



# Party-Based Euroscepticism in the Visegrád (V4) Countries

József DÚRÓ

Corvinus University of Budapest, Institute of Political Science

**Abstract.** After the electoral breakthrough of Eurosceptic parties at the latest European parliamentary election, Euroscepticism has become a hot issue once again. However, it is clear that Euroscepticism is not a single phenomenon but a very complex one. Eurosceptic MEPs sit at almost every group of the EP; they have different views on society, economy and on the European integration in some respects. As far as the Visegrád Countries are concerned, the Eurosceptic parties of the region have been a significant reinforcement to the critics of the EU since 2004. This paper focuses on the nature of party-based Euroscepticism in Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary. Keeping the classification of Taggart and Szczarbiak, I found that there are four main types of party-based Euroscepticism in this region: sovereignty-based, leftist/anti-capitalist, periphery-based and redistribution-based.

**Keywords:** Euroscepticism, parties, European Union, Visegrád Countries, EP elections

The problems of the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty (e.g. in Poland and the Czech Republic), the strengthening of Eurosceptic parties, such as Jobbik in Hungary and the crisis of the eurozone (the fall of Slovak government in 2011 for instance), have once again put the critics of the European Union in the limelight in the Visegrád Countries (V4). Since the EU accession has started in 2004, lots of parties have gained European Parliamentary seats which have criticized the EU. Despite the fact that these parties are ideologically very different, they are often labelled as Eurosceptics without making a difference between them. However, the phenomenon of Euroscepticism in V4 countries is so complex and diverse that it needs further categorization. This paper focuses on the types of party-based Euroscepticism in two ways. First of all, I update the classifications of Taggart and Szczarbiak. Secondly, I analyse the reasons of Euroscepticism because they are important but less researched. Taggart and Szczarbiak argue that the main reference point is the relation to membership. They use two categories: 'hard Eurosceptic' parties think

that their countries should withdraw from the EU, while ‘soft Eurosceptics’ do not form a principled opposition to European integration (Taggart-Szczerbiak, 2008: 8). Similarly to Taggart and Szczerbiak, Kopecký and Mudde (2002) state that Eurosceptics differ from Eurorejects in the relation to EU-membership.

I analyse the parties having at least one seat in the national or European Parliament. This means 6 Eurosceptic parties. During my work, I have taken into account the statements of the literature about Eurosceptic parties. In order to get a detailed picture of Eurosceptic parties, I have analysed the programmes and manifestos of these parties and investigated the parliamentary and European Parliamentary votings on the Treaty of Lisbon. I argue that Eurosceptic parties in V4 countries are quite different and at least four types of Euroscepticism could be differentiated: sovereignty-based Euroscepticism, leftist Euroscepticism, periphery-based Euroscepticism and redistribution-based Euroscepticism. It is quite interesting that Eurosceptic parties in Eastern Europe do not really reflect on the democracy-deficit of the EU; so, this type of Euroscepticism clearly lacks in this region.

Sovereignty-based Euroscepticism means if a party opposes the integration or a part of it because it impairs its country’s sovereignty, or if the national sovereignty and/or the real or perceived occurrence of the national interest’s damage stands in the centre of the party’s critique. I classified here Neo-liberal Eurosceptic parties as well. These parties criticize overregulation; however, it is a question of national sovereignty: what is regulated in Brussels, cannot be regulated at national level. Leftist Euroscepticism rests on two pillars. One of them is that anti-capitalist attitude which aims at socialism or at the creation of a kind of proletarian union. It is the Marxist-Leninist and Trotskyist parties’ own. On the other hand, a kind of leftist Euroscepticism stands out along the new left parties’ classical values (anti-globalization, social sensitivity, anti-capitalism in some cases and pacifism).

Periphery-based Euroscepticism is the critique of the Eurosceptic parties in the periphery countries of the European Union and which originates from the fact that these countries are poorer than the core countries of the EU. So, these parties experience the FDI from the centre as colonization. Usually, these parties criticize the decision-making process dominated by France and Germany. In the case of the post-communist countries, it is coupled with the fact that these member states joined the EU later and with worse conditions.

Redistribution-based Euroscepticism is when a party’s critique against the EU is drawn up by a redistribution issue. On the one hand, the source of these criticisms is the fact that some policy areas have a decreasing share from the EU budget (e.g. Common Agricultural Policy). Therefore, the favoured member states of these policy areas have been interested in the maintenance of the status quo. The other subtype of this category has become visible in connection with the crisis of the Eurozone. Its essence is that the Eurosceptic parties of richer member states claim that their countries should not finance the countries in trouble.

I think I need to define some notions at this point. First of all, I define party-based Euroscepticism because it has several definitions (e.g. Taggart and Szczarbiak, 2008; Kopecký and Mudde, 2002; Harmsen-Spiering, 2005; Kaniok, 2009; Sørensen, 2007). Naturally, it focuses on parties and does not pay attention to voters. Secondly, the subject of the criticism has to focus on European integration instead of public policy. For example, party A criticizes the environmental policy of the EU because it does not serve sustainable development, while party B criticizes it because it means a further deepening of the integration. In this case, only party B is Eurosceptic. Hence, a Eurosceptic party is a party which opposes or criticizes the current European integration, some parts of it, or its decision-making process or mechanism, where the criticism is basically principal-based, not policy-based.

This paper has three main parts. First of all, I define party-based Euroscepticism and make a literature review. I comment on the categorization of Taggart and Szczarbiak, and later on the classification of Kopecký and Mudde because both have some problems. In the second section, I demonstrate the methodology of the research. Thirdly, I examine Eurosceptic parties in the Visegrád Countries. At the end of the paper, I analyse the investigated parties according to the nature of their Euroscepticism.

## **1. Concepts of Party-Based Euroscepticism**

### **1.1. First Steps**

Before the ratification process of the Maastricht Treaty (early 1990s), Euroscepticism was not a hot issue in European politics. Naturally, there were some Eurosceptic parties (e.g. communist parties), but as the phenomenon was marginal the literature has not drawn attention to it. This situation changed in the early 1990s when the ratification process of the Treaty on European Union (TEU) called some Eurosceptic parties and movements into life such as the June Movement in Denmark, the UK Independence Party or the Movement for France.

As a reaction to the emergence of the parties which had criticized the European integration, Paul Taggart (1997, 1998) defined Euroscepticism:<sup>1</sup> '[e]uroscepticism expresses the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration' (Taggart, 1998: 366). In my opinion, this explanation seems to be good at first sight. The trap of this designation becomes clear after seeing the classification of Taggart. He differentiates three types of Euroscepticism (Taggart, 1997: 3):

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1 Ernst B. Haas (1958) also researched the parties' relation to the European integration; however, he did not define the concept of Euroscepticism.

- (1) Anti-integrationist position means that a party opposes the very idea of the European integration.
- (2) There are those parties that are sceptical about the current European integration because it is too inclusive (i.e. these parties desire less integration).
- (3) There are those parties that are sceptical that the EU is the best form of the integration because it is too exclusive (i.e. these parties prefer deeper integration).

The first category is very clear and unequivocal. The two latter groups need some attention. Taggart demonstrates that parties being sceptical about the EU because of its inclusivity argue that the EU is trying to combine elements that are incompatible. These parties often cite the rights and sovereignty of the member states. Contrarily, parties criticizing the EU because of its too exclusive nature sometimes conclude that the European Union excludes the poorer regions of the world or cuts across the interests of the working class (Taggart, 1998: 366). It means that either these parties prefer another form of integration (e.g. workers' union) or a deeper integration.

I think this categorization evolves a major problem of the conceptualization of Euroscepticism. Taggart thinks that every critique that reflects on the current European integration process is a Eurosceptic behaviour. This could be at least questionable. Can those parties that criticize the European Union because of its exclusivity be labelled Eurosceptic? As far as I am concerned, I simply cannot accept this point of view. There are only a few cases when parties rejected a European treaty because it did not include any real improvement in the European integration process: e.g. the Humanist Democratic Centre (CDH) in Belgium did not support the ratification of the Treaty of Nice (Deschouwer and Van Assche, 2008: 80). But nobody says that CDH is a Eurosceptic party.

## **1.2. Hard and Soft Euroscepticism**

The first real milestone of the research of Euroscepticism was the classification of Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart (2000). They differentiate two sides of Euroscepticism. These definitions have been clarified during the recent years; so, I concentrate on the very last designations.

Hard Euroscepticism is where there is a principled opposition to the EU or the 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 and Szczerbiak, 2008a: 7).

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 lead 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's trajectory (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008a: 8).

Szczerbiak and Taggart emphasize that hard Eurosceptic parties oppose the intergovernmental form of the economic integration (i.e. the original form of the EEC) as well (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2000: 6). This is an important statement because most of the Eurosceptic parties prefer intergovernmental co-operations. However, parties being in favour of utopian conceptions, such as proletarian union, are included in the hard Eurosceptic category.

Kopecký and Mudde find some weaknesses of the concept of Taggart and Szczerbiak. First of all, they find that soft Euroscepticism is too inclusive because it includes every insignificant disagreement with any policy decision (Kopecký and Mudde, 2002: 300). Taggart and Szczerbiak allege that the subject of soft Euroscepticism is only the planned and further extension of EU competencies (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008b: 242). Secondly, Kopecký and Mudde note that the clear distinction between hard and soft Euroscepticism is blurred when the authors argue that 'hard Euroscepticism can be identified by the principled objections to the current form of European integration in the EU' (Kopecký and Mudde, 2002: 300). Thirdly, Kopecký and Mudde argue that it is not clear that hard and soft Euroscepticism reflect on the relation to the idea of the European integration or on its embodiment, the European Union (Kopecký and Mudde, 2002: 300).

Finally, I state that Taggart and Szczerbiak do not make any difference between the status before and after the EU accession. It is a mistake because parties that opposed joining the EU do not wish to withdraw their countries from the EU in every case (e.g. the Austrian greens opposed joining the EU and promoted the maintaining of the country's EU membership). The lack of this distinction could cause the overestimation of the number of hard Eurosceptic parties and thereby it could lead to incorrect conclusions, which do not help the understanding of the phenomenon.

### **1.3. Kopecký and Mudde's Alternative Classification**

As far as Kopecký and Mudde are concerned, they create an alternative classification based on the Visegrád Countries (Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary). The authors conclude that there is a difference between the relation to the idea of the European integration and the European Union itself. They use Easton's (1965) model on the support for political regimes (diffuse and specific support). As Kopecký and Mudde show, the diffuse support for Europe is the support of the idea of the European

integration, while the specific support concerns the European Union (Kopecký and Mudde, 2002: 300). These two dimensions give a matrix (Table 1).

**Table 1.** *Classification of Kopecký and Mudde*

	<b>Europhile</b>	<b>Europphobe</b>
<b>EU-optimist</b>	Euroenthusiast	Europragmatist
<b>EU-pessimist</b>	Eurosceptic	Euroreject

*Source: Kopecký and Mudde, 2002: 303*

Kopecký and Mudde point out that the supporters of the EU are EU-optimists, the rejecters are EU-pessimists, while the supporters of the European integration are Europhiles, and the rejecters are Europhobes. These categories create four groups. Parties which combine Europhile and EU-optimist positions are Euroenthusiasts. Eurosceptics support the idea of the European integration, but they are pessimistic about the current form. Groups that oppose both the general idea and the current form of integration are Eurorejects, and finally, parties that do not support the idea, but they support the European Union, are Europragmatists (Kopecký and Mudde, 2002: 302–303).

Taggart and Szczerbiak criticized this classification in some ways. Firstly, they say that the category of ‘Eurosceptics’ is too exclusive because it does not include the principled opposition. Secondly, the authors find the ‘Europragmatist’ category illogical. Kopecký and Mudde categorized as Europragmatist parties such as Mečiar’s Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) or the Independent Smallholders’ Party (FKgP) in Hungary (Kopecký and Mudde, 2002: 316). I think of Karen Henderson’s phrase, ‘phoney Europhile’ (Henderson, 2008: 284). Finally, Taggart and Szczerbiak argue that the ‘Euroenthusiasts’ category is too inclusive because there are differences between parties supporting the current integration process (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2008b: 243–244).

Agreeing with Taggart and Szczerbiak, I think there is another major problem with the classification of Kopecký and Mudde. It seems very clear that the category of ‘Eurosceptics’ is not a principled opposition of the EU but only a critique of the current European integration. From this point of view, it is more or less the same as Taggart and Szczerbiak’s soft Euroscepticism. Along the same principle, Eurorejects can be categorized as hard Eurosceptics.

Despite their problems, I think both classifications could be useful to analyse the parties’ relation to the European Union. In this paper, I focus on the current European integration process, so I use hard and soft Eurosceptic categories. However, these definitions are not enough to understand the nature of Euroscepticism in CEE countries. To solve this problem, I examine the reasons for which Eurosceptic parties criticize the European Union.

## 2. Methodology

In this paper, I examine the Euroscepticism of parliamentary parties in CEE countries. In this field, the most serious question is the indicator of Euroscepticism. Taggart argues in his first study on the phenomenon that the relation to the Maastricht Treaty is a good indicator of it because it reappraised the European Union; Eurosceptics could express their opposition this way and general support of the EU declined in public opinion (Taggart, 1998: 366–367). I think, Taggart's suggestion is basically good, and this method is useful later as well because the changes of Euroscepticism can be followed easily through 2-3 treaties within a decade. The most serious question in connection with the indicator is its operationalizability. My aim is to choose a simple and easily operationalizable indicator (Taggart and Szerzbiak, 2008b: 246). The examination of party programmes could be misleading: it can happen that a hard Eurosceptic party moderates itself in government or neutralizes the European issue and changes its European policy like the French Communist Party did in 1997 (Benedetto and Quaglia, 2007: 482). A similar problem could arise during the analysis of parliamentary votings: the two green parties and the People's Union (VU) in Belgium rejected the Nice Treaty simply because they did not feel it European enough (Deschouwer and Van Assche, 2008: 82). 'Honest' voting can come to the European Parliament, but parties becoming relevant that time (e.g. Freedom and Solidarity in Slovakia) would be omitted from the research in this case.

Different treaties deepening the European Union – more precisely, parties' standpoints on them – create very good bases, sufficiently dense clues and opportunities for operationalization. Therefore, classification based on the relation to the European Union has a benefit because it is always current as the reform of the European Union is continuously on the agenda – which cannot be said about the relation to the membership (hard and soft Euroscepticism).

I perform the synthesis of the three methods: considering party programme as a base, I examined the reason if a party did not vote in accordance with its party programme. I found cases in which the certain party was either in government position, changed its standpoint, or some other domestic factor may have affected its decision. Kaniok argues that it is important to examine parties' rhetoric (Kaniok, 2009: 166); however, I disagree with this statement. Rhetoric is for voters, but a party which supports the deepening of the European integration while its leader criticizes the European Union in some other issues cannot be deemed as Eurosceptic.<sup>2</sup>

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2 Some leaders of non-Eurosceptic parties have argued many times against the idea of federal Europe. For example, then French president Nicolas Sarkozy said in the European Parliament in 2008 that building a Europe against the nation-state would be a historical mistake (BBC, 2008). German Chancellor Angela Merkel emphasized in an interview that she does not see any reason to transfer further powers to Brussels (Spiegel, 2013). Furthermore, Frits Bolkestein, former European commissioner and ex-leader of the Dutch liberal party (VVD), agreed with his party's

### 3. Party-Based Euroscepticism in V4 Countries

Table 2 shows Eurosceptic parties at the time of the EU accession. Although there have been major changes within the party systems of the Visegrád Countries, it could be a good starting point. In the Czech Republic, the Communist and Civic Democratic Party are still relevant; however, ODS has lost most of its voters since then. The Republican Party does not exist anymore, but Tomio Okamura's Dawn party (Úsvit) gained mandates last autumn and the Party of Free Citizens (Svobodní) won a European Parliamentary seat in May. In Hungary, the Euroscepticism of the Fidesz can be questionable, while MIÉP was replaced by Jobbik on the right of the political spectrum. The Hungarian Workers' Party has never had any parliamentary seats. As far as Poland is concerned, Self-Defence and LPR lost their parliamentary representations in 2007 and became insignificant parties. Polish People's Party abandoned its Euroscepticism, which focused on the circumstances of the accession. Law and Justice remained the only relevant Eurosceptic party, though Korwin-Mikke's Congress of the New Right (KNP) gained 4 EP seats and has a real chance to become a relevant actor of Polish politics. Euroscepticism in Slovakia was a marginal phenomenon before the economic crisis. HZDS lost its representation in 2010 and its Euroscepticism is also disputed because the party's MPs and MEPs voted in favour of all major deepening efforts of the European integration. The Euroscepticism of the Christian Democrats and the National Party has to be tested, and in 2010 another Eurosceptic party broke into the Slovak political scene: Freedom and Solidarity (SaS).

**Table 2.** *Classification of Eurosceptic parties in CEE countries*

Member state	Hard Euroscepticism	Soft Euroscepticism
Czech Republic	Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) Miroslav Sládek Republicans (RMS)	Civic Democratic Party (ODS)
Hungary	Hungarian Justice and Life Party (MIÉP)	Fidesz Workers' Party
Poland	Self-Defence (SRP) League of Polish Families (LPR)	Law and Justice (PiS) Polish People's Party (PSL)
Slovakia	Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS) Slovak National Party (SNS) Real Slovak National Party (PSNS)	Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) Direction (Smer) Christian Democratic Movement (KDH)

*Source: Taggart and Szczesbiak, 2008a: 12*

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European spokesperson, who stated that European federalists, such as Guy Verhofstadt, mean greater danger to the united Europe than right-wing populists such as Le Pen (NOS, 2013).



I examine the nature of relevant Eurosceptic parties' Euroscepticism below, focusing on the relation to the European Union, on the one hand, and on the drivers of Euroscepticism, on the other. I also analyse the parties' standpoints on the Lisbon Treaty and other European issues if necessary.

### 3.1. Poland

In Poland, during a several-year period after the EU accession, hard Eurosceptic parties played an important role. The League of Polish Families campaigned against joining the EU, while Self-Defence did not have a clear position about the membership (Markowski and Tucker, 2010: 527). After a long internal debate, the Polish People's Party was in favour of the membership (Riishøj, 2007: 517); however, the party criticized the circumstances thereof. Law and Justice also supported to join the EU despite the fact that party leader Jarosław Kaczyński expressed his doubt about the conditions of the accession (Szczurbiak, 2008: 231–232).

In 2005, PiS won the parliamentary and presidential elections and formed a one-party minority government, which was joined by LPR and Self-Defence in 2006. One year later, disagreements between Law and Justice and its coalition partners resulted early parliamentary elections, which were won by the centre-right, pro-European Civic Platform (PO). LPR and SRP lost all of their parliamentary seats. As Table 3 shows, Law and Justice has remained the only relevant Eurosceptic party in Poland. Although the party's club in the Sejm was divided over the Lisbon Treaty, party leader Jarosław Kaczyński voted in favour of the ratification.

**Table 3.** *Voting on Lisbon Treaty (Poland)*

Party group (club)	Sejm				European Parliament			
	Yes	No	Abst.	Absent	Yes	No	Abst.	Absent
<b>Civic Platform</b>	206	0	0	3	13	0	0	0
<b>Law and Justice</b>	89	56	12	2	0	0	8	0
<b>Democratic Left Alliance</b>	37	0	0	3	4	0	0	1
<b>Polish People's Party</b>	31	0	0	0	1	1	1	0
<b>League of Polish Families</b>	-	-	-	-	0	2	0	0
<b>Self-Defence</b>	-	-	-	-	2	0	0	0
<b>Others</b>	21	0	0	0	9	9	0	3
<b>All</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>

*Source: Sejm, 2008; European Parliament, 2008*

The nature of PiS's Euroscepticism is based on two pillars. The party has criticized the conditions of Polish membership, declaring that Poland is only a second-ordered member of the community (Szczerbiak, 2008: 233). This argument is clearly an Eastern European type of Euroscepticism focusing on the circumstances of the EU accession (e.g. agricultural subsidies). On the other hand, in its party programme, Law and Justice emphasizes the importance of defending national sovereignty (PiS, 2014: 150). Another Eurosceptic party gained European Parliamentary seats in May: Janusz Korwin-Mikke's Congress of the New Right (KNP). KNP is in favour of a free-trade area, but it strongly opposes any EU regulation and institution (KNP, 2014). Basically, it is a Neo-liberal critique which propagates deregulation. In this sense, KNP's Euroscepticism belongs to the sovereignty-based Euroscepticism.

### **3.2. The Czech Republic**

Euroscepticism has always been a mainstream phenomenon in the Czech Republic because in the first half of 90s then Prime Minister Václav Klaus expressed his doubt about the European integration process. Klaus led his party (Civic Democratic Party) until 2002. In this era, the ODS, which was one of the two largest parties in the Czech Republic before 2013, was a clearly anti-federalist Eurosceptic party. Klaus and his party's Euroscepticism based on three pillars. Firstly, as a pro-free market party, ODS criticized the overregulated EU (a clearly Hayekian argument) (Hanley, 2004a: 693). Recently, the ODS has moderated its Euroscepticism, but Klaus uses primarily this argument to attack the European integration. Secondly, the Civic Democratic Party stated that the EU enlargement is a self-interested approach of the old member states (Hanley, 2004b: 526). Finally, the ODS tried to define itself as a defender of national interest, i.e. a vindicator of the Czech national sovereignty.

In addition, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia is a constant actor of the Czech political scene as well. The party was against the membership (Hanley, 2004a: 702–704); however, it did not play any role in the campaign of the referendum. After the accession, the KSČM's Euroscepticism has softened (Neumayer, 2008: 147) and accepted the idea of a confederal or a moderately federal Europe as a reality (Handl, 2005: 133).

As Table 4 shows, the Communist Party was against the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, while the Civic Democrats were divided on the issue. In the latter case, Mirek Topolánek, the then prime minister and leader of the party, not only voted for the treaty but also tried to gather enough MPs for the successful ratification (in the Czech Republic, a three-fifths majority is needed to adopt such treaties). The changing attitude of the party led to an open breakup between ODS and the incumbent president, Václav Klaus. Klaus started to support minor libertarian

Eurosceptic parties such as the Party of Free Citizens (*Svobodní*), which won a European Parliamentary seat in May and joined the Eurosceptic Europe of Freedom and the Direct Democracy (EFDD) group in the EP.

**Table 4.** *Voting on the Lisbon Treaty (Czech Republic)*

Party group	House of Representatives				European Parliament			
	Yes	No	Abst.	Absent	Yes	No	Abst.	Absent
<b>Civic Democratic Party</b>	33	37	9	0	0	0	8	1
<b>Czech Social Democratic Party</b>	71	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
<b>Communist Party (KSČM)</b>	0	23	2	1	0	4	0	2
<b>Christian and Democratic Union</b>	12	0	0	1	1	0	1	0
<b>Green Party</b>	4	0	0	0	-	-	-	-
<b>Others</b>	5	1	0	1	2	2	0	1
<b>All</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>

*Source: Poslanecká Sněmovna, 2009; European Parliament, 2008*

The basis of the Civic Democrats' Euroscepticism has not changed since the 90s. The party still uses pro-free market (ODS, 2104: 5) and sovereignty-based (ODS, 2014: 3) arguments against the European integration; however, it has moderated itself and has become a more conformist Eurosceptic party. As far as KSČM is concerned, its Euroscepticism has softened and it is basically anti-capitalist; nevertheless, the party tends to criticize the bureaucracy and the democratic deficit of the EU as well (KSČM, 2014). Dawn's (Úsvit) party programme is very short-spoken on the European integration, but it is clear that the party wants to reform the EU.

The Party of Free Citizens (*Svobodní*) wants to withdraw Czech Republic from the EU and emphasizes the 'undemocratic' nature of the European Union and the necessity of defending national sovereignty (*Svobodní*, 2014: 8–9). The party is also in favour of deregulation and free-market.

### 3.3. Slovakia

As opposed to the Czech Republic, party-based Euroscepticism has been a marginal phenomenon in Slovakia. There was a consensus among main parties about EU accession. The Slovak National Party is clearly Eurosceptic; however, the party lost its parliamentary representation in 2012. The Christian Democratic Movement abandoned its Eurosceptic agenda; most of its Eurosceptic members

left the party and founded the Conservative Democrats of Slovakia (KDS) and the New Majority (NOVA). These parties formed a joint list at the 2014 European Parliament election with the Civic Conservative Party (OKS) and have a real chance to gain one seat.

Voting on the Lisbon Treaty was not a test of party-based Euroscepticism but one more battle between the leftist-nationalist government and the centre-right opposition. The Christian Democratic Movement and the Slovak Democratic and Christian Union boycotted the voting, while the Party of Hungarian Coalition, ensuring the necessary majority, voted with the government (Table 5).

**Table 5.** *Voting on the Lisbon Treaty (Slovakia)*

Party group	National Council				European Parliament			
	Yes	No	Abst.	Absent	Yes	No	Abst.	Absent
<b>Smer (Direction)</b>	50	0	0	0	3	0	0	0
<b>Slovak Democratic and Christian Union</b>	0	0	0	30	3	0	0	0
<b>Party of Hungarian Coalition</b>	19	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
<b>Slovak National Party</b>	18	0	0	1	-	-	-	-
<b>Movement for a Democratic Slovakia</b>	14	0	1	0	3	0	0	0
<b>Christian Democratic Movement</b>	0	0	0	9	0	0	3	0
<b>Conservative Democrats of Slovakia</b>	0	4	0	0	-	-	-	-
<b>Others</b>	2	1	0	0	-	-	-	-
<b>All</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>

*Source: Národná Rada, 2008; European Parliament, 2008*

According to this voting, neither the Direction nor the HZDS can be considered as Eurosceptic, even SNS is a soft Eurosceptic party voting in favour of the ratification because of their governmental engagement. Nowadays, the only relevant Eurosceptic party in the Slovak political scene is the Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) party. SaS was against the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) despite the fact that it caused the fall of the centre-right government in which the party took part (Gyárfášová and Bútorová, 2013: 93). It stated that Slovakia should finance Greece despite the fact that Slovakia is a poorer country than Greece. It is a typical example/argument of redistribution-based Euroscepticism. The party is against further deepening the EU because it limits Slovak sovereignty (SaS, 2012: 56). SaS has a Neo-liberal Eurosceptic attitude

as well, opposing economic homogenization (Mesežnikov, 2013: 65). The New Majority (NOVA) gained a European parliamentary seat in May 2014, and it is against the concept of the United States of Europe and reducing national sovereignty (NOVA, 2014: 6).

### 3.4. Hungary

In Hungary, party-based Euroscepticism was not a visible phenomenon after 2002, when the Party of Hungarian Justice and Life (MIÉP) lost its parliamentary seats. Only the nationalist MIÉP campaigned against the EU membership, while there was a relatively stable consensus among mainstream parties about the necessity of joining the EU.

**Table 6.** *Voting on the Lisbon Treaty (Hungary)*

Party group	National Assembly				European Parliament			
	Yes	No	Abst.	Absent	Yes	No	Abst.	Absent
<b>Hungarian Socialist Party</b>	184	0	0	6	8	0	0	1
<b>Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Union</b>	114	1	5	19	11	0	0	0
<b>Christian Democratic People's Party</b>	1	3	8	11	1	0	0	0
<b>Alliance of Free Democrats</b>	19	0	0	1	2	0	0	0
<b>Hungarian Democratic Forum</b>	6	1	1	3	1	0	0	0
<b>Others</b>	1	0	0	2	-	-	-	-
<b>All</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>

*Source: Országgyűlés, 2007; European Parliament, 2008*

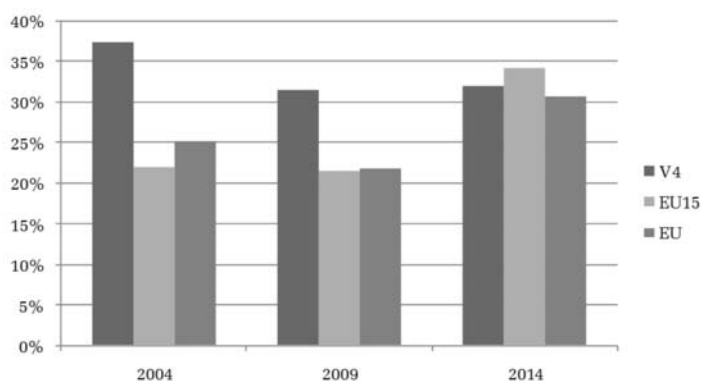
Although Fidesz is often categorized as Eurosceptic, as Table 6 shows, its MPs and MEPs voted in favour of the Lisbon Treaty (and in favour of the Fiscal Compact as well). However, it is true that the party uses a confrontational rhetoric against Brussels, but it does not reflect on deepening the European integration, only on some domestic issues (e.g. overhead reduction, pálinka etc.).

In 2009, a new nationalist party, the Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik) broke into the political arena at the European parliamentary elections. One year later, the party also gained seats in the National Assembly. Basically, Jobbik supports the concept of the Europe of Nations. The party criticizes the European Union in two main ways. On the one hand, Jobbik considers the integration as a threat to Hungary's national sovereignty; so, the party's Euroscepticism is

primarily sovereignty-based. On the other hand, it sees the European integration process as the colonization of Hungary by Western Europe (Jobbik, 2014: 32), which is a typical argument of the Eurosceptic parties at the periphery of the EU.

#### 4. How is Party-Based Euroscepticism in V4 Countries?

Eurosceptic parties of the Visegrád Countries meant a serious resupply of party-based Euroscepticism after the Eastern enlargement (Figure 1). While the rate of Eurosceptic MEPs in old member states dropped in 2004, the same rate was extremely high in the Visegrád Countries in 2004. Nevertheless, in 2009, the rate of Western European Eurosceptic MEPs stagnated, but the total number of critics reduced due to the V4 Countries. Five years later, in 2014, the number of Eurosceptic MEPs grew significantly, while its rate did not change in the V4 Countries; so, the importance of Eurosceptic parties in CEE declined.



*Source: Own calculations based on results*

**Figure 1.** *Rate of Eurosceptic MEPs*

As far as the nature of Euroscepticism in the CEE region is concerned, there are four major types of Eurosceptic arguments. Like in Western Europe, sovereignty-based Euroscepticism plays an important role in the Visegrád Countries as well. The question of national sovereignty is important to the major Eurosceptic parties: Law and Justice, Congress of the New Right, Civic Democratic Party, Freedom and Solidarity and Jobbik. ODS, KNP and SaS criticize the European Union on a Neo-liberal basis as well. The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia represents leftist Euroscepticism in the region.

Finally, there is a special type of Euroscepticism which originates in the conditions of EU accession, on the one hand, and it is based on the feeling that old member states colonize the region, on the other. It seems to be region-specific;

however, Greek, Spanish, Italian and Portuguese Eurosceptic parties also have used similar arguments in recent years. Nationalism, anti-capitalism, anti-globalism and other specific interests (e.g. agriculture) could be the reason of this form of Euroscepticism as well. In the Visegrád Countries, Jobbik uses periphery-based Eurosceptic arguments because of the party's strong nationalist and protectionist stance. Law and Justice and Polish People's Party also criticized the conditions of EU accession, focusing on agriculture. The Civic Democratic Party has had some similar arguments as well. Basically, periphery-based Euroscepticism is one of the main types of the phenomenon in the Visegrád Countries; however, neo-liberal stances play an important role as well.

**Table 7.** *Classification of Eurosceptic parties in the V4 Countries*

	<b>Hard Eurosceptic</b>	<b>Soft Eurosceptic</b>
<b>Sovereignty</b>	Party of Free Citizens	Law and Justice Congress of the New Right Civic Democratic Party New Majority
<b>Leftist</b>		Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia
<b>Periphery</b>	Movement for a Better Hungary*	
<b>Redistribution</b>		Freedom and Solidarity

\* Jobbik hovers between hard and soft, as well as between sovereignty and periphery-based Euroscepticism.

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