

UNIVERZA V LJUBLJANI  
FAKULTETA ZA DRUŽBENE VEDE

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Populistične radikalno desne stranke v Evropski uniji

Populist Radical Right Parties in the European Union

Magistrsko delo

Ljubljana, 2017

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## Populistične radikalno desne stranke v Evropski uniji

Populistično radikalno desnico sestavlja skupina političnih strank, ki v zadnjih letih povečujejo delež glasov v številnih državah članicah Evropske unije. Zaradi svojih ideoloških profilov in političnih ciljev, je njihova politična dejavnost usmerjena proti političnemu sistemu in uveljavljenim evropskim političnim normam. Magistrsko delo raziskuje odnos med skupino teh strank in normami liberalne demokracije, ki so vgrajene v temelje Evropske unije. Natančneje se naloga ukvarja z odnosom med aktivnostmi populističnih radikalnih desničarskih strank in pravicami migrantov kot tudi etničnih in verskih manjšin. Odnos do pravic navedenih manjšinskih skupin je v ospredju ravno zato, ker nazorno prikazuje razlike med omenjenimi skupinami strank in dominantnimi političnimi normami v Evropi. Poseben poudarek je na Evropski uniji, ki predstavlja politično arena, v kateri se odvijajo ti procesi, hkrati pa je tudi eden izmed akterjev v mednarodnih odnosih.

**Ključne besede:** populistične radikalno desne stranke, liberalna demokracija, populizem, Evropska unija.

## Populist Radical Right Parties in the European Union

Populist radical right parties are a group of political parties which have been steadily increasing their vote share in a number of European Union member states in recent years. Due to their ideological profile and consequent political goals, their political activity is understood as directed against the political establishment and the established European political norms. This thesis explores the relation between this group of parties and the norms of liberal democracy, which are embedded in the European Union. More specifically, it examines the relation between the activity of populist radical right parties and the rights of immigrants, as well as ethnic and religious minorities. Special emphasis is put on the role of the European Union as both the political arena in which this development is taking place, but also as an agent in international relations.

**Key words:** populist radical right parties, liberal democracy, populism, the European Union.

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## Acronyms and abbreviations

AENM	Alliance of European National Movements
AfD	Alternative for Germany ( <i>Alternative für Deutschland</i> )
AN	National Alliance ( <i>Alleanza Nazionale</i> )
ANEL	Independent Greeks ( <i>Ανεξάρτητοι Έλληνες</i> )
APF	Alliance for Peace and Freedom
AS	Social Action ( <i>Azione Sociale</i> )
BNP	British National Party
DF	Danish People's Party ( <i>Dansk Folkeparti</i> )
EAF	European Alliance for Freedom
ECR	European Conservatives and Reformists
EFD	Europe of Freedom and Democracy
EFDD	Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy
ENF	Europe of Nations and Freedom
EP	European Parliament
EPEN	National Political Union ( <i>Εθνική Πολιτική Ένωση</i> )
EPP	European People's Party
EU	European Union
FN	National Front ( <i>Front National</i> )
FPÖ	Freedom Party of Austria ( <i>Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs</i> )
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ITS	Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty
KNP	Congress of the New Right ( <i>Kongres Nowej Prawicy</i> )
LN	Northern League ( <i>Lega Nord</i> )
L'SNS	People's Party – Our Slovakia ( <i>Ludová strana – Naše Slovensko</i> )
MENF	Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom
MEP	Member of the European Parliament

MP	Member of Parliament
MSI	Italian Social Movement ( <i>Movimento Sociale Italiano</i> )
NPD	National Democratic Party of Germany ( <i>Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i> )
PiS	Law and Justice ( <i>Prawo i Sprawiedliwość</i> )
PRLPs	Populist radical left parties
PRM	Greater Romania Party ( <i>Partidul Romania Mare</i> )
PRR	Populist radical right
PRRPs	Populist radical right parties
PS	Finns Party ( <i>Perussuomalaiset</i> )
PVV	Party for Freedom ( <i>Partij voor de Vrijheid</i> )
SD	Sweden Democrats ( <i>Sverigedemokraterna</i> )
SNS	Slovak National Party ( <i>Slovenská národná strana</i> )
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TGI	Technical Group of Independents
UKIP	United Kingdom Independence Party
VB	Flemish Interest ( <i>Vlaams Belang</i> )
XA	Golden Dawn ( <i>Χρυσή Αυγή</i> )

## 1 Introduction

One of the most important traits of European political and party systems in the wake of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has been the ascent of an emerging party family of the populist radical right. This thesis constitutes an attempt at contributing to an increasing body of academic literature seeking to understand this phenomenon, as well as its implications for the study of International Relations, with a particular emphasis on member states of the European Union (EU). In this regard, this thesis shall analyse the emergence and evolution of the contemporary populist radical right, and, more specifically, shed a new light on their position within the European political context, particularly regarding its relation towards the established norms of liberal democracy, which have become one of the cornerstones of European politics.

Populist radical right parties (PRRPs) of the so-called ‘third wave’ emerged in the 1980s, and have since posed an ever increasing challenge to the mainstream parties, particularly in recent years, when their electoral fortunes have reached unprecedented levels. The insurgence of the PRRPs has been even labelled as ‘populist *Zeitgeist*’ (Mudde 2004), a term cautioning that the influence of this type of political parties on contemporary European politics must not be underestimated. Their emergence has been academically described as a “revolt opposite to that of 1968” (*ibid.*, 557), or a “counter-offensive to the universalistic values advocated by the New Social Movements /.../ in the 1960s” (Bornschieer 2008, 1), and can be described as a contemporary reactionary political movement embodied in advocacy of national interests and discriminatory rhetoric towards certain portions of population, combined with, and supported by, the populist narrative and political strategy.

The PRRPs have been described as parties whose rhetoric and political objectives are posing a serious challenge to the postwar political consensus and established political parties (Betz and Immerfall 1998). Elsewhere, radical right-wing populism was defined as a combination of ethno-nationalist xenophobia and anti-establishment populism, which allows it to mobilise support on xenophobic and anti-immigrant attitudes without being denounced as racist, as well as to criticise contemporary democratic systems without being labelled as anti-democratic (Bryder 2008, 24). This evidently bipolar nature of these political parties represents one of the recurring themes of this thesis, which examines the somewhat paradoxical combination of their support for democratic means (particularly in the form of majoritarian or direct democracy) and a simultaneous blatant disregard for the interests of minority groups, which entails their opposition to the ideal of liberal democracy, which,

among other things, guarantees respect and protection of rights of minority groups. In this respect, Betz and Johnson (2004, 312) have argued that PRRPs aim at “weakening and undermining the values and institutional arrangements and procedures central to liberal democracy”.

Liberal democracy is hereby understood as “a political system marked not only by free and fair elections, but also by the rule of law, a separation of powers, and the protection of basic liberties of speech, religion, assembly and property” (Zakaria 1997, 22), which has become a norm in the Western world since 1945 (*ibid.*). Therefore, besides being an electoral democracy, liberal democracy also entails the system of checks and balances put in place to restrain the rule of majority, at the same time providing protection of civil and political rights of individuals and groups, *i.e.* the special protection of all minorities (Albertazzi and Mueller 2013, 346-347). Although liberal democratic or civic values are not universal principles, they have become increasingly prominent in European politics, especially in the context of the EU, representing what is dubbed as ‘civic *Zeitgeist*’ by some authors, who state that “the development of the European polity lies in the ‘recognition of cultural pluralism and a set of shared democratic values among culturally diverse publics’” (Halikiopoulou *et al.* 2012b, 3).

Furthermore, the Copenhagen criteria, drafted at the European Council meeting in 1993, which have been established as a set of rules that any country aspiring to EU accession must meet, state that it is necessary that “/the/ candidate country has achieved stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, respect for and protection of minorities, the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union” (European Council 1993, 1). These conditions have been commonly interpreted (*e.g.* Magone 2014; Dawson and Hanley 2015) as the establishment of a ‘functional liberal democracy’, alongside a functional liberal market economy. From this it can be concluded that the establishment of a ‘functional liberal democracy’ is more than just a tacit contemporary European political norm – it can rather be understood as an underlying political principle of the EU, a universal condition that all its member states are obliged to meet continuously. Also, since many other European states openly seek EU membership, relevance of this principle for the international relations possibly transcends the EU level, hence becoming a wider, European principle in process.

Also, the European Parliament’s Rules of Procedure explicitly list “principles upon which European Union is founded, namely the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law” (European Parliament 2014, Rule 225).



Despite this broad definition, any perceived violation of the listed principles may be sanctioned by the institutions of the EU following an adequate disciplinary procedure. The clash between the perceived civic *Zeitgeist* embodied in the concept of liberal democracy on one side, and the populist *Zeitgeist*, marked by the political ascent of the ideology of the populist radical right, which politically challenges its very foundations on the other, represents the focal point of interest of this thesis.

Political parties encompassed by this thesis form a relatively volatile group of political parties situated at the right side of the political spectrum from the ‘mainstream right’ parties (such as conservatives and Christian democrats). Scholars do not share a common consensus regarding the name of this political family, using a number of mutually similar terms<sup>1</sup> to outline their ideological gist, such as: extreme right (Ignazi 1995), radical right (Green 2012; Halikiopoulou *et al.* 2012a), far right (Swank and Betz 2003), populist radical right (Mudde 2004; Liang 2007; Loch and Norocel 2014) radical right-wing populism (Betz 1993), right-wing populism (Luther 2011), extreme right-wing populism (Rydgren 2005) or populist extremism (Goodwin 2012).

However, despite the terminological inconsistency of the existing academic literature, this thesis adopts Mudde’s (2007) designation of these parties as ‘populist radical right’ (PRR) as a comprehensive term, which particularly denotes populism as one of the key characteristics of this emerging party family. On the other hand, considering that the ideological position of PRRPs cannot be entirely sublimed in these three terms, this thesis proposes their key ideological elements to be populism, Euroscepticism, nationalism, anti-immigration stance, ethnopluralism and authoritarianism, all of which shall be elaborated upon in the following chapters.

PRRPs are considered to be characterised by “a combination of nativism, authoritarianism and anti-democratic rhetoric as well as showing opposition to key features of liberal democracy and the protection of minority groups” (Saltman 2011, 115). However, the adoption of populism as a political style or a ‘thin-centred ideology’ (Mudde 2004) has made the radical right move away from the anti-democratic legacy of their far right predecessors and accept representative democracy as a necessary political instrument (Bryder 2008), consequently even calling for a more democratic decision-making process by advocating the introduction of

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<sup>1</sup> This list shows only some of the more frequent examples of academic designations for this party group, and is by no means exhaustive. For example, Obućina (2011) lists as many as 23 terms used simultaneously for the same purpose.

direct democratic measures, such as referenda on key political issues. However, this support for democratic majoritarianism also inherently implies a disregard for minority groups and leaves a possibility of an establishment of a ‘tyranny of the majority’<sup>2</sup> at their expense, disregarding the protection of minority rights, which is embedded in the essence of liberal democracy. As Mudde (2004) has noted, unlike inherently undemocratic extremism, radicalism that characterises these parties implies acceptance of democracy *per se*, but is nonetheless opposed to liberal democracy.

Political parties included in the analysis are the ones that share the above explained political ideology, while also holding seats either in the European Parliament or in their respective national parliaments. Hence, political representation at the national and EU level is considered to be an indicator of individual parties' relevance in the decision making and agenda setting processes and, therefore, their relevance for this thesis. Based on this criterion, 19 EU member states have at least one *relevant* PRRP<sup>3</sup> (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden and the United Kingdom), while in the remaining nine (Croatia, Cyprus, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain) there are currently no PRRPs with parliamentary representation.<sup>4</sup> As of January 2017, in seven EU member states, *i.e.* in Denmark, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Poland and Slovakia, PRRPs have participated in government or provided it with support, which is part of the evidence of their political relevance at the national level.

Also, at the European level there have been significant developments regarding the organisation and cohesion of this group of parties, with two political groups dominated by PRRPs operating in the European Parliament as of January 2017. This data shows that the rise of the populist radical right is a political phenomenon present throughout the EU, both at the national and the European level, which leads to the conclusion that this topic holds relevance for the academic discipline of International Relations, due to its increasing significance of PRRPs as an agent of political processes in Europe.

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<sup>2</sup> This term was first used by John Adams in 1788 in order to describe the possibility of an unintended consequence of unchecked democratic majoritarianism, *i.e.* the rule of majority without regard to rights and interests of minority groups, and it served as a justification of introducing limitations of power and minority protection, which went on to become cornerstones of liberal democracy.

<sup>3</sup> For an extensive list of relevant PRRPs, refer to Appendix A.

<sup>4</sup> This should not be interpreted as an assertion that PRRPs do not exist and participate in the political processes in those states, but rather serve as an indicator of the current state of play, since in a number of listed states there are active non-parliamentary PRRPs, some of which have had parliamentary status in recent past.

The main purpose of this master thesis is providing an academic insight into the ongoing development of the PRR party family, as well as its possible implications for European politics. By analysing the programmatic profile of this party family, as well as its relation with predominant political norms supposedly symbolised by the EU, this thesis has the goal of discerning to what extent the insurgence of right-wing populists represents a threat to the broad liberal democratic consensus in European politics. Regarding this relationship, the analysis will attempt to determine the nature of relationship of PRRPs with mainstream parties and institutions, as well as its implications for the European international relations.

The relevance of the topic for the discipline of International Relations stems from the fact that this development (*i.e.* the increasing significance of PRRPs as political agents in European politics), if continued, would have immense consequences for the very structure of international politics on the continent, having in mind the emphasis of this type of parties on national interests, their willingness to overturn decades of political integration, as well as their exclusionary policies based on ethnic nationalism which would all have profound effects on international political processes if implemented.

This thesis, therefore, in a way represents a twofold risk analysis: on one hand it seeks to determine the probability of PRRPs' emergence as a significant agent in international relations, as well as the changes that their increased political power would bring about in the context of international politics, particularly in the member states of the EU. Essentially, the central issue that this thesis deals with is this clash between the insurgent populist radical right and its inherent ideology, which shall be further elaborated upon in the following chapters, and the liberal democratic consensus, which is built in the foundations of the EU. This thesis opted not to analyse PRRPs as an independent variable, trying to determine structural or agency factors which contributed to their emergence, but will rather constitute an attempt to analyse the extent and nature of their influence on European politics.

Increasing political influence of this party family and its hypothetical future ascent to power could arguably lead to the collapse of European liberal democracy, particularly when it comes to cultural and minority rights, or even to a disintegration of the EU, which is one of their proclaimed political goals. Relevance of the issue for International Relations is therefore self-evident: the populist radical right represents a potential threat to the very essence, or even existence of the EU, the most advanced project of supranational political integration in today's world. Since the World War II, international relations of the European states have been characterised by a gradual trend of increased political and economic co-operation and

integration, processes which have been at the heart of European politics during that period, while the emergence of the populist radical right represents an attempt at reversing this process and dismantling the resulting institutional arrangements, in favour of regaining national sovereignty and returning to the nation-states as key agents in international relations.

The principal research question of this thesis can be defined as the question to what extent the PRRPs, if they can be treated as a coherent party family, and their ideology are conflicted with liberal democracy, which is embedded in the very essence of the EU and the European political system in general. Inclusion of the EU in the analysis gives this issue an additional dimension, since this international organisation is founded upon the liberal democratic principles that PRRPs are opposed to, and is one of the focal points of these parties' criticism, representing the personification of the establishment that they construct their identity against.

In addition to the introductory chapter and the conclusion, the thesis will be composed of three chapters, each treating a specific complementary aspect of the research question. The following chapter will attempt to outline the political profile of the populist radical right, and is divided into three sections – an overview of the contemporary PRRPs, the analysis of these parties' ideological profile, and the analysis of electoral performance of the populist radical right party family. The main goal of this chapter is to establish whether these parties constitute a distinct party family based on shared ideology and a certain degree of mutual coordination, and consequently evaluate their relevance in the context of international relations in Europe, as well as their political position, which shall allow to juxtapose their ideological profile with predominant political norms embodied by the EU. This chapter will include a review of existing scholarly literature treating these parties and a comparative analysis of PRRPs in the EU, a qualitative textual analysis of primary and secondary sources regarding the parties' ideological profile, with a particular emphasis on party programmes, as well as a quantitative analysis of the electoral results and the analysis of the collected data in order to determine the extent of political influence of PRRPs at both national and European levels.

The third chapter will examine the relation between PRRPs and liberal democracy, as it aims to understand the major points of conflict between the PRR ideology and liberal democratic norms that this thesis explores. It will be divided into four sections, each of which deals with a specific issue area in which the aforementioned conflict is most evident: immigration, minority rights and islamophobia, with a special emphasis on specific traits of the subcategory of PRRPs labeled as extreme right. This chapter will include the review of secondary sources,

as well as the analysis of primary sources expressing the political views of this party family, and their comparison with the generally accepted *rules of the game* of European politics.

Chapter four deals with international co-operation of these parties, as well as their activity at the European level, *i.e.* within the institutions of the EU. This segment is particularly relevant to the thesis as it showcases the international aspect of the issue in question, as well as the activity of PRRPs in relation to the EU, which can arguably be understood as an embodiment of European liberal democracy. It will be composed of a review of the chronology of the *internationalisation* of the populist radical right, an overview of the activity of PRRPs in the European Parliament, and the response strategies of mainstream parties and European institutions to the emergence of this new political phenomenon.

The account of previous attempts of internationalising the PRRPs' activity will serve to provide insight into both roots and current trends of their mutual co-operation while the overview of these parties' activity within the institutions of the EU allows us to draw conclusions about the political relations of this party family with other political agents and the much-maligned *establishment*. This chapter shall contain the analysis of primary sources and data on political representation and participation of PRRPs in the legislative process, as well as some historical and discourse analysis conducted in order to determine the extent of actual political influence of PRRPs which is indicative of the probability of their ideological postulates being implemented in practice. The conclusion will sublime the listed elements of the analysis conducted throughout this thesis, and assess the extent of compatibility of PRRPs with the contemporary norms of liberal democracy, as well as the seriousness of the challenge that these parties pose to the norms of liberal democracy and civic values which are in the foundation of the developing European polity.

Additionally, the record levels of popular support for PRRPs in Europe have coincided with the explosion of right-wing populism across the Atlantic – most profoundly embodied by the successful candidacy of Donald J. Trump for the President of the United States in 2016, but also to the incongruous political movement which has become known as *Alt-Right*. Connections between the President of the United States and European PRRPs are evident, as a large number of prominent members of European populist radical right have officially endorsed his presidential candidacy and announced future political co-operation. Another segment which differentiates the PRRPs from all other European party families is their benevolent relationship towards the Russian government, which is subject to EU sanctions since the Ukrainian Crisis and consequent annexation of Crimea. As these are recent and

ongoing developments, and it is too early to draw credible conclusions from them, this information is intended merely to illustrate the potential U-turn that European politics could take in the case of these parties' potential ascent to power, and its effects on the nature of the system of international relations in Europe, but also globally.

## **2 The Populist Radical Right**

### **2.1 Overview of populist radical right parties in Europe**

PRRPs in Europe are a group of parties with heterogeneous background, unified by a common political ideology, which will be further elaborated in following chapters. This group of parties comprises political movements with diverse origins, ranging from parties which have been politically active for decades (*e.g.* FPÖ, FN, LN, VB), but also parties which have been founded in recent years, such as AfD or PVV. Despite their diverse ideological and historical roots, these parties are converging in terms of both political ideology and practice. Namely, all these parties pursue an ideology which can be described as an amalgam of following doctrines: populism, Euroscepticism, nationalism, anti-immigration politics, ethnonationalism and, to a certain extent, authoritarianism. These common positions lead to a conclusion that there is enough common ideological ground between the parties for them to be considered an emerging party family. The attribute ‘emerging’ is used in order to take into account the lack of clear definition of this party family, as well as the current level of their political interconnectedness. At the level of political practice, patterns of increasing co-operation and integration of PRRPs have also been emerging through the formation of international alliances, and especially through mutual co-operation within the institutions of EU, particularly the European Parliament, which have reached unprecedented levels in recent years, in spite of a persistent fragmentation and lack of cohesion among the parties at the international level.

Regarding the used notion of ‘party family’, four approaches to it can be utilised, those primarily focusing either on party origins, ideology, international grouping or party names (see Mair and Mudde 1998). By ruling out the first approach for putting too much emphasis on socio-historical roots of parties rather than the present state of play, and the last one for being too simplistic and arbitrary, this thesis identifies the concept of party family as a group of political parties characterised by a shared underlying ideology and a tendency towards international grouping. As it will be elaborated in the following chapters, PRRPs fulfill both criteria for such a designation, due to their shared ideological positions and recent activities towards the institutionalisation of their international relations, most notably by establishing supranational organisations at the European level.

PRRPs have been described as a new type of party “which during the 1990s emerged as one of the most significant new political forces in Western Europe and other liberal capitalist

democracies” which have surprisingly established themselves as contenders for votes, and even office (Betz 2003, 194). These parties, regardless of their diverse origins and specific characteristics, are united through a common ideological platform, which combines populism as the main political strategy with the ideology of radical right – embodied in nationalism and consequent Euroscepticism, but also by their distinguished rhetoric towards the ethnic or religious groups that are the main scapegoat and are targeted by their policies. Opposition to immigration, extremely negative stance towards Muslim population, as well as the ethnopluralist doctrine, which claims that different (and allegedly incompatible) cultures should not be mixed, lead to recognisable ideological amalgam. These ideological elements serve as a foundation for formulating exclusionary policies directed against certain groups of population, defined on the basis of their predetermined characteristics, such as racial, ethnic or religious identity, leading to a conflict between such an ideology and the very essence of liberal democracy and its inherent protection of minority rights.

As a direct consequence of their distinct political history, political situation in the countries of Central and East Europe is specific in the context of radical right politics as well. Unlike the 'Old Democracies' of Western Europe, which, in most cases, enjoy a significant political tradition of democratic and liberal norms and values, most of these post-communist countries' democratic experience is traced back only to the fall of the Iron Curtain, which resulted in establishment of their multi-party systems. The legacy of communist authoritarianism, although far from uniform in its intensity and methods of application across the region (see Kitschelt *et al.* 1999), along with the developing democratic culture, proved to be a fertile ground for elements of radical right ideology to enter mainstream politics.

Unlike Western Europe, where radical right parties have in the past often been treated as pariah parties, their emergence usually causing other parties to form the *cordon sanitaire* in order to prevent them from gaining political power or entering office, and have never had the chance of controlling the government (although PRRPs have entered government in Austria, Italy and Netherlands, but always as junior coalition partners), the governing parties and politicians, especially in the countries of Visegrád group (*i.e.* Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and Poland) have made an 'illiberal shift' in recent years, adopting the rhetoric of populist radical right especially regarding to issue of immigration, which has been brought to the spotlight of the European political debate by the European refugee crisis which commenced in 2015. In this respect, vociferous anti-immigrant agenda has been adopted by Hungarian president Viktor Orbán, Czech president Miloš Zeman, Slovakian president Robert



Fico, while Polish ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party also pursues similar ideological positions (Thorleifsson 2015; Simecka and Tallis 2015). However, it would be incorrect to observe this trend only in the post-communist countries, as a similar shift also influenced the traditional mainstream parties in Western European states. European migrant crisis drew criticism of the EU's approach also from centre-right parties, for example in Germany, France and Sweden. However, it is still early to deduce whether this shift represents a mere reflection of unfavourable popular opinion regarding the increased influx of migrants and consequent populist exploitation of the topic, or perhaps a gradual programmatic transformation of these political parties.

When analysing the politics of the post-communist European states, their specific political and cultural legacy needs to be taken into account. First of all, as noted above, these countries have very limited experience with democracy, and it can be argued that their democratic transitions failed to bring about a substantial change of their political systems. In other words, democratic *rules of the game* have been universally accepted, while liberal norms have not been integrated in their political discourse and practice. Another important factor in this respect is these countries' demographic composition – they are more ethnically homogenous than their Western counterparts, in part due to historically very limited influx of migrants, particularly of those from different ethnic, cultural or racial backgrounds. Combined with very limited experience with multiculturalism, these factors can be helpful in understanding the recent mainstreaming of populist radical right discourse in Central and Eastern Europe, *i.e.* the appropriation of populist radical right policies, particularly regarding immigration, even by the ruling parties in these states.

On the other hand, differences between the two groups of countries, although undeniable, have at times been blown out of proportion, in attempts to differentiate the corresponding radical right parties into two distinct subgroups. For instance, Obućina (2009) claims that due to different levels of immigration only Western European PRRPs have a comprehensive anti-immigration policies, while post-communist PRRPs only ostensibly pursue such positions, with no actual interest in the subject. However, this hypothesis has been rendered absolutely obsolete, as shown most blatantly by the recent migrant crisis and the accompanying political debate regarding it, which has shown that the situation regarding anti-immigrant policies to be even opposite, with even mainstream ruling parties of centre-right or even centre-left (as in

Slovakia) adopting a discourse on this issue which has traditionally been associated with the radical right.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, despite these notable differences, this thesis shall consider the political parties from both Western and Central and Eastern Europe to be context-specific embodiments of the same political ideology. This hypothesis is based on the fact that PRRPs across the EU share the same core ideological concepts, such as Euroscepticism, nationalism and, most notably, strong opposition to immigration. Also, their continued attempts of political co-operation, particularly within the European Parliament, which will be elaborated upon in the chapters to come, have grouped these parties together, albeit with numerous obstacles, at the European level. Hence, while noting their substantial differences stemming from the distinctness of their respective historical structural factors, demographic composition and political legacy, which result in undeniable variations in both ideology and practice, this thesis treats PRRPs from these two groups of countries as a single party family because they seem to share a common ideological basis, and have continuously, more or less successfully, pursued mutual co-operation at the international, *i.e.* European level.

## **2.2 Populist radical right ideology**

Terminology similar to the one utilised by this paper has been used academically as early as 1993, when Betz outlined the four key characteristics of European ‘populist extreme right’ as: 1) radical opposition to the cultural and socio-political system without an overt attack on the system as such; 2) refusal of individual and social equality; 3) defence of the *common man* and 4) emphasis on the *common sense*. According to Betz (1993, 414), “these parties combine a classic liberal position on the individual and the economy with the sociopolitical agenda of the extreme and intellectual new right, and they deliver this amalgam to those disenchanted with their individual life chances and the political system”. This assertion outlines one of the most notable characteristics of PRRPs: their dualistic, ambiguous nature, which stems from the fact that they supposedly cherish and defend traditional liberal values from the outsider groups constituting the *threatening others*, while simultaneously promoting policies towards those groups which do not comply with basic liberal democratic norms, such as minority rights or even basic human rights of their members.

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<sup>5</sup> This occurrence has been the main reason for inclusion of parties such as Fidesz and PiS, which have previously been associated mostly with mainstream right, but have shifted significantly towards the populist radical right ideology in recent years, partially in a response to the European migrant crisis which started in 2015.

Ignazi (1995), in his scholarly work on the extreme right, focuses mostly on the heritage of fascism and this party family as its alleged most recent historical embodiment, despite the nominal renouncement of totalitarian ideologies by the vast majority of PRRPs themselves. He claims that, despite this, these parties' agenda implies undemocratic values compatible with the fascist ideology and opposed to the concept of liberal democracy. However, both Ignazi and Betz (1993) attribute economically liberal positions to the radical right, a trait typical for their activity in the 1990s, which is nowadays quite inaccurate, PRRPs having gradually opted for a different approach to the welfare politics, in most cases embodied by the concept of welfare chauvinism. Despite these differences, Ignazi (1995) also lists a number of ideological attributes relevant to modern PRRPs, such as nationalism, moral traditionalism, inclination towards a more authoritarian state and xenophobic policies towards the foreigners.

Kitschelt and McGann (1995) help us better understand different variations inside the radical right party family, by introducing three distinct ideal types of those parties: new radical right, populist antistatists, and welfare-chauvinists. New radical right (*e.g.* in Denmark and France) is deemed to combine neoliberal stance on economic issues and socially conservative and xenophobic attitudes regarding political and cultural issues. On the other hand, populist antistatist parties (*e.g.* in Austria, Italy) are supposedly also economically liberal, but less xenophobic or culturally conservative, the emphasis being on their populist nature. The third Kitschelt's ideal type are welfare chauvinist parties (*e.g.* in Germany), which combine socially conservative, culturally xenophobic and nationalist policies with support for national welfare state rather than economic neoliberalism.

Bearing in minds that these subgroups of PRRPs are merely ideal types, we can nonetheless argue that all these types of parties essentially pursue the same ideology. In social sphere, the most notable difference is the emphasis put on populism, supposedly strongly present only in one group, which has in the meantime been adopted by virtually all radical right parties, and went on to become one of their trademark characteristics. Some differences can however be noted in the extent of nationalism and xenophobia between first two groups and the welfare-chauvinist ideal type, which still persists as a dividing line noticeable even in the European Parliament (as a division between PRRPs united into EFDD and ENF groups, and those acting as *non-inscrits*, which could be described as closest to the Kitschelt and McGann's third ideal type). Regarding the role of economy and differences among PRRPs on this issue, this thesis is in alignment with the contemporary academic consensus that the issue of economy is of much lesser significance for PRRPs and their voters, and does not play a

significant role in their political ideology and advocacy, their main focus rather being on social and cultural issues, such as immigration and security.

Goodwin (2012, 12) considers *populist extreme parties*, as he names them, to possess two essential core characteristics: opposition to immigration and growing social and cultural diversity (which are countered by exclusionary policies opposed to the principle of human equality), while also pursuing the populist anti-establishment strategy, which is “ambivalent if not hostile towards liberal representative democracy”. Elsewhere, Mayer and Rosenberger (2015, 3) state that “/w/hile there is disagreement as to the precise definitions of ‘radical right’, ‘extreme right’ and ‘(new) populist right’, they all share an anti-immigrant rhetoric, sometimes combined with ethno-nationalism and, more recently, anti-Islamic polemic”, striving for a “homogenous national identity based on an ethnocentric understanding of a community”. Mudde (2008), on the other hand, considers the populist radical right ideology to be a combination of nativism, authoritarianism and populism.

As varied as the scholarly descriptions of the ideological elements of PRRPs are, there is a shared opinion that these parties indeed do share a “common ideological core” (Mudde 2000, 16), giving credence to their treatment as a distinct party family. For example, Liang (2007) observed their shared doctrine based on ethno-pluralism, while Ennser (2012, 167) notes their “distinct and specific policy profile with a clear focus on anti-immigration views”. Despite the lack of clear academic consensus regarding the labelling of constitutive elements of PRR ideology, by taking into account the existing literature on this party family, it is possible to outline the ideological cornerstones of PRRPs. In order to better define the ideological profile of these political parties, their key tenets will be individually elaborated upon in the following chapters.

### **2.2.1 Populism**

Perhaps the most logical starting point, not least because of the very term selected to describe this party family, is populism itself. Despite being a quite vague term often subject to derogatory political connotations, it is essential in understanding the *modus operandi* of the contemporary radical right. This paper adopts Mudde's definition of populism as “an ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogenous and antagonistic groups, 'the pure people' versus the 'corrupt elite', and which argues politics should be an expression of the *volonté générale* (general will) of the people” (2004, 543). Populism tends to simplify the political issues in order to adapt its discourse to the 'common man' fed up with

the established parties branded as the corrupt and undemocratic elite. Despite the fact that populism itself does not constitute a comprehensive political ideology, but rather a “thin-centred ideology” (*ibid.*, 544) used in combination with other political doctrines, it is primarily being exploited in order to create an entirely new political cleavage, pitting the people, or the so called “silent majority” (Goodwin 2012, 14) supposedly represented by the populist radical right, against the elite, composed by the *cartel* of established mainstream political parties. This cleavage formation, initialised by the discourse of the PRRPs, is also supported by a number of favourable external factors, such as fears of insecurity and economic fears (Liang 2007, 2).

Mudde (2004, 551) has argued that populism has been a regular feature of politics in Western democracies at least since the 1990s. By mobilising on popular discontent with, and distrust in mainstream political parties, radical right has embraced populism as a political tool utilised for establishing a new political cleavage, putting themselves, as true representatives of the people, on one side, pitted against the entire ‘political establishment’ on the other side, which supposedly consists of all mainstream parties, regardless of their ideology.

Populism as one of the key components of PRR ideology, since its adoption by the radical right parties, has managed to move them away from undemocratic ideas, and has instead made possible for them to identify themselves as true democrats. However, as argued by Kriesi and Pappas (2015), the populist vision of democracy has a number of illiberal components: it rejects liberal checks and balances, implies hostility towards intermediaries between the people and the decision makers, and calls for a more direct linkage of masses with elites, while also having a monolithic conception of the *will of the people*, which leaves little room for pluralism or deliberation. The consequence of such an ideology is equating the majority it claims to represent with the, supposedly homogenous, dominant ethnic group which is seen as the only legitimate basis for decision making. Hence, the remaining portion of population remains out of their reckoning, and could subsequently be marginalised and excluded from political life, or even openly discriminated against.

### **2.2.2 Euroscepticism**

Euroscepticism is another omnipresent core tenet of the populist radical right party family, often emphasised in both their programmes and electoral campaigns. Euroscepticism itself does not automatically categorise the party in this family, but is however a necessary precondition for a party to be identified as a part of the European populist radical right. In

other words, European political parties can be Eurosceptic without belonging to the radical right (*i.e.* Conservative Party in United Kingdom, or Civic Democratic Party in Czech Republic), but cannot be considered PRR without expressing some form of Euroscepticism as an integral part of their ideology. As a part of their discourse, PRRPs often launch attacks on the EU, characterising it as undemocratic and too bureaucratic, and considering it a threat to their respective national identities.

On the other hand, PRRPs do not overtly denounce European co-operation as such, in favour of national isolationism, but rather put forward an entirely different model of European politics. Building on European cultural roots dating back to ancient Greek and Roman civilisations and consequent common Christian identity (Liang 2007), PRRPs consider European nations to share a distinct political and cultural heritage. This sentiment and the shared vision of ‘Fortress Europe’, or ‘Europe of Nations’, rooted in traditional cultural and conservative social values, and mobilised against the *threatening other*, personified by the culturally different immigrants, is the key driver of the increasing international co-operation of these parties, which is analysed by this thesis.

Paradoxically, the existence of the EU and its institutions, primarily the European Parliament, has provided the populist radical right with a forum for promoting their agenda, as well as for pursuing international co-operation with like-minded political parties from other member states. Also, their anti-EU stance has been effective in polarising the electoral body somewhat, which has been one of the factors leading to better electoral results for PRRPs in European electoral arena than in national parliamentary elections.

### **2.2.3 Nationalism**

Somewhat akin to their historical precursors, the mid-twentieth century far right parties, PRRPs express nationalism as a core segment of their ideology. For example, Eatwell (2000) lists nationalism as the common core doctrine of this party family. However, it is important to note that this nationalism is being expressed increasingly in cultural terms, rather than ethnic ones, in order to denounce any sort of overt connection with racism and connected political ideologies. Nationalism of the PRRPs complements their rejection of European integration and multiculturalism as dominant political processes advocated by the mainstream parties, and understands the people, in its populist monolithic sense, understood as a national community, to be the only legitimate basis for democratic decision making process. Although ethnic, or especially racial conditions for group affiliation are avoided in the PRRPs’ rhetoric,

in order to dissociate themselves from the ideologies such as fascism, cultural and linguistic characteristics are used as conditions of exclusion serving basically the same purpose.

Certain authors (Halikiopoulou *et al.* 2012a) claim that nationalism, as well as the consequent Euroscepticism, represents an ideological characteristic which unites the radical right with their radical left counterparts. However, the main difference between the two is in the fact that radical right nationalism is inherently ethnic, *i.e.* exclusive, while left-wing nationalism is by definition civic, or inclusive, in its character.

Despite aggressive nationalism being a core tenet of post-World War II radical right, as well as one of the ideological cornerstones of PRRPs in earlier academic works on this subject (*e.g.* Betz 1993), PRRPs are increasingly promoting a new brand of *defensive nationalism*, defined as a political reaction to the processes of de-nationalisation and globalisation (Loch and Norocel 2014). Because of these wider political, cultural and demographic trends, nationalism evolved into a protectionist discourse attempting to defend national or European cultural values against the supposedly threatening outsiders, thus enabling PRRPs to partially overcome their national particularisms and cooperate at the European level in order to protect the ‘Fortress Europe’ from the perceived invaders, identified in non-European immigrants, and particularly those belonging to Muslim religion and the associated cultural heritage.

#### **2.2.4 Anti-immigration**

Opposition to immigration is something of a trademark issue of the contemporary populist radical right, as well as its main propellant in terms of both media coverage and electoral results. Immigration has been described as the central issue and key predictor for voting PRRPs (Rydgren 2008), or as a part of the ‘populist radical right trinity’ of issues, along with corruption and security (Mudde 2008), which are the issues that PRRPs traditionally look to own and increase their salience, in order to increase their electoral fortunes, building on widespread popular discontent regarding this issue.

However, this anti-immigrant stance is not universally directed towards immigrants in general; on the contrary, it is almost exclusively directed towards the influx of Muslim migrants and refugees, leading the academics to label PRRPs as islamophobic political subjects. Both anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment are said to be “extremely common” in the radical right discourse (Green 2012, 339), whereas elsewhere their anti-Muslim sentiment has been labelled as the driving force behind their electoral support (Goodwin 2012). The PRRPs' opposition to immigration is threefold: firstly, immigration is viewed as a

security threat; secondly, immigrants are seen as culturally incompatible with national, or European values dominant in host countries, and as such pose a threat to cultural identity and national homogeneity; and finally, they are portrayed also as an economic threat, draining welfare resources at the expense of the native population.

One of the more obvious evidences for the connection of the issue of immigration with PRRPs can be drawn from the correlation of the unprecedented influx of refugees and immigrants into the EU member states as a result of the ongoing crisis in Syria with the rise of both media visibility of PRRPs advocating their anti-immigrant stances, and their subsequent electoral successes.<sup>6</sup> Populist radical right promoted itself as the main opposition of immigration policy advocated by the EU, therefore attempting to create a political cleavage regarding the issue of immigration, and promoting exclusionary policies and limiting human rights, such as the freedom of movement. Scholars have also argued that the volume of foreign immigration necessarily bolsters the vote for the radical right (Swank and Betz 2003).

### **2.2.5 Ethnopluralism**

Populist radical right, in its defence of the concept of a culturally homogenous nation, vehemently opposes multiculturalism, creating a new cleavage which opposes identity to the multiculturalist concept of society (Liang 2007). In order to distinguish themselves from their historical predecessors, these parties have moved away from overtly xenophobic rhetoric, introducing instead the concept of ethnopluralism, which has been developed by French *Nouvelle Droite* school of thought during the late 1970s (Betz 2003). Liang (2007) states that the main characteristic of this ideological concept is a highly restrictive notion of society, citizenship and democracy, which are seen as intricately tied to a culturally and ethnically homogenous community. This concept manages to keep the notions of race and ethnicity within the political discourse without resorting to the argumentation similar to that of fascist and Nazi politicians.

Instead of biological racism, through the concept of ethnopluralism PRRPs promote policies of cultural exclusion, substantiating their views with alleged incompatibility of different cultures, namely between cultural traditions of the West (*i.e.* Europe) on one side, and the Muslim world on the other. Rydgren (2008) describes ethnopluralism as a notion that, in order for unique national characters of different peoples to be preserved, they ought to be separated

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<sup>6</sup> Parliamentary elections held since the initiation of the crisis show a significant increase of popular support for PRRPs at the national level, for example in Estonia, Greece, Poland and Slovakia.



to prevent the subsequent ‘cultural extinction’. The same author notes another difference in comparison with ‘traditional racism’ – namely, ethnopluralism does not imply a hierarchy between ethnicities, treating them instead as different and incompatible, rather than superior and inferior. In this respect, Obućina (2009, 194) asserts that within European populist radical right ideology ‘the others’ are not observed in a traditionally racist manner, but rather as members of equal, albeit different nations, which, on the other hand, are seen as having no historical or natural right to migrate to Europe.

On the other hand, the ‘master narrative’ used by PRRPs to describe the alleged threat of Islam portrays the religion and its adherents as inherently violent, intolerant, antidemocratic, misogynist, monolithic and unwilling or unable to be reformed (Green 2012). In other words, even as other groups defined by PRRPs as incommensurable with perceived European values are not being denounced in biological terms, similar exclusionary policies are being advocated in cultural terms, but with same presupposed hierarchical relation between superior and allegedly primitive and inferior culture embodied primarily by the Muslim population. This brings into question the often cited ‘different, but equal’ approach to use of ethnopluralism as a political doctrine, since its sincerity can be disproved by PRRPs’ own rhetoric regarding Islam and Muslim population in Europe, characterised by their perception of Muslim population as a counter pole for the supposedly progressive and superior European cultural values that they claim to be safeguarding.

### **2.2.6 Authoritarianism**

Regarding domestic policy issues, and particularly law and order, these political parties employ an authoritarian, socially conservative approach, which is another key feature of their ideological profile. Authoritarianism has been listed by Mudde (2007) as one of the three elements of PRRP ideology, along with nativism and populism, and is defined as “the belief in a strictly ordered society in which infringements of authority are to be punished severely”. The authoritarian approach of PRRPs is perhaps best exemplified by their policy proposals regarding immigrants and particular minority groups, which are subject to a number of proposed restrictive measures. Hence, authoritarianism of the PRRPs is not always expressed in domestic policy issues (for example, Dutch PVV holds very liberal views on issues such as use of illegal drugs, prostitution or LGBT rights), but represents one of the characteristics of their policies regarding border control and immigration patterns.

### 2.2.7 Economic policy

In the last two decades of the previous century radical right has been pursuing economically liberal, market-oriented economic policies, with very little regard to the social aspect of economy. For example, Betz (1993) has indicated that ‘extreme right parties’ are against the welfare system as such, and are pursuing a ‘neo-liberal agenda’ by criticising high taxation, the bureaucratic state and welfare outlays. However, Betz admits that the perceived economic neoliberalism is only secondarily an economic programme, with a primary purpose of criticising the established political parties and bureaucratized state institutions.

However, during recent years the economic policy position of PRRPs has largely shifted towards a support for welfare state, instead of neoliberal doctrine of free market. However, in accordance with their ideology, their support for welfare policies is by no means universal – in the populist radical right rhetoric, all welfare benefits are viewed as reserved exclusively for the native population, *i.e.* for the dominant ethnic group which is equated with *the people*. This economic approach, labelled as welfare chauvinism, hence views the state funds as property of the dominant ethnic group, attempting to exclude groups such as immigrants from accessing them. This ideological characteristic stems directly from the perception of immigrants as an economic threat to the native population, who are accused of draining public resources. Welfare chauvinism therefore understands the welfare state “as a system of social protection for those who belong to the ethnically defined community and who have contributed to it” (Kitschelt and McGann 1997, 22).

Despite this notable trend from a neoliberal economic agenda to support for measures labelled as welfare chauvinist, there is a broad academic consensus that PRRPs do not have a coherent economic agenda simply because their focus is on socio-cultural, rather than on socio-economic issues (*e.g.* Mudde 2010, Bornschier 2008). It can be argued that, in a number of cases, the economic agenda represents simply an extension of previously explained ideological traits. For example, a widespread populist critique of elites and their alienation from the ‘common man’ implies a critical attitude towards the international financial institutions (such as European Central Bank, International Monetary Fund, *etc.*). Viewed as such, the economic element of PRR agenda shall be considered to be an extension of their other key ideological postulates, contingent and dependent on *Zeitgeist*, and will not be treated as a key element of their ideology.

### 2.2.8 Relation with other populist parties

Another important distinction should be made regarding the distinctness of PRRPs from other political subjects also being described as populist, but are not pursuing the radical right ideology. For instance, this thesis does not treat populist anti-establishment movements such as Italian Five Star Movement (*Movimento Cinque Stelle – M5S*) as a part of the populist radical right. The reason for this, despite the undisputed populism and Euroscepticism of this movement and its co-operation with a number of PRRPs in the European Parliament through the EFDD group, is the non-existence of trademark radical right doctrines such as ethnic nationalism and hard line anti-immigration policy, as well as M5S' emphasis on other issues absolutely unrelated to PRR ideology, such as pronounced environmentalism or advocacy of the right to internet access.

On the other hand, another type of political party has emerged as a rising factor in European politics in the second decade of twenty-first century. Political parties designated as radical left, or left-wing populist, have enjoyed significant electoral success (*e.g.* Podemos in Spain, Left Bloc in Portugal), or even entered government (*e.g.* SYRIZA in Greece) in a number of EU member states. Analogically with the terminology adopted by this thesis, these political subjects can be designated as populist radical left parties (PRLPs). The concurrence of their ascent with that of the PRRPs has led some authors (*i.e.* Halikiopoulou *et al.* 2012a) to analyse these parties as a single political phenomenon, citing common Euroscepticism and nationalism as common ideological factors allegedly uniting them. Halikiopoulou and others imply a causal connection between PRRPs and PRLPs as nationalist and Eurosceptic political forces, differing only in the nature of their nationalism (left-wing supposedly implying civic nationalism, while their right-wing counterparts pursue the ideology of ethnic nationalism). However, this thesis does not concur with this point of view, and shall not treat PRLPs as related to the political phenomenon which is its focal point.

Firstly, nationalism is wrongly attributed to these parties as a consequence of their Eurosceptic stance, which is a highly questionable assumption, bearing in mind that internationalism is an inherent element of the radical left's ideology, unlike PRRP's ethnic nationalism. By misinterpreting the anti-EU stance as a universal expression of nationalism, we would omit to notice entirely different reasons underlying common Euroscepticism. Another notable difference between PRRPs and PRLPs is their emphasis on certain issues – while PRRPs focus on social and cultural issues, and particularly their trademark issue of immigration, PRLPs pay far more attention to economic aspect of politics, highlighting issues

such as economic inequality and wealth distribution. Even when it comes to the socio-cultural issues, these two types of parties have opposing views – while PRRPs are exclusive, xenophobic, and advocate ethnonationalism, their left-wing counterparts are inclusive and supportive of multiculturalism. In accordance with this, even the main scapegoat used in their populist discourse differs greatly – while the radical right parties put emphasis on immigrant groups from different cultural backgrounds, the focal point of criticism of their left-wing counterparts is the allegedly corrupt financial elite.

Even in the institutional context of the EU, no connections can be found between these two types of parties, which have always been members of different political groups in the European Parliament. Finally, when it comes to violation of norms of liberal democracy treated by this thesis, such as discrimination against ethnic and religious minority groups and immigrants, there are no occurrences or even allegations of such activity by PRLPs, leading to the conclusion that they are not substantially connected to PRRPs' ideology (the only programmatic similarity being their Euroscepticism, which also varies in its intensity and sort of argumentation used to advocate such position), and as such should be treated as an entirely distinct group of parties from the populist radical right.

### **2.2.9 Extreme right**

It can be argued that within the proposed emerging party family of PRRPs we can observe a distinct subgroup of parties, sometimes even treated as separate party group, which comprises parties which have not reformed their ideology, and continue to advocate aggressively nationalist, authoritarian, or even neo-Nazi standpoints. Building on Kitschelt's typology which has been previously outlined, these political parties belong to the third ideal type, *i.e.* welfare-chauvinist parties, which are described as more extreme than their counterparts. In practice, these political parties have been excluded from group-forming negotiations in the European Parliament even by groups mostly comprising of PRRPs due to being 'too extreme'. Political parties analysed in this thesis which can be included in this subgroup are Greek Golden Dawn (XA), Hungarian Jobbik, National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD) and Kotleba - People's Party Our Slovakia (L'SNS).

These parties, conditionally labelled as 'extreme right', due to being at the right fringe of the classical left-right ideological spectrum, can indeed be considered as a distinct political phenomenon, but due to the similarity of key ideological tenets, this thesis shall consider them a variation of the populist radical right family rather than a distinct group of parties. When

their ideological gist is examined, it can be concluded that these parties do not represent a different political position, but rather differ only in the intensity of ideological positions put forward by the populist radical right. Using terminology analogous to that of Mudde, which describes PRRPs as products of radicalisation of European mainstream views, extreme right parties can be described as products of (further) radicalisation of populist radical right-wing views, or even as an anti-revisionist tendency opposing the rapprochement of the populist radical right and the political mainstream in recent years. Hence, they also pursue populist, Eurosceptic, nationalist, anti-immigrant, ethnopluralist and authoritarian positions, only in a more uncompromising manner, which causes them to remain isolated as *Non-inscrits* in the EP, and form alternative transnational alliances which shall be outlined in following chapters.

### **2.3 Trends of electoral support for populist radical right parties**

In order to analyse the significance of the populist right at both national and international (*i.e.* European) level, as well as their electoral strength, this thesis uses the analysis of electoral results of what has previously been defined as relevant PRRPs since the turn of the century, in order to determine the extent of their alleged electoral ascent, possible impact on national and EU level policy making, as well as recent trends of their electoral support. The analysis takes into account 26 political parties currently represented either in national parliaments or in the European Parliament, while 19 of those political parties which have contested at least three elections in the observed period (including at least one national and one European election) have been selected in order to analyse the trends of electoral PRRP support.<sup>7</sup>

Regarding this data, a number of precautions needs to be taken into account. Since the relevance of political parties, as defined above, is taken as the eliminatory criterion for their inclusion, the less successful PRRPs which are currently without a parliamentary status are omitted from the analysis, which has the effect on perceived electoral trends that concentrate solely on the electorally successful PRRPs. The analysis also excludes those countries which have no PRRPs represented either at national or European parliamentary level (*i.e.* Cyprus, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain), which by no means implies that this type of political party is non-existent in the listed countries. Finally, the collected data serves merely as a descriptive tool utilised in order to illustrate the extent of electoral success of these political parties at a certain point in time, and as such should not be

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<sup>7</sup> The data collected on trends encompasses the following parties: FPÖ (Austria), VB (Belgium), Ataka (Bulgaria), DF (Denmark), PS (Finland), FN (France), NPD (Germany), ANEL, XA (Greece), Fidesz, Jobbik (Hungary), LN (Italy), NA (Latvia), TT (Lithuania), PVV (the Netherlands), PiS (Poland), SNS (Slovakia), SD (Sweden) and UKIP (United Kingdom).

treated exclusive, exhaustive or definite. More detailed information on individual parties and their electoral results can be observed in the Appendix B.

### 2.3.1 National elections

By taking into account the data included in the analysis, based on the previously outlined conditions, we can observe a number of patterns regarding the electoral results of PRRPs in recent years. First of all, it can be concluded that, despite remaining relatively side-lined in the context of parliamentary decision making process, European PRRPs are by no means a marginal actor in national politics. The collected data shows that average share of votes per party, obtained by 25 *relevant* PRRPs at the latest parliamentary elections, stands at 11.63 %, while the average result per country is even higher, standing at 14.54 %. However, it must be noted that there is a huge variation between individual parties, ranging from as high as 44.87 % and 37.6 % won by Hungarian Fidesz and Polish Law and Justice (PiS) respectively, to marginal results such as those of German NPD or Polish Congress of the New Right (KNP) which obtained less than 1 % of votes in the latest elections. Another caution is in order here: taking into account that the best results are made by parties such as Fidesz and PiS, ruling parties in their respective states which have shifted towards the ideological profile of populist radical right only in recent years, particularly as a consequence of an unprecedented arrivals of Middle Eastern immigrants and refugees in European countries, and as such represent recent and perhaps volatile members of this party group, the data on political representation of parties which have continuously pursued the populist radical right ideology could be somewhat different.<sup>8</sup>

Taking into account only those 19 parties which contested at least three elections in the observed period, we can draw some useful conclusions as well. First of all, the average electoral result of these parties since the turn of the century stands at 11.35 %, once again showing that PRRPs are a political factor with limited, but nonetheless significant and stable vote share in national context. Once again, the most successful parties are Fidesz and PiS, followed by Danish People's Party (DF). Regarding the trend of PRRPs' results in national elections,<sup>9</sup> we can observe a significant rise in electoral results in the observed period, with the difference between the beginning and the end of the selected period standing at +5.72 %. From this we can conclude that, while the sensationalist language of some authors warning

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<sup>8</sup> If we exclude those two parties, the average most recent national electoral result, for example, drops significantly, from 11.63 % to 8.3 %.

<sup>9</sup> *I.e.* the difference between the first and last electoral result recorded in the observed period (2000–2016).

about a dramatic insurgence of the populist radical right might be exaggerated, there is an evident gradual ascent of this party family in national context, leading to PRRPs becoming well established political actors in a significant number of EU member states. However, this positive trend is not uniform: while 15 selected parties observed positive trends, the remaining four have experienced a decrease in electoral support, with this number being even higher should we also take into account those PRRPs which have lost parliamentary status. The most significant increase in electoral support has been observed in Poland, where PiS gained 26.1 %, Finland (PS, 16.08 %) and Hungary, where one of the most extreme PRRPs, Jobbik, experienced a rise of 14.47 %. The opposite trend was most notable in Belgium, with VB dropping 7.93 %, as well as in Greece (ANEL, 6.9 %) and Lithuania (TT, 3.99 %).

### **2.3.2 European elections**

It has been previously argued that European elections, due to a number of structural advantages, present a favourable opportunity for electoral success of the populist radical right. Despite remaining without a coherent political group in the European Parliament for the largest part of this period, resulting in their *de facto* marginalisation from the decision making process, the same cannot be said for their electoral results. On the contrary, a significant portion of European voters constantly supports PRRPs at the EU level, showing that nationalist, anti-immigrant and Eurosceptic ideology has a respectable number of adherents across the Union. As the results of latest 2014 European elections show, the average electoral support for PRRPs stands at 13.32 %, while it increases to 15.99 % if we take countries with relevant PRRPs, rather than parties themselves, as our parameter.

Regarding the average result in last three European elections (held in 2004, 2009 and 2014), calculated for 19 selected parties, at 13.07 % it is somewhat higher than the national average, but still relatively modest when compared to other, more established party families. Hungarian Fidesz is by far the most successful party in European elections, with average support of an absolute majority of voters (51.25 %), while over one fifth of votes were obtained on average by PiS (23.97 %) and UKIP (20.07 %). Similarly to findings related to national elections, the analysed trend of support for PRRPs in European elections is generally positive, with average electoral result rising for 6.1 % in the observed period. Taking into account the individual parties, from 17 parties for which it could be calculated, 14 parties experienced a positive electoral trend, while only three relevant PRRPs have lost a share of

electoral support during this period.<sup>10</sup> The highest trend was observed in Denmark, where DF has risen for 19.8 %, followed by Poland, where PiS increased its electoral support for 19.1 % and France, which witnessed the rise of FN for 15.06 %. The only three countries with negative trend of results in the European elections are Belgium (VB), Bulgaria (Ataka) and Netherlands (PVV).

### 2.3.3 Analysis and comparison

When we take into account the acquired electoral data at both national and European level, we can draw some general conclusions regarding the recent electoral fortunes and consequent political significance of this party family both nationally and internationally, *i.e.* within the EU. As it has been previously outlined, although we cannot argue that Europe is currently witnessing a dramatic surge in electoral support for the populist radical right, these parties are undoubtedly making a steady progress in terms of electoral fortunes. The trend of their electoral fortunes, with few exemptions to this rule, is clearly upward, partly thanks to a number of favourable structural factors complementary with their populist and xenophobic rhetoric (Goodwin 2012), such as the Great Recession or the ongoing European migrant crisis. In this respect, the claim that PRRPs do not represent a pathology of European societies, but rather a “radicalisation of mainstream values” (Mudde 2010, 1181) seems plausible, as these structural factors evidently complement the predominant populist radical right discourse, characterised by the ‘populist radical right trinity’ (*ibid.*) of issues, *i.e.* the subjects of corruption, immigration and security. Hence it might be sensible to argue that the rise of the populist radical right represents a reflection of the favourable *Zeitgeist* which is currently contributing to saliency of the issues pertinent to these parties, and as such should not be observed as a linear and irreversible phenomenon, but rather, at least to a certain extent, as a consequence of contemporary political and social structural factors.

Despite moderate success achieved by the PRRPs in recent elections, their influence on policy making has been all but marginal in the vast majority of analysed countries. This has particularly been the case in Western Europe, with notable exceptions of Austrian FPÖ, which was a junior partner in the coalition government with centre-right ÖVP (2000–2005) and Danish DF, which supported the liberal-conservative coalition from 2001 to 2011, and is once again providing support for a minority centre-right Venstre government since 2015. In the remaining Western European countries PRRPs still largely face a *cordon sanitaire*, which

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<sup>10</sup> Calculated for 17 parties (instead of 19), because NA (Latvia) and ANEL (Greece) have only contested European elections once, thus making the calculation of electoral trend impossible.



prevents them from ascending to the positions of power, but on the other hand contributes to their perception by public as the outsiders opposed to the ‘cartel’ of mainstream political parties, which is one of the focal points of their populist rhetoric.

In the post-communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and particularly the countries of Višegrád Group, the situation has been significantly different. Namely, the ruling mainstream parties in these countries, in response to the structural factors such as the unprecedented influx of refugees and migrants since 2015, have either modified their policies to such extent that they can be classified as PRRPs (PiS in Poland, Fidesz in Hungary), or adopted elements of PRR ideology in regard to immigration (Czech Social Democratic Party in Czech Republic, Direction – Social Democracy in Slovakia). In Slovakia, populist radical right SNS has also entered the ruling coalition following the results of the 2016 general election. This process has enabled the ideology of populist radical right to infiltrate the policies of governments of Višegrád states, which have been described as a bloc of ‘illiberal democracies’. Besides the states of Višegrád Four, as of January 2017, PRRPs are also participating in governing coalitions in Finland (PS), Greece (ANEL) and Latvia (NA).

When the results of PRRPs at national and European level are compared, it can be concluded that European elections and the EU as such, despite being a regular target of populist radical right’s rhetoric, present these parties with a more favourable opportunity structure in comparison with the national level. Regarding the latest electoral results, the average PRRP result in European elections is 1.69 % higher than the corresponding national election result. On average, during the analysed period (2000–2016), PRRPs’ European election results have been 1.72 % higher when compared to the national ones. When we look at the electoral trends, the rise in support has also been higher in European elections, albeit only for 0.38 %. However, this supposed favourability of European elections is more ambiguous than mere numbers imply – although the European Parliament does provide PRRPs with resources and media visibility, the situation is very different in context of actual influence on decision making. While at the EU level, despite recent successes in group formation, PRRPs in most cases remain largely isolated (except for a small share of parties included in more moderate groups), at the national level their influence is more varied: some PRRPs have during this period been included in governing coalitions and as such possessed a larger share of political influence than at the European level, despite their less successful electoral performances.

### 3 Populist Radical Right Parties and Liberal Democracy

The alleged incompatibility of PRRPs with the norms of liberal democracy, embodied institutionally in EU, primarily refers to rights of minority groups, and consequently even disregard for basic human rights of those groups which are being targeted by their political agenda. Policies which combine ideological components laid out in the previous chapter entail advocacy of discriminatory measures against the sections of society treated as threatening others, or viewed as culturally incompatible with the native population. Regardless of their ideological profile, all political parties and party families with significant political representation in the EU share the consensus on basic political principles, which can be broadly described as “the pluralist worldview of liberal democracy” (Mudde 2004, 545). Populist radical right party family is the first to significantly contest this consensus, by attempting to redefine the notion of people on cultural, but essentially ethnic grounds, instead of treating all citizens as equal members of the society. This stance automatically implies discrimination on ethnic grounds and undermines the protection of minority rights as one of the liberal democratic cornerstones. As Mudde (2013) has put it, PRRPs do not represent a threat to democracy as such, since they support both popular sovereignty and popular rule. However, their relationship towards liberal democracy is “less supportive”, due to their monist nature, scepticism towards minority rights and the politics of compromise. In other words, “while PRRPs have never challenged the bare essence of their democratic systems, this cannot be said of the fundamentals of *liberal* democracy” (*ibid.*, 11).

Particularly the prominence of populism, which has become one of the key defining elements of these parties’ ideology, implies a majoritarian approach towards the decision making process, which also contains a risk of becoming a *tyranny of the majority*, especially if combined with other ideological postulates such as opposition to immigration and ethnopluralism. It is the populist conception of the people as a homogenous, unified entity with a shared common interest, which is contradictory to pluralism enshrined by the contemporary representative democratic systems, due to its blatant disregard for dissenting opinions and interests of groups which do not comply with the ethno-cultural pattern that defines the majority that populist parties claim to represent. In other words, this populist strategy “undermines the pillars of the liberal democratic and pluralist societies” (Goodwin 2012, 14). Mudde (2004, 562) has outlined the relationship of populist element of PRRP ideology with the essence of liberal democracy:

Rather than representative democracy, populism is inherently hostile to the idea and institutions of liberal democracy or constitutional democracy. Populism is one form of what Fareed Zakaria has recently popularized as 'illiberal democracy', but which can also be called democratic extremism /.../ /L/iberal democracy is a complex compromise of popular democracy and liberal elitism, which is therefore only partly democratic. As Margaret Canovan has brilliantly argued, populism is a biting critique of the democratic limitations within liberal democracies. In its extremist interpretation of majoritarian democracy, it rejects all limitations on the expression of the general will, most notably the constitutional protection of minorities, and the independence /.../ of key state institutions.

In this thesis we will focus on three distinct, albeit overlapping, policy areas in which PRRPs most evidently pursue policies in contradiction with predominant European liberal democratic norms – policies directed against immigrants, minority groups, and particularly against the Muslim population. These three society groups are subject to a number of proposed discriminatory measures (although due to limited political strength and influence of PRRPs such measures have so far rarely been actually implemented) advocated by PRRPs in their programmatic documents. For this reason, a number of manifestos and electoral programmes of PRRPs across the EU has been analysed in order to determine whether the measures they advocate can be considered as to be violations of rights of these portions of the population. It is also important to note that the degree of norm violation significantly varies within the populist radical right party family. For this reason, the purpose of this chapter is not to attempt to provide general deductive conclusions on the status of these parties, but rather to use an inductive approach in order to showcase a number of examples of such violations by different PRRPs, and outline the common contradictions between elements of their ideology and EU's founding principles. The chapter will also include an overview of policies advocated by the subgroup of PRRPs previously designated as extreme right, in order to analyse the possibly variations in their relation towards the norms of liberal democracy.

On the other hand, this notion does not intend to imply that the aforementioned norms represent universal values defended by mainstream parties from the incoming populist offensive. On the contrary, in the past it has often been mainstream parties, particularly those from the right side of the political spectrum, which have advocated an exclusionary vision of Europe and insisted on its inherent Christian identity, implying the anti-Muslim discourse, and arguably even providing PRRPs with a possibility to radicalise this position, which is in line with Mudde's assertion of their radicalisation of existing mainstream views, rather than challenging the existing consensus with entirely different ideological constructs. In other words, despite the nominal liberal democratic identity of the EU, significant portion of its

political forces have undermined these principles to a certain degree, inadvertently legitimising the discourse which has consequently been adopted and elaborated by the PRR.

### **3.1 Immigration**

As it has been previously discussed, opposition to immigration represents one of the key areas of interest for PRRPs, as well as one of the crucial drivers of their electoral ascent, with unprecedented levels of influx of non-European immigrants into the EU putting an ever larger emphasis on this issue area in recent years. Open hostility towards immigration has been noted as the most powerful predictor of these parties' electoral support, with PRRPs utilising the relatively widespread anti-immigrant public opinion in the EU, fuelled by concerns for cultural and national identity (Goodwin 2012). In other words, PRRPs politicised mostly pre-existing anti-immigrant sentiment in the population (Mudde 2013).

Immigration is seen by the PRRPs as a twofold challenge: on one hand, immigration is represented as a major security threat, while on the other hand it is understood as a cultural threat for native population of European countries. Both narratives build on the perception of non-European immigrants as impossible to integrate and assimilate, bearing in mind the stance of these parties on multiculturalism. Securitisation of the discourse related to immigration tends to collectively equate all immigrants with groups that could pose a threat to national security, such as Muslim extremists, and as such stigmatises an entire group of people without a reliable cause for such claims. This analogy serves as a foundation for a number of advocated repressive policies towards immigrants, resulting in advocacy of human right violations, based on generalisations and an oversimplification of complex issues such as immigration, Muslim fundamentalism and the threat of terrorism.

The theme of immigration features heavily in both PRR discourse and official programmatic documents. For example, Project of Front National, the official programmatic document of the French party, contains an entire section dedicated to this issue. The *massive and uncontrolled* immigration is presented as a major problem facing France, and denounced as a weapon of big capital which is aimed at endangering social rights of French workers (Front National 2012). The uncontrolled immigration is described as a source of tension in the country, due to its inability to successfully integrate the 'new French', as well as denounced as a threat to national identity (*ibid.*). Policies outlined by the party advocate drastic reductions in immigration levels (from 200,000 to 10,000 per year), as well as reducing the number of granted asylum requests, questioning the Schengen Agreement, and seeking to

renegotiate the Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, which guarantees the right to respect for private and family life (*ibid.*).

Electoral programme drafted by Vlaams Belang (VB) for the 2014 Belgian general election states that mass immigration puts the capacity of Belgian society to the test, and imports unemployment, deprivation, crime and conflict (Vlaams Belang 2014). VB also argues for the termination of the Schengen Agreement, which allegedly allows for increasing migration patterns from southern and eastern Europe towards northern Europe and Flanders in particular, and facilitates the trafficking of illegal immigrants (*ibid.*). On the other hand, the Principle Programme of Swedish Democrats (SD) claims that this party is not opposed to immigration as such, but believes that immigration must be held at such level that it does not represent a threat to Swedish national identity and the country's prosperity and security because of recent immigration patterns of people from distant and culturally different countries (Sverigedemokraterna 2011). At the same time, this party openly discriminates immigrants based on their country of origin, calling for the immigration from countries with *strong elements of fundamentalism* to be very strictly limited (*ibid.*), without elaborating how this criterion could ever be determined.

Similarly vociferous anti-immigrant rhetoric is also expressed by UKIP, which claims that immigration “has driven down wages and led to job losses for British workers” and is one of the main factors which are “pushing public services to breaking point” (United Kingdom Independence Party 2015). This party’s Manifesto anticipates the establishment of a new institution, the Migration Control Commission, which would operate under a strict mandate to significantly reduce the numbers of people migrating to the United Kingdom (*ibid.*). The same document even advocates the refusal of free health care for illegal immigrants and those who overstay their visas, denying those people of basic human rights.

Dutch PVV goes even further, vowing to entirely stop immigration from Muslim countries. In its electoral programme, this party describes the immigration as a very damaging process for the Netherlands, with disastrous consequences, citing an alleged overrepresentation of non-Western immigrants in terms of benefit dependency, anti-Semitism, homophobia, discrimination against women, crime and school dropout rates as reasons for the proposal of such a radical policy shift (Partij voor de Vrijheid 2012). PVV’s boisterous opposition to the Turkey’s EU accession bid is fuelled by concerns that it will cause an influx of *millions of Turks*, while current situation is described as the opening of floodgates for *hundreds of thousands of Muslims* lured there by jobs, benefits, housing and education (*ibid.*).

As it can be concluded from the listed examples of official party positions on some aspects of the immigration issue, immigration itself does not represent the problem *per se* from the point of view of the PRRPs. Their issue with immigration patterns remains limited to the influx of immigrants with different ethnic, cultural and religious backgrounds, as they are seen as a threat for the perceived national homogeneity, expressed by the dominant national culture. This selectiveness regarding the immigrants' background implies a discrimination of people based on predetermined categories, such as ethnic, cultural or religious origin, representing a violation of the principle of non-discrimination, as stipulated for example by the Article 14 of European Human Rights Convention and Article 8 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Unlike the 20<sup>th</sup> century extreme right ideologies such as fascism or Nazism, populist radical right does not overtly use racial or ethnic background as the basis for exclusion of certain groups of people, employing instead the concept of culture as a defining characteristic of supposedly distinct and unmixable portions of population. This exclusionary doctrine based on cultural identity constitutes what can be described as 'differentialist nativism' (Betz 2003), goal of which is preserving diversity through cultural segregation. Despite the different basis for discrimination, this differentialist nativist approach implies discrimination nonetheless – and with it a disregard for the principle of human equality as such.

### **3.2 Minority rights**

Since the populist radical right understands *the people* as a monolithic entity with common concerns and interests, disregard for the minority interests seems to be an integral part of its political ideology. As it has been previously noted, PRRPs' emphasis on ethnopluralism puts notions of citizenship, nationality and democracy in the context of culturally (and consequently ethnically) defined homogenous communities. Conceived as a counterpole for multiculturalism, this doctrine implies the existence of a dominant, national culture which is not to be contested by importing or facilitating any foreign cultural influences. In accordance with their perception of nation state as the only legitimate basis for decision making, and intricately tied with the dominant ethnic group to which it belongs to, these political parties aim to promote the dominant culture at the expense of minority groups, whose cultural identity should, in line with their ideology, be suppressed through an extensive process of cultural assimilation.

PRRPs claim that multiculturalism aims to destroy the national community (Bornschieer 2008), defence of which remains one of their key political goals. This leads to the paradoxical situation that the political parties supposedly aiming to preserve cultural diversity actually

suppress any sort of diversity within their respective nation states. The inherent populism and nativism of the populist radical right hence imply political goals which are conflicted with one of the cornerstones of liberal democracy, *i.e.* the protection of minority rights. Tendency towards a total cultural assimilation of minority groups already residing in European states implies a simultaneous violation of their minority rights, including cultural rights.

Minority rights are not just a theoretical element of the ideal type that liberal democracy represents, but a set of rights protected both by international law and EU legislation. For example, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) contains a provision (Article 27), which states that ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities shall not be denied the right to enjoy their culture, profess their religion and use their language, in community with other group members (United Nations 1966). It must also be noted that, in most cases, not all minority groups are treated the same – while the *traditional* minorities are allowed to enjoy some degree of cultural autonomy, no such rights are recognised for immigrants, which dominantly include the people of Muslim heritage, who are denounced by the radical right rhetoric as unwilling and unable to assimilate and adapt to the European *modus vivendi*.

Analysed programmatic documents and electoral programmes of PRRPs include overt calls for assimilation of minority groups and denouncing of any special rights reserved for members of minority groups. For example, VB's Declaration of Principles insists that foreigners and immigrants must adapt to the dominant (in this case, Flemish) culture, values, habits and principles. Failure to do so is to be sanctioned with a *return policy* (Vlaams Belang 2014). The same document includes a classical example of the bipolar nature of PRR ideology: while advocating discrimination based on cultural and ethnic identity, VB claims to be doing so in defence of European liberal and democratic values, such as separation of church and state, democracy, human rights and gender equality (*ibid.*). In Sweden, SD openly declares its opposition to multiculturalism, claiming that the preservation of national culture represents a necessary precondition for nation's survival, while multiculturalism, on the other hand, implies increased alienation, segregation, conflicts and insecurity (Sverigedemokraterna 2011). In accordance with this, SD suggests an adoption of a policy of total assimilation directed towards the immigrants, withdrawing all financing for preservation of minority cultures, with the final goal of assimilating them into Swedish culture, and therefore into the Swedish nation.

Similar assimilatory policy of cultural integration is advocated by UKIP, which also rejects multiculturalism, and instead proposes an integration of all citizens into the “unifying British

culture”, even if some of its elements are contradictory to their own (United Kingdom Independence Party 2015). This culturally hegemonist approach directly connects cultural identity to citizenship and is inherently discriminatory towards anyone not sharing the cultural patterns of dominant group. In this respect, UKIP advocates revoking all public funding used in order to promote “divisiveness through multiculturalism” (*ibid.*). PVV proposes the introduction of an obligatory signing of the ‘assimilation contracts’ for all immigrants who arrive in Netherlands. Those who refuse to sign, or do not comply with the contract provisions, are to be deported from the country, along with all *unemployed foreigners* (Partij voor de Vrijheid 2012).

FN also advocates a similar position, stating that all legal immigrants who do not work for a year, should be *encouraged* to return home (Front National 2012). If such policies are to be implemented, they would invariably constitute violations of cultural rights of minority groups, which would be systematically suppressed by the state in favour of total cultural assimilation into the dominant national culture, as well as a violation of social rights by their disadvantaged treatment in a number of areas, enforced by proposed serious sanctions, such as expulsion from the country despite residing in it legally. Conception of *the people* that FN, like other parties of this party family, claims to represent is hence very narrowly and exclusively defined in cultural terms, showcasing the ideological blend between nationalism and populism. As Reungoat (2010, 306) puts it, FN’s appeal to the people builds its community through the concept of French nationality, a construction which is “explicitly exclusive and rejects several types of people”. In other words, FN and similar parties “equate the nation with a homogenous ethnic group that has the right to self-rule and sovereignty” (Halikiopoulou 2012a, 523).

Ethnopluralist doctrine advocated by the populist radical right and its inherent opposition to multiculturalism also implies an overt rejection of typical liberal democratic measures employed in order to protect rights of ethnic or religious minority groups, such as positive discrimination, affirmative action, or other similar incentives. Such a stance is found, for example, in FN’s programme, which advocates a prohibition of positive discrimination in hiring or receiving trainees, students or apprentices in the public sector, as well as in private enterprises and schools and educational institutions financed at least partly by the public funds (*ibid.*). Interestingly, FN simultaneously advocates a discriminatory practice of ‘national priority’, claiming that people of French nationality should have a priority in social housing programmes, while also aiming to limit the access to child support funds only to those couples



where at least one parent is either French or European (*ibid.*). In a similar manner, PVV calls for proficiency in Dutch language to be an eliminatory condition for access to any state funded benefits, which should, according to its electoral programme, be available to immigrants who have acquired the Dutch nationality (which should, according to PVV, be only granted to them after working in the country for ten years, under an additional condition that they do not have a criminal record).

From the examples listed above, it can be concluded that, as politically legitimate as the defence of a national culture might be, in the case of PRRPs it is necessarily interwoven with simultaneous suppression of any cultural forms which deviate from the dominantly established cultural patterns. Some of the programmatic goals expressed by European radical right populists, should they ever be actually implemented in practice, would undeniably constitute serious violations of cultural rights of certain minority groups, which would in turn face imposed assimilation and prohibition of expressing their actual cultural identity. However, having in mind the limited electoral strength and influence on policy making process of this party family, their support for such policies remains entirely rhetorical, and as such, albeit inherently contradictory (in its proclaimed fight for the preservation of cultural diversity, while advocating cultural assimilation of immigrants) and anti-liberal democratic, does not represent a realistic threat for minority rights in EU, at least for the time being.

### **3.3 Islamophobia**

The third issue area in which PRRPs' ideology arguably conflicts with the norms of liberal democracy is these parties' relationship towards the Muslim population in Europe. It needs to be noted that this frame is not viewed as independent from others, but actually an integral part of the previously described ones, and in a certain way represents a gist of these parties' advocacy, or their main ideological propellant. The resentment towards the immigrants and their alleged adverse effect on nation states almost invariably implies their Muslim heritage, especially because of the perception of Muslims as the least compatible with European cultures and the least inclined towards cultural assimilation (Rydgren 2008). Also, the proclaimed cultural incommensurability and incompatibility between traditional, national cultures and the foreign, minority cultures, even when it is not explicitly formulated in such manner, necessarily implies European national identities, based to a certain degree on Christian values, and Muslim culture which is becoming more and more visible in those nation states thanks to immigration. Hence, it can be said that islamophobia, or an extremely negative perception of Islam and Muslim population actually underlines the entire ideological

construction of the populist radical right. The ideological construct of threatening others, portrayed as culturally different (if not inferior) immigrants threatening the European states both financially and culturally, is ideally personified by Muslims, who represent the main scapegoat for PRRPs, and as such the main target of their negative electoral campaigns and advocated policies.

However, it would be incorrect to observe the anti-Muslim position of PRRPs as an isolated ideological phenomenon, not present in other European political agents. As it was noted above, due to the fact that the EU itself was conceived as an alliance of predominately Christian states, a significant portion of European political parties advocated, more or less openly, its Christian identity, implicitly defining Islam as the 'Other', in contrast to which the common European identity is defined (which is evident, for example, in the situation regarding the issue of proposed accession of Turkey to EU). Christian identity represents one of the focal points of mainstream conservative parties in the EU, which necessarily implies a certain degree of exclusion of Muslims, the ideological tenet further developed and radicalised by the PRRPs. Hence, this ideological position of the populist radical right does not represent an isolated political position, contrasted to those of remaining political actors, but rather a radicalised version of the conception of Europe outlined above, and advocated by a significant portion of mainstream political parties, regardless of formal dedication of the EU to multiculturalism.

Scholars have frequently included the 'Muslim issue' in the analyses of the functioning of these parties, some even proposing a causal connection between the increasing Muslim population in Europe and the rise of radical right (*e.g.* Green 2012). The Muslim issue is described as connected to immigration, but transcending it, by including the perceived security threat, but also by Muslims being seen as a direct challenge to collective identities, traditional values and public politics (Liang 2007). It can be also argued that these two frames (anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim stances) have been interconnected to such an extent that they represent elements of a single integrated master narrative PRRPs employ in order to make political gains on pre-existing public sentiments of fear and hostility towards these groups. In this respect, Muslims are singled out as a group which does not belong in Europe, merely on the basis of their cultural and religious identity which PRRPs consider to be undermining the European identity, and the corresponding individual national identities.

As it has already been noted, representation of Muslims within the radical right's narrative is one of cultural incompatibility and threat to national identity. Islam is portrayed as violent,

intolerant, antidemocratic, misogynist, and monolithic, *i.e.* inherently irreformable (Green 2012), and as such represents a threat to ‘European values’ that these parties claim to represent and defend. The resulting policies advocated by the PRRPs constitute potential violations of religious rights. However, the nature of religious rights is somewhat ambiguous, as exemplified by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Namely, its Article 18 proclaims the freedom of religion, including freedom to manifest religion, privately or publicly, individually or collectively, in worship, observance, practice and teaching. However, the same article contains limitations to this freedom, stating that it can be subject to limitations prescribed by law, and necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others. As generally formulated as it is, this optional limitation of religious rights can be subject to different interpretations, and consequently abused, due to the possibility of limitation of those rights in order to a very ambiguous definition of exceptions to the rule.

The ‘Muslim issue’ features prominently in analysed programmatic documents of PRRPs, as one of the recurring subjects. PRRPs express their fears of *Islamisation* of Europe and the perceived cultural clash with Islam as a threat to social order and national identity, and consequently propose a number of measures aimed directly against the Muslim population in order to limit the supposedly threatening advance of Islam in Europe. For example, the electoral programme of Vlaams Belang (2014) claims that the growing presence of Islam represents the main threat to public order and peaceful coexistence. The same document states that, rather than Belgium having to adapt to the presence of Islam, it has to adapt to Belgian values. French FN also openly bemoans what they are defining as an increasing Islamisation of France, and its supposedly destructive effects on national cohesion (Front National 2012).

The most radical stances on Islam, among the analysed programmatic documents, are expressed by those of the Dutch Party of Freedom (PVV). This party’s latest electoral programme lists the growth of Islam as one of the main challenges facing their country, openly denouncing it as not being a religion at all, but a totalitarian political ideology which is diametrically opposed to freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid 2012). The programme states that Islam simply does not belong in Netherlands, where it will always be a constant source of unrest. They also connect this issue with an increase in immigration, which is said to be causing a rise of criminality, poverty and welfare dependence (*ibid.*). PVV obviously attempts to portray Islam as the main political threat to Western values, which they proclaim

themselves to be defenders of, in an attempt to define themselves in contrast to the skewed view of this religion that they seek to promote.

However, by doing so, this party is overtly stereotyping an entire religion, whose adherents are discriminated against merely on the basis of their religious identity. The entire Muslim population is rhetorically equated to Muslim extremist and fundamentalist groups and their activity, and as such stigmatised as an inherent threat to European nations. This electoral programme exposes one of the variations of PRRPs' actual activity and advocacy, as well as their nominal or theoretical ideological standpoints – their opposition to multiculturalism, expressed in the form of ethnopluralism, allegedly does not classify cultures as superior and inferior, but rather merely insists on their separation and self-contained development. However, as it can be seen from this sort of depiction of Islam and consequently of Muslims as a whole, behind this 'different, but equal' approach there is actually a belief in own cultural and social superiority, constituting an ideological element which can be conditionally labelled as cultural supremacism. It can even be argued that this stance represents nothing more than a reconstructed and redefined racist narrative, only expressed in cultural, rather than racial terms, which explains the PRRPs' usual reluctance to publicly express such radical stances, instead opting for expressing this sort of argumentation through the politically acceptable cultural terms.

Sweden Democrats (SD) is one of the few analysed political parties which explicitly identifies itself as a defender of Christianity. The party's Principle Programme states that Swedish government cannot and should not be religiously neutral, due to Christianity representing an integral part of Swedish culture and identity. As such, it is argued, it should be allowed to have a special position in relation to other religions present in the country (Sverigedemokraterna 2011). On the other hand, Islam is portrayed as the religion which has found it most difficult to harmoniously coexist with Swedish and Western culture. In this respect, SD aims to decrease the influence of *Islamism* on the Swedish society, claiming that religions which claim social influence must be discussed and criticised on the same terms as political ideologies (*ibid.*). In comparison, similar stance towards Islam expressed by FN is backed by a significantly different argumentation – by counter posing it to the principle of secularism (*laïcité*), strongly embedded in the French political tradition, which is supposedly threatened by the existence of Islam. In this respect, this party proposes the establishment of the Ministry of Interior, Migration and Secularism, which should enforce the principle of *laïcité*, but the question remains whether this principle is utilised merely as a tool for

discriminatory practices towards Muslim population, since within the rhetoric of FN it is necessarily connected to the immigration issue and intended to target a specific religion, rather than serving as a universal principle of governance.

Virtually all parties whose programmatic documents have been included in the analysis (with the sole exception of UKIP) also suggest a number of measures explicitly intended to counter this alleged threat that Islam represents to their national identities. For example, FN advocates a ban on Muslim headscarves and any other religious symbols. VB also proposes a similar ban, albeit only for civil servants, while PVV advocates a ban on headscarves in healthcare, education, in state institutions and in public sector in general. Opposition to any sort of subsidisation or positive discrimination on religious grounds represents another one of the common standpoints of PRRPs, expressed in different forms, but with the same goal – to exclude the Muslim population from accessing public funds, which are viewed as reserved exclusively for the natives, in accordance with the already elaborated doctrine of welfare chauvinism adopted by these parties.

A number of parties, namely VB and PVV, go even further, by advocating prohibition of construction of Muslim sacral objects. While VB calls for freezing of construction of new mosques, as well as closing of existing *extremist mosques*, PVV calls for a construction ban for mosques in all urban areas, as well as banning the construction of minarets<sup>11</sup> altogether. PVV goes even further with its anti-Muslim agenda, which seems to be at the very core of its political message and essentially its *raison d'être*. Besides also calling for banning of Quran, the central religious scripture of Islam, this party advocates a total ban on immigration from predominantly Muslim countries, a highly selective and discriminatory measure intended to enforce cultural and religious segregation advocated by this party and by PRRPs as a whole.

When the discourse of PRRPs regarding Muslims is analysed, despite non-negligible variations in its intensity among individual parties, some of the outlines of their 'master narrative' of Islam can indeed be observed. Even if sometimes PRRPs avoid openly denouncing Muslims as inferior in cultural and social sense, their official documents and inflammatory rhetoric hardly conceal what we have defined as cultural supremacism, *i.e.* the belief in superiority of one's own culture (in this sense, Christian European) over another (Muslim non-European). Muslim population is denounced as unable and unwilling to adapt to

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<sup>11</sup> Minarets are high, narrow towers, built adjacent to mosques, typically used for Muslim calls for prayer. Their construction was, for example, banned in Switzerland in 2009 following the result of a national referendum on this issue.

the European *way of life*, based merely on their religious affiliation. Also, despite the fact that this issue will never be defined in these terms by the parties themselves, their depiction of Muslims almost invariably implies the non-White portion of European population, mostly that of Arab descent, adding implicitly yet another level to their discriminatory rhetoric. Violations of religious rights through restrictive and openly discriminatory policies advocated by the populist radical right prove these parties' ideology to be extremely hostile towards a share of European population. Furthermore, the anti-Muslim sentiment seems to also incorporate the previous two frames of discrimination, as both immigrants, who are portrayed as a vital security threat, and minority groups, which are denied the right to cultivation and preservation of their native cultures, predominantly belong to this religious group. Hence, it may not be too far-fetched to designate these parties as anti-Muslim, in addition to other descriptions utilised to better explain their ideological foundations.

### **3.4 Extremism**

In accordance with the previous elaboration,<sup>12</sup> this thesis understands extreme right parties to be a subgroup of PRRPs, since they advocate similar ideological positions, and for the most differ in mere intensity of their rhetoric, and some distinct additional elements. While most PRRPs attempt to present a more moderate public image to potential voters in order to compete with mainstream parties, extreme right parties are characterised by continuous support for hard line stances and even expressing some ideological elements which are not found in other contemporary PRRPs, such as anti-Semitism or even neo-Nazism. Four parties out of the 28 covered by this analysis can be classified as extreme right: Jobbik (Hungary), NPD (Germany), XA (Greece) and L'SNS (Slovakia). Despite being grouped together due to their designation as *extreme*, these parties have different backgrounds and face significantly different political environment, at least at the national level. Founded in 2003, Jobbik has been described as anti-Roma and anti-Semitic Hungarian political party (Goodwin 2012, 3).

This party advocates aggressive nationalism, which includes irredentist elements, such as the call for revision of the Treaty of Trianon, the peace agreement signed in 1920 between the victorious Allies of World War I and the Kingdom of Hungary as one of the successor states of the defeated Austria-Hungary, which ceded certain parts of its territory to the surrounding states. Golden Dawn (XA), founded in 1980, is a party which is academically described as neo-Nazi, racist and xenophobic (Halikiopoulou and Vasilopoulou 2015). L'SNS, Slovakian

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<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 2.2.9 for more detailed information.

party which made its electoral breakthrough in the 2016 general election, gaining parliamentary status for the first time since its foundation in 2010, also includes anti-Roma and anti-Semitic messages. Finally, German NPD, founded in 1964, is a political party most often described as neo-Nazi. However, unlike the previous three parties, NPD remains utterly marginalised within its political system, having never held a single seat in Bundestag. Its inclusion in this thesis is justified by the electoral rules for the 2014 European elections in Germany, which allowed this party to gain a single representative in EP for the first time in its history, after receiving 1.03 % of votes.

Treatment of these parties in their respective national political arenas also varies greatly: while NPD is absolutely stigmatised, isolated, and put under close surveillance by the authorities, and has faced numerous attempts of a legal ban, in contrast the president of L'SNS, Marian Kotleba, currently serves as the governor of Banská Bystrica Region of Slovakia. However, all four extreme right parties have very limited coalition potential, as they are *de facto* isolated by other political parties within their national political systems.

For the sake of brevity and clarity, the overview of these parties' ideological elements and their positions in regard to liberal democratic norms will not include the previously outlined elements, *i.e.* their positions in regard to immigration, cultural rights of minorities, or relationship towards Islam. In line with the previously adopted categorisation of the extreme right, all of these are understood as integral to the ideology of this subgroup. For that reason, this segment will focus on the ideological elements which differentiate these parties from the rest of PRRPs, earning them the *extreme* designation – making these parties the least compatible with European liberal democracy. Besides their notable mutual differences, these parties share a number of ideological elements that distinguish them from the remaining PRRPs – notably their anti-Semitism, anti-Roma sentiment and connections to neo-Nazism. Despite previously being attributed as a part of the ideology of a number of PRRPs (for example Jean-Marie Le Pen, the founder and former leader of FN is notorious for frequent anti-Semitic remarks),<sup>13</sup> anti-Semitism does not feature in programmes of PRRPs, and is reserved for the most extreme parties among them.

Due to the political stigma attached to overt anti-Semitism, especially due to its association with Nazi ideology, such stances are hardly ever expressed in official party documents. However, such remarks can be heard from the leading figures of European extreme right

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<sup>13</sup> Jean Marie Le Pen, who was the FN leader since its foundation in 1972 until 2011, has for example infamously been quoted stating that Holocaust represented a 'detail of history'.

parties. For example, Jobbik's leader Gábor Vona publicly accused Jewish businesses of trying to conquer Hungary economically (Loch and Norocel 2014), while his party have been described as espousing 'conspiracy-like' anti-Semitic rhetoric (Pytlas 2013). Nikolaos Michaloliakos, leader of Greek XA, has been known to deny the Holocaust, stating that the existence of ovens and gas chambers used in concentration camps for mass exterminations was a lie, and that the number of Jewish victims has been exaggerated (Mezzofiore 2012). XA is described as "explicitly anti-Semitic, accusing the Jews or Zionists of seeking to eliminate the Greek nation through US-induced globalisation and cosmopolitanism" (Ellinas 2013, 551).

Anti-Roma sentiment is another common ideological trait of the extreme right parties, most pronounced in the political activity of the Central European extreme right parties, *i.e.* Slovakian L'SNS and Hungarian Jobbik. For example, in its programmatic documents, L'SNS refers to the Roma people as asocial parasites who abuse the welfare system and cause an increase in crime rate (Nociar 2012). Anti-Roma rhetoric represents a central political message that this party's platform conveys, as well as the key tool for its voter mobilisation (*ibid.*). For example, the electoral programme of L'SNS for the 2016 general election contains a point dedicated to security, which deals exclusively with the problem that Roma people allegedly represent to Slovakian society. This point of the programme contains the promise of protecting the Slovakian people from *Gypsy terror*, as well as the criticism directed against the government for failing to crack down on *Gypsy extremists* (Kotleba 2016). When it comes to the measures that L'SNS proposes in order to combat this issue, the focal point of this programme segment is the proposed establishment of militias, which should protect the people along with regular police forces. Also, this party proposes looser regulations on firearms ownership and right to self-defence, higher sentences for criminal acts, and destruction of all illegal settlements (*ibid.*).

Jobbik is a party which is notorious for its anti-Roma sentiment and activity. As Pytlas (2013, 169–170) states, Jobbik's ideological foundation relies on comprehensive nativism "with a particularly overt and extreme anti-Roma element". This party often refers to the 'gypsy issue' which is facing Hungary, and emphasises the problem of 'gypsy crime' as a threat to public safety, and has even formed a party militia in 2007, called the Hungarian Guard (*Magyar Gárda*), which was banned in 2009 by Hungarian judicial institutions due to violations of human rights of minority groups. Members of Hungarian Guard and a number of



other militia groups connected to Jobbik have been accused of terrorising the Roma population, particularly in rural parts of the country (Fekete 2012).

Besides expressing, more or less openly, anti-Semitic or anti-Roma rhetoric, these four extreme right parties are unified by another common characteristic, which serves to further marginalise them both at national, and especially European level – their sympathetic stance towards the Nazi ideology, or even self-identification with political groups which collaborated with the Axis forces during the World War II. For example, Jobbik openly shows admiration for Miklós Horthy, a Hungarian statesman who forged an alliance with Hitler, while the situation is quite similar regarding L'SNS and Jozef Tiso, a Nazi collaborator who ruled Slovakia as the German puppet state.

German NPD openly supports certain Nazi leaders, such as Rudolf Hess, and is generally described as a party drawing on Nazi ideology. Golden Dawn also includes a variety of prominent members, including its leader Michaloliakos, who have publicly expressed sympathies towards Nazism. The party's logo represents the Greek meander, highly reminiscent of Nazi swastika, especially due to similar colour schemes used in the party flag featuring this symbol. Analysis of the official party documents, conducted by Ellinas (2013), implies a direct ideological lineage to the far-right interwar ideologies. More specifically, XA adopts a biological form of nationalism, similar to Nazi ideology, with official party documents containing mentions of intellectual, national, and racial inequality of humans (*ibid.*). This open adherence to biological racism classifies Golden Dawn as perhaps the most extreme political party ever to gain representation at both national and EU level.

When it comes to their activity at the European level, these political parties play a marginal role in the context of party politics. Extreme right parties which managed to win seats in the European Parliament remain among the few parties sitting as *Non-inscrits*, with their non-affiliation further limiting their virtually non-existent influence on the policy making process. Some progress has been recently made regarding the organisation of a number of like-minded parties at the EU level. Golden Dawn, Jobbik and L'SNS participate in the Alliance for Peace and Freedom (APF), a European political party founded in 2015 and recognised by the EU institutions. APF comprises some of the most extreme populist right-wing movements in Europe, and is supported by controversial politicians such as Nick Griffin and Jean-Marie Le Pen, who participated in a number of its political activities. In 2016, a proposal has been tabled before the European Parliament by four political groups to investigate whether APF meets the criteria for being recognised as a European political party, due to its alleged failure

to meet the basic principles of the EU, such as basic human rights, liberty and democracy, as stipulated by the Article 225 of the Rules of Procedure of the European Parliament. This illustrates the atmosphere in the EU regarding these political parties, and serves to prove the existence of a contradiction between their political goals and the very foundations of the EU.

If we attempt to summarise the ideological positions expressed by the extreme right parties, we can establish that these political parties show the least level of compatibility with liberal democratic norms in comparison to all other PRRPs. Due to the additional ideological elements, which are not found in other PRRPs, such as open discrimination towards Jews and Roma, as well as identification with certain elements of Nazi ideology, these parties constitute a group of pariah parties, which are shunned even by remaining PRRPs, let alone by more moderate parties. We can also note that, with the exception of the marginal NPD, all three electorally successful extreme right parties operate in the states of Central and Eastern Europe, alongside more moderate PRRPs (ANEL in Greece, Fidesz in Hungary, SNS in Slovakia). Perhaps aided by an added legitimacy given to them by the existence of an even more radical political option in their political systems, all three listed parties currently participate in their respective governments. As a whole, parties designated as extreme right do indeed represent an ideology incompatible with liberal democratic norms embedded in the EU, but on the other hand their social and political influence remains very limited at the European level despite some individual exceptions, leading to a conclusion that no notable threat to the predominant political consensus can come from them despite the extremist ideology that they advocate.

## **4 Populist Radical Right Parties and the European Union**

The role of the EU in the context of populist radical right, especially when analysing its international impact, has to be a pivotal one. EU has been described as a supranational project that is transforming Europe into a geographical space where territory, membership and identity are one again contested and re-negotiated (Berezin 2005, 10). As such, the EU is an emerging transnational political arena, which symbolises a shift from traditional international relations among nation states. The process of both expansion and integration of the EU has formed an unprecedented level of interconnectedness of European countries, which makes its institutions an integral part of both political advocacy and decision making in a large number of policy areas.

Regarding the PRRPs, the impact of EU is multifaceted – it serves as one of the focal points of their criticism, while, on the other hand, providing them with an unique opportunity for both attracting public's attention and pursuing mutual co-operation. European Parliament is the crucial institution in this respect, as its direct elections have been said to stimulate increasing co-operation between like-minded parties in different EU parties, and promote the institutionalisation of official party groups. (Mair and Mudde 1998). This chapter will analyse the current status of PRRPs within the institutional context of the EU, which serves as a common platform for their mutual co-operation. On the other hand, liberal democratic norms, which have been proven to be at least partially contested by these parties, represent the essence of the EU, and as such prove it to be a relevant point of interest regarding the research question embedded in this thesis.

### **4.1 Attempts of transnational co-operation of the populist radical right**

When it comes to transnational co-operation of PRRPs, the situation can be described as ambiguous and paradoxical. On one hand, the nationalist and Eurosceptic ideologies of these parties leave little room for political co-operation with similar political subjects from other countries, even less so for creation of transnational political structures, such as those formed by mainstream parties. On the other hand, attempts of transnational radical right co-operation date back to the 1980s, and have been increasingly frequent and intensive in recent years, especially through the institutional arrangements of the much maligned EU. Due to the existence of the common enemy, embodied by international organisations, such as the EU, and mainstream political parties with well-established European-level connections, the radical right has been becoming increasingly united, and has made continuous attempts at creating a

transnational PRR network, albeit plagued with fragmentation and limited power of those networks so far.

In a certain way quite contradictorily to their staunch Eurosceptic and anti-integration approach, European elections have traditionally been a more favourable arena for PRRPs. This occurrence has been influenced by a number of structural factors which constitute a “more favourable opportunity structure” that PRRPs face in context of European elections in comparison to national ones (Almeida 2010, 244).

First of all, in a number of countries the electoral system (*e.g.* the first-past-the-post majoritarian system in the United Kingdom, or two-round majoritarian system in France) favours the largest, usually mainstream political parties, typically those belonging to the centre-left and centre-right, giving PRRPs in those countries a disproportionately smaller share of decision making power in comparison with their respective electoral results. For instance, despite winning 12.7 % of votes in the 2015 general election, UKIP only has a single representative in the 650-member Chamber of Deputies, while FN holds only two seats (out of 577) in the French National Assembly despite receiving 13.6 % of votes in the first round of 2012 parliamentary elections.

Unlike parliamentary elections, European elections are uniformly conducted using the method of proportional representation, giving PRRPs opportunities for better representation, and consequently more speaking time, better media coverage and a more significant voting share in comparison with their national counterparts. Also, because European elections do not confer any executive power, and are usually conducted in the middle of national parliamentary mandate, voters might be more inclined towards voting for radical parties in this context (*ibid.*). Other factors often cited as beneficial for PRRP performance at the European elections are the allocated campaign funds and a larger share of media coverage guaranteed to smaller parties in those campaigns, as well as the significantly lower voter turnout implying lower *cost* of mandates in terms of number of votes.

Another, perhaps the most obvious, but sometimes nonetheless neglected factor contributing to this phenomenon is the virulent Euroscepticism that is one of the key pillars of PRR ideology, which is particularly salient in context of the European election agenda. Additionally, the increasing significance of the issue of immigration at the EU level, another trademark subject of the PRR, especially within the context of the European migrant crisis which started in 2015, can be used as an indicator of possible further ascent of the PRRPs

within the institutions of the EU. As of 2016, there are 16 political parties hereby identified as populist radical right with representation in the European parliament, making up a total of 112 MEPs (14.9 %), which is far from a marginal proportion, although over 60 % of those seats are controlled by four largest parties: 22 MEPs belong to UKIP, 21 to FN, 16 to PiS, and 11 to Fidesz. Despite the respectable representation in the European Parliament, the overall weakness and fragmentation of PRR is perhaps best exemplified by the fact that all four aforementioned largest parties belong to different political groups: FN is the pivotal party of the Europe of Nations and Freedom group (ENF), the same can be said about UKIP and Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) group, PiS belongs to the conservative right-wing European Conservatives and Reformists group (ECR), while Fidesz is a controversial inclusion in the centre-right European People's Party (EPP) group.<sup>14</sup>

The following part of this paper will present a brief historical overview of turbulent attempts of European PRR co-operation, in order to outline what can be described as a slow and troubled, but nonetheless persistent movement towards a common policy of globalised nationalism (Liang 2007, 27). Attempts of transnational co-operation of PRRPs date back to 1979, when a temporary alliance called *Eurodroite* gathered nationalist parties from Italy, France, Spain and Belgium ahead of the first European elections. However, only Italian member MSI managed to attain parliamentary status, rendering any sort of EP group creation impossible. The first radical right European parliamentary group, Group of the European Right, was founded in 1984 and lasted until 1989. Chaired by Jean-Marie Le Pen, the group consisted of FN (France), MSI (Italy) and Greek party National Political Union (EPEN). The group was consequently joined also by an MP from Ulster Unionist Party. In 1987, a first attempt of forming trans-European ties of youth PRR organisations occurred in the form of the FN-sponsored *Mouvement de la Jeunesse d'Europe*.

At the following European election in 1989 EPEN failed to retain parliamentary representation, while the Ulster Unionist member left the group. On the other hand, German radical right party, The Republicans (*Die Republikaner*) contested the European elections for the first time, winning 6 seats. However, due to their disputes with the Italian MSI over the status of the province of South Tyrol, as well as the refusal of another potential member party, Belgian Vlaams Blok (VB) to cooperate with MSI due to its position on minority rights (Almeida 2010), formation of a coherent political group has been rendered impossible. Hence,

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<sup>14</sup> In recent years, radicalisation of the ruling Hungarian party, Fidesz, has been the subject of a number of critical reports by international institutions, such as Council of Europe and European Parliament; however, the party remains an integral part of the otherwise mainstream conservative EPP group.

the second incarnation of a nationalist political group in the EP came in form of Technical Group of the European Right, which lasted from 1989 to 1994. The Technical Group of the European Right consisted of FN, VB and The Republicans. At the 1994 European elections, the Republicans failed to retain the parliamentary status, consequently causing the dissolution of the group, after which the remaining representatives were forced to return to the *Non-inscrits*. A number of other radical right parties have entered European Parliament, but have refused to cooperate with FN in order to pursue a more moderate political position, such as the National Alliance (*Alleanza Nazionale* - AN), essentially a rebranded MSI, and Austrian Freedom Party. Italian Lega Nord (LN) also managed to gain parliamentary status, but decided to join the Group of the European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party instead.

Despite the failure to form a political group in EP, Jean Marie Le Pen and FN continued their efforts to integrate European radical right. In March 1997, an association of European nationalist parties, named Euronat, was formed at the FN Congress in Strasbourg, and included radical right parties from 18 European countries (Mareš 2006, 11). Euronat attempted to offer an alternative to the globalisation of Europe by promoting 'Europe of nation states' and rejecting both EU and NATO. However, this project had limited political influence, both due to its loose organisation and the fact that it did not include some relevant radical right parties at the time, most notably FPÖ, which unsuccessfully attempted to form a rival nationalist organisation at the European level (*ibid.*, 12).

Following the 1999 European elections, FN and VB attempted to once again form a technical group of MEPs. They initially succeeded, forming the Technical Group of Independents (TGI) with Italian MEPs from regionalist Lega Nord (LN) and libertarian Bonino List (*Lista Bonino*). However, this group was short-lived, as the group proclaimed political independence of its member parties, leading to a number of court rulings, concluded with the decision of the European Court of Justice which set forward the principle of unacceptability of ideologically mixed groups, leading to forced dissolution of TGI.

Next European election held in 2004 did not bring any new developments regarding the formation of a populist radical right group in the EP, because of the failure to meet the prescribed requirements for group formation regarding number of MEPs and countries they represent. However, despite the lack of a formal EP group, the European radical right continued with its slow but persistent process of *transnationalisation* through different forms of political contacts and co-operation. Political alliance named European National Front (ENF) was founded in 2004, uniting far-right nationalist movements, including neo-Nazi

parties such as German NPD, Greek Golden Dawn, and Italian Tricolour Flame (*Fiamma Tricolore – FT*). Furthermore, in November 2005, more moderate radical right 'patriotic and nationalist parties and movements' of Europe (French FN, Austrian FPÖ, Belgian VB, Italian Social Action (AS), Romanian PRM, Spanish *Alternativa Española*) signed the Vienna Declaration, stating their commitment to stopping the immigration in the EU, and defend Europe from “terrorism, aggressive islamism, superpower imperialism and economic aggression by low-wage countries” (Belien 2005). The Declaration also opposed the proposed European Constitution and called for prohibition of accession of non-European territories (*i.e.* Turkey) into the EU.

Thirteen years following the dissolution of the Technical Group of the European Right, European PRRPs have managed once again to form a political group in the European Parliament, a move made possible by the accession of Bulgaria and Romania into the EU, both of which had radical right parties with parliamentary representation. On 15 January 2007, MEPs from French FN, Belgian VB, Romanian PRM, Bulgarian Ataka, as well as Italian parties Social Alternative (*Alternativa Sociale – AS<sup>15</sup>*) and Tricolour Flame formed a group called Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty (ITS). FN was the largest and most influential party of the group, while its prominent member Bruno Gollnisch has been elected as chairman. The group has been described as ideologically vague or loose, officially founded on quite general principles of protecting national interests, commitment to Christian values and traditions of European civilisation (Almeida 2010, 246). However, only ten months after its creation, ITS dissolved in November 2007, following a dispute between Italian MEP Alessandra Mussolini and Romanian MEPs on the issue of immigration, which resulted in PRM's withdrawal from the group. As Sen (2010, 64) notices, this brief adventure had two-fold consequences: on one hand, it has shown once again the immense difficulty of uniting nationalist political forces at the international level, while on the other hand it has revealed the growing transnational aspirations of these parties.

Aftermath of the 2009 European elections saw the formation of a new political group in the European Parliament, which included a number of PRRPs. Namely, the group titled Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) was formed by a number of Eurosceptic right-wing parties in 2009, largest of which were the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) and Italian

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<sup>15</sup> Not to be confused with Social Alliance (Alleanza Nazionale - AS); while Social Alliance is a political party led by Alessandra Mussolini, which lasted from 2003 to 2009, when it merged with Berlusconi's The People of Freedom (*Popolo della Libertà*), Social Alternative (*Alternativa Sociale*) was a wider electoral coalition formed by Mussolini, which lasted from 2004 to 2006.

Northern League (*Lega Nord* - LN). The group also included a number of parties classified as PRRPs by this thesis: Danish DF, Finnish PS, Lithuanian TT and Slovakian SNS. However, the group rejected some of the more radical parties, in attempt to pursue a more moderate public image. For example, Austrian FPÖ applied for membership during group formation in 2009, and once again in 2011, but was denied access to group membership due to the lack of consensus among the already participating parties (Der Standard 2011). This EFD's strategy of non-attachment with the political parties characterised as too radical left all remaining PRRPs sitting as *non-inscripts* during the 2009-2014 EP convocation, including FPÖ (Austria), VB (Belgium), Ataka (Bulgaria), FN (France), Jobbik (Hungary), LN (Italy), PVV (Netherlands), PRM (Romania),<sup>16</sup> and BNP (United Kingdom).<sup>17</sup> Despite the fact that the listed parties could have theoretically met the formal conditions for the formation of a EU-recognised political group, another internal division prevented such thing from happening. Similarly to the exclusionary policy employed by EFD towards them, the vast majority of these parties ruled out a possibility of grouping with the most extreme parties, such as BNP or Jobbik, rendering the making of another distinct populist radical group impossible at the time. This sort of internal fragmentation has further slowed down the still ongoing process of PRRPs establishing themselves as a coherent group of parties at the European level.

In October 2009 another European political party was founded in Budapest at the party congress of the Hungarian Jobbik party. The new political subject, Alliance of European National Movements (AENM),<sup>18</sup> was founded by Jobbik, French FN, Italian Tricolour Flame (*Fiamma Tricolore*), National Democrats (Sweden), BNP (United Kingdom) and National Front (Belgium). However, following Marine Le Pen's election as president of FN, and her consequent efforts to *de-demonise* the party and make it closer to mainstream, the French constituent left AENM due to its other constituent parties being closer to far right ideology it sought to distance itself from.

AENM remains functioning as a EU-recognised European political party, albeit with Jobbik its only constituent party to currently have representatives in national or European Parliament. Political Declaration of AENM, the document containing its key programmatic cornerstones, promotes national sovereignty, strong Euroscepticism, direct democracy, anti-globalisation

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<sup>16</sup> Greater Romania Party (*Partidul România Mare*) is a Romanian nationalist party which currently has no representatives at national or European level.

<sup>17</sup> British National Party (BNP) is a British far right party, which currently has no representatives at national or European level.

<sup>18</sup> Also referred to by its French name *L'Alliance Européenne des Mouvements Nationaux*, and the corresponding acronym AEMN.



and ‘preservation of diversity’. AENM also stands for “effective protection of Europe against new threats, such as terrorism and religious, political, economic, or financial imperialism” (Alliance of European National Movements 2009), resolution of the ‘immigration problem’, and also solving the demographic deficit in European and protection of ‘traditional values’ (*ibid.*). Due to its inclusion of far-right and even neo-Nazi political subjects, and very limited political relevance of the vast majority of its member parties, AENM remains a marginal political subject in the context of European politics.

Next attempt at unifying the European populist radical right came about in the form of the European Alliance for Freedom (EAF), a political alliance of the radical right formed in 2010 upon an initiative from UKIP MEP Godfrey Bloom (Mudde 2014), members of which were individual prominent party members, rather than parties themselves. FN joined the alliance subsequently, following its exit from AENM as a consequence of Marine Le Pen taking the party leadership role from her father. EAF constituent parties were unable to form a political group after the 2014 European elections, because in the post-election negotiations they were snubbed by UKIP-dominated EFDD which integrated into its ranks a number of PRRPs seeking a more moderate image, such as the Finns Party (at the time named True Finns), while on the other hand parties such as Jobbik, NPD and Golden Dawn were ruled out due to being too extreme. The resulting effect was the initial marginalisation of most PRRPs in EP, due to their classification as *Non-inscrits*.

However, following the initial failure to form a group in the EP, the EAF *de facto* ceased to exist, as FN decided to form a new European populist radical right political alliance named Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom (MENF),<sup>19</sup> along with FPÖ, LN, VB and Czech Civic Conservative Party. MENF served as an impetus for the eventual formation of a political group called Europe of Nations, which has been formed in June 2015 following the joining of a split MEP from UKIP, who fulfilled the last criterion necessary for group formation, *i.e.* inclusion of representatives from at least seven member states. The group was consequently joined by two additional MEPs: Laurențiu Rebegea from Romania (an independent MEP elected from the list of Conservative Party of Romania who left the party following its merger with Liberal Reformist Party) and Marcus Pretzell from Germany (representative of AfD who opted to join ENF following his party’s expulsion from the ECR group), THUS bringing the number of represented member states up to nine.

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<sup>19</sup> Also commonly referred to by its French acronym MENL (*Mouvement pour l’Europe des nations et des libertés*).

The official political platform of the Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom (MENF), which is represented in European Parliament by the Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF) group, contains five key points: respect of the principle for democracy, sovereignty, identity, specificity and freedoms.

In the first point contains an explicit rejection of “any past or present affiliation, connection or sympathy to any authoritarian or totalitarian project” (Movement for a Europe of Nations and Freedom 2015), in favour of democratic principles and fundamental human rights. The second point contains the strong support for national sovereignty (“of states and peoples”) and an overt rejection of any policy focused on creating any supra-national model, while also expressing strong Euroscepticism by rejecting any transfer of state sovereignty to supranational bodies and/or EU institutions. The third point expresses support for the preservation of national identity, as well as the emphasis on the right to regulate and control immigration as one of the fundamental principles. Furthermore, the fourth point states the member parties' recognition of each other's specific economic, social, cultural and territorial models. The final point states the support for defending individual freedoms, with special emphasis on the freedom of speech and digital freedoms.

Hence, the main policy positions of this political group highly correlate with the academic model of the PRRP ideology. Particularly, these explicitly stated political positions are: rejection of totalitarian (*i.e.* fascist and Nazi) heritage, nationalism, anti-globalism, Euroscepticism, anti-immigration and cultural conservatism (emphasis on *national identity*). All these noted ideological tenets, as well as those of the constituent parties, lead to the conclusion that ENF indeed does represent PRRPs at the European level, which serves to justify the hypothesis of this party family establishing itself as a coherent political force within the EU.

Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) is the political group formed following the 2015 European elections, as the successor of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy group which functioned during the previous convocation of the European Parliament. The current composition of the EFDD group is dominated by the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) with 22 MEPs, described academically as a radical right, anti-immigrant party (Mayer and Rosenberger 2015, 5), and Italian populist Five Star Movement (*Movimento Cinque Stelle* – M5S) with 17 MEPs. This political group has been joined also by PRRPs such

as Sweden Democrats (SD) and Lithuanian Order and Justice, as well as a former FN representative, Joëlle Bergeron. Despite describing themselves as a primarily Eurosceptic group, EFDD, as well as its predecessor EFD, can at least partially be also described as right-wing populist, which will be elaborated upon by analysing their programmatic goals. However, it must be noted that not all participating parties can be classified as PRRPs, with Italian M5S and Czech Party of Free Citizens being exceptions to the predominantly populist radical right group membership. This somewhat heterogeneous group composition may imply the existence of a compromise of a number of PRRPs previously aligned in ENF, and M5S, the newly formed unattached political subject, following the decision of former EFD member parties such as DF (Denmark) and PS (Finland) to join the more moderate ECR group instead of aligning themselves with EFDD.

EFDD political group, in its main programmatic document, the Charter, synthesises its common ideological profile into four key points. In the first point, EFDD expresses support for co-operation of sovereign European states, simultaneously rejecting “bureaucratisation of Europe and the creation of a single centralised European superstate” (Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy 2016). The second point of the Charter states that the national level of democratic legitimacy is the only acceptable one, since there is no such thing as the European people, while also claiming support for a more democratic political system. However, this support for democracy is actually strongly underlined by common Euroscepticism, and in practice implies the existence of strong nation states and their more active role in the decision making process. Third point states the support for protection of national borders and protection of historical, traditional, religious and cultural values, as well as advocacy of direct democracy. On the other hand, the same programmatic point denounces xenophobia, anti-Semitism or any other sort of discrimination. The final point of the Charter simply contains a provision stating that members of EFDD have the right to vote as they see fit, showcasing the heterogeneity of the group.

When the essence of this Charter is examined, it can be concluded that it contains provisions quite similar to ones outlined by ENF, which are significantly overlapping with the ideological ideal type of the populist radical right. In this respect, this document officially declares Euroscepticism, nationalism, anti-immigration and cultural conservatism as key ideological positions, along with a vague support for direct democracy. On the other hand, in order to distance itself from the heritage of the 20<sup>th</sup> century far-right heritage, this political group also nominally denounces xenophobia and anti-Semitism, which is also an element of

the outlined model of populist radical right ideology. Despite presenting a somewhat more moderate profile in comparison with ENF, and taking into account its decentralised and heterogeneous nature, EFDD group unquestionably shows some elements of a radical right-dominated ideological profile.

To summarise, both political groups containing PRRPs in the European Parliament have strikingly similar ideological positions, both to each other's and to the theoretical ideal type of PRRP. Firstly, both ENF and EFDD express an overt contempt for the 'bureaucratised' EU project, advocating stronger nation states and co-operation instead, rather than further integration. Anti-immigrant attitude is also explicitly denoted by both groups, connected to the proclaimed right of states to control their borders. Also, both programmes mention the preservation of national identity as one of their focal points. Another distinct feature is their rejection of ideologies connected to fascism and Nazism, as a part of a previously elaborated attempt to distance themselves from far right ideologies and pursue an image different from that of far right embodied in parties such as Jobbik or Golden Dawn. This programmatic symbiosis shows that there are no significant ideological differences between those two political groups, a point perhaps best illustrated by the fact that the very creation of both groups has been made possible by the exchange of MPs who have split from FN and UKIP respectively, and that both EFDD and ENF can be understood as two competing populist radical right groups in the European Parliament.

Another offshoot of far-right European political party has been launched in February 2015 by parties previously involved in European National Front, under the name of Alliance for Peace and Freedom (APF). APF is chaired by Roberto Fiore from Italian *Forza Nuova*, and its only member parties holding seats in the European Parliament are Golden Dawn and NPD, who remain sitting as *non-inscrits*. Statement of Principles of APF, as its main programmatic document, contains somewhat similar postulates as its more successful counterparts, EFDD and ENF, such as emphasis on national sovereignty, addressing the democratic deficit within the EU or a strong opposition to immigration. However, APF puts a greater emphasis on preserving “traditional European cultural values” (Alliance for Peace and Freedom 2015), and also has a more benevolent stance towards “the eastern half of European civilisation” (*ibid.*), the latter being a reflection of their benevolent and cooperative stance towards the Russian government, which is largely conflicted with the general international policy of EU towards Russia, particularly following the Ukrainian Crisis of 2013–2014 and Russian annexation of Crimea, and consequent sanctions enforced against this country.

In conclusion, PRRPs remain divided at the European level, two main camps being EFDD centred around UKIP, and ENF which is dominated by French FN.<sup>20</sup> On the fringes there are another two organisations bringing together political parties deemed 'too extreme' to join the aforementioned alliances, *i.e.* AENM (whose only MEPs come from Jobbik) and APF (represented in the European Parliament by Golden Dawn and NPD). Despite some progress regarding their organisation at the European level, the latter two political subjects have limited electoral and therefore political significance and consist mostly of nationally marginal far-right and neo-Nazi parties denounced even by the more moderate PRRPs. On the other hand, EFDD and ENF, despite their functioning as separate organisations, gather political parties which can most adequately be described as populist radical right, for they continue to pursue ideological goals so strikingly similar that the fragmentation of radical right is unlikely to be caused by programmatic disagreements.

#### **4.2 Impact of populist radical right parties in the European Parliament**

As Almeida (2010) notes, most scholarly analyses have so far ignored the mobilisation of populist radical right within the European Parliament, perhaps due to the fact that it might seem paradoxical to assess the Europeanisation of nationalist Eurosceptic political subjects. However, given the fact that European elections have been a more favourable arena for PRRPs, which have continuously utilised European Parliament to gain media visibility and promote their agenda, it seems sensible to assess the extent of these parties' impact on the work of European Parliament. Regarding the positioning of PRRPs within the context of EU legislative politics, three patterns of interaction within the parties can be outlined: institutionalised ties within the PRR, institutional ties with other parties, and isolation (*ibid.*, 246–247). Formation of transnational Populist radical right networks has proved to be a precarious endeavour, with sporadic, albeit limited, successes, such as the formation of Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty group (ITS) or the currently active Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) and Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF) groups. These groups represent a focal point for attempting to determine the influence, if any, that PRRPs have on the decision making process in EP.

Second pattern of party interaction in the EP is the decision made by some PRRPs to participate in more mainstream, less controversial groups, in order to promote a softer public

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<sup>20</sup> Despite the fact that FN is by far the largest party in the group, the role of Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) led by Geert Wilders is often emphasised as well, the group often being dubbed by media as the 'Le Pen-Wilders alliance'.

image and distinguish themselves from the extreme right parties. One of the notable examples of this behaviour is the activity of Danish People's Party (DF), which has been supporting liberal-conservative coalition government from 2001 to 2011, and currently supports the minority Conservative People's Party government since 2015. In order to promote a more mainstream image, at the EU level DF aligns itself with ECR, rather than the more programmatically similar parties aligned mostly in the ENF. Similar course of action was also chosen by Sweden Democrats (SD), which opted to join the programmatically vague Eurosceptic populist group Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD) over the more coherently populist radical right ENF.

Also, UKIP has continuously rejected co-operation with PRRPs gathered in a loose coalition around FN, deeming them too extreme and nationalist, championing instead the creation of EFDD, formation of whose last incarnation was, paradoxically, enabled by a split FN's MEP, Joëlle Bergeron, who was crucial in fulfilling the seven countries requirement. Interestingly, the same occurrence, only in opposite direction, made possible the formation of ENF, when eight months later an ex-UKIP MEP Janice Atkinson, previously expelled from the party, joined the FN-lead EP group.

The third and final pattern of radical right activity in EP is the least desirable one for the parties, characterised by a *de facto* isolation as a consequence of not being a part of any group. MEPs sitting as *non-inscrits* receive significantly less funds, less speaking time and are far less likely to be elected to committee chairs or to be appointed rapporteurs, therefore playing a marginal role in the decision making process, which has mostly been the fate of PRRPs in previous convocations. However, with the formation of ENF in June 2015, PRRPs established themselves as one of the formal factors in the legislative branch of the EU, with only a small number of parties remaining marginalised, mostly due to their unreformed extreme right ideology. Currently, *non-inscrits* include XA, Jobbik and NPD, as well as ex-FN MEPs Jean-Marie Le Pen and Aymeric Chauprade and an ex-KNP MEP Janusz Korwin-Mikke.

Since the second pattern of behaviour merges PRRPs with more moderate parties, limiting their political advocacy at the EU level, and the isolation results in *de facto* marginalisation of included parties, our focus is on the activity of populist radical right groups and their status in the context of the European Parliament.

During the short-lived existence of the Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty (ITS) group, which functioned from January to November 2007, despite gaining access to funds designated for parliamentary groups, the group remained side-lined in the European Parliament due to political strategy of *cordon sanitaire* employed by other groups. Namely, even as they have been entitled to two vice-chairmanships, other groups used the right to vote on the issue, hence denying ITS candidates vice-chairman positions in committees for culture and transport (Deutsche Welle 2002). Regarding the rapporteur roles, which are crucial for the work of parliamentary councils, the situation was no different, as ITS has not been granted a single rapporteur role during its existence. Hence, it can be concluded that, despite providing PRRPs with greater visibility and budgetary funds, formation of ITS group had no effective impact on policy making within the EP.

Having in mind that majority of PRRPs in previous three EP convocations (1999–2004, 2004–2009 and 2009–2014) PRRPs have, with a number of exceptions which enjoyed limited success, been sitting as *non-inscrits*, the formation of ENF group, based on populist radical right ideology, certainly represents a benchmark for the activity of PRRPs at the EU level. The *cordon sanitaire* has therefore moved further to the right, with only extreme right parties remaining excluded and stigmatised, as the populist radical right has established itself as a relevant actor, at least for the time being. However, if we take into account their *de facto* limitations in regard to policy making process, *i.e.* the lack of participation of PRRP MEPs in the key phases of the legislative process, this relevance has to be questioned, leading to a conclusion, that, despite evident progress PRRPs seem to be making when it comes to representation and internal cohesion, the impact they are having on legislative process remains very limited. It has been argued that even the PRRPs' influence regarding the politicisation of their trademark issue, immigration, remains limited and indirect. Mayer and Rosenberger (2015) have concluded, based on extensive empirical research, that presence and strength of PRRPs do not correlate with issue salience of immigration, providing support to the conclusion of limitations of these parties regarding their political influence.

On the other hand, the degree of coordination of activity of PRRPs in the legislative process gives credence to the hypothesis that PRRPs can be treated as a distinct party family. For example, Ennser (2012) predicted that PRRPs should be more heterogeneous than other party groups due to their diverse origins and social roots, limited transnational federations, and lack of academic consensus regarding their ideology and group membership. However, the acquired empirical data refuted such a hypothesis, with results showing not only similar

heterogeneity levels between centre-right parties and PRRPs, but even higher levels of heterogeneity in the Liberal political group (*ibid.*). This, along with the established high degree of ideological consistency of this group of parties, leads to a conclusion that the initial designation of PRRPs as a distinct party family has been sensible. However, the limited influence of PRRPs on the legislative process at the EU level, along with a predominantly hostile attitude of other political groups towards both EFDD and ENF, lead us to conclude that, even as PRRPs do pursue an ideology conflicted with the predominant liberal democratic consensus, the threat that they present to it in reality remains almost non-existent. However, with the ideological rift evident and electoral results of the populist radical right on the rise, this latent cleavage between the democratic majoritarianism (or illiberal democracy) on one side, and liberal democracy on the other may resurface as one of the more salient characteristics of European politics in the future.

#### **4.3 Response strategies of the European Union institutions and mainstream parties**

Electoral breakthroughs of the populist radical right at both national and EU-wide level have undoubtedly affected the fortunes of the established, mainstream parties, thus causing different sorts of reactions, usually as a part of a strategy to limit their political influence to minimum. Goodwin (2012) differentiates between six distinct response strategies employed in such situations: exclusion, defusing, adoption, principle, engagement and interaction. Exclusion is perhaps the most common strategy, implying the existence of a *cordon sanitaire*, *i.e.* the policy of non-co-operation with parties it is directed against, aimed at disabling them from entering office or having an effect on the policy making process. This has been the common practice in a number of European national parliaments, where parties such as VB or FN have been facing such an obstacle during most of their existence. However, as it can be concluded from these parties' electoral resilience, this strategy can also have unintended negative consequences - as Goodwin (*ibid.*) correctly notes, it can give the marginalised parties a reinforced *outsider status*, pushing them towards further radicalisation. This notion can be contested if populism as one of the key ideological determinants of these parties is taken into account: they might not be pushed towards extremism by the exclusion strategy, but rather facilitated to employ the populist discourse in order to portray themselves as only fighters against the cartel of mainstream parties, further adding to their credibility.

The strategy of diffusing represents a more subtle approach aimed at decreasing salience of trademark issues of PRRPs, such as immigration, but is also more complicated, as it requires a coordinated and continuous effort by a variety of parties. When it comes to adoption, it goes



even further, presupposing the programmatic shift of mainstream parties towards PRRPs in order to limit their electoral strength. This strategy might best be exemplified by the ‘right turn’ of the Hungarian ruling Fidesz party, which underwent a transformation from a moderate liberal party to an ‘illiberal nationalist party’ (Dawson and Hanley 2014), being dubbed the “spearhead of radical right” (Thorleifsson 2015), partially as a response to the ascent of the far right Jobbik party.

In a number of other states of Central and Eastern Europe this sort of shift has taken place, with governing centre-right parties, or even the centre-left as it is the case in Slovakia with Direction – Social Democracy (*Smer-SD*), which has adopted radical right stances on issues such as immigration, and even formed a post-electoral coalition with the populist radical right Slovak National Party (SNS).<sup>21</sup> As illustrated by these examples, the strategy of adoption can shift the party towards the populist radical right party family to an extent that the cleavage between mainstream parties and PRRPs is overcome, resulting in an amalgam of populist radical right policies with mainstream politics, as it has particularly been the case in recent years with Višegrád Group countries. The remaining three listed response strategies include tactics such as mainstream parties remaining loyal to their political principles, focusing on grassroots activism or addressing the underlying causes of the rise of the PRRPs. However, these are merely potential variations of political strategy, and as such shall not be further elaborated.

Beside these political responses to the emergence of this party family, there have also been legal attempts directed against the activity of PRRPs in a number of EU member states. Notable examples include the successful banning of VB in Belgium in 2004, as well as unsuccessful banning attempts of the far right NPD in Germany in 2003, 2011 and 2012. *Vlaams Blok* was banned by the Belgian Court of Cassation at the peak of its electoral strength (having won 24.2 % of votes at the parliamentary elections the same year) for violating the Belgian 1981 Anti-racism law. It has been argued that the official programmatic party documents advocated discriminatory measures, particularly by advocating a separate educational system for foreign children, higher taxes for employers employing non-European foreigners, as well as restrictions on unemployment benefits and child allowances for such foreigners (Coffé 2005). However, this court decision had very little actual effect, since the party was merely re-founded under the similar name, *Vlaams Belang* (thus even retaining its

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<sup>21</sup> The Third Fico Cabinet, formed in March 2016, included three ministers nominated by SNS, who serve as independents: Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Minister of Defence and Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sport.

acronym, VB), with only certain controversial parts of the statute being modified. On the other hand, the more extreme NPD has been closely monitored by German government, which however failed in attempts to outlaw the party completely. However, despite evading legal sanction for its activity, NPD remains a marginalised actor in German politics, with very limited electoral support and social influence.

Despite the illustrated examples, legal action against PRRPs represents an exception, rather than a rule. As it has been previously explained, the evolution of this party family towards a 'more acceptable' public image and 'de-demonisation' of the radical right, those measures can hardly be utilised successfully in future. Even in illustrated cases, banning attempts have proved futile and have at best been inefficient, if not counterproductive. Namely, this sort of action by the political mainstream can homogenise the targeted party's support on populist grounds, reinforcing its status as political outsider in the otherwise supposedly corrupt world of party politics.

In the context of the EU, Charter of the Fundamental Rights of the European Union contains provisions, stipulating, among other things, freedom of religion (Article 10), prohibition of discrimination on the basis of gender, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation (Article 21), as well as the respect for cultural, religious and linguistic diversity (Article 22). Provisions of this Charter are also incorporated in the Treaty on European Union (TEU), which refers explicitly to it in its Article 6.

Liberal democratic character of the EU is outlined in the Article 2 of TEU, which states that the EU is based upon the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are said to be "common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail" (European Union 2012). Article 7 of the same document stipulates the possibility of sanctions towards a member state which is "in a clear risk of a serious breach" of the aforementioned principles set forward in the Article 2 (*ibid.*). This provision stipulates that such a violation shall be determined by the Council by a four-fifths majority, with consent of the Parliament, and can be reported by one third of member states, European Parliament or Commission. However, the final decision is made unanimously by the

European Council, which can consequently result in suspension of membership rights for the member state, including suspension of voting rights in the council.

Similar procedure has been set forward by the previous treaties of the EU, and has been used against Austria in February 2000, following the entrance of FPÖ into the government coalition in that state. However, as there was no legal basis for sanctions, 14 member states introduced bilateral diplomatic sanctions towards Austria. These sanctions were however short-lived, as they were revoked in September 2000, following a report drawn up by independent experts delegated by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) was published stating that the introduced sanctions were counter-productive (Black and Connolly 2000). This example shows the questionable efficiency of disciplinary measures towards the member states, even despite the existing foundations for such an activity in basic documents of the EU.

When it comes to the European Parliament, PRRPs remain isolated as a sort of *cordon sanitaire* is continuously employed in order to limit their influence on the decision making process. This marginalisation strategy was efficient in combination with the status of these parties as *non-inscrits*. However, following the formation of European parties of PRRPs and their recognition in European Parliament, PRRPs' influence and visibility are undoubtedly increasing. Still, PRRPs compose only a small fraction of total number of MEPs, and as such currently have no significant influence of the work of the EU's legislative body. An interesting precedent has been set by the EP President Martin Schulz, who expelled the Greek Golden Dawn (XA) MEP Eleftherios Synadinos for his racist statements against Turks, on grounds of the Rule 165 of the Rules of Procedure, which contains provisions intended against disruption of parliamentary procedure.

Although the Rule 165 does not list acceptable grounds for such disciplinary action, it has been announced that the aforementioned speech represents a breach of the rules of the European Union. Another motion has been set forward against the Alliance for Peace and Freedom (APF), the European party which XA is a part of, along with some of EU's most extreme radical right parties (most notably German NPD and Slovakian L'SNS), in order to determine whether its existence is in compliance with the founding principles of the EU. The principles referred to are set out in the Rule 225 of the European Parliament Rules of Procedure, as "principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law" (European Parliament 2014). According to the aforementioned provision, 25 % of MEPs from at least three political groups have the right to initiate such a

procedure, which shall be carried out by the Constitutional Affairs Committee. If it is determined that a European party is in breach of those values, or otherwise does not fulfil the criteria for recognition, its status can be revoked, along with EU funds which all European parties are entitled to.

Generally speaking, the shift in populist radical right discourse towards a more acceptable, softer public image, it can be concluded that their activity cannot be countered by legal means, as they have accepted the basic democratic *rules of the game*. Also, as shown by an increasing share of PRRPs entering governing coalitions at the national level, it seems that these parties' presence cannot be ignored or marginalised, as they represent a significant share of the electorate. At the EU level, however, the overall strength of this party family remains very limited, as well as their alliances, which shows both their fragmentation and a degree of dysfunctionality. This means that, despite nominally challenging the foundations of liberal democracy, these parties, at least for the time being, do not possess enough strength and influence to undermine in practice the prevailing consensus regarding rights of immigrants, minority groups, and concretely Muslim population in EU member states. However, there are instances of European parties, such as APF and AENM, which, despite having miniscule representation in EP, pursue ideological goals which are arguably incompatible with the founding principles of the EU, and as such can be subject to disciplinary sanctions and refusal of access to EU funds.

## 5 Conclusion

When we take into account all previously elaborated aspects of the issue treated by this thesis, we can extract a number of concluding observations regarding the PRRPs and their impact on European politics. From the perspective of International Relations, the activity of PRRPs can be understood as a coherent development in the European politics, which is substantially conflicted with the predominant norms of liberal democracy on the ideological level. The analysis conducted based on the research question has identified a number of policy areas in which this conflict is most evident. By renouncing the liberal constraints on democratic majoritarianism and protection of minority groups, as cornerstones of contemporary European liberal democracy, PRRPs challenge certain elements of the existing political system in Europe. However, at the practical level, due to limited, albeit increasing, political relevance of this party family, the challenge that they pose to the existing system of international relations in Europe remains limited in scope.

Despite the existing doubts sporadically expressed in the academic literature, particularly that of older date, it can be concluded that this group of parties does fulfil the preconditions necessary to be treated as a distinct party family. As previously established, the adopted criteria for such a designation are a common set of shared coherent ideological principles, as well as a tendency towards mutual grouping at the international level. This thesis dismisses the designation of PRRPs as single-issue parties, focused solely on populist exploitation of the issue of immigration as too narrow and selective. As it has been elaborated in the thesis, opposition to immigration does indeed represent one of the key issues covered by this party family, as well as possibly one of the most significant sources of their electoral support. However, it would be misleading to designate them as mere anti-immigration parties for a number of reasons. Firstly, their ideological profile elaborated by this thesis shows that there are a number of other distinct elements that comprise the ideology of populist radical right, such as nationalism, Euroscepticism, populism or ethnopluralism.

These parties share a common ideological platform, and as such need to be observed as an intertwined political phenomenon. Besides that, the activities conducted regarding these parties' organising at the EU level, particularly in more recent period, serve to prove that PRRPs, despite the specious paradox of the existence of international co-operation of nationalists, share a common tendency towards international grouping, and consider each other to be sharing a common political platform. Also, as a result of the conducted analysis, this thesis dismisses the characterisation of PRRPs as a short-lived political phenomenon,

since their durability obviously refutes their designation as so-called ‘flash parties’. This leads to a conclusion that PRRPs can be considered to be a party family, and therefore that their political activity can indeed be treated as a coherent political development, rather than a number of separate political phenomena, or a mere by-product of contingent structural factors.

Another argument for the relevance of this party family for the academic discipline of International Relations lays in the general trend regarding their electoral results, both at the national and European level. Naturally, this trend is not universal and uniform, and is dependent on a number of factors, but a consistent increase in the share of votes received by the PRRPs leads to a conclusion that their relevance as a factor in European politics is also gradually increasing. The ascent of the populist radical right is particularly evident in the European Parliament, where a record number of MEPs from these parties are sitting in the current convocation, mostly organised in two political groups dominated by PRRPs, serving as further reminders of an increasing international significance and consolidation of the populist radical right. Certain developments can also be noted regarding the level of legitimacy of PRRPs – their more frequent participation in a number of national governments (albeit almost always as junior partners, with notable exceptions of Hungary and Poland) implies that they can no longer be considered to be political outsiders, marginalised by the remaining political actors. On the contrary, their involvement in executive power of a number of European states signals that a significant portion of these parties are no longer treated as pariah parties, and are considered to be legitimate coalition partners. At the EU level, however, their influence on the decision making process is far less significant, even in comparison to the share of seats they hold in the European Parliament.

When it comes to relationship of PRRPs with norms of liberal democracy, which is the focal point of this thesis, we can conclude that this party family actually pursues anti-liberal democratic ideological positions in a number of policy areas. Despite their virulent opposition to immigration, which has gone on to become the trademark issue of the populist radical right, the immigration issue in general largely remains a matter of domestic policy, and as such, in theory, can be subject to different legitimate interpretations. However, beside this security dimension, immigrant groups in European states, who predominantly identify with significantly different cultural and religious heritage, are targeted by a number of forms of discriminatory practices advocated by the PRRPs.

Most notably, their populist view of the native population as a homogenous entity with coherent common interests, and consequential support for a majoritarian democracy, tends to

neglect the interests of minority groups, which are largely seen as contradictory to those of the majority group targeted by their political activity. Besides threatening to exclude minority groups from their share in the decision making process, these parties have been shown to advocate violations of cultural rights of minority groups, due to their overt rejection of multiculturalism and alternative advocacy of ethno-nationalism which implies introducing a sort of mutual cultural isolationism among countries. However, this approach, when applied in practice, usually involves extensive cultural assimilation of all minority groups into the native culture, while ignoring their established rights to cultivate and preserve their respective cultures, which is one of the cornerstones of liberal democracy.

Concerning the relationship of PRRPs towards the Muslim population, their incompatibility with liberal democratic norms becomes perhaps the most evident. Muslims are extensively demonised throughout the discourse of this party family, by being denounced as incompatible with European culture(s), and portrayed as a culturally inferior group which, in a hypothetical case of populist radical ideology being implemented in practice, would roughly be presented with a choice between total assimilation and expulsion from the country. Besides Muslims being targeted as the supposed disruptive factor of European politics, programmatic documents of PRRPs often include calls for violations of their religious rights, aiming at restricting their right to practice religion.

Regarding the institutional context of the EU, the extent of threat that the PRRPs pose to its *modus operandi* remains limited. These parties have certainly made evident progress when it comes to mutual international co-operation, and have succeeded in putting together a common group in the European Parliament. However, a number of PRRPs remain divided among the somewhat moderate groups, which limits the potential for coordinated activity at the international level. Furthermore, influence of PRRPs at the decision making level within the EU remains very low, which leads to a conclusion that, at least at the moment, despite nominally challenging liberal democratic norms, these parties do not possess the political power necessary to muster such a challenge in practice.

On the other hand, the undisputable rise in electoral support for PRRPs both in national and European elections in recent years requires a strong note of caution, since further expansion and consolidation of the populist radical right bloc in the EU seem to be unavoidable if the observed electoral trends continue. Also, the recent activity of the EU institutions seemed to have an unwanted effect of stimulating the populist radical right, which was perhaps most evident in their management of the European debt crisis, which caused a public backlash to

the imposed austerity measures, which had its unwanted consequences, such as the rise of the extreme right in debt-ridden Greece. Therefore, governance at the European level also has an effect on the fortunes of the populist radical right political actors, and may be one of the key determinants of their future successes or failures.

When the European populist radical right is discussed as a single entity, two important distinctions need to be made. Firstly, political parties in Western Europe on one hand, and those from the predominantly post-communist Central and Eastern European operate in different political environments shaped by their respective political traditions and historical structural factors, and as such may be treated as variations of the same political phenomenon. Most importantly, the latter are faced with more benevolent opportunity structure – lack of democratic tradition and a historically limited influx of culturally different migrants are two factors supportive of the populist radical right's agenda. In practice, this makes PRRPs a more acceptable political option at the national level, which is becoming increasingly merged with political mainstream in these states.<sup>22</sup>

Also, another subgroup of PRRPs, identified as the extreme right, needs to be highlighted in this regard. These parties are far less compatible with liberal democratic norms, due to pursuing aggressive nationalist, racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Roma or even neo-Nazi positions. However, the electoral influence of the extreme right is miniscule in comparison to other PRRPs, and particularly in the context of European politics, and as such represents a fringe phenomenon of parties which are largely marginalised even within their party family, let alone other actors in international relations, leading to a conclusion that, despite theoretically representing the biggest threat to the liberal democratic consensus that the EU embodies, their political influence remains virtually non-existent in practice.

Due to constraints imposed by the format of this thesis, we have focused only on one aspect of the complex phenomenon that European populist radical right represents. For the sake of comprehensiveness and further explorative efforts, a number of other implications which have not been covered will be briefly mentioned. Even though the research question and subsequent analysis focused on the complicated relation between the PRR ideology and European liberal democracy, the potential impact of this party family transcends this issue. Namely, potential ascent to power of PRRPs would arguably lead to a complete

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<sup>22</sup> This does not imply that this process is not possible in Western European countries as well, but rather is intended to emphasise its higher probability in Central and Eastern Europe due to more convenient structural factors.



transfiguration of international relations, if these parties' disdain for supranational organisations and emphasis on national interests are taken into account – this would cause a reverse in the trend of increasing international integration, *i.e.* a decline of multilateralism and a return to the Westphalian system in which nation states are viewed as primary agents in international relations.

Another issue covered only partially by the scope of this thesis is the evident adoption of ideological elements of the populist radical right by the mainstream political parties in recent years, or, alternatively, adoption and radicalisation of existing mainstream party policies by the populist radical right. Due to electoral gains of the PRRPs in recent years, some of their ideological elements are being exploited also by established mainstream parties, probably in attempts to thwart their further rise and take over a share of their votes. However, mainstreaming of these ideological elements (*e.g.* a stricter immigration policy, stronger emphasis on national interests) can lead to their gradual acceptance in European politics, even if PRRPs fail to continue their impressive ascent in vote share. This gives additional credence to the claim that, even regardless of PRRPs as its primary agents, the populist radical right ideology can have substantial effect on international relations in Europe, and liberal democracy in particular.

Presented concluding observations give credence to the starting hypothesis that PRRPs can be treated as a single party family, due to their shared ideology and tendency towards international grouping, which embraces democracy as such, and does not contest in any manner, while its relationship with liberal democracy is largely that of conflict. The ideology pursued by this party family includes violations of cultural and religious rights of minority groups, which are directly contradictory to the essence of liberal democracy. Essentially, this ideological conflict is the one of pluralism *v.* monism, the former being essential to liberal democracy, and the latter representing the foundation of the worldview of the populist radical right. As this party family includes a number of variations of the ideological profile established by this thesis, level of compatibility of individual parties with liberal democracy fluctuates, but their relationship is unquestionably one of mutual antagonism, due to PRRPs renouncing the liberal constraints on democratic decision making process in favour of an alternative which closely resembles the *tyranny of the majority*. On the other hand, the noted shift of PRRPs towards a somewhat more moderate ideological profile, combined with their steady electoral ascent, can lead to a presumption that there might be some sort of a correlation between these two trends, which would mean that the electoral success of PRRPs,

which would otherwise be accompanied with a larger possibility for contesting liberal democratic norms, might be mitigated by further moderation of their ideological profile, which would bring PRRPs closer to the mainstream parties and make them less likely to challenge the established *status quo* regarding certain policy areas.

Also, it is important to note that the ideology espoused by these parties has already exceeded parties themselves, and has affected even the mainstream parties, some of which have a decisive influence on the policy making process. Even though this thesis focused on PRRPs as primary agents and transmitters of the eponymous ideology, we cannot neglect the fact that elements of this ideology are being adopted by a larger share of political actors, and as such represent one on the characteristics of the current political *Zeitgeist*. This cautionary note can also be understood as a further reminder of relevance of threat to European liberal democracy that this political ideology represents, as it is not intricately tied to electoral fortunes of PRRPs, but can also be present in a number of other political actors who attempt to steer the electorate away from the populist radical right by giving way to some of their political goals. The danger of this process lays in the possibility of mainstream parties aiming to make electoral gains by neglecting elements of liberal democratic norms and standards, which would have a very serious effect on international relations among the EU member states, as well as their relations with the rest of the world.

As for the research question and its analysis conducted throughout this thesis, it can be concluded that the populist radical right indeed represents an unprecedented phenomenon in European politics, and as such can be viewed, particularly following their continuous increase in vote share, as a plausible threat to the liberal democratic consensus upon which the EU has been founded. On the other hand, it does not represent an alien force hostile to European politics, but a manifestation of the political trend which have taken place across the continent since the end of the Cold War, namely the approachment of left- and right-wing parties, achieving (neo)liberal consensus on economic issues, and consequent shift from economic to cultural cleavage, which created space to PRRPs to exploit the popular disillusionment with mainstream politics.

As it was noted in the introductory remarks, goals of this thesis were establishing whether the populist radical right resembles a coherent political phenomenon which can be considered a new party family in European politics, and determining the extent of conflict, both at theoretical and practical level, between the ideology of right-wing populism and liberal democratic norms and values. The first element proved to be quite straightforward, as the

analysed sources served to prove an ideological consistency and an increasingly institutionalised international co-operation of this type of parties. The latter, key element of the issue treated by this thesis is arguably a bit more complex, but the conducted analysis leads to the conclusion that ideological postulates of PRRPs are inherently contradictory with generally accepted *rules of the game* of European post-WWII politics, and as such represent a potential threat to the entire continental system of international relations should they ever actually materialise in practice.

To summarise the analysis conducted throughout this thesis, the European populist radical right has been proven to be a distinct nascent party family, and a political force which is inherently opposed to the concept of liberal democracy, and as such represents a viable threat to its crucial elements, such as protection of cultural and minority rights of certain groups of population. Despite the modest influence that PRRPs have on international relations at the moment, the established trends of their electoral performances, as well as their increasing transnational co-operation, most notably facilitated through the EU institutions, serve as reminders that their role in the international relations must not be underestimated or neglected.

This thesis concludes that serious contradictions between both the PRRPs' ideology and practice on one hand, and norms of liberal democracy on the other, exist and even help define the political profile of this party family, even though it would be wrong to understand that all other political actors uniformly support these norms. Even though parallels between the populist radical right and the historical parties of extreme right are certainly an exaggeration, most notably due to their differences in relation with democracy and *modus operandi* in general, the analysis conducted in this thesis points to the conclusion that they do indeed represent the most comprehensive challenge to the predominant Western liberal democratic consensus, and its inherent concept of international relations, and as such deserve to be subject to close academic attention also in the years to come, as their evolutionary process is still ongoing, and the extent of its future consequences still remains uncertain.

## Long Slovenian Abstract

Populistično radikalno desnico sestavlja skupina političnih strank, ki v zadnjih letih povečujejo delež glasov v številnih državah članicah Evropske unije. Zaradi svojih ideoloških profilov in političnih ciljev, je njihova politična dejavnost usmerjena proti političnemu sistemu in uveljavljenim evropskim političnim normam. Magistrsko delo raziskuje odnos med skupino teh strank in normami liberalne demokracije, ki so vgrajene v temelje Evropske unije. Natančneje se naloga ukvarja z odnosom med aktivnostmi populističnih radikalnih desničarskih strank in pravicami migrantov kot tudi etničnih in verskih manjšin. Odnos do pravic navedenih manjšinskih skupin je v ospredju ravno zato, ker nazorno prikazuje razlike med omenjenimi skupinami strank in dominantnimi političnimi normami v Evropi. Poseben poudarek je na Evropski uniji, ki predstavlja politično arena, v kateri se odvijajo ti procesi, hkrati pa je tudi eden izmed akterjev v mednarodnih odnosih.

Najprej skuša magistrsko delo razumeti kompleksen problem, ki ga predstavlja populistična radikalna desnica z analiziranjem ideoloških domnev in določevanjem karakteristik, ki te politične stranke združujejo v edinstveno skupino strank, ter utrditi relevantnost le-teh za akademsko disciplino mednarodnih odnosov. Prav tako nam analiza njihovega ideološkega profila omogoča, da postavimo ideologijo populistične radikalne desnice ob bok liberalno demokratičnim normam, ki so domnevno ogrožene z njenim političnim delovanjem.

Naslednji segment analize se ukvarja z vprašanji, ki osvetljujejo nekompatibilnost ideologije populistične radikalne desnice z dominantnimi liberalno demokratičnimi normami, kot npr. vprašanja imigracije, pravic manjšin in islamofobije. S primerjanjem njihovih konfliktnih ideoloških elementov lahko razumemo naravo odnosa med populistično radikalno desnico in liberalno demokracijo, primerjava pa nam pomaga določiti tudi stopnjo njihove kompatibilnosti, oz. pomanjkanja le-te. Izbira omenjenih tem kot ključnih za analizo izhaja iz dejstva, da se pravice manjšinskih skupin, ki so nominalno zaščitene v kontekstu evropske liberalne demokracije, občutno drugače tretirajo v diskursu populistične radikalne desnice, ki demokracijo enači z večinsko voljo ljudstva, obenem pa zanemarja interese manjšinskih skupin, kot so migranti ter etnične in verske manjšinske skupnosti.

Kontekst Evropske unije daje problemu institucionalno dimenzijo, saj ta mednarodna organizacija predstavlja ključno točko kritike teh političnih strank, obenem pa ima nenameren pozitiven učinek na volilne rezultate in mednarodno sodelovanje teh strank iz svojih držav. Vloga Evropske unije v razvoju skupine teh strank in njena vloga v širjenju ideologije populistične radikalne desnice predstavljata predmet analize magistrskega dela.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: List of relevant populist radical right parties in the European Union:<sup>23</sup>

Country	Party name (English)	Native party name	Abbreviation <sup>24</sup>
Austria	Freedom Party of Austria	<i>Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs</i>	FPÖ
Belgium	Flemish Interest	<i>Vlaams Belang</i>	VB
Bulgaria	Attack	<i>Ataka</i>	/
Czech Republic	Dawn – National coalition	<i>Úsvit - Národní koalice</i>	/
	Freedom and Direct Democracy	<i>Svoboda a přímá demokracie</i>	SPD
Denmark	Danish People's Party	<i>Dansk Folkeparti</i>	DF
Estonia	Conservative People's Party	<i>Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond</i>	EKRE
Finland	Finns Party	<i>Perussuomalaiset</i>	PS
France	National Front	<i>Front National</i>	FN
Germany	Alternative for Germany	<i>Alternative für Deutschland</i>	AfD
	National Democratic Party of Germany	<i>Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i>	NPD
Greece	Independent Greeks	<i>Ανεξάρτητοι Έλληνες</i>	ANEL
	Golden Dawn	<i>Χρυσή Αυγή</i>	XA
Hungary	Hungarian Civic Alliance	<i>Magyar Polgári Szövetség</i>	Fidesz
	Movement for a Better Hungary	<i>Magyarországért Mozgalom</i>	Jobbik
Italy	Northern League/Us with Salvini <sup>25</sup>	<i>Lega Nord/Noi con Salvini</i>	LN/NcS
Latvia	National Alliance	<i>Nacionālā apvienība</i>	NA
Lithuania	Order and Justice	<i>Tvarka ir teisingumas</i>	TT
Netherlands	Party for Freedom	<i>Partij voor de Vrijheid</i>	PVV
Poland	Law and Justice	<i>Prawo i Sprawiedliwość</i>	PiS
	Kukiz'15	<i>Kukiz'15</i>	/

<sup>23</sup> As noted above, relevance of a party is hereby defined as its representation in the legislative body either at national or EU level.

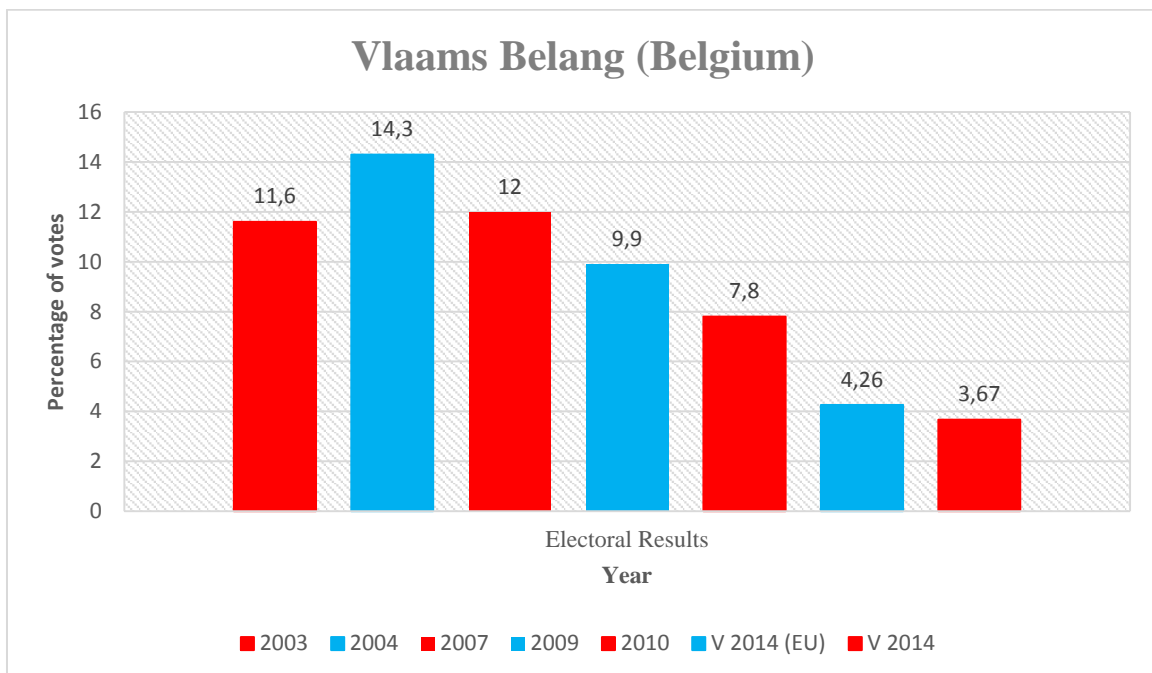
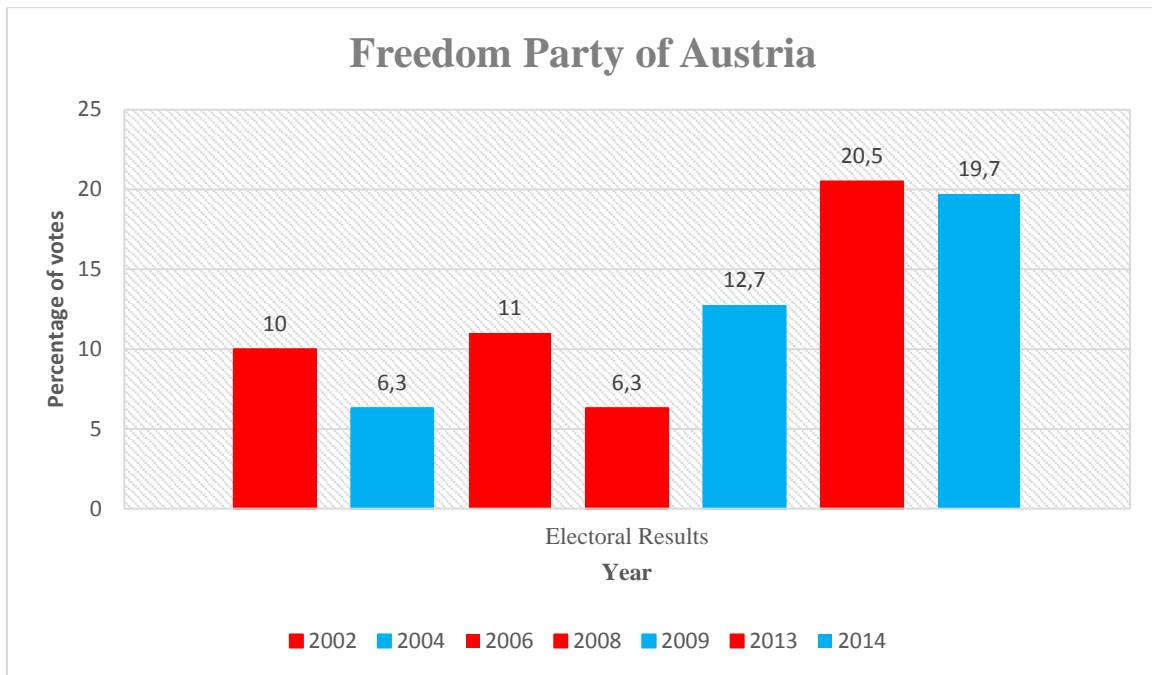
<sup>24</sup> In cases where parties have more than one abbreviation (usually in English and their native language), the abbreviation shown in this table represents the abbreviation that shall be adopted for the needs of this thesis.

<sup>25</sup> While Northern League, founded in 1989, focuses on northern Italy, Us con Salvini is its sister party founded by the Northern League's president Matteo Salvini in 2014, which covers the central Lazio region, as well as southern Italy and the island of Sardinia.

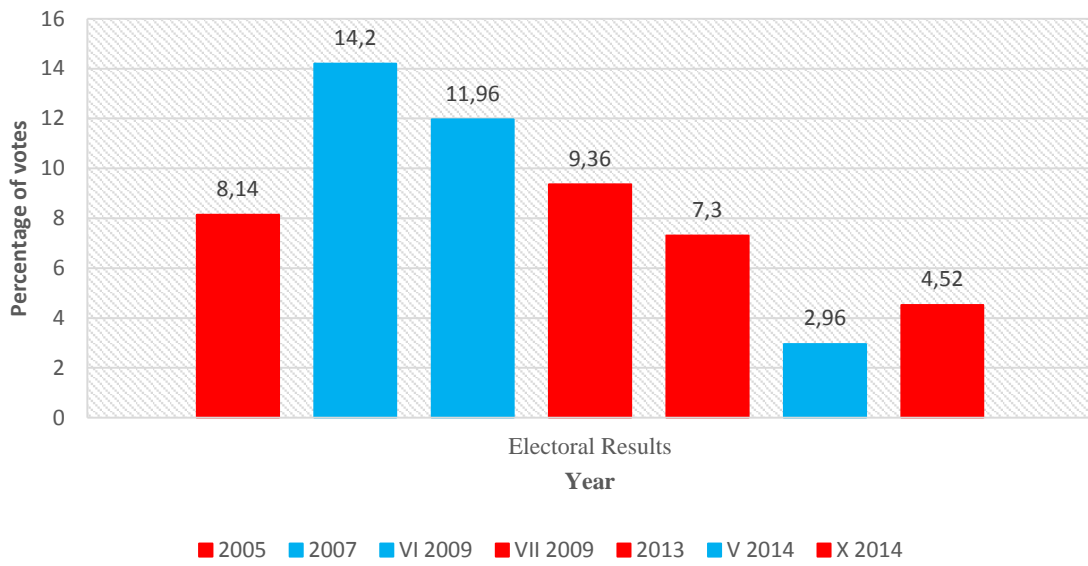
	Congress of the New Right	<i>Kongres Nowej Prawicy</i>	KNP
	Coalition for the Renewal of the Republic - Liberty and Hope	<i>Koalicja Odnowy Rzeczypospolitej Wolność i Nadzieja</i>	KORWiN
Slovakia	Slovak National Party	<i>Slovenská národná strana</i>	SNS
	People's Party – Our Slovakia	<i>Ľudová strana – Naše Slovensko</i>	L'SNS
Sweden	Sweden Democrats	<i>Sverigedemokraterna</i>	SD
United Kingdom	United Kingdom Independence Party	/	UKIP

**Appendix B:** Electoral results of individual parties over time

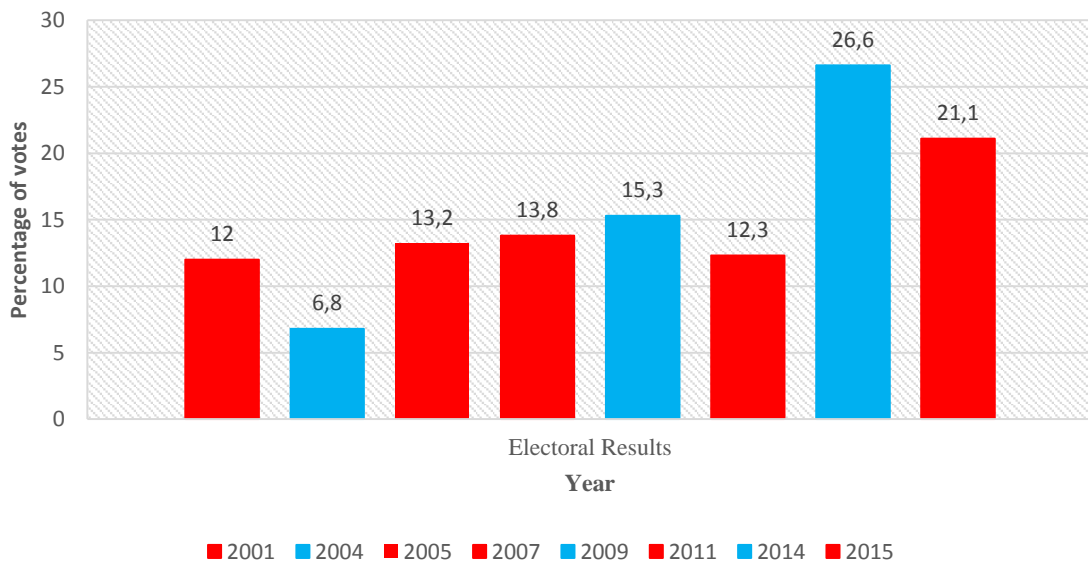
*Nota bene:* red – national elections; blue – European elections.



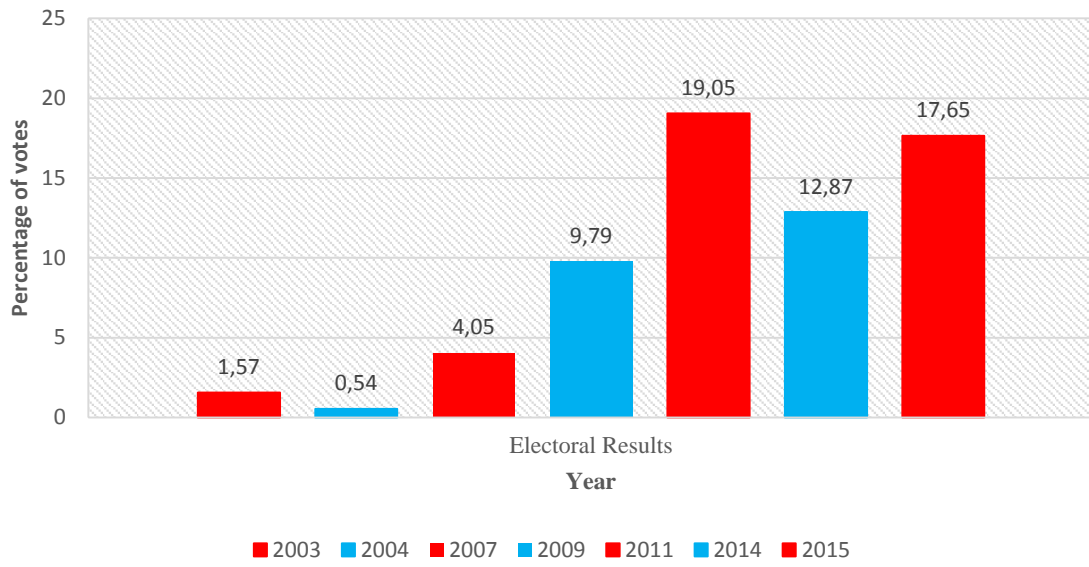
### Ataka (Bulgaria)



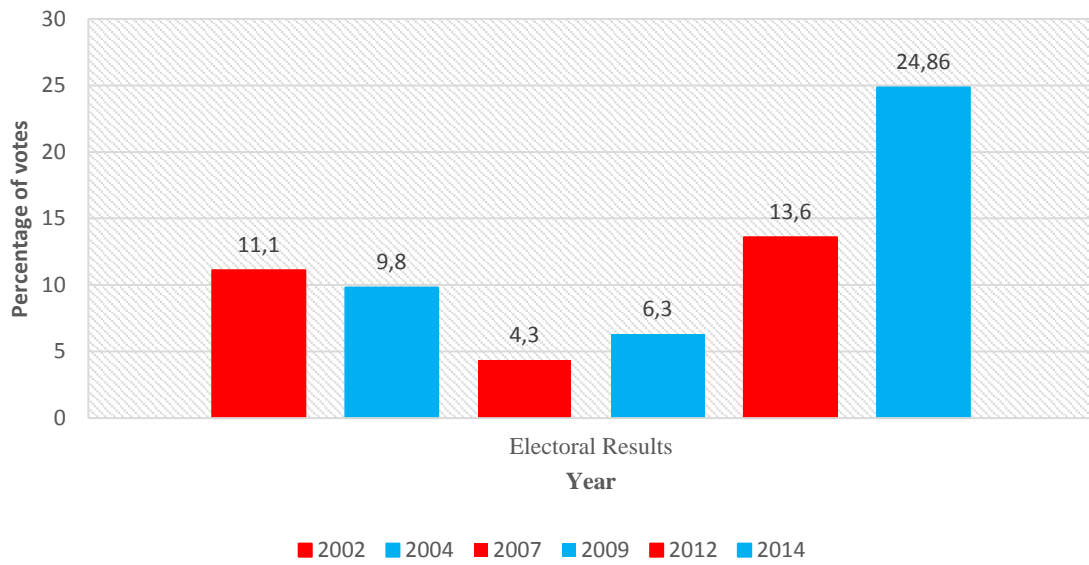
### Danish People's Party (Denmark)

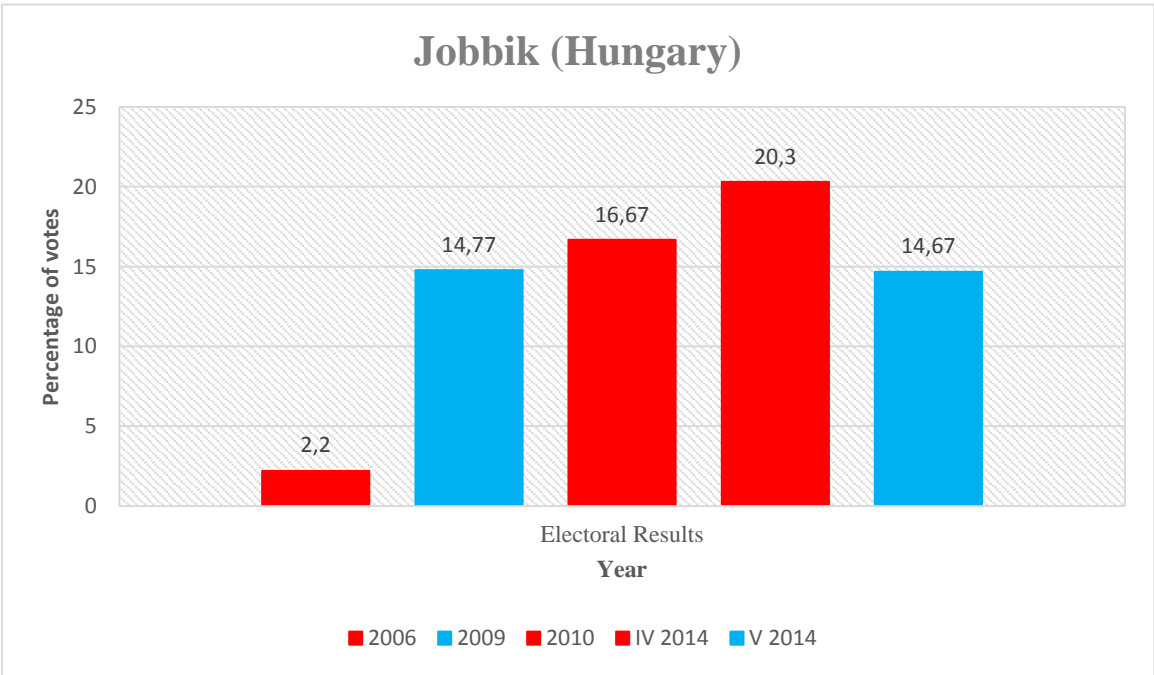
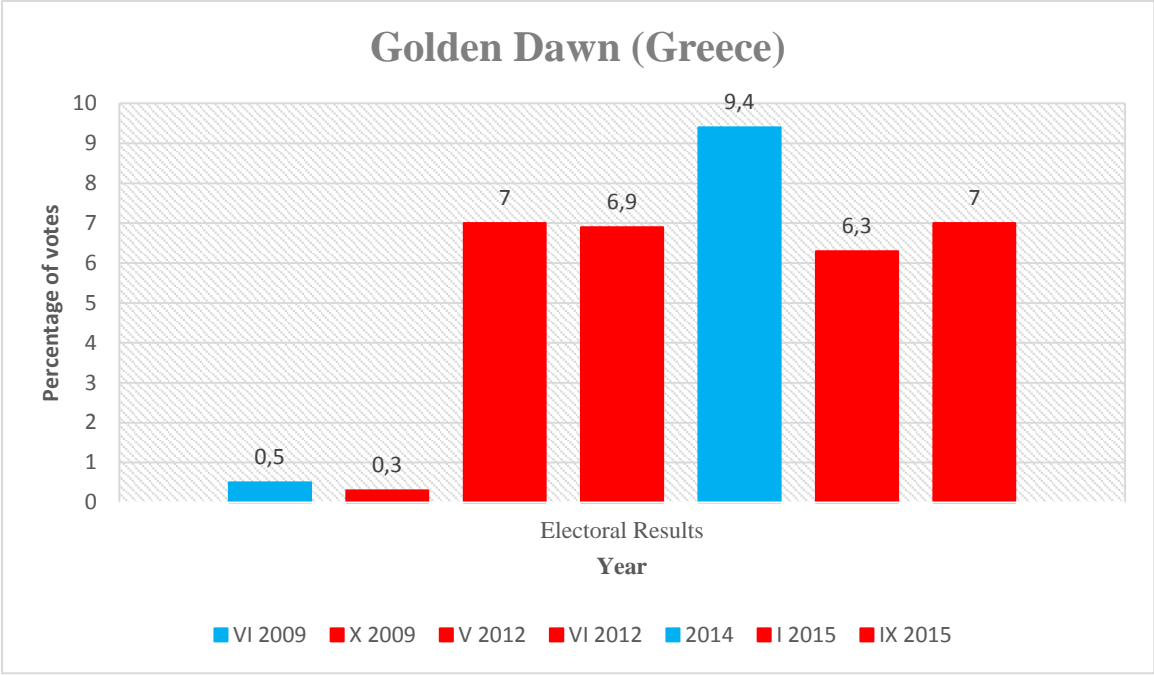


### Finns Party (Finland)



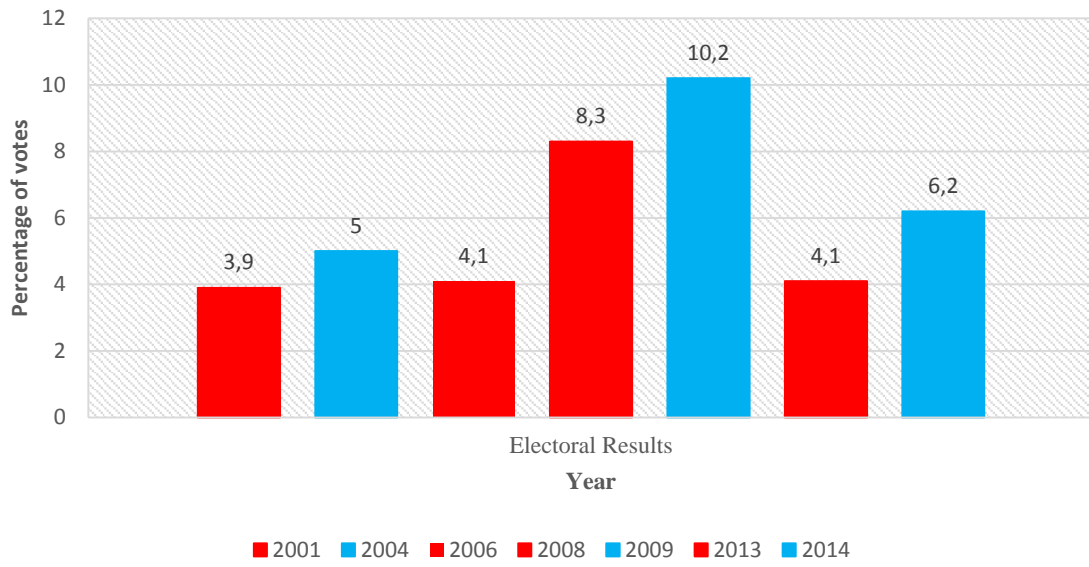
### Front National (France)



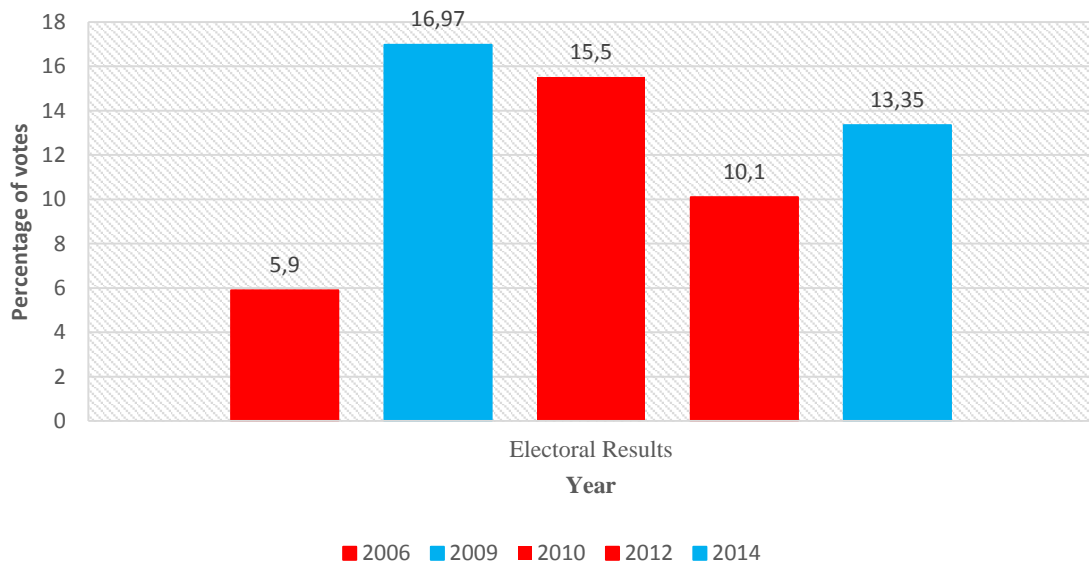




### Legia Nord (Italy)



### Party for Freedom (Netherlands)



## Sweden Democrats

