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## List of Abbreviations

EU	European Union	
EC	European Commission	
ECE	East Central European	
EP	European Parliament	
Fidesz	Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége	Alliance of Young Democrats
Fidesz – MPP	Fidesz - Magyar Polgári Párt	Hungarian Civic Party
KDNP	Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt	Christian Democratic People's Party
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe	

## **Abstract**

This paper attempts to examine to what extent Euroscepticism has risen among the Hungarian governing party Fidesz over the years, how the party's attitude towards the European Union has changed since going into office in 2010 and exemplify Fidesz Euroscepticism by focussing on the Eurosceptic rhetoric, most of all of the Prime Minister in office, Viktor Orbán.

In order to answer the research question, the method of the single case-study is used, in which as object of the study the reaction of the Fidesz party on the criticism of the EU, with respect to the constitutional changes since 2010 and the media law, in form of the 'Tavares report', is chosen.

First a theoretical framework on the phenomenon of Euroscepticism is provided in a relevant extent for the thesis. Secondly, background information on the history and development of the Fidesz party is given, before the most important constitutional amendments and the new media law are explained. In the following, criticism made by the European Union regarding the changes is illustrated.

The outcome of the case study evolves from the analysis of the Memorandum composed of the Hungarian government, Viktor Orbán's statements during the discussion in the European Parliament on the 'Tavares report', as well as some remarks made in a press conference following the debate, which are subsequently exemplified.

As a result, Euroscepticism among the Fidesz party has not only changed regarding its extent but moreover, in its appearance. The hypothesis, that Euroscepticism among the Fidesz party has risen over the years as well as that this can be exemplified in their rhetoric, can, at the end of the study, be affirmed.

## **Abstract Deutsch**

Thema dieser Arbeit ist der Euroskeptizismus der Ungarischen Regierungspartei Fidesz und die Frage, in welcher Weise sich die Einstellung der Partei zur Europäischen Union über die letzten Jahre seit ihrem Amtsantritt 2010, verändert hat, mit besonderem Fokus auf die Euroskeptische Rhetorik des Premierministers Viktor Orbán.

Um die Fragestellung zu beantworten wurde die Methode der Fallstudie gewählt, wobei Gegenstand der Untersuchung die Reaktion der Fidesz Partei auf die Kritik der EU an den konstitutionellen Veränderungen seit 2010 und dem Medien Gesetz in Form des Tavares Reports ist.

Vorab wird ein theoretischer Rahmen zum Phänomen des Euroskeptizismus, im für die These relevanten Ausmaß geboten, sowie Hintergrundinformationen zur Fidesz Partei und ihrem politischen Werdegang, bevor zur Erklärung der relevantesten, konstitutionellen Veränderungen und dem neuen Mediengesetz übergangen wird. Im Folgenden wird die Kritik der Europäischen Union an den zuvor erläuterten Änderungen dargestellt.

Die Ergebnisse der Fallstudie, die sich aus der Untersuchung des Memorandums der ungarischen Regierung, Viktor Orbán's Reden im Parlament und Stellungnahmen zum Tavares Report, sowie einiger Statements in einer Pressekonferenz zusammensetzen, werden in der Folge genauer analysiert und erläutert.

Schlussendlich stellt sich heraus, dass sich der Euroskeptizismus der Fidesz Partei im Laufe der Jahre nicht nur im Ausmaß seines Vorkommens, sondern auch in seiner Erscheinungsform verändert hat. Es lässt sich die These, dass der Euroskeptizismus der ungarischen Regierungspartei gestiegen ist, sowie dass dies heute aus anderen Gründen geschah und in Form der Rhetorik veranschaulicht werden kann, bestätigen.

# **1 Introduction**

## **1.1 Research Question and Academic Relevance**

In the past few years, the European Union has had to face various difficulties, most importantly, the financial crisis, the migration crisis, as well as several terror attacks, which have shaken up the continent. As a consequence, the European Union has experienced a decline in the support for its policies, instead of solidarity among the member states. In such difficult times, the phenomenon of Euroscepticism emerged among the nation states within political parties but also citizens, and they managed to spread their critical attitude towards European integration and questioning the European Union itself. The result is an increasing Euroscepticism over the continent. Therefore, it is important to assess to what extent Euroscepticism appears and why, in order to be able to combat it. Moreover, examining Euroscepticism among political parties as ideology bearers and promoters is crucial, as parties can, to some degree, determine whether the public will take a pro- or anti-European stance, since citizens might be influenced by the party's stance on the European issue.

For the thesis, the special case of Hungary is chosen, for Hungary being a relatively 'new' member state, a former communist country, with a considerable extent of Euroscepticism among the public and political parties.

For this reason and for the actuality and the importance given, this paper seeks to further examine the phenomenon and appearance of party-based Euroscepticism, regarding the current Hungarian governing party, Fidesz, and the Prime minister Viktor Orbán by analysing their Eurosceptic rhetoric, and moreover ascertain whether Euroscepticism among Fidesz has risen over the years.

## **1.2 Structure**

To provide a good framework, the term Euroscepticism will first be generally defined, based on the fundamental work of Taggart 1998.

After having explained the term in general, the author seeks to concentrate on party-based Euroscepticism, by firstly encompassing the phenomenon in general and then by making a distinction between hard and soft party-based Euroscepticism. In this part, the focus will mainly lie on the works of Taggart and Szczerbiak (2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2008).

An extra section here will concentrate on the role of strategy and ideology, as those are one of the most important factors to explain the Euroscepticism in the Hungarian governing party and therefore special attention should be paid to those two factors. Another approach to

Euroscepticism, by Jan Rovny will also be outlined, as it combines the framework of Taggart and Szczerbiak with ideology and strategy and is therefore considered appropriate to serve the thesis' purpose.

After having formed the conceptual framework for the topic, the author will attempt to continue examining whether the in the title outlined statement: 'Rising Euroscepticism among the Hungarian Fidesz party', can be verified. Given that the story behind the change in attitude and the rise of Euroscepticism is a long one, it can be best exemplified on a specific case. Therefore, at first, general information on the current governing party in Hungary, Fidesz, will be provided. The aim is to demonstrate the party's history and development from its very beginnings and to point out the changes regarding their ideology over the years. Then, in the next section, some remarks on the party's change in their attitude towards the European Union and their membership of the European Union will be given as well as an explanation on why it has changed and how Euroscepticism is manifested in the party.

As a following step, the intention is to illustrate the transformation of the legal changes by Fidesz from 2010 onwards. The focus lies on the introduced constitutional changes on the one hand and on the controversial media law on the other hand.

Subsequently, the criticism of the EU on the situation of democracy in Hungary will be outlined, with special regard to the "Tavares report", which will also be explained in more detail. The report was followed by a debate on in the European Parliament, where Viktor Orbán as representor of the Hungarian government was able to respond to the critics. Viktor Orbán's statements made in the discussion and his speech in the parliament, as well as the remarks made by him in the press conference that followed the debate, will be outlined in the following part of the thesis. For reasons of completeness and to underline the Eurosceptic rhetoric of Fidesz from the start of their governing period 2010 onwards, some other statements will be given as well.

In the last part, the statements will be analysed with regard to the Eurosceptic rhetoric. The findings will then be summarized and reference will be made to the first, theoretical framework of the thesis.

### **1.3 Methodology**

First of all, it should be clarified in which field of study the matter of Euroscepticism is located. In fact, various disciplines committed themselves to the research of the phenomenon of Euroscepticism and can therefore be described as an interdisciplinary one. Nevertheless, the



issue of Euroscepticism should be examined in the light of integration theories, as it is directly linked to the will of integration of states.<sup>1</sup>

This study will be carried out as a case study<sup>2</sup>, meaning it is ‘an intensive study of a single unit for the purpose of understanding a larger class of (similar) units’ (Gerring, 2004: 342). For Gerring, the term unit stands for a phenomenon which is spatially defined and may therefore focus, for example, on a nation state, a political party or a single person. Moreover, it can either be studied at a specific point in time or over a limited time period (Cf. Ibid.). Regarding the temporal and spatial variation, three types of case-studies can be differentiated. The first one being a single-unit case-study, as it is only examining one unit, yet with temporal variation and therefore diachronically. The thesis will be based on this type, as the single unit that it focuses on is the Fidesz party, however the party will be examined over a time period and thus diachronically.<sup>3</sup>

Concerning the number of cases, also referred to as N, which a case-study comprises, Gerring suggests that it may either be large or small N, and can therefore be regarded as a qualitative or quantitative study (Cf. Ibid.: 343). As this study focuses on one case, it can be identified as a qualitative one.

Concerning the research for literature for the theoretical approach, the author searched for basic literature on Euroscepticism with a focus on Euroscepticism within party systems over Google scholar and the online university library platform. Then, as a second step, literature on Euroscepticism in East Central European countries has been searched for, with special regard to Hungary. For this part, mostly scientific papers and books were consulted.

As a next step, literature on the history of the Hungarian party system and general information on Hungary’s political system has been searched for, with a focus on the Fidesz party. Moreover, the author looked for scientific papers and contributions on the legal changes in Hungary since 2010. For the criticism by the EU on legal amendments, the European Parliament website served as a valuable source, which provided transcripts of, as well as video material

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on integration theories see: Pollak J.; Slominski P. (2012): Das politische System der EU. Wien: Facultas Verlags- und Buchhandels AG.

<sup>2</sup> The author’s method relies on Gerring’s approach of carrying out a case study. For further information on case studies see: Gerring, J. (2004): What is a case study and what is it good for?. In: American political science review, 98(2), 341-354.

<sup>3</sup> The other two types, which are not relevant here, both imply spatial variation within the unit, meaning a variation in the regarded phenomenon (e.g. political party, election, person, etc.), yet, one without and the other including temporal variation (Cf. Gerring, 2004: 343).

on, the debate that is part of the study. The website also allocated the Tavares report, which is the basis for the case study.

For the reaction on the criticism, the debate in the European parliament, and mainly speeches of Viktor Orbán, as well as a YouTube video of the statements made by Orbán in the press conference, are used.

## **2 Euroscepticism – A state of the art**

First and foremost, the term Euroscepticism needs to be defined and conceptualised, in order to be able to work with this concept in the course of this thesis.

Among the scholars who research the phenomenon of rising Euroscepticism in European member states, various definitions exist and they tend to distinguish between different types of Euroscepticism. The ones who looked into the matter of Euroscepticism in more detail were, among others, Taggart and Szczerbiak, representing the approach of the so-called Sussex school and Kopecky and Mudde, as representors of the, as it is referred to, North-Carolina School. Their works form the basis for further research in the issue of Euroscepticism, and can therefore be regarded as the most fundamental ones. Other important scholars, who further refined the concepts of Euroscepticism based on one of the two schools were for example Chris Flood or Nick Sitter.

Due to the numerous different definitions and classifications existing, finding the one suitable for the subject of this thesis is of importance. Since the topic of Euroscepticism is such a broad one, which can be examined from various perspectives, for example as Euroscepticism among citizens or among political parties, and the scope of the thesis is limited, the focus here will lie on party-based Euroscepticism.

Yet, even by looking specifically on Euroscepticism among political parties and how it can be manifested and expressed within a party, numerous approaches exist. Moreover, the reasons for a party adopting a Eurosceptic stance may vary. Euroscepticism might be linked to the identity of a political party, however, it might also be a strategic choice. Therefore, this chapter seeks to provide a framework on the concept of Euroscepticism.

First, the term Euroscepticism will be explained in general. Secondly, a quick overview of the most common and widely spread theoretical approaches will be provided and contrasted to one

another. The conceptualisations of party-based Euroscepticism will mainly rely on the work of Taggart, as being one of the first ones trying to provide a concept, and Szczerbiak, whose work stands in contrast to Kopecky and Mudde's approach.

Furthermore, Nick Sitter and Jan Rovny's work, as being the ones who further concentrated on the role of strategy and ideology for Euroscepticism, will be explained in this chapter.

## 2.1 General Definition

The first time the term Euroscepticism appeared was in the 1980's in the British newspapers, as a consequence of Margaret Thatcher's expressed criticism on the European Community (Cf. Leconte, 2010: 44; Rodríguez-Aguilera de Prat, 2013: 21; Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2003: 6; Harmsen/Spiering, 2004: 15). Even though the background of the term is more a journalistic one, rather than an academic one, many scholars devoted themselves to research and classify this concept. This was also due to the fact, that the ratification process of the Maastricht treaty, had shown that Euroscepticism is, outside of Great Britain, also to be found among other Member States and cannot be seen as a phenomenon that was restricted to the British political elite (Cf. Oberkirch/Schild, 2010: 9).

One of the first ones trying to classify the subject and provide a general definition was Taggart in 1998, by introducing a conceptualisation of the term (Cf. Duro, 2016: 36; Harmsen/Spiering, 2004: 18).

Quoting Taggart, a general definition of Euroscepticism occurring in West European countries could be,

*'(...) the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration.'*

(Taggart, 1998: 366)

Moreover, according to Taggart (1998), three different opposing positions towards the European Union can be encompassed.

First, a position which opposes the idea of European integration in general, and therefore 'as a consequence oppose the EU' (Taggart, 1998: 366).

Secondly incorporating those, who are not principally opposed to the process of European integration, but express scepticism because it might be too inclusive. As explained by Taggart, (...) 'the EU is trying to force together elements that are too diverse to be compatible' (Ibid.).

The third and last position is the one of those being not generally opposed to the project of European integration. They are rather sceptical whether the form of European integration is

adequate, since they regard it as being too exclusive, geographically or socially speaking, including the ones who consider it critically because poorer regions are excluded (Cf. Taggart, 1998: 366).

However, at this point it needs to be stressed that the definition of Taggart is only one among various others from different authors, as for example Chris Flood, who interprets Euroscepticism as

*'(...) attitudes and opinions represented in discourses and behaviours (...) which express doubt as to the desirability and/or benefits and/or long-term viability of European and/or EU integration (...)'*  
(Flood, 2002, cited after Oberhauser/Schild, 2010: 10).

Nevertheless, the concept of Taggart focuses on Euroscepticism in party systems among member states, in his first works in Western Europe and then, later, also in the ECE countries and candidate states, which is why it is regarded being the most suitable for the subject of this thesis.

The following section will take a closer look at party-based Euroscepticism, explaining the various Eurosceptic party types existing.

## **2.2 Party-based Euroscepticism**

In the before mentioned fundamental work of Taggart (1998), he focuses in particular on Euroscepticism among political parties. Taggart regards political parties in three different ways, either as the 'bearers of ideology' (Taggart, 1998: 367), which can therefore be classified according to party families, 'as to how they relate to the Euroscepticism they manifest' (Ibid.: 368) or, as a third approach, according to their party system (Cf. Taggart, 1998: 368).

As Taggart then further defines, four different kinds of Eurosceptic parties exist, which can be distinguished from one another.

The first type of party is the *single issue Eurosceptic party*, whose opposition to the EU is its only reason of existence (Cf. Ibid.).

Secondly, the *protest based parties* along with a Eurosceptic attitude, which are generally opposed to the functioning of the political system and, in addition, take in an anti-EU position. As he explains, 'Such parties promote themselves on the basis of their distance from the parties of government' (Taggart, 1998: 368).

The third type makes up *established parties* which take on a Eurosceptical position. Those parties are usually former parties of government or want to promote themselves as being close to governmental parties and therefore worth to be supported (Cf. Taggart, 1998: 368).

The last type occurs in form of *Eurosceptical factions*, which means that ‘a significant faction of an existing party expresses opposition’ (Taggart, 1998: 369), but the party in general counts as supportive of European integration. This type might occur when one of the main representatives of the party changes his position, so that it stands in contrast to the general one of the party (Cf. Taggart, 1998: 369).

Taggart later, together with Szczerbiak provided another classification of Eurosceptic political parties, hereby concentrating on ECE countries, differentiating between a ‘hard’ and a ‘soft’ Eurosceptic dimension, which will be explained in the following.

### **2.3 Hard vs. Soft Euroscepticism**

According to Taggart and Szczerbiak, in trying to find the best suitable conceptualisation for Euroscepticism, a major problem lies in the fact that a definition needs to be found, which can as well be transferred to all the other Member States of the European Union (Cf. Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2002a: 4). They found that, in order to be able to extend the definition of Euroscepticism to the Central and Eastern European countries, the term should be further divided into two categories, namely ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ (Cf. Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2008: 7), which will be explained in the following section.

#### **2.3.1 Hard Euroscepticism**

When speaking about hard Euroscepticism, Taggart and Szczerbiak refer to political parties, which take in a position of principled opposition to the European Union and European integration. Those parties would either like their country to withdraw from the Union, or they are taking in an opposing attitude towards European integration in general, which is expressed in their policies (Cf. Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2002a: 4; Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2002b: 27).

‘HARD EUROSCEPTICISM is where there is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived’

(Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2002a: 4).

Two different ways exist to assess whether a party is a hard Eurosceptic one or not. The first one is to examine if a political party is a ‘single issue anti-EU party’ (Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2002a: 4), because a party would only solely mobilise against the EU, if it were generally opposed to the project. Another method is to look if the party disapproves of the EU because it regards the EU as being ‘too capitalist/social/neo-liberal/bureaucratic’ (Ibid.). Depending on the ideology the political party follows, they seek to rearrange the terms on which their country’s membership of the EU grounds. However, this should be accomplished in a way that is contradictory to what European integration originally stands for (Cf. Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2002a: 4).

### **2.3.2 Soft Euroscepticism**

In contrast to the previous explained concept of hard Euroscepticism, the soft dimension appears when a party contests European issues as part of their rhetoric and is rather criticising the current development of European Integration, than the whole concept itself (Cf. Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2008: 8).

*‘SOFT EUROSCEPTICISM is where there is NOT a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas leads to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that ‘national interest’ is currently at odds with the EU trajectory’*

(Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2002a: 4).

Soft Euroscepticism is therefore only present where a party appeals doubts and disputes over the European Union as one part of their party platform, but not the only one. Moreover, it is contestation about the current development of European integration, anyway, still being in favour of pursuing European integration. For politicians with a soft Eurosceptic attitude, the membership in the European Union is regarded doubtfully, whenever a current progress being made stands in conflict with the interests of their political party. Taggart and Szczerbiak further propose that, whenever European integration is supported, but further integration rejected, it shall be as well considered Eurosceptic (Cf. Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2002b: 28; Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2008: 5-8).

Moreover, soft Euroscepticism can be divided into ‘policy’ and ‘national’ Euroscepticism.

Whereas by policy Euroscepticism an opposition regarding policy measures is addressed, with which either the political and economic integration is sought to be deepened, or specific

competencies of the EU might be extended, national Euroscepticism means ‘defending or standing up for the national interest’ (Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2001: 10; Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2000: 7).

Policy Euroscepticism can be seen for example in Great Britain, Sweden and Denmark, by expressed opposition to the Euro currency (Cf. Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2001: 10; Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2000: 6).

Furthermore, it is important to note that both, policy and national Euroscepticism, do not imply general opposition to integration. They can still be ‘compatible with support in principle for the European project’ (Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2001: 10). Policy Euroscepticism however, is time and country based depending on the specific aspects of integration.

Moreover, both concepts of soft Euroscepticism may also occur at the same time and do not exclude one another (Cf. Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2001: 11; Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2000: 7).

However, this differentiation between ‘hard’ or ‘principled’ versus ‘soft’ or ‘contingent’ opposition to European integration was harshly criticised by some other scholars researching the subject, mainly by Kopecky and Mudde (2002), who were as well focusing on political parties in their conceptualisation (Cf. Rodríguez-Aguilera de Prat, 2013: 26).

They both criticised the weakness of Taggart and Szczerbiak’s differentiation between soft and hard Euroscepticism, and outlined four shortcomings of this concept (Cf. Kopecky/Mudde, 2002: 300).

First of all, they criticise the category of soft Euroscepticism being defined too broad, and including every disagreement with policy decision of the European Union possible (Cf. Kopecky/Mudde, 2002: 300), thus being ‘too inclusive’ (Duro, 2016: 36).

Secondly, the distinction between hard and soft Euroscepticism is, according to them, ‘too blurred’ (Kopecky/Mudde, 2002: 300).

The third disagreement with Taggart’s and Szczerbiak’s concept lies in the fact that ‘the criteria that are used, both, to connect and to separate the two forms of Euroscepticism remain unclear’ (Ibid.).

Fourthly, they note that the hard and soft category are not enough to distinguish between ideas of European integration and ‘the European Union as the current embodiment of this ideas

(Ibid.). Therefore, they argue that parties and ideologies which are in fact pro-European are being misleadingly labelled Eurosceptic (Cf. Kopecky/Mudde, 2002: 300).<sup>4</sup>

As we can see, there are classifications which assume that one can distinguish between hard vs. soft Euroscepticism, as Taggart and Szcerbiak do, while others, like Kopecky and Mudde, tend to work with scheme of two dimensions, containing four different types (Cf. Ibid.: 302).

However, defining whether a party can be seen as Eurosceptic and ‘mapping’ where it can be found in a political spectrum, what kind of Euroscepticism it encompasses and to which degree is rather complicated. Therefore, two other factors need to be taken into account, the one being ideology and the other one strategy. Their role in shaping a party’s position on European integration will be explained in the following section.

## **2.4 The Role of ideology and strategy**

In order to understand party-based Euroscepticism, it is important to differentiate between ideologically driven and strategically determined Euroscepticism. Strategy especially is an important factor for the further course of this thesis, as it plays an important role in the

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<sup>4</sup> Kopecky and Mudde (2002) formulated their own concept, which shall here, for reasons of completeness, be shortly explained, yet will not be of importance for the further course of the thesis and the classification of Fidesz. In their concept, they rely on Easton, who designed a model of two dimensions: ‘diffuse’ and ‘specific’ support for political regimes, which they transferred on support for European integration (Cf. Easton, 1965: 124; Kopecky/Mudde, 2002: 300). ‘Diffuse’ support on the one hand implies the ‘support for the general ideas of European integration that underlie the EU’ (Kopecky/Mudde, 2002: 300), whereas ‘specific’ support on the other hand, refers the ‘support for the general practice of European integration; that is, the EU as it is developing’ (Ibid.).

It results a two-dimensional concept, in which basic support and scepticism about European integration in general and in particular can be illustrated. In the first dimension, Europhiles, who express general support by believing in the ideas of European integration, are being distinguished from Europhobes, who do not support those ideas, yet often even oppose to those ideas. For Europhobes taking in such a position might be out of nationalist, socialist, isolationist reasons or because they do not even believe in European integration at all, due to the diversity among the European nations (Cf. Kopecky/Mudde, 2002: 300-301). The second dimension however, expresses particular support for European integration and therefore the European Union. It is where EU-optimists can be separated from EU-pessimists. Here, it is important to note that EU-Optimists can either be content with the way the EU has been set up, is developing, or they are optimistic about the Union’s further development. Critics relating to a certain EU policy does not disqualify a person from being an EU-optimist (Cf. Kopecky/Mudde, 2002: 302).

The result of their concept is a two-dimensional scheme, containing four categories of parties’ positions: Euroenthusiasts, Eurosceptics, Eurorejects and Europragmatists (Cf. Ibid.: 300-302).

According to Kopecky and Mudde, these types can be further defined in the following way.

As the first type, the Euroenthusiasts, being Europhile and EU-Optimist at the same time generally support the ideas of European integration (Cf. Ibid.). The second type is a combination of the Europhile and the EU-pessimist position, which they label as Eurosceptics. Those ‘support the general ideas of European integration, but are pessimistic about the EU’s current and/or future reflection of these ideas’ (Kopecky/Mudde, 2002: 302). Thirdly, the Europragmatists, combining the position of Europhobes and EU-optimists. While the general idea of European integrations is not being supported, neither is it opposed by them (Cf. Kopecky/Mudde, 2002: 303). Lastly, the Eurorejects, a mix of EU-pessimists and Europhobes, who do neither support the idea of European integration, nor the EU in general (Cf. Ibid.).



development of Fidesz' attitude towards Europe. Nevertheless, ideology cannot be ignored, as it is connected to strategy (Cf. Rodríguez-Aguilera de Prat, 2013: 46) and is moreover, also of importance for examining Fidesz' Eurosceptic stance as a right-wing party.

Therefore, this section seeks to undermine the difference of them both and provide an insight in how these factors interrelate with Euroscepticism among political parties.

As Sitter (2002) puts it,

*'although, long-term policy positions and ideology play a considerable part in shaping a party's response to the European question, the degree to which party-based Euroscepticism develops (...) depends largely on strategic and tactical decisions.'*

(Sitter, 2002: 5)

Furthermore, 'party-based Euroscepticism may change with changes in party strategy or tactics' (Sitter, 2002: 6). Yet, even though parties can change their position on European integration according to strategic choices, they can only do so within ideological boundaries (Cf. Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2002a: 17).

Ideology can, to some degree, help to encompass a party's stance on European integration, however, according to Taggart (1998) '(...)'knowing a party's ideology is not necessarily a guide to its position on the EU' (Taggart, 1998: 379) yet, it is 'a component' (Ibid.: 379). Taggart and Szczerbiak furthermore suggest that, being ideologically left- or right-wing does not say whether it can also be classified as Eurosceptic as well. Nevertheless, specific party families, as new populists or nationalist parties are more likely to adopt a Eurosceptic stance, than for instance, social democratic or Christian democratic parties (Cf. Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2002a: 17).

They conclude that, 'Euroscepticism (especially hard Euroscepticism) is more likely to be found on the extremes of politics and not among centrist parties' (Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2002a: 17; Cf. Rodríguez-Aguilera de Prat, 2013: 46).

Talking about the role of ideology and identity, Taggart (1998) mentions three factors, which contribute to party-based Euroscepticism.

First of all, identity politics, a factor which can either apply to those, concentrating on the nation when talking about identity, or on the contrary, to those defining the concept of identity as a more or less global one, and also identifying themselves in a global way. Yet, reflecting a global

identity does not automatically mean expressing support for the EU, since one can still regard the European Union as not being the adequate form of an international organisation (Cf. Taggart, 1998: 379).

The other two factors Taggart mentions are the party-position in the system and the ‘position on the most appropriate site for conflict resolution’ (Taggart, 1998: 379), which are both constant factors.

Taggart (1998), moreover, created a map in which parties can be located according to their ideology. It contains a horizontal axis, ranging from individual to community and a vertical axis, from global to national (Cf. Taggart, 1998: 380).

He assumes that, according to this map, Eurosceptic attitudes primarily emerge ‘from the bottom left and the top right’ (Taggart, 1998: 380) corners. Those are parties that are ideologically either new politics parties, extreme left parties or, on the other end of the map, new populist parties (Cf. Taggart, 1998: 380-381).

Taggart further claims that ‘New politics’ and extreme left parties on the one hand take Eurosceptic positions because the EU is ‘not global enough’ (Taggart, 1998: 380) and too ‘restrictive’ (Ibid.), by, for example, leaving out the global North-South dimension (Cf. Taggart, 1998: 380). The new populist parties on the other hand, see the scope of the EU as too global, while the nation-state is being neglected (Cf. Ibid.: 381).

*‘The left wing protest comes from those that see the EU as too exclusive while the right wing protest comes from seeing it as not exclusive enough’*  
(Taggart, 1998: 381).

Following Cécile Leconte’s differentiation while examining the role of ideology for party-based Euroscepticism, four different cleavages are of relevance: the centrist ideology in contrast to ideological extremism, the left/right cleavage, the State versus the church cleavage and ‘the parties’ positions on the new politics cleavage’ (Leconte, 2010: 108).<sup>5</sup>

A priori, it can be supposed that parties with a centrist ideology are rather pro-European, while ideologically extremist parties, regardless of right or left extremists, are probably Eurosceptical (Cf. Leconte, 2010: 109). Leconte argues ‘As a party’s distance from the centre of the political spectrum grows, so does its likelihood of being Eurosceptic.’ (Leconte, 2010: 109)

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<sup>5</sup> For reasons of relevance, only the centrist ideological in contrast to the ideological extremism, the left/right cleavage and the ‘New Politics’ cleavage will be discussed in detail.

Yet, marginal parties even represent different levels of Euroscepticism. Some parties on the left margins of the political spectrum can express severe criticism, though they still do not promote withdrawal, while others may take in a hard-Eurosceptic position (Cf. Leconte, 2010: 109).

This can also be illustrated for extreme right parties: ‘(...) some support the European membership and the internal market (...), while others (...) stand for a withdrawal from the EU and can thus be qualified as anti-European parties.’ (Leconte, 2010: 109)

Regarding the left and right cleavage, one might claim that centre-right, conservative and liberal parties, express less endorsement for integration, whereas social democrat and socialist parties stand for the very reverse. However, this assumption cannot be generalized, as the attitude on integration and on the European Union must be embedded into the country’s context. As Leconte continues, Euroscepticism is a phenomenon of left-wing parties in typical welfare states, while it is more likely to be emerging from the right-wing in the new member states (Cf. Leconte, 2010: 110).

The last important factor for ideology in party-based Euroscepticism was called the new politics cleavage. The term ‘new politics’, encompasses the politicization of new issue of the society, as, among others, gender equality, immigration, rights of sexual minorities and environmental protection. Now, this new politics cleavage co-exists with old politics cleavage, and, according to various studies, a party’s attitude towards the new politics cleavage is in relation to its opinion on European integration. In general, it can be claimed that, the more conservative or authoritarian values a party holds, the more Eurosceptic a party can be considered. Contrary to this, about those being more liberal, as for example the Greens, can be said that they are being more supportive in terms of European integration, though exceptions need to be taken into account (Cf. Ibid.: 111).

On the contrary it is important to mention that ideology, as outlined above, cannot be seen as the only factor of importance playing a role for Euroscepticism among political parties. Leconte argues that both, ideology but also strategy, shall be taken into account to justify a party’s position on the European issue (Cf. Ibid.: 111), since both are, as outlined above, interconnected.

Concerning strategy, it is important to note that, as Sitter (2003) puts it,

*‘For most political parties, Euroscepticism (...) has been a deliberate and explicitly considered choice. This may be considered a question of party strategy (...)’*  
(Sitter, 2003: 8).

Sitter (2002) explains that party-based Euroscepticism is a strategic choice of a political party, 'in the light of survival, ideology, organisation and the pursuit of office' (Sitter, 2002: 23). Moreover, as the strategy or tactics of a party changes, party-based Euroscepticism may change as well (Cf. Sitter, 2002: 6).

As hard Euroscepticism is hardly compatible with a catch-all strategy, due to the fact that hard opposition to European integration is considered being combined with ideological commitment, and because integration is a process mostly driven by the government, Eurosceptic parties tend to avoid hard Euroscepticism, once in office (Cf. *Ibid.*: 8). Therefore, hard Euroscepticism is also highly unlikely to be found among governing parties (Cf. Leconte, 2010: 107).

Moreover, hard Euroscepticism is more likely to result out of ideology, while a soft Eurosceptic stance tends to be taken out of strategic reasons (Cf. Rodríguez-Aguilera de Prat, 2013: 47).

Rovny (2004), also tried to conceptualise Euroscepticism with the focus lying on strategy and ideology in combination with hard and soft Euroscepticism. His concept is based on former work of Taggart and Szczerbiak, as well as on Kopecky and Mudde. Rovny claims that 'there are different degrees of both categories of Euroscepticism and thus the magnitude of Euroscepticism can be conceived in ordinal terms' (Rovny, 2004: 33) and that both, hard and soft Euroscepticism can imply different levels of Euroscepticism (Cf. Rovny, 2004: 33).

He makes assumptions with regard to ideology and strategy in combination with Euroscepticism, naming ideology and strategy as the motivation for, while hard and soft categories imply the magnitude of Euroscepticism. As already examined by other scholars, the European issue is one of low salience in national party politics.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, Rovny suggests that 'Euroscepticism (...) cannot be seen as an autonomous ideology on its own.' (Rovny, 2004: 36). He rather names it as an 'appendix', something that can be added to the party's identity or discourse. However, he also acknowledges that some ideologies can be presumed to adopt a Eurosceptic attitude easily. Here he agrees 'with Kopecky and Mudde, that there is congruence between certain political ideologies and the probability of adopting Eurosceptic positions.' (*Ibid.*)

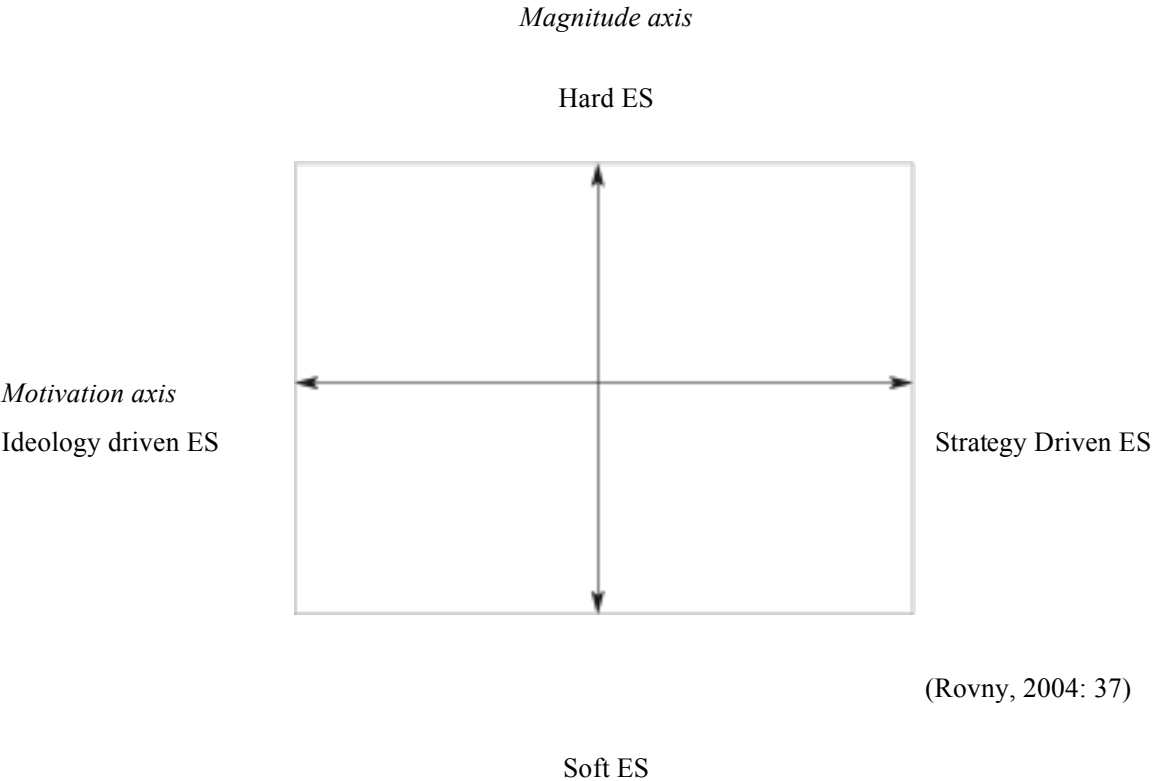
According to him, in the case of ideologically driven Euroscepticism, a value, goal or policy which European integration implies, conflicts with the ideology of the party and is therefore in

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<sup>6</sup> See: Taggart, P. A.; Szczerbiak, A. (2004): Contemporary Euroscepticism in the party systems of the European Union candidate states of Central and Eastern Europe. In: *European Journal of Political Research* (43), 18.

opposition to the European Union. Moreover, they do not tend to change their ideology and values so that those are reconcilable with those of Europe (Cf. Rovny, 2004: 36-37). On the contrary, those Eurosceptic parties which take in such a position for strategic reasons ‘use Euroscepticism as a pragmatic addition to their original program.’ (Rovny, 2004: 37) Furthermore, he claims that this goes hand in hand with the party’s desire to maximise votes (Cf. Rovny, 2004: 35-37) and ‘attract new voters’ (Ibid.).

To conclude Rovny’s approach, he somewhat combined the distinction of hard versus soft Euroscepticism with ideology and strategy. The result is a ‘conception of a theoretical Eurosceptic space’ (Rovny, 2004: 37), with a magnitude axis ranging from hard to soft Euroscepticism and a motivation axis, which spans from ideologically to strategically driven Euroscepticism (Cf. Rovny, 2004: 37). Inside this ‘Eurosceptic space’ political parties can be classified, according to the ‘hardness’ or ‘softness’ of their Euroscepticism in combination with whether it arises from ideology or strategy.



As we have seen, various approaches exist, which can be combined with each other. Furthermore, reasons for a party to take in a Eurosceptic stance can either derive from ideology or strategy, yet, both factors are of importance and to some extent connected with each other.

The next chapter will provide an overview of the history of the Fidesz party and its development. Moreover, the change of the party's ideology over the years will be encompassed. An extra section will concentrate on its position on Europe, and how it has changed over the years. Then the major changes of the constitution will be outlined, as well as the criticism of the European Union on these changes.

### **3 Fidesz's – From Eurofriendly to Eurosceptic?**

In order to further examine the rise of Euroscepticism in the Hungarian governing party, and also see the reasons and triggers for these developments, a general overview of the history of the evolution of the Fidesz party is provided.

#### **3.1 History of Fidesz and change of ideology**

Fidesz, which is an acronym standing for 'Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége', translated as 'Alliance of Young Democrats' (Bátory, 2016: 286) was founded in 1988 by several students, as a 'protest movement of the Kádár era' (Szabó, 2011: 48). Back then, Viktor Orbán, nowadays leader of the party, already represented one of the main characters of the movement (Cf. Bátory, 2016: 286; Kipke, 2005: 84).

Szabó (2011)<sup>7</sup> outlined six different stages in the development of the party, from a so-called 'dissident movement' (Szabó, 2011: 50) to a governing party.

First, from 1988 until the first elections in 1990, Fidesz was labelled a dissident movement, being a critic of the communist system. Then, from 1990 onwards, it already counted as an established party and member of a multi-party system (Cf. Szabó, 2011: 50). The time from 1992 until 1998 made up the third stage, in which Szabó claimed it to have been a 'leading force of the centre-right' (Szabó, 2011: 50). The fourth stage was marked by Fidesz-MPP as a governing party with a 'top-down mobilisation strategy' (Ibid.), followed by the transformation

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<sup>7</sup> See also: Szabó, M. (2003): Mobilization and protest strategy of the Fidesz-MPP within and after the electoral campaign in Hungary 2002. In: Central European Political Science Review, 4(13), 74-88.

and renaming after having lost the 2002 elections into Fidesz-MSZP, a right-wing mobilizing populist party. The last stage was marked from 2010 on until now, by Fidesz being again a governing party (Cf. Szabó, 2011: 50).

However, a closer look into the transformation, also with respect to their ideology, should be offered.

Until the first free elections in 1990, in which they gained a small fraction in the parliament (Cf. Ibid.; Bátory, 2016: 286), the party established itself initially as a political party for the youth with an erstwhile age limit of 35 years, which they abandoned in 1992 (Cf. Szabó, 2011: 52; 53). Back then, as a liberal, ‘radical anti-communist youth movement’ (Báatory, 2002: 533) it vouched for free elections and demanded the Soviet troops based in Hungary to withdraw from the country (Cf. Báatory, 2016: 286; Oltay, 2014: 182).

However, over the years Fidesz changed its attitude out of strategic reasons. In 1993, I declared itself for the first time as group of the liberal centre (Cf. Oltay, 2014: 182-183).

As they lost the following elections in 1994 and the party had to choose whether they wanted to follow the left liberal or the conservative camp, they chose to align to the conservative camp (Cf. Ibid.). Therefore, they moved from an alternative and ‘liberal youth movement’ (Báatory, 2016: 286), to a ‘conservative catch-all party’ (Ibid.), with only the anti-communist attitude remaining (Cf. Kipke, 2005: 84).

*‘Fidesz, after its strategic and personal reorientation in 1992-1993, increasingly became a supporter of the church and nation. Fidesz grew from an alternative party into a liberal one from 1988 to 1992, and from a liberal party to a centre-right, Christian, populist one between 1992-1998.’*

(Szabó, 2011: 54)

After being defeated in the 1994 elections, in 1995 they added MPP to their party name standing for ‘Magyar Polgári Part’/ ‘Hungarian Civic party’, in order to be seen as a ‘people’s party’ (Cf. Kipke, 2005: 85). In the following election in 1998, Fidesz came off as a winner and became coalition partner of the conservative government, which was when their ideological transformation started (Cf. Báatory, 2002: 533; Báatory, 2001: 18). The coalition was built together with the Independent Smallholder’s Party, FGKP, and the Hungarian Democratic Forum, MDF (Cf. Báatory, 2016: 286; Kipke, 2005: 85). From then on, instead of, as in former times, taking a stand for free market, they rather accentuated the ‘national community’ (Báatory, 2002: 533). The party furthermore defined what ‘Hungarianess’ consists of and differentiated between the ‘national interest’, by which all Hungarians were meant, whatever country they

may life in, and the ‘interest of the state’ which solely applied to the Hungarian citizens (Cf. Fidesz-MPP, 1996: 8-11; Bátor, 2001: 18).

For the next years, Hungarian politics was shaped by an infighting between ‘Fidesz and its minor Christian-conservative coalition partners on the right and the Socialist Party with Free Democrats in the left/liberal camp’ (Bátor, 2016: 286).

The following two elections, 2002 and 2006, were both won by the left camp, which urged Fidesz to change its strategy again. It reinterpreted itself as an opposition party, representing the interests of the Hungarian people (Cf. Oltay, 2014: 189). The party started to mobilize, through countrywide consultations and collecting signatures for petitions against the former government (Cf. Ibid.: 191). Moreover, Fidesz changed the values it promoted before to nationalist and traditional ones (Cf. Gallina, 2007: 188).

Finally, in 2010, Fidesz won the elections together with the KDNP, the Christian Democratic People’s Party, holding a two-third majority of seats in the parliament (Cf. Bos, 2011: 39; Szabó, 2011: 61). One reason for the outstanding victory over the left camp was the corruption scandals by members and officials of the socialist party, high unemployment and debt rates as well as the released secret speech of former prime minister Ferenc Gyurcsány in 2006, in which he criticised the Socialist party, which he was part of, for their electoral and economic policy programme (Cf. Szabó, 2011: 59-61). According to Gyurcsány, they lied about Hungary’s state of economy, making promises and economic policy programmes which could not be implemented due to restrictions from the European Union and stability criteria (Cf. Bátor, 2016: 286).

In the 2014 elections, Fidesz even managed to be re-elected with a qualified majority, though this time for different reasons. After being elected in 2010, Fidesz modified the electoral system<sup>8</sup> in a way that the party in office was favoured, which they accomplished also by gerrymandering (Cf. Bátor, 2016: 291). Furthermore, the campaigns of the opposition parties were disadvantaged because ‘the governing party ‘enjoyed an undue advantage because of restrictive campaign regulations, biased media coverage and campaign activities that blurred the separation between political party and state’ (OSCE, cited from Bátor, 2016: 291).

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<sup>8</sup> The modifications will be discussed in detail in section 3.3.



### 3.2 Fidesz' changing attitude towards Europe

This section is going to take a closer look at the change of Fidesz, with respect to their attitude towards Europe, as it is regarded as important background information.

Fidesz, as outlined above, starting as an originally liberalist party, was one to the parties which openly supported Hungary's accession to the EU. During their opposition for the first two parliamentary periods (Cf. Bátorý, 2001: 17), Fidesz was claimed to be one of the most supportive parties when it comes to accession to the European Union:

*'In the early 1990s, Fidesz was one of the most enthusiastic supporters of Hungary's 'return to Europe' - (...)'*  
(Bátorý, 2008: 270).

However, after forming a coalition with the Christian Democratic party, KDNP in 1998, which was followed by an ideological transformation, their attitude towards Europe and European integration changed. Before, in 1994, the fastest integration possible into the West European system was one of the principal objectives. Yet, this position made a significant U-turn as well. As Fidesz became the coalition partner of the governing party from 1998 onwards, they started to 'stand up for the national interest also vis-à-vis Brussels' (Bátorý, 2001: 18; Cf. Bátorý, 2002: 533; Bátorý, 2008: 270). According to Fidesz-MPP, Hungary's place was still in Europe and accession to the European Union never questioned, even though, some critical remarks were made by Orbán (Cf. Bátorý, 2001: 18; Bátorý, 2002: 533).

However, when Hungary moved from the position as an applicant for EU membership to negotiator status, a new phase of relations with the European Union was marked (Cf. Bátorý, 2008: 270).

*'Hard bargaining with 'Brussels', however, also became a key component of the party's rhetoric on government from 1998, particularly toward a domestic audience.'*  
(Bátorý, 2008: 270)

Moreover, Fidesz-leader Viktor Orbán was regarded one of the most obvious contesters of the EU, by statements like 'there (was) life outside the EU' (Orbán, cited after Bátorý, 2008: 270) and 'Accession is the minimum that we should get' (Orbán 1998, cited from Hegedüs, 1999: 10).

However, at this point, one cannot assume that the party evolved into a Eurosceptic party. Criticism towards the EU was, back then, more out of frustration and disappointment, due to the slow accession process (Cf. Batory, 2002: 533; Tunkrová, 2006: 231).

According to Mike (2007), Viktor Orbán has also been one of the first politicians to openly criticise the EU. Yet, here he also mentions that, relying on Hegedüs (1999), criticism relied on the way the entry process was being dealt with by the European Commission (Cf. Mike, 2007: 12).

From 2003 on, after having lost the following elections of 2002, the party adopted some sort of Eurosceptic rhetoric, in order to refrain from the pro-European stance of the ideologically left positioned parties (Cf. Ibid.), to mark their position as a protest party, in terms of Taggart (1998), and distance themselves from the governing party, which can be assumed a strategically driven change. Nevertheless, Mike (2007) claims that the party ‘remained clearly in favour of EU membership all along.’ (Mike, 2007: 12).

However, the European issue was not necessarily on the agenda of the Fidesz party. As Lázár argues, ‘some kind of Eurosceptic rhetoric could be heard from Fidesz, but it fitted the national-conservative programme (...)’ (Lázár, 2015: 228).

The question of Europe and membership of the European Union became only important to the party in the following of the 2010 elections. Fidesz, with a two-third majority coming off as winners was still threatened by Jobbik, a radical right, hard Eurosceptic party, receiving more than 12 percent of the votes.

*‘The EU issue substantially served as a novel dimension of contestation between Jobbik and the party of PM Orbán. Fidesz shifted from the EU-optimist position of the 2000s to an EU-pessimist stance reminiscent of Jobbik – a strategy part of Orbán’s general bid to co-opt party of Jobbik’s agenda in an attempt to win more radical right-wing electorate.’*

(Pirro/Van Kessel, 2017: 413)<sup>9</sup>

Fidesz therefore made fundamental changes, in practice but also in their attitude concerning the EU (Cf. Lázár, 2015: 228).

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<sup>9</sup> See also: Bíró Nagy, A., Boros, T., Vasali, Z. (2013): More Radical than the Radicals: The Jobbik Party in International Comparison. In: Right-wing Extremism in Europe: Country Analyses, Counter-strategies and Labor-market Oriented Exit Strategies, edited by R. Melzer and S. Sera n, 229–253. Berlin: Friedrich- Ebert-Stiftung.

*'Fidesz found a right-wing challenger which is able to win voters over. Jobbik's new powerful, radical voice, nationalistic attitudes and hard-Euroscepticism could appeal to the "harder Fidesz voters" so Fidesz started to use a more sceptical rhetoric towards the EU.'*

(Lázár, 2015: 229)

This change can also be assumed a strategic one, as Fidesz was threatened by the emerging Jobbik party, which was even more right-wing than Fidesz and they feared to lose voters to Jobbik. As a consequence, Fidesz tried to put the focus of their political programme on Hungary as a strong and independent country, defending Hungary in case the EU criticises it, yet at the same time not questioning their membership in the EU.

*'They took a string, sovereign, independent Hungary to the centre of their programme which does not question the EU membership but opens to the East and fights the EU.'*

(Lázár, 2015: 228).

However, back in the days, Fidesz Eurosceptic rhetoric has not been as present as it is since 2011. This shift can be seen as a result due to various criticism on the part of the EU, concerning judicial and constitutional changes initiated by the Fidesz government from 2010 onwards, which will be more precisely explained in the next section.

### **3.3 Changes under Fidesz from 2010 onwards**

*'A real chance that politics in Hungary will no longer be defined by a dualist power space.... Instead, a large governing party will emerge in the centre of the political stage (that) will be able to formulate national policy, not through constant debates but through a natural representation of interest'.*

(Orbán, 2009, cited after Bánkuti/Halmaj/Scheppele, 2012: 145)

After two governing periods by the left camp, FIDESZ, having reassessed power in the course of the 2010 elections, started rolling up the Hungarian political system by amending major parts of the constitution as well as appoint reliable, Fidesz-close people in all important positions.

One of the first actions of Orbán was to issue a 'declaration of national cooperation', which was adopted by the parliament. The main point of this declaration was that everybody who agrees with the system could be part of it. Furthermore, it was obligatory for the proclamation to be posted on the walls in public institutions and governmental buildings (Cf. Bozóki, 2012:

11; Kovács/Tóth, 2011: 196). However, this was only the beginning and a few more fundamental amendments and new laws followed. The most important and fundamental constitutional changes that caused severe criticism as well as the media law will be discussed more detailed in the following.

Here, it should be clarified beforehand, that most of the changes were strongly criticized by the European Union and other international organisations, as the OSCE and the Council of Europe, which will also be discussed in the further course of this thesis.

### **3.3.1 Constitutional changes**

As soon as Orbán came to power in 2010, he announced that a new constitution will be written and Fidesz started re-shaping the national constitution in a way that it fits the needs and the political agenda of the government (Cf. Bozóki, 2012: 11; Vegetti, 2014: 204; Kovács/Tóth, 2011: 196). The incoming prime minister Orbán defended rewriting the constitution with the argument that the old one was adopted in 1949, right before the country's takeover by the communists. This constitution was amended the last time in 1989, during the last communist parliament. Therefore, the new constitution shall 'be seen as the fulfilment of a 20-year-old promise' (Hungarian Government, 2013: 20).

It is important to note here, that all those changes were made possible because of the two-thirds majority of seats the Fidesz holds in the parliament, and therefore described as 'democratic legitimate', even though the new constitution was never approved by a public referendum (Cf. Jenne/Mudde, 2012: 148). During Fidesz's first year in office, the old constitution was amended 12 times and additionally over 50 provisions. Most of the changes were in favour of the current government, by reducing checks and balances and weakening independent institutions. The result was a new constitution, which was shaped completely according to the ideas of the Fidesz party. Important to say, during the voting on the adoption of the new constitution in the parliament, only the Fidesz fraction voted in favour of it, while other parties were either absent, abstained or were against it. However, due to their two-thirds majority of seats they are holding, the votes were enough to adopt the new constitution (Cf. Bánkuti/Halmai/Scheppele, 2012: 139; Kornai, 2015: 35).

One of the first major and fundamental changes concerned the former four-fifths rule for writing a new constitution. The rule implied that, in order to be able to rewrite the constitution, a four-fifths majority of consent is required in the parliament. However, since the rule for amendment

of the constitution required only two-thirds majority, Fidesz, with its two-thirds majority, was able to amend the law, by removing the four-fifths rule completely and transform it likewise into a two-third one, so they were able to rewrite the constitution without consent of the other parliamentary members. From then on, Fidesz could start to write a new constitution (Cf. Bánkuti/Halmi/Scheppele, 2012: 139; Bugarić, 2014: 8).

Once the law for re-writing the constitution was amended and a new one could be written, the Constitutional Court was Fidesz first 'victim'. When the constitutional court found one of the new laws to be unconstitutional and therefore repealed it, it antagonized Fidesz, whose backlash was to downsize the courts power being henceforth only able to control the application of law (Cf. Bozóki, 2012: 11; Bozóki, 2011: 651; Bánkuti, Halmi, Scheppele, 2012: 139).

Furthermore, Fidesz changed the rule for the nomination of judges of the Constitutional Court (Cf. Bánkuti, Halmi, Scheppele, 2012: 139). According to the old constitution, the parliamentary parties had to agree on the nomination of judges by majority. The nominated person then needed a two-third majority of votes in the parliament to be elected. Fidesz however, changed the rules, making it a right of the governing party to nominate candidates alone (Cf. *Ibid.*; Kovács/Tóth, 2011: 193; 200).

From now on, it was the parliament that had to appoint the new chairperson of the court. Also, the courts number of members was raised from 11 to 15, and the new members were all former politicians close to Fidesz (Cf. *Ibid.*; Bánkuti/Halmi/Scheppele, 2012: 139; Bozóki, 2011: 652).

In addition, the Courts jurisdiction concerning fiscal affairs was restricted by the new government, in order 'to take away the Court's power over fiscal matters' (Bánkuti/Halmi/Scheppele, 2012: 139). From that it follows that the court was not able to review Fidesz' economic policies for constitutionality. As a result, when Fidesz undertook the nationalisation of private pensions, the Court had no right to intervene anymore (Cf. Bánkuti/Halmi/Scheppele, 2012: 139-140).

As shortly mentioned before, also appointing Fidesz representatives and Fidesz-close people in important positions was a common practice for the incoming government.

The new president of the Court of Auditors was likewise a former Fidesz parliamentary representative and the position of the new attorney general, a cadre of former Fidesz political candidates was appointed. (Cf. Bánkuti/Halmi/Scheppele, 2012: 140).

Additionally, the Financial Supervisory Authority and the Budgetary Council were influenced by Fidesz and even the president of the National Cultural Fund, who, at the same time, takes in the position of the president of the Parliamentary Cultural Committee and therefore overseeing his own job, is a Fidesz politician (Cf. Bozóki, 2012: 11-12).

The State Audit Office and Public Prosecutor, institutions which were both newly created, were also packed with Fidesz loyalists (Cf. Bugaric, 2014: 11).

The position of the president of the Republic was likewise affected by Fidesz's personnel changes. As the president of the Hungarian Republic holds the power to check the government and is able to exercise a veto to laws proposed by the parliament (Cf. Bánkuti/Halmai/Scheppele, 2012: 141), Fidesz found it to be suitable to exchange the former president László Sólyom (Cf. Bozóki, 2012: 11). Instead of reappointing him, they decided to rather go for Pál Schmitt, also a Fidesz loyalist who 'never hesitated to sign anything that the Fidesz government put before him.' (Bánkuti/Halmai/Scheppele, 2012: 141; Cf. Bugaric, 2014: 9). As Schmitt had to resign from office due to a plagiarism scandal, János Áder, the co-founder of Fidesz, was appointed the new president (Cf. Bánkuti/Halmai/Scheppele, 2012: 141).

Concerning the free and fair elections and the electoral system, some major changes have been introduced as well, which were important to secure Fidesz' power in the 2014 elections.

First, after winning the elections in 2010, the National Electoral Commission has been filled with Fidesz sympathizers and members.

Secondly, the electoral laws have been changed in a manner, making it more difficult for smaller parties to be represented in the local government. Moreover, a change to a one-round system has been made before the elections of 2014, and also the electoral districts have been adapted in a manner, so that they accord to partisan interests, also known as 'gerrymandering' (Cf. Bozóki, 2011: 653; Bozóki, 2012: 13).

As we can see, from 2010 onwards, people considered 'reliable' and close to the government have been put into all the important decision-making positions, also with regard to public organisations (Cf. Kornai, 2015: 35). From these new laws and the changes of personnel into people loyal to the government 'the constitutional court, the State Audit Office, the Fiscal Council, the Competition Authority, the Ombudsman Office, and the Central Statistical Office' (Kornai, 2015: 35) were affected.

At this point, it should be underlined, that most of the people in those positions mentioned before are appointed for nine to twelve years, which means that, even if the current government would not be re-elected, they could still oppose to new policies in case they were contradictory to those of the current government (Cf. Bozóki, 2012: 12). Therefore, it is important to note that, even if in the future elections another party may come to power, Fidesz-loyalists are positioned in all the organisations and important positions (Cf. Bánkúti/Halmai/Scheppele, 2012: 145).

*'(...) it will be hard for any other party to come to power with this level of political control over all the institutions necessary for democratic elections. Even if any other party defies the odds and manages to win an election, however, Fidesz loyalists are entrenched in every corner of the state.'*  
(Bánkúti/Halmai/Scheppele, 2012: 145)

### **3.3.2 The media law**

Another 'game-changing' law introduced by Fidesz concerned the media and free press. In the, as it is referred to 'media law', consisting of two legal acts, the Media Authority and the state regulatory were restructured and an independent Media Council, consisting of five members, was established (Cf. Bánkúti/Halmai/Scheppele, 2012: 140).

In the first law, Act CIV of 2010, the position of a media regulator and the National Media and Info- Communications-Authority were created. Moreover, general principles concerning the freedom of press, as for example the right for a journalist to protect sources, the right to receive information and prohibition of hate speech were addressed by the new law, however, most of these principles were weakened by the new act (Cf. Bátor, 2014: 235).

As a result of the second act of the media law, Act CLXXXV of 2010 concerning Media Services and Mass media, the parliament's majority had the right to appoint the members of the Media Authority's executive board (Cf. Ibid.).

A former Fidesz member of parliament was then appointed as the Media Authority for the following nine years. Moreover, every single seat of the Media Council was given to people close to Fidesz. Its power was, for example, to fine the media if it fails to give 'balanced' news (Cf. Bánkúti/Halmai/Scheppele, 2012: 140; Bátor, 2014: 235).

*'The media laws of 2010 created a media supervisory authority, and the individuals who are in the decision-making positions of this body are all close to Fidesz. The Media authority can issue financial*

*penalties at its discretion not only to radio or television programs that fail to abide by the media laws, but also to print or electronic media, and even to bloggers.*' (Bozóki, 2011: 653)

The media law poses problems because, even though there are still independent newspapers, television channels and radio stations, they find it difficult to secure broadcast frequencies and sell advertising. This is mainly due to the fact that, government agencies as well as private firms seek to keep up a good relationship with the political elite and therefore abstain from advertising in independent media (Cf. Kornai, 2015: 40).

Those actions outlined above have attracted the attention of international press and institutions and caused severe criticism, notably from the European Union. The next section therefore, will focus on the reaction of the European Union to those changes, particularly on its expressed criticism towards the Hungarian government.

### **3.4 EU reaction on the changes and the media law**

Soon after those changes were carried out and the new laws were implemented, the European Union, most of all the European Commission, as the 'watchdog of the Union', responded to and harshly criticised some of the new laws.

Most of all, the media law was under suspicion to be against the freedom of speech and violating democracy, on which the European Union is based upon as one of its fundamental principles. Neelie Kroes, as the former Vice-President of the European Commission was one of the first ones to voice doubt concerning the controversial media law, saying it is 'jeopardizing fundamental rights' (European Commission, 2011).

Concern has been raised about the fact that registration for all media, even blogs is required. According to the law, 'balanced' new coverage is requested, of 'national and European events' (Ibid.). Moreover, the suspicion had been aroused, that the media authority is being politically controlled in the appointment (Cf. European Commission, 2011).

In addition, the law had been harshly criticised by the European Parliament, saying it is a violation of the freedom of the press. Subsequently, Hungary was put under pressure by the European Commission to amend the law and withdraw some of the provisions. However, concerning books, the possibility of limiting freedom of press remained (Cf. Bozóki, 2011: 653; Bozóki, 2012: 13; Jenne/Mudde, 2012: 150).



One of the reasons, that the international community reacted as quickly was the fact, that Hungary was about to take over the EU Council Presidency at the time when most of the new laws were implemented. Most of all, the Prime minister of Luxembourg complained, that this task shall not be transferred to a country, led by someone who is not familiar with principles of liberal democracy (Cf. Müller, 2013: 32-33).

Nevertheless, the European Union was internally divided about taking actions against Hungary. Even though criticism and concern about the current situation in Hungary had been expressed, the Union still partly refrained from taking measures. On the one hand, because they did not agree on the priority and severity of the Hungarian issue, on the other hand, while the European Parliament wanted to institute proceedings against the country, the European People's Party, which Fidesz is part of, opposed to do so (Cf. Jenne/Mudde, 2012: 150).

However, as a consequence, in January 2012, the European Commission, initiated three infringement proceedings against Hungary, 'over its judiciary, its data protection authorities and the independence of the National Bank of Hungary (MNB)' (Várnagy, 2012: 96; Cf. Bugaric, 2014: 18).

In addition, the European Parliament became active in the 'Hungarian issue' and had made a report, the so-called 'Tavares report' on the situation of fundamental rights in Hungary, which will be explained in the further course.

### **3.5 The Tavares report**

The so-called 'Tavares report' was named after the Member of the European Parliament, Rui Tavares, who prepared the report. This report presents a fundamental and consequential refusal and denunciation of Prime minister Orbán's constitutional changes undertaken in Hungary since his and his Fidesz party's election victory (Cf. Scheppele, 2013).

The report first provides some background information on the evolution of the debate between the European institutions and the Hungarian government. Here, the report also refers to the underlying articles of the treaties which are being violated by the new laws, as well as the statements of the Hungarian government and the reaction in terms of amendments (Cf. Tavares, 2013: 3-4).

Moreover, it clarifies that violating ‘the Union’s common principles and values by a Member State cannot be justified national traditions nor by the expression of national identity when such a violation results in the deterioration of the principles (...), such as democratic values, the rule of law (...)’ (Tavares, 2013: 9).

Then, the report provides a general overview of the reforms in Hungary, that were carried out since the Fidesz’ take-over of the government and describes the weakening of the checks and balances. Also, it emphasizes the fact that the changes have been carried out in an exceptionally short amount of time, which was unusual until now.

With reference to the new Fundamental law, it criticises in particular that it has been adopted ‘exclusively with the votes of the member of the governing coalition and on a draft text prepared by the representatives of the governing coalition’ (Tavares, 2013: 11) and that a debate with the opposition and the citizens was therefore restricted (Cf. Tavares, 2013: 11).

Furthermore, the weakening of the checks and balances is being debated, regarding the Constitutional Court, the Parliament and the Data Protection Authority. Also, the creation of a Budget Council, which has the power to veto the general budget and moreover, which lacks democratic legitimacy, is reviewed (Cf. Ibid.: 13).

Yet, even the electoral reforms, which were to secure Fidesz power in the following elections, are addressed (Cf. Ibid: 14). In the later course of the report, the assessment, it concludes that the changes addressed, as the redrawing of electoral districts, the Act on the election of parliamentary members, as well as the law on the electoral procedure, which had been adopted, changes the rules and standards for the upcoming elections in 2014. Also, the fact that the new rules have been adopted unilaterally by the governing parties is noted (Cf. Ibid.: 25).

Importance shall also be drawn to the part of the report where the media law is being discussed, explaining the concerns raised from several institutions, but also remarking the amendments made by the Hungarian government concerning the law (Cf. Ibid: 15-18). The report enhances the fact that ‘the European Union is founded in the values of Democracy and the rule of law, and consequently guarantees and promotes freedom of expression and information’ (Tavares, 2013: 15), as outlined in article 11 of the Charter and Article 10 of the ECHR (Cf. Tavares, 2013: 15). In addition, it expresses the duty of Member States to ‘constantly promote and protect freedom of opinion, expression, information and the media (...)’ (Tavares, 2013: 15).

The 'highly hierarchical structure' (Ibid.: 16) and lack of independence of the media authority is also regarded critically.

Over other issues, concerning hate speech against Roma and other minorities as well as the imposition of retroactive tax and pensions legislation, concerns have been raised as well (Cf. Tavares, 2013: 18-19).

The second part of the report makes up the assessment of the fundamental law of Hungary as well as its implementation.

Major concerns have been expressed regarding the excessive 'use of cardinal laws to set forth very specific and detailed rules' (Tavares, 2013: 21), 'undermining the principles of democracy and the rule of law' (Ibid.). As using two-thirds majority laws is also common in other Member States, the problem rather lies in the fact that the current government in Hungary is able to implement political decisions and consequently making it more difficult for any subsequent government, which might only enjoy a simple majority, to 'respond to social changes' (Ibid.), and therefore it is also 'diminishing the importance of new elections' (Ibid.). Thus, it is considered important to re-think such use, so that upcoming governments are able to pass legislation and govern in a meaningful way (Cf. Tavares, 2013: 21).

Regarding the system of checks and balances, the report comes to the conclusion, that among independent institutions the separation of powers needs to be secured. Also, the government's decision to raise the number of constitutional judges from 11 to 15, which are elected by the two-thirds majority, is regarded with concern (Cf. Ibid.: 22).

Moreover, the prohibition for the Constitutional Court to review laws and constitutional amendments is seen as a severe restriction of the role of the Court as a protector of the Constitution (Cf. Ibid.).

Here, the report 'Deplores the fact that the abovementioned institutional changes resulted in a clear weakening of the systems of checks and balances required by the rule of law and the democratic principle of the separation of powers.' (Tavares, 2013: 24).

The third part of the report consists of recommendations, which are not solely concerning Hungary but the European Union in general and also appeals the Member States to protect and promote the common values and oblige the treaties (Cf. Tavares, 2013: 29). Moreover, suggestions are being made to the Commission to create an 'Article 2 TEU/Alarm Agenda' (Tavares, 2013: 30-31).

Further recommendations are being made to the Hungarian Authorities, to implement as fast as possible the measures which the European Commission regards as necessary to comply with EU law (Cf. Tavares, 2013: 32-33). Moreover, suggestions are being made to the Hungarian Government concerning the Fundamental law, the checks and balances, the electoral reforms, the independence of the judiciary, on the media, respect for fundamental rights and the freedom of religion or belief (Cf. Ibid.: 32-35).

In the end, the report ‘creates a strong set of tools for European institutions to use in defending the long-term prospects for Hungarian democracy.’ (Scheppelle, 2013)

In the European Parliament, 370 votes out of 754 voted in favour of the Report, 248 against it and 82 abstained from voting, whereby the report legally passed the Parliament (Cf. Scheppelle, 2013).

#### **4 Fidesz’ reaction on EU criticism and Eurosceptic rhetoric**

First, some important statements, which have been issued from 2011 onwards, when Hungary took over the Council presidency and therefore attention was drawn to Hungarian internal political affairs and critic had been raised, should shortly be outlined to demonstrate the Eurosceptic rhetoric of the Fidesz party. Afterwards the government’s reaction on the report will be exemplified.

At the beginning of the Hungarian Council presidency in 2011, immediately the new laws in Hungary had been adopted, Orbán clearly stated that:

*‘We don’t believe in the EU, we believe in Hungary!’*

(Leconte, 2012: 138)

Moreover, in Orbán’s speech in the EP, presenting the programme for the Hungarian Council presidency, protest had been raised also concerning the new laws, most of all the media law in Hungary and the Prime minister got a cold reception from the Parliamentarians.

After having presented Hungary’s programme for the following six months, he also clarified and asked the other MEP not to mix up their critics of Hungarian internal politics with Hungary’s Presidency of the EU Council (Cf. Batory, 2014: 235; European Parliament, 2011).

*'(...) I am aware that all of us sitting or standing in this House are politicians. We all have our own points of view, our own principles, our own comrades, and also our own interests. While acknowledging this, I respectfully advise you, whatever opinion you may have about the Hungarian internal politics, not to associate your criticism and actions related to Hungarian domestic politics with the following six months of the Hungarian presidency of the European Union.'*

(European Parliament, 2011)

He further effectively challenges the members of Parliament, stating that, 'If you do associate them, I will, of course, be ready for a fight' (European Parliament, 2011).

After the debate in the Parliament, Orbán received another chance to speak and responded to the remarks made by other MEPs. As severe critics have been enunciated regarding Hungary's new laws, he regrets that 'you have been so badly misled and deceived' when it comes to Hungarian domestic politics.

He also claims that after the previous government has dismantled the rule of law, which has never been criticised by anyone, it finally has been reinforced. Moreover, he reasons that, obviously, '(...) it is not really the media law you are having a problem with, but the fact that, in an act of solidarity unprecedented in Europe, the Hungarian people voted a two-thirds majority to a political force in Hungary.' (Ibid.)

In the end, he marks it as an insult to the Hungarian citizens, to question democracy in Hungary and stating it as accusation, to presume Hungary is becoming a dictatorship, considering it as an attack on Hungary (Cf. European Parliament, 2011).

He presents himself again as the defender of the Nation, saying that he will always stand up to protect his home country (Cf. Ibid.).

The self-portrayal of himself as someone who defends Hungary vis-à-vis the EU can also be illustrated in other statements, as for example in his speech on the Hungarian national holiday on March 15<sup>th</sup>, celebrating the 1848's revolution:

*'We did not tolerate Vienna dictating us in (18)48, and we did not tolerate in (19)56 and 1990 that Moscow dictates us. We won't allow it now either that anyone from Brussels or anyone else dictates us.'*  
(Orbán, cited after Batory, 2016: 290)

A similar statement on the same day was:

*'We will not allow Brussels dictating us their terms! We have never let Vienna or Moscow guide us in our history, and now we won't let Brussels do this! Hungary should have its own corner interests!'* (Stier, 2011, cited after Heinisch/Schlipphak, 2014: 189)<sup>10</sup>

One year later, on the 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2012 Orbán, in his annual speech, again draws on the perception of Hungary being 'colonized' by the EU, saying that: 'We will not be a colony!' (Orbán in Traynor, 2012, cited after Cas/Mudde, 2012: 150) and further 'Hungarian will not live as foreigners dictate, will not give up their independence of their freedom.' (Ibid.)

In the following section, the memorandum of the Hungarian government, which served as an answer to the Tavares report will be presented and summarized. Then, the reaction of Orbán in the European Parliament on the criticism of the EU concerning Hungarian's democracy will be addressed. The protocol of the plenary debate from the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2013, in which the situation of Hungary's democracy and the Tavares report has been discussed, will serve as a source. Therefore, the most significant statements and rhetoric examples made by prime minister Viktor Orbán will be adduced to undermine the presumption of Orbán using Eurosceptic rhetoric. As another source to undermine the assumptions of Eurosceptic rhetoric will serve the press conference with Viktor Orbán after the plenary debate on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2013, where Viktor Orbán provides responses to several questions from journalists with regard to the criticism passed during the discussion in the EP.

#### **4.1 The Hungarian Government's reaction on the Tavares report**

As illustrated above, the constitutional changes and new laws implemented by the incoming Fidesz government in 2010 draw the attention to Hungary and resulted to a large extend in criticism on the violation of fundamental rights, also in form of a report.

As a reaction to the "Tavares report", the Hungarian Government composed a memorandum, containing remarks on the report of the European Parliament and on the situation of fundamental rights in Hungary.

In this memorandum, critic has been raised on the conclusion of the report, by saying that the report questions 'the founding principles of the European Union, the balance between the Member States and the institutions of the Union, as well as the relationships among the various

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<sup>10</sup> Original Orbán statement not available any more. See also: Batory, A. (2014): Uploading as political strategy: the European Parliament and the Hungarian media law debate. In: East European Politics, 30(2), p. 239.

bodies for the EU' (Hungarian Government, 2013: 1). Moreover, it is perceived as a threat, by being a justification for the European Parliament to be able to 'place under "tutelage", (...), any Member State without any authorisation to do so' (Ibid.).

The Hungarian Government furthermore accuses the report of failing to give precise examples of the Government acting contrary to the European principles and values (Cf. Hungarian Government, 2013: 1).

*'Instead, it hints trends, amplifies false perceptions and draws conclusion that are out of proportion with the facts.'*

(Hungarian Government, 2013: 1)

As a conclusion, the memorandum argues that the report acts beyond the competences of the Parliament and ignores the division of competences among the Institutions of the European Union. It furthermore ignores the treaty obligations regarding mutual respect for constitutional traditions of the member states. The Hungarian Government here also criticises the fact that the report sees the amendments as an attack on the rule of law in Hungary, while ignoring the same practices in other Member States (Cf. Hungarian Government, 2013: 9).

In the end, the report concludes with the statement that,

*'(...) the report, that applies double standards openly, amounts to an abuse of power by the European Parliament that is deeply unjust with Hungary and the Hungarian nation. As a consequence, the Hungarian Government rejects the report in its entirety.'*

(Hungarian Government, 2013: 9-10)

#### **4.2 Orbán's reaction on the criticism in the EP debate on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013**

The "Tavares report" had also been discussed in the European Parliament on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2013. During this debate, Viktor Orbán, as representative of the Hungarian government, was invited to justify his policies and he furthermore sought to defend the changes vis-à-vis the European Union.

At the beginning of the debate, Orbán gives a speech, saying the report is 'deeply insulting' and 'untrue' vis-à-vis Hungary and the Hungarian people (Cf. European Parliament, 2013). He further argues the use of double standards, does not acknowledge and downgrades the great work of the Hungarians in renewing their homeland (Cf. Ibid.).

He further claims the report endangers Europe and the fundamental treaties of the European Union (Cf. Ibid.).

One of his last statements in his speech is rather controversial, saying that:

*'(...) we Hungarian do not want a Europe, where successful countries are being punished, instead of being accredited! We do not want a Europe, where they convict a unity expressed by a two-third instead of respected! We do not want a Europe, where they put one under tutelage, restrict freedom and do not expand it! We do not want a Europe the bigger ones abuse their power and the majority abuses ones power! We do not want such a Europe, where they use double-standards, where only the smaller ones have to respect the bigger ones!'<sup>11</sup>*

(European Parliament, 2013)

In the end of the plenary session, Orbán stands another chance to speak react on the various criticism articulated, during the debate. In the end of his speech, as a conclusion he states that:

*'(...) if you would tell us your critic, I would very much appreciate it, but you do not tell us your critic. In this report, you make suggestions to put Hungary under political tutelage, and I can never accept, that you want to put my home under political tutelage. Hungary us a free county, and therefore we cannot accept this report.'<sup>12</sup>*

(European Parliament, 2013)

### **4.3 Analysis of Orbán's statements during the press conference on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013**

After the plenary debate on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 2013, Orbán held a press conference, answering various question on the debate shortly before. In this conference, some more statements were given by the Prime minister, which have led to the conclusion of Orbán using Eurosceptic rhetoric and that the rhetoric might, have been, besides other factors which are not topic of this thesis, triggered by criticism and interventions by the EU.

Answering a question, whether Orbán is not impressed by the fact that, for the first time, so many states try to change a constitution of another member state, and what he feels while being under such pressure he says:

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<sup>11</sup> Translated by Gabriela Greilinger from Hungarian to English.

<sup>12</sup> Translated by Gabriela Greilinger from Hungarian to English.



*'(...) we reject the imperialistic approach, imperialistic which would like to create an empire, with the centre of Brussels, we don't like that. We believe (in) the alliance of the nations, the European Union of free nations.'*

(Magyarország Kormánya, 2013: min. 11:15-11:35)

Viktor Orbán moreover regrets the fact the Hungary does not get any appreciation and respect from the European Union for the economic improvement. He pities that Hungary is not being regarded as a successful country and a good example due to its financial stabilization after the economic crisis and therefore abstain from attacking it. He further regrets the fact that the general atmosphere is so bad in the European Parliament saying that:

*'What is going in here (sic!) is not positive for any human being, so I don't like it at all, but you know, that's part of life.'*

(Magyarország Kormánya, 2013: min. 14:19-14:25)

Another question is being raised with reference to the continuity of the 'Copenhagen criteria'<sup>13</sup> and whether a so-called 'Copenhagen Commission' shall be established. The idea of creating such a commission was a recommendation in the Tavares report. However, this concept has been harshly criticised by the Hungarian government, saying that it would contradict the treaties (Cf. Hungarian Government, 2013: 9). Likewise, in the press conference, Orbán answers to the question, that such a Commission does not exist, and that, if someone wants to change the fundamental treaties of the EU and 'create a new Europe', it should openly admit that he wants to modify the Union, not through the backdoor, and then there can be an open debate about it. Orbán further names it 'unfair' and not appropriate (Cf. Magyarország Kormánya, 2013: min. 16:46-17:48).

The reporter further questions whether Hungary can be seen as the 'apropos' for establishing such a commission or the first subject, due to which it shall be created (Cf. Ibid.: min. 17:51-17:57). Here, Orbán draws an interesting but rather controversial metaphor, asking whether it makes any difference if the Turk occupy the empire because they like Hungary or because they hurry to get to Vienna. He even continues, asking the hypothetical question whether it is not the same for the Hungarians if the Russians in the cold war occupy Hungary, because they wanted to have a good position vis-à-vis the Americans. He then answers the hypothetical question

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<sup>13</sup> 'Copenhagen criteria' are in general the criteria a candidate must meet in order to become a member of the Union.

himself, saying that from the Hungarian's perspective, it would not matter, as the Hungarian suffer anyway (Cf. Ibid.: min. 17:58-18:15). This can be interpreted as passing direct criticism on the European Union or Brussels in acting as if it would be the same situation now with the European Union and again claiming it to be 'imperialistic', and colonising Member States. He concludes that, in any way, if the interests of the Hungarian are being violated, they have to stand up and defend them immediately, pretending to be the 'hero of the nation'. Moreover, he says that from the national perspective, they had to refuse the report, and make clear that the Hungarians cannot go along with that (Cf. Ibid.: min. 19:03-19:07).

As an answer to the following question, whether the Hungarian government, as a matter of fact, does not intent to work together with the EU institutions and adapt the recommendations of the Tavares report, Orbán again draws a connection between the old Soviet regime in Hungary and Hungary's EU membership. He puts up the hypothetical question, whether this here is 'Moscow or Brussels'<sup>14</sup> (Magyarország Kormánya, 2013: min. 20:43-20:45), or as he says, more precisely 'the old Moscow or the new Brussels?'<sup>15</sup> (Ibid.: min. 20:48-20:49). He further explains, that in the old Soviet times, the nations did not possess any independence, and that, as he made clear, the two, Moscow and Brussels, cannot be compared to each other, because there would have never been such a dispute in Moscow. Even if there would have been such an argument, the Soviets would never have let the Hungarians go home, not as they do here. Nevertheless, he continues that there is still, psychologically seen, some kind of 'weird' similarity: those arguments and phrases they have heard in there<sup>16</sup>, where the same ones, the Hungarians heard from the Soviets, that they wanted to protect the Hungarians from themselves (Cf. Magyarország Kormánya, 2013: min. 21:17-21:33). Here he further clarifies: 'We do not want that. We do not need to be protected from ourselves'<sup>17</sup> (Magyarország Kormánya, 2013: min. 21:33-21:40). Moreover, he says, it is especially suspicious for the Hungarians, if someone wants to protect them from themselves (Cf. Magyarország Kormánya, 2013: min. 22:39-22:43). Therefore, it can be assumed that he still, to some extent, compares Brussels and the EU with the old Soviet regime.

One of the last questions by a journalist was, whether Orbán regrets being in the European Union. Here, the prime minister states that, it has always been a desire of the Hungarian nation,

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<sup>14</sup> Translated by Gabriela Greilinger from Hungarian to English.

<sup>15</sup> Translated by Gabriela Greilinger from Hungarian to English.

<sup>16</sup> Note: in the European Parliament debate;

<sup>17</sup> Translated by Gabriela Greilinger from Hungarian to English.

to become member of the European Union and to belong to the community of West Europe. Therefore, he is of the mind that, just because of this ‘unfair treatment’ inside the Union, he would never say, that the Hungarians should reject the idea of belonging to the West. However, they should open to the East as well and also think globally. Anyway, Hungary still belongs to the West, in terms of culture, history and also geographically (Cf. Magyarország Kormánya, 2013: 41:50-42:41). So, he will always stand up for ‘the values of cooperation’ (Magyarorszáág Kormánya, 2013: min. 42:47-42:53) and defend them as well as support between the nations of Europe. Being member of the European Union is not just tactical, or a ‘short calculation’, it is Hungary’s place, as he concludes (Cf. Magyarország Kormánya, 2013: min. 43:00-43:49).

To conclude, it can be said that Orbán’s overall reaction on the report has been quite negative. This can too be proved by a statement in a radio interview in 2013 on the Tavares report, where he argues that,

*‘(...) it is not the Government the European Union has a problem with, much as they want us to believe..., the truth is they attack Hungary.’*

(Orbán, cited after Bátorý, 2016: 290)

The statement here perfectly summarizes the argument, with which Orbán tries to defend his Eurosceptic stance and rhetoric: by portraying the European Union as the ‘enemy’ of Hungary, he wants to justify his action concerning the constitutional changes and new laws that he introduced since 2010. By accusing the EU of ‘Euro-colonialism’ (Bebel/Collier, 2015: 20) and illustrating the Union’s criticism as attacks against Hungary, he wants to play the ‘blame game on Brussels’ (Schlipphak/Treib, 2017: 359). In accusing the European Union of attacking Hungary personally, he hopes to receive more votes and support from the voters in Hungary, as he presents himself as a ‘defender’.

*‘In the face of a highly Eurosceptic public such as the Hungarian one, playing the blame game on Brussels is an electorally rewarding strategy. Orbán was successful in framing even the very cautions interventions by the EU as illegitimate interference with domestic affairs.’*

(Schlipphak/Treib, 2017: 360)

Moreover, as the Union criticises the democratic backsliding in Hungary, Orbán turns the tables, emphasising the fact that he and the Hungarian government were democratically elected by a majority and challenging the democratic legitimacy of the European Commission.

*'I was elected, the Hungarian government was also elected, as well as the European Parliament... But who elected the European Commission? What is its democratic legitimacy? And to whom is the Parliament responsible? This is a very serious problem in the new European architecture.'*

(Orbán, 2012, cited after Jenne/Mudde, 2012: 149)

In the following section, a summary on the findings will be given and reference will be made to the first part of the thesis, the theoretical framework, according to which an attempt will be made to classify Fidesz.

## **5 Summary of the findings**

Before summarising the findings of the case-study, it is worth emphasizing that the reaction of the Hungarian government, and particularly Viktor Orbán, to the Tavares report and the debate on the situation in Hungary can only be seen as one example to illustrate the application of Eurosceptic rhetoric by the Fidesz party. But, as this thesis is written as a case-study, demonstrating the hypothesis, that Fidesz' Euroscepticism has risen over the years and that the party, and most of all Viktor Orbán, uses Eurosceptic rhetoric, this specific, very special case is seen as convenient.

This chapter will try to summarise the obtained results of the study, to moreover position Fidesz according to the findings within the different types outlined in the theoretical framework and also describe Fidesz' type of Euroscepticism in more detail.

Generally, it can be claimed that Orbán tries to justify his Eurosceptic position in putting it as if the EU would endanger Hungary's sovereignty and therefore the country needs to be protected. Moreover, he often draws a connection between the old Soviet regime, that suppressed Hungary, and the EU, as he knows Hungarians still are quite sensitive about this issue. However, at the same time he still tries to clarify that Hungary's place is in Europe, and that Hungary belongs to the West.

According to that, it can be reasoned that the Eurosceptic stance of Fidesz nowadays has more to do with the fact, that they do not want the EU to intervene. It can therefore be seen as some sort of 'blame-shifting', so that, to put it in Schlipphak's and Treib's words, the 'citizens perceive their own domestic situations more favourably of the EU is portrayed in a more negative way' (Schlipphak/Treib, 2017: 355). Therefore, it can also be seen as some kind of

strategy of the Fidesz party, to accuse the EU of intervening and by that, limiting the sovereignty of Hungary, in order to make their own policies appear more beneficial.

As a next step, an attempt is made to classify Fidesz according to the types of Euroscepticism which were outlined in the theoretical approach according to the findings made in the course of this thesis and draw a conclusion to the result of the study.

Defining the position of Fidesz on the European Union can, at times, be quite difficult, as their stance changed over the years, on grounds of their modified ideology and changing position and importance within the Hungarian party system.

To begin with the categories of Eurosceptic parties of Taggart 1998, it can already be seen that classifying Fidesz within those is quite difficult, since their positions has altered with time. While Fidesz had been in opposition between 2002 and 2010, to some extent a Eurosceptic stance developed. In this time, it could have been classified as protest based party with Euroscepticism. Since in 2010 Fidesz became a governing party, it is rather a party with Eurosceptic factions, which means that in general they are supportive for European integration, yet, significant factions take in a Eurosceptic position (Cf. Taggart, 1998: 369). Yet, classifying Fidesz as a party with Eurosceptic faction might not be completely suitable, as from nowadays perspective, it is not just a faction of Fidesz that is Eurosceptic, as the whole party backs Viktor Orbán and supports his policies.<sup>18</sup> However, this type is regarded as the most appropriate one according to the three types defined by Taggart in 1998.

As Taggart and Szczerbiak made further distinctions between a soft and a hard category, there is a broad consent on the classification of Fidesz as soft Eurosceptic, as various scholars defined Fidesz as such from the party's beginnings on, despite still supporting membership in the European Union per se (Cf. Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2004: 10; Taggart/Szczerbiak, 2001: 16, 18; Ágh, 2015: 30; Bebel/Collier, 2015: 20; Beichelt, 2004: 39, Batory, 2008: 265)

Duro (2016) however, claims that Fidesz cannot be classified as soft Eurosceptic, due to its supportive stance on European integration despite the various conflicts since 2010 (Cf. Duro, 2016: 36).

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<sup>18</sup> This can be illustrated on the various campaign that have been carried out, as for example the most recent 'Let's stop Brussels' campaign, which the whole party promoted. For further information see: AFP (2017): Hungary launches 'Stop Brussels' questionnaire campaign, URL: <https://guardian.ng/news/hungary-launches-stop-brussels-questionnaire-campaign/>, last access: 26.07.2017.

Nevertheless, by looking at the findings of the case-study and the Eurosceptic rhetoric of the Prime minister, Fidesz can easily be classified within the dimension as a soft Eurosceptic party. Moreover, as explained in 2.3.2, the soft dimension can be divided into national or policy Eurosceptic.

Fidesz is here rather found to be a ‘national’ Eurosceptic party, as it consistently emphasizes the Hungarian nation, and its need of protection from the European Union’s ‘attacks’. At the same time, Fidesz advocates further integration and can therefore not be classified Eurosceptic regarding policies. Yet, this position has also changed in the past years, since Fidesz nowadays also rebels against certain policies of the EU. The most recent example here would be the migrant quotas, which Fidesz rejected.<sup>19</sup>

Taking into account ideological and strategical dimensions, it becomes clear that the factors ideology and strategy to explain Fidesz’ Euroscepticism are of importance and that both are interconnected. Moreover, it has been proven that the reasons for the party to take on a soft Eurosceptic position altered over the years<sup>20</sup> and that ideological, as well as strategical factors are involved.

This complicates classifying Fidesz according to Rovny, as their position in his concept depends on the time period one is looking at. As outlined in the theoretical framework, Rovny’s work relies on the assumption that ideology and strategy are the motivation for adopting a Eurosceptic attitude, while the magnitude of Euroscepticism can range from hard to soft categories. By examining Fidesz with regard to the development of their Eurosceptic stance, it becomes clear that both, ideology and strategy are of importance and are interconnected.

At first, the motivation Fidesz’ Euroscepticism can rather be explained to be out of strategy, as they were unsatisfied with the outcomes of the accession negotiations and therefore displayed some kind of soft Euroscepticism, yet not as strongly as in recent times.

As Fidesz became more Eurosceptic over the years, this was also due to strategic reasons. When Jobbik, a right-wing, nationalistic and Eurosceptic party became a clear threat for Fidesz, they tried increasingly expressed Euroscepticism, out of fear to lose voters on Jobbik.

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<sup>19</sup> For further information on Hungary challenging the migrant quotas see: Zalan E. (2017): Hungary and Slovakia challenge quotas at the EU's top court, URL: <https://euobserver.com/migration/137857>, last access: 27.7.2017.

<sup>20</sup> For further information on the change of Fidesz’ attitude in the European issue see section 3.2

Moreover, the Fidesz' reaction to the criticism by the EU can be regarded as an indicator for strategy-based Euroscepticism. Fidesz used the critics as a justification to apply Eurosceptic rhetoric and putting it as if the EU was attacking Hungary while presenting themselves as defenders of the nation, hoping for sympathy from the Hungarian voters. Therefore, it can be assumed that the motivation for their Eurosceptic stance is strategy.

However, ideology and strategy shall both not be regarded separately, as they interact and are often connected with each other, which is also the case for Fidesz.

Ideologically seen, Fidesz was first pro-European and supportive of the 'return to Europe'. Yet, over the years their ideology changed, from liberal to conservative, and with it their attitude towards Europe. Fidesz hence became more and more Eurosceptic, taking up a nationalistic stance, which is also reflected in their Eurosceptic rhetoric.

Therefore, one can argue that, in the case of Fidesz, it is a mix of ideology and strategy, which makes it difficult to locate them in the concept of Rovny, as they are to be found somewhere between ideologically and strategically driven soft Euroscepticism.

## 6 Conclusion

As we have seen from the study, the Euroscepticism among the Hungarian governing party can be considered to have risen over the past years while also the reasons for the scepticism have changed. Before the accession, as outlined in the sections above, scepticism had more to do with the fact that accession negotiations were not fast enough and the government felt deflated by the long proceedings. Later, scepticism was rather due to European policies and the criticism of the European Union on Hungarian internal political affairs.

Also, the fact that the Hungarian governing party applies Eurosceptic rhetoric remains, after having carried out the case-study, without a doubt. In their rhetoric, they mostly express their Eurosceptic stance by comparing Brussels with the Soviet regime, and therefore oppressing Hungary. Moreover, Fidesz wants to be perceived as the defender of the nation, which is also reflected in their rhetoric. The findings of the study furthermore show, that criticism by the EU to domestic politics is seen as a justification for the government to apply Eurosceptic rhetoric and to defend its national policies.

However, other interesting questions and factors which should be more closely considered and discussed, but would have gone beyond the scope of this thesis remain. For example, what measures the EU could take to prevent democratic backsliding, without, triggering Euroscepticism and, as Schlipphak and Treib (2017) named it, making national governments 'playing the blame game on Bussels' (Schlipphak/Treib, 2017).

Furthermore, the classifications of Euroscepticism might need to be adapted, to keep up with the times and changing international circumstances. As it has been shown, the reasons for changing one's stance on Europe are diverse and also the fact that extent to which a party expresses Euroscepticism is likely to change over times, due to strategic reasons. This suggests, that new categories for such 'chameleon' parties need to be found. In addition, as ideology and strategy are, at least in the Fidesz party, to such a major extend interconnected, a new concept which combines the two factors needs to be found, in order to explain party-based Euroscepticism, which has ideological and strategic grounds.

In addition, the 'soft' dimension of Euroscepticism, introduced by Taggart and Szczerbiak can be regarded as not sufficient. As Fidesz can generally be classified as soft Eurosceptic, this position does not change over the year, even though Fidesz ideology and strategic reason for adopting the Eurosceptic stance, clearly have changed over the years. Furthermore, the study



has shown that Euroscepticism is indeed rising among the Hungarian governing party, yet this is not reflected in the soft-hard dimension, as Fidesz can still be regarded as soft Euroscepticism, even though it can definitely be perceived stronger today than ever. Therefore, the author suggests that the differentiation of hard and soft categories are to be reviewed and adapted to nowadays political parties or further subdivision of the hard and soft categories are necessary.

Yet, this is another topic and for now, we have to work with the terms and conceptualisations given.

To conclude, this thesis ought to provide an insight on how and why Euroscepticism can change and rise over the years among a political party, exemplified on one specific case, and how it can be rhetorically expressed from the sight of a political party. The reasons for a party changing its stance on European integration, of course, vary, however, Fidesz as a party represents an interesting example on how such a change can be demonstrated in the rhetoric of a political party.

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