Conflicted Politicians

The populist radical right in the European Parliament

Marley Morris

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All errors and omissions remain my own.

Marley Morris

Executive summary

With the 2014 European Parliament elections on the horizon, there is growing concern from European leaders that the current climate means that the populist radical right – as well as Eurosceptic parties – will make significant gains in the European Parliament (EP). To understand what this might mean in practice, it is essential to investigate how the populist radical right currently operates in the EP. There has been much research on the ideology of the populist radical right and the attitudes of its supporters – but less on how the MEPs actually function at the European level. This report uses data and case studies on roll-call voting from VoteWatch Europe (www.votewatch.eu) in order to investigate the behaviour of populist radical right MEPs. It aims to depict the current behaviour of the populist radical right in the European Parliament to policy-makers, politicians and citizens, to ensure that future strategy and policy-making is guided by evidence-based and context-sensitive analysis and interpretation.

The research

Populist radical right MEPs face a fundamental conflict. On the one hand, in most cases their ideology commits them to being fiercely critical of the EU – in some cases they want out altogether. At the same time, they benefit from the EU – obtaining money, representation, legitimacy and contacts – and are part of one of its core

institutions. Our research suggests that this core conflict is manifested in a series of ways.

First, some populist radical right MEPs are fiercely against the political consensus in the European Parliament on certain core populist radical right issues – for instance, immigration and ethnic minority rights. Especially anti-consensus parties that are part of the populist radical right family include the Partij Voor de Vrijheid (PVV), the British National Party (BNP) and Vlaams Belang. When placed in the situation of being part of an institution they dislike, it appears that some populist radical right MEPs react by rebelling against the institution and regularly voting against the majority on the issues that matter to them.

Second, populist radical right parties (PRRPs) have struggled to form strong alliances in the European Parliament. The Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) group – containing a number of populist radical right parties – has a relatively low cohesion rate compared to other political groups. That is, the EFD's members often do not vote the same way. The other PRRPs are not attached to any group, largely because they do not have the required number of members to form a political group. This weakness on the populist radical right's part is rooted in ideological heterogeneity, a fear of stigmatisation, and conflicting nationalisms.

Third, the populist radical right has little impact on policy and substantive issues in the European Parliament. When compared to the other political groups, its MEPs participate less often, write fewer reports and opinions, and are less successful at pushing through amendments and winning votes. They rarely hold the balance of power and so have little 'blackmail power' to offer the other political groups votes in exchange for advancing their policy interests. Where they have made a difference to a voting decision, it is generally because

they have sided with the centre right on a particular issue. This lack of impact appears to be both because populist radical right MEPs are marginalised in the EP and because they have little interest in influencing policy. In particular, the core conflict of populist radical right MEPs between their hostility towards the EU and their role within it may well force them to distance themselves from the policy-making process.

Fourth, when it comes to making speeches and asking questions, the populist radical right tends to outdo other MEPs. Our analysis suggests that the populist radical right focuses its role on gaining publicity rather than participating in policy-making activities in the European Parliament.

The reason for this is given by the populist radical right's fundamental conflict in the European Parliament, pitting PRRPs' antagonism towards the EU against the benefits they receive from having members within the parliament. In response to this conflict, populist radical right MEPs tend to want to be perceived in the media and by national audiences as railing against the system from the inside.

1

Introduction

'I already have my church, so I don't need another religion in Brussels.' [1]

Timo Soini

The populist radical right and the European Union do not have an easy relationship. In the recent turmoil of the Eurozone crisis, European Council President Herman Van Rompuy has repeatedly cautioned against populism and extremism. In a keynote speech, Van Rompuy observed that:

For Europe means friendship too. Some may think me naïve, but was the first Franco-German Treaty not a friendship treaty? Let us now extrapolate the concepts of individual and person to the whole of society. We end up with political ideas expressed on the one hand in populism and inward looking and on the other hand in solidarity, a sense of responsibility, and openness to the world.[2]

The populist radical right epitomises the outlook Van Rompuy criticised. In their case, 'friendship' between people is also to be valued, but on different terms – some people are friends, others are most certainly not, and it is perfectly natural that people choose to be friends with those who are more like them. This outlook is exemplified by former Front National leader Jean-Marie Le Pen's notorious line: 'I love my daughters more than my nieces, my nieces more than my cousins, my cousins more than my neighbours.' [3] For the populist radical right, then,

the European Union is less a genuine expression of friendship and instead a 'forced marriage' between nations, riding roughshod over the crucial differences between the EU's member states.

Not long ago, things were very different. As Cas Mudde has noted, in the 1980s populist radical right parties – in both Western and Eastern Europe – were markedly more sympathetic to the European Union and its institutions.[4] Originally, the populist radical right was also swayed by the grand vision of the European project. Even the self-avowed nationalist Le Pen was in favour – as long as it was on his (and France's) terms. But over time this optimism morphed into suspicion and distrust, particularly after the passing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992.[5] Now, most PRRPs are either resolutely opposed to the European Union, or at the very least wary of its current incarnation.[6]

In this context, this report explores how the populist radical right operates in one of the EU's key institutions, the European Parliament. By examining the voting behaviour of populist radical right MEPs using data and case studies from the independent organisation VoteWatch Europe, this report aims to determine the relationship between the populist radical right and the EU. As we shall see, it is a complex relationship, but one that is deeply revealing. First, it sheds much light on the nature of the populist radical right and how it interacts with those institutions it pits itself against. As such, we hope this report is a valuable tool for policy-makers and advocates who are looking for responses to the populist radical right at both the national and European level. And second, the relationship reveals much about the nature of the European Union itself. This is relevant for anyone who cares about the future of the European project.

Before beginning the analysis, we shall address some preliminary questions. First, who are the populist radical

right MEPs? And second, how do the populist radical right and the European Union perceive each other?

Who are the populist radical right MEPs?

The terms 'populist', 'radical' and 'right' each have their own controversies, but there are good reasons to describe the parties under discussion in this way. For this pamphlet, we use the term 'populist' to refer to their condemnation of a corrupt 'elite' and their glorification of an exclusive 'people'; we use 'radical' to refer to their 'outsider' challenge to the political mainstream; and we use 'right' to refer to their social conservatism, often signified by their antipathy to the social and cultural effects of high levels of immigration. 'Right' can also, of course, signify an economically libertarian position, but, as we shall see, not all of these parties can be considered 'right' on that understanding of the term. Populist radical right parties are, we think, problematic for a variety of reasons, not least their corrosive impact on the mainstream debate on immigration, integration and minority rights.[7]

There is still, of course, the practical question of how to decide who should and should not be included in the family of populist radical right parties. In the context of the European Parliament, the task needs to be particularly comprehensive, given the wide range of parties and countries involved. To answer this practical question, we apply Cas Mudde's seminal classification of populist radical right parties.[8]

Mudde's classification tells us that two sets of MEPs are particularly relevant for the analysis: the Europe of Freedom and Democracy (EFD) group and the MEPs who are not attached to any European political group. The latter set of non-attached MEPs is mostly made up of populist radical right parties according to Mudde's classification (see Tables 1 and 2

for which parties are populist radical right). Other non-attached MEPs should not be considered part of the populist radical right at all – for instance, Unión, Progreso y Democracia, a socially liberal Spanish party 'of the radical centre'.[9] But the non-attached MEPs provide a focal point for where the populist radical right lies in the European Parliament.

Table 1 **National parties with non-attached members in the European Parliament**[10]

Party name	Member State	Political group	No. of MEPs	Populist radical right (based on Mudde)
Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs	AT	NI	2	Y
Liste 'Dr Martin – für Demokratie, Kontrolle, Gerechtigkeit'	AT	NI	2	
Bündnis Zukunft Österreich	AT	NI	1	Y
Vlaams Belang	BE	NI	1	Y
National-Democratic Party	BG	NI	1	
Unión, Progreso y Democracia	ES	NI	1	
Front National	FR	NI	3	Y
British National Party	GB	NI	1	Y
Democratic Unionist Party (Northern Ireland)	GB	NI	1	Y
United Kingdom Independence Party	GB	NI	1	
We Demand a Referendum	GB	NI	1	
Independent MEP (formerly BNP)	GB	NI	1	Y
Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom	HU	NI	3	*Y*
Partij voor de Vrijheid	NL	NI	4	*Y*
Artikel 50	NL	NI	1	
Partidul România Mare	RO	NI	2	Y
Partidul Social Democrat	RO	NI	1	

Table 2 **National parties in the EFD group**[12]

Party name	Member State	Political group	No. of MEPs	Populist radical right (based on Mudde)
Independent MEP (formerly Vlaams Belang)	BE	EFD	1	Y
People for Real, Open and United Democracy/ Conservative Party for Democracy and Success	BG	EFD	1	
Dansk Folkeparti	DK	EFD	1	Y
Perussuomalaiset	FI	EFD	1	*Borderline*
Mouvement pour la France	FR	EFD	1	
United Kingdom Independence Party	GB	EFD	10	
Popular Orthodox Rally – G. Karatzaferis	GR	EFD	2	Y
Lega Nord	IT	EFD	8	Y
'Io amo l'Italia'	IT	EFD	1	
Independent MEP (formerly Lega Nord)	IT	EFD	1	Y
Partija Tvarka ir Teisingumas	LT	EFD	2	
Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij	NL	EFD	1	
Solidarna Polska	PL	EFD	4	
Slovenská Národná Strana	SK	EFD	1	Y

The EFD, on the other hand, contains a number of MEPs considered populist radical right by Mudde (Lega Nord, LAOS, the Danish People's Party, the Slovak National Party and perhaps the Finns Party). These tend to be the PRRPs considered more moderate by experts and the press – the Finns Party, for instance, has a relatively subdued immigration policy compared to its counterparts in the rest of Europe.[11] They are also joined in the EFD by a mix of fringe parties, Eurosceptics and

anti-EU parties such as the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). Again, this is indicative of the ideological diversity of radical right and Eurosceptic groups. Indeed, it is perhaps possible to understand the populist radical right only in the context of the broader, more mainstream feelings of discontent towards the European Union and immigration. For this reason, we will examine the EFD, but we will interpret the results in the context of it being primarily a Eurosceptic group with populist radical right elements, rather than it being a purely populist radical right group.

The ECR is sometimes characterised as consisting of populist radical right parties. When the Conservatives joined forces with Law and Justice in Poland and other parties, some accused them of getting into bed with extremists.[13] However, a thorough analysis by academics Tim Bale, Seán Hanley and Aleks Szczerbiak notes that the group's members are 'far from being extremists', and few of the members are populist radical right according to Cas Mudde's classification. As a result, we will leave the ECR out of the analysis.[14]

To summarise, we will focus attention on the EFD and the non-attached members in the analysis, while bearing in mind that these groups capture parties that are not all populist radical right. We accept that this is not a perfect science. Yet this approach is, we think, the most comprehensible and useful way of studying the populist radical right in the context of the European Parliament.

United by Europe

As we have seen, the populist radical right is a diverse family, and the ideologies of its members are notoriously idiosyncratic depending on the national context (in particular, the East–West divide). But they do share

some traits, and one is hostility to the European Union and its institutions. For the populist radical right, the European Union is the ultimate bogeyman: in their eyes an elitist, politically correct, bureaucratic institution contravening popular democracy and national borders. As Robert Ford has noted, in the UK in recent years the activities of European institutions have become increasingly associated with the populist radical right's traditional bugbears: immigration (in particular, the immigration from Eastern European countries to the UK that went with the accession of new countries), law and order (including tensions with the European Court of Human Rights), nationalism (the threat of sovereignty) and anti-elitism.[15] Many of these concerns are voiced by populist radical right parties in other countries too.[16] Particularly given the consequences of the Eurozone crisis and the rising tensions between Northern and Southern Europe, for many in the populist radical right, the EU – or 'Brussels' – is often now a core enemy.

This of course is not the case just for the populist radical right – it also applies to other Eurosceptic and anti-EU fringe parties (including some on the radical left). These parties (such as UKIP in the UK, the Socialist Party in the Netherlands and Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement in Italy) have seized the Eurozone crisis as an opportunity to find mainstream backing for what was once a platform that could mobilise only a small number of citizens preoccupied with the EU.

The populist radical right dilemma

But this leads to a fundamental conflict for both Eurosceptics and the populist radical right.[17] On the one hand, they are fiercely critical of the EU, and in some cases want out altogether; yet, at the same time,

they benefit from the EU, in particular the European Parliament. From the Front National's breakthrough result in 1984 to the BNP's strong showing in the 2009 elections, the European Parliament elections have always been great opportunities for the populist radical right. Voters are often more supportive of fringe parties than they are when it comes to national contests, viewing the EP elections as less important, 'second order' contests, where they can express their disdain with mainstream politicians without risking too great a political sacrifice. And the electoral system can be kinder to them too, at least in countries that do not use proportional representation for their national elections.[18] Moreover, success at the European Parliament elections brings more financial resources, influence and legitimacy. Winning is both easier than in national elections and packed with benefits.

Opting out of the European Parliament elections on principle would therefore amount to wasting a vital opportunity – for most parties, it is not an option. But the paradox remains: how can populist radical right parties (and indeed Eurosceptics more generally) reconcile their hostility towards the European Union with the attachment that comes from sending representatives to the European Parliament? The greater the hostility to the EU, the greater the paradox.

The mainstream dilemma

If the populist radical right is hostile to the EU, then the EU does not let the populist radical right off lightly either. With its formation so tied to the experience of extremism, totalitarianism and war in the earlier part of the 20th century and the conviction that such a series of tragedies should never reoccur, the European Union was naturally going to be suspicious of a political family some consider a reinvention of the fascism of that earlier era.

And as illustrated at the beginning of this chapter, those who work in its institutions – particularly the other MEPs in the European Parliament and the leaders in the Commission – often take aim at the populist radical right. Yet due to the workings of the European Parliament, politicians of these different stripes are at times flung together. Here the other MEPs face their own conflict: how to deal with the populist radical right in the European Parliament in a way that robustly stands up for tolerance and human rights but that also upholds the principles of democracy and freedom. This is a question we will return to later in the report.

Overview

So, on the one hand, populist radical right (and Eurosceptic) MEPs are suspicious of the European Union, but they are also part of the system they rail against; on the other, the remaining MEPs are often hostile to the populist radical right but aware that their presence in the European Parliament lends them democratic legitimacy. These conflicts are crucial to understanding the analysis that follows.

In the next chapter, we will look at how populist radical right MEPs vote in the European Parliament on the issues that they typically campaign on: do they tend to stick to or depart from the European consensus?

In Chapter 3, we will look at the cohesion of the Europe of Freedom and Democracy group and examine how often the group tends to vote the same way.

In Chapter 4, we will look at how much policy impact the populist radical right has in the European Parliament, examining who the MEPs tend to vote with, whether they tend to be on the winning side, and how often they draft reports and opinions in committees. We will also draw on some case studies.

Finally, in Chapter 5, we will look at how active the populist radical right is when it comes to other matters of the European Parliament – in particular, the numbers of questions raised and speeches they make in comparison to the other MEPs. It is this final piece of analysis that will tie together the story of the populist radical right's presence in the EP.

2

Against the consensus

It is sometimes contended that the European Parliament is dominated by consensus politics. PRRPs (and some Eurosceptic forces) typically present themselves as fighting against the stale collusion politics of the European Parliament; 'Brussels' is depicted as a homogenous block that needs to be shaken up. (Take, for instance, the Finns Party leader Timo Soini's line referred to at the beginning of the report.) This is an approach used in national politics too: Front National leader Marine Le Pen, for instance, speaks dismissively of the 'UMPS', an amalgam of the centre right UMP (Union pour un Mouvement Populaire) and the centre left PS (Parti Socialiste).[19] But with the European Parliament, there is even more at stake than with national parliaments – since in this case the populist radical right is often hostile to the very foundations of the institution it is a part of, rather than just the mainstream parties that currently dominate inside it. In other words, a PRRP might oppose the politics of all the large parties in their national parliament but does not necessarily want the institutions themselves torn down; the situation can be quite different when it comes to the European Parliament.

In fact, research by Simon Hix, Abdul G. Noury and Gérard Roland shows that the European Parliament has become more competitive along the traditional left–right divide over the years.[20] In the current parliament, there are at times close votes between the centre right European People's Party (EPP) and the centre left

Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (S&D), as we shall see in Chapter 4.

Still, on a number of issues there is a broad consensus between the centrist parties. On these issues, it is illuminating to look at which parties vote with and which parties vote against the mainstream.

Anti-consensus politics: migrants and ethnic minorities

First, we will look at policies relating to the status and rights of migrants and ethnic minorities. Given that PRRPs present themselves as challengers to the larger centrist parties, one would expect the populist radical right to vote against the consensus. And given that the subject matter is related to immigration, this is even more likely to be the case, since PRRPs – in Western Europe, at least – tend to mobilise on this issue more than any other.[21] The ten dossiers we look at – all picked because they brought out broad consensus among the centrist parties – are:

1 Creation of an immigration liaison officers' network
2 Granting and withdrawing of international protection [to refugees]
3 European Refugee Fund for the period 2008–13 (amendment of Decision No. 573/2007/EC)
4 Movement of persons with a long-stay visa
5 Rights to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings
6 Single application procedure for residence and work
7 Third countries whose nationals must be in possession of visas when crossing the external borders of Member States
8 EU strategy on Roma inclusion
9 Second European Roma Summit
10 Community Code on Visas

On these key ten votes, Table 3 lists those parties in the European Parliament who were most against the EP consensus. (Every other party voted against only one or none of these measures.)

Table 3 **National party delegations that score highly on the anti-consensus index in the field of immigration and ethnic minority rights**

Party	Member State	Political group	Times against
Partij voor de Vrijheid	Netherlands	NI	10
Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs	Austria	NI	9
Front National	France	NI	9
Lega Nord	Italy	EFD	9
British National Party	United Kingdom	NI	9
Independent	United Kingdom	NI	9
Vlaams Belang	Belgium	NI	8
Dansk Folkeparti	Denmark	EFD	7
United Kingdom Independence Party	United Kingdom	EFD	7
Independent	Denmark	ECR	6
Democratic Unionist Party (Northern Ireland)	United Kingdom	NI	6
Perussuomalaiset	Finland	EFD	5
Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom	Hungary	NI	4
Attack	Bulgaria	NI	3
Mouvement pour la France	France	EFD	3
Front de gauche pour changer d'Europe	France	GUE-NGL	3
Slovenská Národná Strana	Slovakia	EFD	3
Lijst Dedecker	Belgium	ECR	2
Občanská Demokratická Strana	Czech Republic	ECR	2
Suomen Kristillisdemokraatit	Finland	EPP	2
Parti Communiste Réunionnais	France	GUE-NGL	2

Party	Member State	Political group	Times against
Coalition of the Radical Left	Greece	GUE-NGL	2
Communist Party of Greece	Greece	GUE-NGL	2
Magyar Demokrata Fórum	Hungary	ECR	2
Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNNK	Latvia	ECR	2
Politisko Partiju Apvienība 'Saskaņas Centrs'	Latvia	GUE-NGL	2
Lietuvos Lenkų Rinkimų Akcija	Lithuania	ECR	2
ChristenUnie	Netherlands	ECR	2
Christen Democratisch Appèl	Netherlands	EPP	2
Polska Jest Najważniejsza	Poland	ECR	2
Prawo i Sprawiedliwość	Poland	ECR	2
Coligação Democrática Unitária (PCP-PEV)	Portugal	GUE-NGL	2
Partido Comunista Português	Portugal	GUE-NGL	2
Ulster Conservatives and Unionists-New Force	United Kingdom	ECR	2
Sinn Féin	United Kingdom	GUE-NGL	2

Source: VoteWatch Europe

Interestingly, the most anti-consensus on these issues is the PVV, which voted against every single resolution on the list. The FPÖ in Austria, the Lega Nord in Italy, the Front National in France and the British National Party in the UK are not far behind. As expected, these are all PRRPs.[22]

Yet at the same time, a number of parties typically considered populist radical right – and who are either non-attached or are in the EFD group – do not vote against the European consensus on these issues, as Table 4 shows. In particular, Popular Orthodox Rally (LAOS) in Greece and the Greater Romania

Party rarely vote against the consensus. These parties have therefore shown a willingness to cooperate with the mainstream. (With respect to LAOS, this is reflected in their willingness to be part of the short-lived national coalition government in 2011 during the Greek debt crisis.[23]) This suggests that an anti-consensus voting strategy with respect to immigration issues is far from a necessary feature of populist radical right parties.

Table 4 **National party delegations in the EFD groups and non-attached members and parties who score low on the anti-consensus index in the field of immigration and ethnic minority rights**

Party	Member State	Political group	Times against
Popular Orthodox Rally – G. Karatzaferis	Greece	EFD	1
'Io amo l'Italia'	Italy	EFD	1
Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij	Netherlands	EFD	1
Unión, Progreso y Democracia	Spain	NI	1
Independent	Austria	NI	0
Liste 'Dr Martin – für Demokratie, Kontrolle, Gerechtigkeit'	Austria	NI	0
Independent	Bulgaria	NI	0
Partija Tvarka ir Teisingumas	Lithuania	EFD	0
Partidul România Mare	Romania	NI	0

Source: VoteWatch Europe

Neither is the relationship between radicalism and anti-consensus voting completely straightforward: for instance, the PVV scores more highly on this measure than Jobbik (which tended to abstain on these votes), yet Jobbik – with its barely disguised anti-Roma and anti-Semitic rhetoric[24] – is widely considered to be a more extreme party than the PVV. So it is not simply a case of the more radical, the more anti-consensus. Rather, as we

shall see, the approach taken by a populist radical right party is in part determined by what it perceives as its wider purpose in the European Parliament.

Anti-consensus politics: further populist radical right issues

Still, it is clear that there is a tendency for a significant number of populist radical right parties to vote against the consensus on the issue of the status and rights of migrants and ethnic minorities. What happens when we include other policy areas that are likely to be of concern to the populist radical right? We look at votes relating to the following additional issues:

1 Women's rights and gender equality
2 Promotion of human and minority rights worldwide
3 Mobilisation of the European Fund for Adjustment to Globalisation (aimed at helping workers in EU member states who become redundant as a result of relocation of specific economic actors)
4 Mobilisation of the EU Solidarity Fund (aimed at helping EU regions affected by natural catastrophes such as floods)
5 Approval of the EU budget
6 Developing the EU-level institutional and political framework (constitutional affairs)
7 EU regional aid
8 Deepening of the EU internal market
9 International trade agreements
10 Financial assistance provided to EU neighbouring states
11 EU enlargement

Examining votes where there are high levels of consensus between the main political groups and that are related to the above 11 issues, we develop a cross-policy score that details how many times each party

voted against the consensus. The results (shown in Table 5) are remarkably similar to those seen in Table 3.

Table 5 **Parties that achieved the highest scores across this set of policy areas**

Party name	Member State	Political group	Cross-policy score
Partij voor de Vrijheid	NL	NI	65
British National Party	GB	NI	64
United Kingdom Independence Party	GB	EFD	59
Independent	GB	NI	50
Vlaams Belang	BE	NI	37
Kommounistiko Komma Elladas	GR	GUE-NGL	36
Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs	AT	NI	35
Front National	FR	NI	34
Mouvement pour la France	FR	EFD	30
Democratic Unionist Party (Northern Ireland)	GB	NI	30
Independent	DK	ECR	28
Dansk Folkeparti	DK	EFD	27
Perussuomalaiset	FI	EFD	27
ChristenUnie	NL	ECR	25
Lega Nord	IT	EFD	25
Coligação Democrática Unitária (PCP-PEV)	PT	GUE-NGL	25
Občanská Demokratická Strana	CZ	ECR	24
Ulster Conservatives and Unionists-New Force	GB	ECR	24
Conservative Party	GB	ECR	23
Lijst Dedecker	BE	ECR	22
Partido Comunista Português	PT	GUE-NGL	22
Front de gauche pour changer d'Europe	FR	GUE-NGL	21
Prawo i Sprawiedliwość	PL	ECR	20

Party name	Member State	Political group	Cross-policy score
Polska Jest Najważniejsza	PL	ECR	20
Socialistische Partij	NL	GUE-NGL	20
Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom	HU	NI	20
Magyar Demokrata Fórum	HU	ECR	19
Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras	GR	GUE-NGL	19
Anorthotiko Komma Ergazomenou Laou – Aristera – Nees Dynameis	CY	GUE-NGL	18
Slovenská Národná Strana	SK	EFD	17
Politisko Partiju Apvienība 'Saskaņas Centrs'	LV	GUE-NGL	17
Lietuvos Lenkų Rinkimų Akcija	LT	ECR	16
Folkebevægelsen mod EU	DK	GUE-NGL	16
Vänsterpartiet	SE	GUE-NGL	16
Liste 'Dr Martin – für Demokratie, Kontrolle, Gerechtigkeit'	AT	NI	16
Sinn Féin	GB	GUE-NGL	15

Source: VoteWatch Europe

Again, we see that the PVV has the highest score; again, it is followed by a number of other populist radical right parties, including the BNP and Vlaams Belang. The anti-EU UKIP – not on our measure a populist radical right party but a member of the EFD – also scores highly, again suggesting that voting against the European consensus is not just a question of how radical a party is. (Although it may relate to how radical a party is on the specific question of the EU.)

Strands of the populist radical right

There are a number of interesting subtleties in these results. Attesting to the complexity of the ideology

of those parties that have bucked the European consensus, different clusters of parties emerge, according to their differing policy preferences. There are three notable categories of PRRPs that deserve particular attention:

The parties that sit near the top of the list – including PRRPs such as the PVV, the BNP, Vlaams Belang and the FPÖ – tend to be broadly anti-consensus across all the policy areas we have identified. These are the real 'troublemakers' in the European Parliament.

There is a second group, however, of more protectionist PRRPs that do agree with some of the policies on the list. This group – including PRRPs such as the Lega Nord and the Front National – disagree with the consensus on civil liberties issues and are opposed to liberalising the internal market and international trade. But they are less opposed to EU enlargement and agree with the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund. This is in accord with these parties' stances on the issues of immigration and integration but left-wing positions on international trade and protectionism.

Finally, another group made up of PRRPs such as the Danish People's Party and the (borderline PRRP) Finns Party are also against the consensus on the issue of civil liberties. But these parties in fact oppose using the European Globalisation Adjustment Fund to help redundant workers and are in favour of liberalising internal and international trade.

This classification points to the variety of views – particularly socioeconomic views – among PRRPs. It could also point to a European North–South divide across the political spectrum, with the North less willing to offer support to struggling workers, given that countries in Northern Europe are broadly more prosperous and have lower unemployment rates than the debt-stricken South. Indeed, the Finns Party has

made the EU's series of bailouts of Southern European countries a centrepiece of their EU-critical campaigning.[25]

Another notable feature in Table 5 is the prominence of the radical left United European Left – Nordic Green Left (GUE-NGL) group. The members of this political group do not challenge the consensus on the subject of immigrant and ethnic minority rights, one of the key issues for the populist radical right. However, some members do oppose EU enlargement, liberalising internal and international trade, and increasing the EU budget. It appears to be on the radical left and the (populist) radical right where the most firm anti-consensus – and Eurosceptic – political preferences lie.

We discussed in Chapter 1 that the populist radical right's presence in the European Parliament is rife with conflict. At once hostile and attached to the EU, populist radical right MEPs find themselves in an inherently awkward position. The results from this chapter show that one of the PRRPs' responses to their paradoxical situation is to break from the political consensus on the issues that matter to them. How effective this strategy is in the European Parliament is one of the key topics of the next three chapters.

3

Alliances across Europe

To determine how effective the populist radical right is in the European Parliament, it is vital to look at how cohesive its groups are. A group that is cohesive – i.e. a group whose members often vote together – tends to have a greater influence in the European Parliament. By voting as a block, transnational groups can have a greater impact on votes.

Indeed, research on the European Parliament has shown that its transnational groups have relatively high levels of cohesion – that is, the members of each group often vote the same way.[26] This is surprising for all sorts of reasons – not least because the European Parliament is not part of a traditional parliamentary system and so group leaders have fewer powers to discipline their members. (They cannot, for instance, threaten the fall of the government as the leaders of parties in government potentially can in parliamentary systems.[27]) Moreover, the parties come from different national contexts and so there is a huge variety of ideological and cultural preferences in the European Parliament, suggesting that transnational groups will have a hard time getting along. Yet it appears they do. Research shows that, for the large groups, group cohesion has increased over the years in spite of ideological variation becoming larger.[28] The political cleavages in the EP have emerged more along the traditional left–right divide and less along national lines.[29]

The EFD is the main political group containing populist radical right elements. Most of the other populist

radical right MEPs are non-attached, in part because there are not enough of them to form a separate group. So how does the EFD fit into this story of growing cohesion in the European Parliament? Before looking closer at the data, it is useful to understand how the EFD presents itself. In its statutes, the EFD group states that it is:

Committed to the principles of democracy, freedom and co-operation among Nation States, the Group favours an open, transparent, democratic and accountable co-operation among sovereign European States and rejects the bureaucratisation of Europe and the creation of a single centralised European superstate.[30]

It also states that it is:

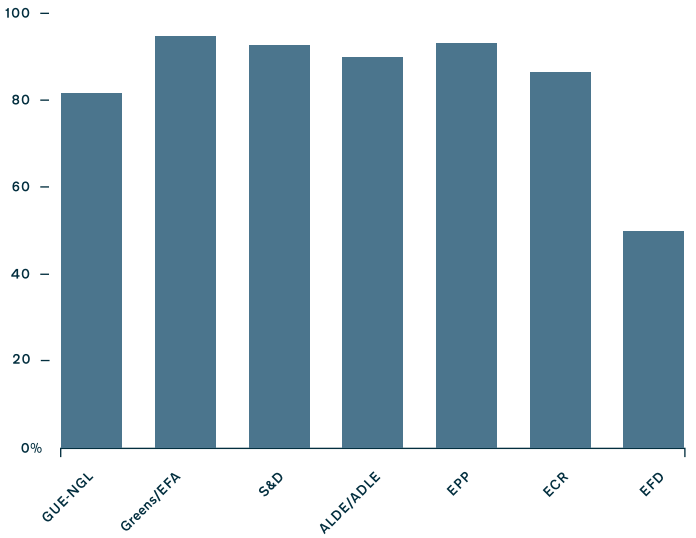
Convinced that the legitimate level for democracy lies with the Nation States, their regions and parliaments since there is no such thing as a single European people.[31]

The EFD also makes clear that it 'rejects xenophobia, anti-Semitism and any other form of discrimination' and that the 'Peoples and Nations of Europe have the right to protect their borders and strengthen their own historical, traditional, religious and cultural values'.[32] Finally, the group explains how 'Agreeing on embodying these principles in its proceedings, the Group respects the freedom of its delegations and Members to vote as they see fit'.[33] This suggests that the EFD in effect gives its members a free vote in the European Parliament.

The cohesion of the EFD

We now take a look at the data. Figure 1 depicts the comparative cohesion rates of the political groups in the European Parliament.

Fig 1 **Comparative cohesion rates of political groups in the European Parliament (14.07.09—14.07.12)**



Source: VoteWatch Europe

It is clear from this graph that the EFD group is by a significant margin the least cohesive of the seven political groups.

The size of the group is surely a factor in its low cohesiveness. The EFD group is small – made up of only 35 members[34] – and this makes it harder to influence policy and set the agenda. This gives it little reason to discipline its members and enforce voting. There is little at stake. But it seems unlikely that this is the only reason for its low cohesion, since the left-wing GUE-NGL group is of a similar size and has a much higher cohesion rate than the EFD group (though still lower than the other major political groups).

The reason appears to be more connected to the EFD's fourth statute, which, as stated earlier, says that

members can 'vote as they see fit'. With no discipline in place, cohesion is unlikely – particularly since, as Hix, Noury and Roland have argued, group discipline plays a key role in ensuring cohesion.[35] The EFD is therefore a rather different beast from the other political groups and its cohesion rate reflects this.

But, digging further, it is worth asking: why is the EFD run so differently from the other political groups? This brings us to deeper questions regarding how the populist radical right operates. There are three key reasons for why the EFD is a much looser arrangement than the other groups in the European Parliament: ideological variety, fear of stigmatisation, and national preference. We discuss each in turn.

Ideological variety

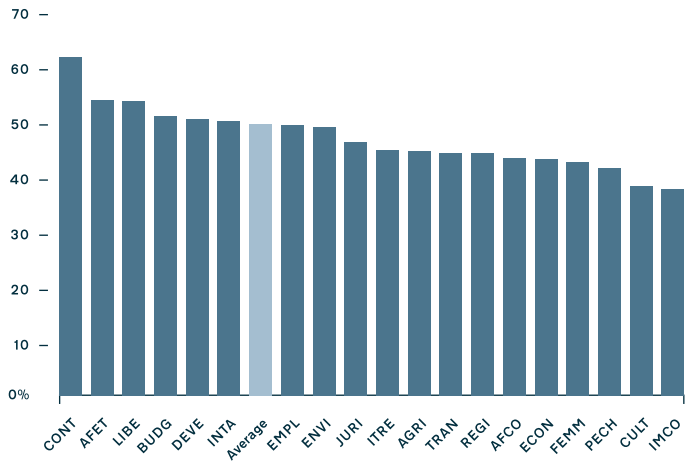
The populist radical right is well known to be a highly heterogeneous party family.[36] There is no consistent, complete ideology that connects all the parties in the family, and often such parties will vary wildly on a number of policy dimensions. On economic policy, for instance, some parties (such as the Finns Party, a borderline PRRP) tend to be economically more in line with traditional social democrats, while other parties are (or at least used to be) significantly more right-wing.[37] The Danish People's Party has shifted its economic policy significantly compared to the earlier Danish Progress Party.[38] Even on immigration policy, rhetoric and policy vary significantly from country to country and party to party – from the more moderate Finns Party to the far more radical BNP.

The EFD group itself is not made up just of parties from the populist radical right: it also contains other Eurosceptic and fringe groups. This creates even more diversity. For instance, expert survey analysis of the

national parties comprising the EFD shows that UKIP and the Danish People's Party sit on opposite sides of the economic left–right spectrum.[39] Indeed, as set out by the statutes, the perspective that really unites EFD members is Euroscepticism (although even here the national parties vary on their exact policies, with some desiring withdrawal from the European Union and others arguing for reform).[40] Therefore it is unsurprising that the group gives its members free votes; it is hard to envisage how disciplining MEPs to vote a certain way could work with such a diverse membership.

When analysing the cohesiveness of the EFD across different policy areas (see Fig 2), it is on the issue of budgetary control that the group is most consistent. Given that the group is broadly united by its opposition to 'the bureaucratisation of Europe', it is understandable that it is most cohesive when it comes to scrutinising the EU's annual budget: for it is to be expected that most members will agree that the EU is (to some degree) a waste of money. But even here the group's cohesion rate is relatively low.

Fig 2 **EFD cohesion rates across policy areas (Sept. 2009 — July 2012)**



Source: VoteWatch Europe

Fear of stigmatisation

Parties in the European Parliament that form groups run a real risk of being tarnished by their fellow MEPs in their national political contexts. For the EFD, this is a particularly high risk, because some of its members are regularly labelled 'far right' in the European media.[41] Mainstream parties therefore, according to one MEP, 'risk their own reputation in Europe' by associating with these parties.[42]

A recent article on UKIP in the UK newspaper *The Guardian* illustrates this problem. The article highlights both UKIP's association with the United Poland party and the Lega Nord in the EFD, and in turn these parties' associations with homophobic remarks. A spokesperson for UKIP responded by saying of the EFD group: 'It is a marriage of convenience, so we get speaking time in the parliament. There is no necessity for commonality of policy.'[43] Hence it is in the interest of some EFD members – in particular, those that are recognised as mainstream players in their national contexts – to have as loose a relationship as possible with their colleagues in the political group, while at the same time recognising the benefits of being in such a group. Specifically, these benefits include the amount of speaking time UKIP MEPs receive, as well as financial benefits. Indeed, this has caused significant tensions for some former UKIP MEPs – Nikki Sinclaire, who was elected as a UKIP MEP in 2009, was ousted from the party over her refusal to ally herself with parties she labelled as having 'a variety of extreme views', as well as over other internal party disputes.[44]

In another case, Timo Soini, former MEP and leader of the borderline populist radical right Finns Party (a member of the EFD) recently said at a talk at the LSE in London that he could not be in the same political group with parties such as Hungary's extreme right Jobbik.[45]

This is a phenomenon that does not apply just to the EFD – it is a challenge for any efforts on the part of the populist radical right to form international alliances. Guilt by association and stigmatisation will hamper any effort for alliances across the populist radical right. Of course, failed alliances may well be down to genuine ideological differences. But while in some contexts parties will welcome transnational alliances and accept a degree of ideological diversity, there is an extra limitation for a party contemplating forming alliances with a party considered to be populist radical right. It is much harder to overlook differences in beliefs when it is known that others will do their best to shine a spotlight on them in order to undermine the parties involved. This in part explains the large number of non-attached MEPs from the populist radical right in the European Parliament – no other party will dare get close to them.

National preference

The EFD states in its statutes that it allows members to vote as they choose because this is a way of 'embodying these [the EFD group's] principles in its proceedings'.[46] The group therefore appears to believe that, since there is no 'single European people', then, just as nation states should decide their own affairs, individual MEPs should decide how to represent their electorates without any overarching European control. This is an instance of the general principle that nationalist parties can be disinclined to work together closely, for the simple reason that their *raison d'être* means that they do not believe that other countries should interfere in their affairs – in itself creating an immediate barrier for cooperation. This, according to Catherine Fieschi, is 'the price of nationalism'.[47]

Conclusion

These three factors – ideological diversity, fear of stigmatisation, and national preference – all play an important role in understanding the cohesion of the EFD. Indeed, as we have argued, they apply more generally too. Former attempts to form political groups containing populist radical right members have faced similar problems.

In the 1984–89 parliament, Front National leader Jean-Marie Le Pen was able to form a 'Groupe des Droites Européennes', but in the early 1990s arguments and tensions between the various parties made cooperation difficult.[48] For instance, the German Republikaners and the Italian MSI fell out over South Tyrol.[49] After the 1994 European Parliament elections, the Italian National Alliance, then part of national government, feared the stigma attached to being connected to parties such as the Front National, again helping to prevent an alliance.[50] More recently, the 'Identity, Tradition, Sovereignty' group faced ideological tensions between its Western and Eastern members before its collapse.[51] And a recent attempt by the populist radical right to form a new European political party (called the Alliance of European National Movements) and hence receive EU funding has faced a severe backlash from anti-fascist organisations.[52]

The results from this chapter suggest that the populist radical right faces significant barriers to forming strong alliances in the European Parliament. Some populist radical right MEPs are in a group (the EFD) with a low cohesion rate and others are not attached to a group at all. How great a weakness this is can be understood only by surveying the populist radical right's other activities in the EP. In the next chapter we will examine in greater depth how populist radical right politicians impact on policy in the European Parliament.

4

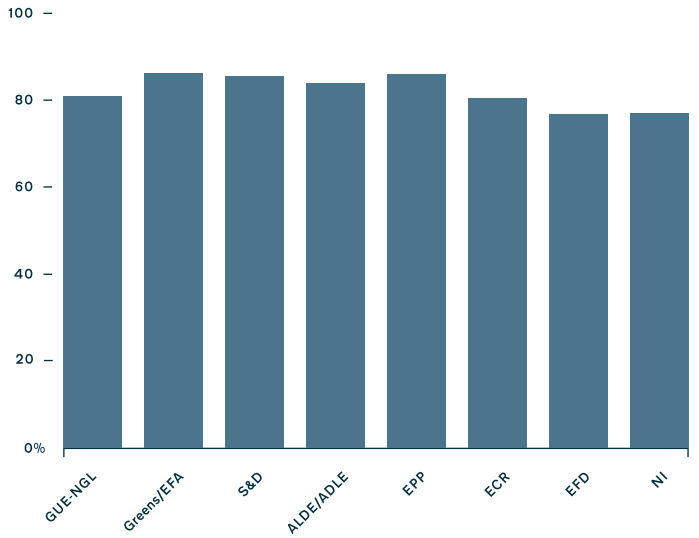
Assessing the policy impact

PRRPs face a conundrum in the European Parliament: how to interact inside an institution they are hostile to? We saw in Chapter 2 that often this manifests itself in anti-consensus voting. But how effective is the populist radical right when it comes to actually influencing policy decisions? In this chapter we will analyse roll-call voting data to determine how the populist radical right's voting behaviour impacts on policy. We will examine to what degree populist radical right MEPs participate in voting in the EP plenary sessions, who they tend to vote with in the EP, how regularly their votes are successful, how often they draft reports and opinions, and how often they push amendments through to legislation.

Participation in voting in the EP plenary

We have already seen from the last chapter that PRRPs are a disparate bunch in the European Parliament. This in itself means that the MEPs are likely to find it harder to achieve their policy goals. Analysis of MEPs' participation in roll-call votes in the EP plenary reveals that MEPs from the EFD and those who are non-attached voted less regularly than MEPs from the other parties (see Fig 3). By not participating as actively, populist radical right MEPs – who in any case form only a small proportion of the total number of representatives in the EP – reduce their influence further.

Fig 3 **Participation in roll-call votes in the EP plenary (14.07.09 — 14.07.12)**

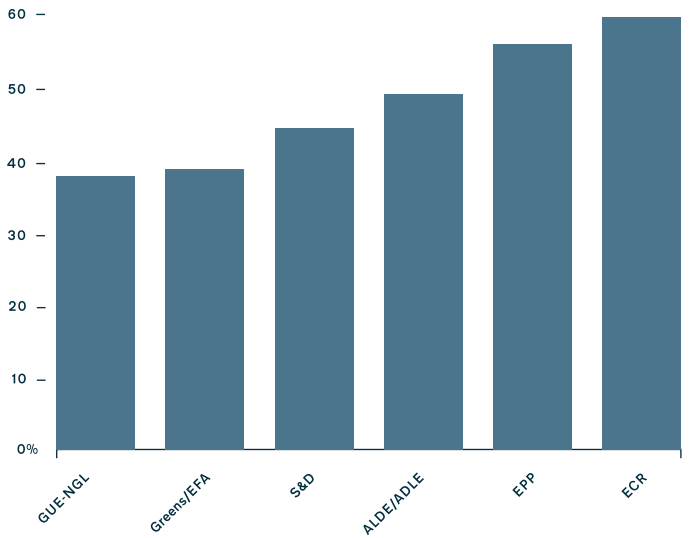


Source: VoteWatch Europe

Voting patterns in the EP plenary

But when EFD MEPs do vote, *how* do they vote? We saw in Chapter 2 that a number of populist radical right and EFD MEPs tended to be anti-consensus in some particular votes. Now we compare the EFD with the other European political groups across all policy areas to see which groups the EFD agrees with most.

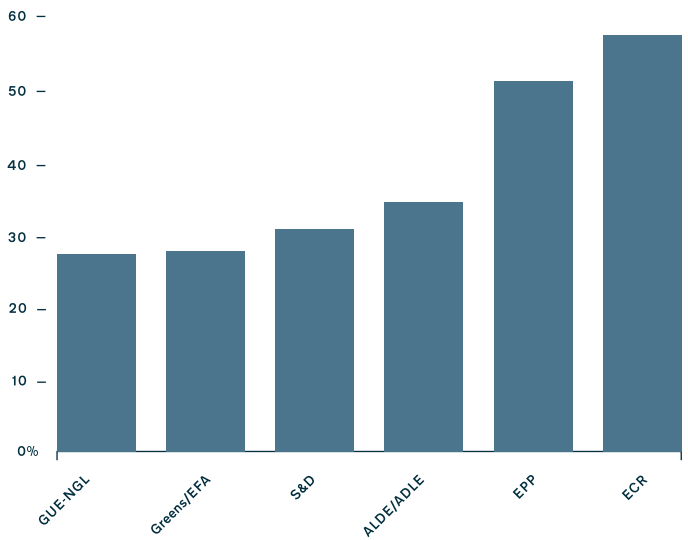
Fig 4 **EFD matching other European party groups on all policy areas[53] (14.07.09 — 14.07.12)**



Source: VoteWatch Europe

It is clear from Figure 4 that the EFD is most closely aligned with the more right-wing political groups – it matches the right-wing ECR group and the centre-right EPP group the most and the radical left GUE-NGL the least. In fact, an even wider gap opens between the EFD and the left-wing groups in the European Parliament when we look at only one of the core policy areas of the populist radical right: civil liberties, justice and home affairs (see Fig 5).

Fig 5 **EFD matching other European party groups on civil liberties, justice & home affairs (14.07.09 — 14.07.12)**

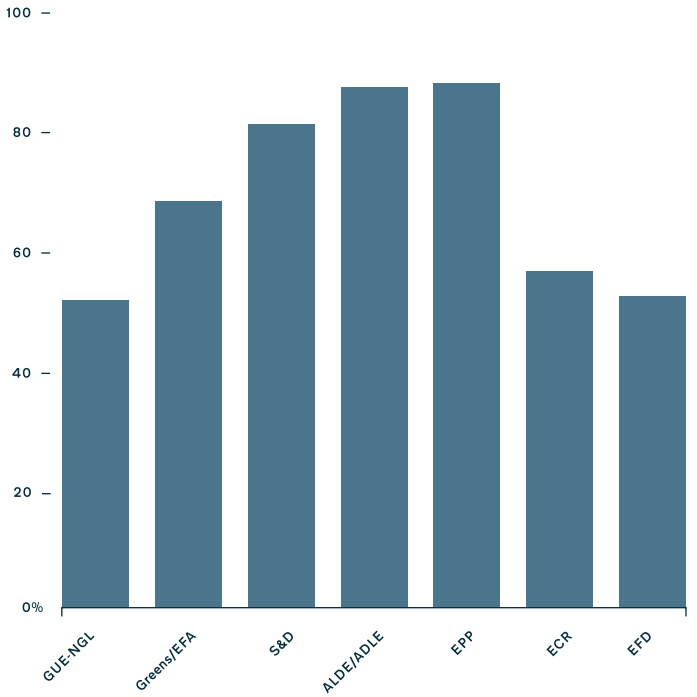


Source: VoteWatch Europe

This is not surprising given what is known about the policy preferences of the EFD group. Expert survey analysis of the EFD group, for instance, places the EFD on the right of the political spectrum, not too far from the ECR.[54] Further, parties within the EFD have formed arrangements with right-wing parties in their national governments. The Danish People's Party, for instance, until recently supported a centre-right coalition government in Denmark.[55]

But, despite this overlap with the centre right, the EFD is not as likely to be in the winning majority in the European Parliament. In fact, both the political groups that tend to be furthest from the middle struggle to win votes when compared to their more centrist counterparts (see Fig 7).

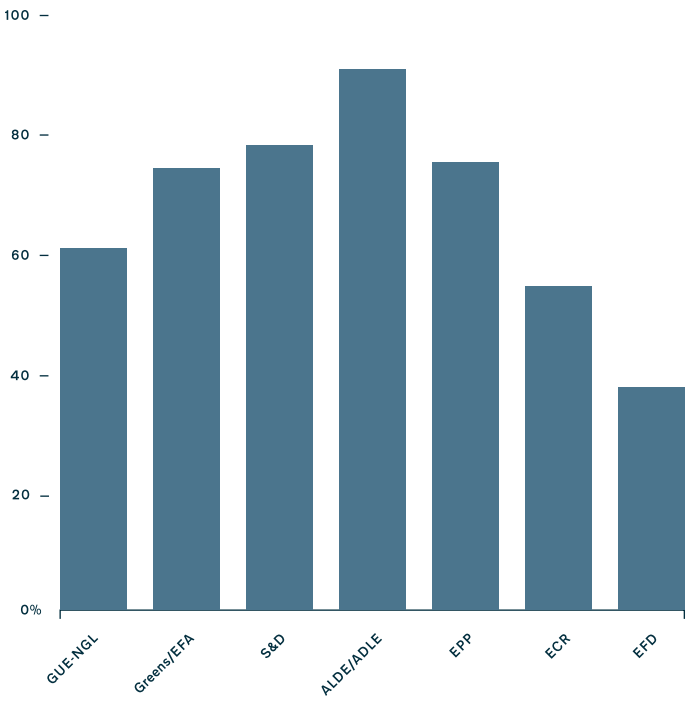
Fig 6 **Percentage of votes won by each of the political groups on all policy areas (14.07.09 — 14.07.12)**



Source: VoteWatch Europe

The EFD group is distinctively isolated in the civil liberties, justice and home affairs policy area. In this area, it appears that the distance between the EFD and the other groups across the political spectrum makes it particularly hard for the EFD to win votes (see Fig 7). Here it seems that the EFD is dramatically outnumbered.

Fig 7 **Percentage of votes won by each of the political groups on civil liberties, justice & home affairs (14.07.09 — 14.07.12)**



Source: VoteWatch Europe

Policy work in the European Parliament is not, though, just about voting in the plenary session. MEPs can also set the agenda in committees by drafting reports and making amendments to legislation proposed by the Commission. We now turn to look at how influential the populist radical right is at the committee stage.

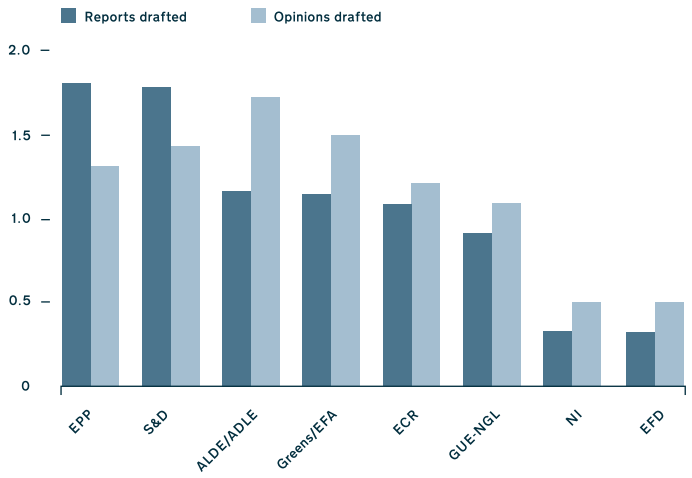
In the Committees: reports and opinions

It is in the committees of the European Parliament where the first stage of EP policy-making takes place. Before continuing, it is worth giving a brief description of how the committees typically work. For each legislative or non-legislative report, a committee assigns an MEP to the position of *rapporteur*. The *rapporteur* is given the responsibility of tabling the first draft of the proposal and is therefore a highly influential figure. *Rapporteurships* are selected via an auction, where the European political groups compete to be able to draft reports. Points are awarded to a report depending on its importance – the more important, the more points are assigned to the report. The political groups each have a number of points according to their size and can bid for different reports. Hence the larger political groups find it significantly easier to win the most crucial reports. The political group that wins the report then chooses an MEP from its group to become the *rapporteur*.[56]

Sometimes, proposals impact on multiple policy areas; in these cases, one committee is given responsibility for the report as per usual, while the committees responsible for the other policy areas that the report affects again appoint a committee member to the position of *rapporteur* to table an opinion. In the case of opinions, *rapporteurs* are appointed using the same method as with reports.

It is fairly clear, then, that the more reports and opinions drafted, the more influence a political group has in the European Parliament. As smaller groups will necessarily find it harder to win reports and opinions due to the bidding process favouring groups of a larger size, this is factored in by looking at the average number of reports and opinions drafted per MEP.

Fig 8 **Average number of reports per MEP for each of the political groups**



Source: VoteWatch Europe

Yet, even when factoring in group size, the non-attached MEPs and the MEPs from the EFD group clearly draft fewer reports and opinions (see Fig 8). This could be in part because the larger groups exert disproportionately greater influence over the policy-making process. But the EFD and non-attached MEPs draft fewer reports than the GUE-NGL, another small political group. A first analysis of policy influence at the committee stage therefore suggests that the populist radical right has little clout here. But policy can also be influenced at a later stage – when legislation is put forward to the EP plenary.

Amendments to legislation in the EP plenary

Proposing amendments to legislation at the plenary stage is one of the key ways parties in the European

Parliament can further influence the policy-making agenda.[57] But as Table 6 shows, the EFD has the lowest approval rate out of all the political groups. Only two of its proposed amendments were adopted between September 2009 and July 2012. Indeed, this is a better record than the non-attached members, who cannot table any amendments owing to their not being in a political group.

Table 6 **Rate of adoption of amendments drafted in the EP plenary[58] (September 2009–July 2012)**

Political group	Total	Approved	Approval rate
EPP	98	59	60.2%
S&D	107	48	44.9%
ALDE/ADLE	37	11	29.7%
ECR	123	25	20.3%
Greens/EFA	108	18	16.7%
GUE-NGL	184	10	5.4%
EFD	65	2	3.1%

Source: VoteWatch Europe

With respect to the two amendments that have been successful, the first was a technical amendment tabled by EFD co-chair and Lega Nord politician Francesco Enrico Speroni, asking for further conditions on a proposal on the 'Indication of the country of origin of certain products imported from third countries'.[59]

The second amendment was part of the 2010 European Parliament discharge report. The amendment, from Frank Vanhecke, noted that 'while it has been

claimed that written questions from the public are in general answered within two weeks, there is at present no system in place whereby questions from Members to the President or the Secretary-General are answered in the same amount of time'.[60]

Neither of these amendments appears particularly controversial, and indeed the latter is purely focused on the internal politics of the European Union rather than wider policy areas. Therefore, the results from both the analysis of committee activities and amendments at the plenary stage suggest that the populist radical right has little political weight in the European Parliament.

This lack of impact can be explained by a range of factors. It appears from Table 6 that the smaller political groups' amendment approval rates are very low. Indeed, this is an instance of a more general phenomenon whereby the smaller political groups are edged out of the policy-making process.[61] As a small group, the EFD is a highly limited political force, with the 'big three' political groups (i.e. the EPP, S&D and ALDE) dominating policy-making in the EP. As explained earlier, the key role of *rapporteur* is assigned in large part on the basis of a political group's size. MEPs who are not attached to any political group face even greater marginalisation. Non-attached members, for instance, are in effect barred from the meetings between group coordinators determining which political group will get which report.[62]

Yet the marginalisation of the EFD is not just down to the fact that it is one of the smaller groups in the European Parliament. It can also be explained in part by the ostracising of the populist radical right. Populist radical right MEPs live in 'splendid isolation' in the EP, according to one MEP,[63] and there tends to be an informal convention on the part of the other MEPs to avoid them.[64] Brack notes with respect to Eurosceptic MEPs that 'there is a sort of *cordon sanitaire*, especially

around radical right members, as the majority of the MEPs are hostile to their presence in the EP'.[65] This means that these MEPs have few opportunities to write reports and thereby influence the legislative process.

A further factor explaining the apparent low policy influence of the populist radical right is that their MEPs have little interest in influencing policy. Our initial argument centred on the conflict between MEPs' hostility towards the EU and their presence inside it. A natural response to this conflict would be to not participate in EP decision-making – why bother with technicalities when one has little interest in the whole institution? Indeed, this does appear to be the case for some populist radical right MEPs. The populist radical right is 'not active in European debates'[66] according to one MEP. Moreover, one populist radical right MEP, despite emphasising that in order to boost his credibility it was important for him to be active in the European Parliament, did recognise that drafting reports and opinions 'would be appropriate for MEPs who support the EU Project but much less so for those of us who oppose it'.[67]

Eurosceptic and anti-EU MEPs also tend to be less interested in policy work. Research by Nathalie Brack suggests that UKIP MEPs – among others – do not get involved in the policy element of the European Parliament. 'I don't want to be involved in the way it works. Being in charge of a report, you're becoming part of it and I don't want to be,' UKIP MEP John Bufton said to Brack in an interview.[68] Here the tension for these MEPs is palpable – for, although Bufton says he does not want to be part of the system, by occupying the very role of MEP he is doing exactly that. It seems, then, that some populist radical right and Eurosceptic MEPs will do anything they can to distance themselves from the workings of the EP, even if that means they have no influence.

Moreover, given the populist radical right's marginalisation in the European Parliament, a vicious circle could be at work that increasingly weakens their policy influence. On the one hand, as the other MEPs isolate them more in the EP, they build up further resentment to European institutions, further distancing themselves from the policy-making process. On the other hand, by involving themselves less in the committee reports and plenary decisions, they give the impression to the other MEPs that they have little interest in the substantive issues of the European Parliament, and so the other MEPs feel less uncomfortable about excluding them further.[69] This could lead to greater and greater marginalisation of the populist radical right politicians, even if they do increase their presence at the next European Parliament elections.

Making the difference

Having said this, there are cases where the populist radical right can make a difference in the European Parliament. This naturally tends to be on the more competitive votes – i.e. the votes where the large parties disagree. Here the smaller political groups and the non-attached MEPs can really change the outcome of a vote; in the cases where the large parties agree, they will easily outnumber any remaining dissenting MEPs. The following case study illustrates the former scenario.

Case study 1: Freedom of information in Italy

This case study – within the 'Civil liberties, justice and home affairs' policy area – is the 2009 European Parliament resolution on 'Freedom of information in Italy and in other EU member states'. A coalition of centre-left political groups (including ALDE, S&D, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL) put forward a joint motion

for resolution on freedom of expression and information pluralism, calling for action from the Commission. The centre left said they were 'concerned about the situation in Italy' and believed that the EU had a 'political and legal obligation' to ensure that the democratic right to freedom of information was honoured in all member states.[70]

The parties on the right (including EPP, ECR and EFD) saw the effort by the centre left as a thinly veiled partisan move to attack Berlusconi's government. Quoting Commissioner Reding, they argued, 'Members of the European Parliament should not "make use of the EU institutions to solve problems which should, under our Treaties, be solved at national level".'[71] (A related possible factor was that some MEPs – including Lega Nord MEPs, who make up a significant slice of the EFD cohort – belonged to parties that were part of the Italian government.) The EFD and the populist radical right non-attached MEPs voted against the resolution and – in part due to defections in the ALDE group[72] – it was defeated by a margin of three votes.

An 'empty heart'?

There are, however, other situations where the populist radical right sides with the centre left rather than the centre right. The following case study illustrates such a scenario, one which may become more important in the next parliament.

Case study 2: Adoption of the Economic Governance Package

In September 2011, in the wake of the financial crisis, the EP voted on the European Economic Governance Package. In response to Europe's economic problems, the package gave EU institutions greater power to monitor national budgets and implement sanctions in order to ensure member states adequately reduced their public debts.[73]

The centre right supported the package. However, they faced opposition on both sides of the political spectrum. For their part, centre left and left MEPs took issue with many of the package's provisions because they considered the policies proposed in response to Europe's economic crisis too focused on austerity. At the same time, Eurosceptic and populist radical right MEPs opposed the package because they believed it undermined national sovereignty.

Even so, both the EPP and the ALDE political groups voted for the package and, together with defections from the remaining groups, this was enough to achieve a simple majority in the EP. Yet they were not able to secure an absolute majority of all MEPs. This would have created complications if the Council had not agreed with the Parliament at the first reading. In the event, the Council did agree because it was dominated by centre-right ministers.

This case study suggests that in the future the centre right may well have to give further concessions to opposing political groups and MEPs to successfully push through legislation.

Of course, further changes are likely in the coming months and years as newly elected national governments and the 2014 European Parliament elections change the political make-up of EU institutions. It seems likely, however, that there will be further coalitions between both centre right and populist radical right, and centre left and populist radical right. This is often because the populist radical right's tendency to believe that EU laws violate national sovereignty aligns with particular disagreements on the right and on the left. For instance, in the first case study, an argument from the centre right accusing the left of partisan stirring coincided with a separate argument

(made by the populist radical right as well as the centre right) about the rights of member states to not be subject to EU interference. And in the second case study an economic argument from the centre left against the package coincided with a separate argument (made by the populist radical right) about member state sovereignty.

In fact, the populist radical right's alliances with both centre left and centre right in the European Parliament are indicative of a more general feature of populism and nationalism: their status as thin-centred ideologies – that is, bodies of thought that are not fully formed and that still leave some core political questions (typically questions of economic distribution and social justice) unanswered.[74] As such, populism and nationalism tend to attach themselves to other ideologies, both left and right. Populism has, in Paul Taggart's words, an 'empty heart', and can take a variety of forms.[75] Given this, it is unsurprising that populist radical right (as well as Eurosceptic) parties are willing to vote with both left and right in the EP. Their concerns – including a belief that EU institutions threaten national sovereignty – cut across the left–right divide.[76]

No blackmail power

Despite these instances where the populist radical right influenced the result in the European Parliament, in most cases the populist radical right vote does not prove decisive. The populist radical right can in general have an impact only when there is sufficient political influence from a mainstream group that happens to agree with the populist radical right MEPs. Given the dominance of the EPP, the S&D and the ALDE, Eurosceptics and the populist radical right have little 'blackmail power' over the other political groups, particularly in areas where the EP is less competitive and more consensual.[77]

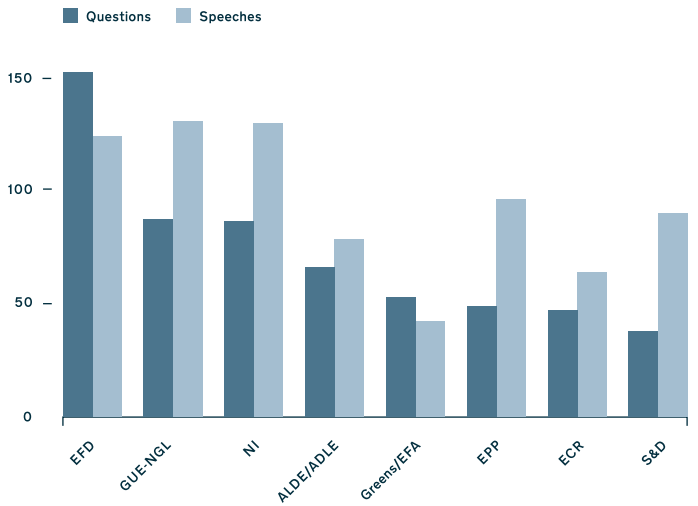
Populist radical right MEPs therefore have little influence over substantive issues in the EP – and, as discussed earlier, this appears to be a product of both their marginalisation by other MEPs and their low level of interest in participating in legislative processes. But perhaps this is not a problem for them. For it might be the case that, given their contrary position as MEPs and as critics of EU institutions, it is in their interest to distance themselves from the policy-making systems they are surrounded by in Brussels. In the next chapter, we examine another side of their role as MEPs – the opportunity they get as European representatives to publicise their worldviews.

5

Speaking out in the European Parliament

Apart from the other processes in the EP considered so far, MEPs also make speeches and give questions to the European Commission or the Council of Ministers as part of their plenary activities. Figure 9, which illustrates the average numbers of questions and speeches per MEP, paints a remarkably different picture from the results in Chapter 4.

Fig 9 **Average numbers of questions and speeches per MEP**



Source: VoteWatch Europe

In Chapter 4 we saw that MEPs from the EFD political group and non-attached MEPs – the proxies for the populist radical right in this report – tended not to participate in substantive activities such as drafting reports and opinions and participating in voting at the plenary. Here we see the opposite trend: MEPs from the EFD and non-attached MEPs (along with MEPs from the radical left GUE-NGL) are the most active in delivering speeches and asking questions.

This suggests the following natural explanation. Populist radical right MEPs, as we have emphasised, are caught between an aversion to the EU and working within the system as a member of the EP. To untangle themselves from their dilemma, the MEPs use their position primarily to promote their (often Eurosceptic) views to a wide audience, in particular to an audience from within their own country. By doing this, they position themselves as railing against the system from the inside.

Speeches from the populist radical right

A few examples of speeches from populist radical right MEPs illustrate the phenomenon we describe. Some MEPs target the European Union directly; others focus on other typically populist radical right issues; and still others merge concerns about the EU with issues such as immigration.

Do you recognise that instead of more peace, more friendship, there is increasing tension among the nations of Europe? Why is this? It is because your European Union is a totally artificial malignant institution that forces on European nations very malignant economic policies and a lack of self-determination. That is the root cause, Mr Swoboda.

Krisztina Morvai, Jobbik, 13 March 2012 [78]

After all, immigrants from non-Member States are allowed to enter Europe without visas, get free access to our health care system, as well as the right to benefits, work after the end of their volunteering period and, indeed, have the right to form a family. We as citizens are mainly supposed to show solidarity for this influx of 'intercultural enrichment' and then this Parliament finds it strange that citizens are increasingly turning away from Europe. Mr President, we, the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) are not surprised in the least. You just keep up the good work; the European élite state will collapse all the sooner.

Lucas Hartong, PVV, 12 June 2012 [79]

Over and above myself, I feel ashamed for our institution. It is mired in political correctness. There is no confrontation of ideas. There is no real freedom of expression. It is all about conformism. We spend our time doing work that would be far better done by a technical agency responsible for harmonising standards or rules and, other than that, we play at being the United Nations. You defend human rights in Guatemala and Indonesia – anywhere in the world where you have no jurisdiction. You are incapable of defending the rights of one of your Members. I feel ashamed for this Parliament; it is a useless Parliament and a Parliament of useless people.

Bruno Gollnisch, Front National, speech on 10 July 2011 on whether he should receive parliamentary immunity [80]

Mr President, Baroness Ashton, ladies and gentlemen, in the prevailing relativism of European politics, there is one word that is taboo: Christianophobia... Wake up, wretched Europe, and remember your Christian roots!

Mario Borghezio, Lega Nord, 19 January 2011 [81]

As with PRRPs, Eurosceptic and anti-EU MEPs use their positions as platforms to promote their opposition to the EU. The UKIP delegation is particularly prominent in this regard. UKIP leader and EFD co-chair Nigel

Farage has become infamous for his provocative speeches in the European Parliament.[82]

These speeches are meant to send a powerful message. Indeed, the more outspoken and outrageous they are, the more likely they will be covered by the national and international media. 'They [populist radical right MEPs] want to use it as a platform to spout propaganda,' said one MEP.[83] Furthermore, giving unnecessary speeches is in itself one way of disrupting proceedings and distracting the European institutions from substantive work. Therefore the speeches potentially achieve two goals: externally, they spread the party's message; internally, they may disrupt the normal parliamentary process.

Tying the story together

The explanation that grandstanding is a key function of the populist radical right in the EP is also supported by much of the analysis of the preceding chapters.

In Chapter 2, we examined the degree to which, on a number of their key issues, the populist radical right voted against the consensus. Making controversial speeches in the EP on these issues is a natural complement to some populist radical right MEPs' anti-consensus politics. One hypothesis based on the content of the speeches is that there could be a correlation between anti-consensus voting and the degree of hostility of MEPs' speeches. (The Greater Romania Party, for instance, rarely voted against the consensus and we could find little evidence of antagonistic anti-EU speeches from the party in the parliamentary records, while the MEPs who gave the speeches listed above all come from parties that ranked highly on the anti-consensus measures in Chapter 2.) Of course, this hypothesis needs systematic testing in order to verify it.

Then, in Chapter 3, we studied the cohesion of the EFD, which, as we have previously emphasised, is a political group containing both anti-EU and populist radical right elements. The EFD, we saw, has low cohesion and no real group discipline – members can vote as they choose. UKIP sources explained this by saying that the only reason the group exists is that it increases the speaking time allotted to the party. Indeed, the UKIP source we contacted explicitly stated that this enables Nigel Farage to give speeches to influential figures in the EU and other senior politicians, thereby increasing the likelihood of coverage both in the traditional media and online.[84] This demonstrates the importance of delivering speeches for anti-EU parties like UKIP: they are willing to form alliances with parties considered less reputable in their home countries (i.e. populist radical right parties like Lega Nord and the Danish People's Party, in UKIP's case) in order to get more speaking time. The evidence we have laid out above suggests that speaking time is not just important for UKIP – it is crucial for PRRPs too.

Finally, in Chapter 4 we saw how the populist radical right struggles to make an impact on substantive decision-making in the EP. Our argument in this chapter is that populist radical right MEPs – conflicted as they are by their dual obligations – attempt to use their position inside the system as a tool for advocating their political visions and often criticising the institutions they themselves are a part of. In a sense, they behave more like campaigners than policy-makers. To become involved in substantive issues would risk truly becoming part of the system. Or, to look at it the other way round, an MEP marginalised from the decision-making process may turn more often to speeches and questions as the only way of making their voice heard. Either way, the results from Chapter 4 align naturally with the analysis of speeches and questions given here.

Absentees, public orators and pragmatists

It is important, however, to not over-emphasise the populist radical right's fondness for grandstanding and speechmaking. Recent research by Nathalie Brack on Eurosceptic MEPs in the European Parliament (ranging from parties such as UKIP to radical right parties such as Vlaams Belang) identifies three 'ideal types' of Eurosceptic MEPs: absentees, public orators, and pragmatists.[85] The second category of public orator clearly aligns the most with the argument in this chapter. Brack says that these MEPs want to 'de-legitimize the institution through public speeches'.[86] They also try to get dirt on EU institutions by exploiting their insider position – something that the populist radical right MEP we contacted also suggested.[87] But Brack makes a strong case for the other two ideal types of MEPs – absentees and pragmatists – as well.

Absentees are, we think, close cousins of public orators: they are distinguished by a concern for national politics and a lack of participation in parliamentary activities, and so have little interest in the decision-making process of the EP.[88] The 'absentee' response to the dilemma facing populist radical right MEPs is to distance themselves as much as possible from the European Parliament. Party leaders, who of course have a busy schedule and other responsibilities, fall into this category, such as the Front National's Marine Le Pen.

More different are the pragmatists – those MEPs who are willing to engage in substantive parliamentary activities and involve themselves in committee work. For instance, Brack quotes a Vlaams Belang MEP as saying: 'I think we have to work in the legislative work as well as the control function of the parliament.'[89] (Although it should be noted that some of the MEPs Brack classifies as pragmatists are Eurosceptics rather than populist radical right MEPs.) Despite the institutional challenges

discussed in Chapter 4 and the conflicted position they find themselves in, it appears that some populist radical right MEPs are willing to get stuck in to technical policy work. It could be that for these MEPs the price of being subject to the accusation of 'being part of the system' is worth paying for the credibility and legitimacy that this work offers.

Furthermore, those populist radical right MEPs who lean towards the 'public orator' model may struggle to achieve their goals. One populist radical right MEP told us that, while he aimed to get publicity for his speeches in the European Parliament, this was difficult given the unwillingness of the media to cover the activities of the EP.[90] This of course is a major problem for populist radical right MEPs who put great weight on promoting their views to a wider audience.

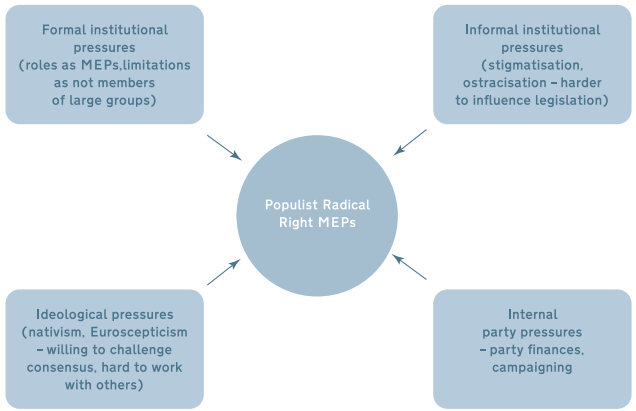
Still, this analysis – in particular, the results expressed in Figure 9 – does suggest that there is a tendency for populist radical right (and Eurosceptic) MEPs to follow the 'public orator' ideal, when compared to other MEPs. Brack notes that British Eurosceptic MEPs (including UKIP MEPs) are particularly likely to fall into this category, possibly because they are used to the 'Westminster style' of politics dominant in the UK.[91] The publicity and speechmaking centred approach appears to be a common solution to the dilemma initially proposed in this report: the inherent conflict populist radical right MEPs who are hostile to the EU face when they take a key role in one of its most important institutions.

6

Conclusions and recommendations

In this report we have analysed the voting behaviour and parliamentary activities of populist radical right MEPs. As there was no straightforward way of delineating these MEPs given they were not part of one political group, we looked at the EFD and the non-attached members as proxies. The conclusions from the analysis are summarised in Figure 10.

Fig 10 **Summary of analysis**



In the European Parliament, populist radical right members are in a bind. They face internal ideological pressures: their value systems – typically nativist in

nature[92] – often conflict with EU institutions and make it hard to work with other populist radical right MEPs. On top of this, they face pressures from their party. They often need to use their role as MEPs to shore up party finances and advertise their party's profile and message.

They also face institutional pressures, both formal and informal. Formally, their role as MEPs automatically gives them a key position within the European Parliament. In addition, not being part of one of the large political groups creates formal restrictions on policy influence – for instance, due to the key role of *rapporteur* being allocated on the basis of the size of a political group. Informally, the MEPs are ostracised by their colleagues and accordingly face even greater marginalisation when it comes to substantive activities and the day-to-day workings of the European Parliament.

Given these various pressures, it is natural that one common way of responding is to use the opportunities of giving speeches and asking questions at the plenary as a platform for promoting their (regularly Eurosceptic) worldviews, in the hope they will be picked up by the national and international media – or even just receive a lot of views on YouTube. A similar model applies to Eurosceptic MEPs, although there are some clear differences – one being that they are less likely to face stigmatisation from other EU politicians.

Recommendations

Keeping in mind the European Parliamentary elections in 2014, what are the potential practical results and recommendations of the analysis for European politicians and policy-makers? We make four suggestions.

Beware forming cross-national alliances with populist radical right parties

Parties risk their own legitimacy and standing by forming alliances – whether these are political groups in the EP, European political parties or more informal alliances – with PRRPs. As we noted earlier in Chapter 3, parties such as UKIP have received considerable negative attention for their connections with PRRPs in the EP. This kind of coverage is likely to increase as the European Parliament elections near, and could do significant damage to the credibility of any party.

Of course, there are strong reasons to form political groups – including increased speaking time. But given the risks to credibility and legitimacy, it could be in the best interests of all parties (populist radical right or not) to distance themselves from parties they find xenophobic, distasteful or extreme.

Greater transparency in EP voting to reduce criticisms of lack of democratic accountability

Further transparency in voting in the European Parliament is highly recommended – for instance, ensuring more votes are made by roll call, as VoteWatch Europe has suggested.[93] This will undermine accusations made by the populist radical right that the EP is undemocratic and opaque. At the same time it will shed more light on the populist radical right's parliamentary activities.

Strong verbal responses to grandstanding by the populist radical right

At times it appears that MEPs are unsure how to respond to the populist radical right. A belief that the populist radical right should be challenged can conflict with a concern that by getting too angry MEPs would be playing into their hands by helping to create a more engaging scene for the cameras.[94]

If MEPs do not respond to the populist radical right then they are in danger of looking weak and ineffectual. MEPs are in all likelihood better off taking the risk and making a stand against populist radical right grandstanding than deciding not to act at all. At the same time, of course, the kind of response is also important: we would, in particular, recommend one that is courteous and well researched.

The problem is responsiveness, not policy impact

Finally, we emphasise that, despite expressions of alarm in the media, the coming elections need not lead to a dramatic rise in influence of populist radical right forces in the European Parliament. In all likelihood, there will be a number of populist radical right gains in 2014, including for instance the Front National and Golden Dawn. (Though, as we argued in *Recapturing the Reluctant Radical*, populist radical right parties are not necessarily on an upward trend in all European countries.[95]) Yet, even with a significant gain in representation, the analysis presented here indicates that the multiple pressures the populist radical right now faces in the EP will most likely continue into the next parliament. This means that it still may well have little influence over the policy-making process.

However, the presence of the populist radical right in the European Parliament creates another problem for European politicians. The fact that these MEPs have little influence in the European Parliament rightly or wrongly reinforces the impression that EU policy-making is closed and unrepresentative. If European voters send a much larger cohort of populist radical right and Eurosceptic representatives to the EP in 2014 and if, as this report suggests, this has little impact on EP policy-making, then some voters might wonder what it is they can do to have any bearing whatsoever on the workings

of the European Parliament. The difficulty for the European Parliament with respect to the populist radical right is not a question of policy, but rather a question of what the EP can do to show that it is responsive to the electorate. This is the ultimate challenge for those MEPs who care about a tolerant and open Europe.

Notes

1 Bilefsky, 'In Finland, EU critic is gaining a following'

2 Van Rompuy, 'A temple for Europe'

3 Cited in Lahav, *Immigration and Politics in the New Europe: Reinventing Borders*, p. 113

4 Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, p. 159

5 Ibid, p. 159

6 Ibid, pp. 162–65

7 Fieschi, Morris and Caballero, *Recapturing the Reluctant Radical: How to Win Back Europe's Populist Vote*

8 See Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*

9 'How much is enough?', *Economist*

10 The list of MEPs is taken from the European Parliament website (last updated 12 April 2013). There may be some mismatches with the data later presented due to recent movements between the political groups. The information for the classification is taken mainly from Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, Appendix A. The Democratic Unionist Party in Northern Ireland is not mentioned in the appendix, but is categorised as populist radical right in Chapter 2. The PVV and Jobbik were not mentioned in Mudde's classification as it was written in 2007. However, later work by Mudde classifies these parties as radical right, and the same text calls the Finns Party a borderline case, so we have placed these classifications in italics. See Mudde, *The Relationship Between Immigration and Nativism in Europe and North America*

11 True Finns, 'Fitting for the Finns – the True Finns' election programme for the parliamentary election 2011 / Summary'

12 See note 10

13 For instance, UK Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg described the group as made up of 'nutters, homophobes and anti-Semites' in a pre-election TV debate (Banks, 'Clegg told to apologise to Tory EU group over "nutters" jibe')

14 Bale, Hanley and Szczerbiak, '"May Contain Nuts"? The reality behind the rhetoric surrounding the British Conservatives' new group in the European Parliament'

15 Ford, 'Euroscepticism is now a powerful force for the radical right in the UK – and UKIP is well placed to harness it'

16 Cas Mudde puts nativism and populism as core elements of populist radical right ideology. See Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, Chapter 1

17 For other discussions of this conflict, see Brack, 'Euroscepticism at the supranational level: the case of the "Untidy Right" in the European Parliament'; or Startin, 'Where to for the radical right in the European Parliament? The rise and fall of transnational political cooperation'

18 See e.g. Startin, Ibid

19 See, for instance, 'Pour Marine Le Pen, "le système UMPS" tourne au "radeau de la medusa"'

20 Hix, Noury and Roland, *Democratic Politics in the European Parliament*, Chapter 8

21 Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, Chapter 3

22 Some of the smaller parties in the table have lower scores than expected. This is due to their members not being present for some of the votes.

23 'Greece swears in unity cabinet and PM Lucas Papademos', *BBC News*

24 See Verseck, 'Anti-semitism in Parliament: Hungary's far-right rhetoric reaches new dimension'

25 Hewitt, 'Finland rocks the EU'

26 Hix, Noury and Roland, 'Power to the parties: cohesion and competition in the European Parliament, 1979–2001'; Scully, 'Beyond cohesion: party discipline and dissent in the European Parliament'

27 Hix, Noury and Roland, Ibid, pp. 211–12

28 Ibid

29 Hix, Noury and Roland, *Democratic Politics in the European Parliament*, Chapter 9

30 See www.efdgroup.eu/index.php/about-us/who-we-are/charter.html

31 Ibid

32 Ibid

33 Ibid

34 See www.efdgroup.eu/members.html (last updated 15 April 2013)

35 Hix, Noury and Roland, *Democratic Politics in the European Parliament*, pp. 101–02

36 See e.g. Arzheimer, 'Working class parties 2.0? Competition between centre left and extreme right parties', p. 1

37 Paloheimo, 'Populist parties in the Nordic countries: ideological differences and profiles of committed, reluctant and potential supporters'

38 Andersen, 'The Danish People's Party and new cleavages in Danish politics', see http://vbn.aau.dk/files/14109015/widfeldt_-_FINAL.pdf

39 McElroy and Benoit, 'Policy positioning in the European Parliament'

40 Email exchange with UKIP source, Jan 2013

41 See, e.g. 'Far-right MEPs form group in European Parliament', *EurActiv*

42 Interview with Leonidas Donskis, 10 Jan 2013

43 Helm and Hooper, 'Nigel Farage heads for row over UKIP's anti-gay allies'

44 'Rebel Euro MP Nikki Sinclaire expelled by UKIP', *BBC News*

45 Soini, 'What I think about the EU and the Euro?'

46 See www.efdgroup.eu/index.php/about-us/who-we-are/charter.html

47 Fieschi, 'European institutions: the far-right and illiberal politics in a liberal context', p. 523

48 Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, pp. 177–78

49 Ibid, p. 178; Fieschi, 'European institutions: the far-right and illiberal politics in a liberal context', p. 523

50 Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, p. 178

51 Startin, 'Where to for the radical right in the European Parliament? The rise and fall of transnational political cooperation'

52 Hope not Hate, 'Take action to stop the BNP getting €400,000'

53 Measures the extent to which the political line of the selected European Party group (expressed through roll-call votes) matches those of the other groups

54 McElroy and Benoit, 'Policy positioning in the European Parliament'

55 'Denmark's immigration issue', *BBC News*

56 Hix, Noury and Roland, *Democratic Politics in the European Parliament*, Chapter 6

57 Ibid, Chapter 6

58 The figures refer only to those amendments drafted by a single European political group at a time, i.e. amendments put forward together by a combination of two or more political groups are not counted.

59 See www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+AMD+A7-2010-0273+046-050+DOC+PDF+V0//EN (amendment 48)

60 See www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+AMD+A7-2012-0120+009-015+DOC+PDF+V0//EN (amendment 14)

61 See, e.g. Yordanova, 'Plenary "Amendments" to Committee Reports: legislative powers of the European Parliament Committees'

62 Brack, 'Euroscepticism at the supranational level: the case of the "Untidy Right" in the European Parliament', p. 90

63 Interview with Leonidas Donskis, 10 Jan 2013

64 Interview with Richard Howitt, 15 Jan 2013

65 Brack, 'Euroscepticism at the supranational level: the case of the "Untidy Right" in the European Parliament', p. 89

66 Interview with Leonidas Donskis, 10 Jan 2013

67 Email exchange with populist radical right MEP, 1 Feb 2013

68 Brack, 'Euroscepticism at the supranational level: the case of the "Untidy Right" in the European Parliament', p. 98

69 Brack says, for instance, that 'other MEPs do not expect them [Eurosceptic MEPs] to be involved within the parliament'. Brack, 'Euroscepticism at the supranational level: the case of the "Untidy Right" in the European Parliament', p. 90

70 See, e.g. www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?language=EN&reference=RC-B7-0090/2009

71 See www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=MOTION&reference=P7-RC-2009-0088&language=EN

72 'Parliament votes down EU moves on press freedom', *EurActiv*

73 European Commission, Economic and Financial Affairs, 'EU economic governance package – a milestone reached'

74 See, e.g. Freeden, 'Is nationalism a distinct ideology?'; and Fieschi, 'Introduction'

75 Taggart, 'Populism and representative politics in contemporary Europe'

76 For an example of how Euroscepticism cuts across the political spectrum, see Bloom, 'Eurosceptic parties "entering new paradigm"', where UKIP MEP Godfrey Bloom refers to alliances with both the Front National and Sinn Fein.

77 Brack, 'Euroscepticism at the supranational level: the case of the "Untidy Right" in the European Parliament'; and Benedetto, 'Explaining the failure of Euroscepticism in the European Parliament'

78 See www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20120313+ITEM-012+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN&query=INTERV&detail=2-438-000

79 See www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20120612+ITEM-007+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN&query=INTERV&detail=2-132-000

80 See www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20110510+ITEM-012+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN&query=INTERV&detail=2-160-000

81 See www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+CRE+20110119+ITEM-010+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN&query=INTERV&detail=3-443-000

82 A particularly well-known speech made by Farage described Herman Van Rompuy as a 'damp squib'; see www.youtube.com/watch?v=bypLwI5AQvY

83 Interview with Richard Howitt, 15 Jan 2013

84 Email exchange with UKIP source, Jan 2013

85 Brack, 'Euroscepticism at the supranational level: the case of the "Untidy Right" in the European Parliament'

86 Ibid, p. 98

87 Email exchange with populist radical right MEP, 1 Feb 2013

88 Brack, 'Euroscepticism at the supranational level: the case of the "Untidy Right" in the European Parliament', p. 92

89 Ibid, p. 100

90 Email exchange with populist radical right MEP, 1 Feb 2013

91 Brack, 'Euroscepticism at the supranational level: the case of the "Untidy Right" in the European Parliament', p. 99

92 See Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe*, Chapter 1

93 VoteWatch Europe, 'Methodology'

94 Interview with Richard Howitt, 15 Jan 2013

95 Fieschi, Morris and Caballero, *Recapturing the Reluctant Radical: How to Win Back Europe's Populist Vote*

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With the 2014 European Parliament elections approaching and populist radical right parties continuing to influence the political debate, this report takes a timely look at the activities of populist radical right MEPs. Using data from VoteWatch Europe, it aims to develop an in-depth understanding of how the populist radical right operates within an institution it is often hostile to.

The report asks:

- How often do populist radical right MEPs challenge the consensus?
- How successful are they at making cross-national alliances?
- How often do they participate in legislative activities?
- And how do they make use of the opportunities to use speaking time and ask questions?

The picture that emerges is one of a conflicted politician, pulled in multiple directions by ideology, by internal party constraints, and by formal and informal institutional pressures.

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