Politicization of EU integration
– Euroskeptic challenges for mainstream parties' 2014 EP campaign communication

Michaela Maier, Silke Adam, Melanie Leidecker, Eva-Maria Antl-Wittenberg, Beatrice Eugster and Franzisca Schmidt

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Abstract

We investigate whether and how Euroskeptic challenger parties use their campaign communication in the up-run to the 2014 EP elections campaign to mobilize against Europe. We assume that Euroskeptic challengers' mobilization forces pro-European mainstream, especially conservative parties to react in order to avoid losing votes. These pro-European mainstream parties have three possibilities to react: silencing of EU integration issues, forcefully putting forward their own (mainly) pro-EU positions or adopting EU-critical stances.

We study Euroskeptic challenger parties' campaign communication and the reaction of pro-European mainstream parties in Austria and Germany based on a quantitative content analysis of their press releases in a period of eight weeks preceding the EP elections. We thereby expect German conservatives – being challenged for the first time by a right-wing party – to react with silencing strategies, whereas the conservatives in Austria – which already have lost a substantial segment of voters to right-wing parties – to voice their own (pro-EU) positions.

Keywords: European Elections, Election Campaigns, Euroskeptic Parties, pro-European Parties, Content Analysis

Introduction

For a long time, researchers agreed that the EU is a compromise-seeking machine that produces "policy without politics" (Schmidt, 2006: 5). The lack of a politics dimension points to the fact that Europe was neither publicly visible nor were different opinions on Europe voiced. Instead, for domestic parties and mass media, Europe was a side- or even a non-issue (e.g. De Vreese, 2003; Ferrara & Weishaupt, 2004; Gerhards, 2000). Even European elections were rated "second-order" driven by domestic concerns (Reif & Schmitt, 1980) and with relatively little attention paid to (Cayrol, 1991; Holtz-Bacha, 2005). Some researchers even go so far as calling European elections "third-order" elections, because even regional elections are paid more attention by the population and the media (Reif, 1997; Wilke & Leidecker, 2013).

Since the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, with more and more competences shifted to the European level, the thesis of the EU as a non-issue was confronted with new empirical facts. First, citizens' "permissive consensus" (Lindberg & Scheingold, 1970) has started to dissolve (Eichenberg & Dalton, 2007; Hooghe & Marks, 2005; Hooghe, 2009). Citizens have formed more stable and well-structured opinions regarding EU integration (Boomgaarden et al., 2011) that differ sharply from elites' attitudes (Mittag & Wessels, 2003) and that even impact voting on the national level (De Vries, 2007). Second, we have seen new Euroskeptic parties emerging and segments of traditional parties turning critical towards EU integration (e.g. Hooghe & Marks, 2006; Taggart, 1998; van Spanje & de Vreese, 2011). These developments lead us to pose the core research questions of this paper:[1]

> *Do national parties today mobilize on EU integration and thereby foster the politicization of EU integration?*
> *Which role do Euroskeptic challenger parties play for EU contestation and how do pro-European mainstream parties react to these challengers?*

To answer both questions, we analyze the campaign communication of Euroskeptic challenger parties in two party systems in which such parties have experienced very different results in preceding elections: Whereas in Austria the established right-wing Euroskeptic party FPÖ gained a fifth of all votes in the 2013's national election, in Germany the just recently founded Euroskeptic force at the right side of the party spectrum ('Alternative für Deutschland´) won 4.7 percent of the votes, the Euroskeptic challenger from the left ('Die Linke`) gained a vote share of 8.6 percent. We pose the question whether Euroskeptic parties in the stabilisation or crisis management phase of the sovereign dept crisis (took their chance and clearly voiced their anti-EU positions in the up-run to the 2014 EP elections, challenging

the pro-European parties on new EU-related issues. We further explore whether and how pro-European parties reacted to such Euroskeptic challenges. All analyses are based on a quantitative content analysis of press releases published by the political parties in a period of eight weeks prior to the 2014 EP elections.

In the following we will first provide a summary of the literature on parties' politicization of EU integration, we will then derive our more specific research questions and hypotheses, explain our countries selection and methods of data collection, coding and analysis, proceed with the presentation of our empirical findings and finally come to conclusions also regarding suggestions for future research.

Parties' politicization of EU integration

Politicization is a process that results in public debate about a political issue. According to de Wilde, politicization has two characteristics: salience is attached to specific issues and polarized opinions are publicly voiced (De Wilde, 2007). In general, there are two agents of politicization: mass media and political actors (Hooghe & Marks, 2008; Kriesi, 2008). The former agent possesses a considerable potential to arouse the sleeping giant and to shape citizens' attitudes to the EU (e.g. De Vreese & Boomgaarden, 2006; J. Maier & Rittberger, 2008) as citizens have very little direct experience with the Union. However, media as politicization agents depend on other (political) actors to put an issue on the agenda. E.g., Jalali and Silva (2011) show for the 2009 European Parliament (EP) election campaign that European issues only capture the attention of the mass media if national parties provide EU cues in their campaigns (see also Adam, 2007a; De Vreese, 2003; Machill, Beiler & Fischer, 2006; Schuck et al., 2011; Taggert & Szczerbiak, 2002).

Research on parties' strategic decisions whether to put EU issues on the agenda however is divided. Some researchers claim that national parties still refrain from communicating Europe (e.g. Green-Pedersen, 2011). Politicization on issues of EU integration is hampered by internal party disagreements (Edwards, 2009; Ferrara & Weishaupt, 2004; de Vreese, 2006), because it neither fits the traditional left-right paradigm of political competition (Eijk & Franklin, 2004; Thomassen, Noury, & Voeten, 2004; Van der Brug & van Spanje, 2009), nor is it predictable to publicly play this issue because it may be linked to a multitude of issue areas (Green-Pedersen, 2011). On the contrary, other researchers claim that the politicization of EU issues has increased. They find that right-wing parties mobilize against the EU especially on identity matters (Adam & Maier, 2011; Hooghe & Marks, 2008; Kriesi et al., 2006). However, potential reactions of pro-European parties to such challenges have not been

analyzed yet. In sum, it is still debated 'whether' political parties put EU issues on the agenda or not while knowing even less on the question under 'which conditions' and 'how' they do so (see De Wilde, 2007).

Our research is based on the assumption that national parties' communication is strategically driven. Regarding issues, parties have to take two decisions (Green-Pedersen, 2007). First, parties use salience to selectively emphasize issues in their public communication that are advantageous to the own party, e.g. because the party is judged as competent to solve the problems involved (Carmines & Stimson, 1986; Petrocik, 1996; Riker, 1986). As a consequence, "(p)arty competition is only secondarily a direct confrontation of opposing policies. Most frequently it produces selective emphases on the strong points of one's own case. Second, salience considerations are strongly related to positional strategies. For a political party it is not worth to draw attention to issues on which all parties agree as on such issues there is nothing to win. As a consequence parties will turn to other, more controversial issues (Downs, 1968; Rabinowitz & MacDonald, 1989; Riker, 1996).

Research shows that we can distinguish two party types that profit from different types of issues. First, it is mainly governing parties in a two-party system and winning parties vote-, policy- and / or office-wise (Müller & Strøm, 1999) in a multi-party system (Hobolt & de Vries, 2011) that mobilize on long-existing issues which have been shaping the debate for decades. Such established parties do not want to upset their traditional electorate, but want to keep the debate on those 'winning' issues (Hobolt & de Vries, 2011). Consequently, these parties are labeled as 'issue traditionalists' that are distinguished from potential 'issue entrepreneurs' (see for core ideas Carmines & Stimson, 1986, 1993; Hobolt & de Vries, 2011; Riker, 1986, 1996): "[i]ssue entrepreneurship refers to a political strategy with which parties mobilize new policy issues that have been largely ignored by the political mainstream and adopt a policy position on the issue that is substantially different from the current position of the mainstream" (Hobolt & de Vries, 2011: 3). By putting new issues and new positions on the agenda, issue entrepreneurs seek to "upset the dominant party alignment" (Carmines & Stimson, 1993). Such issue entrepreneurs can often be found on the losing side of an existing party system: in a two-party system they are in opposition, in a multi-party system they are not successful vote-, policy- and / or office-wise (Hobolt & de Vries, 2011, 2012).

Empirical research supports the idea of issue traditionalists and issue entrepreneurs: From the early post-materialist issue entrepreneurs, who put ecological or gender topics on the agenda, till nowadays' rise of populist right-wing parties (Inglehart, 1971; Ignazi, 1992). On the specific question of European integration, research also supports the two distinct roles of issue traditionalists and issue entrepreneurs. Europe has largely been ignored by issue traditionalists, the core pro-European mainstream parties (e.g. Weber, 2007) whereas losing parties, e.g. those without coalition experience, are likely to put issues of EU integration on the public agenda voicing anti-EU positions (Hobolt & de Vries, 2011, 2012). Also Adam et al. (2013) show that it is primarily Euroskeptic parties at the rims of the political spectrum and distant from government participation, that most openly criticize EU integration. In the following we will therefore distinguish the communication strategies of Euroskeptic parties and pro-European parties, in the second group focusing on 'winning' mainstream parties.

In earlier years researchers have claimed that parties talk past each other: issue entrepreneurs put new issues on the agenda whereas issue traditionalists, the mainstream parties, stick to those issues which they have been using for decades (e.g. Petrocik, 1996; Saglie, 1998). However, more and more empirical research questions the general validity of the selective emphasis thesis (for summaries of the literature see Baumann, Haber, & Wältermann, 2011; Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2010). Sigelman and Buell (2004) for example show for the U.S. elections since 1960 that attention profiles of parties converge and that intra-party continuity is smaller than issue convergence. Such an issue convergence is in line with the argument that no party has a monopolistic agenda control (Steenbergen & Scott, 2004). Instead each party observes its dynamic issue environments. For parties it is difficult to ignore these issue environments as they are expected to have a position on all issues, as ignorance goes along with an eschewal of shaping the positional struggle (Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2010) and as otherwise they run the risk of being accused of inactivity (Van Noije, Kleinnijenhuis, & Oegema, 2008). Vliegenthart et al. (2011) for example show that parties determine each others' agendas especially if they are in the same language region, part of a coalition, ideologically close or occupy a successful niche. Yet, these strategic interactions of parties have only recently gained attention what makes Kriesi et al. (2008) as well as Hooghe and Marks (2008) call for more research exactly in this realm in order to understand how issues are politicized. In this paper we seek to add to the state of research by exploring whether Euroskeptic challenger parties as potential issue entrepreneurs try to mobilize on European issues and whether their strategic communication has an spill-over effect on pro-

European (mainstream) parties, the issue traditionalists. Thereby we don't limit our analyses to the issues put forward by the parties but include the evaluations political parties voice regarding the overall idea of European integration, but also regarding the functioning of EU institutions as well as regarding concrete EU policies. In the following section, we'll derive our specific research questions and hypotheses.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

First, we have to address the questions which parties have to be considered as potential issue entrepreneurs in the European realm and under which conditions they become active, putting European issues on the agenda. Potential issue entrepreneurs regarding Europe are those who have a position different from the pro-European mainstream parties (so-called "issue traditionalists"). At least for most European countries, mainstream parties still adhere to a moderate pro-EU consensus (Eijk & Franklin, 2004; Hix, 1999; Hooghe & Marks, 2002; Helbling, Hoeglinger & Wüest, 2010). The party landscape at the domestic level has consequently been described as a silent "cartel" (Weber, 2007). However, since more competences have been shifted to the EU and new countries have entered the Union, Euroskeptic parties have emerged in most EU countries. Following Taggart (1998: 366), Euroskepticism "expresses the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration." This broad term encompasses those "who stand outside the status quo" (Taggart, 1998: 366). Euroskeptic parties are potential issue entrepreneurs which might challenge the silent pro-EU cartel.

Our analysis compares parties' strategic communication in two European countries, Germany and Austria, that differ significantly regarding the relevance of Euroskeptic parties within their party systems (see next section). In both countries, we can observe Euroskeptic forces driven by right-wing parties, but in Germany we can also find an example for leftist Euroskepticism by the party 'Die Linke'. Even though public support for the EU varies between both countries, citizens' support in Germany has also been decreasing during the financial crisis (Eurobarometer, 2013). Therefore, we assume that Euroskeptic parties in both countries have an incentive to challenge the pro-European mainstream parties regarding matters of EU-integration, leading to our first hypothesis

> *H1: In the run-up to the 2014 EP elections Euroskeptic parties in Germany and Austria will take the chance campaign on European issues.*

However, as public opinion towards the European Union still is significantly more positive in Germany than in Austria and as public contestation of anti-EU statements is by far less frequent in Germany, German Euroskeptic parties will be more hesitant to voice anti-EU positions and their critique will focus more on the performance of EU institutions and specific EU policies, while Austrian Euroskeptic parties will also tackle fundamental questions of European integration.

>*H2a: The relative amount of Euroskeptic campaign statements voiced by Euroskeptic parties will be higher in Austria than in Germany.*

>*H2b: In Germany, Euroskeptic parties will focus their critique on the performance of EU institutions and specific EU policies, while Austrian Euroskeptic parties will also tackle more fundamental questions of European integration.*

Then, we turn to the question which issues Euroskeptic challenger parties put on the agenda. Opposition to Europe on the economic dimension in general stems from the left who mobilizes against a free-market Europe. Opposition to Europe on a cultural dimension most often originates from right-wing parties which mobilize on matters of national sovereignty and identity (see for empirical evidence Adam & Maier, 2011). Thereby, most authors conclude that the main mobilization against Europe today refers to the cultural dimension and is brought up by right-wing parties (Adam & Maier, 2011; Hix, 2007; Hooghe & Marks, 2008). However with the ongoing debt and financial crisis in Europe, new opportunities for mobilization might emerge. However, it is an open question in which new forms Euroskepticism will materialize. Hypothesis 3 therefore sticks to the more traditional claims:

>*H3: Right-wing EU issue entrepreneurs mobilize on cultural matters whereas left-wing issue entrepreneurs mobilize on economic matters.*

Finally, we turn to the question whether pro-European (mainstream) parties react to their Euroskeptic challengers and which communication strategy they choose. As Bale et al. (2010) show, issue traditionalists have different options to deal with challenges: they may either stay issue traditionalist trying to *silence* the new and rising issue by shifting the attention to their core issues or they may turn into issue followers. As issue followers there are two

alternatives: First, they may voice their traditional position – a position that contrasts Euroskeptic issue entrepreneurs. In this case they follow the challenger salience-wise, yet *polarize* by voicing their pro-European position. Second, they may react by not only discussing the issue, but as well by *adopting* an EU-evaluation that is close to the issue entrepreneur. Empirically, we know that all strategies occur (regarding polarization strategies see Adam, et al., 2014; regarding all strategies Bale, et al., 2010). Yet, we know hardly anything on how parties react to each another. The relevance of the overall party agenda for a single party's strategic communication has been shown (e.g. Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2010; Steenbergen & Scott, 2004; Vliegenthart, et al., 2011). However, it's an open question to which degree single Euroskeptic challenger parties can shape the agendas of pro-European (mainstream) parties. A strong influence is most likely if issue entrepreneurs are already successful in elections (Vliegenthart, et al., 2011). Beyond, we might expect that a higher number of issue entrepreneurs mobilizing on the same new issue might in sum also be able to shape the party agenda. Hypothesis 4 predicts:

> *H4: Euroskeptic issue entrepreneurs are more successful in forcing pro-European mainstream parties to also address an issue, the more influence they have within the party system, i.e. the higher their vote shares or the number of challenger parties are.*

Following hypothesis 4 we expect a much stronger influence of Austrian Euroskeptic parties on the party agenda than in Germany.

The final question now is how issue traditionalists react if they are forced to turn into issue followers: Do they go for a polarization strategy which would result in politicization of issues on EU integration? Or do they favor an adoption strategy not defending their pro-EU stances also playing the 'anti-EU card'? Research leads us to assume that these reactions depend on the ideological proximity of parties (Vliegenthart, et al., 2011). It is plausible to assume that right-wing populist Euroskepticism that is strongly focused on cultural matters of EU integration leads Socialists to opt for polarization strategies whereas Conservatives may try adoption strategies. Vliegenthart et al. (2011) have shown that Conservatives are more likely to take up right-wing Euroskepticism. Euroskepticism from the left side of the political spectrum is likely to lead to reversed reactions by left and right-wing traditional parties. The reason: Traditional parties on the right side of the political spectrum struggle themselves with

the cultural side of integration whereas traditional parties on the left do so regarding a free-market Europe (Kriesi, et al., 2006). Hypothesis 5 therefore claims:

> *H5: The closer traditional parties are ideologically to issue entrepreneurs, the lower is the probability that they will show polarization strategies. Instead ideologically closer parties which are forced into the role of issue followers will opt for adoption strategies whereas ideologically more distant parties are more likely to adopt polarization strategies.*

Research Design, Data and methods

In order to study the interplay between pro-EU mainstream parties and Euroskeptic challenger parties in countries with higher and lower degrees of Euroskepticism in political parties, we need to choose (a) a sample of countries, (b) a relevant set of parties included in the study, (c) the period of analysis, (d) data sources that provide information on parties' strategic communication behavior, and (e) the appropriate method of analysis.

(a) Selection of countries

The selection of countries included for the study is strictly derived from the hypotheses we want to test. We choose Germany and Austria as two EU-member states which are relatively similar concerning the political system and the economic situation, but differ significantly regarding the status of Euroskeptic parties within their party systems. To classify the status of Euroskeptic parties within the party system, we take into account the ideological position of Euroskeptic parties (right- or left-wing), the previous or current government participation of Euroskeptic parties on the national level as well as the vote shares of Euroskeptic parties in the last national and EP elections (see table 1).

Table 1: Criteria of countries' selection for the study

Criterium	*Data source*
Existence of right- and left-wing Eurosceptic parties	2009 PIREDEU-Manifesto-data, Schwarz & Santkiewitsch (2014), Taggart & Szczerbiak (2002)
Vote shares of Euroskeptic parties in the last national and European elections	Election results
(Previous) government participation of partly/Euroskeptic parties (H4)	Public archives

	Political Parties				
	Government participation of Euroskeptic parties	Left-right placement of Euroskeptic parties		Vote share of Euroskeptic parties in the last elections	
		left	right	low	high
Germany	-	x	x	x	-
Austria	(x)	-	x	-	x

Germany is selected as a country in which Euroskeptic parties currently exist at the right as well as the left side of the party spectrum, but as non-established forces with low to moderate vote shares (up to 20%; Jandura, 2007) in the last national elections ('Alternative für Deutschland' (right-wing), 4.7 %; 'Die Linke' (left-wing), 8.6 %). As opposed to this, we find well established Euroskeptic parties in Austria, which can be described as right-wing populist. The FPÖ as the major right-wing challenging party gained high vote shares in the 2013 national election (2.5 %), the BZÖ – also a Euroskeptic party from the right – won 3.5 of the votes in 2013. In addition, Euroskeptic parties have already been part of the Austrian government in the past, which underlines, that Euroskeptic positions are more established in Austria than in Germany. The Euroskeptic FPÖ had already governmental responsibility in the 1980ies in a coalition with the SPÖ (1983-1987) and again from 2003 till 2005 together with the ÖVP. Between 2005 and 2007 ÖVP and BZÖ formed the government.

(b) Parties included in the study

Our study takes into consideration all German and Austrian parties that won at least three percent of votes in the last European or national elections and participated in the European Elections 2014 (in Austria 'Team Stronach' and 'Liste Martin' did not participate in the 2014 EP elections). In sum, our analysis covers 13 parties (and their corresponding fractions) – seven from Germany and six Austrian parties. These political parties may be categorized on four dimensions (see tables 2 and 3).

1) *Position regarding European Integration/European Union.* As we are interested into parties' contestation about Europe, our study includes pro-European as well as Euroskeptic parties.

2) *Current government participation* of Euroskeptic parties on the national level. As our research question aims to cover the interplay between communication strategies of pro-European governing parties and Euroskeptic challenger parties, both "types" of parties have to be included in our study.

3) Another indicator for the status of Euroskeptic political parties is their *vote share* (in the last national election) – how much support do Euroskeptic parties receive by a country's electorate?

4) *Ideological position.* Euroskeptic parties may be found on the right- or left-wing of a party system and are assumed to justify their Euroskepticism with different arguments.

Table 2: Categorization of German political parties included in the study

			Attitude towards EU			
			Europhile		Euroskeptic	
			left	right	left	right
Government Participation	Yes	High vote share	SPD	CDU, CSU	/	/
		Low vote share	/	/	/	/
	No	High vote share	/	/	/	/
		Low vote share	Grüne	FDP	Die Linke	AfD

Table 3: Categorization of Austrian political parties included in the study

			Attitude towards EU			
			Europhile		Euroskeptic	
			left	right	left	right
Government Participation	Yes	High vote share	SPÖ	ÖVP	/	/
		Low vote share	/	/	/	/
	No	High vote share	/	/	/	FPÖ
		Low vote share	Grüne NEOS*		/	BZÖ

*NEOS describes itself as a liberal party apart from the classical left-right-divide (NEOS, 2014).

In the German case we analyze five pro-European (governing) parties and two Euroskeptic (challenging) parties, in the case of Austria four pro-European (two of them with government responsibility) parties and two Euroskeptic (challenging) parties as well. The tables show that the array of political parties in Austria is more Euroskeptic (higher vote shares) than in Germany.

(c) Period of analysis

Most campaign-studies focus on the so called "hot phase" of election campaigns (usually up to four weeks prior to the election). However, we believe that politicization processes are context sensitive – campaigns may trigger different issue dynamics (Van Noije et al., 2008). Therefore we choose a longer period of observation, i.e. eight weeks prior to the EP elections 2014. This allows us to study the strategic communication of challenging Euroskeptic parties that potentially may mobilize against Europe, as well as the reactions of pro-European parties to this challenge. As we don't have any experiences yet, how long it takes a challenging party to put an Euroskeptic issue on the overall party agenda (does it have to "push" the issue for several days or even for weeks?) and how long it takes till other, pro-European parties react on this politicization (within some days or weeks?), the analysis of a longer time period seems necessary.

(d) Data sources

To study parties' campaign communication several data sources may be taken into account: party manifestos, campaign posters and TV-spots as well as press releases. All of these data sources have their strengths but also their shortcomings (Netjes & Binnema, 2007). Manifestos, posters and spots are only published during the "hot phase" of the election campaign. As we want to cover a broader time period, these sources do not seem ideal for our task. Press releases in contrast are constantly available not only during election campaigns, but also during non-election periods. They are a continuous communication tool that is geared at the media and the general public.

For these reasons, we collected all press releases the aforementioned parties published eight weeks prior to the 2014 EP elections. In the case of Austria all press releases were available from the "Originaltext-Service GmbH" (OTS). For Germany, we collected the necessary press releases from party archives and party homepages. As we are only interested in politicization of European issues, only press releases that referred to *European policies*, *European*

institutions, *European politicians* and/or the *EP elections* at least twice were included in the analysis. To identify relevant press releases, we compiled an electronic search string that contained the relevant key words and word components[i]. This search resulted in a total of 235 relevant press releases for Germany and 729 cases for Austria within eight weeks prior to the 2014 EP elections.

(e) Method of analysis

To systematically analyze the content of the press releases, we conducted a quantitative content analysis of all relevant press releases (census). To ensure the reliability of coding, all coders took part in a common thorough training and then conducted a (researcher-coder) reliability test of 25 press releases each. We tested reliability of coding according to Holsti-Formula as well as according to Krippendorff's Alpha coefficient whenever possible or useful. With average results for *formal categories* (e.g. date of publishing, source, country etc.) of 0.98 – 1.00 according to the Holsti-Formula respectively of 0.97 – 1.00 according to Krippendorff's Alpha and reliabilities for *content characteristics* (e.g. mainissue, evaluation of the EU etc.) of 0.76 – 0.98 (Holsti) respectively 0.74 – 0.90 (Krippendorff's Alpha) across the two countries, reliability tests delivered satisfactory results.

Our unit of analysis is the statement of the actor (politician or party) who published the press release. In addition to formal categories, aspects of content were captured. The main focus was on the main issue covered in the press release, the evaluation of the general idea of European integration and the evaluation of the actual functioning of the EU, its institutions, politicians and policies. We compiled an issue list composed of 16 main issue fields (and 149 subtopics) that follows the PIREDEU (2009) issue list (see attachments, table 1).[ii]

Results

In the following, we test our hypotheses regarding the strategic communication of Euroskeptic parties in the run-up to the EP elections 2014 comparing a country with Euroskeptic parties on the fringes of the party spectrum (Germany) and a country with well-established anti-EU forces (Austria). We analyze if Euroskeptic parties address European issues, in which way they voice their critique of the European Union and how the pro-European parties react to those challengers.

First, we want to provide an overview on how active the different parties in both countries were in publicly addressing European issues. As a measure for this activity, we use the

amount of EU-related press releases a party published per week. Looking at the absolute numbers (see figure 1 and 2), we can see clear differences between the two countries: Most of the German parties published up to ten press releases with EU-references per week (see figure 1). On average, German parties addressed European politics in only four press releases per week. Looking at the Austrian parties, we see much more activity with an average of 15 releases per week (see figure 2).

Figure 1: Press releases with reference to the EU per party and week – Germany (absolute numbers)
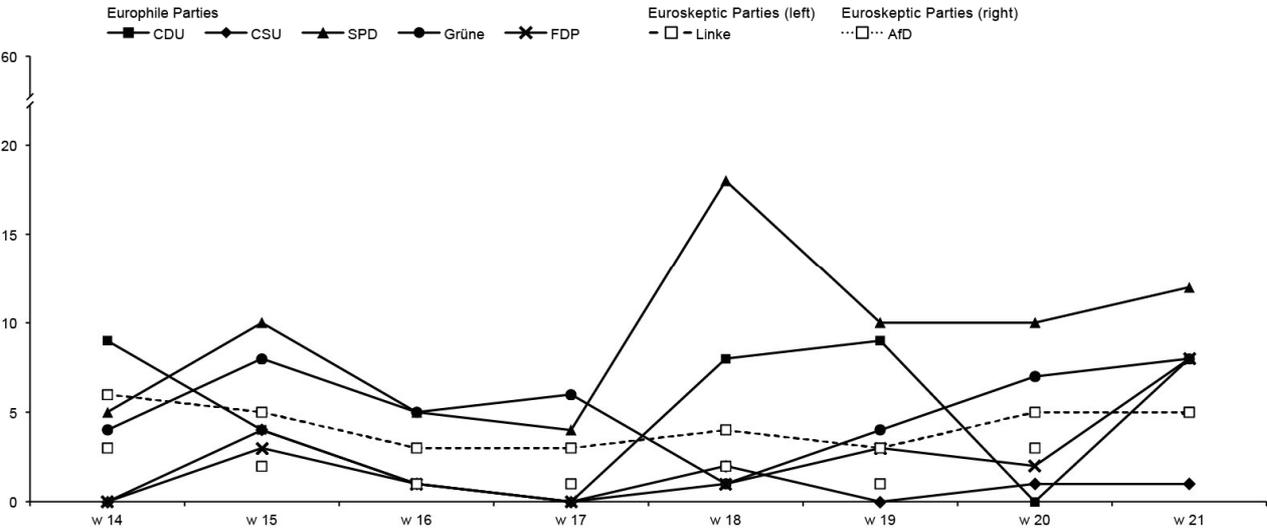
N = 235 press releases

Figure 2: Press releases with reference to the EU per party and week – Austria (absolute numbers)
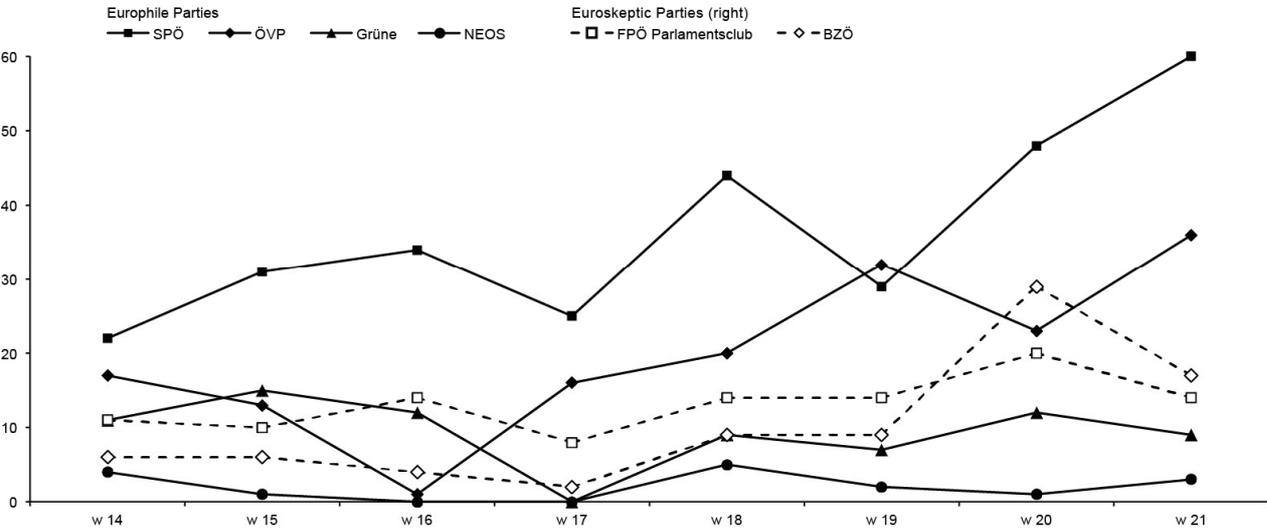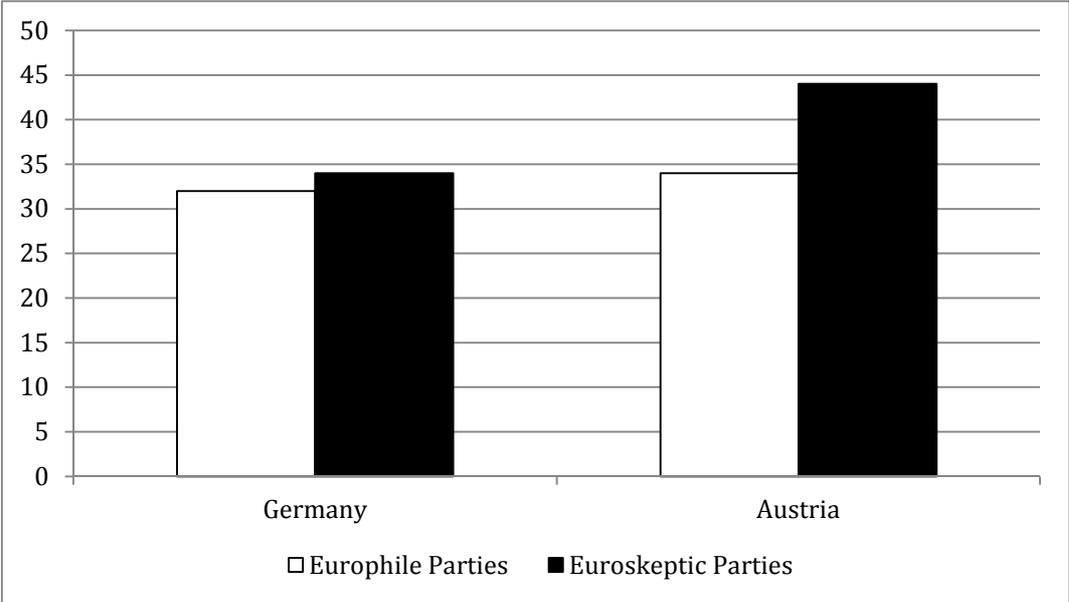

N = 729 press releases

However, the share of press releases with EU-references in all published press releases per party[iii] (see attachments, figure 1 and 2) is relatively similar in both countries. During the 2014 EP campaign, German parties mentioned the EU in 32 percent of their press releases, while the Austrian parties did so in 37 percent of the cases. German as well as the Austrian pro-European and Euroskeptic parties address European issues during the campaign phase. Another similarity in both countries is that right-wing fringe parties referred to EU-topics the most often. The German AfD as well as the Austrian BZÖ mentioned EU-Topics in about half of their press releases (AfD: 48 percent; BZÖ: 53 percent).

Hypothesis 1 claimed that all Euroskeptic parties would use the chance to address European topics in the run-up to the 2014 EP elections. This hypothesis is approved by the data, as we can not only see that all Euroskeptic parties talked about European politics, but they addressed European issues even relatively more than the pro-European parties. While the German parties all use about a third of their press releases to talk about EU-issues and the Euroskeptic parties only have a little higher share (34 percent) than the Europhile parties (32 percent) (see figure 3), the difference in Austria is clearer. As figure 5 shows, the mean value is 44 percent for Euroskeptic parties and only 34 percent for pro-EU parties. The well-established anti-EU parties in Austria seem to be more active in voicing EU topics than the German Eurosceptic fringe parties.

Figure 3: Mean share of press releases with EU-reference (in %)


N = 964

We're not only interested in the amount of published press releases that refer to European politics, but even more in what particular issues they deal with and whether these issues are framed in a Euroskeptic manner. Do challenging Euroskeptic parties connect European issues with anti-EU statements? Our second hypothesis claims at first (H2a) that the amount of Euroskeptic statements voiced by Euroskeptic parties will be relatively lower in Germany than in Austria as public opinion towards the European Union is more positive in Germany than in Austria and as Euroskeptic parties in Germany experience less support in the electorate than in Austria.

We test our hypothesis by analyzing how often the political parties explicitly and negatively evaluate 1) the general idea of European integration – that means a fundamental critique on a strong cooperation of European states within the framework of the European Union regarding economy, politics, legal and international affairs – and 2) the actual functioning of the EU (as an economic and political union of 28 member states), its institutions (like the European Commission, the European Council, etc.), European politicians (EP candidates/members) and concrete EU policies (regulations, laws, etc.). In general, it is possible to support the idea of European integration while criticizing the actual functioning of the European Union. Critique on the functioning of the EU in that sense is more specific than critique on the general idea of European integration as a whole (that would be fundamental critique).

Our second hypothesis secondly (H2b) expects that Euroskeptic parties' specific critique on the actual functioning of the EU in Germany will be relatively higher than fundamental critique on the general idea of European integration, while Austrian Euroskeptic parties will also tackle more fundamental questions of European integration.

Our analysis shows that the vast majority of EU-related press releases from Euroskeptic challenger parties in Germany as well as in Austria do *not* contain explicit negative evaluations of the general idea of European integration (see Figures 4 and 5).

Figure 4: Evaluation of the general idea of European integration – Germany (in %)
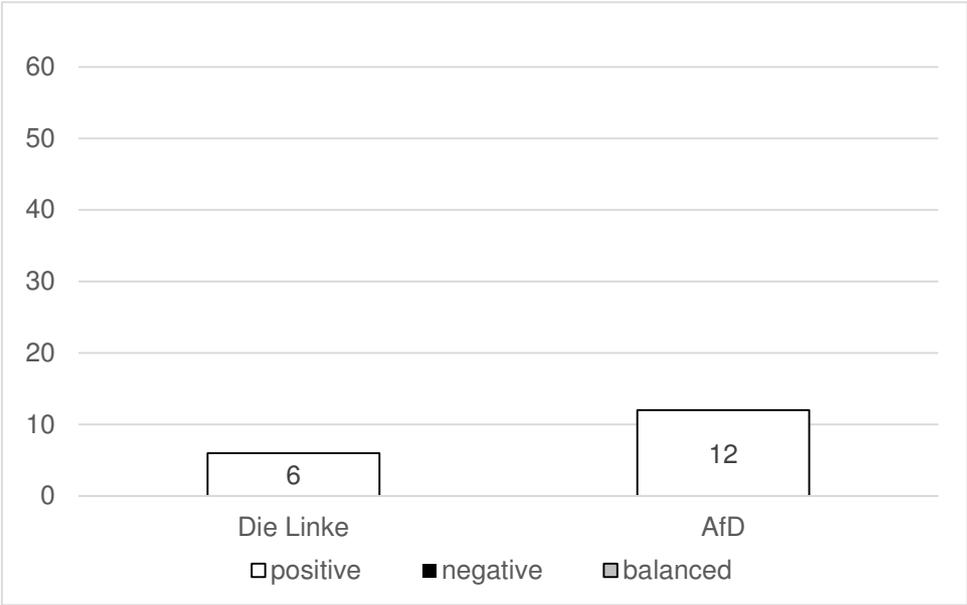
Basis: Number of press releases: Die Linke: n = 34, AfD: n = 17. Share of press releases without evaluations: Die Linke: 94%, AfD: 88%.

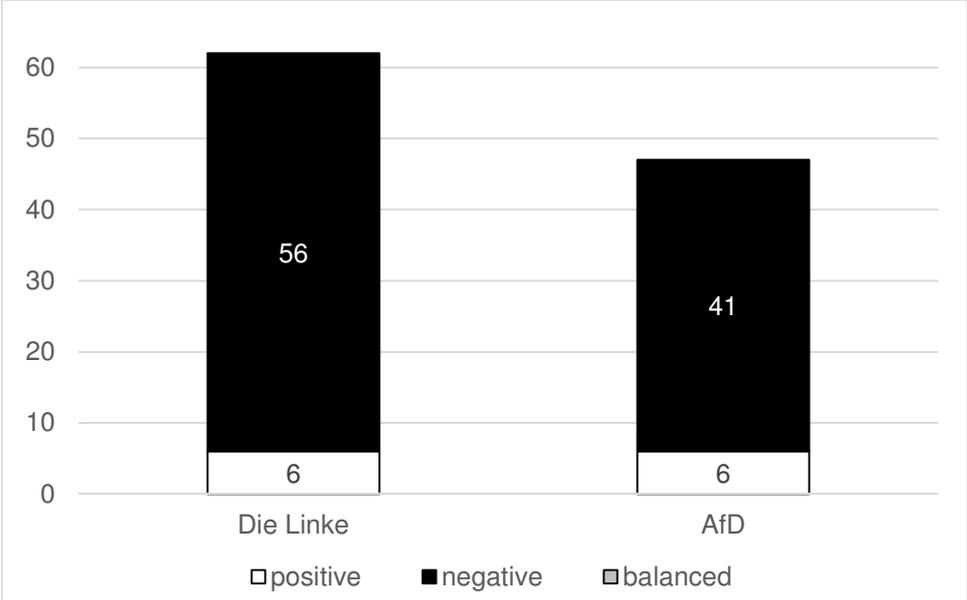**Figure 5: Evaluation of the general idea of European integration – Austria (in %)**
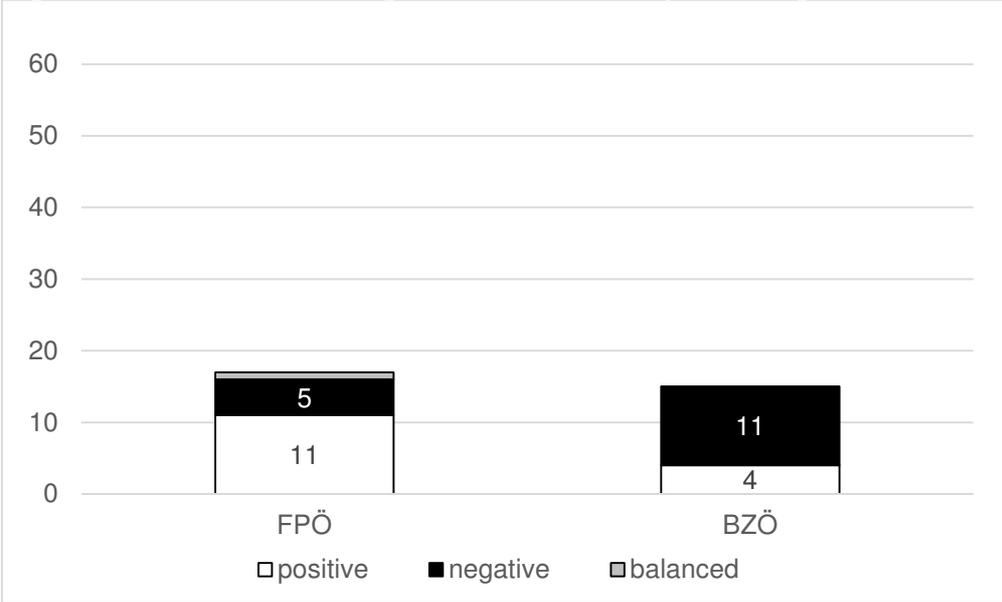
Basis: Number of press releases: FPÖ: n = 105, BZÖ: n = 81. Share of press releases without evaluations: FPÖ: 84%, BZÖ: 85%.

In Germany, 94 percent of all EU-related press releases published by the Linke and 88 percent of all press releases from the Alternative für Deutschland did not contain evaluative statements on the general idea of European integration at all. The cases that contained evaluative statements were – without exception – positive (6 percent of all press releases from the Linke and 12 percent of all press releases from the AfD). In Germany no fundamental critique on the idea of a European Union as a whole is made – the general impression of European integration is absolutely positive, even on side of the Euroskeptic parties.

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In Austria the picture is somewhat different. Indeed, even in Austria the majority of press releases from Euroskeptic challenger parties did not provide any statements regarding the general idea of European integration at all (84 percent of all press releases from FPÖ and 85 percent from BZÖ did not contain such evaluative statements). But if Euroskeptic challenger parties in Austria did evaluate the idea of European integration, different from Germany, they also voiced fundamental critique in their press releases. Five percent of the FPÖ's press releases contained critical statements about the idea of European integration in general, and 11 percent of the press releases from the smaller BZÖ. While in the case of FPÖ 11 percent of press releases contained positive evaluations of EU integration (and therefore dominated the negative evaluations), positive evaluations in the press releases of the BZÖ only occurred in four percent of the cases. Therefore, the smaller BZÖ seems to be the more "radical" Euroskeptic challenger party in Austria.

Turning to the specific critique on the actual functioning of the EU, as stated in H2b, in both countries the amount of negative evaluations by Euroskeptic parties is higher than their critique on the general idea of European integration (see Figures 6 and 7).

Figure 6: Evaluation of the actual functioning of the EU – Germany (in %)

Basis: Number of press releases: Die Linke: n = 34, AfD: n = 17. Share of press releases without evaluations: Die Linke: 38%, AfD: 53%.

Figure 7: Evaluation of the actual functioning of the EU – Austria (in %)
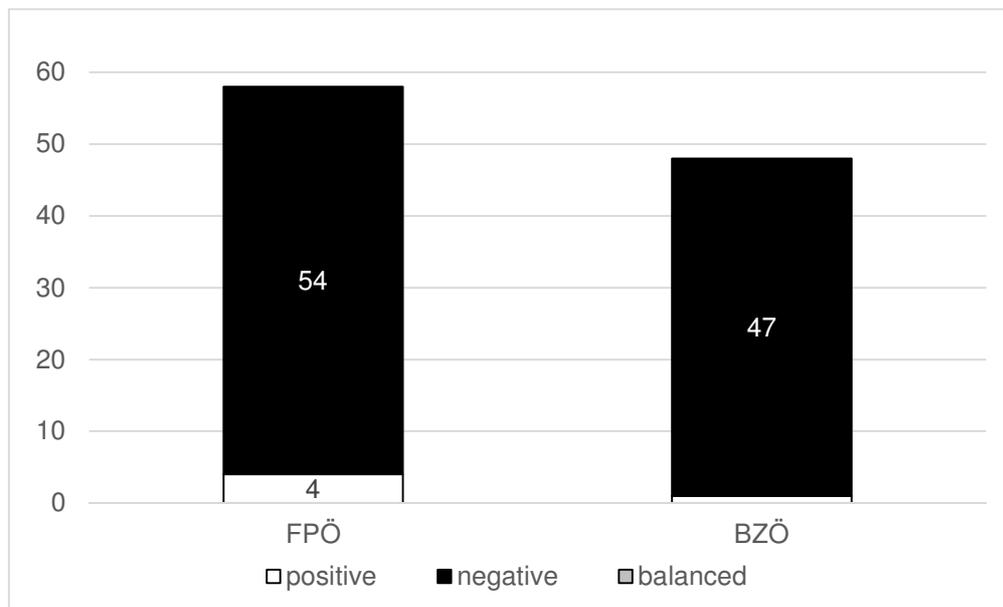
Basis: Number of press releases: FPÖ: n = 105, BZÖ: n = 81. Share of press releases without evaluations: FPÖ: 42%, BZÖ: 52%.

In Germany, 38 percent of all EU-related press releases published by the Linke and 53 percent of all press releases from the AfD did not contain evaluative statements on the actual functioning of the EU. The cases that contained evaluative statements were predominantly negative: 56 percent of all press releases from the Linke and 41 percent of AfD press releases. Only six percent of the press releases from both parties evaluated the EU, European institutions, European policies or European politicians positive.

In Austria the picture is quite similar. 42 percent of all EU-related press releases from FPÖ and 52 percent from BZÖ did not evaluate the actual functioning of the EU. And we cannot clearly say that Euroskeptic challenger parties from Austria do voice substantive more critique on the actual functioning of the EU than Euroskeptic challenger parties from Germany. 54 percent of all press releases from the FPÖ contained negative EU-evaluations and almost half of all BZÖ press releases. But the two Euroskeptic parties from Austria do voice positive evaluations on the EU functioning less often than the two German Euroskeptic parties (FPÖ: 4 percent positive evaluations; BZÖ: 1 percent). In total, EU-criticism is only voiced a little bit more often by Euroskeptic challenger parties in Austria than in Germany and EU-praise is voiced a bit less often in Austria. Therefore H2a seems to be confirmed.

Table 4: Mainissues of Press Releases – Germany (in %)

	EU-skeptic parties		Europhile Parties									
	Negative Evaluations		Negative Evaluations					Positive Evaluations				
	Challenger Parties		Governing Parties			Challenger Parties		Governing Parties			Challenger Parties	
	left	right	left	right		left	right	left	right		left	right
	Linke	AfD	SPD	CDU*	CSU**	Greens	FDP	SPD	CDU*	CSU**	Greens	FDP
Economy	22.2	28.6	12.5	0.0	0.0	27.3	0.0	29.4	27.3	0.0	8.3	20.0
Social policy /Labor market	0.0	14.3	25.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Law and Order	0.0	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	23.5	9.1	100.0	41.7	60.0
Immigration	16.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	50.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0
International affairs	27.8	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	8.3	0.0
Environment/Energy	11.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	9.1	0.0	5.9	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Consumer protection	5.6	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	18.2	0.0	0.0	9.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Citizens' rights	11.1	0.0	12.5	0.0	0.0	18.2	0.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Constitutional questions	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	50.0	5.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Territorial questions	5.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	16.7	0.0
Administration and Bureaucracy	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Elections	0.0	42.9	37.5	33.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	18.2	0.0	0.0	20.0
Other Issues	0.0	0.0	0.0	33.3	0.0	18.2	0.0	23.6	9.1	0.0	16.7	0.0
N	18	7	8	3	2	11	2	17	11	2	12	5

*CDU, including the CDU-CSU-coalition in the national parliament. **CSU acting as autonomous party in Bavaria.

Table 5: Mainissues of Press Releases – Austria (in %)

	EU-Skeptic Parties		Europhile Parties							
	Negative Evaluations		Negative evaluations				Positive Evaluations			
	Challenger Parties		Governing Parties		Challenger Party		Governing Parties		Challenger Party	
	right	right	left	right	left	liberal	left	right	left	liberal
	FPÖ	BZÖ	SPÖ	ÖVP	Greens	NEOS	SPÖ	ÖVP	Greens	NEOS
Economy	16.1	42.1	18.6	0.0	16.0	0.0	31.3	31.3	33.3	14.3
Social policy /Labor market	5.4	5.3	12.9	0.0	4.0	0.0	14.6	6.7	0.0	0.0
Law and Order	1.8	7.9	5.7	0.0	4.0	0.0	10.4	2.2	11.1	7.1
Immigration	10.7	5.3	0.0	6.3	20.0	0.0	4.2	2.2	0.0	0.0
International Affairs	10.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.0	0.0	0.0	4.4	0.0	7.1
Environment/Energy	7.1	2.6	5.7	0.0	28.0	0.0	6.3	2.2	22.2	0.0
Consumer protection	3.6	0.0	2.9	0.0	4.0	50.0	12.5	2.2	11.1	7.1
Citizens' rights	0.0	5.3	5.7	0.0	4.0	0.0	6.3	2.2	0.0	7.1
Constitutional questions	5.4	2.6	1.4	6.3	4.0	50.0	0.0	4.4	0.0	7.1
Territorial questions	3.6	5.3	1.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4	11.1	0.0
Administration and Bureaucracy	8.9	2.6	2.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Elections	21.4	18.4	38.6	62.5	8.0	0.0	8.3	24.4	0.0	28.6
Other Issues	5.4	2.6	4.2	25.1	4.0	0.0	4.2	13.4	11.1	21.4
N	56	38	70	16	25	2	48	45	9	14

Next, we turn to the question which issues Euroskeptic challenger parties in Germany and Austria put on their agenda and connect them with negative evaluations of the actual functioning of the EU. In our content analysis we covered 16 main issue fields (e.g. economy, social and labour market policy, education and research, elections etc.) with 149 subtopics in total. In the following, we'll analyze to which main issues the negative EU-evaluations voiced by the Euroskeptic parties were attached (see Tables 4 and 5).

The issues Euroskeptic challenger parties in Germany connected most often with critique on the functioning of the EU are *economic issues* (Linke: 22 percent of all press releases related to European issues; AfD: 29 percent), *international affairs* (Linke: 29 percent; AfD: 14 percent) and *elections* (Linke: 0 percent; but AfD: 43 percent). Most of the "economic" press releases dealt with the stimulus package and safety umbrellas (ESM, EFSM, Eurobonds etc.), namely 16 percent of all press releases (related to European politics) from the Linke and even 17 percent of the press releases from the AfD. Most of the press releases on international affairs dealt with the Crimean Crisis, a conflict unfolding the region of Crimea that started in 2014 in the aftermath of the Ukrainian revolution (14 percent of AfD's analyzed press releases) respectively European relations to Russia as a consequence of this conflict (16 percent of the Linke's analyzed press releases). The Linke as a left-leaning party also criticized immigration policies (17 percent) that regulate immigration from outside the EU (asylum, border controls), environment and energy issues as well as citizens' rights (both about 11 percent). The right-leaning AfD voiced EU criticism regarding social policies (14 percent), especially family policy matters like child care or parental leave, and regarding the EP 2014 elections (43 percent; mostlycritique on EP candidates from other parties).

In Austria, the policy areas in which Euroskeptic challenger parties voiced most critique on the European Union are – similarly to Germany– *economic issues* (FPÖ: 16 percent; BZÖ: 42 percent), *international affairs* (FPÖ: 11 percent; but BZÖ: 0 percent), *immigration* (FPÖ: 11 percent; BZÖ: 5 percent) and *elections*. Even the subtopics that are connected with negative EU-evaluations are nearly the same: Regarding international affairs it is also the Crimean Crisis and Europe's relations to Russia that are matters of concern, regarding immigration it is policies on asylum or border controls, and concerning elections other EP candidates are criticized most often. However, the economic subissues differ somewhat: they are more diverse (12 subissues in

Austria versus three in Germany) and the focus is not on the stimulus package or on safety umbrellas (only 5 percent of the negative BZÖ press releases), but also on interest rate (8 percent), inflation (5 percent), EU depts (5 percent) or bank and financial sector regulation (5 percent), for example.

We now turn to the question whether Euroskeptic challenger parties have the potential to influence the strategic communication behavior of pro-European parties. Hypothesis 4 claims that Euroskeptic parties with higher vote shares should have a stronger impact on the overall party agenda than challenger parties with less support in the electorate. Therefore, we expect an especially strong influence of the FPÖ in Austria and a minor effect of the smaller German Euroskeptic parties. In the following, we will again first analyze the degree and forms of negative EU evaluations voiced by pro-European parties in both countries and then focus on the question whether Euroskeptic parties have been successful in placing concrete issues on the overall party agenda.

Regarding the evaluation of the general idea of European integration by Euroskeptic parties, we've observed above that such challenger parties in Germany did not at all voice fundamental critique in their press releases; instead, EU-evaluation was even positive to some extent. In Austria however, FPÖ's and especially BZÖ's press releases contained critical statements about the idea of European integration in general. Turning to the mainstream parties in Germany now (figure 8), we find that CSU (25 percent), SPD (26 percent), FDP (44 percent) and Greens (26 percent) only voiced positive evaluations of the general idea of EU integration. The only exemption being the governing CDU: Besides 10 percent of clearly positive statements, this party also provided criticism in 2 press releases (one dealing with labour market regulations and one with agricultural policies) and one balanced evaluation (on the EP elections). It's interesting to see that the major governing party in Germany was the only one to voice some critique on the general idea of European integration. However, this critique was not provoked by any of the Euroskeptic parties.

Figure 8: Evaluation of the general idea of European integration in Germany (in %)
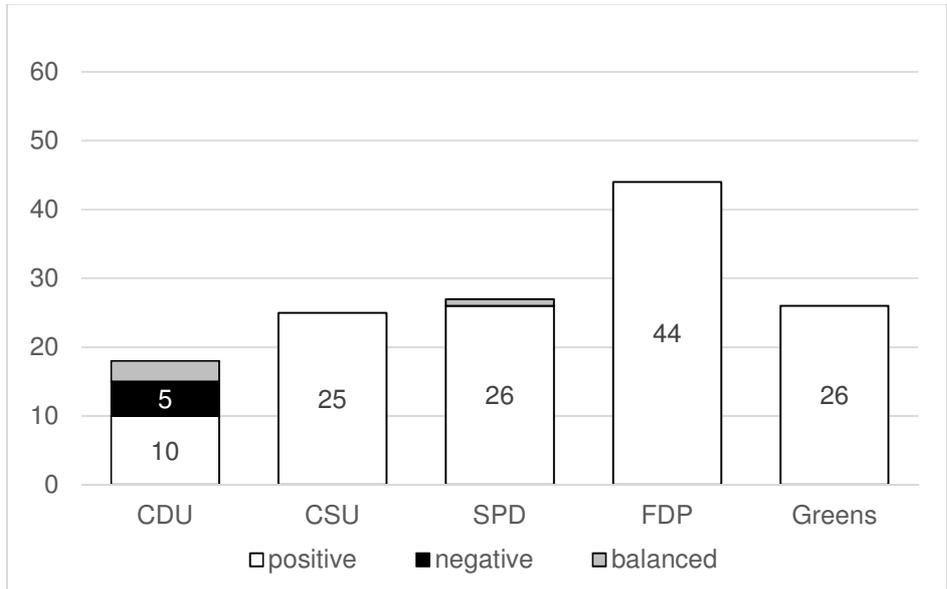
Basis: Number of press releases: CDU: n = 39, CSU: N=8, SPD: n = 73, FDP: n = 18, Greens: n = 46. Share of press releases without evaluations: CDU: 82%, CSU: 75%, SPD: 73%, FDP: 56%, Greens: 74.

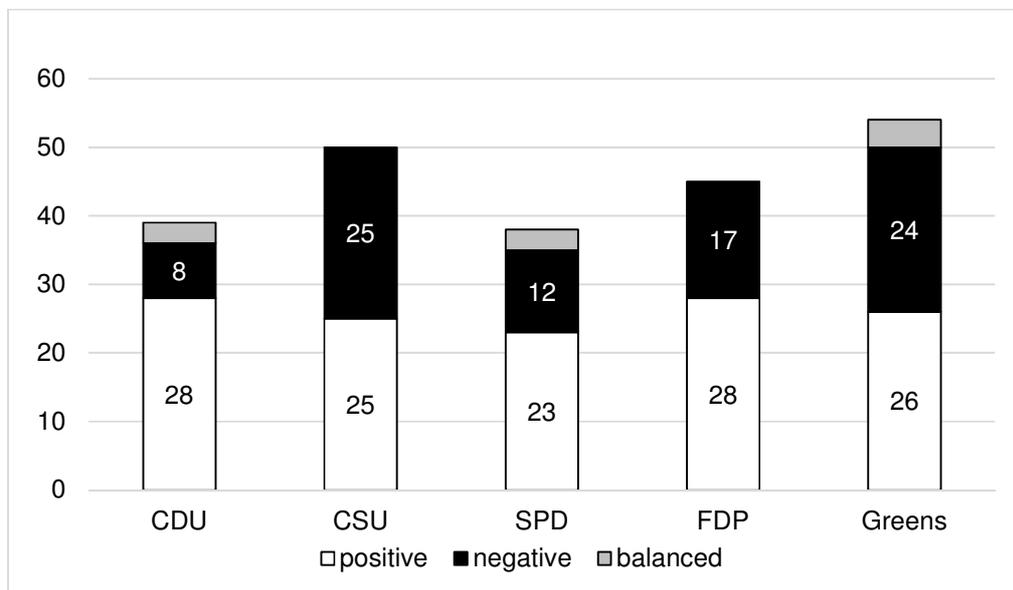**Figure 9: Evaluation of the general idea of European integration in Austria (in %)**
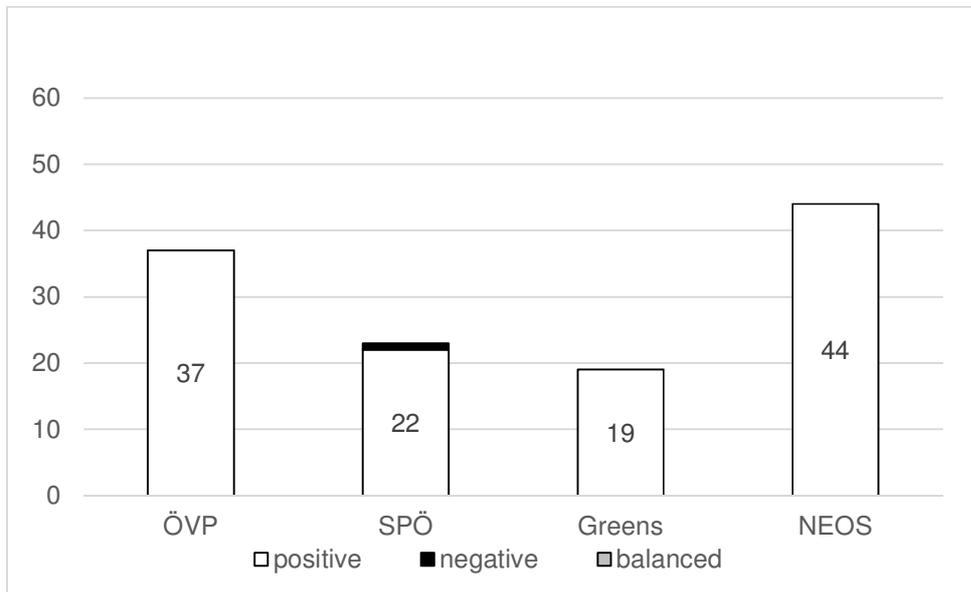
Basis: Number of press releases: ÖVP: n = 158, SPÖ: n = 293, Greens: n = 75, NEOS: n = 16. Share of press releases without evaluations: ÖVP: 63%, SPÖ: 77%, Greens: 81%, NEOS: 56%.

The picture is very similar in Austria (figure 9): With only one exception (SPÖ, 1 percent), all the evaluative statements of mainstream parties were positive regarding the general idea of EU

integration (ÖVP: 37 percent; SPÖ: 22 percent; Greens: 19 percent; NEOS: 44 percent). The negative evaluation of EU integration from the SPÖ was connected with an issue of EU consumer protection policy and an issue of EP elections 2014 (candidates).

Turning from the evaluation of the general idea of European integration to the evaluation of the actual functioning of the EU, i.e. EU-policies, we've observed significantly more critical statements by Euroskeptic parties in this category in Germany as well as in Austria. We also find such specific EU-skepticism among pro-European parties in both countries (figures 10 and 11).

Figure 10: Evaluation of the actual functioning of the EU – Germany (in %)

Basis: Number of press releases: CDU: n = 39, CSU: N=8, SPD: n = 73, FDP: n = 18, Greens: n = 46. Share of press releases without evaluations: CDU: 62%, CSU: 50%, SPD: 62%, FDP: 56%, Greens: 46.

Figure 11: Evaluation of the actual functioning of the EU – Austria (in %)
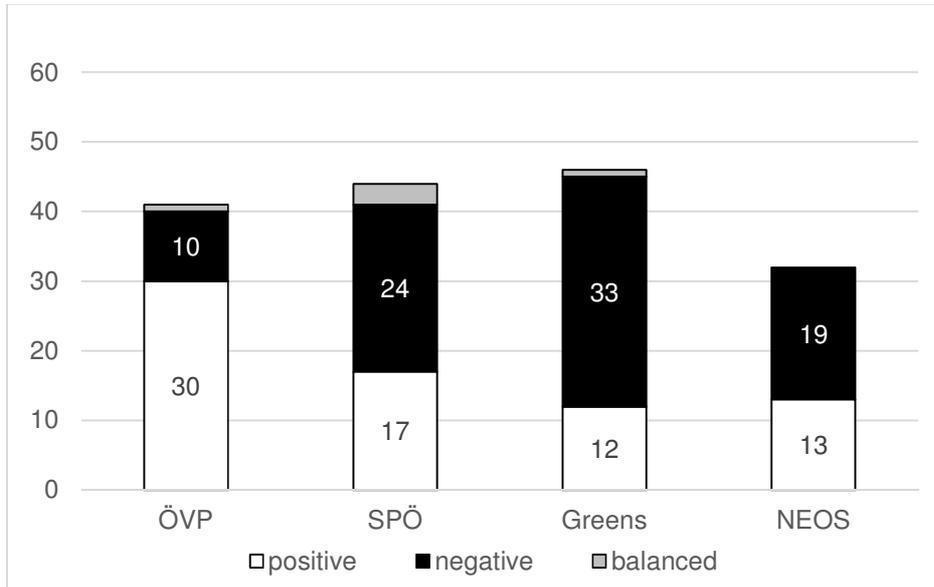
Basis: Number of press releases: ÖVP: n = 158, SPÖ: n = 293, Greens: n = 75, NEOS: n = 16. Share of press releases without evaluations: ÖVP: 59%, SPÖ: 57%, Greens: 53%, NEOS: 69%.

In Germany, the governing CDU shows positive evaluations the most often (28 percent) and the fewest critique (8 percent). Their coalition partner, SPD, also seems quite reluctant to voice criticism even on specific policies (12 percent); while the percentage of critical statements is higher for the CSU (also part of the governing coalition on the national level: 25 percent), the FDP (17 percent) and the Greens (24 percent). In Austria the governing ÖVP provided a positive evaluation for EU-policies in 30 percent of their press releases and voiced criticism in only 10 percent of the cases. Their coalition partner SPÖ however, showed significantly more EU-critique (24 percent), while the Greens even criticized concrete EU-policies in 33 percent of the cases. The new pro-European party NEOS voiced EU-criticism in 19 percent of their press releases. In sum, we can state that in both countries we find similar degrees of specific EU-criticism voiced on the one side by Euroskeptic and on the other side by pro-European parties. Different than expected, specific EU-criticism stemming from Euroskeptic parties was not higher in Austria than in Germany. The percentages of statements criticizing specific EU-policies voiced by Europhile parties were much smaller than for Euroskeptic parties in both countries. It's interesting to note, but not astonishing, that in both countries, the right-leaning governing parties were the ones that voiced the fewest critical statements on EU-policies. As we find significant proportions of specific Euro-criticism from Euroskeptic and Europhile parties in both countries alike, the question now is whether this can be interpreted as a spill-over effect in the sense that

communication of Eurokeptic parties about specific issues forces Europhile parties to also pick up these issues in their communication. We therefore turn to the analysis of issues communicated about in the next section.

Table 4 (see above) first displays connected to which issues Euroskeptic parties in Germany voiced negative EU-policy evaluations. It shows that economic issues were the field in which both parties (Linke and AfD) voiced most critique, followed by international affairs. The left-leaning Linke also criticized EU's immigration policies, while the right-leaning AfD challenged the mainstream parties regarding social policies. Now, looking at the way in which the pro-European parties communicated in these fields, we find that the major governing party in Germany, CDU, regarding economic matters did not pick up the negative evaluations provided by the challenger parties, but on the contrary provided positive evaluations (27 percent) in this area. However, the left leaning SPD as well as the green party seemed a bit torn between negative (13 and 27 percent) and positive (29 and 8 percent) evaluations of EU's economic policies. The second important area of the challengers' critique, i.e. international affairs, none of the pro-European parties really turned into a campaign issue. This also holds true for immigration policies. However, in the field of social policy the EU-evaluations-are divided. The right-leaning AfD and the left-leaning SPD connect this issue with negative evaluations (AfD: 14 percent; SPD: 25 percent), while the right-leaning CDU shows positive evaluations in this field (18 percent). A spill-over effect from Euroskeptic to Europhile parties does not seem reasonable.

In table 5 (see above) the connection between issues and evaluations is provided for the Austrian parties. It's interesting to note that the three policy areas in which Euroskeptic parties expressed most critique are exactly the same for both countries, i.e. economy, immigration and international affairs. In Austria as in Germany, the Euroskeptic parties voiced most critique regarding economic EU-policies. As in Germany, the right-leaning governing party (ÖVP) in the same area showed clearly positive EU-evaluations, while the left-leaning SPÖ and the Greens also provided a mixture of some negative (19 and 16 percent) but mostly positive EU-evaluations (31 and 33 percent). Regarding the negative evaluations on the subissue "trade policy", a spill-over effect from the right-leaning Euroskeptic FPÖ and BZÖ to the left-leaning Europhile SPÖ and Greens seems possible. FPÖ and BZÖ put that issue (connected with a negative EU-evaluation) on their party agenda (FPÖ: April, 3rd, 14th, 30th; BZÖ: May, 9th) and a while later also the Europhile SPÖ and the Greens talked in a EU-sceptic manner about this issue (the Greens: April, 28th, May, 6th;

SPÖ: May, 13th, 15th). Immigration policies in Austria was the second area in which the Euroskeptic parties criticized the EU most often (FPÖ: 10.7; BZÖ: 5.3 percent). In this field, the Green party (and rudimentarily the ÖVP) also showed criticism, while all other parties did not engage in too much evaluations. A potential spill-over may have come from the Euroskeptic FPÖ to the Europhile Greens. The FPÖ voiced the issue "immigration policy" on April, 1st-3rd, 17th, and May, 12th connected with a negative evaluation of the EU. On April, 8th, 20th, and May, 13th, the Greens (and on May, 13th also the ÖVP) put the same issue with a negative EU-evaluation on their agenda, too. Finally, FPÖ's criticism on EU's international affairs did not lead to significant reactions in neither of the other parties. But the issue of "data and personal information security", that was evaluated by the BZÖ in a EU-critical manner concerning EU- on April, 3rd and 4th seems to have a spill-over effect on the Europhile SPÖ and the Greens. Both parties put the same topic on their agenda on April, 7th and 8th and also connected it with EU-critique.

Hypothesis 4 claimed that the more influence a Euroskeptic party has within the party system, the stronger should its influence be on other parties. According to this, we would have expected a strong influence of the FPÖ in Austria. And according to hypothesis 5, this impact should have been strongest on the ideologically closer ÖVP. However, such an impact can neither be stated for the FPÖ in general and also not on the ÖVP. On the contrary, the right-leaning governing parties ÖVP in Austria and CDU in Germany were those who engaged solely in positive evaluations regarding the most criticized issue-field, i.e. economy.

Conclusion

In sum, about a third of all press releases, which were published from German and Austrian parties eight weeks prior the EP 2014 elections, dealt with European issues. The Euroskeptic fringe parties from the right invest most of their publicly voiced information for European matters to advance their own positions. The new founded German Alternative für Deutschland as well as the Austrian BZÖ used half of their press releases to address EU-matters. In sum the more established Austrian Euroskeptic parties (FPÖ and BZÖ) were more active in talking about European politics (44 percent) than the German Euroskeptic forces AfD (right-wing) and Linke (left-wing) (34 percent). The Euroskeptic parties in Austria were also more active than their Europhile counterparts, which addressed European issues in 34 percent of their releases, while the German Euroskeptic and Europhile parties were nearly on the same level (34 versus 32 percent).

Regarding the evaluation of the *general idea of European integration*, we found that Euroskeptic parties in Germany did not at all voice such fundamental critique in their press releases; instead, even those parties' general EU-evaluation was positive to some degree. In Austria, the FPÖ's press releases contained some critical statements about the idea of European integration, but also more positive evaluations. However, BZÖ voiced critique more often than positive evaluations. In sum, we stated that some fundamental EU-criticism was voiced by the Euroskeptic parties in Austria, but not at all in Germany.

In both countries, however, we observed significantly more critical statements regarding the *actual functioning* of the EU. The share of press releases that contained negative evaluations of EU-policies ranged between 41 and 56 percent for the Euroskeptic parties in both countries. We also found such specific EU-skepticism for the German and the Austrian pro-European parties with the governing right-leaning parties CDU (8 percent) and ÖVP (10 percent) being the most hesitant to voice criticism, but other pro-European parties criticizing the EU on concrete policies in up to 25 percent in Germany (CSU) and up to 33 percent in Austria (Greens). In sum, we state that in both countries we find similar degrees of specific EU-criticism voiced on the one side by Euroskeptic and on the other side by pro-European parties, with the percentages of critical statements being much smaller for Europhile than for Euroskeptic parties. Different than expected, specific EU-criticism stemming from Euroskeptic parties was not higher in Austria than in Germany. But EU-commendations were in sum lower in Austria than in Germany.

Finally, turning to the question whether Euroskeptic parties have the potential to impact the agendas of pro-European parties, we analyzed in which issue fields the Euroskeptic parties had voiced their critique. For both countries these were predominantly the three policy areas economy, immigration and international affairs. In the case of Germany we were not able to detect such spill-over effects from Euroskeptic to Europhile parties. Maybe the amount of published, EU-skeptic press releases was too low (and the issues connected to EU-criticism were too diverse). But in the case of Austria, we identified three possible spill-over effects from EU-skeptic evaluated issues voiced by the right-leaning FPÖ and BZÖ to the Europhile left leaning SPÖ and the Greens. These issues were "trade policy", „immigration policy" and „data and personal information security".

In our hypotheses we had expected the FPÖ as well-established Euroskeptic party in Austria to have a stronger impact on the Austrian pro-EU parties than the significant smaller challenger

parties in Germany. However, an impact can neither be stated for the FPÖ in general, nor on the right-leaning ÖVP specifically. On the contrary, the right-leaning governing parties ÖVP in Austria and CDU in Germany were those that were least skeptical on EU-policies in general and engaged solely in positive evaluations regarding the most criticized issue-field, i.e. economy. It seems reasonable to assume that the involvement of CDU and ÖVP in political decision-making on the European level and especially regarding the handling of the financial crisis prevented them from buying into EU-criticism at this point. It would be interesting to compare the communication strategy of right-leaning parties in countries with left-leaning governments.

A very interesting finding of our analysis is that EU-skeptical parties in both countries voiced their criticism on exactly the same issue fields, i.e. economy, immigration and international affairs. The interesting question would be whether EU-skeptical parties campaigned on the same agenda (spill-over between parties' agendas) or whether the parties in their strategic communication reacted to the public agenda (spill-over between public and parties' agendas). In order to answer this question, it would be necessary to longitudinally track the emergence of the parties' issue agendas and to compare it with the public agenda, e.g. documented in media reports, during the same period of observation. Such an analysis would also enable us to see whether the EU-skeptical parties were successful in influencing the media agenda in the up-run to the 2014 EP elections. For the pro-European parties in Germany and Austria we can, based on our analysis of the campaign period eight weeks prior to the election, not state such an impact of Euroskeptic voices.

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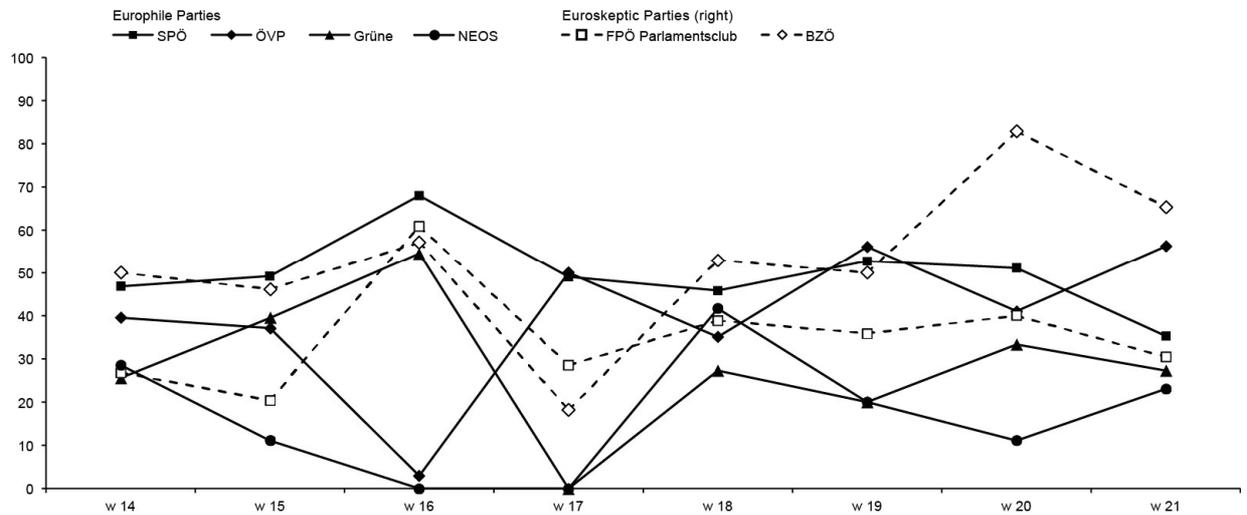**Attachments**

Figure 1: Share of press releases with EU-reference per party and week – Germany (in %)
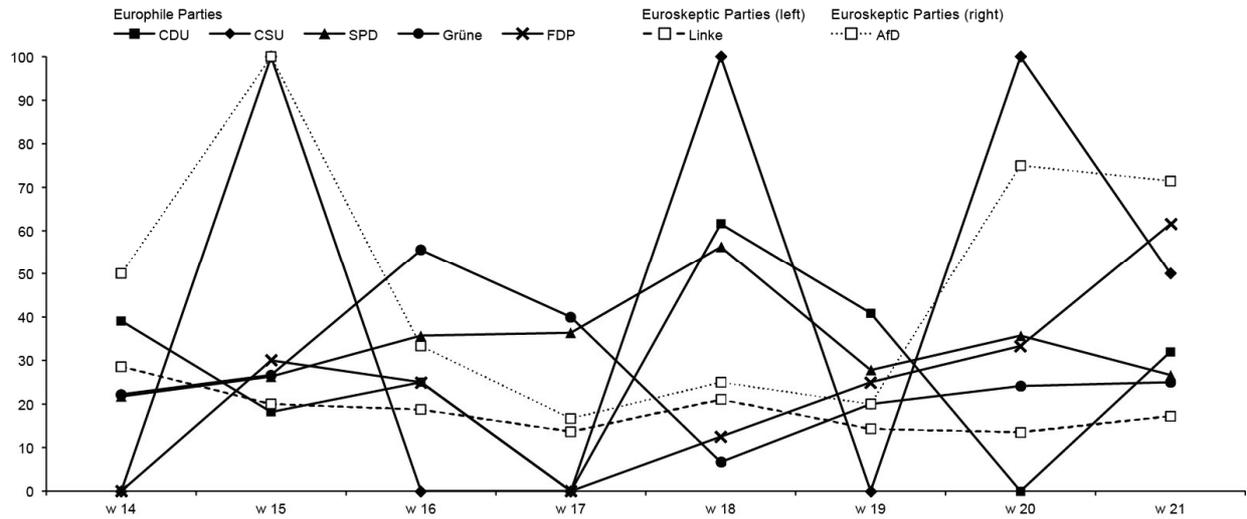
N= 833 press releases

Figure 2: Share of press releases with EU-reference per party and week – Austria (in %)

N= 1.807 press releases

Table 1: Issue List

Topic01 Economy

01	The Euro (e.g. currency rate, inflation, stability)
02	Effect of Euro on the economy
03	Eurozone exit
04	Other currency related topic

05	Inflation (policy)
06	Interest rate (policy)
07	Taxes (policy)

08	Financing the EU: National contributions (from member states)
09	EU budget / finances / (incl. 3% rule, semester system)
10	EU debts (incl. 3% rule, semester system)
11	State budget / state finances / (non EU)
12	State debts (non EU)

13	EU economic policy: Stimulus package and safety umbrellas (bilateral credits, buying of state bonds, Eurobonds, EFSM, EFSF, ESM, SKS)
14	Bank and financial sector regulation
15	Banking Union
16	EU Structural Fund (EU funds for underdeveloped regions/areas)
17	EU competition policy (incl. investigations into state aid, mergers, take-overs, fixed prices, carving up of markets)
18	Competition policy non-EU (incl. investigations into state aid, mergers, take-overs, fixed prices, carving up of markets)
19	Government Ownership, nationalisation in general (land, banks, etc.)
20	Privatisation (of government owned business or industry)
21	Protectionism (e.g. methods to protect national markets, economic growth)
22	Government intervention/control over the economy (prices, wages, rents)
23	Economic Planning (of long-term economic planning, e.g. Greece)

24	Free movement of people within the EU (common market: including the Schengen agreement)
25	Free movement of goods, capital and services within the EU (common market)
26	EU trade policy (e.g. EU tariffs and import quotas towards non-member states)
27	Trade policy non-EU

28	Effects of financial crisis on domestic/ EU/ global economy (e.g. competitiveness, demand and supply, consumption, business climate)
29	State of the EU economy, current situation and outlook, growth, shrinkage
30	Stock market and its developments (shares, bonds, AEX, DAX, Dow Jones etc.)
31	Business (companies, banks, industry, mergers, manufacturing, bankruptcy)

32	Other economic topics

Topic02 Social and labour market policy

01	EU employment policy
02	Employment policy (non-EU)
03	Labour market regulations (e.g. working hours, wage policy; unemployment insurance, unemployment regulation)
04	Health care (policy)
05	Retirement and pensions (policy)
06	Social housing (including poverty, social assistance) (policy)

07	Youth (policy)
08	Family policy (e.g. child care, parental leave)
09	Other social and labor market topics

Topic03 Education and Research
01	EU education policy
02	Education policy (non-EU)
03	Science and research policy
04	Other education and research topics

Topic04 Law and Order
01	EU police collaboration
02	Crime prevention policy
03	Fight against terrorism
04	Intelligence service
05	Data and personal information security
06	Courts, trials, court decisions
07	Crime (robbery, mugging, killing)
08	Other law and order topics

Topic05 Immigration
01	EU immigration policy - regulating immigration from outside the EU (e.g. refugees, asylum, EU border protection)
02	Immigration policy (non-EU) - regulating immigration from outside the EU
03	Migration / immigration policy – regulating migration within the EU (e.g. labour migration from Eastern European countries or Southern European countries to the Northern member states)
04	Immigrant integration
05	Multiculturalism (cultural diversity, cultural plurality)
06	Anti-Islam
07	Other immigration topics

Topic06 International Affairs
01	EU foreign affairs regarding Crimean Crisis
02	Foreign affairs regarding Crimean Crisis (non-EU)
03	EU foreign affairs general (e.g. EU-China, EU-Russia, EU-US relations, European neighbourhood policy)
04	Foreign affairs general (non-EU; e.g. relations Germany-US, UK's role in the UN; relations between states or (international) political organizations)
05	EU defence / peace-keeping / EU security
06	Defence / peace-keeping / national security (non-EU; e.g. France sending troops to peace-keeping mission in Africa)
07	Armed forces (modernization, structure, expenditure, military strength)
08	Military cooperations / treaties / obligations (e.g. membership, obligations, NATO)
09	Other international affairs topic

Topic07 Culture
01	EU cultural and media / communication (policy) (arts, films/movies, theatre, music, media)
02	Cultural and media / communication (policy) (non-EU) (e.g. subsidies for theatre's, movies, music etc.; the export of own culture, language etc.)
03	Human interest (soft news: about prominent persons, celebrities, anniversaries, weddings, animals, strange/funny events, etc.)
04	Religion

05	Sports weather report/ forecast
06	(Natural) disasters (earthquakes, floods)
07	Accidents
08	Other culture and soft news topics

Topic08 Environment and Energy
01	Climate policy
02	EU Energy policy – supply safety (e.g. securing energy supply, EU contracts with Gazprom and other suppliers)
03	Energy policy – supply safety (non-EU)
04	Energy policy – renewable energies (e.g. wind, solar, water)
05	Energy policy – fossil energies (e.g. fracking)
06	Energy policy – nuclear energy
07	Other EU environmental and energy topics
08	Other non-EU environmental and energy topics

Topic09 Infrastructure
01	EU transportation policy
02	Transportation policy (non-EU)
03	ICT policy (e.g. communication infrastructure)
04	Energy grid
05	Other technology and infrastructure topics

Topic10 Agriculture and Food
01	EU agricultural policy (e.g. subsidies for farmers, food safety, genetically modified food)
02	Agricultural policy (non-EU)
03	EU maritime affairs and fishery policy
04	Maritime affairs and fishery policy (non-EU)
05	Food safety
06	Food and public health
07	Other agriculture and food topics

Topic11 Consumer protection
01	EU consumer protection policy
02	Other consumer protection topics

Topic12 Citizens' rights
01	Female rights and equality
03	Abortion
04	Immigrant rights
05	Minority rights (e.g. handicapped, gay marriage, children, elderly)
06	Private property and copyright rights
07	Other citizens' rights topics (e.g. Human rights in general, civil liberties, equality before law)

Topic13 Constitutional questions and functioning of the EU
01	Division of power *between political institutions* (e.g. between Parliament and Government, between the Council and the European Parliament, separation of church and state)
02	Division of power *between political levels* (e.g. delegation and transference of decision-making power between Brussels and the national level; between regional and national levels; federalism, regional autonomy AND devolution; subsidiarity)

03	EU's *democratic deficit* (e.g. distance or 'gap' between the EU and its citizens or the responsiveness of the EU towards its citizens, citizens feeling not represented or understood by the EU)
04	Division of power *between the people and the political system* (e.g. democracy, referendums, sovereignty of the people); non-EU
05	Other *rules of decision-making* (e.g. qualified majority voting, EU treaties, right to veto, other treaty reforms)
06	Competences of the European Parliament (power, legislative procedures)
07	Competences of the European Commission (Powers of the European Commission)
08	Competences of the European Council/Council of Ministers (Powers of the European Council/Council of Ministers)
09	Competences of the European Court of Justice (references to the powers of the European Court of Justice)
10	European Central Bank functioning and power
11	Power and position of the EU presidency of member state
12	Power and position European Council President/Presidency (Rompuy position)
13	Power and position European Commission President/Presidency (Barroso position)
14	Power and position external affairs (Ashton position)
15	Power and position Eurogroup leader (Dijsselbloem)
16	Other EU polity / constitutional topic
17	European Integration

Topic14 Territorial questions
01	EU-Membership (existing) (e.g. British referendum on EU membership)
02	Enlargement (negotiations, criteria, pros and cons) of EU
03	Potential EU membership Turkey
04	Potential EU membership other (e.g. enlargement of EU with Croatia, Iceland, Macedonia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo)
05	Other territorial questions topics

Topic15 Administration and bureaucracy
01	Executive and administrative efficiency
02	EU political corruption, fraud, scandals EU-level politicians or institutions, including regulations and anti-corruption measures (not abuse of EU funds by member states)
03	Political corruption non-EU: Fraud, scandals of non-EU (e.g. national, supranational) politicians or institutions, including regulations and anti-corruption measures
04	Other administration and bureaucracy topics

Topic16 Elections
01	European Elections: Candidates, politicians, parties; their images and strategic positions, personality, candidate MEP's personal character, background, leadership qualities
02	European Elections: Electioneering, campaigning (strategy, style, finance, fundraising, events, media appearances, endorsements, targeting of electoral groups, political marketing, publicity, advertising)
03	Media coverage of the campaign
04	European elections: Voters, public opinion, polls, (anticipated) electoral success
05	European Election: Voter turnout (e.g. expectations)
06	European Elections: List of party positions on issues (a "manifesto story")
07	European Elections: Voting procedures (e.g. electronic voting machines, foreign votes
08	European Elections: Election laws, rules, regulations
09	European Elections: (Formal, public) debates (as an event) between parties, politicians

10	Political consequences of EP election outcome (e.g. for national-level politicians, parties, power in the)
11	EU policy profile of national political parties (e.g. party manifesto on EU integration issues) (only in context of EU elections)
12	Political party groups/alliances in European Parliament (e.g. political party group profile, internal affairs, conflict, organization, internal elections)
13	Vote advice for European Elections
14	Other EP election-related topics
15	Other National, regional, local elections in EU Countries
16	Other National elections in non-EU Countries

Topic17 Other topics

[i] The search string contains the following key words respectively word components that have to appear at least twice or the press release has to contain two various words/components to be identified as relevant press release: "Europ*, europ*, EU, EP, EZB, EIB, ESM, EFSF, EFSM, EuGH, EAD, EWSA, EIF, EDSB, EWU, Troika, Frontex, FRONTEX, Verfassungsvertrag".

[ii] These issue fields are: economy, social and labour market policy, education and research, law and order, immigration, international affairs, culture, environment and energy, infrastructure, agriculture and food, consumer protection, citizen's rights, constitutional questions and functioning of the EU, territorial questions, administration and bureaucracy, elections.

[iii] The Austrian parties published 1,807 press releases in the period of observation, which is more than twice as much as the German parties, which sent out 833 press releases.