peoples (they want to democratize and socialize the European project).</p>	<p>According to the distinction established by Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012): <b>'Eurocritic'</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Criticism of the 'neoliberal' project, against the austerity policies imposed by the EU, betting on an expansionist economic vision that benefits the majority.</li> <li>• They denounce the exercise of corruption and speculation carried out by large multinational corporations, banks, and the United States.</li> <li>• They advocate for a European Union with social justice, reinforcing social and cohesion funds to equalize social disparities, protect public services and reduce unemployment.</li> <li>• They demand that the EU adopt a more proactive role in the execution of new policies in order to minimize the consumption of fossil fuels and reinforce the use of nuclear energy.</li> <li>• Demand an end to unfavourable conditions for Czech farmers (higher subsidies).</li> <li>• They strongly reject the “meaningless” notion of immigrant quotas for each Member State (functional border protection).</li> <li>• They reject the 'unjustified' increase in arms spending in the European Union budget and support the abolition and dismantling of NATO.</li> <li>• They are committed to a more transparent and inclusive decision-making process within the EU.</li> </ul>	<p>According to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the distinction established by Szczerbiak &amp; Taggart (2002): <b>'Soft Eurocepticism'</b>.</li> <li>➤ the classification established by Flood (2002): <b>'Minimalist'</b>.</li> <li>➤ the classification presented by Kopecky &amp; Mudde (2002): <b>'Europragmatist'</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Volt-Nederland (Netherlands)</b></p>	<p>EU: A common project that, after centuries of conflict, has managed to come together and build a stable structure that has guaranteed peace and prosperity for more than sixty years. They state that, beyond its borders and despite its</p>	<p>According to the distinction established by Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012): <b>'Eurocritic'</b>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They are committed to reinforcing participatory and transnational European direct democracy, strengthening the capacity of citizens to influence politics beyond elections (dynamic, plural, and accessible public sphere).</li> <li>• Institutional and governance reform of the European Union. They affirm that the Union cannot restrict democracy to certain areas of political exercise, but that it is imperative to exercise it at all levels in order to recover the confidence of European citizens in their institutions.</li> <li>• They consider it necessary to increase European defence</li> </ul>	<p>According to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the distinction established by Szczerbiak &amp; Taggart (2002): <b>'Soft Eurocepticism'</b>.</li> <li>➤ the classification established by Flood (2002): <b>'Maximalist'</b>.</li> <li>➤ the classification presented by Kopecky &amp; Mudde</li> </ul>



	<p>shortcomings, the European project transmits a message to the world based on the common values that unite the different States.</p>		<p>capabilities by establishing a European army jointly with member states committed to reinforcing European internal security.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Increase the transparency and accountability of the EU.</li><li>• They are committed to the use of EU funds to create jobs in the most disadvantaged areas, enlarging public spending to increase continuous employability.</li><li>• They require the EU to guarantee decent living conditions by introducing a minimum income above the poverty threshold in all Member States, as well as providing support and assistance to the most disadvantaged and economically affected people.</li><li>• Reorientation of the Common Agricultural Policy to achieve sustainable agriculture.</li><li>• Europe must play a leading role in the transition to a green economy (introduction of an EU-wide CO2 tax, call for an end to fossil fuel subsidies...)</li><li>• Establish a uniform refugee reception system and complement it with fines and sanctions for those Member States that refuse to assume their share of responsibility.</li><li>• Guarantee the equal representation of men and women in EU politics and promote the participation of women within the Union.</li></ul>	<p>(2002): '<b>Euroenthusiast</b>'.</p>
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Source: Own elaboration

Thanks to the analysis of the *frame* elements exposed in the previous table, it is possible to show with greater clarity the existing ideological and strategic positions towards the European Union among the six electoral programs analysed.

Regarding the European Union's conception, we observe how three of them —Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia and Volt-Nederland—, although Eurosceptic, present a certain consensus when it comes to cataloguing the European Union as something positive and beneficial for the States that comprise it. In general, these three political parties agree in describing the European Union as a union or community of sovereign states that provide mutual benefits without harming each other. Along the same lines, they place great emphasis on highlighting the integrated economic and political structure that it configures, conceiving it as a common project supported by a platform to live in peace, stability, and prosperity. This demonstrates and evidences the positive connotation that predominates in its framework used for the conception and perception of the Union. They even come to recognize that the presence of their respective countries in the European Union is a historic opportunity in several senses, pointing out the rights, benefits, and opportunities that membership offers them. In short, they are satisfied and proud to be full-fledged participants in the European political community.

On the contrary, and as expected, the positions and perceptions about the European Union by parties such as Rassemblement National, Brexit Party or Lega Norte are much more hostile, critical, and unfavourable, building a contextual framework that revolves around a negative connotation of the Union, bringing it to the fore in a generalized and endemic way in its electoral program. Specifically, the three parties coincide in denouncing the persistence of the Union in strengthening supranational mechanisms, eroding particularisms, and counteracting national sentiments, facts that they conceive as a serious threat to their nations and national sovereignties. While the French party emphasizes the importance of conserving and protecting the enormous internal diversity that makes up the Union —conceiving its homogenizing tendencies as a risk for particularism and singularities— and affirming that this has been one more step towards the subjugation and dissolution of the Nations that compose it, the Italian party points to the lack of true democratic legitimacy of a gigantic supranational body such as the European Union, focusing its criticism against the bankers, speculators, bureaucrats and do-gooders —what they call the “sprawling bureaucratic structure”—. Along the same lines, the British party exposes a strong criticism of the Union, defining it as a broken political system that conspires against its country, being its membership in the Union

one of the greatest obstacles and threats they face. Likewise, they denounce that the European Union is an anti-democratic, illegitimate, and arbitrary organization that threatens their interests and sovereignty. It is for this very reason that their intention is to leave the European Union through what they call a “clean-break Brexit”:

***“With a clean-break Brexit, we can start changing Britain forever from day one. There will be no extended 'transition period', no more years of disputes with Brussels, no more entanglements with the EU's controlling political institutions. We will be free to start building our future immediately, to change politics and Britain forever”.<sup>3</sup>***

Having analysed the general frameworks that each political party uses to frame their — positive or negative— general perception towards the European Union, I am going to focus on contrasting the position of each one regarding the current level of integration, according to the distinction established by Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012). While the Rassemblement National and Brexit Party fit the label of 'Europhobes', the rest of the political parties could be classified as 'Eurocritics'. As to the last ones, they advocate a negative rejection of the European integration project, showing direct opposition to the current level of integration in the EU for being excessive and rejecting any attempt to integrate, being clearly anti-integrationist. In the French case, it is proposed to create a "Europe of the peoples", which unites the nation-states in circles of freely determined cooperation, always respecting their sovereignty, differences and historical links, giving back to the nations their freedom:

***“We are committed to freeing Europe from the federalist ideology that weakens the nations, to free it from the supranational straitjacket that disarms the states, from an opaque operation that invalidates universal suffrage and from an oligarchy that is going in the wrong direction”.<sup>4</sup>***

As we can see in the previous extract from the electoral program of Rassemblement National, the French party makes use throughout its manifesto of rhetoric and argumentation based on an abuse of critical language tools —such as metaphors, parables, etc.— to expose its point of view opposed to the current integration level. Following the same line, the British party is directly committed to the complete and total abandonment of the European Union, without having any intention of remodelling it from within to reach a point of agreement. Specifically,

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<sup>3</sup> Extract obtained from the 2019 electoral program of Brexit party. Retrieved from: <https://www.thebrexitparty.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Contract-With-The-People.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Extract obtained from the 2019 electoral program of Rassemblement National. Retrieved from: <https://rassemblementnational.fr/telecharger/publications/Manifeste.pdf>

they call it "a clean-break Brexit", understood as the total independence of the United Kingdom from the EU, restoring the United Kingdom as a sovereign, independent, and autonomous state. In short, they focus their attention on the will to break the economic, legal, and jurisdictional ties they share with the EU.

On the other hand, we find the rest of the political parties, which I have categorized as 'Eurocritics' since, although they do not directly reject the principle of integration as such, they consider that either the current European Union is forcing integration (the EU is too inclusive) —this is the case of Lega Norte, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość and the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia—, or they believe that the EU is too slow in its integration level intensification (the EU is too exclusive) —this is the case of Volt-Nederland—. In the case of the first ones, although they reject the current level of integration as excessive, their hope is that the EU moves decisively towards a less integrationist direction, where they would have a perfect place:

***“We want to remain within the European Union only on condition that we re-discuss all the Treaties that impose restrictions on the exercise of our full and legitimate sovereignty, effectively returning to the European Economic Community prior to the Maastricht Treaty”.***<sup>5</sup>

While, in the case of the latter, quite the opposite, that is, although they reject the current level of integration as insufficient, their hope is that the EU will move decisively towards a supranational direction with a higher level of integration. I find this distinction very interesting and useful to demonstrate that Euroscepticism as such does not only respond to those political formations that are reluctant to transfer national powers to a supranational entity such as the European Union, but also brings together those who believe that it is vital and necessary for the Union to increase its powers more and more in order to go beyond the national level and strengthen federalism within the Union. So that, although federalists, they do not fail to formulate certain doubts or apprehension towards the current degree of integration (since they consider it insufficient):

***“Some support a world of each country ‘on their own’; we have chosen a different course, one of collaboration, where commonly agreed rules contain the strong and protect the***

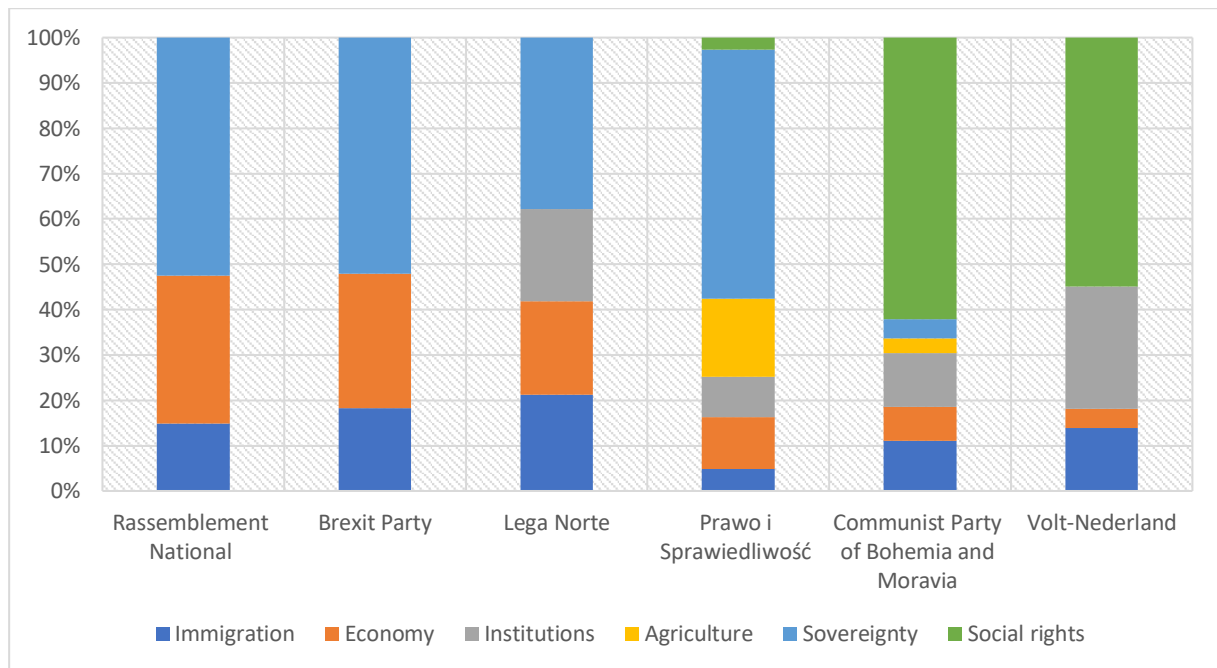
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<sup>5</sup> Extract obtained from the 2018 government program of Lega Norte. Retrieved from: <https://www.leganord.org/component/phocadownload/category/5-elezioni?download=1514:programma-lega-salvini-premier-2018>

*weak, and we are the best for it. If the story is based on the decisions we make, we decide to create a more robust and sustainable Union for future generations and the world in general”.*<sup>6</sup>

Once we have seen the general conception that each party has about the EU and their respective positions regarding the current level of integration, it is time to focus on those arguments that each of them uses when criticizing or opposing it. In other words, below, we will focus on highlighting the most predominant *frames* in each of the electoral programs, with the intention of knowing the simplification method used by each party when addressing its criticism of the European Union:

**Figure 3: Distribution and comparison between the predominant *frames* in the electoral programs of each political party<sup>7</sup>**



Source: Own elaboration

I have designed the above graph to be able to quickly and easily visualize the distribution that each political party makes of its "interpretative packages" when making its criticism or opposition to the European Union. In other words, the graph above clearly shows us those "central organizing ideas" that each electoral program incorporates, the function of which is to

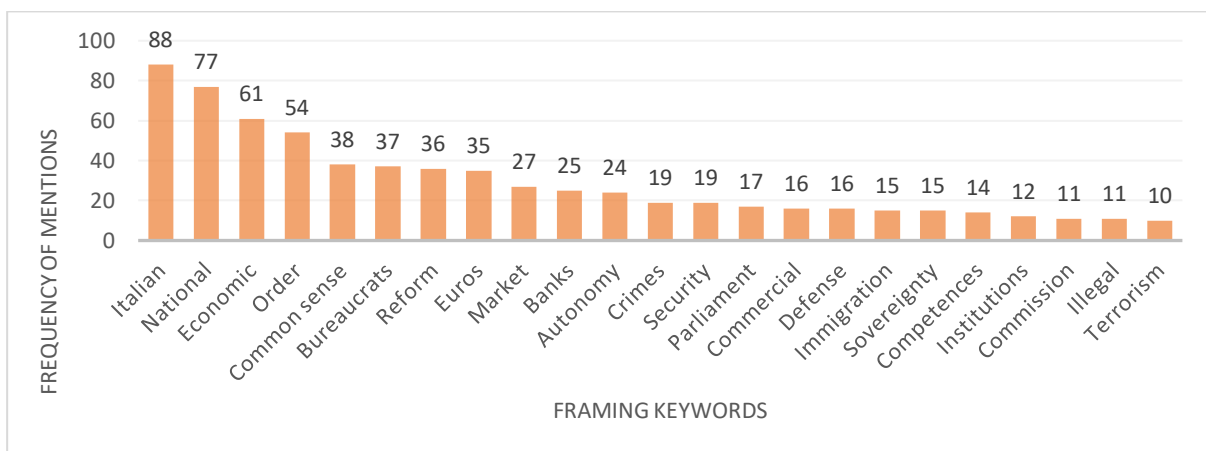
<sup>6</sup> Extract obtained from the electoral program of Volt Nederland for the 2019 European elections. Retrieved from: <http://dnpprepo.ub.rug.nl/12194/1/Volt%20-%20Verklaring%20van%20Amsterdam%20-%20Programma%20voor%20het%20Europees%20Parlement%202019-2024.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> The previous graph has been prepared from the frequencies obtained in the repetition of those most predominant terms throughout each electoral program using the WordStat program.

try to influence —from a certain critical and interpretive approach of the Union— the conception of the electorate about the integration project.

We can see how Rassemblement National, Brexit Party and Lega Norte use very similar and coincident arguments based mainly on immigration, sovereignty, and economic *frames*. On immigration, all three political parties agree that the European Union needs to take strong action against illegal immigration. Likewise, they absolutely reject the imposition of quotas of immigrants to receive for each Member State. However, they claim to be at the service of all those legal immigrants or political refugees, although they repeatedly conceive immigration as a threat to the national security of their countries —relating it to terrorism, delinquency, or crime rates—. Thus, we can clearly see how the above conceive immigration as a threat to their respective Member States and the European Union as a whole, carrying out a process of social construction that, through its own language, pushes a regular policy space towards a space of security using discursive rhetoric of emergency, threat and danger that seeks to justify the adoption of extraordinary measures (Buzan & Waeber, 2009).

**Figure 4. The most used keywords by Lega Norte**



Source: Own elaboration

To this type of discursive practice is also added the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia which, although being a party of the extreme left, conceives the new migratory waves as a threat to Europe due to their difficult management, demanding functional protection of borders of the European Union and an effective national asylum policy which includes the effective and rapid return of the migrant to the place of origin or another reasonably safe. Finally, they demand energetic measures against crime and terrorist acts:

***“Politicians who have been involved in causing the migration wave should not be admitted to decision-making positions in the European Commission”.***<sup>8</sup>

In short, we can see how immigration is a widely used and dominant *frame* among the different political formations when it comes to disapproving of the European Union. Something very similar happens with the sovereignty *frame*, where the three previously mentioned political parties point out that the European Union’s attitude is a source of tension that arouses national passions and historical rivalries, since it despises the national identities and particularisms, proving to be a failure when it comes to respecting the national sovereignty of each of them. In fact, one of the points that most permeates the electoral programs of Eurosceptic formations is the reluctance to transfer state powers to a supranational entity such as the EU, since they consider that this threatens their national sovereignty, betting on retaking part of the control of its own laws and put an end to European jurisdiction in different areas:

***“The vision of the only possible model of European integration, based on the disappearance of the nation state and the exclusion of the defence of national interests, has not turned out to be true. The political potential of the state, based on its military strength, effective economy, and internal social order, remains the most important factor”.***<sup>9</sup>

Another of the most shared *frames* among the different Eurosceptic formations analysed is that of the economy. This *frame* encompasses a multitude of "central organizing ideas", from the market, trade and globalization to the crisis, the euro, and the budget. Rassemblement National and the Brexit Party agree in describing the economic system imposed by the European Union as an economic bankruptcy, remembering that the euro zone has the lowest growth rate of the industrialized countries, as well as a high rate of deindustrialization, deficits, debts, and mass unemployment. In short, a system characterized by the increase in economic and social imbalance that condemns its national economies to total disintegration:

***“A cunning dictatorship of the economy over the Nations has been imposed on everyone with a currency and a debt that does not serve us, but rather enslave us”.***<sup>10</sup>

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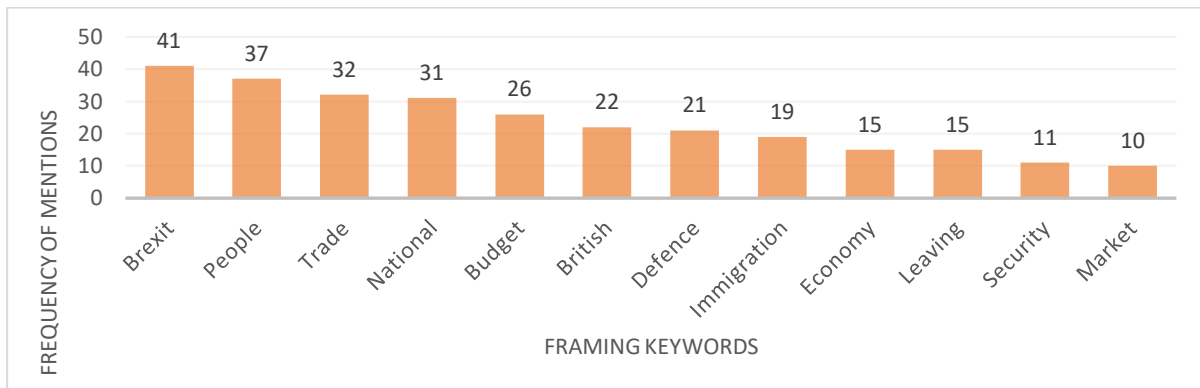
<sup>8</sup> Extract obtained from the electoral program of KSCM for the 2019 European elections. Retrieved from: <http://tabor.test.kscm.cz/cs/nase-strana/program/volebni-program-kscm-k-volbam-do-ep-v-roce-2019>

<sup>9</sup> Extract obtained from the electoral program of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość for the 2019 European elections. Retrieved from: [https://pis.org.pl/files/Program\\_PIS\\_2019.pdf](https://pis.org.pl/files/Program_PIS_2019.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> Extract obtained from the 2019 electoral program of Rassemblement National. Retrieved from: <https://rassemblementnational.fr/telecharger/publications/Manifeste.pdf>

In this sense, the Brexit Party argues that leaving the EU would save them from the budget for foreign aid and in general payments to the EU. They consider that outside the EU Great Britain would be a more prosperous nation, regaining control of trade policy, freeing businesses from unnecessary regulations, and increasing jobs.

**Figure 5. The most used keywords by Brexit Party**



Source: Own elaboration

Rassemblement National, Brexit Party and Lega Norte express a forceful criticism of the majority conception in the EU of a great market without limits that intend to extend beyond the geographical borders of the continent. They consider that the European market needs to be rebuilt to return it to a national priority, fixing its borders to protect it from globalization and simplifying the complex system of rules that makes it increasingly difficult to reach its true potential:

***“The delivery of the protected internal market to world competition, a clear surrender to globalization, is the main cause of European stagnation and the destruction of our national production system. It ruins the hope placed in the construction of Europe, by diverging the economies, by increasing unemployment and poverty. The underdevelopment of so many cities and regions in Europe is a direct consequence of the opening of borders”.***<sup>11</sup>

Similarly, Lega Norte and Prawo i Sprawiedliwość question the Union, assuring that the euro has been an "experiment" that has not worked. While the Polish party takes an unequivocal position in maintaining the zloty as Poland's national currency and showing clear opposition

<sup>11</sup> Extract obtained from the 2019 electoral program of Rassemblement National. Retrieved from: <https://rassemblementnational.fr/telecharger/publications/Manifeste.pdf>



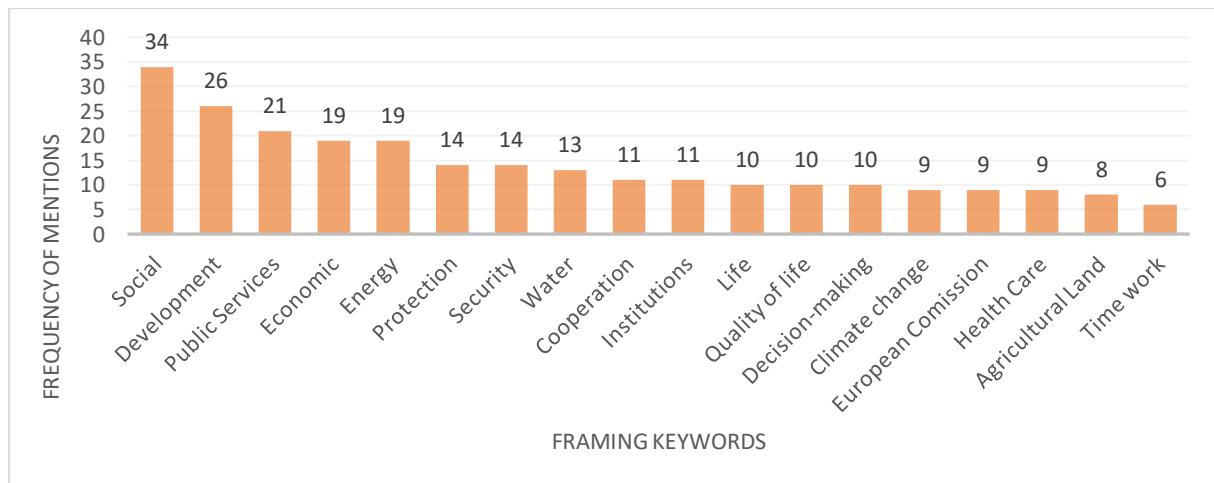
to giving an ideological meaning to the euro, the Italian party predicts that the euro will fall and claims to be looking for partners in Europe to start a shared path of consensual exit:

***“The euro is the main cause of our economic decline, a currency tailored to Germany and multinationals and contrary to the needs of Italy and small businesses”.***<sup>12</sup>

At the other extreme, we find the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia and Volt-Nederland, which also use the economic sphere as a *frame*, but employing different interpretive approaches —arguments typical of the progressive left—. The Czech party exposes a fierce criticism against the austerity policies imposed by the European Union, considering that economic growth must be based on expansionist economic policies that end with the "liberal project" established by the European Union:

***“The European Union is in disarray to the applause of the United States and its economic interests. Such European integration cannot be supported, the lives of the European Union’s people are more important than the profits of the banks!”.***<sup>13</sup>

**Figure 6. The most used keywords by Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia**



Source: Own elaboration

On the other hand, the Dutch party emphasizes the importance of the Union promoting a transition towards the green economy in order to be at the forefront of the fight against

<sup>12</sup> Extract obtained from the 2018 government program of Lega Norte. Retrieved from: <https://www.leganord.org/component/phocadownload/category/5-elezioni?download=1514:programma-lega-salvini-premier-2018>

<sup>13</sup> Extract obtained from the electoral program of KSČM for the 2019 European elections. Retrieved from: <http://tabor.test.kscm.cz/cs/nase-strana/program/volebni-program-kscm-k-volbam-do-ep-v-roce-2019>

climate change. To do this, they propose the introduction of a CO2 tax throughout the EU, ending subsidies for fossil fuels and launching the circular economy, among others.

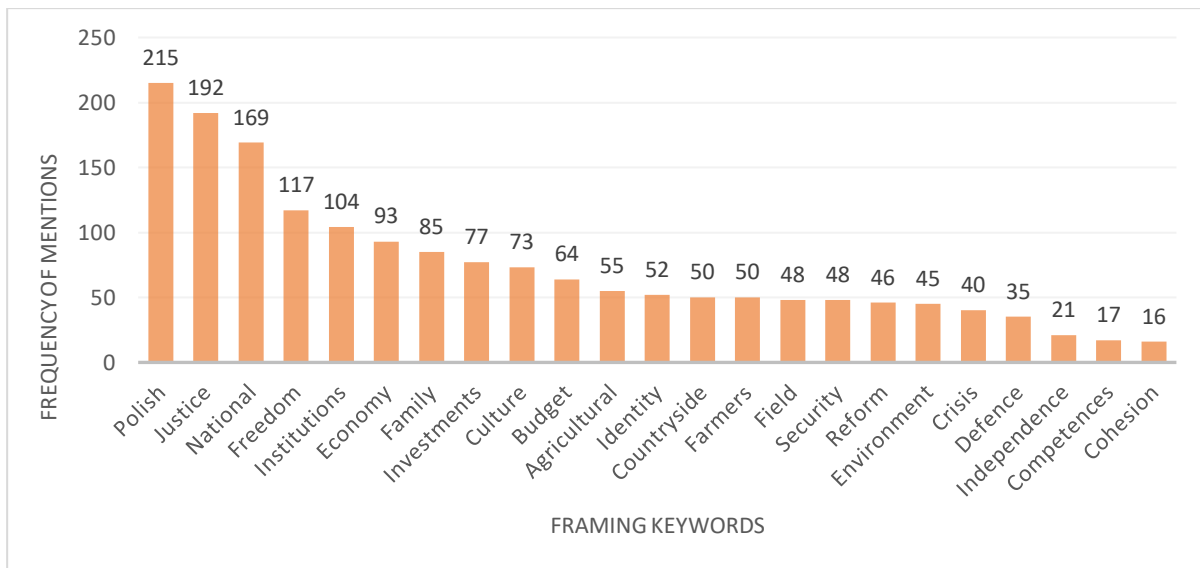
Another of the most used *frames* —strategic, in this case— is that of agriculture, specifically, that of the Common Agricultural Policy. As is well known, many member states depend on the funds allocated to them in this matter. In my particular case, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia and Volt-Nederland are the three parties that introduce proposals, criticisms and demands in this regard, while the rest do not give it much importance. To a certain extent, it is logical, since precisely Poland and the Czech Republic are two of the countries that are popularly associated with agricultural activity, showing, at the same time, great dependence on the European Union. On the one hand, Volt-Nederland advocates sustainable agriculture through a reorientation of the Common Agricultural Policy away from large producers and more towards small producers who farm organically. Along the same lines, the Czech party demands an end to the unfavourable conditions for its farmers, considering it necessary to establish an appropriate subsidy policy taking into account the rural development and infrastructure of its country, as well as to harmonize the subsidy policy rules between all member states. Therefore, we see how the *frame* used by these two parties when talking about agriculture, unlike the Polish party, is exclusively aimed at defending and promoting its farmers, as well as protecting the environment. The Polish party, on the other hand, remembering that they are one of the biggest beneficiaries of the EU's cohesion policy, demands the maximum increase in obtaining funds for rural development from the Common Agricultural Policy, as well as an equalization of subsidies of Polish farmers to the average level of the European Union. We see, then, how the latter uses a political narrative based on criticism of the EU, although aimed at obtaining more funds from it, that is, a strategic *frame*:

***“These funds are of great importance for the modernization of Polish agriculture and the survival of as many farms as possible (...). Our priority is to remedy the unfair and discriminatory inequalities of Polish farmers in direct payments. (...) This constitutes a great oversight on their part and proof of their ineffectiveness in the field of European agricultural policy”.***<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Extract obtained from the electoral program of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość for the 2019 European elections. Retrieved from: [https://pis.org.pl/files/Program\\_PIS\\_2019.pdf](https://pis.org.pl/files/Program_PIS_2019.pdf)

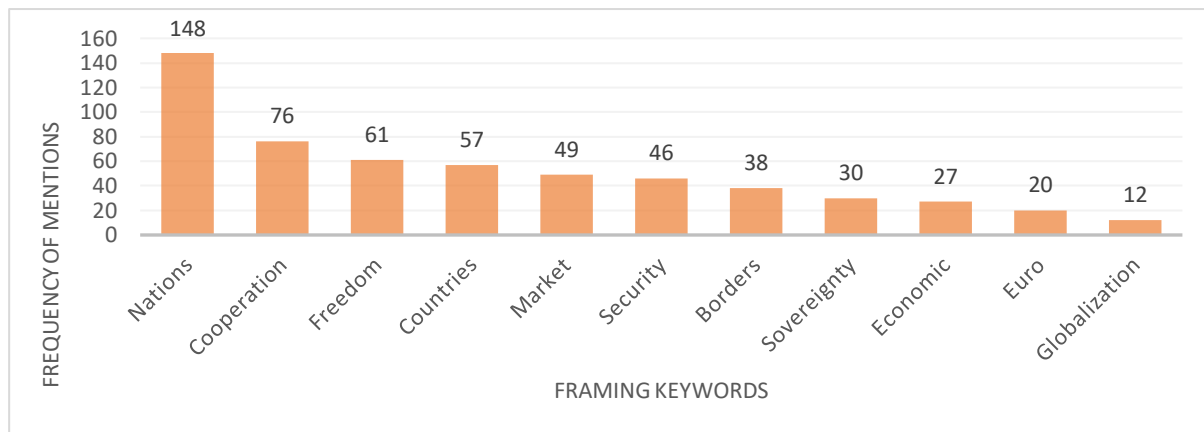
**Figure 7. The most used keywords by Prawo i Sprawiedliwość**



Source: Own elaboration

Criticism of the institutions that make up the European Union constitutes one of the most important *frames* for the Eurosceptic parties, structured from various "central organizing elements" that vary depending on the party's ideological position, as well as its position with respect to the current level of integration. Among them, the discontent and distrust towards the EU institutions stand out, as well as the questioning of their legitimacy in the integration project's framework. In this sense, Rassemblement National and Brexit Party emphasize the criticism of the European Union's institutions, defining them as illegitimate, undemocratic, and arbitrary authorities that have not been elected democratically, since they ignore such fundamental principles as universal suffrage or the separation of powers. They also say that power in Europe has never been so far away from citizens. They add that countries often have the legitimate feeling of being financially aggrieved due to the cost of maintaining the EU institutions, which decide for them what concerns their countries, thus flouting their sovereignty and ability to choose. We observe, then, how these two parties —two of the most intense in terms of opposition to integration— not only formulate contingent and qualified criticism towards the different Union's institutions but even go so far as to question their legitimacy, adopting some very aggressive discursive and qualifying techniques, which conceive the European institutions as "the enemy", that is, a threat to their respective nations. However, they do not offer any alternative nor do they propose to reform them to adapt them to their principles.

**Figure 8. The most used keywords by Rassemblement National**



Source: Own elaboration

On the other hand, Lega Norte and Prawo i Sprawiedliwość do not share the radical argument used by the previous political parties, although they agree that there is a democratic deficit within the European Union. However, and unlike previous political formations, they present a series of detailed reform proposals that go beyond mere criticism. In the case of the Italian party, they believe that it is necessary to guarantee greater democratic control over the European institutions in order to avoid greater centralization in decision-making by assigning powers to Parliament, promoting its legislative initiative and guaranteeing the effective representation of the Regions. Along the same lines, the Polish party is willing to take responsibility for carrying out the necessary changes in the Union so that it overcomes the democratic deficit, reinforcing the role of national parliaments in the Union's decision-making process, as well as opposing proposals to extend those cases where EU decisions would be taken on the basis of majority voting and not seeking compromise.

For their part, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia and Volt-Nederland focus their *framing* elements on the importance of guaranteeing a more inclusive and transparent decision-making process, where citizens are the ones who decide on those fundamental aspects of life through elections. and referendums —also regarding accession to new international agreements—. Specifically, Volt-Nederland exposes an extensive battery of programmatic proposals in this sense, suggesting to promote dynamic, pluralistic and accessible public spheres, which is why they advocate the possibility that European citizens are empowered to make informed political decisions and be capable of influencing politics beyond elections. In short, its commitment is based on the promotion of a dynamic and deliberative European democracy. To do this, they put forward implementing a series of

specific tools —such as digital platforms for communication with administrations— that strengthen the influence that citizens have, as well as the design of participatory budgets:

*“It is necessary to strengthen the influence of citizens in politics. (...) We also recognize that political innovations in general, and digital technologies, have given rise to a variety of tools and processes that make it possible for citizens to actively participate in democratic civic life beyond elections and the mere act of voting”.<sup>15</sup>*

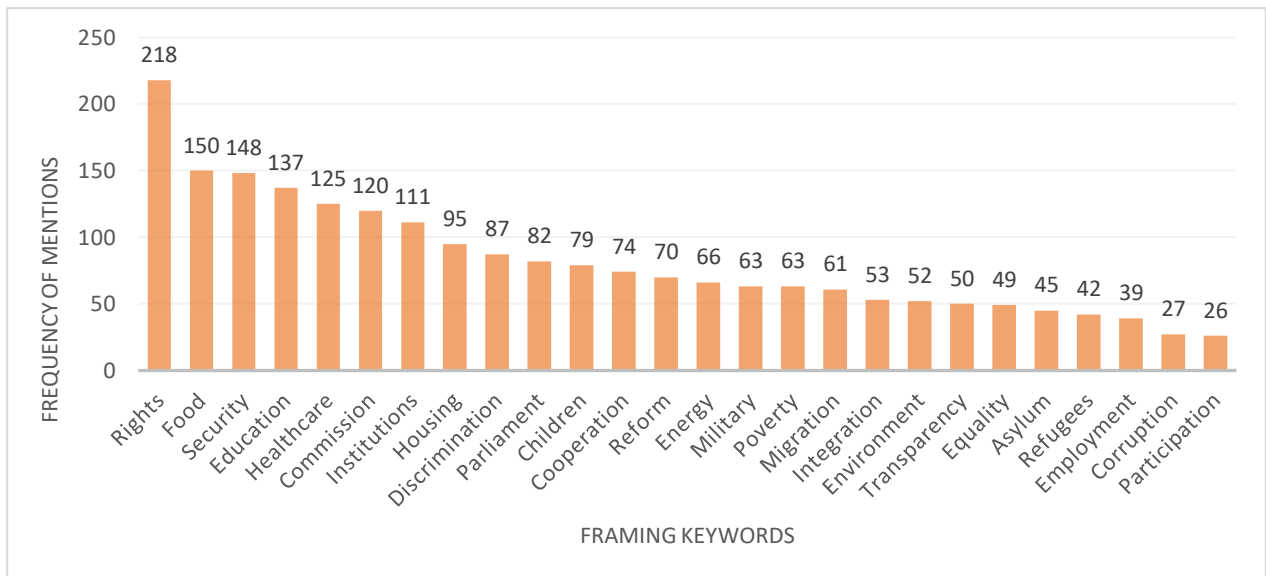
But the Dutch party's proposals for improvement in the institutional sphere do not end here. They also propose a series of changes in the three great powers of the Union. Within the legislative power, they propose giving the European Parliament the right to legislative initiative, reforming its election, as well as establishing the direct election of the members that make up the Council of the European Union. As for the executive power, they propose to abolish the European Council and establish a real European government —with the EP electing a Prime Minister to lead a federal Cabinet of ministers—. Finally, within the judiciary, they propose expanding the prerogatives available to the Court of Justice of the European Union, as well as creating regional delegations of this same Court.

Following the same line, Volt-Nederland establishes a new interpretive framework in its political narrative based on transparency and the fight against corruption. In fact, this is the only party that introduces this new *framing* element when criticizing the current EU —the rest of the formations mention it very briefly or do not mention it at all—. In this sense, it places great emphasis on controlling the accountability of both European institutions and officials and managers as measures to discourage corruption. In the same way, it places great emphasis on the importance of guaranteeing greater transparency in the institutions of the European Union in order to regain the confidence of citizens and bring them closer to the Union.

**Figure 9. The most used keywords by Volt-Nederland**

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<sup>15</sup> Extract obtained from the electoral program of Volt Nederland for the 2019 European elections. Retrieved from:<http://dnpprepo.ub.rug.nl/12194/1/Volt%20-%20Verklaring%20van%20Amsterdam%20-%20Programma%20voor%20het%20Europees%20Parlement%202019-2024.pdf>



Source: Own elaboration

Finally, the last key area that has obtained more frequency in its repetitions throughout the analysed electoral programs has been that of social rights. However, not all political formations have attached the same importance to this *frame* when opposing the current course of the European Union. Specifically, it has been those parties of the radical and progressive European left —Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia and Volt-Nederland— that have resorted to an argument based on justice and social progressiveness to pressure the EU to carry out a turn to the left in this direction. On the one hand, the communist party proclaims in favour of a more socially just European Union, denouncing that the dictates of financial capital bring citizens to the brink of poverty, and affirming that the dismantling and theft of the welfare state must be stopped, initiating a further development of a just and more efficient social system. On the other hand, the Dutch party advocates protecting the dignity and safety of workers by introducing a minimum income above the poverty threshold in all Member States, protecting people without long-term contracts. They also mention their intention to create an EU-wide working time choice law under which employees and employers can negotiate flexible working arrangements that meet the needs of the individual, the team, and the company. Likewise, they are committed to the use of EU funds to create jobs in the most disadvantaged areas. In the same way, both parties consider it essential to reinforce the social and cohesion funds to equalize social disparities and protect public services, reduce unemployment to generate social cohesion in society and reinforce those instruments available to the EU to stop the Privatization of public services:

***“It is clear that the European institutions’ lack vision of the European Union’s economic framework and social development. (...) The social disparities in the European Union are enormous: poverty, unemployment and homelessness must have no place in the Europe of the 21st century”.***<sup>16</sup>

In addition, Volt-Nederland demands that the EU guarantee the fulfilment of women's rights, work for the equal representation of men and women in Union politics, as well as encourage the participation of women through the “zipper” lists of candidates:

***“Discrimination and social exclusion of people based on gender, sexuality, disability, appearance, origin, or belief still takes place in the EU. The EU must opt for a comprehensive approach, which excludes any form of discrimination with equal rights and opportunities for all. Human rights must be respected, applied, and observed so that there is equality for all in Europe in 2025!”***<sup>17</sup>

Having seen the arguments used by each of the political formations to oppose or criticize the European Union, it is necessary to focus on the different intensities that each political party can exert when opposing both European integration and the European Union as such. For this, I have designed the following table, where I have located each political party analysed according to the results obtained in my study:

**Table 5: The fourfold model of party-based Euroscepticism**

		SUPPORT FOR EUROPEAN INTEGRATION	
		<i>Europhiles</i>	<i>Europhobes</i>
SUPPORT FOR EUROPEAN	<i>Euro-optimists</i>	<b><u>Euro-enthusiasts</u></b> Volt-Nederland (soft, maximalist)	<b><u>Europragmatists</u></b> Lega Norte (soft, revisionist) Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (soft, minimalist) Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (soft, minimalist)

<sup>16</sup> Extract obtained from the electoral program of KSČM for the 2019 European elections. Retrieved from: <http://tabor.test.kscm.cz/cs/nase-strana/program/volebni-program-kscm-k-volbam-do-ep-v-roce-2019>

<sup>17</sup> Extract obtained from the electoral program of Volt Nederland for the 2019 European elections. Retrieved from: <http://dnpprepo.ub.rug.nl/12194/1/Volt%20-%20Verklaring%20van%20Amsterdam%20-%20Programma%20voor%20het%20Europees%20Parlement%202019-2024.pdf>

<b>UNION</b>	<i>Europessimists</i>	<b><u>Euroseptics</u></b>	<b><u>Eurorejectors</u></b> Rassemblement National (soft, revisionist) Brexit Party (hard, rejectionist)
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Source: Own elaboration based on Kopecky & Mudde, (2002) classification.

We can see how, in the previous table, I have graphically located each political party in the corresponding box according to the classification of Kopecky & Mudde (2002), since I consider it to be the most complete and accurate. However, I have accompanied this graphic description of some small mentions under the name of each political party where their corresponding categories appear according to the classifications of Szczerbiak & Taggart (2002) and Flood (2002). I consider that it is necessary to do so in order not to lose any nuance and to observe that, although the different classifications of Eurosepticism have a minimum relationship between them, they do not follow any pattern in common.

In accordance with the distinction established by Szczerbiak & Taggart (2002), we observe how all the selected political parties —except the Brexit Party— can be framed in what the authors call 'soft Eurosepticism', that is, a contingent or qualified opposition that, although it proposes certain reforms that modify the methods or processes on which the integration process is based, it only points to certain elements or key areas that make up said process, as we have previously verified. Thus, in no case is there any reference, by these political parties, to the will to leave or dismantle the European Union, although it is possible that the general approach of the EU as a negative framework is present throughout the program. In the words of Szczerbiak & Taggart (2002), 'soft Eurosepticism' encompasses all those political forces that do not express an objection to the principle of European integration or belonging to it, but instead show concern about one or more political areas, where there is a sense that the national interest is currently in disagreement with the EU's trajectory.

As I mentioned before, the Brexit Party is the only political party that we can categorize as 'hard Eurosepticism', since it exercises absolute or total opposition to the European integration process and its proposal revolves around the abandonment of the club. In addition, its program presents some of the characteristics that perfectly define this type of Eurosepticism. One of them is the EU and integration project's general rejection, which permeates the entire manifesto. In addition, we can observe an absence of sophisticated or theory-based argumentation —beyond the general opposition to the EU as the main argument—. In other words, there is an absence of linguistic tools that offer and discuss alternative



solutions within the EU. In fact, they claim that a manifesto is little more than a set of vague promises that will not be fulfilled. Rather, they define their “Contract with the People” as a specific set of promises with the sole aim of delivering the Brexit that the people voted for. Along the same lines, there is a preference for the nation-state discourse and a challenge to the general discourse of the EU. In short, according to Szczerbiak & Taggart (2002), 'hard Euroscepticism' constitutes a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and, therefore, can be seen in those parties which believe that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU equals to opposing the entire project of European integration as it is currently conceived.

However, the main problem that this classification offers me is that its reductionist schematism is not capable of capturing all the nuances between the different types of Euroscepticism. This leads me to the need to establish more sophisticated and precise criteria when approaching the study of the term. Therefore, given the weakness of this previous classification, I must resort to other classifications proposed by the academic literature which allow me to achieve a richer and more complete approximation of the phenomenon in question.

Focusing on the second classification established by Flood (2002), we observe how *Rassemblement National* and *Lega Norte* can be considered 'revisionists' since it is clear that their intention is to return to a previous stage of integration —generally before a revision treaty—. In other words, they are in favour of the State recovering some of the powers transferred to the European Union in basic matters, maintaining only a transfer of a few powers in very specific and limited areas —that is, a position clearly tending towards intergovernmentalism—.

Instead, and continuing with the same classification, I have classified *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* and the *Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia* as 'minimalist' since they accept the current status quo but want to limit further integration as much as possible. That is to say, in no case do they refer to going back to a lower stage of integration, but simply warn that a higher degree of integration would be interpreted as an attack on their subjectivity. In other words, they are in favour of evaluating the current level of integration, warning that a greater degree of this would be to the detriment of their respective states, being interpreted as an excessive intrusion into their sovereignty. They are not willing to allow the distortion, overestimation, or abuse of European Union legislation in detriment of the Member States.

For this, they consider it essential to eliminate all dysfunctional and harmful legislation for the different States. In short, they only accept integration in certain very specific areas.

For its part, the Brexit Party clearly fits the definition of 'rejectionist' since it is explicit that its position is framed in a resounding rejection of integration, added to the opposition in participation and a will to leave the community club. In other words, they are radically opposed to EU membership and participation in its basic policies. At the other extreme, we find Volt-Nederland, which stands for the 'maximalist' label as its aim is to push integration as far and as fast as possible towards the practical realization of maximum integration in the entire structure of the European society, as well as correcting the deficiencies of what has already been done. We can see this position in favour of a greater European commitment materialized in its federalist and pan-European position that advocates for close coordination between European countries, sharing their national sovereignty and pursuing the creation of a European State with a federal structure.

Finally, and in accordance with the classification proposed by Kopecky & Mudde (2002), we observe how Lega Norte, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość and the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia have been defined as 'europragmatists', since attending to the first axis —support for the principle of integration— are considered 'europhobes', since they do not support at all the general ideas of integration that underlie the EU, although they are not necessarily opposed to them —they do not reject the principle of integration as such, but consider that the current European Union is forcing integration—. On the other hand, regarding the second axis —support for the EU—, we can consider them as 'euro-optimists' since, although they do not support the EU as it is currently configured, they are optimistic about the direction of its development, presenting a list of proposals so that it becomes a true reflection of them. These political formations are never opposed to belonging to the EU, quite the contrary. In general, this group contains those parties that do not have a firm ideological opinion on European integration, and on the basis of pragmatic considerations —often utilitarian, as in the cases that concern us—, decide to value the EU positively because they consider it profitable for their country or constituency.

Continuing with the same classification, we can see how I have placed Rassemblement National and the Brexit Party in the category of 'eurorejectors' since, according to the first axis —support for the principle of integration—, they are considered 'europhobes', since they do not support the general ideas of integration that underlie the EU. They conceive the idea of

European integration as a threat to national sovereignty. On the other hand, regarding the second axis —support for the EU—, we can consider them as 'europessimists' since they do not support the EU as it is configured at the moment and are pessimistic about the direction of its development, going so far as to affirm —in the case of the British party— that they will not be the only country to leave the Union and that in a few years it will end up disappearing. In this particular case, it does represent a direct opposition to EU membership. This is not so clear in the French case, which conceives the idea of European integration as a threat to the existing diversity among European states —although they often express some support for the idea of cooperation between them—. On the other hand, even if they are pessimistic about the direction of its development, it does not necessarily mean that they are opposed to EU membership, but rather that they consider that the current EU suffers from a serious deviation from its founding ideals. However, they hope to change the EU in such a way that it becomes a true reflection of them.

Finally, we find Volt-Nederland, located in the box of the 'euro-enthusiasts' since according to the first axis —support for the principle of integration—, it is considered a 'europhile' since they believe in the key ideas of integration that underlie the EU: institutionalized cooperation on the basis of joint sovereignty —the political element— and an integrated liberal market economy —the economic element—. In this case, they conceive European integration as a project to create a new supranational —federalist— state. On the other hand, regarding the second axis —support for the EU—, we can consider them 'euro-optimists' since, although they do not support European integration as it is currently configured as insufficient, they are optimistic about the direction of its development, supporting the general ideas of the integration project and believing that the EU will soon be the institutionalization of these federalist ideas.

## 5.2. Binary logistic regressions

The GESIS<sup>18</sup> survey selected —2019 European Election Study (EES) Voter Study— allows me a deep and complete analysis of the reasons why people support or do not support the European Union. I have selected this questionnaire as it was the most up-to-date data set in my study's field, which includes numerous variables that I wanted to test in relation to Euroscepticism, such as participation and voting behaviour in the European Parliament elections, the evolution of citizens' perceptions and preferences about the EU political regime, as well as their evaluations of the Union's political performance. In addition, it has an impressive geographical coverage with data stratified by gender, age, region, and type of locality from the 28 EU member states, reaching a total sample size of 26,530 respondents.

The objective of this section is to carry out a binary logistic regression to predict whether an individual is "Eurosceptic". In other words, using the estimates obtained in the regression, I have been able to calculate the probability that an individual is Eurosceptic depending on each of the variables selected within the model. As I have indicated before, my dependent variable is the 'Euroscepticism indicator', which will vary depending on the different independent variables proposed. I consider it very interesting to test what is the effect that each independent variable has on the possible doubts or apprehensions that a citizen may have about the European Union.

Before starting with the empirical analysis, I have been doing a thorough review to decide which questions of the questionnaire I could use to test what effect and significance they have on my dependent variable. Likewise, I have found it convenient to create a "data.frame" with only those variables that interest me. Subsequently, I have changed the name of all of them to facilitate their subsequent interpretation. In the same way, I have determined which ones were of the factor type —categorical— and which ones were numerical so as not to have problems with their execution in the software. Next, I've run the "na.omit" action to remove all missing values before going to work with the regression. Finally, I have recoded my dependent variable into dichotomous and all independent variables into fewer categories to optimize their interpretation in binary logistic regression. All these steps can be seen in greater detail in

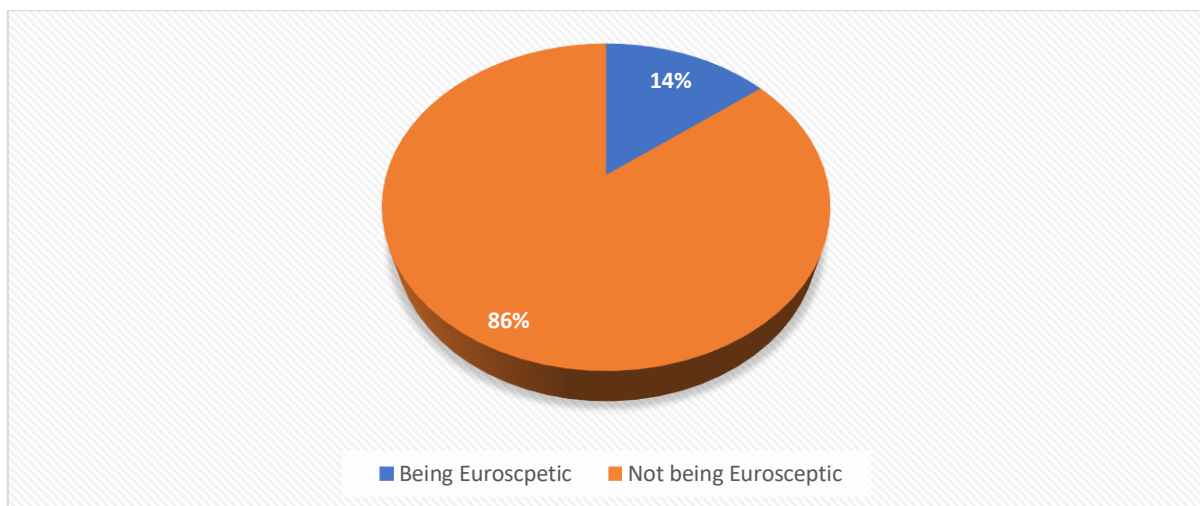
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<sup>18</sup> Schmitt, Hermann, Hobolt, Sara B., Brug, Wouter van der, & Popa, Sebastian A. (2022). European Parliament Election Study 2019, Voter Study. *GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA7581 Data file Version 2.0.1*, <https://doi.org/10.4232/1.13846>.

the two RScript files (Ideological variables and Sociodemographic variables) included in the work's appendices.

Since I use a dichotomous dependent variable "Euroscepticism Indicator" (1=Being Eurosceptic; 0=Not being Eurosceptic), it is clear that I must use a binary logistic regression to carry out my empirical analysis. Thus, the logistic model that I have designed establishes the probability of the event happening —being Eurosceptic=1—. From there, the signs of the coefficients of each independent variable will tell us if there is a positive or negative effect on the probability that Y is 1 when the values of each independent variable increase.

**Figure 10: Distribution of total respondents in my dichotomous dependent variable**



Source: Own elaboration based on the results obtained in the questionnaire object of study

In the graph above, we can see how the vast majority of respondents —21.699— responded that the fact that their country is part of the European Union is "a good thing" or "indifferent", while another minority part of these —3.659— responded that it is "a bad thing". Although the Eurosceptics are relatively few compared to the rest, they are enough to check if there is a relationship statistically significant enough to be causal between the probability of being Eurosceptic and the different independent variables collected. To do this, I have divided my independent variables into two different logistic regressions; the one that refers to the ideological variables —which include those general political attitudes and perceptions of the Union— and the other that includes the sociodemographic variables. We will study this through the results of the two binary logistic regressions that I present below:

**Table 6: Correlates (coefficients) of Euroscepticism in the different selected ideological variables (logistic regression)**

Selected variables and categories	p-value coefficients
<b>Satisfaction with their country's democracy</b>	
Not satisfied	0.724*** (0.063)
<b>Approval of their country's government</b>	
Does not approve	0.120** (0.056)
<b>Participation in EP elections</b>	
Did not vote	0.150* (0.054)
<b>Self-placement on the ideological scale</b>	
Center	-0.194** (0.063)
Right	0.278*** (0.066)
<b>Same-sex marriage</b>	
Middle position	0.285*** (0.065)
Very much against	0.092* (0.054)
<b>Immigration</b>	
Middle position	-0.063 (0.060)
Very much against of limiting it	-0.275*** (0.057)
<b>Environment</b>	
Middle position	0.281*** (0.089)
Greater importance to economic growth	0.619*** (0.067)
<b>Importance of living in a democracy</b>	
Middle position	-0.448*** (0.123)
Very important	-1.123*** (0.111)
<b>Trust in the European Parliament</b>	
Middle position	0.611*** (0.087)
No trust in the European Parliament	2.080*** (0.077)
<b>Perception of their country's economic situation</b>	
It has stayed the same	0.209*** (0.062)
It has worsened	0.302*** (0.065)
<b>Interest in politics</b>	
Not interested in politics	-0.040 (0.051)
<b>Observations</b>	26538

Note: \* $p < 0,1$ ; \*\* $p < 0,05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0,01$

The first binary logistic regression's results indicate different patterns. In the first place, I am going to highlight those variables —and categories— that have turned out to be statistically more significant in determining whether a citizen is Eurosceptic.

To start with, we can observe how those who are not at all satisfied with the functioning of democracy in their country have a higher probability of being Eurosceptic than the reference category —those who are satisfied in this sense—. On the other hand, the variable that collects ideological self-location on the left-right axis shows us how those respondents who consider themselves to be on the right have a statistically higher probability of being Eurosceptic than those who call themselves left-wing. Similarly, those in ideological centre's positions are less likely to be Eurosceptic than the reference category—those on the left. Thus, we could infer that Euroscepticism is an ideological movement that tends to be situated at the extremes of the political landscape —although it mostly occupies positions on the right and extreme right—.

Among the most statistically significant variables when describing the probability to an individual being Eurosceptic is that of support for same-sex marriage. In this case, those who are unconvinced or strongly opposed to same-sex marriage are statistically more likely to be Eurosceptics than the reference category —those who staunchly support this type of marriage—. Along the same lines, we observe how immigration is a factor that is strongly related to predicting whether a citizen is Eurosceptic or not. Specifically, we observe how those who are strongly against policies that limit immigration have a much lower probability of being Eurosceptic than the reference category —those who are in favour of such policies—. In other words, a citizen who opposes immigration is much more likely to be Eurosceptic. In the same way, the position taken by those surveyed regarding the environment turns out to be relevant when explaining when a citizen is Eurosceptic. Specifically, the coefficients of the category "Greater importance to economic growth" and "Middle position" are positive, which indicates that those who consider that economic growth should always have priority even at expenses of environmental protection are more likely to be Eurosceptics than the reference category —those who say that environmental protection should always have priority even at expenses of economic growth—. These last three results obtained quickly show us how Euroscepticism can be delimited and associated, in a great measure, with those citizens who are more conservative and reticent towards progressive policies such as those that seek to normalize the union between same-sex people, allow and stimulate migratory flows within the Union, as well as promote public policies that take care for the environment.

The importance that respondents give to living in a democratically governed country is another of the variables that turn out to be relevant when explaining the probability that a citizen has of being Eurosceptic. Specifically, we observe how the coefficients of the categories “Very important” and “Middle position” are negative, which means that those who attach great importance to living in a democratically governed country have a lower probability of being Eurosceptic than the reference category —those who do not give it such importance—. In other words, those who consider living in a democratic country unimportant are more likely to be Eurosceptics.

In addition, and as expected, the variable that includes the confidence of those surveyed in the European Parliament turns out to be significant and to have a strong relationship when determining when a citizen is Eurosceptic. What the obtained coefficient tells us is that those people who show distrust towards the European Parliament have a significantly higher probability of being Eurosceptic than those who show confidence in said institution.

Another variable that turns out to be closely related when determining the probability that a citizen supports Eurosceptic proposals is the perception of the economic situation of their respective country. In this case, those who perceive that the local economic situation has remained the same or has worsened, have a statistically significant and higher probability of being Eurosceptic than the reference category —those people who, on the contrary, perceive that the general economic situation of their respective countries has improved—. We observe, consequently, how the economic pattern continues to have a lot of weight and importance in the support or not of Eurosceptic approaches, as I have previously referred to in the theoretical framework.

On the other hand, we find two variables that, although not as relevant as those previously exposed when determining the Eurosceptic profile of a citizen, are still considered significant enough to show a certain degree of causality between the probability of being Eurosceptic and the different ideological circumstances that I expose below. The first of these is the one that refers to the approval that respondents make of their national government’s work. In this case, we see how those who do not approve their national government are significantly more likely to be Eurosceptics. We can associate this result with the one previously obtained, which referred to the satisfaction in the functioning of the respective domestic democracies. We observe, then, how discontent at the national level also translates into generalized discontent at the European supranational level. The second variable that shows a slight statistical

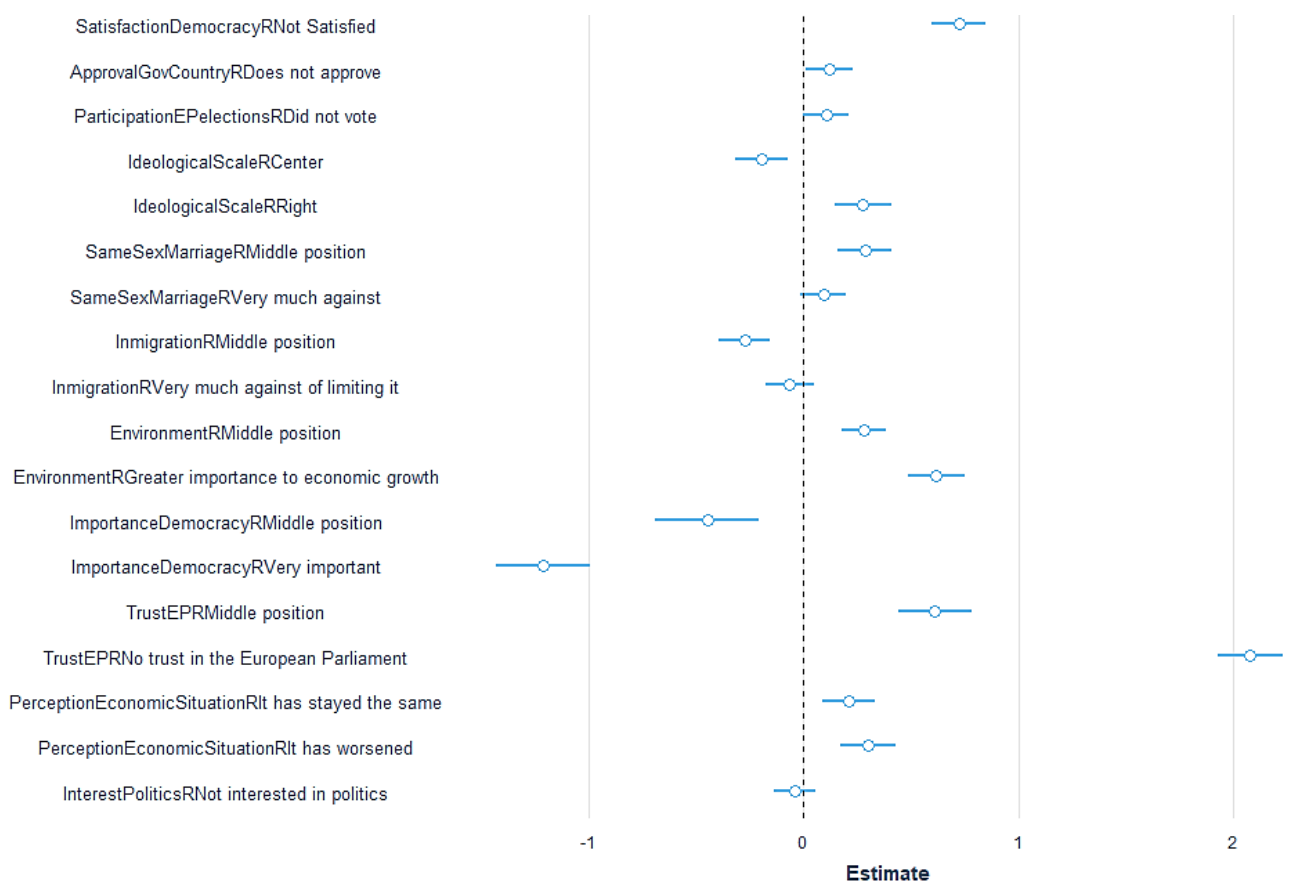


significance in explaining Euroscepticism at the population level is participation in the European elections. In this sense, the results show that Eurosceptic citizens tend to mobilize less in the European elections. Thus, while some of them show their apprehensions or doubts about the integration process through protest votes to anti-integrationist parties, others express their disenchantment with the European project by not going to the polls.

Finally, the variable that includes the respondent's interest in politics has not turned out to be statistically significant when determining whether a citizen is Eurosceptic. Therefore, according to this model, those who express themselves as apolitical do not have a statistically different probability of being Eurosceptic than those who show interest in this sense.

Next, we can graphically observe the significance obtained in each of the selected categories. Those that do not cross zero are the most statistically significant:

**Figure 11: Summary of the coefficients and significances resulting from the binary logistic regression relative to ideological variables**



Source: Own elaboration based on the coefficients and significations obtained in RStudio.

**Table 7: Correlates (coefficients) of Euroscepticism in the different selected sociodemographic variables (logistic regression)**

Selected variables and categories	p-value coefficients
<b>Education level</b>	
With a university degree	-0.333*** (0.042)
<b>Gender</b>	
Women	-0.186*** (0.041)
<b>Age</b>	
Adulthood	0.258*** (0.066)
Youth	-0.019 (0.107)
<b>Employment Status</b>	
Retired	0.007 (0.071)
Unemployed	0.219*** (0.076)
<b>Social class</b>	
Middle class	-0.305*** (0.046)
Upper class	-0.340*** (0.074)
<b>Rural-urban gap</b>	
Urban area	-0.167*** (0.048)
<b>Religion</b>	
Atheist	0.294*** (0.061)
Agnostic	0.165*** (0.050)
<b>Socioeconomic status of their family</b>	
Medium family	-0.407*** (0.063)
Rich family	-0.313*** (0.102)
<b>Observations</b>	26538

Note: \* $p < 0,1$ ; \*\* $p < 0,05$ ; \*\*\* $< 0,01$

Once those variables related to the general political attitudes and perceptions of the respondents have been analysed, I will focus on studying the significances obtained in the variables that refer to the sociodemographic aspects of each citizen.

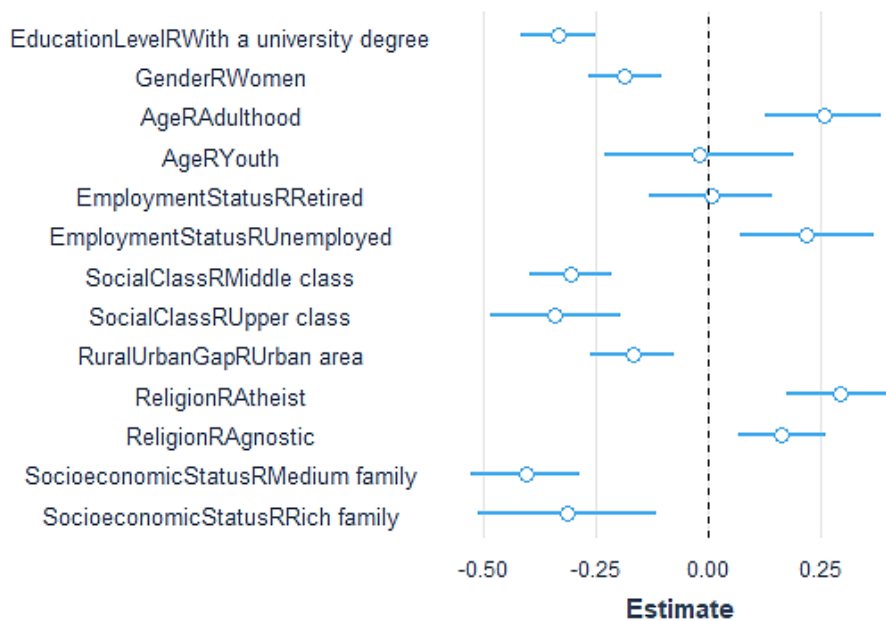
We can see how all of them —or at least one of their categories— have turned out to be statistically very significant when it comes to determining when a citizen is more likely to support Eurosceptic approaches. In the first place, the variable that indicates the respondent's educational level shows us how those who have graduated with at least one university degree

are much less likely to be Eurosceptic than the reference category —those who do not have a university degree—. Thus, we can say that Euroscepticism tends to be much more present in those people with less academic formation, that is, those who stopped studying full-time at an early age. On the other hand, the results show us that gender is statistically significant when it comes to predicting Euroscepticism. Specifically, the data quickly shows us how men tend to be much more Eurosceptic than women. Likewise, we can appreciate how Euroscepticism tends to be more present in adult people. In other words, adolescents, young people, and the elderly are much less likely to be Eurosceptic than adults —the age group where Eurosceptic sentiment is largely concentrated—.

Similarly, we see how those who are unemployed are significantly more likely to be Eurosceptic than the reference category —those who are working—. Along the same lines, the results clearly show that the upper and middle social classes are statistically less likely to be Eurosceptic than the reference category —the lower classes—. In other words, the lower classes are much more likely to be Eurosceptic than the others. The same pattern is repeated in the question that refers to the socioeconomic status of the respondents' families. Specifically, we once again observe how those families with fewer socioeconomic resources —vulnerable socioeconomic status or at risk of social exclusion— are much more likely to support Eurosceptic proposals within the Union.

Finally, the rural-urban gap and religion variables also appear to be relevant when explaining Euroscepticism in citizens. Regarding the first of them, we can see how citizens who live in urban areas are much less likely to be Eurosceptic than their reference category —those who live in rural areas—. Thus, the inhabitants of peripheral areas with little population agglomeration are statistically more likely to be Eurosceptic. On the other hand, regarding the variable that captures religion, we can see with certainty that those who are not believers or consider themselves agnostics have a significantly higher probability of being Eurosceptic than those who practice some type of religion.

**Figure 12: Summary of the coefficients and significances resulting from the binary logistic regression relative to sociodemographic variables**



Source: Own elaboration based on the coefficients and significations obtained in RStudio.

The two figures that I have presented previously constitute a graphic way of appreciating which variables and categories are significant in our study. The graph allows us to see the level of statistical significance of each of the variables and categories; those whose “whiskers” —confidence intervals— cross zero, means that they are not statistically associated with being Eurosceptic, while those whose confidence intervals are located at one or the other extreme of the graph are the most relevant when predicting the Eurosceptic phenomenon. We can see how, following the criteria described, we reach the same conclusion as before.

## 6. Conclusions

This research has examined the motivations and implications of the pressure that Eurosceptic political formations and public opinion have exerted on the European Union's structure. Thus, based on the ideas extracted from the literature review and its consequent translation into a deep qualitative and empirical analysis of the Eurosceptic phenomenon, the main conclusions of this research can be drawn.

From the outset, and referring to the qualitative analysis, not all Eurosceptic parties are the same. In other words, the findings obtained in this research show us that Euroscepticism does not constitute a homogeneous and monolithic ideology, but rather a transversal ideological phenomenon. As I have addressed in the analysis, we can define Euroscepticism as a social phenomenon based on a feeling of disapproval or doubt regarding the European integration project. In this sense, my task in this research has been to capture and operationalize the different forms of opposition or criticism to the European Union that the Eurosceptic political elites carry out when they concur in the European elections.

Specifically, I have been able to verify how the different Eurosceptic political parties differ in intensity and in the arguments —*frames*— that they use when criticizing or opposing the current level of integration. But not only that. They also differ in their countries of origin, in their ideological positioning and in the European Parliament's political families of which they are a part. Following the same line, they show relevant discrepancies in their conceptions of the European Union as such, in their support for the procedures on which the integration project is based, in their opinion regarding the current level of integration, in their vision regarding the membership of their respective countries in the club, as well as on the most controversial issues on the European political agenda.

However, although they may differ in these variables, they converge in criticizing —to greater or lower intensity— the integration process, proposing, at one extreme, certain reforms that modify the values on which the integration process is based —as is the case of Rassemblement National, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, Lega Norte, Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia and Volt-Nederland—, and in the other, the total dissolution of the EU or the intention to leave the club —as is the case of the Brexit Party—.

We observe, then, how the Eurosceptic phenomenon presents an enormous richness and diversity within the European political sphere, constituting itself as a notion compatible with

different ideologies that extend from the extreme right to the extreme left, from those sovereign nationalists —with no desire to yield more power to the Union or even to those in favour of recovering previously ceded powers— to those supranational federalists —those who criticize the current integration process for considering it insufficient, proposing a federal model for Europe—. The criticisms of the right-wing parties analysed focus mainly on nationalism, on opposition to interference and threats against national sovereignty and immigration. On the contrary, the criticism from selected leftist parties is rooted in an anti-capitalist ideology and demands for more state intervention and wealth redistribution.

Taking all the above into account, I considered it necessary to overcome the reductionist and simplistic vision —based on the dichotomous distinction proposed by Szczerbiak & Taggart (2002) between “hard” and “soft” Euroscepticism— on which most researchers have relied until now when classifying the different types of Euroscepticism. To do this, I have decided to introduce a series of new classifications and typologies that are much more accurate and precise, which have made it possible for me to be aware of the enormous plurality that exists between Eurosceptic parties, as well as to give relevance to the nuances that the previous classification completely ignored. Specifically, I have put into practice in my case studies the classifications proposed by Kopecky & Mudde (2002) and Flood (2002), mostly unknown in the academic literature.

In this sense, a study such as this one becomes relevant because a new contribution to the roles of Szczerbiak & Taggart (2002) is suggested. I have carried out an analysis of the different Eurosceptic typologies based on multiple indicators but grouping them mainly in parameters that measure support for the principle of integration, on the one hand, and the European Union, on the other. So, my main goal has been to facilitate the understanding when investigating them and being able to capture as many nuances as possible between the different existing forms of opposition.

Another difficulty that I have faced has been the fact that some of the selected political formations had not presented an electoral program for the 2019 European elections. In these cases, in order to be accurate, I have replaced the missing data with the closest national elections’ electoral program of the same party, as well as by making use of public statements, press releases or speeches by its leaders in the chamber.

In order to cover the full potential range of positions related to European integration of each of the selected parties, I have designed a series of tables where I have systematized and

codified the content of each electoral program, based on the *framing* analysis. Through this analysis, I have been able to confirm **Hypothesis 2**, which stated that Euroscepticism can be easily limited to certain political areas —*frames*—, being more visible in sensitive and controversial issues while in other spheres, Eurosceptic political parties support most of the EU's proposals, suggesting that Euroscepticism is often instrumentalized on politicized issues. In this sense, this research has pointed out the most predominant *frames* in each of the Eurosceptic electoral programs, with the intention of figuring out the simplification methods used by Eurosceptic parties when addressing their European Union's criticism. In other words, political parties use the framework to give meaning to their arguments and, in a certain way, simplify reality problematizing an issue —in this case, simplify and reduce the European Union to a certain vision based on several key elements of their speech in order to easily present its position to the public in an attractive way—.

The results of this research show that the most predominant *frames* among right-wing political parties —Rassemblement National, Brexit Party, Lega Norte and Prawo i Sprawiedliwość— have been those dealing with issues of immigration, economy, criticism of institutions that make up the EU and national sovereignty. On the contrary, we find the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia and Volt-Nederland, who use other types of interpretive approaches —typical progressive left arguments—, such as the defence of social and labour rights and the demand for greater transparency in the European institutions. Another of the most used *frames* —strategic, in this case— is that of agriculture, specifically, that of the Common Agricultural Policy. In my particular case, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia and Volt-Nederland introduce in their electoral programs, proposals, criticisms and demands in this regard, while the rest do not give it great importance. We can observe, then, how they use a political narrative based on EU's criticism but based on pragmatic and utilitarian considerations they decide to value it positively because they consider it profitable for their country.

Secondly, the empirical analysis carried out using binary logistic regressions shows us the European Eurosceptic citizen's profile —that is, those ideological and sociodemographic variables that have turned out to be statistically more significant when determining the probability of a citizen being Eurosceptic—. One of the difficulties that this part of the research has generated for me has been the restrictions imposed by the program used when selecting those potentially relevant variables when predicting Euroscepticism. My initial model had introduced many more variables that attempted to explain the Eurosceptic

phenomenon. However, if many of the variables that are added do not turn out to be consistent for the model, they can distort and modify the results. This happened to me, so I had to suppress a lot of them to optimize the model.

The results obtained make me confirm **Hypothesis 3.b**, which estimated that Euroscepticism may be related to the increase in discontent at the domestic level. Specifically, those citizens who are less satisfied with the functioning of democracy and government in their respective countries are statistically more likely to be Eurosceptics. Thus, we can theorize that Euroscepticism does not find its causes strictly and solely in discontent with the European Union's performance, but also finds its motivations in the national political arena. In other words, discontent at the national level also translates into widespread discontent at the European supranational level.

Furthermore, the results clearly show how Euroscepticism in the population sphere is closely related to political conservatism —political ideas of the political right and extreme right—. Specifically, those citizens who are on the right are much more likely to adhere to Eurosceptic approaches. Along the same lines, all those who oppose policies that favour immigration, same-sex marriage or the environment's protection are statistically more likely to be Eurosceptics. Even those who place little importance on living in a democratic society are also more likely to be Eurosceptics. We observe, then, how most Eurosceptic citizens share a very conservative political ideology which is close to the extreme right.

All the above makes me partially confirm **Hypothesis 3.a**, which affirmed that the Eurosceptic phenomenon has settled in public opinion regardless of transitory economic conditions and finds its motivations in a wide range of social, political, and national factors. Although it is true that this phenomenon is based on a great variety of social and political causes beyond the economic ones —as we have verified—, it is not accurate to affirm that the transitory economic conditions have ceased to influence its rise. Most of the research to date continues to present the evolution of the economy as the main —and only— cause of its rise, and although it is true, my research points to multiple causes that also have a great deal of statistical significance in predicting Euroscepticism. In this sense, it is shown how the perception of the economic situation at the national level continues to be a very relevant factor when it comes to explaining and predicting Euroscepticism.

Therefore, I can confirm **Hypothesis 1**, since we observe that there is a correlation between the dominant discursive practices of Eurosceptic political elites and those key areas where



European public opinion shows greater support for Eurosceptic approaches, such as opposition to the immigration and environmental protection, criticism of the economic situation, or mistrust of European institutions. In this sense, it would be convenient to determine in future lines of research the ascending —bottom-up—, descending —top-down— or bidirectional nature of the relationship described above in order to know if it is the political parties who, through a populist strategy, introduce a Eurosceptic *frame* in their speeches with the aim of attracting their potential voters or, on the contrary, if the political parties act simply as loudspeakers of those citizens' concerns about the integration project.

In addition, a statistically significant relationship can be seen between those who do not trust the European Parliament and the probability of being Eurosceptic. In fact, the data obtained shows me how this mistrust ends up translating into abstentionism by part of the Eurosceptic electorate. It is for this reason that it would be necessary to investigate what proportion of the Eurosceptic electorate choose to abstain in the European elections, what implications this fact may have in the medium and long term within the Union, as well as the impact that would have on the European Parliament that this part of Eurosceptic citizens will choose to transform their abstentionism into a protest vote to Eurosceptic formations.

In the same way, the results obtained also show us how men, those who do not have a university degree, those who live in the rural area and those who are not believers have a higher probability of being Eurosceptic than the reference category.

Variables such as employment status, social class or socioeconomic level indicate that the social vulnerability of some European citizens may be one of the main causes when it comes to supporting Eurosceptic approaches. Specifically, those who are unemployed, from lower social classes, or from families with low socioeconomic status are much more likely to be Eurosceptics. This leads me to infer that Euroscepticism is a frustration expression of the most vulnerable people in society, who are at risk of social exclusion. Perhaps one of the ways they have to express their indignation or disaffection with the current system is through a protest vote to Eurosceptic parties.

But is the European Union doomed to disintegration? The fact that the views in favour of a European Union's reform differ so radically from one country to another —and between each political party— indicates to us the need to find common solutions to the challenges that the Union will have to face when it comes to consolidating its integration project.

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## 8. Appendix

### 8.1. Own-based tables design to systemize and codify the different political parties' electoral programs:

**Table 8: Discourse and content analysis of Rassemblement National's electoral program**

<i>Political party:</i> <b>Rassemblement National</b>	
<i>Country:</i> France	
<i>Political ideology:</i> Euroscepticism, protectionism, anti-globalism, sovereigntism, national conservatism, right-wing populism, extreme right	
<i>Political family in EP:</i> Identity and Democracy Party	
<i>Source of data collection:</i> Manifesto for a new cooperation in Europe: "The European Alliance of Nations", used in the European parliament elections of 2019.	
<b>CASE ANALYSIS:</b>	
<b>European Union's conception (party's view of the EU)</b>	<p>They consider that the European Union is the transitory state of a link between European nations that has not found its definitive political form. They affirm that Europe is shaped by the wealth that emerges from the diversity of its Nations. However, they point out that the current course of the European Union seriously threatens their nations since it persists in strengthening supranational mechanisms, eroding particularisms and in counteracting national sentiments. They believe that the European Union has been one more step towards the subjection and dissolution of the Nations that compose it. In other words, they believe that the European Union has drifted towards a growing distance from the territories and their citizens, provoking an ideological battle between nationals and globalists. From his point of view, the European Union has too often yielded to the temptation to standardize, at the risk of making Europe lose the treasure of its internal diversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>"Save Europe from the European Union".</i></li> <li>▪ <i>"The European Union acts against Europe."</i></li> <li>▪ <i>"Liberate Europe from the pro-European ideology."</i></li> <li>▪ <i>"The EU: the denial of peoples and their sovereignty."</i></li> <li>▪ <i>"The European Union is not Europe, but it is a transitory form of Europe, dated and circumstantial."</i></li> <li>▪ <i>"The European Union has made Europe the laboratory of globalist ideology and its corollary, free trade".</i></li> <li>▪ <i>"The EU discredits the idea of Europe, perverting the European idea and swindling the confidence of Europeans."</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“With the European Union, Europe is no longer a dream, but a cause for concern, no longer a hope, but a nightmare, no longer a promise of well-being, but the perspective of limitations and unnecessary sacrifices.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Position on the current level of integration</b></p>	<p>According to the distinction established by Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012), this party is '<b>Euromphobe</b>' (negative rejection), since it rejects the current level of integration in the EU for being excessive and shows direct opposition to any integration attempt, being clearly anti-integrationist. In fact, they are committed to the creation of what they call the "European Alliance of Free Nations." Although it is true that they do not use the word 'integration' to describe their proposal, the word 'cooperation' appears on multiple occasions throughout the electoral program. Specifically, they propose to create a Europe of the peoples that unites nation-states in freely determined circles of cooperation, respecting always their sovereignty, differences and historical roots. In this way, they want to establish a new cooperation in Europe to give it a coherent and stable political form, giving back to the Nations their freedom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“The shared desire to save Europe from the European Union demands an alliance of free Nations, of sovereign Nations, of Nations in full possession of their territories and their destinies.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Europe, undermined by the failures and ideological errors of the European Union, must rethink itself before rebuilding itself.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Our ambition is to give Europe the political form it deserves.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The project of the European Alliance of Nations is an invitation to leave the prison vision of Europe that the European Union has promoted and installed to the detriment of States and citizens.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“We are committed to freeing Europe from the federalist ideology that weakens the Nations, to free it from the supranational straitjacket that disarms the States, from an opaque functioning that invalidates universal suffrage and from an oligarchy that goes in the wrong direction.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“European cooperation must become a legal and technical tool at the service of all, that is, in relations based on respect for the freedom of all participating nations.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Nothing is more important than giving back to the citizens of the European Nations their autonomy of decision.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“It is necessary to rebuild Europe to reconcile the peoples with it.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“It is necessary to admit the failure of the model of European construction and the need to refund it.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Arguments used to oppose/criticize the current level of</b></p>	<p>When exposing the different arguments of opposition to the current course of the European Union, first of all, they resort to a list that they present as "unfulfilled promises reduced to slogans", where the following areas stand out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <u>Peace and harmony</u>: they point out that the attitude of the European Union is a source of tension that arouses national passions and historical rivalries since it despises national identities and has turned out to be a failure when it comes to defending the</li> </ol>

**integration**

European people from the globalization.

- b) Democracy: they criticize the institutions of the European Union, defining them as illegitimate authorities who have not been democratically elected, since they ignore such fundamental principles as universal suffrage or the separation of powers. They also say that power in Europe has never been so far away from the citizens. They add that countries often have a legitimate feeling of being financially aggrieved due to the cost of maintaining the EU institutions, which decide for them what concerns them, thus circumventing their ability to choose.
- c) Solidarity: they affirm that a rule of competition of all against all has been established, choosing greed and selfishness as a business virtue to the detriment of men and Nations. They recall that the only solidarity that was expressed was towards the banks, which came to save billions of European public money from the 2008 bankruptcy in violation of the rules of liberalism.
- d) Freedom: they consider that, with the assent or passivity of the European Union, a European legal system is configured that tends to violate the rights of citizens in the name of defending the rights of minorities. In addition, the temptation to control freedom of expression (particularly on the Internet), poses serious threats to the freedom of citizens.
- e) Prosperity: They expose that many European countries are experiencing unprecedented and endless deindustrialization: they are sinking into deficits and debts, experiencing endemic mass unemployment. They recall that the eurozone has the lowest growth rate of the industrialized countries.

Having exposed those promises of the EU that they consider unfulfilled, they present a series of reasons that explain their harsh criticism of the current level of integration:

- a) The EU: The denial of peoples and their sovereignty. They strongly criticize the fact that the EU persists in strengthening supranational integration mechanisms, thus denying the sovereignty of its peoples:
  - *“The European Union has drifted towards a form of unitary, Jacobin state, almost imperial in size. The European Union, trampling on their will, anaesthetizes the peoples by depriving them of their memory and national pride”.*
- b) The EU: An organization that no longer protects Europeans against the threats of today and tomorrow. They consider that the European Union is failing to fulfil the primary duty of a political entity, which is to ensure the security and tranquillity of its citizens, increasing every day the risk of remaining in it due to irresponsible decisions:
  - *“By allowing the installation in our territories of criminal or mafia gangs dedicated to crime and delinquency, the European Union is contributing to daily insecurity. Radical Islamism and the chaos caused by the migratory avalanche condition and modify our ways of life, our traditions and even our values as a civilization”.*
  - *“The European Union causes Europe to experience tragic paradoxes: it opens its borders but imprisons its peoples; neutralizes the resistance capacities of the States and hands them over to the mafias”.*

	<p>c) <u>The EU: an economic bankruptcy</u>. They affirm that the economic system imposed by the European Union, characterized by an increase in economic and social imbalance, has condemned their economy to total disintegration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>"A cunning dictatorship of the economy over the Nations has been imposed on everyone with a currency and a debt that do not serve us, but rather enslave us."</i></li> </ul> <p>d) <u>The EU: unprecedented social insecurity</u>. They consider that the 1950s, when Europe was conceived as a promise of progress, is over:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>"The European Union has not reduced unemployment, especially that of young workers, and has not ensured progress in the living conditions of pensioners and the working poor"</i>.</li> <li>▪ <i>"Never have households felt their loss of purchasing power so much, employees the weight of unemployment, families the uncertainty of tomorrow, citizens the indifference of elites blinded by their own certainties."</i></li> </ul> <p>e) <u>The EU: a technostructure that disarms the Nations and weakens France</u>.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>"The heaviness of supranational procedures condemns the European Union to impotence, loquacity and incoherence"</i>.</li> </ul> <p>f) <u>The EU discredits the European idea</u>. They think that by betraying their founding fathers' promises of democracy, freedom, solidarity, or power, this union has doomed itself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>"The EU does not suffer so much from its lack of realization, but from its model, from a problem of nature and not of degree, not because of its excessive modernity, but because of an irreducible anachronism in a world in total turmoil"</i>.</li> </ul> <p>g) <u>The European market</u>. They express a forceful criticism of the Europeanist vision that prefigures a mercantile conception of a great market without limits that intends to extend beyond the geographical borders of the continent. They consider that the European market needs to be rebuilt in order to return it to a national priority, setting its borders to protect it from globalization and turning it into a means of prosperity, security and progress for its States and citizens.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>"The abandonment of the internal market protected from global competition, a clear surrender to globalization, is the main cause of European stagnation and the destruction of our national production system. It ruins the hope placed in the construction of Europe, by diverging the economies, by increasing unemployment and poverty. The underdevelopment of so many cities and regions in Europe is a direct consequence of the opening of borders"</i>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Intensity in opposition/criticism</b></p>	<p>❖ According to the distinction established by Szczerbiak &amp; Taggart (2002), this political party fits the definition of '<b>soft Euroscepticism</b>', that is, a contingent or qualified opposition that proposes certain reforms that modify the values in which the integration process is established. Although it is true that his harsh criticism repeatedly questions the legitimacy of the</p>



**towards the EU**

European institutions and integration project, at the heart of the matter, it is an opposition that, although forceful and broad, points to certain elements that make up this integration project. In no case is there a reference to the desire to leave or dismantle the European Union, although it is true that the general approach of the EU as a negative framework is present throughout the electoral programme. To do this, they use rhetoric and argumentation that focuses on highlighting the most discrepant points while offering alternatives to improve it. Likewise, they abuse critical language tools, such as metaphors, parables, etc., to expose their point of view opposed to the current EU.

- ❖ On the other hand, according to the classification established by Flood (2002), we can frame it in the '**revisionist**' position, since it is clear that its intention is to return to a previous stage of integration, generally before a revision treaty. In other words, they are in favour of the State recovering of some of the powers transferred to the European Union in basic matters, and that there is only a transfer of powers in very specific and limited areas.
- ❖ Finally, according to the classification presented by Kopecky & Mudde (2002), the Party fits into what they call '**eurojector**', since according to the first axis (support for the principle of integration), it is considered 'europhobe', since they do not support (and often even oppose) the general ideas of integration that underlie the EU. They take this position because they are nationalists, conceiving the idea of European integration as a threat to national sovereignty and diversity among European states (although they often express some support for the idea of cooperation between them). On the other hand, regarding the second axis (support for the EU), we can consider them as 'Europessimists' since they do not support the EU as it is currently configured and are pessimistic about the direction of its development. However, this does not necessarily mean that they are opposed to EU membership, but rather that they believe that the current EU suffers from a serious deviation from its founding ideals. However, they hope to change the EU in such a way that it becomes a true reflection of them.

Source: Own elaboration.

**Table 9: Discourse and content analysis of Brexit Party’s electoral program**

Political party: **Brexit Party - UKIP**

Country: United Kingdom

Political ideology: Euroscepticism, right-wing populism, unitary British nationalism

Political family in EP: Non-attached Members

Source of data collection: Manifesto “Contract With the People”, used in the European parliament elections of 2019; UKIP National Manifesto “Save Britain”; Nigel Farage’s final speech to European Parliament.

**CASE ANALYSIS:**

**European Union’s conception (party’s view of the EU)**

They conceive the European Union as a broken political system conspiring against the UK to frustrate the fundamental political reform it needs, being their membership in the Union one of the biggest obstacles to achieving their national goals. Thus, one of the strictly necessary steps to carry out this political reform is to leave the EU. Along the same lines, they describe the European Union as an anti-democratic, illegitimate and arbitrary organization that threatens the interests and sovereignty of the United Kingdom. It is for this reason that they characterize the Union as a form of political establishment that tends to perpetuate the status quo in its member states:

- *“Leaving the undemocratic EU is just the beginning. It will be the first step in an essential political revolution to carry out the fundamental democratic reforms that our country needs.”*
- *“The way in which the political establishment has conspired to frustrate democracy and Brexit has highlighted the need for fundamental political reform. The Brexit Party can bring about real democratic change because we are not part of the European Union status quo”.*
- *“Brexit has been presented as a confrontation between “common people” and the establishment, typical of populist forces when they say they empathize with the concerns of the “people” and attack the interests of their leaders”*
- *“British people signed that to a common market, not to a political union, flags, or anthems, and now you even want your own army (...) If we want to trade and friendship cooperation reciprocity for Europe, we don’t need a European Commission, a European Court or other institutions (...). In the Brexit Party we love Europe, we just hate the European Union (...) The European Union it’s a bad project, it isn’t just undemocratic, it’s anti-democratic and it gives people power without accountability, and that is an unacceptable structure”, (Farage, 2020).*

<p><b>Position on the current level of integration</b></p>	<p>According to the distinction established by Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012), this party is '<b>Europophobe</b>' (negative rejection), since it rejects the current level of integration in the EU for being excessive and shows direct opposition to any type of integration, being clearly anti-integrationist. In fact, they directly bet on the complete and total abandonment of the European Union, without having any intention of reshaping the EU from within to reach a point of agreement. Specifically, they talk about "a clean break Brexit", understood as the total independence of the United Kingdom from the EU, restoring the United Kingdom as a sovereign, independent and autonomous state. To do this, they propose not only to leave the EU institutions (Commission, Parliament and Council), but also advocate their withdrawal from the Single Market, the Customs Union, the Common Security and Defence Policy and the Foreign and Common Security (CSDP and CFSP), as well as the European Defence Financing (EDF), the European Defence Agency (EDA), the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the Common Fisheries Policy (PIC). In summary, they focus their attention on the desire to break the economic, legal and jurisdictional ties they share with the EU, also giving importance to the migratory phenomenon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Our priority is to leave the European Union and achieve the Brexit that 17.4 million voted for in 2016. Acting on the largest popular mandate in British history is crucial to restoring faith in our democracy. What kind of democratic society do we live in, if a few parliamentarians can defy the express will of the people?”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“With a clean break Brexit, we can start changing Britain forever from day one. There will be no extended 'transition period', no more years of bickering with Brussels, no more entanglements with the EU's controlling political institutions. We will be free to start building our future immediately, to change politics and Britain forever.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“A clean break Brexit will give us the freedom to shape our future by taking immediate control of our own laws, borders, money, fisheries and defence.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“UKIP means complete and total withdrawal from the European Union. Regardless of any new "withdrawal agreement" or treaty the government agrees with the EU, UKIP will continue to fight for the UK's full independence from the EU and to fully restore the UK's former status as an independent and self-governing sovereign state. ”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“In short, UKIP means: no more money to pay the EU, no more EU laws imposing rules on us, no more jurisdiction over us by the European Court, and no more borderless EU immigration”.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Arguments used to oppose/criticize the</b></p>	<p>The Brexit campaign gave centrality to several key elements of its populist agenda:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <u>Economy</u>: they argue that leaving the EU would mean a saving of 50% of the budget in foreign aid, as well as a saving of 13,000 million pounds sterling a year in general payments to the EU. They add that this money could form part of a Brexit</li> </ol>

<p><b>current level of integration</b></p>	<p>dividend to invest billions in regions of Great Britain, reducing the cost of living and building a better future for its citizens and putting their needs first. In the same way, all that annual contribution to the EU would be used for investment in key public services, such as the environment, fishing and strategic industries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>“Outside the European Union, Britain will be a more prosperous nation. We will take back control of our trade policy, we will free businesses from unnecessary regulation, we will take control of our agricultural industry, and we will restore our fishing industry. Greater prosperity will mean more jobs and more tax revenue to pay for the things we all want for the British people.”</i></li><li>▪ <i>“A clean break Brexit is an opportunity to reduce the cost of living for working families. The impact of EU policies on energy prices costs us jobs and punishes the poorest in society, while the EU Customs Union prevents us from reducing tariffs on imports outside the EU”.</i></li></ul> <p>b) <u>International trade</u>: they express the will to liberate Great Britain's commercial policy from the control of the European Union, ceasing to obey community legislation. They claim that leaving the EU would free Britain to pursue its own trade policies, presenting a great opportunity to increase trade and employment.</p> <p>c) <u>Foreign relations</u>: they consider that the international position of Great Britain would improve if they left the EU, since it could act independently, while it retains its membership in the UN Security Council, the World Trade Organization and more than 100 other international organizations. In addition, they welcome the fact of ceasing to be part of the EU's Common Foreign, Security and Defence Policy, which would inevitably involve them in the planned EU armed forces and in its foreign policy ambitions.</p> <p>d) <u>Immigration</u>: they advocate the borders' protection of Great Britain, which means that they intend to control their own national security and borders, without having to follow the immigration and integrated defence policies of the EU. To do this, they say it is necessary to crack down on illegal immigration and stop the human tragedy associated with human trafficking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>“Rapid, massive, and uncontrolled immigration has been extremely damaging to Britain. Not only does this exploit immigrants, but it also depresses wages and living standards for those at the lower end of the economic scale, driving up property prices and rental costs”.</i></li></ul> <p>e) <u>Soberanía</u>: One of the points that most permeates the electoral program is the reluctance to transfer state powers to a supranational entity such as the EU. They affirm that this violates their national sovereignty, betting on retaking control of their own laws and ending European jurisdiction to build a sovereign, independent and autonomous state. Nigel Farage's exclamation "we want our country back" inspired the official slogan of the Brexit campaign: "take back control":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>“We make no apologies for believing in the UK. We believe that our country can be a strong, proud, independent and</i></li></ul>
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	<p><i>sovereign nation”.</i></p> <p>On the other side of the card, the party outline five things that Britain will be able to do when it leaves the EU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Restore trust in democracy”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Take control of our laws, borders and trade”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Invest in the future of our regions”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Take full control of our fishing”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Cut the cost of living”.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Intensity in opposition/criticism towards the EU</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ According to the distinction established by Szczerbiak &amp; Taggart (2002), this political party fits the definition of <b>'hard Euroscepticism'</b>, that is, an absolute or total opposition to the European integration process since its proposal revolves around leaving the club. In addition, its program presents some of the characteristics that perfectly define this type of Euroscepticism. One of them is the presence of constant criticism of the euro and the Union’s economic system, based on the general rejection of the EU and European integration. Furthermore, we can observe an absence of sophisticated or theory-based argumentation (beyond the general opposition to the EU as the main argument). In other words, there is an absence of linguistic tools that offer and discuss alternative solutions within the EU. In fact, they claim that a manifesto is little more than a set of vague promises that will not be fulfilled. Rather, they define their Contract with the People as a specific set of promises with the sole aim of delivering the Brexit that the people voted for. Along the same lines, there is a preference for the nation-state discourse and a challenge to the general discourse of the EU.</li> <li>❖ On the other hand, according to the classification established by Flood (2002), we can frame him in the position of <b>'rejectionist'</b>, since it is clear that his position is framed in a resounding rejection of integration, added to the opposition to the participation and willingness to leave the community club. In other words, they are radically opposed to EU membership and participation in its basic policies.</li> <li>❖ Finally, according to the classification presented by Kopecky &amp; Mudde (2002), the Party fits what they call <b>'eurorejector'</b>, since according to the first axis (support for the principle of integration), it is considered 'europhobe', since they do not at all support the general ideas of integration that underlie the EU. They conceive the idea of European integration as a threat to national sovereignty. On the other hand, regarding the second axis (support for the EU), we can consider them as 'Europessimists' since they do not support the EU as it is configured at the moment and are pessimistic about the direction of its development, even stating that they will not be the only country to leave the Union and that in a few years it will end up disappearing. In this case, it does represent a direct opposition to EU membership.</li> </ul>

Source: Own elaboration.

**Table 10: Discourse and content analysis of Lega Norte’s electoral program**

*Political party:* Lega Norte

*Country:* Italy

*Political ideology:* Italian nationalism, national populism, right-wing populism, conservatism, anti-globalization, anti-immigration, Euroscepticism

*Political family in EP:* Identity and Democracy Party

*Source of data collection:* Government Program “Salvini Premier” used in the 2018 national elections; Radio and Video Spots “Prima l’Italia! Il Buonsenso in Europa” used in the 2019 European elections.

**CASE ANALYSIS:**

<p><b>European Union’s conception (party’s view of the EU)</b></p>	<p>They conceive the European Union as a gigantic supranational body, devoid of any real democratic legitimacy and structured through an expanding bureaucratic structure that sets the agenda of their government, even at the expense of the physical and economic protection of the Member States’ citizens. In addition, they affirm that common sense needs to be restored in Europe and they want to take the battle against bankers, speculators, bureaucrats, and do-gooders to Europe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Yes to the Europe of the peoples, of peace and freedom. No to the Europe of bureaucrats and speculators”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The common-sense revolution”.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Position on the current level of integration</b></p>	<p>According to the distinction established by Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012), this party is '<b>Eurocritic</b>', since it does not reject the principle of integration as such but considers that the current European Union is forcing integration (the EU is too inclusive). That is, although the political party repudiates the current level of integration as excessive, his hope is that the EU moves decisively towards a less integrationist direction, where they would have a perfect place. Specifically, they propose to return to the stage of integration prior to the Maastricht Treaty, effectively returning to the European Economic Community, that is, a form of free and peaceful cooperation between States of a purely economic nature. In addition, they repeatedly make it clear that they do not conceive an Italy outside the EU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“We want to remain within the European Union only on the condition that we re-discuss all Treaties that impose restrictions on the exercise of our full and legitimate sovereignty, effectively returning to the European Economic Community prior to the Maastricht Treaty”.</i></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Italy cannot leave Europe. Italy belongs to the European continent by its own geographical nature, and, in fact, its position is absolutely strategic within the Mediterranean basin”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Italy is in Europe, it is a founding country”.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Arguments used to oppose/criticize the current level of integration</b></p>	<p>The key points on which they structure their criticism of the current EU fall, mainly, on the economic, migratory and sovereign spheres, constituting a clearly Eurocritical discourse:</p> <p>a) <u>Euro</u>: they question the European Union assuring that the euro has been an experiment that has not worked. They predict that the euro will fall and be ready for the next day. They claim to be looking for partners in Europe to start a shared path of consensual exit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“The euro is the main cause of our economic decline, a currency tailored to Germany and multinationals and contrary to the needs of Italy and small businesses.”</i></li> </ul> <p>b) <u>Immigration</u>: they focus their program on the fight against illegal immigration. To do this, they consider it necessary to draw up a list of countries considered safe as a condition for accepting applications for international protection. Likewise, they value positively foreseeing measures such as the loss of the right to apply for international protection in certain cases, the prohibition of establishing higher contributions for the reception of foreigners than for those destined for policies to support Italians in a situation of poverty, as well as the prohibition of obtaining access to benefits for non-EU immigrants. However, they say they are at the service and defend, as a supportive and open country, all those legal immigrants or political refugees:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“No one should feel compelled to leave their country and their roots for economic reasons. We can really help the most disadvantaged areas of the planet by supporting local projects, and not by welcoming everyone. Africa does not fit in Italy!”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Italians first (...) A true integration can only be implemented through strict compliance with Italian law and an equal relationship with Italian citizens”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Radicalization is combated by reaffirming that in the Italian State the freedom to profess one's religion must be exercised in full respect of all other constitutional principles. Italian law cannot be ignored by abusing the concept of religious freedom or democracy (...). Therefore, there must be strict observance and application of the law to Muslims.”</i></li> </ul> <p>c) <u>Sovereignty</u>: they define their Constitution as a guarantee of national sovereignty and are committed to the recovery of the following sovereignties; monetary and economic sovereignty (recovery of exclusive jurisdiction over commercial policy), territorial sovereignty (restoration of total control of each state over its borders, which de facto entails the derogation of the</p>

	<p>Schengen Area), legislative sovereignty (guaranteeing the right of Member States' supremacy over that of the Union) and the restoration of subsidiarity (restoring most of the shared competences and all the supporting competences to the exclusive competence of the Member States):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Our Constitution clearly defines in its Fundamental Principles (art. 11) that Italy can give up spaces of sovereignty in favour of international organizations whose objective is to achieve peace and justice among nations. The EU is not one of these organisations. For this reason, (...) any European law or Treaty that conflicts with the Constitution must be rejected”.</i></li> </ul> <p>d) <u>Market</u>: they demand that the Union reduce and simplify the complex system of rules that makes it increasingly difficult to achieve the true potential of the EU Internal Market:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“A system of standards tailored to our companies is necessary”.</i></li> </ul> <p>e) <u>Democracy and electoral participation</u>: they believe that it is necessary to guarantee greater democratic control over the European institutions by assigning powers to the Parliament, promoting its legislative initiative and guaranteeing the effective Regions' representation. In this way, the Committee of the Regions, today a consultative body, would assume the powers of co-legislator and mediator with the central States, increasing its presence in the European legislative process. In short, they are committed to avoiding greater centralization in decision-making and in the transfer of powers to Brussels.</p>
<p><b>Intensity in opposition/criticism towards the EU</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ According to the distinction established by Szczerbiak &amp; Taggart (2002), it is a Party that fits the definition of '<b>soft Eurocepticism</b>', that is, a contingent or qualified opposition that proposes certain reforms that modify the values in which the integration process is established. In other words, it is an opposition that, although forceful and broad, points to certain elements that make up this integration process, emphasizing mainly the euro, immigration and sovereignty. In no case is reference made to the will to leave or dismantle the European Union, quite the contrary. Although they reject the current level of integration as excessive, their hope is that the EU will go back to an earlier stage of integration, where they would have a perfect place. To do this, they use rhetoric argumentation that focuses on highlighting the most discrepant points while offering alternatives to improve it. Likewise, they also make use of critical language tools, such as metaphors, parables, etc., to expose their point of view opposed to the current EU. It should be borne in mind that for the 2019 European elections the party did not present any written electoral program, but rather based on video and radio spots where a series of slogans were launched in monologue format.</li> <li>❖ On the other hand, according to the classification established by Flood (2002), we can frame it in the position of '<b>revisionist</b>', since they announce that their intention is to return to a previous stage of integration, generally before a treaty of revision. In other words, they are in favour of the State recovering and once again possessing some of the powers transferred to the European Union, specifically, returning to the stage of integration prior to the Maastricht Treaty, where there was only an exercise of free relations between states based on a purely economic nature.</li> </ul>



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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Finally, according to the classification presented by Kopecky &amp; Mudde (2002), the Party fits with what they call '<b>europragmatists</b>', since according to the first axis (support for the principle of integration), it is considered 'europhobe' , since they do not support at all the current level of integration existing in the EU, demanding to go back to the level of cooperation that existed before the Maastricht Treaty (which was only economic). In other words, they do not support the general ideas of integration that underlie the EU, nor are they necessarily opposed to them (remember that they do not reject the principle of integration as such, but consider that the current European Union is forcing this integration). On the other hand, regarding the second axis (support for the EU), we can consider them as 'Euro-optimists' since, although they do not support the EU as it is currently configured, they are optimistic about the direction of its development, presenting a list of proposals so that it becomes a true reflection of them. At no time do they oppose membership of the EU, quite the contrary. In general, this group contains those parties that do not have a strong ideological opinion on European integration, and on the basis of pragmatic (often utilitarian) considerations decide to value the EU positively because they consider it profitable for their country or constituency.</li></ul> |
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Source: Own elaboration.

**Table 11: Discourse and content analysis of Prawo i Sprawiedliwość’s electoral program**

Political party: Prawo i Sprawiedliwość – PIS

Country: Poland

Political ideology: National conservatism, right-wing populism, Christian right, Roman Catholicism, Euroscepticism

Political family in EP: European Conservatives and Reformists Party

Source of data collection: Political program “Polski Model Państwa Dobrobytu” used in the 2019 national elections.

**CASE ANALYSIS:**

**European Union’s  
conception (party’s  
view of the EU)**

They conceive the European Union as a union of States that configures a certain integrated economic structure, resulting in a platform to live in peace, stability, and prosperity. Although they recognize that it is an organization of great importance and promoter of many of its achievements, they consider that it requires certain changes. However, they cannot imagine a Europe without Poland. In this sense, they affirm that a united Europe would not exist without the contribution that Poland has made in the European Union’s construction process. They even recognize that Poland’s presence in the European Union is a historic opportunity for accelerating Poland’s development, a reflection widely accepted by their compatriots. It is for this reason that they are proud to be full participants in the European political community, represented in the European Council, the European Parliament and other EU bodies. They claim to be Eurorealists:

- *“For us, the European Union is first and foremost a union of states. We defend a Europe of the fatherlands”.*
- *“Europe is one for all European countries and nations. Europe needs neither a cultural revolution nor social engineering. Europe needs normal social relations based on the traditions of the European peoples and Christian culture. We reject all federal and disintegration projects.”*
- *“We are guided by the belief that Poland is the heart of Europe”.*
- *“At the core of each of our actions in the community forum is the conviction that the Union must build common law, institutions, market and budget and act on the basis of the four freedoms”.*
- *“We demand the European Union not being a union of double standards. We say a strong “yes” to the EU, but a strong “no” to those who treat Poland and other European countries unequally.”*
- *“Our model of the European Union is a coherent, solidary community of equal states, deregulated, democratic, open, based on the permanent roots of civilizational identity”.*

<p><b>Position on the current level of integration</b></p>	<p>According to the distinction established by Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012), this party is '<b>Eurocritic</b>', since it considers that the current European Union is forcing integration (the EU is too inclusive). They repeatedly express their willingness to ensure a high degree of subjectivity for Poland at all levels and dimensions of the European environment and foreign policy. However, they are not opposed to any type of integration, but rather their intention is to transform the EU from within so that it advances towards a stage with a lower level of integration. Specifically, they propose that the treaties and the principle of subsidiarity be respected, introducing strong legal barriers against those supranational practices with a federalizing nature that threaten Polish national sovereignty. In this way, they guarantee the defence and protection of national interests. In short, they are committed to a policy aimed at building the subjectivity of the states and the freedom of the nations that compose it, contributing to a strengthening of Poland's position within the European Union. To do this, they denounce that the provisions of the Treaty of the European Union cannot be the basis for destroying the national identity, tradition, culture, model of life and Polish customs. In other words, they reject any kind of "cultural experiment", considering that each Member State has the inalienable right to shape its own social order. Therefore, they add that the way out of the EU crisis does not go through promoting federal solutions or projects such as "multi-speed Europe", since they believe that such actions only deepen the internal imbalance, create tensions, and expose the democracy deficit in the EU institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ <i>"Europe would be stronger thanks to a subjective and dynamic Poland, but membership of any organization in international relations cannot be to the detriment of the Polish state".</i></li><li>▪ <i>"We do not accept the uncontrolled erosion of European countries' sovereignty."</i></li><li>▪ <i>"The vision of the only possible model of European integration, based on the nation-state's disappearance and the exclusion of the defence of national interests, has not turned out to be true. The political potential of the state, based on its military strength, effective economy, and internal social order, remains the most important factor."</i></li><li>▪ <i>"We renounce the creation of the Ministry for European Integration, but we adopt the creation of a secretary of state specially designated for European affairs."</i></li><li>▪ <i>"Poland has made great efforts to dynamize the community based on the principle of solidarity and cooperation between member states, but always within the limits of the Lisbon Treaty and on the basis of our constitution".</i></li><li>▪ <i>"We also did not hesitate to oppose the decisions of the EU's majority, when these were in direct contradiction with the interests of Poland".</i></li><li>▪ <i>"We are strong and effective in the pursuit of Polish interests in the European Union".</i></li><li>▪ <i>"For us, more Europe does not mean less Poland".</i></li><li>▪ <i>"We see the genesis of the crisis in the Union in federal trends not accepted by European nations, attached to their traditions, to their own sovereign states and to a culture forged over the centuries".</i></li><li>▪ <i>"We are committed to constantly counteract those unfavourable solutions to Poland and Poles in the European Union,</i></li></ul>
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	<p><i>including migration, agriculture, energy, and social policies”.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“We are opposed to the EU institutions taking over the Member States’ powers and broadening the interpretation of EU treaty law”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The legal basis for the functioning community institutions’ basis are solely the provisions of the European treaties”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“We will evaluate all EU decisions from the point of view of our interests; such a perspective applies mainly to the maintenance of zloty as the Polish national currency, the energy and climate package, the protection of Polish property and migration policy”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“We remain in favour of enlarging the Union to include the Western Balkan States and outlining real prospects for the Eastern European countries (Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova)”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“We are in favour of a large budget for the European Union, so it will allow the design of a cohesion policy, based on the principles of fairness and equality”.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Arguments used to oppose/criticize the current level of integration</b></p>	<p>Their criticism of the current level of integration present in the European Union revolves mainly around the desire to counteract the crisis in the European Union, whose most serious manifestation was, as they consider, the immigration crisis, the crisis in the euro and the unequal treatment of the Community’s new members:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) <u>Reform of the judiciary</u>: they express their will to continue with the reform of the judiciary and, although they say that these changes will be made in accordance with the EU treaties, they add that they must be made in accordance with the Constitutional Court and with the principle that the Constitution is the highest legislative act in Poland.</li> <li>b) <u>Structural funds</u>: remembering that they are one of the biggest beneficiaries of the EU’s cohesion policy, they demand the maximum increase in the reserve of funds for their country and promise to fight for Poland to be allocated a number of budget funds that covers the needs of its citizens, taking into account its role in the EU:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“We maintain that Europe has a chance to compete globally only if it is based on solid and fair basis”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Caring for the reliable and efficient use of each euro of subsidy should be an argument to increase funds for Poland, and not a reason to give the flow of money to countries that do not use their subsidies effectively and, consequently, return money to Brussels.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>c) <u>Common Agricultural Policy</u>: they demand a subsidies’ equalization of Polish farmers at the average level of the European Union, as well as a greater obtaining of funds for rural development from the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy:       <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Our priority is to remedy the unfair and discriminatory inequalities of Polish farmers in direct payments. (...) This constitutes a great oversight on their part and proof of their ineffectiveness in the field of European agricultural policy”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“We will make sure that Poland gets the largest funds in the entire European Union for the second pillar of the</i></li> </ul> </li> </ol>

*Common Agricultural Policy, that is, for the development of rural areas”.*

- *“These funds are of great importance for the modernization of Polish agriculture, but also for the survival of as many farms as possible.”*
- d) Criticism of 'Euro-enthusiasm': they reject the so-called "mainstream" clientelism, which means not respecting the obvious interests of Poland. Likewise, they present a strong naivete in the Euro-enthusiastic perception of the European Union, which is reduced, as they point out, to subordination to stronger European countries combined with a passive policy of Central and Eastern Europe. In addition, they add that Euro-enthusiasm is based on the false belief that, by loosening allied ties with the United States of America, the responsibility for the security of the member countries will be assumed by a European Union dominated by Germany. In short, they are strongly opposed to the European system biased towards Euro-enthusiasm.
- e) Immigration: they reject the European Union's demands (and especially of Germany) in terms of migration. They argue that the disagreement of their Central European partners and of Polish public opinion should prevail in relocating immigrants to their country. Along the same lines, they boast of having caused a change in the EU's migration policy, going from mandatory to voluntary:
- *"Not only the interests of Poland, but also the essence of democracy are ignored when decisions are made against the Poles."*
  - *"We also present our idea to solve the migration crisis by protecting the Union's external borders and providing assistance in regions where a crisis is emerging”.*
- f) Foreign policy: they claim to work from the diplomatic sphere to effectively implement Poland's interests in bilateral relations and in international organizations. For this, the centre of its activity is based on the reason of state, the Polish national interests and the subjectivity of Poland:
- *"We have given priority to four areas of foreign policy: sovereignty, freedom, solidarity and truth”.*
  - *"We have moved away from secondary and peripheral politics, subordinated to those stronger states”.*
- g) Climate neutrality: they claim to be fighting to elaborate the principles of a just energy transformation at the EU level, but they differ in the strategy that the EU has adopted:
- *"We protect nature and take care of climate, but at the same time the costs of a commitment as serious as that of climate neutrality must be shared equally among all European countries”.*
- h) Euro: they take an unequivocal position in maintaining the zloty as the national currency of Poland. In addition, they are opposed to giving an ideological meaning to the euro, but instead choose, like their predecessors, to give it a strictly economic meaning.
- *"Currently, we do not see any economic reason to introduce the euro in Poland”.*
- i) Democratic deficit: they are willing to take responsibility for carrying out the necessary changes in the Union so that it strengthens its position in global competition and overcomes the democratic deficit. To this end, they consider it necessary to

	<p>strengthen the role of national parliaments in the Union's decision-making process. On the other hand, they oppose proposals to expand those cases in which EU decisions would be taken on the basis of majority voting and not seeking a compromise.</p>
<p><b>Intensity in opposition/criticism towards the EU</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ According to the distinction established by Szczerbiak &amp; Taggart (2002), it is a Party that fits the definition of '<b>soft Euroscepticism</b>', that is, a contingent or qualified opposition that proposes certain reforms that modify the values in which the integration process is established. In other words, it is an opposition that points to certain elements that make up this integration process, emphasizing key issues such as the subjectivity of Poland, criticism of Euro-enthusiasm or the demand for a greater amount of EU structural funds for Poland. In no case is reference made to the desire to leave or dismantle the European Union, quite the contrary. Although they reject a higher level of integration than the current one, they repeatedly recognize the great economic dependence they have on the EU, conceiving their membership as a historic opportunity for the development of their country and a source of pride. To do this, they use an argument that focuses on highlighting those criticisms of the EU while offering alternatives to remedy them.</li> <li>❖ On the other hand, according to the classification established by Flood (2002), we can frame it in the position of '<b>minimalist</b>' since they accept the current status quo but want to limit greater integration as much as possible. In other words, in no case do they refer to going back to a lower stage of integration, but simply warn that a higher degree of integration would be interpreted by Poland as an attack on its subjectivity. In addition, another of the main features of this category is that they only accept integration in certain very specific areas. In this case, the economic one, which is explained by the country's great financial dependence on EU resources.</li> <li>❖ Finally, according to the classification presented by Kopecky &amp; Mudde (2002), the Party fits with what they call '<b>europragmatists</b>', since according to the first axis (support for the principle of integration), it is considered 'euromphobe', since they do not support the federalist ideas of greater integration that underlie the EU, but they are not necessarily opposed to them either (it should be remembered that at no time do they reject the principle of integration as such, although they consider that a higher level of integration than the current one would be harmful to Polish subjectivity and sovereignty). On the other hand, regarding the second axis (support for the EU), we can consider them as 'Euro-optimists' since, although they do not support some of the current EU's key points, they are optimistic about the direction of its development. At no time do they oppose membership of the EU, quite the contrary. They understand Poland's future lies within the European Union. In general, this category contains those parties that do not have a strong ideological opinion on European integration, and on the basis of pragmatic (often utilitarian) considerations decide to value the EU positively because they consider it profitable for their country. This case is a faithful reflection of a utilitarian consideration based on economic dependence.</li> </ul>

Source: Own elaboration.

**Table 12: Discourse and content analysis of Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia’s electoral program**

<i>Political party:</i> <b>Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia - KSČM</b>	
<i>Country:</i> Czech Republic	
<i>Political ideology:</i> Communism, Marxism-Leninism, Euroscepticism, Far-left	
<i>Political family in EP:</i> Party of the European Left	
<i>Source of data collection:</i> KSČM election program for the 2019 European parliament elections	
<b>CASE ANALYSIS:</b>	
<b>European Union’s conception (party’s view of the EU)</b>	<p>They conceive the European Union as a community of sovereign states that mutually provide various benefits without harming each other. They consider their membership in the European Union as an opportunity to negotiate bilaterally advantageous and balanced conditions for their country. Proof of this is that they consider it necessary to improve the global awareness of their citizens about the European Union, pointing out the rights, benefits, and opportunities that membership offers them. However, they point out that another European Union is possible if a deep institutional reform and a change of leadership in the Union are carried out. They resolutely pursue a Europe of peace and cooperation, a Union that belongs to its citizens and that works in the interest of the different peoples that comprise it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Reviving the idea of a united, peaceful, socially just Europe and bringing the institutions of the European Union closer to its citizens requires a new policy and also new policies”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“We must democratize and socialize the European Union project”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The 2019 elections are a great opportunity and probably the last to promote another Europe: a Europe of peace and cooperation. To create a European Union that belongs to its citizens, not to multinational corporations and a small group of billionaires”.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Position on the current level of integration</b>	<p>According to the distinction established by Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012), this party is '<b>Eurocritic</b>' since it is not the EU or the idea of European integration as such that the party rejects, but rather they repudiate the current level of integration by considering it excessive, a fact that makes it difficult to defend its national interests. To this end, they advocate European cooperation and integration based on equal rights, "a Europe built from the base", as they indicate. Along the same lines, they consider it necessary to respect the diversity of points of view of individuals, regions and, above all, the Member States of the Union, finding solutions in those conflictive areas</p>

	<p>always to the Czech Republic’s benefit. In the reform of the European Union that they propose, they are in favour of restricting the legislative initiative of the Union in those areas strictly necessary, thus strengthening the role of national states, and especially citizens and civic initiatives, which means a significant reduction in the bureaucratization of the EU. They also express their willingness to carry out a revision of the Treaty of Lisbon to democratize it, firmly opposing those voices calling for the substitution of the unanimity rule (right of veto) for the qualified majority voting. They also propose to increase the emphasis of national parliaments, allowing them not only to participate in decision-making mechanisms in the EU but also to be able to veto European Union regulations that they consider contrary to their interests:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“The membership of the Czech Republic in the European Union only makes sense if it helps to realize Czech national interests and mutually beneficial peaceful cooperation among European nations.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The EU must restore the sovereignty of its Member States, that is, give all EU Member States a right of veto, to return to the Lisbon Treaty”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“It is necessary to evaluate the current level of European legislation and eliminate dysfunctional, redundant or directly harmful regulations, directives and standards for our country”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The need for its application in national legislation must be clearly defined and the distortion, overestimation and abuse of European Union legislation to the detriment of the Member States must not be allowed”.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Arguments used to oppose/criticize the current level of integration</b></p>	<p>They structure their EU’s criticism in several general points. Among them, they highlight the will for the Czech Republic to play its role in promoting greater social and political equality, initiating negotiations to modify the founding treaties of the Union in order to eliminate all the instruments of neoliberal policy and strengthen elements of economic, cooperative and sustainable democracy. Similarly, they claim that the Union contributes significantly to worsening many of these problems due to its bad economic, social, and foreign policy:</p> <p>a) <u>Criticism of the ‘neoliberal’ project</u>: they expose a fierce criticism against the austerity policies imposed by the EU, considering that economic growth must be based on an expansionist economic vision that rejects austerity once for all and benefits the majority. Along the same lines, they denounce the exercise of corruption and speculation carried out by large multinational corporations and banks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“The Union is destroying Europe with its austerity policy under the excuse of 'budgetary responsibility'”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The European Union is in disarray before the applause of the United States and its economic interests. Such European integration cannot be supported, the lives of the people European Union are more important than the profits of the banks!”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The corrupters, the grey mice, the behind-the-scenes conspirators or the unscrupulous careerists who bring down the</i></li> </ul>



*European Union and rob decent citizens must definitely end”.*

- b) Social and labour rights: they advocate a more socially just European Union, denouncing that the dictates of financial capital bring citizens to the brink of poverty. For this reason, they assure that the fight for the social rights of citizens in the European Union is far from over, stating that their objective is to transform the European social system so that it leads to an increase in the quality of life of the most disadvantaged. For this, they affirm that the dismantling and theft of the welfare state must be stopped, as well as the further development of a fair and more efficient social system. In the same way, they consider it essential to reinforce the social and cohesion funds to equalize social disparities and protect public services, reduce unemployment to generate social cohesion in society and reinforce those instruments available to the EU to stop the privatization of public services:
- *“The European Union needs a new economic agenda: it is time to increase wages and reduce working hours”.*
  - *“It is clear that the institutions of the Union lack a vision of the economic framework and social development of the European Union”.*
  - *“We do not want a further expansion of part-time work, but quality jobs. Part-time work cannot be the basis for further expansion of employment replacing full-time work.”*
  - *“The social disparities in the European Union are enormous (...) Poverty, unemployment and homelessness must have no place in the Europe of the 21st century”.*
  - *“We say a resounding NO to working poverty: the income from a job must guarantee a decent life, even in the post-productive age. A necessary condition is to guarantee affordable housing for all!”*
  - *“It is completely unacceptable to accept the proposal to reduce EU spending on access to health care (...) We remain firm in the fight against waste and parasitism, which is connected to the profit-seeking pharmaceutical companies and to the cynical health businessmen”.*
- c) Environmentalism and agriculture: they warn that the intensification of climate change requires the EU to adopt a more proactive role in the execution of new policies to minimize the consumption of fossil fuels. In the same way, they affirm that the development and application of binding regulations for the protection of nature, the landscape and consumers must become one of the priorities of the European Union. To do this, they are committed to reinforcing the role of nuclear energy and promoting the promotion of renewable and green energy sources. Along the same lines, they demand an end to the unfavourable conditions for Czech farmers, considering it necessary to establish an appropriate subsidy policy taking into account the rural development and infrastructure of their country:
- *“Water, soil and air are our ecological priorities!”*
  - *“The European Union must become a laboratory where new economic models and social programs that respect the environment can be found”.*
  - *“End unfavourable conditions for Czech farmers! It is necessary to establish equal subsidy policy rules in all Member*

*States”.*

- *“As part of the negotiations on the common agricultural policy of the European Union, we are promoting the strengthening of the position of the Czech Republic with the aim of restoring the self-sufficiency of the Czech Republic”.*

d) Immigration: they conceive the new migratory waves as a threat to Europe due to their difficult management. Consequently, they flatly reject the “meaningless” notion of immigrant quotas for member states that some European Union countries have applied. On the contrary, they propose to replace them with functional protection of the external borders of the European Union and an effective national asylum policy that includes the effective and rapid return of the migrant to the place of origin or another reasonably safe place. Likewise, they affirm that the inclusion and integration of those immigrants with a historical-cultural interconnection with Europe are much easier. They consider that perhaps it would be more effective and logical if the European Union invested in the poorest countries in order to avoid migratory waves due to an improvement in the economic and social situation of their homes. Finally, they demand energetic measures against crime and terrorist acts:

- *“Asylum and migration policy is intended to help people in need, but it must not lead to a deterioration of the security and social situation in host countries”.*
- *“The politicians who have been involved in causing the migratory wave should not be admitted to the decision-making positions of the European Commission”.*
- *“The problem is not one individual, but tens of millions of people in Africa and Asia who pretend to live in a rich Europe. Without a real and determined approach, we will not be able to meet this challenge.”*
- *“Many African and Asian citizens who leave their homes do so not only because of wars but also because of the catastrophic economic and social situation of their homes and the unrealistic promises made by smuggling mafias. The European Union can demonstrate its true European values if it is able to invest in these poor countries”.*
- *“Reducing crime and preventing terrorist attacks must be a security priority for the European Union”.*
- *“A more consistent and coordinated, timely and active anti-terrorist action against organizations that practice or proclaim their dogmas based on dangerous notions based on their superiority”.*

e) Defence Policy: they reject the “unjustified” increase in spending on weapons not only in the European Union budget but also in the so-called European Defence Fund or similar proposals. On the contrary, they consider that it is necessary to increase spending on protecting the population from the effects of war and natural disasters and on peaceful diplomacy. Likewise, they are in favour of implementing a policy of international dialogue in the European Union that includes dialogue instead of threats and sanctions. One of the most critical points is the demand for the abolition of NATO as a long-term objective and as a maximum objective that of the withdrawal of the Czech Republic from that Pact. They, therefore, demand that the European Union focus more on deepening economic and social cooperation at a global level, acting as a partner and co-guarantor of security at a continental level, while eliminating the prejudice that Russia is the enemy:

- *“The idea of the armed forces of the European Union is unacceptable until the vision of a future functional security*

	<p><i>architecture for all of Europe, including European states that are not members of the European Union or NATO, is clarified.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“The collective defence of Europe following the OSCE, with the same rights and obligations of the Member States, is the only acceptable path that the European Union can take”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Promote peaceful cooperation in the diplomacy of the European Union and act actively as a mediator in areas of acute conflict”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“It is essential to stop the connection between the European Union and NATO”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Europe needs peace to develop. The transatlantic arms trade must be replaced by pan-European, Eurasian and global economic cooperation.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Where the European Union is not active towards Russia, other great powers will be”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The European Union will be a safer place if its political leaders get rid of prejudices about the superiority of some, especially the former colonial countries”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“The European Union has the duty to guarantee the maximum security of its citizens in all areas of their lives”.</i></li> </ul> <p>f) <u>Decision-making</u>: they demand that it should be the citizens of the EU who decide on those fundamental aspects of life through elections and referendums, and not European officials. In other words, they are committed to a more transparent decision-making process within the EU (also in adherence to international agreements):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“The unelected institutions of the European Union are moving away by leaps and bounds from the lives of the citizens of their member states”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Intensity in opposition/criticism towards the EU</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ According to the distinction established by Szczerbiak &amp; Taggart (2002), it is a Party that fits the definition of '<b>soft Euroscepticism</b>', that is, a contingent or qualified opposition that proposes certain reforms that modify the values in which the integration process is established. In other words, it is an opposition that illustrates how they can continue to give space to far-left politics in an enlarged European Union (EU). It analyses in detail several political areas (security and defence policy, immigration, employment policy and policies towards the institutional reform of the EU) affirming that, in no case is its will to abandon or dismantle the European Union, but rather the opposite. Although they are quite critical in certain key areas of the integration process, they emphasize the benefits and opportunities offered by membership, conceiving it as an opportunity for the Czech Republic.</li> <li>❖ On the other hand, according to the classification established by Flood (2002), we can frame it in the position of '<b>minimalist</b>' since its aim is to limit, as far as possible, greater integration. Specifically, they propose to limit the legislative initiative in the European Union only to those truly important common challenges in all the Member States, eliminating all that European legislation that is dysfunctional and harmful to the different States. In other words, they are in favour of evaluating the current level of European integration, warning that a greater degree of integration (such as the substitution of the unanimity rule for the</li> </ul>

qualified majority rule) would be to the detriment of the Czech Republic, being interpreted as an excessive intrusion towards its sovereignty. They are not prepared to allow the distortion, overestimation, or abuse of European Union legislation to the detriment of the Member States. In short, they only accept integration in certain very specific areas.

- ❖ On the other hand, according to the classification established by Flood (2002), we can frame it in the position of '**minimalist**' since its aim is to limit, as far as possible, greater integration. Specifically, they propose to limit the legislative initiative in the European Union only to those truly important common challenges in all the Member States, eliminating all that European legislation that is dysfunctional and harmful to the different States. In other words, they are in favor of evaluating the current level of European integration, warning that a greater degree of integration (such as the substitution of the unanimity rule for the qualified majority rule) would be to the detriment of the Czech Republic, being interpreted as an intrusion excessive towards its sovereignty. They are not prepared to allow the distortion, overestimation or abuse of European Union legislation to the detriment of the Member States. In short, they only accept integration in certain very specific areas.
- ❖ Finally, according to the classification presented by Kopecky & Mudde (2002), the Party fits with what they call '**europragmatists**', since according to the first axis (support for the principle of integration), it is considered 'europhobe', since they do not support the current level of integration existing in the EU, demanding the restoration of sovereignty to the Member States, as well as the preservation of the mechanism of the right of veto. In other words, they do not support the general ideas of integration that underlie the EU and consider that the current European Union is forcing this integration. On the other hand, regarding the second axis (support for the EU), we can consider them as 'Euro-optimists' since, although they do not support the EU as it is currently configured, they are optimistic about the direction of its development, ensuring that they can play an important role in influencing the politics of the extreme left, trying to change the ideological balance towards structurally more progressive and anti-capitalist politics within the Union. At no time are they opposed to belonging to the EU, but on the contrary, they repeatedly highlight the opportunities and benefits that being part of it offers them. In general, this group contains those parties that, on the basis of pragmatic (often utilitarian) considerations, decide to value the EU positively because they consider it profitable for their country or constituency (in this case, the EU's subsidy policy for Czech farmers, for example).

Source: Own elaboration

**Table 13: Discourse and content analysis of Volt-Nederland’s electoral program**

Political party: Volt-Nederland

Country: Netherlands

Political ideology: Social liberalism, Pro-Europeanism, Pan-europeism, European federalism, Centre, Progressivism, Pragmatism

Political family in EP: Greens–European Free Alliance

Source of data collection: Volt's program for the European Parliament 2019 - 2024

**CASE ANALYSIS:**

**European Union’s conception (party’s view of the EU)**

They conceive the European Union as a common project that, after centuries of conflict, has managed to come together and build a stable structure that has guaranteed peace and prosperity for more than sixty years. They are proud to belong to this project. They state that, beyond its borders and despite its shortcomings, the European project transmits a message to the world based on the common values that unite the different States. They are committed to continuing to build a Europe based on a stronger political Union, where the risks are shared between the different States, emerging as an economic superpower that takes care of all people. In short, "a Europe with a vision of the future", as they say. In fact, Volt is the first progressive pan-European political movement, being a transnational political party with which they want to contest elections to create a pan-European coalition “for the democratization of Europe”. For this, they consider it essential to work to achieve a truly democratic Europe that values its citizens, allowing them to be part of the solution to those challenges they face, increasing their political participation within the Union. However, they are convinced that the current deficits can and must be addressed to achieve a better Europe, aiming at more global and representative institutions to create a new sense of community-based on common values:

- *“We have more in common than what divides us, we can forge our destiny together”.*
- *“Through the shared peace and prosperity it has provided, Europe has been a positive force in our lives.”*
- *“We are proud of this achievement. However, Europe has its shortcomings. In general, people do not feel represented in the Union and consider that decisions are imposed on them from above”.*
- *"Volt offers Europeans a new vision of Europe, encompassing the EU's shared ambitions and addressing current shortcomings."*
- *“In a time of great political tension, a group of Europeans from all scopes of life decided to champion a cause they believed in. It was the moment of action, the birth of Volt. Fight together for a better society and have faith in a common future. Our*

	<p><i>message is one of hope, courage, and solidarity. A message to all in order to prevent the division from breaking what our parents have built. Volt was founded to energize Europe and provide solutions to common problems.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Our vision is, therefore, that of a social Europe that has often been mentioned by successive leaders, but never implemented”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“We support a Europe where solidarity means supporting each other and accepting joint responsibility for our common future, where we actively support the development of our poorest regions and help raise their standard of living (...)”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“We believe in a Europe that works the same way for everyone, not just for a privileged few”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“A Europe in which all citizens of the continent have the same rights, and trust that everyone contributes and benefits equally from their participation”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“We believe in a Europe that guarantees the full representation of all citizens and their opinions. (...) Therefore, our vision is of a Europe in which a dynamic democracy creates an open space for debate and allows everyone to participate and be recognized and respected in their diversity. A Europe where citizens directly elect all their European representatives, hold them accountable and have their needs included in the decisions that are made for all”.</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Position on the current level of integration</b></p>	<p>According to the distinction established by Rodríguez-Aguilera (2012), this party is 'Eurocritic', since they do not reject the principle of integration (quite the contrary), but they believe that the EU is going too slowly (the EU is too exclusive), which is a positive rejection. However, although they repudiate the current level of integration as insufficient, their hope is that the EU moves decisively towards a supranational direction with a higher level of integration. In fact, they boast of having been born at a time of integration crisis due to mistrust of common work, with the aim of affirming the strength of the European project and showing their belief in a shared future. They consider that issues such as climate change, economic inequalities, migration, terrorism, or digital transformation represent transnational challenges that cannot be resolved merely through national governments, but that the solution can only be effective if it is joint at the European level. Such is the level of integration that they advocate that they even propose the creation of a European government, as well as that of exclusively European political parties. Along the same lines, they consider it very opportune that all decisions in the EU be taken by majority, eliminating the unanimity rule, which blocks many initiatives, as well as allowing the legislative initiative to the European Parliament as the only institution directly elected by the people. These last two are clear examples of European federalism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Ours is a message of hope, audacity, and solidarity. A message for all to see that division alarms will not bring down what we have patiently built.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Volt was erected to be a pillar of the European project and to re-energize its construction”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Some support a world of each country “on their own”; we have chosen a different course, one of collaboration, where the commonly agreed rules contain the strong and protect the weak, and we are the best for it. Based on the decisions we make, we</i></li> </ul>

	<p><i>decide to create a more robust and sustainable Union for future generations and the world in general”.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“The reform of the EU is necessary, aimed at a future with a federal and truly democratic Europe, by and for the citizens”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Create a Federal Europe with a European government, with a Prime Minister elected by Parliament and a President directly elected by the people”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Allow the creation of authentic EU political parties. The current EU parties are loose coalitions of national parties with conflicting interests. True democracy in the EU needs strong parties with a vision of the future of Europe”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Allow members of the European Parliament to present legislative proposals. Only then will the European Parliament be able to better represent the interests of the population.”</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“It is necessary to increase citizen participation. Europeans feel that they are not listened to and that they cannot participate sufficiently in decision-making processes. They often feel excluded by politics. Giving people more influence will strengthen democracy.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Arguments used to oppose/criticize the current level of integration</b></p>	<p>They structure their critique of the current level of integration (as insufficient) based on the following key areas:</p> <p>a) <u>Political participation</u>: For Volt, the EU is a unique political space with an active democracy experienced at all levels. Specifically, they propose to promote dynamic, pluralistic, and accessible public spheres, which is why they advocate the possibility for European citizens to be empowered to make informed political decisions, as well as being able to influence politics beyond elections and exercise their democratic rights in dynamic and deliberative democracies. Likewise, they are committed to a series of specific tools to strengthen participatory and transnational European democracy, empowering the capacity of citizens to influence politics beyond elections through the implementation of digital platforms for communication with administrations, as well as promoting the creation of citizen councils or that of real and effective participatory budgets:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Starting at the local level, from the neighbourhoods and districts, we encourage citizens to escalate their issues to a European level, coordinating with groups from other countries with the same interests”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“It is necessary to strengthen the influence of citizens in politics. Across Europe, citizens choose their representatives through elections, and we want to make sure that elections across Europe are free and fair. We also recognize that political innovations in general, and digital technologies in particular, have given rise to a variety of tools and processes that make it possible for citizens to actively participate in democratic civic life beyond elections and the mere act of voting”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“We propose to reduce the threshold for submitting a European Citizens' Initiative (ECI) to half the number of signatories, specifically to 500,000”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Electoral democracy is complemented, and can be further strengthened, by elements of participatory democracy”.</i></li> <li>▪ <i>“Governmental institutions must be enabled and empowered to respond to citizen participation”.</i></li> </ul> <p>b) <u>Institutional reform</u>: they consider it essential to start with the reform of the European Union’s governance and institutions.</p>

They affirm that they cannot restrict democracy to certain areas of political exercise, but that it is imperative to exercise it at the local level, at the national level, and at the European level. They assert that this democracy, at all levels, is the key to regaining the trust of European citizens in their institutions, and to agreeing on common solutions to common problems. They are aware that the extension of democracy at the European level will require fundamental changes and will even require modifying the treaties. To achieve this change, they propose a series of changes in the three great powers of the Union. Within the legislative branch, they propose giving the European Parliament the right of legislative initiative, harmonizing the adoption of EU legislation (by putting European legislation to vote in the two European legislative bodies – the Parliament and the Council – so that it becomes in a law approved by the two), reform the European Parliament’s election (to respect the basic principle of "one person, one vote"), as well as reform the Council of the European Union (transforming this body into a chamber with full rights legislature by direct election of its members). Regarding the executive power, they propose to abolish the European Council since they consider that it is exceeding the limits of its functions, exercising legislative functions when it does not correspond to it, as well as establishing a true European government (with the election by the EP of a Prime Minister leading a federal Cabinet of Ministers). Finally, within the judiciary they propose expanding the prerogatives available to the Court of Justice of the European Union, as well as creating regional delegations of this same Court:

- *“A house divided against itself cannot stand, and the European Union cannot remain half-integrated and divided, economically unified and politically nationalized. Therefore, the solution for the open problems of the Union is not a question of “more Europe” or “less Europe”, but a “better Europe”, including better institutions”.*
  - *“As can be seen in our national systems, democracy is not about everyone agreeing - we could never do it - but about managing our disagreements and creating a fair decision-making process that we can all support”.*
  - *“Vollt is fully aware of the difficulty of reforming the EU institutions, but we will not allow this to stop us from insisting on reform in favour of more transparency, more efficiency, and true democracy. This is the only way to achieve a qualitative change and finally reach a federal Europe”.*
- c) Security: they propose to work for the establishment of a European armed forces under the unified military command of the EU with civilian supervision. To this end, they consider it necessary to increase European defence capabilities by establishing a European army with member states committed to reinforcing European internal security by transforming the current Europol into a true federal police force with the power to fight cross-border crime, terrorism and cybersecurity threats:
- *“A strong Europe must defend its citizens. The protection of our citizens, territory and values is one of the central tasks of the EU, and one that we can only achieve if we remain together. Universally acclaimed values recognized by the UN and the international community must be upheld.”*
  - *“Future EU defence policy should aim to protect the EU, and its citizens, by building a common defence system that effectively addresses threats, whether they are near or far. The pooling by Member States of their financial, human, logistical and intelligence resources will be much more efficient and will greatly improve security across the EU.”*



- d) Transparency and corruption: they believe that it is necessary to increase the transparency of the EU by requiring elected officials/directors to disclose the costs and expenses of their position, as well as by expanding the European transparency register to include all EU institutions, including the Commission and the Council. They place great emphasis on controlling the transparency and accountability of all those lobbying activities that take place within the EU, which must be kept in a public registry, linked to a strict code of conduct. As measures to discourage corruption, they propose linking EU project funding to the national commitment to fight corruption, as well as giving new investigative powers to the European Anti-Fraud Office (EPPO) and increasing the mandate of the European Ombudsman in order to investigate the suspicious use of public funds.
- e) Employment: they advocate protecting the dignity and safety of workers, protecting people without long-term contracts, self-employed workers, on-call workers and the self-employed, creating flexible workplaces through a law of choice of working time across the EU under which employees and employers can negotiate flexible working arrangements that meet the needs of the individual, the team and the company. Likewise, they are committed to the use of EU funds to create jobs in the most disadvantaged areas, increasing public spending on professional and vocational education to increase continuous employability. Additionally, they propose to facilitate the search for work throughout Europe by the establishment of a European Labor Platform:
- *“The lack of good jobs in many European countries is increasingly detrimental, especially for European youth. Without enough jobs, space for entrepreneurship and equal opportunities for all, Europe will not move forward. We must encourage entrepreneurship and make it easy to take advantage of opportunities. Unemployment must be addressed by investing in education and training job seekers to apply successfully. People who need help with this need to be helped.”*
- f) Social equality: they state that no one should be left behind. To do this, they require the EU to guarantee decent living conditions by introducing a minimum income above the poverty line in all Member States, as well as providing support and assistance to those people who have lost their jobs in sectors or regions which have been economically affected:
- *“We must all be guaranteed equal rights and opportunities, and human rights must be respected, applied and upheld”.*
  - *“It is also intolerable that almost one in four Europeans faces poverty or social exclusion, and that the most vulnerable people lack the necessary support”.*
- g) Transition to the green economy: they state that Europe must play a leading role in the transition to a green economy in order to reap the benefits and be at the forefront of the fight against climate change. To do this, they propose the introduction of an EU-wide CO2 tax, ending fossil fuel subsidies, kick-starting the circular economy by stimulating the supply of renewable and sustainable goods and services, stopping plastic-based pollution and reduce waste in general, taxing the use of plastic, single-use products, and polluting reusable materials. Along the same lines, they advocate sustainable agriculture through a reorientation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP):
- *“While the EU cannot tackle global challenges alone, it must lead the way in an effort to mitigate the immediate and*

	<p><i>future impacts of climate change and set an example for other regions. Only then will Europe be able to position itself in the green industries of the future”.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“It is essential to support sustainable agriculture through a reorientation of the common agricultural policy away from large producers and more towards small producers who farm organically”.</i></li> </ul> <p>h) <b>Immigration</b>: they consider it necessary to shape the flows of refugees from outside the EU by establishing a uniform reception system and complementing it with a dispute resolution system that provides fines and sanctions for those Member States that refuse to assume their responsibility. They are committed to guaranteeing a fair, efficient and fast asylum policy, through the promulgation of EU directives that establish shorter asylum procedures and give them the right to social, legal and psychological assistance, thus ensuring a successful integration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“The refugee crisis is undoubtedly a political crisis. Europe is legally and morally obliged to help. There is space to receive refugees and Volt is using this to create opportunities for all. A variety of migrant workers in the European labour market can contribute to the well-being of both European countries and countries of origin.”</i></li> </ul> <p>i) <b>Equality</b>: they require the EU to guarantee the fulfilment of women's rights, guaranteeing the equal representation of men and women in EU politics and promoting the participation of women through the "zipper" lists of (male/female candidates) and other methods, such as mandatory reporting on the ratio of male/female representation. Along the same lines, they demand to break the glass ceiling on company boards, to report by companies on gender-balanced salaries and roles, to legalize free abortion and contraceptives across Europe:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ <i>“Discrimination and social exclusion of people on grounds of gender, sexuality, disability, appearance, origin, or belief still takes place in the EU. The EU must opt for a comprehensive approach, which excludes any form of discrimination with equal rights and opportunities for all. Human rights must be respected, applied, and observed so that there is equality for all in Europe in 2025!”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Intensity in opposition/criticism towards the EU</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ According to the distinction established by Szczerbiak &amp; Taggart (2002), it is a Party that fits the definition of '<b>soft Euroscepticism</b>' since, although it proposes certain reforms that modify the values on which the integration process is based to intensify it and meet their federalist demands, they put forward a positive overall approach to the EU as a general framework. In other words, it is a positive opposition, since in no case are they opposed to the European Union, on the contrary, they show apprehension towards the current integration's insufficiency and slowness.</li> <li>❖ On the other hand, according to the classification established by Flood (2002), we can frame it in the position of '<b>maximalist</b>' since its aim is to promote integration as far and as fast as possible towards the practical realization of maximum integration of the EU's entire structure, as well as correcting the deficiencies of what has already been done. We can see this position in favour of a greater European commitment materialized in its federalist and pan-European position that advocates close coordination between European countries sharing their national sovereignty and pursuing the creation of a European State with</li> </ul>

a federal model.

- ❖ Finally, according to the classification presented by Kopecky & Mudde (2002), the Party fits with what they call '**euroenthusiasts**', since according to the first axis (support for the principle of integration), it is considered 'europhile', as they believe in the key ideas of European integration that underlie the EU: institutionalized cooperation on the basis of joint sovereignty (the political element) and an integrated liberal market economy (the economic element). In this case, they conceive European integration as a project to create a new supranational (federalist) state. On the other hand, regarding the second axis (support for the EU), we can consider them as 'Euro-optimists' since, although they do not support European integration as it is currently configured, they are optimistic about the direction of its development, supporting the general ideas of European integration and believing that the EU will soon be institutionalizing these ideas.

Source: Own elaboration

## 8.2. Importation of the codes used in RStudio for the two binary logistic regressions

#ZA7581 | European Parliament Election Study 2019, Ideological variables (general political attitudes and perceptions)

#I open the database

```
ZA7581_v2_0_1 <- read_sav("ZA7581_v2-0-1.sav")
```

#I select only those data that interest me

```
IdeologicalVariables<-
```

```
data.frame(ZA7581_v2_0_1$Q4,ZA7581_v2_0_1$Q5,ZA7581_v2_0_1$Q6,ZA7581_v2_0_1$Q11,ZA7581_v2_0_1$Q14_3,ZA7581_v2_0_1$Q14_5,ZA7581_v2_0_1$Q14_6,ZA7581_v2_0_1$Q16,ZA7581_v2_0_1$Q18_2,ZA7581_v2_0_1$Q19,ZA7581_v2_0_1$Q21,ZA7581_v2_0_1$Q22)
```

#I rename the variables in order to work more comfortably

```
names(IdeologicalVariables)=c("SatisfactionDemocracy","ApprovalGovCountry","ParticipationElections","IdeologicalScale","SameSexMarriage","Inmigration","Environment","ImportanceDemocracy","TrustEP","PerceptionEconomicSituation","InterestPolitics","EuroscepticismIndicator")
```

#I explore my variables

```
class(IdeologicalVariables$SatisfactionDemocracy)
```

```
class(IdeologicalVariables$ApprovalGovCountry)
```

```
class(IdeologicalVariables$ParticipationElections)
```

```
class(IdeologicalVariables$IdeologicalScale)
```

```
class(IdeologicalVariables$SameSexMarriage)
```

```
class(IdeologicalVariables$Inmigration)
```

```
class(IdeologicalVariables$Environment)
class(IdeologicalVariables$ImportanceDemocracy)
class(IdeologicalVariables$TrustEP)
class(IdeologicalVariables$PerceptionEconomicSituation)
class(IdeologicalVariables$InterestPolitics)

#I remove missing values from the database where I work

IdeologicalVariables_omit<-na.omit(IdeologicalVariables)

library(car)

#I recode the variables that I need for the first binary logistic regression: IDEOLOGICAL VARIABLES

IdeologicalVariables_omit$SatisfactionDemocracyR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$SatisfactionDemocracy==1] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SatisfactionDemocracyR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$SatisfactionDemocracy==2] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SatisfactionDemocracyR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$SatisfactionDemocracy==3] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SatisfactionDemocracyR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$SatisfactionDemocracy==4] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SatisfactionDemocracyR <- factor(IdeologicalVariables_omit$SatisfactionDemocracyR,
                levels = c(1,2),
                labels = c("Satisfied",
                           "Not Satisfied"))
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ApprovalGovCountryR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$ApprovalGovCountry==1] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ApprovalGovCountryR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$ApprovalGovCountry==2] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ApprovalGovCountryR <- factor(IdeologicalVariables_omit$ApprovalGovCountryR,
              levels = c(1,2),
              labels = c("Approves",
                        "Does not approve"))

IdeologicalVariables_omit$ParticipationElectionsR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$ParticipationElections==1] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ParticipationElectionsR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$ParticipationElections==2] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ParticipationElectionsR <- factor(IdeologicalVariables_omit$ParticipationElectionsR,
              levels = c(1,2),
              labels = c("Vote",
                        "Did not vote"))

IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScaleR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScale==0] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScaleR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScale==1] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScaleR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScale==2] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScaleR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScale==3] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScaleR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScale==4] <- 2
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScaleR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScale==5] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScaleR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScale==6] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScaleR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScale==7] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScaleR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScale==8] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScaleR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScale==9] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScaleR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScale==10] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScaleR <- factor(IdeologicalVariables_omit$IdeologicalScaleR,
           levels = c(1,2,3),
           labels = c("Left",
                     "Center",
                     "Right"))
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriageR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriage==0] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriageR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriage==1] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriageR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriage==2] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriageR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriage==3] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriageR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriage==4] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriageR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriage==5] <- 2
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriageR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriage==6] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriageR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriage==7] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriageR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriage==8] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriageR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriage==9] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriageR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriage==10] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriageR <- factor(IdeologicalVariables_omit$SameSexMarriageR,
          levels = c(1,2,3),
          labels = c("Very much in favor",
                    "Middle position",
                    "Very much against"))
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InmigrationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Inmigration==0] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InmigrationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Inmigration==1] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InmigrationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Inmigration==2] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InmigrationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Inmigration==3] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InmigrationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Inmigration==4] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InmigrationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Inmigration==5] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InmigrationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Inmigration==6] <- 2
```



```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InmigrationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Inmigration==7] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InmigrationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Inmigration==8] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InmigrationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Inmigration==9] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InmigrationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Inmigration==10] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InmigrationR <- factor(IdeologicalVariables_omit$InmigrationR,
        levels = c(1,2,3),
        labels = c("Very much in favor of limiting it",
        "Middle position",
        "Very much against of limiting it"))
IdeologicalVariables_omit$EnvironmentR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Environment==0] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$EnvironmentR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Environment==1] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$EnvironmentR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Environment==2] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$EnvironmentR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Environment==3] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$EnvironmentR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Environment==4] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$EnvironmentR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Environment==5] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$EnvironmentR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Environment==6] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$EnvironmentR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Environment==7] <- 3
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$EnvironmentR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Environment==8] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$EnvironmentR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Environment==9] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$EnvironmentR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$Environment==10] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$EnvironmentR <- factor(IdeologicalVariables_omit$EnvironmentR,
        levels = c(1,2,3),
        labels = c("Greater importance to the environment",
                "Middle position",
                "Greater importance to economic growth"))
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracyR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracy==0] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracyR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracy==1] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracyR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracy==2] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracyR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracy==3] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracyR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracy==4] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracyR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracy==5] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracyR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracy==6] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracyR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracy==7] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracyR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracy==8] <- 3
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracyR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracy==9] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracyR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracy==10] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracyR <- factor(IdeologicalVariables_omit$ImportanceDemocracyR,
  levels = c(1,2,3),
  labels = c("Nothing important",
    "Middle position",
    "Very important"))

IdeologicalVariables_omit$TrustEPR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$TrustEP==1] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$TrustEPR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$TrustEP==2] <- 1
IdeologicalVariables_omit$TrustEPR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$TrustEP==3] <- 2
IdeologicalVariables_omit$TrustEPR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$TrustEP==4] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$TrustEPR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$TrustEP==5] <- 3
IdeologicalVariables_omit$TrustEPR <- factor(IdeologicalVariables_omit$TrustEPR,
  levels = c(1,2,3),
  labels = c("Trust in the European Parliament",
    "Middle position",
    "No trust in the European Parliament"))
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$PerceptionEconomicSituationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$PerceptionEconomicSituation==1] <- 1
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$PerceptionEconomicSituationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$PerceptionEconomicSituation==2] <- 1
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$PerceptionEconomicSituationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$PerceptionEconomicSituation==3] <- 2
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$PerceptionEconomicSituationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$PerceptionEconomicSituation==4] <- 3
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$PerceptionEconomicSituationR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$PerceptionEconomicSituation==5] <- 3
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$PerceptionEconomicSituationR <- factor(IdeologicalVariables_omit$PerceptionEconomicSituationR,  
  levels = c(1,2,3),  
  labels = c("It has improved",  
            "It has stayed the same",  
            "It has worsened"))
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InterestPoliticsR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$InterestPolitics==1] <- 1
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InterestPoliticsR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$InterestPolitics==2] <- 1
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InterestPoliticsR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$InterestPolitics==3] <- 2
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InterestPoliticsR[IdeologicalVariables_omit$InterestPolitics==4] <- 2
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$InterestPoliticsR <- factor(IdeologicalVariables_omit$InterestPoliticsR,  
  levels = c(1,2),  
  labels = c("Interested in politics",
```

```
"Not interested in politics"))
```

```
#I proceed to create my dichotomous dependent variable "Euroscpticism Indicator"
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$EuroscpticismIndicatorR<-recode(IdeologicalVariables_omit$EuroscpticismIndicator,"1=0;2=1;3=0;98=NA")
```

```
IdeologicalVariables_omit$EuroscpticismIndicatorR <- factor(IdeologicalVariables_omit$EuroscpticismIndicatorR,
```

```
levels = c(0,1),
```

```
labels = c("Not being Euroscptic",
```

```
"Being Euroscptic"))
```

```
#Multivariate analysis: 1st Binary Logistic Regression (Ideological variables)
```

```
library(tidyverse)
```

```
regresion_log_ideological<-glm(formula =  
EuroscpticismIndicatorR~SatisfactionDemocracyR+ApprovalGovCountryR+ParticipationElectionsR+IdeologicalScaleR+SameSexMarriageR+ImmigrationR+EnvironmentR+ImportanceDemocracyR+TrustEPR+PerceptionEconomicSituationR+InterestPoliticsR,data =  
IdeologicalVariables_omit,family = "binomial")
```

```
summary(regresion_log_ideological)
```

```
install.packages("stargazer")
```

```
library("stargazer")
```

```
stargazer(regresion_log_ideological, type = "text", out = "model.docx")
```

```
install.packages("jtools")
```

```
install.packages("ggstance")  
suppressPackageStartupMessages(library("jtools"))  
plot_summs(regresion_log_ideological)
```

## #ZA7581 | European Parliament Election Study 2019, Sociodemographic variables

### #I open the database

```
ZA7581_v2_0_1 <- read_sav("ZA7581_v2-0-1.sav")
```

### #I select only those data that interest me

```
SociodemographicVariables<-data.frame(ZA7581_v2_0_1$Q22,  
ZA7581_v2_0_1$D2_1,ZA7581_v2_0_1$D3,ZA7581_v2_0_1$D4_1,ZA7581_v2_0_1$D6,ZA7581_v2_0_1$D7,ZA7581_v2_0_1$D8,ZA7581_v2_0_1$D9,ZA7581_v2_0_1$D11)
```

### #I rename the variables in order to work more comfortably

```
names(SociodemographicVariables)=c("EuroscepticismIndicator",  
"EducationLevel","Gender","Age","EmploymentStatus","SocialClass","RuralUrbanGap","Religion","SocioeconomicStatus")
```

### #I explore my variables

```
class(SociodemographicVariables$EducationLevel)
```

```
class(SociodemographicVariables$Gender)
```

```
class(SociodemographicVariables$Age)
```

```
class(SociodemographicVariables$EmploymentStatus)
```

```
class(SociodemographicVariables$SocialClass)
```

```
class(SociodemographicVariables$RuralUrbanGap)
```

```
class(SociodemographicVariables$Religion)
```

```
class(SociodemographicVariables$SocioeconomicStatus)

#I remove missing values from the database where I work

SociodemographicVariables_omit<-na.omit(SociodemographicVariables)

library(car)

#I proceed to create my dichotomous dependent variable "Eurocepticism Indicator"

SociodemographicVariables_omit$EurocepticismIndicatorR<-
recode(SociodemographicVariables_omit$EurocepticismIndicator,"1=0;2=1;3=0;98=NA")

SociodemographicVariables_omit$EurocepticismIndicatorR <- factor(SociodemographicVariables_omit$EurocepticismIndicatorR,
                        levels = c(0,1),
                        labels = c("Not being Euroceptic",
                                   "Being Euroceptic"))

#I recode the variables that I need for the second binary logistic regression: SOCIODEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

SociodemographicVariables_omit$EducationLevelR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$EducationLevel < 20] <- 1
SociodemographicVariables_omit$EducationLevelR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$EducationLevel > 20] <- 2
SociodemographicVariables_omit$EducationLevelR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$EducationLevel==97] <- NA
SociodemographicVariables_omit$EducationLevelR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$EducationLevel==98] <- NA
SociodemographicVariables_omit$EducationLevelR <- factor(SociodemographicVariables_omit$EducationLevelR,
```



```
levels = c(1,2),  
labels = c("No university degree",  
          "With a university degree"))
```

```
SociodemographicVariables_omit$GenderR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Gender==1] <- 1  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$GenderR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Gender==2] <- 2  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$GenderR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Gender==3] <- NA  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$GenderR <- factor(SociodemographicVariables_omit$GenderR,
```

```
levels = c(1,2),  
labels = c("Men",  
          "Women"))
```

```
SociodemographicVariables_omit$AgeR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Age>1921] <- 1  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$AgeR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Age>1954] <- 1  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$AgeR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Age>1960] <- 2  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$AgeR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Age>1994] <- 3  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$AgeR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Age>2003] <- 4  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$AgeR <- factor(SociodemographicVariables_omit$AgeR,  
levels = c(1,2,3,4),
```

```
labels = c("Old age",  
          "Adulthood",  
          "Youth",  
          "Adolescence"))
```

```
SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatusR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatus==1] <- 1  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatusR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatus==2] <- 1  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatusR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatus==4] <- 1  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatusR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatus==3] <- NA  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatusR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatus==5] <- 2  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatusR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatus==6] <- 3  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatusR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatus==7] <- NA  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatusR <- factor(SociodemographicVariables_omit$EmploymentStatusR,  
                  levels = c(1,2,3),  
                  labels = c("Working",  
                             "Retired",  
                             "Unemployed"))  
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocialClassR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocialClass==1] <- 1
```

```
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocialClassR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocialClass==2] <- 1
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocialClassR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocialClass==3] <- 2
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocialClassR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocialClass==4] <- 3
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocialClassR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocialClass==5] <- 3
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocialClassR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocialClass==6] <- NA
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocialClassR <- factor(SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocialClassR,
  levels = c(1,2,3),
  labels = c("Lower class",
            "Middle class",
            "Upper class"))

SociodemographicVariables_omit$RuralUrbanGapR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$RuralUrbanGap==1] <- 1
SociodemographicVariables_omit$RuralUrbanGapR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$RuralUrbanGap==2] <- 2
SociodemographicVariables_omit$RuralUrbanGapR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$RuralUrbanGap==3] <- 2
SociodemographicVariables_omit$RuralUrbanGapR <- factor(SociodemographicVariables_omit$RuralUrbanGapR,
  levels = c(1,2),
  labels = c("Rural area",
            "Urban area"))
```

```
SociodemographicVariables_omit$ReligionR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Religion==1] <- 1
SociodemographicVariables_omit$ReligionR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Religion==2] <- 1
SociodemographicVariables_omit$ReligionR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Religion==3] <- 1
SociodemographicVariables_omit$ReligionR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Religion==4] <- 1
SociodemographicVariables_omit$ReligionR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Religion==5] <- 1
SociodemographicVariables_omit$ReligionR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Religion==6] <- 1
SociodemographicVariables_omit$ReligionR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Religion==7] <- 1
SociodemographicVariables_omit$ReligionR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Religion==8] <- 1
SociodemographicVariables_omit$ReligionR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Religion==9] <- 1
SociodemographicVariables_omit$ReligionR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Religion==10] <- 2
SociodemographicVariables_omit$ReligionR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Religion==11] <- 3
SociodemographicVariables_omit$ReligionR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$Religion==12] <- NA
SociodemographicVariables_omit$ReligionR <- factor(SociodemographicVariables_omit$ReligionR,
          levels = c(1,2,3),
          labels = c("Religious",
                    "Atheist",
                    "Agnostic"))
```

```
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatusR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatus==1] <- 1
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatusR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatus==2] <- 1
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatusR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatus==3] <- 2
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatusR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatus==4] <- 2
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatusR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatus==5] <- 2
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatusR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatus==6] <- 3
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatusR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatus==7] <- 3
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatusR[SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatus==98] <- NA
SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatusR <- factor(SociodemographicVariables_omit$SocioeconomicStatusR,
                      levels = c(1,2,3),
                      labels = c("Poor family",
                                "Medium family",
                                "Rich family"))
```

### **#Multivariate analysis: 2nd Binary Logistic Regression (Sociodemographic variables)**

```
library(tidyverse)
```

```
regresion_log_socio<-
```

```
glm(formula=EuroscepticismIndicatorR~EducationLevelR+GenderR+AgeR+EmploymentStatusR+SocialClassR+RuralUrbanGapR+ReligionR+SocioeconomicStatusR,data = SociodemographicVariables_omit,family = "binomial")
```

```
summary(regresion_log_socio)  
install.packages("stargazer")  
library("stargazer")  
stargazer(regresion_log_socio, type = "text", out = "model.docx")  
plot_summs(regresion_log_socio)
```