Euroscepticism, Europhobia, and Eurocriticism. The radical right and left parties vis-à-vis the European Union.

Cesáreo Rodríguez-Aguilera
Professor of Political Science
University of Barcelona

Abstract:

Euroscepticism has become a generic catch-all term that is not always useful to capture the nuances of the different types of political opposition to the current process of European integration. This research analyses the electoral manifestos and programmes presented to the European parliamentary elections in 2009 by twenty-two parties. In this regard, it is clear that the radical right parties usually have Europhobic impulses - their rejection being not only in methods, but also of principals. In contrast, the radical left parties are, in theory, favourable to European integration, but dispute the direction imposed by EU authorities today.

Meanings and causes of Euroscepticism.

As has been noted by many analysts, since the Treaty of Union of 1992, opposition to the process of European integration has steadily increased so ending the previous stage of the tacit permissive consensus of citizens that had worked more or less trouble free from 1957 to the Single European Act of 1987 - the text which marked the beginning of estrangement. On the one hand, there appears to be a growing Europeanisation of protests against the current European Union (EU), whilst on the other, a radicalisation towards the extremes of the political spectrum regarding this. Although the underlying motivations of radical right and left are not the same, the fact is that in both groups, the rejection of the community establishment is usually politically and electorally profitable. In any case, the greatest degree of opposition comes from the radical right - which has benefitted from the EU-impasse. However, the radical left have in turn an average effect which is, comparatively, not as small as is commonly assumed.

In literature the use of the term Eurosceptic, which indifferently groups all parties criticising the current EU, regardless of their ideology, has become widespread. It is often used as an all-encompassing term. Yet, on analysing the criticisms the radical right and left have of the present EU, apart from some objective coincidences, the differing respective objectives are evident. Namely, the rejection of more integration in the former and the advocation of another type of the integration in the latter, always with some exceptions in each position.

From the outset, the main problem of the term Euroscepticism is its conceptual vagueness because it includes at a semantic level two possible attitudes difficult to assimilate: complete rejection or specific reservation. In this regard, it is useful to distinguish not only between the respective positions, but also to clarify the scope and meaning of the reservations. In short, outright rejection implies Europhobia, reservations (especially political) indicate Euroscepticism in a strict sense and dissatisfaction for the impasse in the current EU embody eurocritical positions. Taken to the extreme, the theoretical possibility of dispensing with the term of Euroscepticism could even be contemplated - though this would be irreversible due not only to its full
academic acceptance, but also for the progressive conceptual purification and abundant empirical research carried out in the field.

An appropriate distinction between the rejection of the current mode of European integration and the refusal of any form of supranational linkage is not always seen. Consequently, it is not academically relevant to amalgamate any criticism of the EU, however radical, with the opposition to the idea of European integration itself. It is therefore essential to distinguish between the types of opposition to the EU given that one rejects the very principle of integration, while the other only challenges the existing institutional operation and framework. This means that there is one type of “antisystemic” opposition to the EU (rejecting all that it stands for and represents) and another that essentially refers to its policies. The first is a principled global opposition, fully affecting the project of European integration; the second – in contrast - affects its functional dimension. Structural opposition is at a very low level in the EU (even among radical right groups), while functional opposition is at a high level here. Indeed, outright rejection of the EU is defended only by a minority of radical parties that represent an irresponsible opposition in sartorian terms. In contrast, critical judgement of institutions and policies is the predominant norm in the radical right and almost the exclusive one in the radical left. In any case, the criticism of aspects of European integration has a negative variation, typical of populist eurosceptical parties (the majority of the radical right) and a positive variation, usual in progressive groups (not withstanding some exceptions). In the latter case, the radical left tends to focus their criticism on the current ongoing process and its leading actors, not on the idea of integration per se. While anti-European challenges are more common from the radical right (due to its customary ethnic nationalism), far fewer exist with the radical left (due to its theoretical doctrinal internationalism) who criticise this EU instead so demanding an "alternative" Europe.

The process of European construction affects the foundations of the Nation State and favours the heightening of redoubled nationalism in significant sections of public opinion that are partly captured by radical formations. On the one hand, the absence of a governing majority and an opposition in the European Parliament only serve to reinforce those who challenge the EU. On the other, the complexity of the distribution of competences (to know "who does what") and the usual Community / institutional opacity has increased feelings of uncertainty and questions about the future. In addition, the technocratic language of community elites and harsh economic objectives that subordinate social rights favour radical parties. The construction of the EU is carried out with little regard for citizens, in an exclusive and elitist fashion, through consociative agreements that lack transparency and accountability, which as a result encourages alienation.

Euroscepticism is, and yet is not, a new cleavage and although European politics have traditionally played a secondary role in the Nation States, this is becoming less so since many of the internal problems and those derived from the contradictions of the current process of integration are interconnected, increasing social and partisan divides with political relevance in them. Euroscepticism exists for reasons that are not only economic but also political and cultural. These are the negative evaluations in terms of cost / benefit, the rejection of the elitist and delegative style of community institutions (infamously opaque) and a fear of losing "identity". All are root causes of the phenomenon. It is something that has gained widespread projection in almost all EU
states. It manifests itself both with voters and parties across the ideological spectrum, with different intensities depending on each country and situation.

Are the radical right and left comparable?

Indeed, some parties channel these perceptions and popular feelings, though the critical positions and policies of the parties of the radical right or left do not quite match. For the first group Euroscepticism is not just an element of the development of the EU, but also of principle (although the majority pragmatically accept the idea of continuing in the Community). For the second group the fundamental discrepancy is with the development of the EU itself (sharing neither the style nor the policies of the Community authorities) as there are very few who reject the principle of integration. Although a controversial issue, it appears that, despite obvious ideological differences, there are some items of criticism of the EU that the radical right and left share, notwithstanding a differing emphasis on some or others of these.

In this sense, the radical parties of the right and left capture part of the social discontent caused by some of the negative consequences of the actual process of European integration and are able to mobilise - for different reasons – part of the popular feeling that is anti-EU. Euroscepticism (and often Europhobia) is one of the reasons for the electoral success of the radical right who present globalisation and Europeanisation as two sides of the same “denationalising” coin. The Radical left also reflects concerns about the uncertainties of the current ongoing process. In particular, as economic integration (since the Treaty of Maastricht) and police cooperation (Schengen) advance, hostility from this political position against the Community establishment grows. In both cases, not being parties in government (with some very few exceptions), the inclination to accentuate criticism of the EU is greater.

Although critical attitudes towards the EU go beyond the two strictly ideological party families mentioned (there are infamous Eurosceptics among the British, Czech and Polish Conservatives together with the supposedly liberal Hungarians) most of them are concentrated in the parliamentary eurogroups Europe of Freedom and Democracy (radical populist right) and of the European United Left (radical left) - in addition to the classic right-wing that dominates the "unregistered" area.

The interrelationship between the radical right and left in the European party system is a complex issue because although there is a strong ideological antagonism (with some overlap in certain issues). To some extent all compete for a fairly similar popular electorate. So, in theory there is no relationship as they are polarised ("particularism" of the right versus "universalism" of the left), but both reject the "system" (from different perspectives) and compete in similar electoral margins (the discontented, the losers). Indeed, it is still striking to note the not insignificant range of issues where objective coincidence occurs: - anti-system, anti-globalisation, anti U.S.A., against the "ruling classes", in favour of national sovereignty (with degrees, differences and nuances), in favour of those negatively affected by the community establishment: and all with a (sometimes) politicised vision (politics “at the helm”, politics must decide everything).
To begin with, there are sectors of the electorate of these parties that may not only overlap, but may even be interchangeable. Then the discontent of significant social sectors vis-à-vis parties and governments of the "central block" (popular, socialist and liberal) and also with representative institutions (perceived as being increasingly distant), can be indistinctly captured by parties of either ideological group. The radical left is theoretically in favour of supranational integration, but rejects the economic values of the current EU model and its poor democratic procedures, whereas the radical right completely rejects the idea of a Europe superior to Nation States. While the radical Left focuses its criticism on the neoliberalism that is mining the Welfare State, the radical right emphasises national sovereignty and ethnic identity. The radical left benefits from popular fears about the loss and withdrawal of social rights and the radical right exploits feelings of insecurity regarding extra-community immigration and uncertainty about the opacity of the decision taking mechanisms of Brussels. These strategies tend to favour general processes of withdrawal, mistrust and the fear that they will "contaminate" the moderate centre-right much more as the radical left completely rejects xenophobia. But this does not mean that a part of social democracy is partially sensitive to extremist pressures in these matters (the traditional support of the moderate left for the model of multicultural society has declined).

However, they are also obvious differences: 1) those on the right are nativist and ethnocentric, are obsessed with "security", in favour (with nuances according to parties) of the market economy, elitist and hierarchical (with an instrumental / functional conception of democracy) and conservative and conformist in social issues, 2) those on the left are internationalist / cosmopolitan (with nuances in some cases), in favour of open multicultural societies, advocates of strong public intervention in the market (for the sake of solid Welfare States ), in favour of base democracy and equitable and empathetic regarding social issues.

*The critical items.*

Criticism of the current EU focuses on three major dimensions: national sovereignty (cultural identity), democratic deficit (political control) and neoliberalism (the socioeconomic model), but with different priorities in the radical right (the order is outlined above) and the radical left (neoliberalism, democracy deficit and national sovereignty).

*The Radical Right*

The famous issue of national sovereignty predominates and forms a central part of the programmes of this ideological group. Not only does this occupy about half of all election manifesto content, it is also doctrinally their raison d'être. In some cases, the emphasis on nation - usually with strong ethnic connotations - is reinforced by the ideological reference to "Christian roots", a clearly controversial element in contrast to the Muslim world and immigrants of this religious denomination. It is a sort of instrumental "neoconfession" that pays such parties electoral dividends in some countries.

The rejection of a supranational European political union – more or less federalised - is resounding and massive in this ideological group, because the eventual
European "super-state" is seen to have every possible vice: political centralism, administrative bureaucracy, undemocratic technocratic elitism, globalised economic intrusion and cultural homogenisation. In contrast, most are willing to accept the maintenance of cooperative ties that are mutually beneficial at an economic level, but always from an exceptionally respectful intergovernmental perspective of national sovereignty. In addition, some parties have even explicitly pronounced in favour of a loose confederation of independent states, which could embody a real "Europe of Nations". There are few Europhobe parties whose strategic option is to leave the EU as soon as possible (the case of the British populists).

The hostile and aggressive rejection of the possible entry of Turkey into the EU is also very evident. It is a possibility that is viewed apocalyptically: given its huge population, this country would benefit through representation in EU institutions. It would practically consume all structural and cohesive funds due to its considerable economic underdevelopment, "flood" Europe with hundreds of thousands of immigrants and, especially, encourage the expansion of Islamic radicalism. The issues of Turkey and non-EU immigration are precisely two sides of the same propagandist strategy these parties promote. They are used to stoking fears and resentments with populist and xenophobic overtones that pay electoral dividends. They often associate immigration, crime and even terrorism for such reasons. Some of these parties are notoriously demagogic regarding illegal immigration and its supposedly "unbearable" costs to the public purse and public safety. Naturally these obsessions are characteristic of radical right parties in developed Western Europe. They are not the same for the parties of this ideological group in the countries of Eastern Europe, where the phenomenon of a massive influx of non-EU immigrants is virtually unknown given the underdeveloped character of these countries compared to the western part of the EU.

In keeping with the traditional distrust of the radical right parties with representative institutions, it is no coincidence that many require the use of direct democracy for any reform of the Treaties and / or the inclusion of new members. From this point of view, European leaders have repeatedly contravened the desire of some of their citizens who have had occasion to vote negatively on specific community projects. The fact that the "political class" of the establishment always seeks ways to circumvent and even contravene the results of some referendums is clear evidence for these parties of the undemocratic and anti-popular character that is their essence. From these premises, the Community institutions are severely criticised for being grossly undemocratic, opaque and elitist. There are several parties in this ideological group that have given up on these institutions and advocate a maximum reinforcement of national control mechanisms to prevent anonymous and irresponsible "Brussels bureaucrats" from taking decisions over national interests.

Finally, it is very interesting to analyse the economic criticism of the overwhelmingly neoliberal policies applied by the current EU because this partly plays down a certain clichéd vision of such parties. Indeed, a clear preference for free-market economic policies is traditionally attributed to radical right-wing parties, perhaps coloured by (to a greater or lesser extent) protectionist conceptions about domestic production and commercial sectors. However, the 2009 election manifestos repeatedly criticise financial globalisation and neoliberal economic policies deemed as being extremely harmful to national interests and denounce that these only benefit multinational corporations to the detriment of the majority of the population. It is not
surprising that critics of neoliberalism take an especially hard line with Eastern European parties – at a social level profoundly affected by the same. But what is novel is that various parties of this ideological group in Western Europe also reject the economic model that the current EU has imposed.

*The Radical Left:

The outright criticism of the neoliberal socioeconomic policies of the current EU - which not only favour big business but are negative for the interests of workers and people in general - is not only the unanimous leitmotiv of this ideological group, but the most developed issue in their election manifestos. Being parties that, in general, are linked to the historical tradition of the labour movement and anticapitalist socialism, it is no accident that they dedicate about half of their current programmes to the criticism of the European socio-economic model that is objectively detrimental to workers. All agree that the economic policies of the current EU aggravate social inequalities, precariousness and marginalisation. Some also assert that a small speculative financial oligarchy, disconnected from the real economy, which subordinates governments in accordance to their strict class interests are the only ones to benefit from this situation. These parties are all strongly supportive of prioritising the public sector and more particularly, against the privatisation of society’s essential goods and services (which can not be considered as commodities). It is interesting to note that, in most cases, their alternative proposals are not revolutionary in character and merely demand a return to the classic Welfare State of the "thirty glorious years" (1945-1975). In other words, the bulk of the radical left does not demand the implementation of an anti-capitalist programme of transition to socialism, but - more modestly and realistically – ask that the model of mixed economy and universal social coverage typical of the post-1945 Western European tradition be taken seriously. With this in mind, the hyperradical position of the Greek Communists is almost unique, the only group to explicitly consider the welfare state historically superseded.

All parties of the radical left reject the Lisbon Treaty, especially because it is regarded as undemocratic and fraudulent by those who opposed the Constitutional Treaty (these parties feel both treaties are virtually the same) and the Lisbon Treaty itself (Ireland, as a country). This Treaty is presented as the consecration of the starkest form of neoliberalism in all its dimensions and even of the most elitist and undemocratic opacity in its institutional arrangements.

Perhaps one of the most contradictory issues for the radical left is that of national sovereignty: given its clear rejection of any ethnic conception of the same, there are numerous examples of parties from this group that strongly defend "national interests" against Brussels. In this case, the policy is defended with the argument that the EU is an agent of capitalist globalisation, harmful to society in general and workers in particular and with negligible democratic practice in its political operation. Although the radical left considers, in principle, the nation-state as an anachronism destined to disappear in the process of global transformation, its conception of European policy remains essentially national.

The defence of national primacy regarding the EU is undertaken in this case not with more or less ethnic type essentialist arguments, but with democratic reasoning. Democratic shortcomings in the current EU make the concession of new parcels of
national sovereignty strongly inadvisable as this would be detrimental to the society’s interests. In other words, in the elitist and bureaucratic EU that currently exists, democracy is sacrificed as parcels of national power are ceded. So, while the EU does not undergo a process of true democratisation, the defence of national sovereignty is, and will be, more of a democratic imperative than a strictly nationalist one, although the objective effects of this policy today strengthens civic nationalist desires in many states. The emphasis on national sovereignty as a shield against the encroachments of the EU is very characteristic of the classic communists, the most enthusiastic supporters of this outdated doctrinal principle, which is hardly relevant in the world today. There are neither many parties that clarify what their political project of the "other" Europe would be nor those that explicitly reject its eventual federalisation, an option in which both Communists and post communist parties agree, being – as a consequence – national conditions that determine each party's strategy in this area once again. Likewise, the proposal of leaving the EU is extremely rare as few parties advocate this option.

Specific and transversal dimensions compared.

As a counterpoint to the affinities and differences it should be noted that more Europhobia exists on the radical right than on the radical left because for the former, the level of rejection of the integrationist principle is significant, something hardly seen in the latter. The objective coincidence between the two has its origin in the challenge to the ways and means the present EU operates, albeit from different ideological perspectives. Both groups criticise the Community establishment who are seen as distant and that, moreover, does not consider their views. Consequently, the EU is perceived as an artificial, distant network, damaging to social and national interests. This, then, explains why it is mainly the radical right and left that harvest discontent and protest from many sectors affected by the ongoing integration process.

All radical right parties pronounce en masse their defence of the absolute primacy of national sovereignty, while for the radical left few see this as a priority issue. To this primary difference, two other orders of consideration should be added. First, the radical right makes an "essentialist" defence of the mythical principle of national sovereignty because, very often, this thesis expounds ethnic and xenophobic connotations. Second, the parties of the radical left that assume such primacy claim to do so on behalf of the material interests of the real society, i.e. citizens, not for abstract doctrinal concepts. A very obvious difference is the assumption that some radical right parties make of "Christian roots" as an unmistakable characteristic of European peoples, something entirely lacking on the left given its militant secularism. So, the principal distinctive argument in the radical right’s criticism of the EU focuses on the emphatic absolutism of national sovereignty, endangered - in its opinion - by "Eurocrats". For the radical left, while this is not a principal objection, it is sensitive to the essence of this reasoning and so opposes the concession of new parcels of national sovereignty.

However, the main difference between the two is the approach that they give this classic concept: with a characteristic ethnic exclusivity in the first case and criticism of the limitations of democracy in the second. Just as the radical right so unanimously rejects the hypothesis (in their opinion, a reality in the making) of the European superstate, the radical left (with exceptions) may not do the same, accepting the scenario under very specific conditions and with an alternative economic and political model. In
short, the radical right, true to its nativist nationalist viewpoint, does not accept the EU’s supranational progression or ongoing expansion. In contrast, for the radical left, the main distinctive feature of its opposition to the current EU lies in a rejection of neoliberalism, supposedly harmful to social rights. A part of the radical right is not insensitive to this argument and does not accept per se the current supranational economic model of the EU, which only serves the interests of opaque transnational lobbies. It advocates a protected domestic market and welfare chauvinism reserved for national citizens, elements that are not shared with the radical left. In any case, the myth of national sovereignty has a very clear consequence: the radical right’s unanimous rejection of an eventual European federal state, a hypothesis that some radical left parties also reject. In nationalist parties such as those of the radical right the rejection of political supranationalism is entirely consistent, however it is more difficult to justify on the left, given its internationalist tradition. The truth is that some radical left parties have effectively assumed nationalist theses that they see as progressive, not as a break from traditional ideological dogmas, but as a safeguard for the material interests of their citizens with regard to an insufficiently democratic and neoliberal EU. The total rejection of political federalisation on the radical right and significant rejection with some of the radical left, does not impede both groups accepting elements of European intergovernmental cooperation that are mutually beneficial for their citizens.

The major differentiating factor between the radical right and left are seen with issues related to the national community such as immigration and Turkey, which continue to be linked. The differences in question, in this case, are antagonistic. For the radical right European civilization faces a deadly threat represented by an alleged "invasion" of EU immigrants, in their vast majority Muslim. Indeed, Islam phobia and the xenophobic rejection of immigrants have become the main demagogic tools to catch the popular vote for these parties. In many cases, anti-immigrant policies are almost the only reason these parties exist providing as they do the resource that provides more electoral dividends. In parallel, the entirely hostile opposition to Turkey's candidacy is associated with this exclusive mentality. This country can not fit in Europe for its inclusion would distort the nature for the same, it would be a huge risk to the communal security with the consequent deterioration of social services and an increase in crime and even terrorist threats. Apart from the ideologically apocalyptic, reactionary and unfounded character of these prejudices, they contrast completely with the positions of the radical left. In fact, this group is in favour of the continued unlimited reception of immigrants whose rights must be recognised. This is not only for reasons of solidarity but also for the benefits they bring to European society and to facilitate their social integration. It is obvious that no party of the left objects to Turkey's candidacy, merely reminding all that the requirements of the Copenhagen treaty must be met.

With regard the "democratic deficit" in the EU, the objective coincidence of criticism is high for both left and right – deficiencies attributed to Community procedures and institutions, which are projected negatively on national interests and the social rights of citizens. The universally condemned "democratic deficit" materialises with the almost unanimous rejection of the Lisbon Treaty. In this sense, the critics agree: this treaty enshrines the elitist and bureaucratic character of the EU for reasons of both form and substance. From the first point of view, it has violated the right of citizens to vote directly on the Treaty itself, and from the other, the Treaty only serves to preserve the opacity in the decision-taking processes and operations of EU institutions. It is somewhat unusual to detect a significant distrust of representative
mechanisms on both left and right, albeit with a greater degree in the case of the radical right. These parties all demand – with populist overtones - to "give voice" to the citizens to let them express their views on any Treaty reform, to allow them to be precisely those who accept or reject further transfers of sovereignty to Brussels. Moreover, the current institutional framework of the EU is totally dysfunctional and as such cannot ensure a real popular control. Rather it serves to consolidate uncontrolled bureaucracy. It should be noted that this criticism is much more characteristic of the election manifestos of the radical left, inclined to defend the expansion of popular participation as a natural progression of its traditional political culture.

Finally, in the economic sphere there are some similarities between the two groups as sectors of the radical right criticise neoliberalism for harming "ordinary people". With this, the radical right and left benefit from the erosion of social democracy and the serious deterioration of its historical hegemony in the traditional working-class. Some specialists have come to coin the expression *gaucho-lepenisme* (leftist lepenism) to demonstrate the populist use of the condemnation of the "powerful" among the working class. Indeed, these parties all compete, - sometimes intensely – for an electorate suffering under economic globalisation. The radical right benefits from the "chauvinist" vote of the *Welfare State* itself and the radical left from the discontent and protest of the losers. Therefore, both sides capture an electorate disenchanted with the traditional parties of the *establishment*.

Therefore, although - in principle - the radical right parties accept a market economy every time it rejects the model of comprehensive socialisation regarded as *Marxist*, several of them are against the current neoliberal direction of the EU as it has negative consequences for nations and broad sectors of society. Additionally, the phenomenon of globalisation is even seen as a conspiracy by some - being regarded a manoeuvre by the United States of America to subordinate European nations. From this stems the usual populist rejection of these groups to a greater *Europeanisation* of the EU, as this process is interpreted as a derivation of globalisation and a surrender of European peoples to a denationalising strategy imposed by obscure and distant centres of power. The radical right supports the market economy, but with some conditions: a strong national protectionism to defend and preserve certain productive and commercial sectors and more recently, greater social coverage and protection for disadvantaged groups (nationals, of course) in each country. In any case, the fact that the radical right does not defend the welfare state as such is noteworthy, since it doctrinally attributes this concept to the left and often subjects it to criticism for being “partycratic”, bureaucratic, parasitic, unsustainable and corrupt.

The radical left is against the unrestrained market economy because of the serious consequences of its antisocial practices. From this perspective, the economic policies of the current EU are discriminatory, oligarchic and undemocratic: 1) leading to aggravating inequalities between a privileged minority and the mass majority who are being subject to a cut in their rights, 2) concentrating economic and financial power in very few hands, sharing benefits among themselves, against the interests of the wider society, especially workers, 3) mining the meaning of democracy because representative government has completely capitulated to the interests of these predominant powers, in such a way that election results become irrelevant since it is not possible to change certain *structural policies* from the position of government. The radical left parties demand a strengthening of public interventionism and “social welfarism”, hence their
requests for regulations, controls, nationalisation and the maximum possible extent and quality of universal social benefits. In this sense, the most outstanding fact is to discover that these parties are the main defenders of the classic welfare state as – effectively - there are few who feel the concept has run its course and directly defend comprehensive socialism as the only alternative to the system (this is the quite exceptional case of the Greek Communists). It has been since then that the key to the welfare state – which can’t be ignored - rests on a mixed economic model, the majority of these parties emphasise the protection of what is public against neoliberal policies because, in their view, social rights can not be seen as commodities and must be regarded as popular circumstantial achievements specific in a modern democratic State.

In conclusion, it appears that there are no Euro-enthusiasts among the parties of the left or right, confirming their distance from the "centre block" in the European Parliament. It is a fact that they are all critical of the EU, but to very different degrees - ranging from the less belligerent to the most intransigent opposition, through intermediate positions held by the majority. Indeed, a minority of sectorial criticism exists that does not imply a call for the break up of the current EU or that sees the Union as a failed and irretrievable entity, defending withdrawal from of the same. In this diverse range of positions parties from either group can be found.

The different attitudes can be grouped into blocks: 1) Europragmatics (minority), 2) Eurosceptics / Eurocritics (majority) and 3) Eurorejectors / Europhobes (minority). The parties of the first block are very critical with some EU policies, but work to change the balance of forces inside the Union and to bring these closer to their own manifestos. Here there is a coincidence - from the Austrian and Romanian extremists to parties of the left with more or less realised ambitions for renewal and aspirations for change in the EU. The second block, which is quantitatively the largest, raises a conceptual problem with the label of Euroscepticism. To try to make this operative we have to reserve this term for the parties that in essence have a strictly instrumental attitude towards the EU, i.e., accepting it merely as an entity of economic cooperation, always from the basis of closed intergovernmental budgets. In contrast, there are a few radical left parties that do not fully fit into this category because although they share many of the criticisms, they distinguish themselves by advocating "more Europe" in a supranational sense. Finally, the third block, a small minority, maintains the exceptional idea of leaving or even dismantling the EU, regarding it as not only unusable, but even as irretrievable.

Cesáreo Rodríguez-Aguilera de Prat
Professor of Political Science
University of Barcelona