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COMFORTABLE BED-FELLOWS?
RUSSIA AND THE RADICAL RIGHT AFTER THE CRIMEAN ANNEXATION

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Liesa Aitton

ABSTRACT

This study examines the radical rightist stances of the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), the Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ), the Front National (FN), Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik), the UK Independence Party (UKIP), and the Vlaams Belang (VB) on Russia in the light of the Ukrainian crisis, in particular the Crimean crisis. A focus will be placed on the radical right's foreign policy agenda, and how this shaped their perspective towards Russia. In the past, the scholarship in this field has mostly ignored this topic in favour of analysing the internal dimension. Over the last couple years, the field has expanded to include external factors, such as Euroscepticism and Russophilia. However, most research chose to heavily feature anti-EU sentiments. Thus, questions regarding the relationship between Russia and the radical right remained unanswered. Through an analysis of party programs, voting patterns, and debates in the European Parliament, this thesis measures how and to what extent pro-Russian sentiments have manifested in the external dimension of the radical right. Additionally, patterns of pro-Russian and/or anti-Russian stances, are used to complement this analysis. Regardless of their attitude towards Russia, the findings suggest that the Russian Federation has recently started to appear on the radical right foreign policy agenda. In regard to the FN, the FPÖ, and Jobbik similar pragmatic and Eurosceptic arguments were brought forward to indicate a positive stance towards Russia. The VB supports some of these pragmatic principles as well, but generally perceives Russia in more neutral terms. Finally, those that are critical of the Russian Federation, primarily the AfD and UKIP, tend to use diverging reasons to support their view. As a consequence, patterns on radical right-Russia relations present a rather mixed perspective.

Keywords: Radical right, Russia, Front National, Alternative für Deutschland, UK Independence Party, Vlaams Belang, Jobbik, Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, Euroscepticism, European Union.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA – Association Agreement

AfD – Alternative für Deutschland

ECR – European Conservatives and Reformists

EEC – European Economic Community

EFDD – Europe for Freedom and Direct Democracy

ENF – Europe of Nations and Freedom

EU – European Union

EP – European Parliament

FN – Front National

FPÖ – Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs

Jobbik – Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary

MEP – Member of the European Parliament

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

TTIP – Transatlantic Trade and Investment

UKIP – UK Independence Party

UN – United Nations

UK – United Kingdom

U.S. – United States

VB – Vlaams Belang

INTRODUCTION

At the end of 2013, the then President of Ukraine, Viktor Yanukovich, made the decision to cooperate with Russia, as opposed to signing the Association Agreement (AA) with the European Union (EU). Once this news reached the Ukrainian population, protests started to erupt throughout Kiev. The Ukrainian people collectively went to the Maidan and demanded that Yanukovich sign these agreements after all. No one cared that the AA would not provide solutions to all Ukraine's problems, instead they wished to put a stop to Russia's influence over their nation-state. Their demands were not met, in fact, the Ukrainian government called for the riot police to break up the protests. Overnight a large number of students were beaten and imprisoned. Yet, the demonstrators were not to be deterred, and continued to demand that the AA were signed, and at this point also called for the impeachment of Yanukovich. While the number of protestors steadily increased, so too did the number of violent altercations. In February 2014, fighting reached a peak and 79 people were killed over the course of one day (Bojcun, 2015). Shortly thereafter, Yanukovich realized that the situation in Ukraine was no longer manageable, and fled to Russia. However, this did not cause peace to return to Ukraine. In fact, unrest still affected the country, and this became particularly noticeable in Eastern Ukraine. So much so, that the Russian Federation came to believe that this state of social anxiety would negatively affect their own state and population if they did not intervene. As a consequence, the Russian leadership decided to seize Crimea and armed revanchist insurgencies in the Donbas and Luhansk regions (Bojcun, 2015, p.397). Finally, in March 2014 Crimea became de facto part of Russia.

If one were to look into the situation in Ukraine right now, it would become apparent that violence has decreased. Nevertheless, the Ukrainian crisis still has not been resolved. Moreover, the situation will likely remain tense for the foreseeable future as both Russia and the Euro-Atlantic community continue to level sanctions against one another. The EU, in particular, has adopted several measures against Russia these include, but are not limited to: economic sanctions; diplomatic measures; restrictions on economic relations with Crimea and Sevastopol; and individual restrictive measures (European Council & Council of the European Union, n.d.). In response Russia has

issued counter-sanctions as well, but, maybe even more importantly, started a propaganda war. The output of propaganda served two main purposes. Firstly, it aimed to justify Russia's behaviour in Crimea. Secondly, propaganda was used to find parties in Europe that could come to look favourably upon Russia. This with the purpose to undermine the Union, while also promoting Russia's place in the global society. Slowly but surely radical right-wing parties came to be seen as ideal partners. After all, the radical right, like the Russian Federation, despised the EU as well as other Western institutions. Thus, through this propaganda war, Putin believed that he could kill two birds with one stone. He could legitimise the Crimean annexation and delegitimise the EU at the same time (Moreira, 2018).

This thesis will not be focussing on the Russian propaganda war, but instead will provide a discussion on how the radical right has reacted to the Russian Federation in light of the conflict in Ukraine, in particular in Crimea. Specifically, I will seek to determine what kind of relation the radical right has with Russia, and why this positive or negative connection came into being. I believe this research to be an important addition to the field, as most research focusses on the conceptualisation, vote and office seeking patterns, and internal dimension of the radical right (see for example Mudde, 2007; Mudde, 2016; Minkenberg, 2017; Vasilopolou, 2009; Norris, 2005; Rush, 1963; Brack, 2015b). While these are inherently interesting topics, I feel like the radical and extreme right-wing scholarship has not fully committed to researching topics related to the external dimension, especially when it does not concern the EU. Thus, research on Russia-radical right relations appear to be lacking. That being said, recently some scholars such as Klapsis (2015), Larrabee et al. (2017), Polyakova et al. (2016), Mudde (2014), and Orestein (2014) have made a valiant effort to expand on the research already available in this scholarly field. Nevertheless, this clearly has not proven sufficient, as it remains unknown to what extent the radical right has engaged with the Russian Federation.

In this thesis the author aims to focus on three different aspects that I believe to be under researched. Firstly, the author will discuss the extent to which pro-Russian sentiments have become part of the radical right's foreign policy agenda. Secondly, a focus will be placed on how pro-Russian sentiments have manifested themselves. Finally, the author will analyse if the manifestation of these sentiments has led to any

distinguishable patterns, and, more importantly, how these can be explained. In order to answer these questions, party manifesto, European Parliamentary (EP) votes and debates between 2014 and 2018 will be examined through the scope of the qualitative and quantitative content analysis.

My first chapter outlines the already existing theory on the radical right. A focus will be placed on their foreign policy interests as well as on the conceptualisation and terminology used in regards to this party family. In the second chapter the author will explain the methodology used in this study, and the problems that came along with it. The research questions included in this thesis will also be brought forward. My third chapter addresses the case studies, in particular the author will analyse the radical right's stances on the EU, immigration, and xenophobia. In the fourth chapter, the results will be presented based on an analysis of party programs, EP votes, parliamentary debates. These will be further highlighted and put into context in the fifth chapter. Finally, the author will close this study by presenting some conclusions on the radical right, its foreign policy perspectives, and its relation to the Russian Federation. Points for further research will also be included in this segment.

1. THEORETICAL AND EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Definitions of Radical Right-Wing Parties

Before embarking on the conceptualization of ‘radical right-wing parties’, it is important to note that both the terminology as well as the party family itself prove problematic. Issues concerning the latter became apparent as scholars and policy makers alike started to describe a party family which includes parties such as the Freiheitlichen Partei Österreichs (FPÖ), the Norwegian Progress Party, and the Front National¹ (FN). While all these parties may maintain some similarities, it has become clear that they prove tremendously diverse as well (Norris, 2005). As a result, it becomes debatable what qualities a party should maintain in order to be qualified as the radical right. Confusion further ensues as very few scholars focus on providing a clear and unambiguous definition on the radical right, yet continue to discuss parties which they believe to fall in a this ‘party family’ (Mudde, 2007). Besides causing conceptual problems, this has also lead to authors introducing a large plethora of terms when discussing these parties, including, but not limited to: extreme right, far right, radical right, radical right-wing populism, national populism, neo-populism, and ethno-nationalism (Mudde, 2007). While research has improved over the years the debate on terminology and conceptualization continues.

During the first wave of the radical right scholarship, which lasted from 1945 until 1980, scholars such as G.B. Rush aimed to develop a working definition of this party family (Mudde, 2016; Rush, 1963). This scholar mainly argued that ideologies promoted by American radical right-wing parties focussed on four headings: negative attitudes regarding the government, international relations, modern social principles, and modern social structure and operation (with the exception of the right to work and free enterprise which these parties would support) (Rush, 1963). Even though this definition may have worked in the 1960s in the United States, it appears lacking when current radical right-wing parties are discussed. Especially his arguments on social principles and social structures seem problematic, as parties such as the FN and Vlaams

¹ The Front National recently indicated that they are planning to change their name into Rassemblement National. This thesis will continue to use Front National and its abbreviation FN, as this change has not been finalised yet (Vermaas, 2018).

Belang (VB) are known for supporting welfare chauvinism (Front National, 2017; Vlaams Belang, 2014). Meaning that these parties can be in support of a welfare state, as long as the native inhabitants of the nation-state are the only ones benefitting. Moreover, while social structures and the economy are certainly taken into account, it cannot be said that these are the most important ideological features of this party family (Mudde, 2007). So while Rush's conceptualization certainly added to the research already available in the field, and might have even worked in a certain time and space, it will not be used in this thesis.

Several decades later, Hans-Georg Betz published his renowned book 'Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe' (1994). In his first chapter some attention is given to the definition of, as he terms it, the radical right. Betz argued that radical right-wing parties are (1) against individual and social equality, (2) opposed to the integration of marginalized groups and (3) tend to be xenophobic, and can be racist and/or anti-Semitic (1994, p.4). Moreover, these parties are also able to portray populist tendencies (Betz, 1994). Even though this description provides some good characteristics of radical right-wing parties, little detail is provided on how Betz himself interprets characteristics such as social equality, populism, and marginalized groups. For example, Betz does not indicate how and for what reason people can become marginalized. Furthermore, he also does not distinguish between those groupings that are marginalized because they are foreign entities, and those groups that get the same hostile treatment but originated from the state. Clearly Betz does not take these as well as several other issues into account, as a consequence the quality of his conceptualization suffered. That being said, I do appreciate that Betz uses the term 'radical right' as opposed to 'extreme right'. This because the former term can be interpreted as being opposed to constitutional and/or liberal democracy, whereas the latter can be construed as the "antithesis of democracy" (Mudde, 2010, p.1168). I personally prefer the first term, as most far right parties do not necessarily appear to be anti-democratic, but rather find the manner through which modern states construe democracy to be problematic.

More recently, Michael Minkenberg added to the field of radical right-wing politics and its definitions. Although Minkenberg acknowledges that a vast body of literature is available on the subject, very few scholars have taken the Eastern European system into account (2017). He feels this to be rather disappointing, as Eastern radical

right-wing parties are distinct from those in the West. Especially considering that Eastern European radical right parties are known to be more prone to violence, are more anti-democratic, and are characterized by their tendency to closely resemble social movements (Minkenberg, 2017). Consequently, Minkenberg aimed to present a conceptualization that takes both the Eastern and Western situation into consideration. In the end the author came to the conclusion that the radical right is best defined as:

“ideological criteria of a populist and romantic ultranationalism, a myth of a homogenous nation which puts the latter before the individual and his or her civil rights and which therefore is directed against liberal and pluralist democracy (through not necessarily in favour of a fascist state), its underlying values of freedom and equality, and the related categories of individualism and universalism” (Minkenberg, 2017, p.14).

In this definition the nation as well as its ethnic, cultural, and/or religious inhabitants play a central role (Minkenberg, 2017). As a result, a clear distinction is being made between those belonging to the in-group and those being the out-group. This idea ties in well with Mudde’s (2007) theory on nativism, which will be discussed in further paragraphs. Additionally, Minkenberg (2017) emphasizes the role of democratic principles. Most radical right parties appeared rather critical towards the democratic order, yet do not wish to completely eradicate the system. Instead, they aim to instigate a true government by and for ‘the people’. This conceptualization, unlike those presented in earlier decades, seems to take the reality of the radical right in Eastern and Western Europe into account. Nevertheless, I believe that the Mudde’s definition, which will be analysed next, represents a more structural explanation of the phenomenon under discussion.

Finally, the conceptualization by Cas Mudde (2007) will be discussed. Besides being one of the most renowned scholars in the field, his definition is also well received among other scholars. Mudde provides both a minimum and a maximum conceptualization. The former defines the party family according to the ‘lowest common denominator’, so the feature or features that all parties in the radical right family have in common. The maximum definition discusses the ‘greatest common denominator’, meaning that those factors that make these parties analogous will be

taken into account (Mudde, 2007). The former will be discussed first, followed by an analysis of the latter.

Mudde (2007) argues that nativism can be perceived as the minimal definition as it is able to accommodate all parties. Nativism is best described “an ideology, which holds that states should be inhabited exclusively by members of the native group (“the nation”) and that non-native elements (persons and ideas) are fundamentally threatening to the homogenous nation-state” (Mudde, 2007, p.19). This term appears better suited than those more commonly used, such as nationalism. Because, nativism excludes the possibility of liberal or soft nationalism. Moreover, nativism also acknowledges the importance of xenophobia, which Betz (1994) already described in the early 1990s.

The nativist ideology is also included in Mudde’s maximum definition, which additionally contains authoritarianism and populism (2007). The first can be perceived differently through various disciplines, but in this case the author was inspired by the Frankfurt School and scholars from the social psychology field such as Adorno et al. (1950). These scholars conceptualized authoritarianism as “a general disposition to glorify, to be subservient to and remain uncritical towards authoritative figures of the ingroup and to take an attitude of punishing outgroup figures in the name of some moral authority” (Adorno et al., 1950, p.228). While this manner of thinking definitely aided Mudde in his work, he believed that too many ideological features related to anti-Semitism and ethnocentrism were included. Instead, he wished authoritarianism to relate to principles of law and order and punitive conventional moralism (Mudde, 2007, p.22-23). Finally, Mudde, like Betz, includes populism in his maximum definition. Here populism can be described as a thin-centred ideology which establishes a divide between the people and the elite. In this case the will of the people (‘volonté générale’) should always precede over the wishes of the corrupt elite. In this thesis the maximum definition will be used, as I believe that the greatest common denominator best represents the case studies which will be discussed in Chapter 3.

1.2 What Makes the Radical Right Different?

When the radical right came into being in the late 1940s and early 1950s, people quickly realised that this party family was not like the others. In fact, their extremist ideologies made it impossible for them to be represented in mainstream political parties,

such as the Socialist, Social Democrats, Labour, Liberal, Christian Democrats, and Conservative parties (Adams et al., 2006). Consequently, the radical right, like the Green party in the 1970s, became known as niche parties (Meguid, 2005). While this title has become generally accepted by the scholarship in this field, a definition of what it means to be a 'niche party' still has not been found. Nevertheless, scholars such as Meguid (2005), Adams et al. (2006), and Wagner (2011) have made valiant efforts to resolve this problem.

The most general conceptualization is presented by Adams et al. (2006, p.513), who believe that a niche party presents either a non-centrist 'niche' ideology or simply has an extreme ideology. Although this definition may have worked in their research project, it appears too vague. Moreover, it does not truly indicate why the far-right, or any other niche party, is perceived as inherently different. A more complex conceptualization is provided by Meguid (2005). Firstly, she argues that niche parties prioritize issues that are outside of traditional politics. Secondly, the issues that are raised by niche parties rarely coincide with the left-right-centre political division maintained by mainstream parties. Finally, these parties only adopt policy positions on a limited set of topics, and could consequently become single-issue parties (Meguid, 2005, p.348; Wagner, 2011, p.846). While I believe that this conceptualization has more potential than Adams et al.'s (2006), it still has some problematic aspects. The most important being, that Meguid (2005) continuously appears to refer to niche parties as new parties. Yet this would imply that parties such as the FN and FPÖ could not be perceived as niche parties, even though they do satisfy all other criteria.

Finally, Wagner's (2011) definition will be discussed. This scholar acknowledges the work of both Adams et al.'s (2006) and Meguid (2005). Wagner, like me, appeared most impressed with the latter's conceptualization, yet found some issues as well. Nevertheless, by simplifying Meguid's (2005) definition, Wagner was able to come to the conclusion that niche parties are best defined as parties that "(a) do not emphasize economic issues and (b) emphasize a narrow range of non-economic issues" (Wagner, 2011, p.847). It is important to note that a party can only be qualified as a 'niche party' if it satisfies both conditions. I believe this conceptualization to be most beneficial to my thesis, as one would only have to analyse a party's ideology and/or manifesto in order to determine whether or not it is a niche party. Moreover, this

definition is flexible enough that the party's age does not need to be taken into account. Besides that, it also acknowledges that a niche party could mainstream and/or radicalise.

It should be noted that the non-economic issues mentioned by Wagner (2011) could be anything. In the next few paragraphs, some of the more common policy issues amongst radical right-wing parties will be discussed. Mudde (2007, p.63-89) first points towards identity politics. In the case of radical right parties these are inherently tied to nativist and populist ideologies, and focusses on the us vs them dichotomy. Individuals or groups not belonging to the in-group are described in great detail in order to create a good understanding of who is and who is not the enemy. Among European radical right-wing parties, immigrants are perceived as the biggest enemy. Depending on the region or nation-state, prejudices may increase if the immigrant belongs to Jewish, Muslim, and/or Roma communities (Mudde, 2007, p.78). Regardless of one's (cultural and/or religious) identity, those considered outside of the state will always be considered as enemies as they are not native to the nation. However, it is also possible to become an anti-figure if you are inside the state, but not part of the nation (Mudde, 2007).

Given the predominantly nativist position of the radical right, it cannot come as a surprise that they despise outside influences, especially when it is (forcefully) imposed on them through institutes such as the EU (Mudde, 2007; Brack & Startin, 2015). However, this hatred has not always been the norm. In fact, until the late 1980s most radical right parties supported further European integration. Yet, this all changed after the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which took competences from the states and instead gave these to the Union (Brack & Startin, 2015). As a consequence, most radical right-wing parties became either Eurorejects or Eurosceptics. Nevertheless, some parties and/or party leaders note that they remain pro-Europe. This is best seen in the case of the FN, which used slogans such as "NO to Maastricht – yes to a Europe of Fatherlands!" (Mudde, 2007, p.165). This sentiment may appear logical to these niche parties, as most European states share some common aspects such as a (Judeo-Christian) history, culture, and/or religion. Besides that, some states may even positively look upon some form of cooperation, as long as it is mutually beneficial (Mudde, 2007). EU integration, however, is not perceived this way. Rather, it is believed that the EU is infringing on the sovereignty of states (Brack & Startin, 2015). After all, states are no longer the sole

agents that get to determine where their borders are, who gets citizenship, and who gets to immigrate into their state. As a result, several parties, most notably the UK Independence Party (UKIP), have made strong efforts to leave the EU.

Other issues such as globalisation, Islamism, democracy and feminism are also not popular among the radical right. Thus, it could be said that Wagner's (2011) non-economic issues could be anything, yet most tend to fall within the nativist, populist, and/or authoritarian spectrum that Mudde (2007) described. Nevertheless, these parties have come to realisation that they have to present a well-rounded policy agenda if they wish for popular support on the local, national, and EU level. Consequently, the radical right has started to introduce policies on welfare, culture, education, the environment, safety, and also on the economy. This last point seems to contradict Wagner's (2011, p.847) argument, that radical right-wing parties would not emphasize the economy. Yet, according to Mudde this trend does not have to undermine Wagner's theory. Even though some parties have come to support a neoliberal economic system, this tends to be a secondary part of their ideology (Mudde, 2007, p.119). Thus, this aspect is mostly added with the purpose to please the electorate, and not because the radical right actually feels strongly about the economy.

1.3 Anti-EU and/or Pro-Russia

It has been noted before that most radical right-wing parties tend to focus on a certain range of issues that mostly link to their nativist, populist, and authoritarian ideology. Moreover, while most of these parties can no longer be qualified as single-issue parties, most still pay more attention to their internal sphere than to their external dimension. This for the logical reason that they wish to attract support from the in-group, and leave the out-group where it is, outside of the nation. Nevertheless, over time these parties have come to the conclusion that some attention to their foreign policy sphere has become a necessity. Thus, in the 1990s, most, if not all, radical parties became critical of the EU. While some parties can only claim to be Eurosceptic, others have turned downright hostile towards this organisation. Especially those in the latter category, such as UKIP, became known for their single-issue foreign policy, that of being anti-EU. These anti-EU sentiments are best seen through quotes by radical-leaders, such as Dutch politician Geert Wilders, who claimed that: "We have always

been told that the EU stands for peace. But [...] now we know better. The EU stands for warmongering²” (Wilders, 2014, n.p.). Although Wilders’ anti-EU sentiments specifically focus on the EU’s war-like tendencies, other leaders and parties have come to denounce the EU as it continues to bolster an expansionist rhetoric. Besides that, the radical right also denounces the idea that the EU should integrate more, as this would imply that the nation-state would have to transfer even more sovereignty to this supranational entity (Klapisis, 2015, p.25).

Over time, some radical right-wing parties have also started to include criticism towards other Euro-Atlantic institutions in their foreign policy directives. These institutes, such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), are perceived negatively, as the radical right believes that they are losing their independence and sovereignty to them. Thus, some, but not all, parties started to argue that all their problems (both internal and external) could be resolved if these Euro-Atlantic institutions simply ceased to exist. However, most radical right parties remain rather marginal on both the national and EU level. Thus, it remains unlikely that institutes such as the EU and/or NATO will just dissolve. Furthermore, not all parties may have the ability to instigate a national version of ‘Brexit’. That being said, the radical right may still include critical statements on international alliances in their party manifestos and/or speeches.

Criticism towards the West hardly ever resulted in change. Consequently, some radical right-wing parties thought that it might prove beneficial to start looking towards the East, and it appears like they found a natural ally in the Russian Federation (Rohac, Zgut & Györi, 2017). The first pro-Russian sentiments became apparent in the late 2000s in states such as Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Hungary (Political Capital, 2014). These were all countries that had had strong relations with Russia during the Soviet regime. Because of the annexation of Crimea and the Brexit talks, parties from the West also started to see the appeal in having Russia as a potential partner. (Rohac, Zgut & Györi, 2017, p.13). This due to the fact that Russia was as hostile towards the EU and NATO as the radical right. Consequently, Russia started to appear like a good geopolitical alternative. This in particular, since Russia’s disruptive behaviour may be able to

² Translated from Dutch: “Ons is altijd verteld dat de EU voor vrede staat. Maar [...] weten we wel beter. De EU staat voor Oorlogshitsing”.

facilitate the dissolution of the EU, and may therefore be able to completely (re)shape the post-EU era (Klapsis, 2015). Moreover, “many European far-right politicians see in Russia an example of how a country can be truly sovereign and independent, ignoring Western liberalism and confronting the West” (Klapsis, 2015, p.25). Thus, due to these beliefs the radical right appears to have shifted its foreign policy from the EU to Russia. The Kremlin actively seems to welcome this move, as Russia stands to gain from this as well, since this enables them to overtly and covertly use the radical right to “destabilize European governments, prevent EU expansion, and help bring to power European governments that are friendly to Russia” (Orestein, 2014, p.2).

Historic relations also play a large role in shaping the foreign policy of the radical right. Polyakova et al. (2016, p.4) argue that this proves the case in states such as Germany, the United Kingdom (UK), and France. In particular, France and Germany have had a long history of strong economic as well as political relations with Russia. Thus, it seems likely that the radical right is especially hesitant to ruin these connections by imposing sanctions in response to the Ukrainian crisis. However, after flight MH-17 got shot down, all states united themselves behind Merkel and agreed that restrictive measures were necessary. The radical right did not agree with these measures, yet were not powerful enough to prevent them. Nevertheless, the radical right as well as big businesses in the defence and energy sector stand to benefit from improved relations with Russia, and will thus act accordingly (Polyakova et al., 2016).

Finally, Eurosceptical and Euroreject parties may have established closer relations with Russia due to an ideological connection. This ideological angle has come into play somewhat more recently, and is a direct result of Vladimir Putin’s re-election. When Putin came back to power in 2012, he actively started to promote a neo-conservative perspective at home and abroad. The Kremlin focussed on this specific angle as they believe it to be beneficial for both Russia and the European states to return to the “Christian values that constitute the basis of Western civilisation” (Klapsis, 2015, p.17). In doing so, a focus was placed on the nation, its native culture, and religion. Few, if any, radical right parties would disagree with these ideas as they basically represent their core values. Some politicians, such as Gábor Vona, Marine Le Pen, and Aymeric Chauprade, would go even further and claim that Russia should be perceived as a ‘model society’, as it still defends and protects Christian Europe (Klapsis, 2015,

p.25). This, as opposed to the West, whose downfall will become inescapable if they do not revert back to the traditional values promoted by Putin. In similar vein, European states will have to turn their back on multiculturalism and globalisation, as both of these introduce foreign aspects into the state.

1.4 Trojan Horses or Simply Similar Values

It has been noted throughout this chapter that the relationship between Russia and the radical right has clearly strengthened over the years. However, is this connection just based on the very similar values that both parties tend to promote, or can this relationship be qualified as a Trojan Horse? By this, scholars such as Polyakova et al. (2016), Orestein (2014), and Mudde (2014) tend to imply that the Russian state tries to promote a negative agenda under the pretence of good intentions. In this case, the ‘good intentions’ can be construed as either developing or maintaining positive relations with political parties all over Europe (regardless of their party family). However, in reality this move should be perceived as anything but positive. In fact, Russia’s motive in establishing these connections can be understood as rather malevolent. After all, this alliance between the radical far-right and Russia may lead to disruptions within the EU. However, can it truly be said that Russia or the radical right have nefarious intentions? Moreover, is the relation between them strong enough that it functions as a Trojan Horse, or did they simply bond over shared conservative values and Eurosceptic sentiments?

Cas Mudde, remains rather sceptical of the claim that Putin has successfully established Trojan Horses all over Europe. Although, he acknowledges that relations between Putin and the far-right have been enhanced over the years, he strongly believes that Le Pen’s party is the only one that structurally and openly cooperates with Russia (Mudde, 2014, n.p.). This argument makes sense, as Marine Le Pen had to admit to obtaining a 9-million-dollar loan through the First Czech Russian Bank in Moscow (Polyakova et al., 2016, p.7). Moreover, several members of the FN have established strong personal relations with members of the Russian government (Mudde, 2014). Various other far-right parties, such as the VB, Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik), and FPÖ, can also claim such relations (Mudde, 2014). Yet, no party, besides the FN and allegedly Jobbik, can state that they have documented connections with

Putin's Russia. Furthermore, parties such as the FPÖ and VB have strongly denied any allegations of receiving monetary donations from Russia or any other foreign states (Mudde, 2014; Kijne & Delhaas, 2014).

As a consequence, Mudde (2014, n.p.) argues that this affinity between Russia and the far-right is mostly based on individual connections, rather than on party relations. In fact, in response to a Political Capital Institute (2014) article, Mudde (2014) proclaims that most radical right-wing parties are neutral towards Russia, as opposed to being pro-Russian. Only parties such as the FN and Jobbik, but also Ataka and Golden Dawn portray pro-Russian sentiments. Whereas, parties such as FPÖ, VB, the Party for Freedom and the Danish People's Party are perceived as being neutral towards Russia. Based on Mudde's research, the author would also place UKIP and the AfD in this category. While UKIP's Nigel Farage seems to admire Putin as a leader, the rest of the party appears lukewarm at most about the opportunity to openly support Russia and its leader (Klapsis, 2015; Larrabee et al., 2017). Finally, Mudde (2014, n.p.) concludes that there is no such thing as a Trojan Horse when it comes to the connection between Russia and the far-right. While some scrutiny should be given to this relation, most parties are simply not pro-Russian (enough), instead it is individual party members that portray this sentiment. Additionally, one should look into the EU's political mainstream and major business companies, as they might actually argue in favour of stronger and better relations with Russia.

Larrabee et al. (2017), who wrote an article about Europe-Russia relations in light of the Ukrainian Crisis, provide some interesting insights on the connection between far-right parties and Russia as well. However, they do not once mention the term 'Trojan Horses'. Even though they appear to strongly value the influence that Russia can wield over the radical right, they do not believe that this can be described as a Trojan Horse just yet. They come to this conclusion by analysing the political vulnerabilities that European states experience, and how Russia uses these to exert overt and covert influence over them (Larrabee et al., 2017). One of the main vulnerabilities that the EU experiences is directly related to the radical right. That being said, the authors strongly question if this European weakness will actually lead to change. After all, while the number of populist EU parliamentarians may have increased significantly since the last EP elections, their influence on policy making has remained rather limited

(Larrabee et al., 2017, p.57-58). In fact, the only place where their impact could be somewhat noticeable is in agenda setting. This lack of power is mostly due to factors outside of their control, nevertheless this party family also diminishes their own place in the EP through focussing most of their attention on the national sphere. Therefore, it is not surprising that the radical right has not made much progress in promoting the Russian angle (Larrabee et al., 2017). Nevertheless, this should not imply that relations between Russia and the radical right have not improved. Moreover, while this relation remains rather harmless now, it might become harmful to the EU at some point in the future.

Even though Mudde (2016) and Larrabee et al. (2017) make a persuasive argument, most scholars as well as journalists would argue that Trojan Horses exist in the case of Russia and radical right-wing parties. This proves true in the case of Polyakova et al. (2016) and Klapsis (2015), but also in other works produced by Orestein (2014) and the Political Capital Institute (2014). Polyakova et al. (2016) only analyses cases of France (FN), Germany (Alternative für Deutschland; AfD), and the UK (UKIP). Klapsis (2015) takes a more general approach by including a large number of parties, including, but not limited to, all the cases included in this thesis (see Chapter 3). Regardless, both come to the conclusion that Putin's Trojan Horses exist and should be taken seriously. Klapsis (2015) comes to this conclusion because both sides share certain neo-conservative ideologies, mostly related to Christian values and principles of non-interference. Moreover, Klapsis (2015) claims that the radical right perceives Russia as a geopolitical alternative to the EU. Polyakova et al. (2016) provides a more general overview, as their research does not focus on just radical right parties. As a result, their research indicates that Trojan Horses can develop between Russia and any kind of party (left, right, and centre) that promotes pro-Russian sentiments.

When analysing these different party groupings, such as the far-right, the far-left, and centre parties, it would have been interesting to add a discussion on the different reasons why these parties could come to support pro-Russian attitudes. For example, is the far-right the only group that focusses on similar neo-conservative ideologies as well as alternative geopolitical powers, or do other groupings buy into this notion as well? Other discussions could develop around questions like: Are Trojan Horses, particularly between Russia and the far-right, more likely to develop in the

West compared to the East, or vice versa? Or, are there fundamental differences between Trojan Horses established in Eastern or Western Europe? While it is clear that I wish that these articles would have answered several other questions as well, I do believe they added significantly to the discussion on Trojan Horses. This mostly through describing how these relations could develop over the years, and by providing a large number of examples that indicate that Trojan Horses could exist. That being said, one should regard Trojan Horses with a certain degree of suspicion. After all, those that do not support this theory made valid inferences about the lack of effect that the radical right and Russia have on the EU and other Euro-Atlantic institutes.

2. METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Research Questions

This thesis will look into the occurrence of pro-Russian stances in the European radical-right. More specifically, it asks

R1: To what extent is the pro-Russian sentiment a new external dimension of the radical right?

R2: How do pro-Russian sentiments manifest themselves through the radical right's foreign policy perspectives, party manifestos, parliamentary debates, and voting results?

R3: What explains the similar/different patterns of pro-Russian sentiments in the radical right?

R1 was established based on the results of previous studies that indicated that a relationship was developing between Russia and the radical right (see Mudde, 2014; Klapsis, 2015; Larrabee et al., 2017, Polyakova et al., 2016). R2 addresses the factors that lead to the radical right making a turn towards the East, in particular towards Russia. R3 analyses the development of pro-Russian patterns, and why these came into being. The results of my research in regards to R1, R2, and R3 will be discussed in Chapter 4. The trends discovered will be analysed in detail in the following chapter (Chapter 5).

2.2 Empirical Data

The empirical material for this thesis is obtained through a large number of sources, and includes political party manifestos, debates within the EP, and EP voting records. Firstly, the manifestos and/or party programs of the six cases under discussion will be retrieved either from their official party websites or through the manifesto project database (found here: <https://manifesto-project.wzb.eu/>). Both methods should lead to the same party program, however in some cases the latter proves more

beneficial. This became especially apparent in the case of Jobbik, which only had older versions of its manifesto available on its English language website. Yet, the manifesto project database had obtained a more recent English version. In general, the author tried to obtain English versions of all party programs. However, this proved impossible in the case of the FPÖ, the FN, and the VB. The next paragraph will explain how the author dealt with these language issues. Besides specific language preferences, the author chose to use the most recent versions of the party programs, meaning that the author included the 2017 edition for the FN, the FPÖ, and UKIP, the 2016 edition for the AfD, and the 2014 edition for Jobbik and VB. In the case of Jobbik, the 2010 edition was also consulted, as the manifesto published in 2014 indicated that claims from that particular party program were still perceived as valid.

Secondly, the debates in the EP were directly taken from the official EP website (found here: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/portal/en>). The author solely included discussions held during the eight term, which lasts from 2014 until 2019. All in all, seventeen debates were included, which discussed the political situation in regards to Russia, Ukraine, and Crimea. Debates that mostly focussed on economics or issues unrelated to the Ukrainian crisis were eliminated, as these would significantly and unduly widen the scope of this thesis. However, debates specifically discussing the AA were included, as it relates both to a political and economic angle in regards to Ukraine. It is important to note here that all statements were provided in the native language of the MEP. If statements were given verbatim, an English translation might be available. However, these translations are mostly there to facilitate the debates, and thus might not be a perfect translations of the original speech. Consequently, the author provided her own translations when statements were not in English. In the case of Dutch materials this did not pose a problem, as the author is native speaker in this language. When information was solely available in Hungarian, as proved the case with Jobbik, a native speaker was asked to provide translations. This due to a lack of knowledge on this language from the author's side. All other information was available in either French or German, which the author has some working knowledge of. In this case, translations were initially made by the author, but native speakers were consulted to check if the translated versions matched the original content. This approach was also adopted when party programs were unavailable in English.

Finally, voting records were taken either from the official EP's website or through votewatch (found here: <http://www.votewatch.eu/>). Again votes were only taken from the eighth term and specifically targeted votes related to foreign and security policies. In total six voting records were included, where 61 parliamentarians were able to vote. This is the same number of individuals that could state their opinion during the debates. However, on multiple occasions the Members of the European Parliament (MEP) opted to neither vote nor to use the debates to provide an opinion on the motions for resolution. Lastly it should be noted that, the author only analysed responses by MEPs that were elected or re-elected in 2014. Any MEP that entered the parliament after these elections was not included, this for the sake of clarity. However, those MEPs who chose to leave their respective parties or opted to leave the EP during the eight term, were taken into consideration until the day left.

2.3 Methodological Approach and Issues

In order to answer my research questions, the author implemented a combination of both a qualitative and quantitative content analysis. The former was used when analysing the party manifestos and the debates, whereas the later enabled me to discuss the voting patterns. Initially, the author preferred to use one approach, but this simply would have made it impossible to prescribe any meaning to the votes taken in the EP. Thus, in order to come to some conclusions, I used a quantitative approach to code the votes of individual parliamentarians. The author chiefly considered the percentage of MEPs per party or per debate that voted in favour of Russia. Moreover, an attempt was made to determine if these MEPs were loyal or rebellious towards their faction (see Annex 3 for more information on the votes).

A significant part of this thesis depended on the use of the qualitative content analysis. In general, this approach is used to systematically ascribe meaning to large amounts of textual data by coding the material into different categories (Schreier, 2013). The necessary data could be taken from anywhere, including, but not limited to: interviews, books, focus groups, and observations (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Within this study, the author chose to solely look into debates and party programs as these presumably represent the radical and the (potentially) pro-Russian character best. Moreover, the author initially aimed to work through a deductive approach (Elo &

Kyngäs, 2007). This was done as some scholars have claimed that this method proves most beneficial when some “existing theory or prior research exists about a phenomenon that is incomplete or would benefit from further description” (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005. p.1281). Thus, according to this reasoning the author based the first round of coding on categories that naturally sprang from the literature as discussed in Chapter 1, these include, but are not limited to: pro-Russia, anti-EU, sovereignty back to the state, expansionism, and geopolitical alternative. Nevertheless, after the initial period of trial coding this method had to be abandoned, as it proved impossible to code certain segments of the data. After all, scholars such as Mudde (2014), Polyakova et al. (2016), Klapsis (2015), and Larrabee et al. (2017) each gravitated towards similar factors that affected the external dimension. Thus when foreign policy perspectives were discussed, these always zeroed in on the same points: Euroscepticism, anti-expansionist and anti-integrationist tendencies, and pro-Russian sentiments. Yet, the author does not believe that that is all there is to the radical right’s foreign policy and its relation to Russia. Consequently, the author believed that it would prove beneficial to switch to a more inductive approach which implements open coding. By using this method, codes and their names flow naturally from the data (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007). As a result, the author was able to categorize all data that did not neatly fit in with the already existing theory. While the author perceives the open coding approach to be best suited to this endeavour, it has to be acknowledged that there could be some limitations to this approach, these will be discussed at a later point in this thesis.

For this research to be successful, the author will be following eight steps, as prescribed by Margrit Schreier (2013). Firstly, the author will decide on a specific topic and determine what research questions need to be answered (see segment 2.1 Research Questions). Secondly, the EP debates and party programs will be downloaded and if necessary translated. Based on the data, the coding frame will be established. While this framework will implement some codes that stem from the literature, most will be based on the data. Fourth, the data will be segmented in order for it to fit in one coding frame. Fifth, part of the material will be trial coded, the author will be using software from MAXQDA for this purpose. During the (trial) coding process, the author will introduce all codes on a sentence by sentence basis. However, if the same code can be used for multiple consecutive sentences, one code will encompass all relevant phrases. Once this

phase is finished, the coding frame will be evaluated and modified accordingly. Seventh, all materials will be coded during the main analysis phase (Schreier, 2013). The author will use at least three rounds of coding over a prolonged period of time, this will be done with the purpose to prevent mistakes and to enhance viability and trustworthiness. Finally, the results will be presented and interpreted³.

It has already been noted that this thesis intends to add to the theory on the relations between Russia and the radical right. While I believe that the qualitative content analysis, in particularly open coding, is best suited for this endeavour, it also comes with a number of problems. Most of these specifically relate to the problem of trustworthiness, reliability, and viability. Although flexibility is perceived as one of the major benefits of this approach, it comes at the cost of potentially losing viability. That being said, persistent observation and prolonged engagement may be able to enhance the credibility of this project (Hsies & Shannon, 2005). The author agreed with this notion, and as a result all textual data was coded at least three times.

Another issue has to do with the fact that most, if not all, codes are based on my own thoughts and reasoning. On the one hand, this approach might cause me to develop some good arguments. On the other hand, the author might miss certain categories due to a lack of understanding. As a consequence, the author may fail to recognize some key concepts and/or categories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Which might result in an inaccurate representation of the data. That being said, prolonged engagement can aid in resolving this issue as well. Thus, as long as a significant amount of time is spent on analysing the data and the results, most problems that taint this approach will be resolved.

2.5 Selection of Cases

This research includes six cases: Alternative für Deutschland, Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, Front National, Jobbik, UK Independence Party, and Vlaams Belang. To come to this case selection, the author first chose to solely take those parties that

³ An effort will be made to discuss all coding categories and put them in context. That being said, some codes will receive limited to no attention at all. This because they may not aid in the answering of the research questions. However, this should not imply that these codes or the coded segments are irrelevant. In fact, the author would strongly recommend that more research is implemented on codes such as Democracy (positive) and Ukraine (negative), as these will not be used to their full potential in this work but could lead to valuable inferences in the future.

belong to the radical right party family. Furthermore, the author determined that she wanted to represent a diverse range of parties, where both similar and contradicting responses regarding the Ukrainian crisis and Russia could be expected. Based on that, the author included parties from both Eastern and Western Europe. Besides that, the author also aimed to incorporate those parties that were both older and younger, those that focus on a single issue and those that maintain opinions on a large number of policy areas, and those that clearly have (positive) relations with Russia and those that may or may not have this connection. Additionally, the author included parties that were both popular and unpopular on the local, national, and EU level. At this point it has become clear that the author desired to include parties that have similar ideologies but are not carbon copies of each other. Nevertheless, at this point some cases remained that did not make the final cut. The Dutch Freedom Party (de Partij voor Vrijheid), for example, was discarded as it professes some very liberal opinions in regards to social issues and traditional values. Moreover, its leader, Geert Wilders, chooses to focus his party's agenda mostly towards promoting anti-Islam sentiments. Switzerland, with the Swiss People's Party (Schweizerische Volkspartei), did not fit the scope of this research project either, as it is not part of the EU. The author also excluded the Baltic radical right as these parties tend to have very peculiar relations with Russia, and this would likely skew my results. Finally, several other parties were eliminated due to more practical concerns, such as the author not being able to speak certain languages. An exception was made for Jobbik. While the author does not speak Hungarian, this case was perceived as one of the best representatives of radical right parties in Eastern Europe. This due to the fact that very few parties can claim to be as radical as Jobbik, but more importantly, this party is one of the very few that allegedly has very good relations with Russia.

3. OUTLINING THE CASES

Before turning to the empirical part of this thesis, the cases under discussion will be analysed on the bases of several foreign and national policy sub-themes. In particular, attention will be given to these party's stances towards the EU, immigration, and xenophobia. The author perceived this to be necessary, as some readers may be unfamiliar with these particular radical right parties.

3.1 Anti-EU sentiments

The 90s became known as the decade that kick-started Eurosceptic tendencies. In the very same era, one of Europe's most Eurosceptic parties, UKIP, came into being. In the early 1980s, Alan Sked, a professor at the London School of Economics, grew increasingly frustrated with the European Union and its wish for further integration. Initially, this led him to join the Bruges Group which came into being shortly after Margaret Thatcher's infamous Bruges speech (Usherwood, 2016). However, Sked would also become ill satisfied with this grouping, as it did not intend on pursuing a pure form of Euroscepticism (Usherwood, 2016; Hayton, 2016). As a result of this, Dr Sked established UKIP at a meeting in 1993 (Flamini, 2013). The party immediately established itself as a single-issue party, as its "sole policy was to provoke a British exit from the EU, by winning seats in the EP and then refusing to take them, so causing a constitutional crisis" (Usherwood, 2016, p.248). Yet, this policy would never come to fruition as UKIP failed to obtain any seats in the 1994 EP elections. Moreover, after struggling for survival for the next five years, the party realised that they needed to know what kind of system they were working against. Consequently, when UKIP was able to send three members to the EP, they immediately took this opportunity. Nevertheless, UKIP maintained its extremely negative stance towards the Union. Successfully so, as the UK is now bound to leave the EU.

Compared to UKIP, the FN is only slightly less Eurosceptic. This notion may appear surprising to some, as the FN actually spend a significant part of its existence promoting a pro-European stance. From 1972, when the party was created by Jean-Marie Le Pen, until the late 1980s, the FN did not perceive any problems with the EU. After all, they were far too busy fighting against Communism and bolstering

nationalism (Morini, 2018, p.11). However, just like UKIP, the FN started to become critical towards the European Economic Community/EU as soon as the Maastricht Treaty was agreed upon. This agreement became synonymous with the Union taken sovereignty away from the state. As a result, the FN became radically opposed to the EU and its institutions, and so far, this sentiment has not waned. This became especially clear during the 2014 EP elections when the “FN firmly rejected austerity policies, called for an exit from the Euro, in order to ‘regain French sovereignty’, to implement protectionist economic measures and to revise the Schengen Agreement” (Morini, 2018, p.11). These sentiments were nothing new, as Jean Marie Le Pen had already announced his desire to leave the Union in 2002. These feelings were carried over to the new leadership as Marine Le Pen expressed the same wish. Yet she argued that this decision should be left to the people. Consequently, in her bid for presidency she advocated for a referendum where the French could decide whether or not they wished to remain in the Union (Front National, 2017; Morini, 2018). Nevertheless, during the last few decades the FN has not been able to successfully advance this position, and neither is it expected to do so in the future. This is partially due to the other French parties, who continued to perceive the EU in favourable terms. But more importantly, the FN has remained virtually powerless on the national level, and thus has been unable to press their position.

If one were to rank the case studies in this thesis according to their anti-EU tendencies, the FPÖ would fall somewhere in the middle. This mostly due to the fact that the FPÖ had phases of radicalisation, but also periods in which it mainstreams. Moreover, when the party was formed in 1956 by Anton Reinthaller, being Eurosceptic simply was not the norm. Instead the party became known for its libertarian character, and its German-nationalist, anti-Semitist, and anti-clerical policies (Heinisch & Hauser, 2016; FPÖ Bildungsinstitut, 2017). Only in the 1990s did the party become dedicated to spreading the Eurosceptic message. Yet, this tendency would be short-lived, as the FPÖ mainstreamed itself in order to become part of the government in the early 2000s. This position of power was so important to the leadership that the FPÖ was willing to meet all the conditions set by the Christian-Democrats. Some of these requirements, such as supporting tolerance and the EU, directly went against the character of the party, yet Jorg Haider, the then leader of the FPÖ, knowingly went along with it. This may seem

surprising, but the FPÖ has been known to ignore its party program when this proves politically convenient, as was clearly the case in the 2000s. Haider's approach initially seemed to pay off, as the FPÖ and the Christian-Democratic Party maintained good political relations, where both parties were able to promote their policy ideas. Nevertheless, as the FPÖ's power started to diminish, it became more and more appealing to return to the policies that had been promoted during the 1990s. It was clear that the new head of the party, Heinz-Christian Strache, supported this notion as he started to re-introduce anti-EU sentiments (Heinisch & Hauser, 2016, p.79-81). While these anti-EU policies were definitely radical, Strache ensured that his tone was relatively moderate when he appeared in public, as this led to more support among the population.

As one of the newer cases in this study, Jobbik did not start as an anti-EU party. In fact, when Jobbik came into existence in 2003 it had wanted closer alliances with the Euro-Atlantic community. Thus, when Hungary joined the Union in the same year, this institution had not appeared problematic. However, this positive attitude did not last for a long time, and Euroscepticism became the norm shortly after the financial crises of the late 2000s. During this period the Hungarian nation, in particularly Jobbik and its supporters came to blame the Euro-Atlantic community for the poor socio-economic situation that the country was in. Consequently, the Jobbik leadership started to question whether or not EU Membership was in the best interest of Hungary, as it prevented them from effectively pursuing their own national interests (Kim, 2016, p.348). In the end, the leader of Jobbik, Gábor Vona, determined that Hungary would be better off establishing closer relations with the East, as this could offset the Euro-Atlantic community (Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary, 2010). Nevertheless, Jobbik still has not decided whether it will leave the EU or if the party wishes to renegotiate its relations with the Union (Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary, 2010). As Jobbik and other parties in Hungary keep radicalising, it may seem logical for them to choose the former option. However, this remains to be seen.

In the case of the FPÖ and Jobbik one can clearly see that these countries have become more and more anti-EU since the late 2000s. The VB on the other hand has always maintained some degree of Euroscepticism, yet this was always presented as a secondary issue. Instead, the VB appears to prioritize Flemish nationalism over

Euroscepticism. While this preference has never changed, it should not be implied that the VB is happy to remain within the EU. For several decades, the VB leadership has argued that they do not intend to lose sovereignty to a meddling supra-nationalist organisation like the EU (Vasilopoulou, 2009, p.9). This sentiment became especially apparent in their latest manifesto, where they called upon the Flemish to leave the EU and establish its own state (Vlaams Belang, 2014). However, after leaving the Union, the VB intends to (re-)establish international cooperation likened to the situation before the Treaty of Maastricht. Moreover, a healthier currency will be introduced among those states that culturally similar to Flanders, such as Germany and the Netherlands (Vlaams Belang, 2014).

While all parties in this study can be considered Eurosceptic, the AfD represents this sentiment least. In fact, it has always been difficult to promote anti-EU and radical stances in Germany. The former because German parties as well as the public tend to support the Union, and the latter because “German elites stigmatised National Socialism and criminalised the use of its symbols very early on whilst offering nationalist a home in the mainstream centre-right” (Arzheimer, 2015, p.54). Thus, politicians who may have identified with nativist, authoritarianist, and populist tendencies were discouraged from joining short-lived parties such as the Republicans. The creation of the AfD in 2013 challenged both points. Former Christlich Demokratische Union and Freie Demokratische Partei members Bernd Lucke, Konrad Adam, and Alexander Gauland founded the party as they were no longer satisfied with their respective former parties. According to the AfD leadership, the German parliamentary parties failed to pick up on problems regarding the Eurozone, and were also not Eurosceptic enough (Decker, 2016, p.3). Still issues such as immigration and the law and order were prioritized. In particular the former proved salient during the refugee crisis. Consequently, Eurosceptic sentiments were hardly promoted. This changed when Frauke Petry took over the party leadership, after Lucke and his main supporters felt forced to leave as the party had radicalised too much (Decker, 2016, p.7-9). Over time, the AfD has become more radical, and Euroscepticism has obtained a somewhat more prominent place on the agenda. Nevertheless, other issues feature more prominently in the foreign policy directive. Consequently, the AfD can be perceived as one of the least Eurosceptic radical right parties in this study, but also within Europe.

3.2 Anti-Immigration

Immigration, or preferably the lack thereof, is another topic that has been on the far-right's agenda for a long time. With the fall of the Soviet Union, these parties had hoped for "to the creation of independent, neutral states with robust foreign policies, precluding the need for immigration and multiculturalism" (Liang, 2008, p. 18). This particular perspective was popularized due to the fact that their nativist visions did not (and still does not) allow for any foreign elements to enter into their nation. Unfortunately for these parties, the fall of the Berlin Wall led to a wave of migration from Eastern Europe. These anti-immigration tendencies have only strengthened among this party family, as multiple migration crises hit Europe during the 2000s and 2010s.

Over the last 40 years, the FN has frequently pushed for anti-immigration policies. In fact, it can be said that (anti-)immigration has become the leitmotif of the party's rhetoric (Stockemer & Barisione, 2017, p.107). Successfully so, as its negative stance towards 'outsiders' caused the FN to achieve its first electoral success. In 1983, secretary-general Jean-Pierre Stirbois won a mayoral election in Dreux, a city some 80 kilometres from Paris, where the locals had come to fear Arab and Muslim immigrants and the social problems they brought along (Della Posta, 2013). The citizens of Dreux were certainly not the only ones bothered by these immigrants. Indeed, public opinion towards foreigners, especially those of non-Western descent, only got worse over the years. Especially considering that the local inhabitants wished to blame these immigrants for issues concerning unemployment, the healthcare system, and criminality. The FN cleverly played into these fears, as they not only started to criticize immigration, but also started to promote tougher policies on law and order. Additionally, they also argued that social programmes should only benefit the native inhabitants of the country as opposed to all of those that lived in France (Stockemer & Barisione, 2017, p.107). Thus, the anti-immigration policies that the FN promoted, affected other points on the agenda as well. All of these to the detriment of the 'outsiders'. Clearly, the French public bought into this rhetoric, as the FN started to receive significantly more voters after the refugee and migrant crises (Della Posta, 2013).

It has already been noted that the FPÖ has been willing to mainstream as part of a vote and office seeking strategy. However, since the early 1990s the party has

diligently pursued an anti-immigration agenda (Heinische & Hauser, 2016, p.74). Moreover, the party has made it clear that while it is willing to alter some of its policy positions, this is not the case when immigration is discussed. This became abundantly clear when the party entered government in 2000. At that time, the “FPÖ insisted on a very restrictive regime regarding immigrant quotas and family reunions” (Heinisch & Hauser, 2016, p.74). These policies might seem radical compared to immigration laws in other European states. However, these specific proposals were supported by a significant number of conservative members of the Austrian parliament. Moreover, in the eyes of the FPÖ and the Christian-Democrats, these policies were simply an extension of immigration laws already implemented by previous governments (Heinisch & Hauser, 2016, p.77). Nevertheless, just because the mainstream centre-right in Austria supports strict anti-immigration laws, does not mean that these laws are any less radical. Consequently, the FPÖ can be perceived as one of the most anti-immigration parties in this study.

The AfD gets most of its radical character from its anti-immigration tendencies. Once the refugee crisis started in the early 2010s, the AfD knowingly played into the insecurities and anxieties of the population (Decker, 2016, p.10). The more refugees and immigrants came into their country, the louder the AfD called upon the government to change its laws regarding migration. That being said, this attitude had not always been promoted. In 2013 and 2014 the AfD had already become sceptical of migrants, yet at that point they were still willing to take those that offered economic benefits to the German state. Nevertheless, once the news media started to allege that Muslim refugees had raped a minor, the AfD felt the need to quickly respond by levelling staunch criticism against any and all immigrants (Moreira, 2018, n.p.). Shortly thereafter it became public knowledge that these allegations had been falsified, but this did not stop the AfD’s rally cries against immigration. After all, why would they change an approach that had proven effective in garnering support for their party. Moreover, this anti-immigration stance enabled them, like the FN, to promote other issues related to national-conservatism, such as law and order, and gender and family policies (Decker, 2016, p.6). Finally, this strategy did not just lead to support from the average citizen, but also caused the extreme right-wing movement ‘Pegida’ to voice support for the AfD (Decker, 2016; Moreira, 2018).

Both the VB and UKIP are far less focussed on anti-immigration policies compared to parties such as the FN, the FPÖ, and the AfD. That being said, both parties do include segments on (im)migration in their national party programs. Nevertheless, neither of them has made these policies into a priority issue. Instead the VB tends to direct all its attention towards Flemish nationalism and other national issues. Once independence is achieved, the VB might place a larger focus on leaving the EU or anti-immigration sentiments. In the case of UKIP, the party has always prioritized its anti-EU sentiments over immigration. However, now that Brexit talks have started, one may expect immigration to start to rank higher on the agenda (MacMillan, 2017, p.118). That being said, one has to question how impactful UKIP's stance on immigration will be after the United Kingdom has left the Union. After all, UKIP remains plagued by a lack of representation on the national and local level.

Discussing anti-immigration tendencies makes sense in the context of Western European states, but the same cannot always be said for Eastern and Central Europe. In this region, radical right-wing parties tend to target national minorities as opposed to foreign migrants (Mares & Havlik, 2016; Nagy, Boros, & Vasali, 2013). So while the West tends to turn Muslims and Arabs into scapegoats, the radical right in Eastern and Central Europe appears to put the blame on Jewish and/or Roma parts of the population. Especially, the latter grouping is problematized by Jobbik and Hungarian civilians, as "sixty percent of the population maintains that the Roma "have crime in their blood," and 42% agree with the policies of discos and restaurants that deny them entry" (Nagy, Boros, & Vasali, 2013, p.233). In 1999, when Jobbik was just a youth movement established by students from the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, this anti-Roma stance was not yet popularised. This due in part to their close alignment to Fidesz, which at the time was a centre right party. However, the anti-Roma attitude was quickly introduced once Gábor Vona, one of the party's leaders, realised that their place in civil society would not prove sufficient in realising their 'national radical' platform (Kim, 2016, p.346). As a result, the leaders opted to transform their movement into a political party in 2003 (Jobbik Movement for a Better Hungary, 2016). Immediately thereafter Jobbik made a name for itself by claiming to protect 'Hungarian interests and values' (Kim, 2016, p.346). In order to do so successfully, they would specifically target the Roma, as a significant part of the Hungarian population already believed that these

people were to blame for all negativity that occurred in their country. Nowadays problems related to the Roma still top the agenda, however the refugee crisis did force Jobbik to promote an anti-immigration stance as well. The Hungarians did not perceive this move as radical, as most, if not all, Hungarian parties strongly believe that their nation-state will suffer the consequences if the country is to take (more) migrants.

3.3 Xenophobia

It has been noted in Chapter 1 that most, if not all, radical right-wing parties strongly support national conservatism. One of the corner stones of this ideology is Christianity, a religion which the far-right perceives as the very basis of Western civilisation. Consequently, parties, such as the FN and Jobbik, will do everything in their power to protect, defend, and promote Christian values. In the same vein, these parties will ensure that foreign religions have no place in their society. This especially proves true in the case of the Islam, as it is perceived as “anti-modern, anti-democratic, patriarchal, [and a] violent dogmatic religion belonging to a lower level of civilization” (Liang, 2008, p.21). On top of that, foreign cultures and internal minorities are also ill conceived, this becomes especially apparent in the case of the Jewish and Roma communities. Thus, anyone supporting these religions and/or cultures, in particularly those belonging to migrant communities, will be looked down upon.

It has already been noted that Jobbik has a rather different position on immigration compared to the other cases in this study. Moreover, while Western European parties distinguish between policies regarding immigration and xenophobia, the same cannot be said for Jobbik. In this case, lines are blurred and policies against the Roma and Jewish population are both xenophobic as well as anti-immigrant. This, likely due to the fact that Hungary has not suffered consequences of a significant number of foreigners moving into their nation. Thus, instead they are able to focus all their attention on national minorities. This seems like a logical move to the Jobbik leadership, as they believe that promoting anti-Semitic, racist, and anti-Roma policies is acceptable (Nagy, Boros & Vasali, 2013, p.233-234). Over time these racist tendencies have become more and more apparent. So much so, that a small segment of the Hungarian population has come to believe that Jobbik has gone too far. That being said, most Hungarians remain very prejudiced towards the gypsy population. The fact

that the Roma have not integrated well, certainly has not helped the issue. The situation has grown so tense that scholars cannot help but equate the situation to a ticking time bomb, simply waiting to explode (Nagy, Boros & Vasali, 2013).

Like Jobbik, the VB also has a history in which xenophobia plays a key-role. This became especially apparent during the last two decades of the 20th century. In 1978, when Karel Dillen and Lode Claes established the Vlaams Blok (Flemish Bloc), the party immediately “carved a niche for itself on the right of the political spectrum by championing the cause of Flemish nationalism, anticommunism, anti-abortion, pro-apartheid and pro-amnesty for the Nazi collaborators” (Erk, 2005, p.496). Even though some issues decreased in importance over time, the same cannot be said for the racist and anti-Semitic sentiments. In fact, these only increased salience. So much so that the Belgian government claimed that the VB had taken radicalisation and xenophobia to a new extreme. During the same period, the party’s popularity among the Flemish population had expanded steadily. Consequently, the government felt that it could do nothing but impose a cordon sanitaire against the party (Erk, 2005; Pauwels, 2011). Meaning that no party would work or cooperate with the VB. Nevertheless, the VB continued to promote xenophobic policies until 2004, when the Court of Cassation decided that the VB had breached the Moureaux law (a law which specifically deals with racism). At this point, dismantling the party proved the only option, yet shortly thereafter the old members of the VB founded a new radical right party named Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest; VB) (Erk, 2005). This party, like its predecessor, promotes Flemish nationalism and xenophobic tendencies, yet they ensure that all their policies are styled in a less overtly racist manner, so that they cannot be sued or disbanded again.

In a similar vein, the FN also started out with a leadership that was increasingly xenophobic. In particular, the leadership became known for issuing statements denying the Holocaust, and thus anti-Semitism became the norm within the party (Ivaldi, 2016, p.232). The French government perceived these declarations as so outrageous, that they eventually came to impose a cordon sanitaire on the FN. By electing Marine Le Pen as the new party leader in 2011, the party had hoped to rid themselves of their pariah profile, nevertheless the cordon sanitaire has remained in place. Still, the younger Le Pen has taken it upon herself to eliminate any explicit racist

and anti-Semitic remarks. Furthermore, the new FN has made it clear that Holocaust denial and connections with neo-fascist groups are no longer tolerated. It immediately became clear that Le Pen took this stance seriously, because shortly thereafter she was forced to expulse her father, Jean-Marie Le Pen, since he had questioned the existence of Nazi gas chambers (Ivaldi, 2016, p.232). Regardless of the efforts made, the image of the FN has hardly improved. As a result, Le Pen decided in early 2018 that a name change was in order, as the old one held negative connotations. Moving forward, the FN will be renamed 'Rassemblement National'. Nevertheless, this new name may not seem like an improvement to some. Because during the WWII, a party called Ressemblement National Populaire came to support the Nazi's (Vermaas, 2018).

The FPÖ followed a similar track to the FN, where it has mainstreamed a little over the years. That being said, its beginning (and to some extent its ending) is anything but mainstream. The FPÖ was established shortly after the WWII by war veterans and Nazi-sympathisers. Consequently, it should come as no surprise that anti-Semitic policies became the norm. Overtime, as anti-immigration sentiments started to increase, the party also came to criticize other cultures and religions. In the mid to late 2000s, it were specifically those supporting the Islam that were put in a negative light, as opposed to the Jewish population (Heinisch & Hauser, 2016, p.87). However, once the FPÖ became part of the government, the leadership quickly realised that they could no longer permit themselves to promote these overtly xenophobic policies, as this would hamper their vote and office seeking strategy. So while racist policies remained the standard, the party ensured that they presented themselves in a more moderate manner in public. This approach is best seen in the early 2010s, as Heinz-Christian Strache claimed that Muslims would have a place in the FPÖ, yet at the same time the party used an anti-Muslim platform in local elections in Vienna (Heinisch & Hauser, 2016, p.87-88).

The last two cases under discussion, UKIP and the AfD are not nearly as xenophobic as parties such as Jobbik and the VB. That being said, both parties do promote the use of anti-Muslim policies. In the case of UKIP, these policies are mostly tied in with their stance on immigration, which also singles out Muslim individuals. Nevertheless, both these issues do not rank particularly high on their agenda. According to Rafael Behr this due to "the paradox of British political xenophobia – the racist

element in populism must be discreet because overt racism isn't popular" (2013, p.11). Of course, some xenophobic statements can still be found, but not to the extent of other far right parties. In the case of the AfD xenophobia also does not appear to be the norm. Yet, the party has been known to use slogans such as "Islam has no place in Germany" ("News March 2018", 2018). That being said, recently a leading member of the AfD, Arthur Wagner has converted to the Islam ("News March 2018", 2018). Even though it remains unclear whether or not Wagner will remain in the party, he claims to be loyal to the AfD. Regardless of what happens in the future, one cannot claim that either the AfD or UKIP are known for its xenophobic sentiments.

4. RESULTS

4.1 National Party Programs

When analysing the party programs of the cases under discussion, one has to realise that not every party perceives the EU and foreign policy strategies in a similar manner. Certainly, it cannot be denied that both these topics tend to be taken into account. However, certain parties may come to prioritize the EU and/or other foreign policy angles, whereas others may perceive them as secondary issues. The latter is best seen in the case of the VB which tends to prioritize Flemish nationalism over Euroscepticism (coded: anti-EU). UKIP, on the other hand, has made the EU a foreign policy priority by continuously discussing Brexit (coded: anti-EU). That being said, most parties chose to prioritize the domestic sphere, and as a result their manifestos mostly focus on issues concerning: welfare, education, families, urban planning, and the rule of law. This for the logical reason that these topics actually interest and affect the local population in a more direct manner. Consequently, those programs that mostly concern themselves with the domestic sphere may prove less insightful (in regards to this thesis) compared to those that direct more attention to foreign policy issues. In the next few paragraphs the results of several prevalent foreign policy issues will be discussed.

4.1.1 *Anti-EU but pro-Europe*

All parties included in this study can be described as Eurosceptic, some more so than others. Based on the party programs, Jobbik and the AfD appear least sceptical toward the Union. While both parties perceive tremendous problems with the EU, both are still willing to remain in this supranationalist entity as long as fundamental reforms are implemented (AfD, 2016; Jobbik, 2014). All the other parties in this study appear less lenient, some like the VB call for the immediate decommissioning of the Union. Whereas others, like the FN, appear to favour a national referendum (as was done in the UK), where the people get to determine whether or not they wish to remain in the EU. The FPÖ, while clear in its distaste towards the EU, does not indicate if leaving the organisation is perceived as desired. All stances towards the Union are represented in Table 1. which is available on the next page.

Table 1. The Radical Right on Staying in or Leaving the EU

AfD: Should we not succeed with our ideas of a fundamental reform within the present framework of the European Union, we shall seek Germany's exit, or a democratic dissolution of the EU, followed by the founding of a new European economic union.	Undecided, but rather leaving
FN: For this [talks about the EU], a negotiation will be initiated with our European partners, followed by a referendum on our membership of the European Union. The objective is to achieve a European project that is respectful of French independence, national sovereignties, and will serve the interest of the people.	Leaving
FPO: However, the sovereignty as well as the ideal of a Europe of Nations is increasingly threatened by the current developments in the European Union. Especially, since the objective of the EU has turned into a centralized bureaucratic hole.	Unclear
Jobbik: Hungary's bondage to the EU. There are two options: renegotiate our relations with the EU or quit the EU and implement a Central European cooperation alternative.	Undecided
UKIP: UKIP believes that the UK should have already left the EU, and that following the Article 50 process will lead us to make too many concessions to Brussels.	Leaving
VB: The VB wants to stop the evolution towards an EU-Superstate, and a bigger Belgium. Besides the separation of Belgium, the VB also wants an orderly decommissioning of the EU and the Eurozone.	Leaving

Besides agreeing that the Union is ultimately bad for the nation-state, most parties are also in unison on the reasons why one should leave the EU, these include, but are not limited to: the EU starting to resemble a super state (coded: United States of Europe) which lacks democratic accountability (coded: Democracy (negative)); the EU continuously promoting an undesirable expansionist (coded: Expansion) rhetoric; the Union unjustly gaining more and more power (coded: sovereignty to the EU) as sovereign decision-making capabilities are moved from the state to the EU; and finally the Maastricht and Lisbon Treaties (coded: Pre-Maastricht/ pre-Lisbon) have caused a competence creep within the Union. Based on the currently existing literature as well as on the results found in this study (see Mudde, 2007; Klapsis, 2015; Minkenberg, 2017; Polyakova et al., 2016), it has become clear that calling out the EU on its tremendously

problematic behaviour has become something short of the norm among the radical right. Regardless, these parties do acknowledge that Europe itself is still perceived favourably, this is done by referencing a ‘Europe of Nations’ or a ‘Europe of Fatherlands’ in their party programs. In fact, the VB, the AfD, Jobbik, and the FPÖ perceive the continent so positively, that all state the desire to return to an earlier version of the EU. In particular, they would prefer an alliance likened to the situation before the Maastricht Treaty of 1992. This because “for decades, the European Economic Community (EEC) contributed to peace and prosperity in Western Europe (1957 to 1993) (AfD, 2016, p.16; coded: Pre-Maastricht/ pre-Lisbon). These stances, like the ones on the EU, appear to be consistent with the already existing literature in this field.

4.1.2 International Cooperation

When discussing foreign policies, most radical right-wing parties will include a short segment on the states or institutions that they wish to cooperate with on a regular basis (coded: International cooperation). Some parties have very specific regions in mind with whom they wish to cooperate. For example, the FN aims to mostly focus its attention on improving relations with the French speaking part of Africa (Front National, 2017). Moreover, Jobbik (2010; 2014) seeks to improve relations with the Far East as well as South-East Asia, this with the purpose to turn Hungary into a bridge between the East and West. Besides these particular relations, most parties also provided stances on the United States as well as on Russia. In the case of the latter, one would expect (potential) relations to be perceived favourably. After all, the Kremlin shares some similar conservative ideologies with the radical right, and could also represent a geopolitical alternative to the EU (Klapisis, 2015). The results appear to somewhat match these expectations. The AfD, Jobbik, and UKIP all indicated that they wish to strengthen ties with Russia (see Figure 1 on the next page). However, in the case of UKIP this positive perspective is based on the presumption that Russia will start to act less aggressively towards the West (UK Independence Party, 2017). The FPÖ also seems somewhat inclined to support relations with Russia. However, this ties in more with pragmatic reasons. Indeed, the FPÖ leadership strongly argues in favour of enhancing relations with Russia, as this is expected to positively affect the Austrian agricultural sector. Thus, this stance is mostly based on the benefits that Austria may

attain through this connection, as opposed to truly perceiving Russia as a friendly nation. Therefore, the author would argue that the FPÖ mostly promotes a neutral stance towards Russia through its party manifesto. The last two cases in this study, the FN and VB, have made no mention of Russia in their party programs. However, this should not imply that they are radically opposed to relations with Russia. In fact, works by Mudde (2014) and Polyakova et al. (2016) have proven that the FN is one of the few parties that has documented relations with Russia. Thus, while a pro-Russian attitude has not become apparent through these manifestos, it should not be assumed that it does not exist, it simply remains unknown if one solely considers this platform.

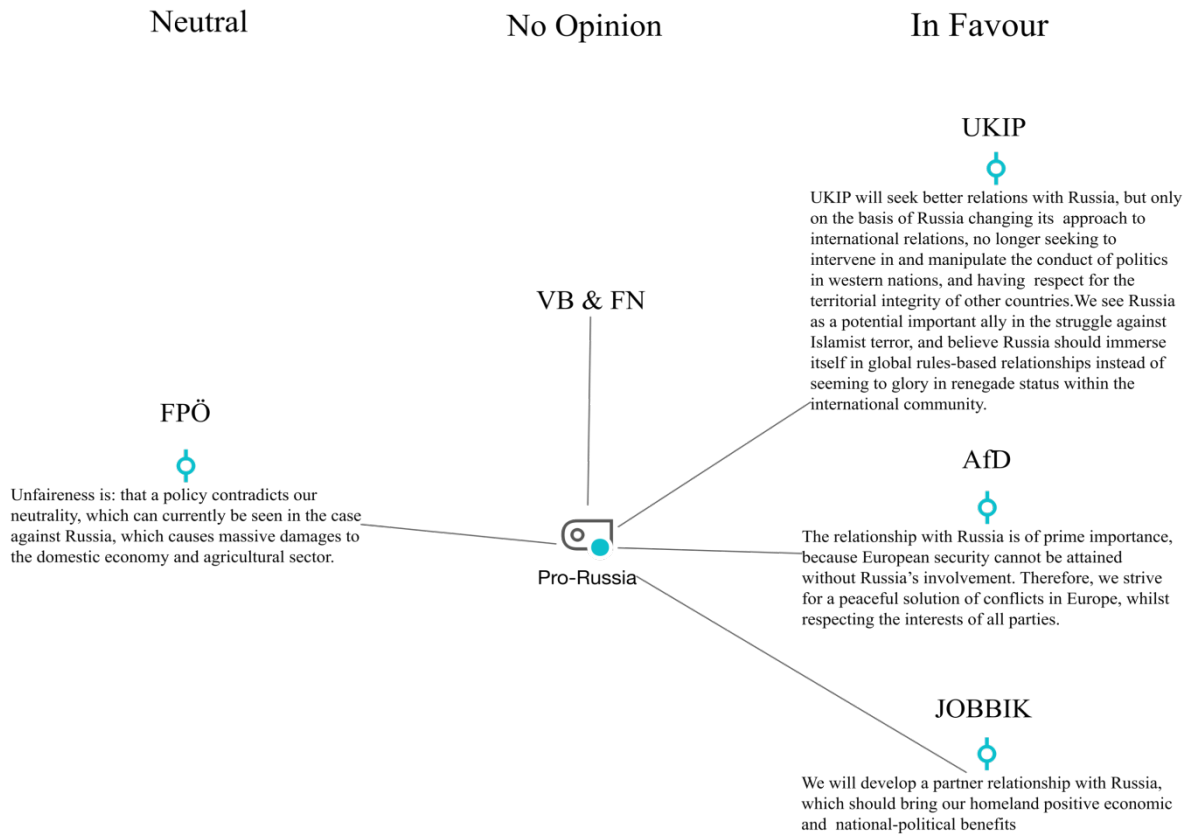


Figure 1. The Radical Right's Stance Towards Russia

Most of the parties included in this study, with the exception of the FN, also include statements on the U.S. in their party programs. Unlike the relations with Russia, cooperation with the United States tends to be described both in positive and negative terms. Both the FPÖ and VB perceive the United States negatively. The latter came to

hold this opinion in response to the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), which the VB perceived as undemocratic (coded: Anti-U.S.). Additionally, the party argued that this free trade agreement was lacking in transparency (Vlaams Belang, 2014, p.10). The FPÖ also does not look favourably upon international agreements with the U.S., this because they are fearful of losing their national sovereignty and principles of neutrality due to American influence (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, 2017, n.p.). Interestingly enough, the AfD, Jobbik, and UKIP maintain a complete opposite stance, and continue to be strong supporters of cooperation with the United States. Both the AfD and UKIP describe the U.S. as a state that has always been an ally, and is thus deserving of their consideration. Jobbik also supports a good working relation with the U.S., but they are not nearly as enthusiastic about this state as the AfD and UKIP. In fact, Jobbik's party program has indicated that: "with the United States we intend [to] develop the kind of bilateral relationship, which consistently and transparently promotes our national interests" (Jobbik, 2010, p.21). However, at this point in time, they no longer feel comfortable with unquestioningly following the foreign policy perspective of the EU and the North Atlantic region, as this will likely hamper their own foreign policy agenda. All in all, the results indicate that Jobbik remains in favour of international cooperation with the U.S., but only as long as it suits their needs. The other parties included in this thesis may also come to support this notion, as national interest may come to trump relations with the U.S., Russia, or any other state.

4.1.3 Defence Alliances

Besides questioning which countries they should and should not cooperate with, the radical right also tends to discuss its opinions on defence alliances in its party programs. Within this sample, there appear to be three types of perspectives, (1) the party wishes to or has joined NATO (coded as: pro-NATO), (2) the party does not wish to join any alliance, and is against NATO (coded as either: anti-NATO or Defence by the state), and (3) the party aims to join another defence alliance (coded as: Defence alliance). Regardless of their stances on defence alliances, all parties included in this study agree that their national defence system needs to be updated and expanded. UKIP and the AfD aim to upgrade their military, navy, and air force through NATO. This due to the fact that they expect this alliance to aid them in (re)developing their foreign and

security politics. Moreover, joining this defence alliance seemed like a logical choice, especially considering that both parties perceive the U.S., the major player in this organisation, in rather favourable terms. While this attitude may suite UKIP and the AfD, all other parties look less favourably towards NATO. While the VB does not specifically mention NATO, it does appear to favour other defence alliances with like-minded states. The FN, however, is strongly opposed to NATO as well as other alliances, as it fears getting involved in wars that are not its own (Front National, 2017). This anti-NATO stance is also well represented in the case of the FPÖ, which is interesting considering that Austria is not part of this defence alliance.

Even though most parties remain in favour of NATO or other defence alliances, all have become sceptical of getting involved in wars without their explicit permission. They all agree with the FN's rhetoric that they can only continue to support defence alliances as long as their security concerns are taken into account. In fact, both UKIP and the AfD state that they only wish to involve themselves in NATO missions if there is either a UN mandate or explicit approval from their national government. The VB seems to think along the same lines and indicated that: "taking part in an alliance or any other form of international cooperation should not lead to a loss of choice in regards to buying into weapon systems or participating in operations" (Vlaams Belang, 2014, p.11; coded: Defence alliance). Similar sentiments can be found in party programs of the FPÖ and Jobbik as well. Consequently, it should be noted that the radical right only favours defence alliances as long as this does not come at the cost of losing their sovereignty.

4.1.4 Conclusions

Finally, the author combined all results discussed in previous segments into Table 2., which is available on the next page. Based on this table it becomes apparent that the AfD and UKIP follow a rather similar pattern. Both favour relations with Russia, the U.S. and NATO. Jobbik's manifesto indicates a somewhat comparable pattern, but they have opted to distance themselves from NATO. The FPÖ and VB also share some similarities as both negatively perceive the U.S. Moreover, while Austria has not joined NATO and probably will not do so in the future, both the FPÖ and the VB appear sceptical of this particular defence alliance. Finally, the FN can be described as an outlier, as it only indicated a disdain towards the EU and NATO. However, the FN

may have simply become an aberration due to a lack of information. That being said, all cases could have become an anomaly, as little information was available in most cases. As mentioned previously, most party manifestos favour a large range of topics, but the majority of the issues discussed appear relate to the domestic sphere. Consequently, little space tends to be dedicated to the party's relations with the EU, the U.S., NATO, and Russia. As a result, one should look at the results represented in Table 2 with a certain degree of suspicion.

Table 2. The Radical Right's Perspective of the West, Western Institutions, and Russia Based on Party Programs.

	EU	Russia	US	NATO
AfD	Against	In favour	In favour	In favour
FN	Against	Unclear	Unclear	Against
FPÖ	Against	Neutral	Against	Against*
Jobbik	Against	In favour	In favour	Rather against
UKIP	Against	Rather in favour	In favour	In favour
VB	Against	Unclear	Against	Rather against

*Austria is not a member of NATO, and the FPÖ aims to keep it this way, as joining this alliance would hamper the state's neutral position.

4.2 Debates in the EP

In order to truly understand how the radical right perceives Russia, Ukraine, and the West, 17 debates, that were held between 2014 and the end of 2017, were analysed. Debate topics included: the state of EU-Russia relations (09-07-2015; 10-07-2015); the situation in Ukraine (14-01-2015; 15-01-2015; 10-02-2015; 14-10-2015; 15-07-2014; 17-07-2014); the strategic military situation in the Black Sea Basin following the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia (10-06-2015; 11-06-2015); the Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia and the situation in Crimea (16-03-2017); the deterioration of the situation in Eastern Ukraine (14-02-2017); Crimean Tatars (12-05-2016); deep and comprehensive free trade agreements with Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine (20-01-2016; 21-01-2016); and the situation in Ukraine and the state of play of EU-Russia

relations (16-09-2014; 18-09-2014). Some of these debates were held over the span of multiple days. Moreover, some, such as the debate on ‘the situation in Ukraine’ were brought up repeatedly in 2014 and 2015. All spoken and written responses by individual FN, FPÖ, VB, UKIP, Jobbik, and AfD MEPs were collected and then submitted to three rounds of coding (see Annex 1 for the coding scheme; see Annex 2 for the raw data on the debates as well as party manifestos). In the following paragraphs the results will be presented. In particular, the author will focus on positive stances towards Russia, neutral to negative stances towards Russia, and stances towards the West. For more information on the results and the interpretation thereof, see Chapter 5. Before any of the data is presented, a short discussion will be presented on the reports written by the EU Commissions.

4.2.1 EU Reports

In this thesis, reports written by EU Commissions on issues such as Russia and Ukraine will not be discussed individually. This due to the fact that none of the radical right MEPs under consideration were part of the commissions that wrote these. Thus, it may be presumed that the radical right’s opinion on these issues is not well represented, if at all. That being said, some background knowledge on the general gist of these reports is necessary in order to truly grasp the content of the debates. In general, these joint motions for resolution condemn Russia for its aggressive behaviour in Ukraine, in particular in Crimea (2014/2717(RSP)). Moreover, these reports stress that the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula violated democratic principles and international law, and is thus perceived as illegal. As a consequence, the EU has started to argue that the Russian Federation can no longer be perceived as a strategic partner (2015/2001(INI)). Nevertheless, the EU also acknowledges that communication and diplomacy are key, and should be used instead of violence in order to resolve this conflict with Russia (2015/2036(INI)). At the same time, the Union aims to instigate cooperation with Ukraine through the AA, with the hopes of establishing a more stable, democratic, and less corrupt nation-state. All in all, one can conclude that the EU strives for closer relations with Ukraine and continues to censure Russia for annexing Crimea. Thus, based on these reports as well as on the information presented in Chapter 1, one could presume that the radical right would protest these joint motions for resolution, as

this would show their pro-Russia and anti-EU stance. Over the course of the next few pages the results will be analysed, and the author will illustrate whether or not this believe proves true.

4.2.2 Positive sentiments towards Russia

According to the literature, one could reasonably speaking expect the radical right to perceive Russia in favourable terms. Based on the coded segments this would also appear to be the case as 43 pro-Russian (coded: Pro-Russia) statements were found in the debates under discussion. This particular code represents two strands of pro-Russian claims: one where the radical right actually applauds Russia's behaviour, and another where radical MEPs defends Russia against allegations made by anti-Russian parliamentarians. An example of the latter can be found in a statement by Dominique Bilde, a FN member who stated that: "Remember for the umpteenth time that Russia is not an adversary, and even less an enemy of European nations". The radical right then used these statements to try and reshape Russia's image from that of an antagonist into that of an ally. Interestingly enough, these pro-Russian sentiments only manifested within certain radical right parties, and not throughout the whole spectrum of parties included in this study. Only the FPÖ, the FN, and Jobbik believed that they should advocate the Russian position, and mostly did so by turning the Russian state into the victim of the West's aggressive behaviour in Eastern Europe. Accordingly, these pro-Russian statements were frequently followed by anti-EU sentiments, critical accounts of EU resolutions, and/or a justification explaining why Russia's behaviour was completely within reason.

Criticizing the motions for resolution that were promoted within the EU, became a common feature among the radical right (EU resolutions was coded 66 times). After all this approach killed two birds with one stone. Firstly, these statements showed that the reports and the motions discussed had an inherent disposition against Russia, and that the EU would not give the Russian government the benefit of the doubt. This point of view became especially apparent through statements such as: "The resolution is unbalanced, subjective and provocative, and will surely not reassure all sides of this unsatisfactory situation" (Barbara Kappel). Secondly, by questioning the objectivity of these reports, the radical right tried to delegitimize and undermine the EU. While it

remains questionable if they succeeded in the latter, this approach appeared perfect for those that were inclined to support Russia, as it showed both Anti-EU and Pro-Russia sentiments.

Besides calling the EU out on its subjective resolutions, the FN, FPÖ, and Jobbik also promoted the Russian angle by calling for improved EU-Russia relations (coded: Positive relations). They mostly did so, by arguing that economic relations with Russia would prove beneficial to the European industry, in particularly the agricultural sector was meant to be enhanced through this cooperation (coded: Economic relations with Russia). Additionally, some members from the FN have argued that Russia could potentially become a geopolitical alternative to Western influence (coded: Geopolitical alternative). Consequently, the FN, the FPÖ, and Jobbik could not see any reason why relations between these entities should not improve. While these parties were arguing in favour of this alliance, they were also bemoaning how the EU's aggressive behaviour has led to the deterioration of EU-Russia relations (coded: Negative relations). Again the FN, FPÖ, and Jobbik stressed that Russia has been turned into the antagonist by the majority factions within the EU, and undeservedly so. Especially considering that the EU was not willing to compromise (either). These sentiments, as well as other favourable stances on Russia have been summarized in Table 3, which is available on the following page.

Table 3. Motives for supporting Russia

"Moreover, the trigger and cause of this conflict is exclusively sought on the Russian side, I have decided against the report".	Pro-Russia
"The proposals in this report are completely unbalanced and one-sided. In my opinion, the motion for resolution would only aggravate the conflict".	EU Resolution
"This state [Russia] should remain an ally and not the reverse, the framework of diplomatic relations between the EU and Russia should be carried out with a spirit of mutual understanding, of a lasting partnership".	Positive relations
"I reject the report on the state of EU-Russia relations as a whole. Once more, Russia is pointed out as the big bad wolf who, intentionally, seeks to provoke chaos in Europe and to satisfy its alleged bitter imperialist tendencies".	Negative relations
"Russia is a key economic partner to us, thus an embargo is not a solution".	Economic relations with Russia
"This is a grave political mistake: it is advisable to positively perceive the accession into a multipolar world, a world in which France and Europe would no longer be subjected to great foreign powers".	Geopolitical alternative

Finally, the FPÖ, Jobbik, and especially the FN, used the Crimean crisis to strongly argue in favour of Russia. All, adopted the democratic referendum (coded: Democratic referendum), the principle of self-determination (coded: Self-determination), the Russo-Georgia war (coded: Russo-Georgian war), and occasionally the Kosovo conflict (coded: Kosovo conflict) as ways to justify the annexation of Crimea to Russia. In particularly the former two were mentioned a significant amount of time (22 and 25 times respectively). These specific forms of justification were used not only to promote the Russian angle, but also to turn the EU into a scapegoat as they were unwilling to respect the free will of the Crimean population. This sentiment is best encompassed through a statement by FN's Marie-Christine Arnautu: "The EU does not recognize the referendum of the 16th of March 2014, it refuses the right of self-determination of the inhabitants of Crimea, it denies democracy and the right of people to arrange themselves". Besides criticizing the Union's lack of respect for referendums and principles of self-determination, the radical right also occasionally mentioned the Russo-Georgia war and the Kosovo conflict (ten and four times respectively). The latter was brought up because the radical right believed that Kosovo could serve as a

precedent for the Crimean case. Furthermore, the former was mentioned in order to demonstrate that Russia was not always responsible for conflicts in its near abroad, as was the case with the Russo-Georgia war which was caused by Georgia. Finally, several MEPs also indicated a degree of scepticism regarding the usage of the word ‘illegal’ in relation to the Crimean annexation (coded: ‘Illegal’). After all, they argued that the Crimean population had wanted to join Russia, thus the annexation should not be perceived as illegal or unlawful. A summary of the author’s main findings regarding Crimea and how this case was used to justify Russia’s behaviour can be found in Table 4.

Table 4. Justifying the annexation of Crimea to support Russia

"The right of peoples to self-determination and the right of ethnic groups to strive for a peaceful change of national borders must be respected".	Self-determination
"A free, fair and democratic referendum is a legitimate expression of the will of the people of a state or region".	Democratic referendum
"In particular, the country [Russia] is accused of being responsible for the Georgian conflict. However, a report by the independent international commission has proven the opposite".	Russo-Georgian conflict
"Moreover, international law provides several precedents, where states achieved independence, e.g. Kosovo".	Kosovo conflict
"It [the resolution] speaks clearly about the illegal annexation of Crimea, although this is controversial under international law".	‘Illegal’ Crimea annexation

4.2.3 *Neutral and negative sentiments towards Russia*

It has become clear that parties like the FN, Jobbik, and the FPÖ subscribe to the pro-Russian stance that was expected based on the literature. However, the same cannot be said for the VB, the AfD, and UKIP. These parties tend to perceive Russia either as neutral, or more in line with the EP’s majority factions, as an adversary. The VB mostly indicated neutral feelings towards Russia. However, it should be noted, that most neutral statements, not only by the VB but also by the other parties in this study, do not truly indicate neutral sentiments in regards to Russia, but instead simply indicate that the word ‘Russia’ or ‘Russian’ was used in a manner that was neither positive nor

negative. Nevertheless, a statement by VB parliamentarian Gerolf Annemans indicates what it means to be truly neutral towards Russia. He stated that: “If the European Union is in favour of free trade let them lift the trade barriers against Russia. After all, the consequences for a large number of European farmers are immense”. Initially this statement seems to slightly favour Russia, but Annemans appears to mostly focus on the advantages that European farmers may receive if sanctions were to be ended. Thus, instead of perceiving Russia as an ally, the VB just used pragmatic reasons to argue in favour of (economic) relations with Russia. Based on statements such as these, the author would qualify the VB as a neutral or somewhat pro-Russian actor. The AfD can be characterized somewhat similarly in the sense that it submitted neutral statements as well. That being said, several AfD MEPs were not satisfied with being neutral, and have called out Russia on its aggressive behaviour, see Figure 2 for example.

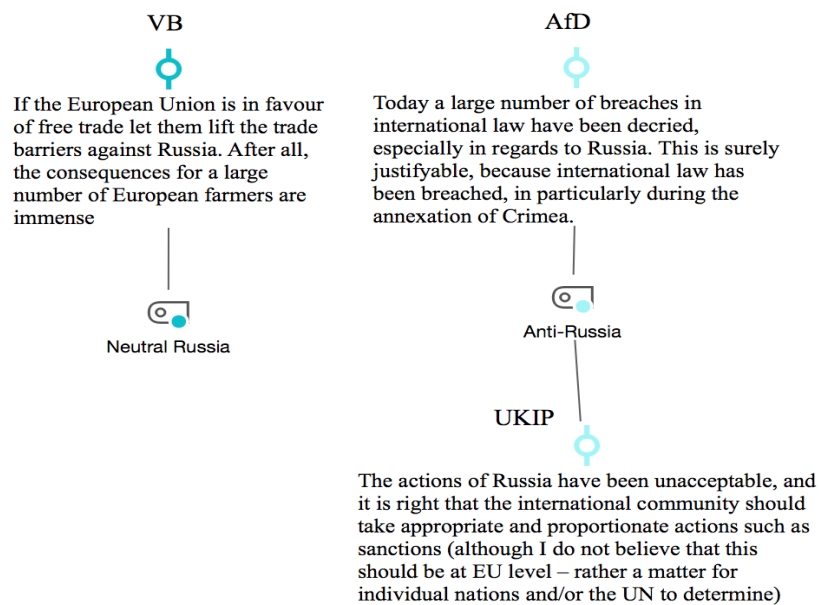


Figure 2. Russia as an Adversary or a Neutral Actor.

Moreover, while the AfD was able to justify some of Russia’s behaviour, they were not willing to legitimize the Crimean annexation. In particular, Ulrike Trebesius and Bernd Lucke immediately condemned the annexation of Crimea by Russia, as they perceived this act to be illegal. Beatrix von Storch and Marcus Pretzell, on the other hand, were far less inclined to truly criticize the behaviour of the Russian government.

Nevertheless, it cannot be said that Von Storch or Pretzell are true Russophiles, instead they seem to regard Russia in mostly neutral terms. The reason for the mixed results within the AfD will be discussed at length in Chapter 5.

Based on the party manifestos discussed in the previous chapter, one would expect UKIP to be pro-Russian. In fact, this document indicated that Russia was perceived as a potential ally, as long as Moscow stopped its aggressive behaviour in its near abroad. Clearly, UKIP has not been impressed with the way Russia has been acting thus far, as their statements mostly point towards being anti-Russian (coded: Anti-Russia). Some of these assertions were not overly negative, as they basically stated that both the EU and Russia were to blame for the situation in Ukraine. However, a declaration by Jonathan Arnott indicated that several UKIP MEPs truly detest Russia's actions. In fact, he asserted that:

“The actions of Russia have been unacceptable, and it is right that the international community should take appropriate and proportionate actions such as sanctions (although I do not believe that this should be at EU level – rather a matter for individual nations and/or the UN to determine)”.

Consequently, it appears like Arnott sided with the EP majority factions in regards to this particular issue. In fact, based on the debates, it can be concluded that most UKIP members agree with Arnott, and as a result have submitted their own negative statements about Russia. These sentiments have become so prevalent among UKIP members that only four MEPs, Nigel Farage, Mike Hookem, James Carver and Janice Atkinson, can claim somewhat positive remarks about Russia. Yet, even their statements appeared rather lukewarm. Indeed, only Nigel Farage was willing to defend the Russian state by claiming that:

“We directly encouraged the uprising in the Ukraine that led to the toppling of President Yanukovich; that led in turn to Vladimir Putin reacting; and the moral of the story is: if you poke the Russian bear with a stick, do not be surprised when he reacts”.

The other pro-Russian UKIP members may have agreed with the notion that Russia's behaviour in regards to the Ukrainian crisis was provoked by the EU's aggressive conduct. However, they would not go so far as to agree with Farage's overly positive review of the Russian leader. In fact, Nigel Farage was the only one willing to argue

that: “Vladimir Putin, whatever we may think of him as a human being, is actually on our side”.

Based on the results, it has become clear that there is a division between UKIP (being mostly anti-Russia) and to some extent the AfD, and the rest of the parties in this study (ranging from neutral to positive feelings in regards to Russia). Regardless, all agreed that the sanctions imposed by the West were problematic and should be lifted (coded: Sanctions by the EU). Some MEPs, especially those from the FN, simply detested the sanctions as these promoted an anti-Russian stance, and this did not suite their pro-Russian rhetoric. The VB, UKIP, and the FPÖ promoted a more pragmatic reasoning. Instead, they wished to put an end to the sanctions as it had a negative effect on the European producers. By lifting the measures imposed by the EU, the negative effect on the European economy could (potentially) be reversed. Finally, a large number of MEPs came to protest sanctions which they believed supported the American interest as opposed to the European interest. Moreover, the radical right argued that by acting as the U.S.’ puppet, EU-Russia relations had been hampered, while at the same time the U.S. had been able to strengthen its ties with Russia.

4.2.4 The West

Besides positive and negative sentiments related to Russia, these debates also included statements on how the West was perceived. Based on the party programs as well as the available literature on the subject, one may assume that the parties included in this study would negatively look upon the EU. The coded segments retrieved from the data clearly communicate the same sentiment, as 138 anti-EU statements (coded: Ant-EU) could be found. In fact, all parties appear to agree that the EU was responsible for the crisis in Eastern Ukraine and the situation in Crimea. After all, the Union chose to act aggressively in a nation where it had no jurisdiction. Additionally, UKIP MEPs argued that Russia and Ukraine deserved a significant share of the blame as well.

Besides focussing on the violent behaviour of the EU in Ukraine, the radical right also extensively criticized the EU for its expansionist tendencies (coded: Expansion). All parties in this study are critical of the further widening of this institute, and they are especially opposed to policies such as the AA (coded: Association Agreement), which they perceive as next step towards EU membership for Ukraine,

Moldova, and Georgia. In particular, UKIP seemed opposed to this proposal as it would lead to the further expansion and integration of this moribund Union. In fact, this party found the AA so problematic that 10 UKIP MEPs submitted the exact same message to the Union:

“UKIP did not support the ratification of Association Agreements with Ukraine, Georgia or Moldova. The signing of these agreements contributed to increased tensions between the EU and Russia and contributed to the increased insecurity in eastern Europe and the Caucasus. They are also seen as a step towards future EU membership. As such we voted against.

UKIP were however pleased to note that Amendment 17 called for the EU to ensure that the upcoming vote in the Netherlands on the EU-Ukraine Agreement is respected”.

Statements such as these, clearly protest the closer relations that started to develop between Eastern European states and the Union. After all, the radical right does not believe that the EU should help countries as corrupt and unstable as Ukraine, especially considering that the EU had its own issues to consider as well. Moreover, while UKIP feels comfortable blaming Russia for causing the war in Ukraine, it also believes that EU-Russia relations should be stabilized, and according to them this would not prove possible if the AA came into being. Other parties in this study also support the notion that the AA is anything but beneficial to the Union. However, to them it seems like a secondary problem. Instead they opt to generalise the topic, and instead criticize the EU’s expansionist tendencies.

Finally, the U.S. and its influence on the Crimean crisis should also be mentioned. In the segment on party programs it was indicated that the FPÖ and the VB perceived the United States negatively, whereas UKIP, Jobbik, and the AfD understood the U.S. in opposite terms. Moreover, the FN simply did not indicate an opinion on this state in its party manifesto. Thus based on these programs one would expect a diverse range of opinions on the U.S. Yet, when the debates are taken into consideration one clear pattern started to appear, that of the radical right being opposed to the U.S. The main reason for this being that the EU continuously seems to follow and promote American interests as opposed to European interests. Harald Vilimsky of the FPÖ goes as far as to claim that: “One gets the impression that the majority has become a

European embassy of the United States of America, instead of a self-confident European Parliament”. Additionally, the radical right was also frustrated that the U.S. got involved in this conflict in the first place. Thus, instead of aiming to promote international cooperation with the U.S., the radical right simply tired of the state’s continuous influence over the EU. This anti-U.S. stance seemed unexpected and remarkable to the author, however due to the scope of this project the topic will not be addressed in further detail. Consequently, the author would recommend that more research is done in order to better understand the relation between the radical right and the U.S.

4.3 Voting patterns in the EP

4.3.1 Votes on the debates

In order to better represent the debates discussed in this previous section, several voting records on related topics will be analysed. In particular, the author will be looking into the following voting records: Situation in Ukraine (17-07-2014); EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, with the Exception of the treatment of Third Country Nationals Legally Employed as Workers in the Territory of the Other Party (16-09-2014); State of EU-Russia Relations (10-06-2015); Strategic Military Situation in the Black Sea Basin Following the Illegal Annexation of Crimea by Russia (11-06-2015); Human Rights Situation in Crimea, in Particular of the Crimean Tatars (04-02-2016); Ukrainian Political Prisoners in Russia and Situation in Crimea (16-03-2017) (references to these votes will be shortened for the sake of clarity). Considering that all these reports are written by Europhile MEPs, the radical right would have to vote against (code value of 1) the resolutions in order to vote in a pro-Russian manner. The exception to this would be the discussion on the ‘Ukrainian Political Prisoners in Russia and Situation in Crimea’, in this case the MEPs would have to either abstain (code value of 3) or vote against the resolution in order to support Russia. In all cases voting in favour (code value of 2) of a joint motion for resolution was perceived as pro-EU and anti-Russia. Besides voting in favour, against, or abstaining, parliamentarians can also be absent (code value of 4), opt to submit no vote (code value of 5), or be on documented absence (code value of 6).

Based on the results of these votes (see Appendix 3) it has become clear that most MEPs vote along party lines. This conclusion is best suited to MEPs belonging to Jobbik, the FPÖ, and the FN, as only one person, Jean-Luc Schaffenhauser, felt the need to defect. Thus, based on this information it would seem like these parties are hard-line pro-Russia. Nevertheless, it should be noted that most FN members chose to abstain in the debate on the Ukrainian Prisoners and the Situation in Crimea. The author still perceived this result as pro-Russian, due in part to the large number of radical right wing MEPs (within and outside of this study) voting along these lines. However, voting against this resolution, as was done by Jobbik and FPÖ MEPs, indicates a stronger pro-Russian sentiment. A brief overview of the extent to which these parties are pro-Russian can be viewed in Figure 3.

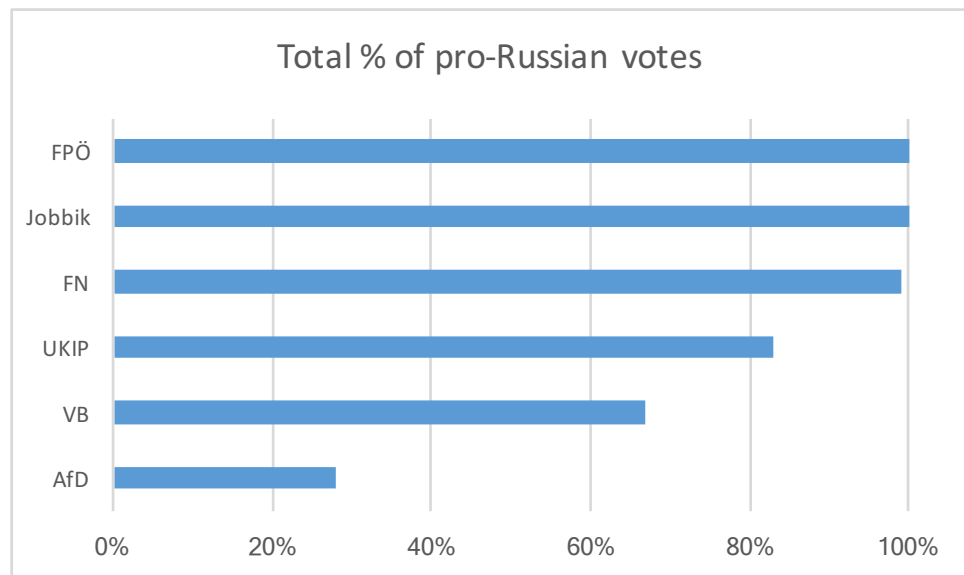


Figure 3. Percentage of Votes in Favour of Russia Between 2014-2018

It should be noted that only those MEPs that voted for, against or chose to abstain, were included in Figure 3. Data on absence, documented absence, and non-voting may appear relevant and is therefore included in Annex 3. However, it does not provide the author with any information on the parliamentarians' perspective of the EU, Russia, Ukraine and/or Crimea. Moreover, including said data would only unduly widen the scope of the thesis. As a consequence, the author chose to exclude the data.

The clear exception to this pro-Russian trend is the AfD. This party was initially represented by seven MEPs (later onwards by two), and did not appear to vote as a

group. In fact, based on the results it would seem like two internal factions came to represent the AfD, one that (somewhat) supported Russia and one that favoured the EU instead. Hans-Olaf Henkel, Joachim Starbatty, Bernd Lucke, Bernd Kölmel, and Ulrike Trebesius, belonged to the latter, and consistently voted in an anti-Russia and pro-EU manner. The former grouping was represented by Beatrix von Storch and Marcus Pretzell, who were more inclined to vote in favour of Russia. Nevertheless, even these two parliamentarians did not consistently vote with the Kremlin in mind. The reasons for these trends will be discussed in Chapter 5.

In a similar vein, the VB also appeared less than consistent in voting in a pro-Russian manner. Only 67% of the votes casted by the VB, were in favour of the Kremlin. However, in this case, the data may be somewhat misleading. After all, Gerolf Annemans is the only member of the VB that has made it into the EP. Consequently, it becomes difficult to distinguish between an ‘average’ VB vote or one that is purely based on Annemans’ perspective. Moreover, whenever Annemans did voted against Russia, he did not necessarily vote in favour of the EU either. Instead the MEP opted several times to abstain, this was also the case when it did prove beneficial for Russia if parliamentarians chose to do so.

Unlike the VB and the AfD, UKIP behaves considerably more like the FPÖ, the FN, and Jobbik, in that it is likely to vote against resolutions that maintain an accusatory tone towards the Russian Federation. This attitude appears rather contradictory when compared to the attitude promoted at the time of the debates. That being said, when considering the report on the ‘Human rights situation in Crimea, in particular of the Crimean Tatars’, the Brits decided to keep with the stance they had advocated during the debates, and opted to vote in favour of this resolution. In fact, of those MEPs belonging to UKIP, only Tim Aker chose to abstain. Others that did not vote in accordance with the pro-Russian stance were Beatrix von Storch of the AfD, who chose to vote in favour of this resolution, and Gerolf Annemans opted to abstain. All other radical right MEPs included in this study, chose to do the opposite, and voted against the resolution. Interestingly enough, all members of the Movimento 5 Stelle, a well-established Italian radical right party belonging to the same overarching faction as UKIP, Europe for Freedom and Direct Democracy (EFDD), opted to vote against this resolution as well (Shekhovtsov, 2016). Thus, UKIP appears like a true outlier in this

case. This result is best seen in Figure 4 below. In addition, this figure also indicates which debates were interpreted in the most pro-Russian terms.

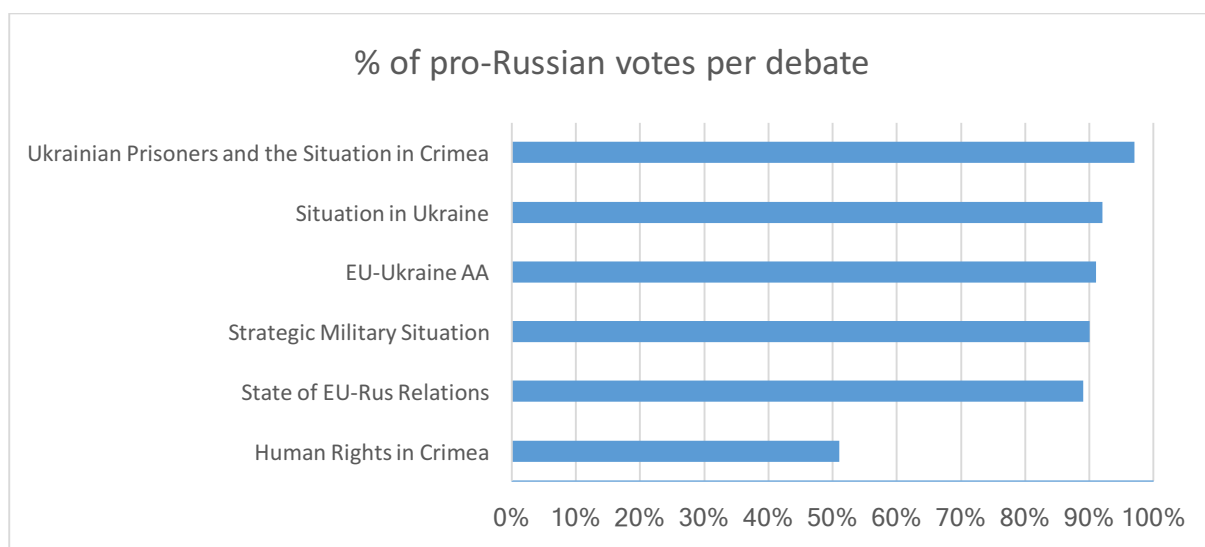


Figure 4. Percentage of Votes in Favour of Russia, Separated by Debate Between 2014-2018.

The voting record on the human rights situation in Crimea clearly indicates that radical right parties may have diverging opinions on certain topics. Nevertheless, the parties discussed in this thesis have a tendency to vote in a similar pro-Russian manner. This is best perceived in the case of the Ukrainian prisoners and the situation in Crimea, where 97% of the radical right MEPs voted against the resolution or chose to abstain. Besides that, other voting records also show a convincingly pro-Russian trend, as at least 89% to 92% of the parliamentarians indicated that they could not support the motions for resolutions in the state in which they were presented. That being said, the results got slightly diminished due to the MEPs of the AfD and the VB, both of which opted to abstain rather frequently. Furthermore, the five members of the AfD mentioned previously, can hardly be described as Eurosceptics and/or Russophiles, as they came to vote in favour of several resolutions. The reasoning behind this rather pro-European outlook will be discussed in Chapter 5.

4.3.2 Loyal or Rebellious

Besides showing voting patterns, Annex 3 also indicates if a MEP was loyal (code value of 1), rebellious (code value of 2), or independent (code value of 3) during certain debates. Initially the author expected that the former two values would indicate the level of pro-Russianness of a faction. However, the results were not as expected. In fact, major problems were caused because of the method used to determine whether a party proved loyal or not. *Votewatch.eu* indicated that “an MEP is considered ‘loyal’ to his/her European political group or national party delegation if his/her voting option is identical to the political line of the political group or party delegation” (*Votewatch.eu*, n.d.). Thus, being loyal or rebellious says something about whether or not an MEP votes in line with the majority of a faction. Thus, even when a party appears to act contradictory, they may still be perceived as loyal as long as they have superior numbers within their bloc. This is best illustrated in the case of UKIP. In the debate on the human rights situation in Crimea almost all members of UKIP voted in favour of this proposal, however a significant number of other EFDD members voted against this resolution. Still, UKIP MEPs were perceived as loyal, as they took up the majority of the seats in their faction. As a result, the political lines of the delegations can become tremendously fluid, which makes it difficult, nay impossible, to make any inferences about these parties being in favour of or against Russia.

Even if inferences based on loyalty or rebelliousness were possible, they would have been hampered due to other factors. The most important being that not all radical right-wing parties decided to join EU factions, such as the EFDD or the Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF). In fact, for some delegations it proved impossible to join such groupings, as they were perceived as too radical. However, other parties chose to become independent themselves, as was the case with Jobbik. Regardless of how these parties came to be independent, their status makes it impossible to make any inferences about their loyalty or rebelliousness. That being said, the data in Annex 3 does imply that members of Jobbik chose to vote similarly, thus loyalty within the party may be presumed. Up to a point, the same can be said for the FN, which also has high levels of cohesion. Moreover, like Jobbik, the FN did not belong to a faction for several years. However, this changed in 2015, when in June the ENF was established. Nevertheless, this move is unlikely to improve the debate on loyalty or rebelliousness. After all, the

FN, like UKIP, has become the majority partner within its faction. Thus, as long as most FN MEPs vote similarly they will appear loyal.

Finally, not all radical right-wing parties opted to join a Eurosceptic faction within the EU. Instead, some chose to join a mainstream affiliation. Among my case studies, this phenomenon is best illustrated by the AfD, which used to partner with the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR). Consequently, if MEPs voted in a pro-Russian manner, they would likely be qualified as rebellious as they went against their faction's interest. After considering all issues concerning principles of loyalty and rebelliousness, the author has decided to exclude this topic from the discussion segment of this thesis. That being said, finding better ways to represent the loyal or rebelling attitude of these (radical) factions might prove an interesting topic for further research.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1 The radical right as pro-Russian actors

Based on the results discussed in Chapter 4, it has become clear that at least part of the radical right has come to promote pro-Russian sentiments through its party programs, parliamentary debates, and through voting results. The FN, the FPÖ and Jobbik strongly argued in favour of improving relations with Russia. The VB, however, pursued a more neutral approach, they believed that sanctions were harmful to European citizens and industries, and should thus be lifted. Finally, both the AfD and UKIP indicated mixed feelings about Russia. On the one hand their party manifestos indicated that relations with Russia were desirable. On the other hand, the debates and the votes took on a less than positive stance. In fact, statements issued by UKIP in the EP took on a hostile tone. While these results may have provided the reader with a good overview of how the radical right perceives Russia, it has not become clear if these favourable and negative stances towards Russia are a recent phenomenon or if they have their roots in the past. In the next few paragraphs the author will discuss the radical right's (new) external dimension, in order to answer the first research question:

R1: To what extent is the pro-Russian sentiment a new external dimension of the radical right?

Based on the party manifestos which were published between 2014 and 2017, several parties indicated that relations between Russia and their respective nation-state should be improved. This with the exception of the FN and VB, who did not provide any stance on Russia through these documents. The FPÖ took on a mostly neutral stance. They specifically indicated that Austria, and not the EU, should be able to make their own decisions in regards to Russia. Consequently, based on this document it remains unclear whether or not the FPÖ wants relations to improve or deteriorate. The party programs published by the AfD, Jobbik and UKIP are significantly more transparent about their stances towards Russia, which are largely positive. However, in the case of Jobbik this does not appear to be a new external dimension. As mentioned previously, the party program published in 2010 also had to be considered, and this document indicated a similar positive stance towards the Russian Federation. Thus,

Jobbik could have become Russia's bedfellow before any of the other parties included in this study. While this is not directly proven by my results, this attitude is shared by the Political Capital Institute. In 2014 they published an article called "The Russian Connection", in which they proclaimed that Eastern European radical right-wing parties, such as Jobbik, Attack (Bulgaria), and the Slovak National Party (SNS), were among the first parties to openly support Vladimir Putin. Indeed, according to this article (Political Capital Institute, 2014) their pro-Russian attitudes precede the Ukrainian crisis and already became apparent in the late 2000s. Moreover, it has been argued that the East used to be Russia's main bedfellow until the Western parties came to consider the Russian position during the Ukrainian crisis of 2014 (Political Capital Institute, 2014). However, a quick search into older party programs by the author, did indicate that at least the FN already had some opinions on the Russian Federation in 2012 (Front National, 2012). Nevertheless, due to the scope of this research project, these documents cannot be considered in detail, so inferences can hardly be made. Nevertheless, one might expect these major power to at least consider bilateral cooperation. In the case of the AfD, the FPÖ, and UKIP, the Russian angle seems to be of a more recent nature, as this particular state was not mentioned in previous party programs. The VB provides least information as Russia is neither mentioned in recent nor somewhat older party programs. It should be noted that the author only considered the second most recent party programs to base these inferences on. Thus, for a better overview on stances on Russia, party programs encompassing a longer period of time need to be taken into account. Yet, this was outside of the scope of this thesis.

The debates and votes that were held between 2014 and the end of 2017, clearly indicate that Russia has entered the external dimension of the radical right. Regardless of their opinion on Russia, most MEPs have made an effort to either praise or criticize this state. In fact, only 10 MEPs did not respond to any of the debates covered in this thesis. All others included at least one statement in regards to Russia. Some, such as James Carver and Jean-Luc Schaffenhauser, appeared more enthusiastic and responded to multiple debates. Yet, the fact that these MEPs are willing to discuss Russia in the EP says more about the roles they are playing within the parliament, than the extent to which Russia is a new foreign policy angle. Nevertheless, the manner through which the radical right has presented itself might have caused the Russian agenda to increase in

salience. Research by Natalie Brack (2015b) indicates that there are four types of MEPs: the absentee, the public orator, the pragmatist, and the participant. The MEPs included in this study are pragmatists at best, and absentees at worst. However, the author expects that most would fall into the category of the public orator. This because the MEPs in my sample appear to closely align themselves with the two main purposes of the public orator. Firstly, he or she uses the EP as a platform for public speaking. Secondly, he or she aims to spread negative information on the EU as well as on other issues. In fact, one anonymous MEP claimed that: “I am not here [in the EP] to help this thing exist, I am to criticize, criticize, criticize” (Brack, 2015b, p.341). Thus, whenever the EU brought up Russia’s behaviour in regards to the Ukrainian crisis, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to call out the Union on its biased position regarding Russia. This logic worked best in light of the Crimean crisis, as this event signified that Russia had finally become one of the Unions main adversaries. However, this rationale might have also worked in the past. Yet in order to make such inferences one would have to analyse whether or not Russia was already perceived as the EU’s antagonist in seventh term (which lasted from 2009 until 2014). While an interesting research avenue, it is outside of the scope of this thesis. That being said, research by Marlene Laruelle (2015) suggests that promoting a pro-Russian stance is a somewhat recent phenomenon. After all, Putin was not able to conflate “Russophilia and Euroscepticism as two sides of the same coin” (Laruelle, 2015, p.4) until he came back to power in 2012. As a result, it simply does not seem logical that the majority of radical right-wing parties came to support Russia before that, or even before the Crimean crisis.

All in all, it can be concluded that pro-Russian and/or anti-Russian stances are a recent phenomenon for most parties included in this study. The clear exception to this is Jobbik. In fact, this party might be able to claim that Russophilia is inherent to their party. After all, their party programs have indicated that closer relations between Hungary and Russia are perceived as desirable. In particular, Jobbik wishes to facilitate a bridge between the East and the West. The other parties discussed in this thesis cannot claim such goals. Moreover, their stances towards Russia, as perceived through the debates, votes, and/or party programs, appear to be of a more recent nature, and have a tendency to specifically focus on the Ukrainian crisis. Thus, this begs the question if foreign policy perspectives on Russia will change significantly or simply

cease to exist once the conflict in Ukraine is settled. While it is currently impossible to answer this question, it might prove interesting to do so if or when the crisis gets resolved.

5.2 The manifestation of pro-Russian sentiments among the radical right

According to the literature discussed in Chapter 1, there are several reasons why the radical right may have started to cooperate with Russia. While Klapsis (2015) argued that this connection could come into existence based on a shared ideological connection, Polyakova et al. (2016) directed attention towards the positive effects of having economic relations with Russia. Besides that, Rohac, Zgut, and Györi (2017) argued that relations between the radical right and Russia could prove beneficial to both, as they tend to fight the same enemies: the EU and other Western institutions. While all these arguments prove interesting and logical in their own right, most do not consider the effects of foreign policies on radical right-Russia relations. In order to gain a better understanding on pro-Russian sentiments, and how these manifested as a consequence of the external dimension, the following question was asked:

R2: How do pro-Russian sentiments manifest themselves through the radical right's foreign policy perspectives, party manifestos, parliamentary debates, and voting results?

Before starting the discussion on how these pro-Russian sentiments manifested, it has to be (re)emphasized that not every party included in this study agrees that Russia should be perceived favourably. Especially UKIP and the AfD would disagree with this notion. Their attitudes towards the Russian Federation, and how these came to be, will be analysed in the next sub-chapter. This specific segment will solely focus on how positive sentiments in regards to Russia manifested themselves through the external dimension.

Regardless of what the radical right thinks about Russia and/or the Russian leadership, there appears to be one thing that they can all agree on; the EU or individual Member States should have strong economic relations with Russia. Even though some parties are highly critical of Russia's behaviour during the Ukrainian war, all believe that sanctions by the EU should be lifted or at least lowered. Moreover, if the EU remains unwilling to accommodate this point of view, then it cannot be expected that

Russia will end its sanctions either. Nevertheless, if the EU is willing to adjust its stance on the economic and diplomatic measures, then, according to the radical right, EU-Russia relations might normalize. This stance is commonly promoted among those that perceive Russia favourably such as the FPÖ and the FN, as both feel that their respective nation-states could benefit from cooperation with Russia. However, even those that are more critical towards Russia support the idea that trade can only benefit the EU, individual states, and EU citizens. This is best seen through the case of Beatrix von Storch, an AfD MEP, who stated that: “[...] we should aim for free trade with Russia. Because, where goods cross the border, armies will not do so”. According to Von Storch, economic relations with Russia should be perceived as a suitable foreign policy option, as it could lead to the stabilization of Eastern Europe. Additionally, MEPs from the VB and FPÖ tend to argue in favour of trade relations with Russia as well, because specific Austrian and Belgian sectors stand to benefit from it. While their arguments prioritize the national sphere, it also suits the pro-Russian angle which the FPÖ in particular promotes. Regardless of their overall motivation, the radical right has intentionally or accidentally come to support Russia. An article published by Polyakova et al. (2016) follows a similar line of reasoning. However, these scholars add that some nation-states may already expect to have economic relations with Russia. For example, both the UK and France have a long standing tradition of trading with Russia, consequently desiring economic relations with this state might not be unique to the radical right (Polyakova et al., 2016). That being said, the radical right may be more committed to supporting these relations in light of Russia’s aggressive behaviour, compared to the more mainstream parties.

Another way that pro-Russian sentiments manifested themselves was through what Laruelle (2015, p.4) calls the ‘equation of Russophilia and Euroscepticism’. Since the early 1990s the EU has been treated with a certain degree of scepticism. Over the years, as the Maastricht and Lisbon treaties were introduced, this sentiment only strengthened. In fact, in light of these accords, the radical right came to believe that the EU had become entirely too powerful. After all, the EU repeatedly took sovereignty away from the state and acted aggressively in conflicts not their own. Not only that, but this institution also continuously promoted an expansionist agenda. The latter point was perceived as especially problematic, because the radical right felt that the Union should

first and foremost focus on its many internal issues, as opposed to adding more (corrupt) states into the Union. However, the EU is not the only one who was perceived negatively; indeed, the United States has been stigmatized as well. This mostly because the radical right believes that this actor has gained too much sway over the EU. Moreover, during the debates on the Ukrainian crisis, it became clear that the radical right had never wanted the U.S. to get involved in this conflict in the first place. Now that the radical right truly opposed both the EU as well as the rest of the Western world, they felt that there was nothing left to do but finding a new ally elsewhere. Immediately, several radical right-wing parties turned towards the East, where they quickly established relations with the Russian Federation. Works by Klapsis (2015) and Larrabee et al. (2017) indicate that this move Eastwards could correspond with the radical right's desire to find a geopolitical alternative to the West. While the radical right has clearly called for the improvement of relations with Russia, the author doubts that this was done with the purpose of finding a political alternative. Moreover, while the radical right might wish to rid themselves of Western influences, the coded segments on geopolitical alternatives do not suggest that they aim to defer to Russia instead. That being said, both Russia and the radical right are willing to form bilateral and multilateral alliances in order to further their relation. In particular, Russia desires to cooperate through partnerships such as the Berlin-Paris-Moscow Triangle and a 'Europe of Nations' (Laruelle, 2015, p.3). Moscow's stance must have been perceived favourably, as radical right-wing MEPs have also started to mention the concept of a 'Europe of Nations' or a 'Europe of Fatherlands' as a replacement alliance for the EU. Thus, by criticizing the West and following Russia's lead, a pro-Russian and anti-EU/anti-U.S. attitude was able to manifest.

The Ukrainian crisis, in particular the Crimean annexation, has also led the radical right to express positive stances towards Russia. In particular, the radical right intended to use this crisis in order to press two points. Firstly, Russia should be perceived as a strategic partner, and not as an antagonist. Secondly, the Russia Federation had justly intervened in its near abroad. This latter point was repeatedly brought up in relation to the social anxiety which affected both Eastern Ukraine and the Crimean Peninsula. The radical right had believed this situation to be so dire that it could have harmed the Russian nation-state and its citizens as well. Consequently,

intervening seemed like the only option. Additionally, Sophie Montel, a former FN member, maintains that Russia's interest in the region is only logical, after all "the natural location of these states is in Russia's immediate neighbourhood". On top of that, the radical right claimed that the Crimean population itself had chosen to (re)join the Russian Federation through a democratic referendum. Even though most Western politicians have described this referendum as anything but legal, the radical right insists that this vote was an expression of the free will of the Crimean people. Additionally, the radical right could have further legitimized this referendum by stating that a significant number of them had been asked to monitor this event (Shekhovtsov, 2014). In fact, Béla Kovács of Jobbik, Aymeric Chauprade a former FN member, as well as several national VB and FPÖ members, made their way to Crimea to check on the validity of the referendum (Shekhovtsov, 2014, n.p.). In doing so, they felt like they could characterise this event as free, fair, and legitimate. Besides the Crimean crisis, the Russo-Georgian war also tended to be brought up with the purpose to legitimize Russia's behaviour. This specific conflict was mentioned on multiple occasions, as it shows that the EU frequently blames Russia for conflicts in its immediate neighbourhood. Even though, a report by Heidi Tagliavini, a Swiss Diplomat, demonstrates that the Georgian state should be held accountable instead. Thus, by bringing up this conflict, the radical right hints at the EU's previous mistakes.

It can be concluded that pro-Russian sentiments manifested themselves through a number of different routes. Some of these, such as having economic relations with Russia, can be perceived as rather pragmatic instead of purely pro-Russian in nature. After all, these policies tend to be implemented with the goal to improve the national economy and industry. Thus, some radical right parties may come to promote economic relations with Russia as this best suits their respective states, and not because it would indicate any sort of positive regard towards Russia. Bearing this in mind, the author does acknowledge that this form of cooperation likely pleases the Russian Federation. Additionally, Russia has worked hard to equate the pro-Russian stance with an anti-EU one. The radical right clearly supports this rhetoric as they tend to criticize the Union, while applauding Russia at the same time. Finally, those radical right parties that reacted positively to Russia, have started to use referendums as well as the principle of self-determination, to justify Putin's behaviour abroad.

5.3 Different and similar patterns of being pro-Russian

It has become evident that parties such as the FN, the FPÖ, and Jobbik have come to strongly support the Russian Federation. The VB has taken a more neutral stance, but may be willing for pragmatic reasons to support Russia. Finally, the AfD and UKIP have opted for a more varied approach in regards to Russia. Both have used their party programs to argue that they are (somewhat) in favour of relations with Russia. UKIP's votes also appeared to favour the Russian state, but these are likely more Eurosceptic in nature (see sub-chapter 5.3.3 for a further explanation). Comparatively, the AfD appears less sympathetic through their votes, as only 28% of these can be perceived as pro-Russian. During the debates the AfD and UKIP became even less supportive of Russia's behaviour. As a matter of fact, both started to characterise Russia as an aggressive actor and put part of the blame for the situation in Ukraine on this state. Based on these responses, it has become clear that the AfD and UKIP follow a more anti-Russia pattern, as opposed to Jobbik, the FPÖ, the FN, and to some extent the VB who all perceive Russia at least neutrally, but more likely, favourably. In the next few paragraphs explanations will be provided for these distinctive behavioural patterns, this with the purpose of answering the last research question:

R3: What explains the similar/different patterns of pro-Russian sentiments in the radical right?

5.3.1 Neutral Russia and pro-Russia: The FN, the FPÖ, Jobbik, and the VB

It cannot be denied that the FN, the FPÖ and Jobbik have come to strongly support the Russian Federation. In fact, through their voting patterns as well as through the debates, similar stances emerge on topics such as the EU, the U.S., Ukraine, and Russia. This mostly due to the fact, that all used the same arguments to justify their relations with Russia. Nevertheless, their pro-Russian attitude does not seem as well matched when one solely compares their party manifestos. Jobbik, as one of Russia's earliest bedfellows, provided a favourable description of Russia in both its 2010 and 2014 party programs. The FPÖ on the other hand took on a more neutral approach, whereas the FN simply did not mention the Russian Federation in this document. Yet,

does this truly signify that these parties portray different patterns of pro-Russianness. The author does not think so. Take the FPÖ for example, this party formally maintained the same party program from 1997 until 2011 (Heinisch & Hauser, 2016, p.79). Even though their manifesto may not have changed, the same cannot be said for the party's foreign policy perspectives. Indeed, over the years the FPÖ, like Jobbik, might have developed a particular stance on Russia, yet this sentiment simply could not have been represented in this static document. Therefore, it might prove more insightful to discuss the radical rightist stances on Russia through the debates and votes. These statements and votes, like the manifestos, only apply to a distinct topic at a specific point in time, but by comparing multiple statements, pro-Russian and/or anti-Russian patterns may become apparent. As mentioned previously, similar pro-Russian stances quickly became noticeable among the FN, the FPÖ and Jobbik once the debates and votes were taken into consideration. Thus, while these party programs should be perceived as insightful in their own right, they may not lend themselves well for forming patterns. Instead, the author decided to mostly focus on the results from the votes and debates to establish these. All in all, the author believes that similar patterns came into existence regarding the FN, the FPÖ and Jobbik, as all used the same pragmatic and Eurosceptic arguments to indicate their Russophilia. Moreover, they also reshaped the narrative around the Crimean annexation in order to portray Russia favourably.

The VB fits a slightly different pattern than the parties mentioned above. This is mostly because the VB provides a mix of both neutral and positive responses in regards to Russia. In the same vein, it proves difficult to establish a pattern that truly matches the VB's stances towards this state. This issue is not helped by the fact that this case suffers from a lack of information. Currently, the VB is only represented by one MEP, Gerolf Annemans, meaning that his opinion has come to represent the entire VB. This would not necessarily be overly problematic, were it not for his absentee tendencies (Brack, 2015b). Clearly, Annemans does not wish to get involved in the EP debates, as only one statement in regards to Russia could be found. This statement was not nearly as positive as those submitted by the FPÖ, the FN, and Jobbik. That being said, Annemans did indicate that sanctions against Russia should be lifted. Yet, he only appears to support this stance because it would prove beneficial for European farmers. Results on the votes appear slightly more insightful, as he voted on all motions for

resolution. However, yet again a mixed record of both neutral and pro-Russian responses becomes apparent. All in all, the author would argue that the VB subscribes mostly neutral feelings towards Russia. However, pragmatic reasons, such as benefiting from trade with Russia, might persuade the VB to become more pro-Russian. That being said, this argument would definitely benefit from additional information.

5.3.1 Pro-Russia, anti-Russia, or neutral towards Russia: The AfD

It has previously been noted that the AfD has portrayed some mixed results in regards to Russia. On the one hand their latest party program indicated that “the relationship with Russia is of prime importance, because European security cannot be attained without Russia’s involvement. Therefore, we strive for a peaceful solution of conflicts in Europe, whilst respecting the interest of all parties” (Alternative für Deutschland, 2016, p.30). On the other hand, when looking into the results of the votes and debates, the AfD did not seem nearly as favourable towards this state. The voting records clearly show this negative stance, as 72% of the votes can be perceived as anti-Russia or pro-EU. But even more importantly, during the debates it became clear that several AfD members continue to blame Russia for the Ukrainian crisis, the Crimean annexation, and the violence and instability that still plague the Ukrainian state.

Even though this behaviour may appear contradictory, there are several reasons that explain this pro/anti-Russian pattern. When the AfD entered the EP in 2014, the party was able to introduce seven MEPs, who mainly focussed on representing their national-conservative and Eurosceptic agenda (Decker, 2017). In particular, the AfD became known for criticizing the Eurozone, which was believed to hamper the German economy. Especially, Bernd Lucke, Joachim Starbatty, Bernd Kölmel, Ulrike Trebesius and Hans-Olaf Henkel passionately represented these issues. Additionally, in 2014 and 2015 the AfD was affiliated with the ECR. While this group was and remains critical of the direction that the EU is going to, it cannot be said that they are hard Eurorejects. Thus, even if anti-EU sentiments were promoted on a local and national level, most AfD members did not want to promote these at the EU level, as this would be a conflict of interest. In the same vein, pro-Russian sentiments simply did not fit in with the general direction that the AfD was going in. As a matter of fact, pro-Russian sentiments, as later onwards advocated by Marcus Pretzell and Beatrix von Storch, simply did not

seem to fit in with the party's rhetoric in the early 2010s (Alternative für Deutschland, 2016; Alternative für Deutschland, 2013). Thus, it appears rather logical that a pro-Russian sentiment did not become noticeable until at least 2016, when the angle was first introduced within a party program.

While most MEPs felt hesitant and unwilling to criticize the EU, members like Beatrix von Storch and Marcus Pretzell felt no such trepidation. Indeed, they regularly came to vote against EU proposals. At the same time their orientation towards Russia started to take on a more neutral character, after all a vote against the EU could be interpreted as a vote in favour of Russia. Truly positive statements were introduced as well, but this happened only after Bernd Lucke and his supporters split with the party. Finally, pro-Russian statements increased in number in 2015, when Frauke Petry, the new leader of the AfD, started to prioritize Euroscepticism as well as EU-Russia relations. That being said, the AfD never became as pro-Russian as the FN or the FPÖ, as even their most radical members could not always justify Russia's behaviour in its near abroad.

5.3.3 Anti-Russia, pro-Russia, or both: UKIP

The case of UKIP is somewhat similar to the AfD, in that both parties appear to encourage relations with Russia through their party programs. That being said, UKIP already appeared somewhat more sceptical, and indicated that it would only support the Russian Federation as long as it would stop manipulating Western states (UK Independence Party, 2017; see Figure 2 in Chapter 4). If one were to only consider the voting records, it would seem like UKIP was pleased with the progress that Russia made. After all, 83% of the votes indicated that Russia was perceived favourably (see Figure 5 in Chapter 4). The exception to these positive sentiments was the joint motion for resolution on the human rights situation in Crimea, here most UKIP MEPs came to vote in favour of this resolution, and thus voted in an anti-Russian manner. This specific resolution condemned the “unprecedented levels of human rights abuses perpetrated against Crimean residents, most notably Crimean Tatars” (2016/2556(RSP), n.p.). Besides that, the document also indicated that the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia remains illegal, and that the EU continues to support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine (2016/2556(RSP)). It seems interesting that UKIP would

vote in favour a resolution that promotes these points, as they had previously voted against resolutions that brought up similar arguments. Nevertheless, Anton Shekhovtsov (2016) notes that the number of ‘against votes’ appear to have decreased over time, and that UKIP might be a supporter of this trend. In particular, Shekhovtsov argues that:

“In comparison to the previous EP vote on Russia ("State of EU-Russia relations"), the share of the "against" votes decreased from 19% to 14%. [...] This means that fewer MEPs are now ready to remain favourable to, or uncritical of, Russia's aggressive foreign policy” (Shekhovtsov, 2016, n.p.).

That being said, UKIP returned to voting in a pro-Russian manner during the next vote on the Ukrainian political prisoners (see Annex 2). Thus, while parties may have become more critical, some remain or return to voting in favour of Russia.

Even though UKIP mostly maintains a pro-Russian stance through its voting pattern and party program, the results from the debates indicate an entirely different sentiment. During these debates, a large number of UKIP MEPs called out Putin on his aggressive behaviour in Ukraine. Furthermore, the party agrees with the EU that the Crimean annexation remains illegal and that it cannot be justified by referencing principles of self-determination or by referring an unjust referendum. As mentioned before, these harsh criticisms towards Russia can be justified through UKIP’s party manifesto, which indicated that Russia would have to change its aggressive and manipulative behaviour in order to (re)establish relations with the United Kingdom. Clearly Russia has not changed, so this begs the question why the votes remain positively oriented towards this actor. The author would argue that these votes have more to do with UKIP’s stance toward the EU as opposed to Russia. After all, UKIP is a hard-line Euroreject, so it seems logical that they would use their votes to protest the Union. The fact that these votes might benefit Russia is of course undesirable, but remains mostly irrelevant as long as the EU gets to be criticized. In light of this reasoning UKIPs behaviour during both the debates and votes makes sense. However, further research on UKIPs contradictory behaviour might prove beneficial.

Interestingly enough, research by Polyakova et al. (2016) indicates that UKIP has become a strong supporter of the Russian state. In fact, these scholars argued that members of UKIP are trying to hold the EU accountable for the Ukrainian crisis. Moreover, these MEPs also apparently alleged that Russia should have every right to

intervene in its near abroad (Polyakova et al., 2016, p.22). While the author can understand why UKIP's votes could be interpreted as pro-Russian, the same cannot be said for the statements issued during the debates. The majority clearly did not hesitate to blame Russia for the social unrest in the region. Indeed, only four MEPs did not share this stance, and instead promoted a more neutral or somewhat positive attitude towards Russia (see Chapter 4). Thus, based on my data, UKIP cannot be described as a pro-Russian actor. Instead, the author would argue that some individual UKIP members may be willing to support the Russian agenda, yet these seem to be a clear minority within their party.

CONCLUSIONS

The radical right's external dimension has largely been neglected from the scholarly perspective. Instead, scholars within this field (see for example Mudde, 2007; Vasilipolou, 2009; Brack 2015a; Brack 2015b) deemed it more relevant to discuss conceptual issues as well as the reasons why people opt to vote for this party family. However, over the last decade or so, radical right-wing parties have become increasingly popular, and consequently have become better represented at the local, national, and EU level. Thus in order to acknowledge this shift, it might prove worthwhile to analyse the radical right's foreign policy perspectives as well. The scholarship within this field appears to agree with this notion, as a large number of books and articles has been published on the relation between far-right parties and the EU. Based on the literature, as well as the data represented in this thesis, it has become clear that the radical right perceives the Union as its main antagonist. Issues such as expansionism, a lack of democratic principles, and the deterioration of sovereignty, are frequently cited among the radical right to justify their hatred for this Western institution. While the literature proved beneficial, in that it increased the information on the radical right and its foreign policy perspectives, it only took one specific part of the external dimension into account. Over the last couple of years, some scholars such as Klapsis (2015), Mudde (2014), Polyakova et al. (2016), Larrabee et al. (2017), and Laruelle (2015) have made an effort to include another angle; that of the radical right's stance towards the Russian Federation. While a valuable addition to the radical right scholarship, very few conclusive remarks can be found and a large number of questions remain unanswered. This thesis sought to shed light on three such questions. First of all, to what extent are pro-Russian sentiments a new angle of the radical right's external dimension. Second, how have these sentiments manifested themselves. Finally, what explains the similar and/or different pro-Russian patterns. By answering these questions, the author hoped to contribute to the growing body of literature on the radical right, its external dimension, and its stance towards Russia.

The findings of this thesis suggest, with respect to the radical rightist stance on Russia, that there is no unified manner through which this party family perceives this state. The data indicated that most parties belonging to the radical right are willing to provide an opinion on the Russian Federation either through their party manifestos, or

through the EP debates and votes. Jobbik appeared especially keen on supporting Russia, and promoted Russophilia through all analysed mediums. Moreover, it could be argued that Jobbik has the longest history of being Russia's bedfellow. Most other parties included in this study, started to include Russia in their foreign policy perspectives somewhat more recently, mostly in response to the Ukrainian crisis. That being said, Russia has always been a great power, thus it would not be all that surprising if parties indicated a strong desire for improved economic and/or security relations. Regardless, further research on the Russian angle, and when it first started to appear on the radical right's foreign policy agenda would prove beneficial, as this could lead to greater insights on the salience of these relations.

When solely analysing party manifestos, Russia is mostly perceived in favourable or neutral terms. While no negative sentiments can be found, both the VB and FN chose to withhold their stances on this nation-state. In regards to the votes and debates that took place within the EP, results are far more mixed. In fact, several parties included in this study, mostly notably the AfD and UKIP, were highly critical of Russia's behaviour. This mostly because Russia continued to meddle in affairs not its own, which neither party was able to justify. The VB promoted a more neutral stance. However, this neutral pattern may be due more to a lack of information than anything else. All other parties included in this study, the FN, FPÖ, and Jobbik, came to support Russia through three different manners. Firstly, these radical right-wing parties came to promote economic relations with Russia, as this would prove beneficial to their respective nation-states. Secondly, Euroscepticism was equated to Russophilia, as this enabled the radical right to try and delegitimise the EU, while also promoting good relations with a (potential) ally. Thirdly, the narrative around the Crimean crisis was reshaped, so that the radical right could justify Russia's acts in its near abroad.

Based on the previous paragraph, it has become clear that at least three to four patterns, are needed to describe the full range of radical right-Russia relations. Firstly, the FN, the FPÖ, and Jobbik can be grouped together, as they used the same types of motives to promote the Russian agenda. This became especially clear through the votes and debates, where a great level of cohesion could be perceived. Secondly, a neutral pattern was necessary to describe the connection between the VB and Russia. While this particular pattern might be applicable to other parties not included in this study, it was

mostly applied to the VB due to a lack of information. Finally, the AfD and UKIP became known for their respective anti-Russian patterns. Despite some similarities, the author believes that two distinctive patterns are necessary to describe the relationship between these parties and Russia, as one simply would not be able to do it justice. After all, the AfD mostly came to reject Russia due to a lack of Eurosceptic MEPs. Whereas, UKIP actively chose to criticize Russia's aggressive behaviour in Crimea and Ukraine. While these four patterns suit the parties included in this study, more research is necessary in order to determine if these patterns are also applicable to other radical right parties, or if others need to be developed.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1

No.	Code label	Sub-code label	Description of code	Example quote	No. of coded segments
1.	Pro-Russia		Russia is perceived (1) positively or (2) as the victim of EU aggression	"Recall once more that Russia is not an adversary and even less an enemy of the European nations."	47
2.		Neutral Russia	Russia is perceived as a neutral actor.	"Whether we like it or not, the natural location of these states is in Russia's immediate neighbourhood."	15
3.		Anti-Russia	Russia is perceived (1) negatively or (2) as the aggressor in this conflict.	"The actions of Russia have been unacceptable, and it is right that the international community should take appropriate and proportionate actions such as sanctions [...]".	22
4.		EU Resolutions	The EU motions for resolutions are perceived negatively, as they tend to be unbalanced, subjective, and one-sided.	"Similar to the report on Russia, this resolution is unbalanced and one-sided, and seeks the solution of this crisis exclusively on the Russian side."	65
5.		Geopolitical alternative	A country or region is presented as a geopolitical alternative to the EU and/or U.S. This alternative can be Russia, but does not have to be.	"This is a grave political mistake: it is advisable to positively perceive the accession into a multipolar world, a world in which France and Europe would no longer be subjected to great foreign powers."	8

6.	Economic relations with Russia	Either that (1) the EU is suffering due to the broken economic relations with Russia (due to sanctions) or (2) that trade with Russia would be beneficial.	"Whether we like it or not, the natural location of these states is in Russia's immediate neighbourhood."	12
7.	Sanctions by Russia	Sanctions imposed by Russia against the EU are perceived as a responds to EU sanctions and thus justifiable.	"The outcry has been huge in the EU, since the Russian side has revealed a list banning individual's entry into Russia. But, it must be clear to everyone that Russia would respond with similar counter-measures to the West's entry bans.	7
8.	Positive relations	Refers to (1) the positive relation between the EU and Russia, or (2) that these should be improved.	"It is time, that part of the EU seeks dialogue with Russia and approaches this with a healthy measure of willingness to compromise."	32
9.	Negative relations	Refers to (1) the negative relation between the EU and Russia, or (2) that these have been deteriorating. Regardless, Russia is always perceived as favourably or neutrally. When Russia is perceived negatively it is coded as Anti-Russia.	"When it comes to the situation in Ukraine and the relations with Russia, Russia is automatically assigned all the blame."	49
10.	Self-determination	Refers to the fact that the Crimean population chose to join Russia. Perceived in positive terms.	"The EU, true to itself, denies democracy and the right of people to self-determination."	21

11.	Democratic referendum	References to the democratic referendum that took place on the 16th of March 2014 on Crimea. Perceived in positive terms.	"A free, fair and democratic referendum is a legitimate expression of the will of the people of a state or region."	20
12.	Russo-Georgia war	General references to the Russo-Georgia war of 2008. Used as an example for cases where Russia was undeservedly given the blame.	"The Russian Federation is effectively accused of all evils: the outbreak of the war against Georgia, yet an independent international commission gave the responsibility to Tbilisi."	10
13.	Kosovo conflict	General references to Kosovo declaring independence, this is perceived as a precedent for the Crimean case.	"Moreover, international law provides several precedents, where states achieved independence, e.g. Kosovo."	4
14.	'Illegal' Crimean annexation	The term 'illegal' is mentioned in the context of the Crimean annexation. The radical right is critical of the usage of this word.	"It speaks clearly about the illegal annexation of Crimea, although this is controversial under international law."	16
15.	Anti-EU	The EU is (1) perceived negatively, or (2) as the aggressor of this conflict.	"I have to wonder if we do not already have enough problems in the European Union in its current form."	137
16.	Pro-Europe	Europe (the continent and its culture) is perceived positively; also includes mentions of a "Europe of Nations".	"European culture has been constructed on three pillars: Greek thinking, Roman law, and Christian morality. As jobbikosok [...], we believe, not only that Europe's past has been founded on these values, but also that its future should continue to be."	18

17.	United States of Europe	The EU is likened to a superstate and/or empire. This is perceived negatively.	"We reject the idea of a United States of Europe, as well as that of a federal state from which an exit is impossible."	20
18.	Expansion	The (further) widening of the EU through including more nation-states into the Union. This code is not used when there are references to the AA, instead see code: Association Agreement.	"My colleagues from the Front National and I, are categorically opposed to the further enlargement of this moribund Union."	46
19.	Sovereignty (to the EU)	The state loses out on sovereignty as it is transferred to the EU (competence creep). This is perceived negatively.	"Furthermore, this report surreptitiously promotes the further integration of Europe, and consequently, promotes less sovereignty for the Member States."	21
20.	Sovereignty to the state	The state (re)gains its sovereignty from the EU. This is perceived positively.	"Every state has the freedom to decide for itself on how it wishes to pursue its foreign policy."	61
21.	Democracy (positive)	Indicates either that (1) democracy/democratic principles are perceived positively, or (2) that democracy will be (re)gained.	"I believe in democracy and transparency, and therefore I believe that my vote on this matter should have been a matter of public record."	14
22.	Democracy (negative)	Indicates either that (1) democracy/democratic principles are perceived negatively, or (2) that there is a loss of democracy.	"Say 'no' to this institution; say 'no' to this Union that disrespects your democracy."	16

23.	Pre-Maastricht/Lisbon	Refers to the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 and the Lisbon Treaty of 2007. Both are perceived negatively, and the radical right calls for a return to the situation before either of these treaties came into effect.	"With the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, and especially its amendment in Lisbon in 2007, the political elites have taken steps to permanently transfer the EU into a centralised state.	14
24.	Sanctions by the EU	Any type of sanctions imposed by the EU against Russia are perceived negatively.	"I believe that the already prompted and future sanctions against Russia are inappropriate and unfounded."	31
25.	International cooperation	International cooperation between countries and/or between countries and institutes will be promoted as long as this does not come at the cost of losing sovereignty. If sovereignty is lost, this will be coded as Sovereignty to the EU.	"We must also secure Polish-Hungarian-Croatian cooperation, conduct Eurasia-oriented foreign policy and establish good relations with the Far East."	54
26.	Anti-U.S.	The U.S. is (1) perceived negatively, or (2) perceived as one of the aggressors of the conflict.	"Europe cannot simply serve the US or any other country's political interests."	57
27.	Anti-NATO	NATO is (1) perceived negatively, or (2) as an aggressive actor.	"This is based on a NATO report, an organisation whose objective it is to combat Russia."	23
28.	Pro-NATO	NATO is (1) perceived positively, or (2) as an actor that can help resolve the Ukrainian crisis.	"I believe that the military situation in the Black Sea should be a matter for NATO, not the European Union."	11

29.	Defence by the state	General references to the national defence system when defence alliances are perceived as undesirable.	"The AfD reject the idea of a combined European military force, and subscribes to well-equipped and trained German Armed Forces as the pillar of German sovereignty."	15
30.	Defence alliances	General references to defence alliances in a positive sense. Any statements specifically related to NATO are coded in accordance with Anti-NATO or Pro-NATO.	"However, we will of course continue our close cooperation with our European partners on matters of defence and security once we have left the EU."	9
31.	Ukraine neutral	Ukraine is perceived as a neutral actor.	"Nevertheless, while Ukraine's borders may be inviolable, they are not unchangeable."	19
32.	Anti-Ukraine	Ukraine is (1) perceived negatively, or (2) as the aggressor of the conflict.	"The Ukrainians are not absolved of all blame for things that have happened there in the wake of the revolution, but all revolutions bring chaos, injustice and suffering."	30
33.	Pro-Ukraine	Ukraine is (1) perceived positively, or (2) as the victim of EU or Russian aggression.	"In Ukraine, we should support a federal constitution with a special status for the Eastern regions."	8
34.	Crimean/Ukrainian crisis	Any mentions of the Ukrainian and/or Crimean crisis. Mentions of the Crimean annexation can also fall under this code.	"The forced rapprochement of the EU has triggered chaos in Ukraine, and this has ended with the secession of Crimea."	20
36.	Association Agreement	References to the Association Agreement between the EU and Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova; coded when there is a negative connotation.	"It has been, among others, the Association Agreement which has further fuelled an already heated political situation."	51

Appendix 2

Raw information and codes on the AfD can be accessed from:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1v20Qz8DLMrcXxyJuIwe38iEVCpdLvaei>

Raw information and codes on the FN can be accessed from:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1DdhCZvYenItclhUfty0wMPOjkddiUGIC>

Raw information and codes on the FPÖ can be accessed from:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=13mFnJWWThRalmpevWMWwV5h8sOFaRlhX>

Raw information and codes on Jobbik can be accessed from:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1zbpY1Zaa9XWpkGBCxrKA71NTau-GrFFp>

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Yadd5H12InLxUqblj49K6uqGKiQb0wG1>

Raw information and codes on UKIP can be accessed from:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1WtYyyz-QDXBzWCQoH1A_VPJNnBNbMh9T

Raw information and codes on the VB can be accessed from:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1NzhJdZ3eRKCw3ZOQK3bb6BX8Pd5KCJdm>

Raw information and codes from the debates can be accessed from:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1cHad56gVE0-U1nO4P33ZogLzYLQrxVxd>

Appendix 3

MEP	Party	vote: 16.03.2017		vote: 04.02.2016		vote: 11.06.2015		vote: 10.06.2015		vote: 16.09.2014		vote: 17.07.2014	
		Vote	Loyal/Rebel	Vote	Loyal/Rebel	Vote	Loyal/Rebel	Vote	Loyal/Rebel	Vote	Loyal/Rebel	Vote	Loyal/Rebel
B. Kappel	FPÖ	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
G. Mayer	FPÖ	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
F. Obermayr	FPÖ	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
H. Vilimsky	FPÖ	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
G. Annemans	VB	3	1	3	2	1	3	3	3	1	3	1	3
B. Von Storch	AfD	3	1	2	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	4	-99
H.O. Henkel	AfD	-88	-88	-88	-88	3	2	2	1	2	1	2	1
J. Starbatty	AfD	-88	-88	-88	-88	3	2	3	2	2	1	2	1
B. Lucke	AfD	-88	-88	-88	-88	3	2	3	2	2	1	2	1
B. Kölmel	AfD	-88	-88	-88	-88	3	2	3	2	2	1	2	1
U. Trebesius	AfD	-88	-88	-88	-88	3	2	3	2	2	1	5	-99
M. Pretzell	AfD	1	2	4	-99	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2
L. Aliot	FN	4	-99	4	-99	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
E. Ferrand	FN	4	-99	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
M. Le Pen	FN	4	-99	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
G. Lebreton	FN	4	-99	5	-99	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
F. Philippot	FN	4	-99	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
M.C. Arnautu	FN	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
N. Bay	FN	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
D. Bilde	FN	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
M.C. Boutonnet	FN	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
S. Briois	FN	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
M. D'Ornano	FN	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
S. Goddyn	FN	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
J.F. Jalkh	FN	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
P. Loiseau	FN	3	1	4	-99	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
D. Martin	FN	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
B. Monot	FN	3	1	5	-99	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
S. Montel	FN	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
J. Mélin	FN	3	1	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3

Appendix 3 continued

M. Troszczynski	FN	3	1	4	-99	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
J.L. Schaffhauser	FN	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
A. Chauprade	FN	-88	-88	-88	-88	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
J.P. Le Pen	FN	6	-99	6	-99	4	-99	4	-99	1	3	1	3
B. Gollnisch	FN	3	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
W. Dartmouth	UKIP	4	-99	4	-99	4	-99	1	1	4	-99	4	-99
T. Aker	UKIP	4	-99	3	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
B. Etheridge	UKIP	4	-99	2	1	5	-99	1	1	1	1	1	1
N. Farage	UKIP	4	-99	4	-99	4	-99	1	1	1	1	4	-99
N. Gill	UKIP	4	-99	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	-99
J.S. Agnew	UKIP	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
J. Arnott	UKIP	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
G. Batten	UKIP	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	4	-99	1	1
J. Carver	UKIP	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
D. Coburn	UKIP	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	4	-99	1	1
R. Finch	UKIP	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	-99
R. Helmer	UKIP	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
M. Hookem	UKIP	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	-99
P. O'Flynn	UKIP	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
M. Parker	UKIP	3	1	2	1	6	-99	6	-99	1	1	1	1
J. Reid	UKIP	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
J. Seymour	UKIP	3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	-99
L. Bours	UKIP	3	1	4	-99	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	-99
J. Collins	UKIP	5	-99	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	-99
P. Nuttall	UKIP	5	-99	4	-99	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	-99
D. James	UKIP	-88	-88	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
J. Atkinson	UKIP	-88	-88	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
A. Bashir	UKIP	-88	-88	-88	-88	-88	-88	-88	-88	1	1	1	1
K. Morvai	Jobbik	4	-99	4	-99	1	3	1	3	1	3	4	-99
Z. Balszo	Jobbik	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3	1	3
B. Kovacs	Jobbik	1	3	4	-99	1	3	1	3	5	-99	1	3

Codes on the votes explained:

1. Against
2. In favour
3. Abstained
4. Absent
5. No vote
6. Documented absence
- 88. MEP was not affiliated with the parties under discussion.

Codes on loyal/rebel explained:

1. Loyal
2. Rebellious
3. Independent
- 99. MEP was absent or did not vote
- 88. MEP was not affiliated with the parties under discussion.

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