

**Now You See It, Now You Don't:
Anti-EU Politics in East and Southeast Europe**

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EUSA Conference 2003

Prepared for delivery at the EUSA Eight Biennial
International Conference, Nashville, TN, March 27-29, 2003

Abstract

The purpose to this paper is to describe and analyze both the appearance and apparent absence of anti-EU politics in the newly democratizing states of East Europe. The cases examined are the Czech Republic, in which anti-EU sentiments have been prominently voiced and appear to play some role in national elections, and Romania where such sentiments have been marginalized and seem to have played little role in recent elections. Several possible explanations for these behaviors are considered. The aim of the paper is to explain the appearance or absence of the anti-EU politics in these countries' political dynamic, and suggest reasons which might apply to the phenomenon in other contexts.

Introduction

Why are anti-EU sentiments prevalent in the mainstream politics of some EU-applicant countries, yet virtually nonexistent in others? Strong and loud Euroskeptic parties maintain much electoral and popular support in the Czech Republic, while anti-EU voices are absent from the elite politics of Romania. While scholars have begun to map Euroskepticism in Central and East Europe, none have systematically analyzed the role of anti-EU politics at the elite/party level in the region.¹ This study aims to make a contribution toward filling that gap.

Why is it important to study anti-EU politics in the new democracies of Central and East Europe? Most broadly, doing so tells us about the effect of the EU's normative credentials and about one impact of eastern enlargement on the region.² More specifically, mobilizing public opinion will be important when the time comes for national referenda on joining the EU, as all of the governments understand. Once these countries join the EU, party-level anti-EU politics are likely to be important as parties play an important role in the European Parliament and Council of Ministers. Finally, viewed the other way (from "the outside in") involvement with and attitudes toward the EU may play a role in structuring party competition and party elite relations within the applicant countries.³

Defining anti-EU politics is crucial to an examination of the concept. This paper will define anti-EU politics similarly to Taggart and Szczerbiak's conceptualization of

¹ This paper will consider "elite-level" and "party-level" to be the same.

² For broader treatment of this theme, see Ronald H. Linden, ed., *Norms and Nannies: The Impact of International Organizations on the Central and East European States* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2002).

³ For West Europe, the evidence on this point is mixed. Matthew Gabel, "European Integration, Voters and National Politics," *West European Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (October, 2000), pp. 52-72 argues that voting for EU membership provides the basis for "a new electoral cleavage" (p. 68). Peter Mair, "The Limited Impact of Europe on National Party Systems," *West European Politics*, Vol. 23, No. 4 (October, 2000), pp. 27-51 says that national party systems are "relatively impervious to any direct impact of European integration" (p. 41).

Euroskepticism.⁴ Taggart and Szczerbiak distinguish two types of Euroskepticism: hard and soft. Hard Euroskepticism involves outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration, and opposition to one's country joining the EU. A party can be considered "hard Euroskeptic" if it is a single issue anti-EU party, or if it rejects the current European project based on principle. Such a principled rejection would come from the belief that the EU is counter to deeply-held values or is the embodiment of some negative values, and is likely to come out of an ideological position. Soft Euroskepticism involves contingent or qualified opposition to EU membership and integration. "Soft Euroskeptic" parties are those that use the rhetoric of anti-EU sentiments as part of their political repertoire. Soft Euroskepticism can be further broken down into two distinct kinds: policy Euroskepticism and national interest Euroskepticism. Policy Euroskepticism refers to opposition to measures designed to significantly deepen European integration or opposition to specific extensions of EU competencies, but it is not incompatible with broad support for the European integration project *per se*. On the other hand, national interest Euroskepticism refers to using rhetoric to "stand up for" the "national interest" in the context of debates about the EU. There are strong reasons to expect such parties to be active in the applicant countries of CEE.⁵

Since understanding anti-EU party-level politics is crucial to understanding the EU and national politics, it is important to isolate the conditions under which anti-EU politics is likely to exist, and when it is absent. An effective way to get a sense of anti-EU national politics in the applicant countries is to examine comparatively the cases of the Czech Republic and Romania.

⁴ Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak, "The Party Politics of Euroskepticism in EU Member and Candidate States," SEI Working Paper 51, Sussex, Great Britain, 2002, pp.7-8.

⁵ *Ibid.*; Paul Taggart, "A Touchstone of Dissent: Euroskepticism in Contemporary Western European Party Systems," *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 33, (1998), pp. 363-388.

This comparative set encompasses enough significant similarities, e.g. postcommunist legacies, economic and political transition, to make comparison enlightening while retaining enough significant differences in the specifics of their two countries party elites, economic and political changes, and political cultures to suggest possible sources for the different levels of Euroskepticism.

Extant literature on Euroskepticism in Central and East Europe

The first scholarly work on Euroskepticism involved mapping and analyzing party-level Euroskepticism in the member states.⁶ Later, these approaches were used to map the patterns of Euroskepticism among Central and East European parties.⁷ Debates have begun about how to define and differentiate among different types of Euroskepticism, as well as which types of parties to include in the analysis (e.g., parties that regularly receive electoral support vs. those that do not), using the cases of the member states. The literature on Euroskepticism in Central and East Europe has focused mainly on describing the kinds of Euroskepticism that exist. It also has attempted to make preliminary suggestions about where future studies should go, if we are

⁶ Gary Marks and Carole J. Wilson, "The Past in the Present: A Cleavage Theory of Party Response to European Integration," *British Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 30 (2000), pp. 433-459; Leonard Ray, "Measuring Party Orientations towards European Integration: Results from an Expert Survey," *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 36 (1999), pp. 283-306; Taggart, "A Touchstone of Dissent."

⁷ Taggart and Szczerbiak, "The Party Politics"; Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde, "Empty Words or Irreducible Core? Euroskepticism in East Central Europe," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, CA, August 30 – September 2, 2001; Heather Grabbe, and Kirsty Hughes, "Central and East European Views on EU Enlargement: Political Debates and Public Opinion," in Karen Henderson, ed., *Back to Europe: Central and Eastern Europe and the European Union* (London: UCL Press, 1999), pp. 185-202.

to understand the predictors of party-level Euroskepticism.⁸ Such propositions have not been tested in the literature on CEE Euroskepticism, but they provide fresh directions for analyses like this one. These untested explanations run the gamut from hypotheses about modes of transition, that is, that CEE Euroskepticism is distinct from Euroskepticism in the member states,⁹ to hypotheses about longstanding social cleavages and party families, i.e., that is, that depending on the party's family and the social cleavages that underlie that family, Euroskepticism will be present or absent. However, the latter approach assumes that social cleavages are present and that they predict party support, a claim that is becoming more and more contested.¹⁰

The first theoretical proposition differentiates between the unique contexts of the applicant countries. According to Susan Milner,¹¹ depending on party system and historical and social factors, *some countries may seek "escape" from their political, economic, and social reality on the road of transition, finding refuge in the EU, while countries with sources of independence will lean towards Euroskepticism (at both the mass and party levels).* This proposition rests on the idea that even though applicant countries must deal with the issue of European integration in a different context than the member states, all applicant countries are not to be considered contextually-equal. On the level of the mass public, this argument suggests that countries will bring to their interactions with the EU different political cultures, including

⁸ Paul Taggart, and Aleks Szczerbiak, "Parties, Positions and Europe: Euroskepticism in the EU Candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe," SEI Working Paper 46. Sussex, Great Britain, 2001; Kopecky and Mudde, "Empty Words or Irreducible Core?"

⁹ Karen Henderson, "Euroskepticism or Europhobia: Opposition Attitudes to the EU in the Slovak Republic," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Political Studies Association, Manchester, England, April 10-12, 2001.

¹⁰ For a thorough discussion, see Stephen Whitefield, "Political Cleavages and Post-Communist Politics," *Annual Reviews of Political Science*, Vol. 5 (2002) pp. 181-200.

¹¹ Susan Milner, "Introduction: A Healthy Skepticism?" *European Integration*, Vol. 22 (2000) pp. 1-13.

evaluations of their own past and expectations for the future, and these might affect levels of Euroskepticism.

A related proposition that takes into account the unique position of the applicant countries is Karen Henderson's argument that *the issue of EU membership is inextricably bound up with transition issues* in CEE;¹² thus, it means something different than in the member states. However, this proposition is problematic because it assumes that all of the applicant countries share the same transitional problems (contrary to Milner's argument).¹³ The existence of pro-reform, soft Euroskeptics like Klaus in the Czech Republic undercuts her argument that Euroskepticism should be fundamentally similar among applicant countries and different between the applicant countries and the member states. Klaus's political party, ODS, is from the conservative party family,¹⁴ a party family that also is prominent and tends to be Euroskeptic. National sovereignty is part of that party's ideology in many member states.¹⁵ It is clear that ODS' vociferous (though soft) Euroskepticism has more in common with other mainstream, conservative parties in member states than with the majority of Euroskeptics in CEE, which is mainly relegated to peripheral parties and of the "hard" Euroskeptic variety.¹⁶

This point leads us to an opposing argument which holds that the new issue of European integration is assimilated into pre-existing ideologies of party leaders, activists, and constituencies, reflecting long-standing commitments to fundamental domestic issues.¹⁷ This *cleavage-based theory of party response to European integration*, developed using the cases of the member states, relies on the intersection between social cleavages (which includes class,

¹² Henderson, "Euroskepticism or Europhobia."

¹³ Milner, "Introduction."

¹⁴ Taggart and Szcerbiak, "The Party Politics."

¹⁵ Marks and Wilson, "The Past in the Present."

¹⁶ *Ibid.*; Ray, "Measuring Party Orientations."

¹⁷ Marks and Wilson, "The Past in the Present;" Ray, "Measuring Party Orientations."

religious, and center-periphery cleavages) and new issues. Marks and Wilson make the institutionalist argument that organizations assimilate and exploit new issues within existing schemas that arise out of the representational link.¹⁸ Given that most political parties actually have constituencies whom they must satisfy, they must act according to bounded orientations that have historically provided a link between publics and elites.

At first glance it may seem that this theory is unlikely to stand up in the case of CEE. First, given that the applicant countries have only had a little more than a decade's worth of experience with democracy, it may seem unlikely that parties have real constituencies (the so-called "tabula rasa" hypothesis).¹⁹ However, scholarship over this time shows that despite the widespread destruction of social relationships by communism, at least some citizens are voting according to intelligible interests and/or values, and that in some cases, parties have been able to generate constituencies based on either socio-structural or value cleavages. The other potential criticism is that the influence of traditional social cleavages has diminished over the past few decades, even in advanced, Western democracies, so the utility of a cleavage-based explanation may be weak. Nevertheless there is evidence that historically-rooted social cleavages do affect what constituents want from their representatives, and that this provides a "bounded rationality" for party elites' range of potential positions on new issues.²⁰

The issue of representational linkages raised by Marks and Wilson brings us to another potential explanation for the presence or absence of anti-EU party-level politics: *mass cues to elites*. According to this view, parties reflect mass opinion; parties and publics are linked via

¹⁸ Marks and Wilson, "The Past in the Present."

¹⁹ Whitefield, "Political Cleavages."

²⁰ Marks and Wilson, "The Past in the Present."

issues.²¹ In the most basic sense, mass opinion and elite positions are likely to converge. While Taggart and Szczerbiak have attempted to test this proposition and concluded that there is not a substantial relationship between mass opinion and party stances,²² their measures have been too narrow to capture similar kinds of Euroskepticism at both the elite and mass levels. While their measures for public Euroskepticism applied only to very strong Euroskepticism, they suggest a link which may apply also to soft Euroskepticism.

Another explanation is that the position that parties take regarding European integration is, at least partially, *a function of their position in their party systems*. In other words, peripheral parties are far more likely to engage in more Euroskeptic rhetoric than mainstream parties in order to advance their comparative positions, or at least to gain some advantages by crying more loudly.²³ It appears, though, that the cases we are looking at do not fit. Taggart and Szczerbiak's argument is that more extremist parties will be Euroskeptic, and that mainstream parties will be pro-EU (or at least ambivalent). However, in the Czech Republic *both* mainstream conservative parties like ODS (Civic Democrats) and more extreme leftist KSCM (Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia) evidence vibrant Euroskepticism while in Romania neither group can be classified as Euroskeptic.

²¹Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes, "Constituency Influence in Congress," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 57 (1963), pp. 45-56; Robert S. Erikson, "Constituency Opinion and Congressional Behavior: A Reexamination of the Miller-Stokes Representation Data," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 22 (1978), pp. 511-535.

²² Taggart and Szczerbiak, "The Party Politics;" Taggart, and Szczerbiak. "Parties, Positions and Europe."

²³ Taggart, and Szczerbiak, "Parties, Positions and Europe"; Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak, "Crossing Europe: Patterns of Contemporary Party-Based Euroskepticism in EU Member States and the Candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, San Francisco, CA, August 30 – September 2, 2001.

Expectations

As we look at these two cases, we will group our expectations into four rough categories:

A) Party strategy: Level of Euroskepticism will be a function of party mobilization techniques derived from their desire to improve their national standing and changes of participating in forming a government.

B) Party ideology: Euroskepticism will be a function of party ideology and will reflect radical views of the left or right, which reject aspects of the European project.

C) Public political culture: Euroskepticism will reflect public sentiments that are xenophobic, hypernationalist, hostile to the free market or capitalism or antidemocratic.

D) Socioeconomic: Euroskepticism among the public will reflect utilitarian calculations as to expectations of a better life offered by EU membership. Those profiting from the transition or perceiving themselves likely to be better off will support joining the EU, while those who perceive themselves to have lost and likely to do so in the future will be opposed.

This paper is not at this point a full empirical test of these propositions. Rather, it is a preliminary examination designed to test the plausibility of these explanatory factors in these cases.

Czech Republic

The Czech Republic is arguably the most Euroskeptical of the Central and East European countries. A variety of factors, including history, political culture, nature of transition, economic situation, treatment by the EU, and mass support for EU membership span the range of possible explanations as to why anti-EU sentiment is so prevalent at the party level in the Czech Republic. The most likely explanations for party-level Euroskepticism, this section will argue, are mass support for EU membership and party families. Briefly, we can speculate that if Czech citizens have been shown to be Euroskeptical (or at least, if there are as many Euroskeptical as pro-EU attitudes in the public), then Euroskepticism's presence at the mass level allows party-level Euroskepticism to flourish at both the mainstream and periphery.

This section will describe relevant events in the history of the Czech Republic since the communist period, popular attitudes toward EU membership, and examine potential explanations for why Euroskepticism is so persistent in both peripheral and mainstream parties in the Czech Republic.

Communism in the Czech Republic

The Czech Republic and Slovakia were united as a democracy between 1918-1938 under T. G. Masaryk, until Nazi Germany invaded and established a protectorate in 1939. After the end of World War II, Czechoslovakia, seeking to make a home for egalitarian democracy after war and economic depression, was the only country in the region to actually vote communists into office. The Czechoslovak Communist Party won 38% of the vote in 1948, held most of the key positions in the government, and gradually managed to silence the anti-communist forces. Although the communist-led government initially intended to participate in the Marshall Plan, it

was forced by Moscow to back out. The Communist Party had fully seized power by February 1948.

The 1950s in Czechoslovakia was marked by the consolidation of orthodox rule by party leader Antonín Novotný. Facing economic stagnation and a challenge within the party, Novotný was replaced by Alexander Dubček in 1968. During the "Prague Spring," the party began to implement a blueprint for economic and political change that would guarantee freedom of religion, press, assembly, speech, and travel – “socialism with a human face,” in Dubček’s own words. These steps toward reform revived public politics in the country, engaging citizens with the government for the first time in twenty years.

Fearful of the impact of these reforms in their own countries, the Soviet Union, Hungary, Bulgaria, East Germany, and Poland invaded and occupied Czechoslovakia on August 20, 1968. Dubček was removed and replaced by Gustav Husák, an orthodox communist, in 1969. The “normalization” of the 1970s and 1980s were characterized by strict adherence to a conservative communist economic plan and firm control over political and social life.²⁴ Rejecting “normalization,” an intellectual dissident movement gained strength, producing, in 1977, a manifesto, “Charter 77,” that criticized the government for failing to protect human rights. With more than 1,000 signatories, Charter 77 included a diversity of political and ideological currents, but it was primarily intellectual and reformist, not politically revolutionary. Among the movement’s leaders was Vaclav Havel, a playwright, whose work and political tracts were circulated clandestinely and published in the West. In 1989, inspired by Mikhail Gorbachev and challenges to the regime in Hungary, Poland, and the GDR, the Czech public took to the streets. Charter 77 and other groups united to become the Civic Forum, an umbrella group that

²⁴ Janusz Bugajski, “Czech Republic,” in Janusz Bugajski, ed., *Political Parties of Eastern Europe*. (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2002), p. 224.

demanded an end to communist rule. Civic Forum quickly gained the support of millions of Czechs, as did its Slovak counterpart, Public Against Violence. After a half-hearted attempt to suppress the uprising by force, the regime capitulated, and Vaclav Havel was elected President of Czechoslovakia on December 29, 1989, capping what is now known as the “Velvet Revolution.”²⁵

Transition to democracy and market economy

A coalition government was formed in December 1989, followed by the first free elections in Czechoslovakia since 1946 in June 1990 with a 95% voter turnout.²⁶ As anticipated, Civic Forum and Public Against Violence won landslide victories. However, although Civic Forum had successfully facilitated regime change, it was ineffective as a governing party and it eventually split into factions led by Vaclav Klaus and Havel, two leaders with very different political views.

By the end of 1990, Klaus’ ODS (Civic Democrats) was the most popular political party. Klaus first was the Finance Minister, engineering Czechoslovakia’s unique “voucher privatization” program, and later became Prime Minister. By 1992, Slovak calls for greater autonomy began to severely hamper the performance of the government. In June 1992 elections, ODS won in the Czech area on a platform of economic reform. Vladimir Meciar's party, Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, became the leader in the Slovak lands, appealing to Slovak nationalism and desires for autonomy. Though he spoke vigorously against it, Havel could not stop the split, especially given the inclination of Vaclav Klaus to let Slovakia go. Havel resigned in July 1992 rather than preside over the break-up of Czechoslovakia. In the latter

²⁵ Ibid, pp. 226-227; Sharon L. Wolchik, “Czechoslovakia.” In Sabrina P. Ramet, ed., *Eastern Europe: Politics, Culture, and Society since 1939*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998), pp. 47-51.

²⁶ Bugajski, “Czech Republic,” p. 228.

half of 1992, Klaus and Meciar devised the provisions of the “Velvet Divorce,” and the federal parliament cooperated enough to pass the law officially separating the two nations.

Post-independence Czech Republic

In January 1993, Havel was elected the first President of the Czech Republic, and in June 1996, Klaus was reappointed as Prime Minister in a minority coalition government following the Czech Republic's first general election. The ideologies of Havel and Klaus became particularly apparent as they urged the Czech Republic toward very different paths and framed the voicing of pro- and anti-EU sentiments at the elite level. Havel, the ethical and moral leader of the Czech nation, began his campaign for the Czech Republic to rejoin Europe as early as 1990 and continued throughout his entire tenure as President (which lasted from 1993 to 2002, after his re-election in January 1998). Believing that state sovereignty was of secondary importance, Havel argued that integrating the European continent was important for reasons that were both political (e.g., to never let another World War II occur) and “natural” (e.g., from the standpoint of a shared European culture). As Peter Bugge describes it,

“Political unity was, according to Havel, not just politically advantageous, it followed logically from Europe’s status as one civilization, based on a shared culture, to which the central and eastern European countries had also for centuries contributed, until they were brutally forced to depart from their natural path. Their ‘return to Europe’ was thus historically legitimate as a return to where they already belonged.”²⁷

²⁷ Peter Bugge. “Czech Perceptions of the Perspective of EU Membership: Havel vs. Klaus.” *EUI Working Paper* RSC No. 2000/10, San Domenico, Italy: European University Institute, p. 14.

Klaus, on the other hand, is a well-known Euroskeptic. While pro-integration for economic reasons, he is primarily concerned with the potential loss of Czech sovereignty and in general, worried about the terms of EU entry. His objections during the EU negotiations are infamous, leading EU Commissioner Hans van den Broek at one point to tell Klaus that "it is not the European Union which wants to join the Czech Republic."²⁸

Klaus resigned as Prime Minister following the collapse of the ODS-led coalition, due to mounting dissatisfaction with the economic reform program and allegations of financial corruption. The new government was a CSSD (Social Democrats)-led coalition with Milos Zeman at the helm.²⁹ Despite Klaus' frequently-voiced skepticism, the Czech Republic applied to join the EU in 1996 and began negotiations in 1998. The country also became a full member of NATO in March 1999.

In addition to the need to meet the requirements of the *acquis communautaire*, two issues accompanied the Czech application for EU membership. First, the opening of the Temelin nuclear power plant near Austria brought Austrian calls for its closure. This dispute was settled, however, in November 2001 as Austria's Chancellor Schuessel and the Czech government agreed to tough measures to improve safety and monitor impact on environment.³⁰ This dispute is likely to have affected Czech public opinion about EU membership, as Czechs were upset at what they

²⁸ Kopecky and Mudde, "Empty Words or Irreducible Core?" p. 9. Bugge, "Czech Perceptions," p. 6. Quote is from Matt Rhodes, "Post-Visegrad Cooperation in East Central Europe." *East European Quarterly* (1998), note 41.

²⁹ However, Zeman's CSSD-led government was the result of an agreement between Klaus' ODS and CSSD, as well as other smaller parties, which allowed CSSD to control the government.

³⁰ Jolyon Naegele, "EU: Austrian Anti-Temelin Drive Seeks To Block Czech EU Accession," *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*, <http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2002/01/14012002105044.asp> (January 14, 2002).

saw as limits to Czech sovereignty. This feeling was exacerbated by demands by some in Austria and Germany in 2002 to repeal the post-war Benes decrees. These decrees, issued after World War II, led to the brutal expulsion of over two and a half million ethnic Germans from the Czech lands. President Havel issued a personal apology for the expulsion in March 1990, but the Czech Parliament has declined to repeal the decrees.³¹

The elections of 2002 gave the most electoral votes to CSSD, now chaired by Vladimir Spidla. However, CSSD only won only 70 seats in the 200 seat parliament. Spidla formed a coalition with centrist alliance of Christian Democrats and Freedom Union with the agenda of the full integration of the Czech Republic into the West, namely, the EU. The Communists (KSCM), a hard Euroskeptic party, came in third in the election with 41 seats, their best result since the Velvet Revolution. In December 2002, the Czech Republic was formally invited to join the EU at the EU summit in Copenhagen. In the same month, Havel's tenure as President ended. After three rounds of voting, and somewhat ironically, Vaclav Klaus was elected the second President of the Czech Republic in February 2003, succeeding his longtime political adversary.

Economic progress in Czechoslovakia has been rather smooth since 1989 compared to other Central and East European countries. However, the Czech economy experienced a brief recession in 1999-2000 as a result of the collapse of several banks and corruption. Though it has been criticized for slow reform in the banking sector and large-scale privatization, its unique

³¹ Jolyon Naegele, "The Benes Decrees – How Did They Come To Be And What Do They Mandate?" *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty*.
<http://www.rferl.org/nca/features/2002/03/01032002095607.asp> (March 2002).

voucher privatization opened the doors for small businesses, and consequently, a middle class, to emerge.³²

Party Euroskepticism

As noted, Taggart and Szczerbiak³³ differentiate between hard and soft Euroskepticism. Unlike many of its Central and East European counterparts, the Czech Republic's party system includes both hard and soft Euroskeptic parties. Soft Euroskepticism is in evidence in the Czech Republic in the form of Klaus' ODS party (Civic Democrats). The ODS' platform is generally pro-European, but in a slightly different way than those of EU proponents. Like the pro-EU parties (such as CSSD), ODS holds that the Czech Republic necessarily must be a part of Europe, and that EU membership can be good for the Czech Republic. ODS supports European integration primarily for the benefits that come from economic cooperation. Unlike the pro-EU parties, though, ODS believes that the Czech Republic already is part of Europe, so membership in the EU is redundant if it is supposed to mean a "return to Europe." ODS believes the Czech Republic has already joined West Europe in both a practical sense, in that a democracy has been established, and in a cultural sense, in that the Czech Republic holds, and has held, Western values.³⁴ Most important, while supporting the notion of EU membership, ODS strongly criticizes its terms. ODS is concerned with the loss of Czech sovereignty, that the Czech Republic should not become lost in a super state structure that was erected without deep social, political, or cultural roots.³⁵ Thus, while ODS supports EU membership, it is largely a utilitarian view, related to potential economic gains. It does not support EU membership on the basis of

³² Wolchik, "Czechoslovakia," pp. 54-55.

³³ Taggart and Szczerbiak, "The Party Politics;" "Parties, Positions, and Europe."

³⁴ Kopecky and Mudde, "Empty Words."

³⁵ *Ibid.*

ethics or morality, and its concern with state sovereignty makes EU membership worrisome to ODS. Given these characteristics, we can classify ODS as soft Euroskeptic.

The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM) is a party that was previously considered hard Euroskeptic, but is now softening its stance toward some variety of soft to hard Euroskepticism.³⁶ At the moment, KSCM's position is undefined, as there is no consensus within the party toward the issue of EU membership. The Executive Committee of KSCM is currently considering for their position on EU membership. According to press reports, they are considering

...three variants -- a 'moderate yes,' a 'moderate no' and a 'categorical no.' It voted to recommend the second variant to the KSCM Central Committee... Pavel Kovacik, chairman of the KSCM deputies' group, told Pravo that he was inclined to support the second variant. 'It is a complex issue, which is why I do not want to say an unequivocal no. But I do not want to say yes, either,' he said. According to Kovacik, 'EU [membership] brings advantages to young people such as travel, [free] movement of labor, or an open market. But because I come from the countryside, I see disadvantages mainly for our agriculture,' he added.³⁷

On its website, KSCM views are similarly ambivalent: "while supporting the processes of European integration, the Congress declared its opposition to membership of the European

³⁶ Taggart and Szczerbiak, "The Party Politics."

³⁷ Jitka Goetzova, "Czech Communists Split on EU Entry, To Recommend 'Moderate No' in Jun Referendum." *Pravo*, Prague. March 8, 2003. (Foreign Broadcast Information Service [FBIS], 8 March 2003).

Union in its present form.”³⁸ The views of KSCM on the EU embrace both nationalism and communism, associating EU membership with multi-national capitalism dominated by German interests. KSCM’s opposition to EU membership appears related to its status at the relative periphery of elected parties, as a strategic device to counteract what it sees as the eagerness of mainstream parties to join the EU.³⁹ Apparently KSCM’s more or less anti-EU position paid off in the 2002 parliamentary election, as it gained a surprisingly large amount of electoral votes and maintains a steady base of electoral support. At the moment, it is the second-most popular political party in the Czech Republic.⁴⁰

A hard Euroskeptic party on the right is the SPR-RSC (Association for the Republic-Republican Party of Czechoslovakia). It has opposed strongly and for a long time both EU and NATO membership, and is strongly anti-Germany. It gained 14 seats in the parliament in 1992 and 18 seats in 1996; however, it has not been voted into power since then.⁴¹

Pro-EU parties are the norm, however, in the Czech Republic, though they take up a smaller share in the party system than in other Central and East European countries. Pro-EU sentiment at the party level is based on both practical and normative grounds. CSSD supports EU membership mainly for practical reasons, though norms play a role as well. CSSD views EU membership as a vehicle to advance a Europe-wide social market economy, which it considers to be the modern social democratic project. After winning the 1998 elections, CSSD quickly implemented an extensive program of reforms and laws that sought to move the Czech Republic into line with EU requirements as quickly as possible. While its pro-EU outlook is based on

³⁸ Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia website; “About the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia.” <http://www.kscm.cz/article.asp?menu=1&necId=319&necId2=319> (March 2003)

³⁹ Kopecky and Mudde, “Empty Words.”

⁴⁰ “Czech Communists Climb to Second Place on Popularity Ladder – Poll,” *CTK, Czech News Agency*, Prague, March 13, 2003 (FBIS, 13 March 2003).

⁴¹ Bugajski, “Czech Republic,” pp. 256-258.

practical and normative reasons, there are also elements of a strategic reaction to Klaus' soft but vociferous Euroskepticism.⁴²

Scholars have argued that the ideological "families" of parties provides us with a useful way to determine whether certain parties are likely to be Euroskeptical.⁴³ Marks and Wilson found that national and economic conservative parties are likely to be Euroskeptical. Such parties support European integration insofar as it leads to regime competition within an integrated market, being careful that supranational institutions do not diminish the sovereignty of individual states. This indeed holds true for the national and economic conservative party ODS, which likens itself to Britain's Conservative Party.⁴⁴ Similarly, Taggart and Szczerbiak find that far right/nationalist parties on the periphery tend to be anti-EU because they favor various forms of decentralization (from a central "state" like the EU) and cultural defense, which explains the Euroskepticism of both KSCM and SPR-RSC. Thus, belonging to certain "families" of parties allows Euroskepticism to flourish, and to take particular forms (e.g., for policy reasons, in the case of ODS and possibly KSCM, or out of principle, in the case of SPR-RSC and likely KSCM).

Popular Euroskepticism

Since the Czech Republic applied for EU membership in 1996, mass support for EU membership has not exceeded the 50% mark. Recently, the rate of approval for EU membership has dropped from a high of 48% in February 2002 to 42% in July 2002 in the Czech Republic.⁴⁵ This figure is not only troubling in general for the upcoming referendum, but it reflects broader uncertainty about the benefits of joining the organization. In April-May 2001, only 46% Czechs

⁴² Kopecky and Mudde, "Empty Words."

⁴³ Taggart and Szczerbiak, "The Party Politics;" Marks and Wilson, "The Past in the Present."

⁴⁴ Marks and Wilson, "The Past in the Present;" Kopecky and Mudde, "Empty Words"

⁴⁵ CVVM report, July 2002; [http:// www.europa.eu.int/enlargement](http://www.europa.eu.int/enlargement).

viewed EU membership as a good thing, 31% viewed it as neither good nor bad, and 9% viewed it as a bad thing.⁴⁶ A survey in July 2002 asked respondents how much they support EU membership on a six-point scale. The majority of citizens who said they support EU membership only support it “at little” (37.3%)⁴⁷, indicating that citizens may not be as pro-EU as previous research has considered.⁴⁸ We might be able to classify those citizens who only support EU membership “a little” as soft Euroskeptics, if we conform to Taggart and Szczerbiak’s formulation of soft Euroskepticism as conditional support for EU membership.

Looking at the shape of general attitudes toward the EU, we can illuminate differences in support for EU membership in the Czech Republic. When asked for their first reactions about the EU, only 40% view the EU positively as their first response, 27% view it as neutral, and 28% view it as negative.⁴⁹ In terms of trust in the EU, 54% tend to trust it, and 20% tend not to trust it.⁵⁰ This is several points below the national average of the other Central and East European states, and many points below Romania. Particularly illuminating is the question of whether Czechs believe they will receive personal advantages from EU membership. Czechs believe that they will receive far fewer advantages from EU membership than the national average of the other applicant countries, and below the average of EU member states. Only 26% the Czech citizens believe that they will receive more to many more advantages from joining, 32% believe that there will be as many advantages as disadvantages, and 17% believe they will receive more

⁴⁶ European Commission, *Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 2001* (Brussels: European Commission, 2002); accessible at: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion>.

⁴⁷ Lisa M. Pohlman, “Changing Minds: Routes to Persuasion and Attitudes toward EU Membership in the Czech Republic.” Paper to be presented at the 2003 Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association. Chicago, IL, April 3-6, 2003.

⁴⁸ Taggart and Szczerbiak, “The Party Politics” and “Parties, Positions, and Europe.”

⁴⁹ European Commission, *Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 2001*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

to many more disadvantages.⁵¹ Thus it is clear that one reason for the lack of strong support for EU members in the Czech Republic is the lack of positive calculations of the benefits. If Czech citizens support EU membership at all, these statistics suggest it is likely only out of resignation; EU membership is viewed as a “necessary evil.”⁵²

Is there a link between party-level and mass-level Euroskepticism? In the Czech Republic, it appears that parties are responding to the constraints put on them by their constituents, who clearly are among the most Euroskeptic in Central and East Europe. Moreover, the fact that some citizens strongly approve of EU membership while others only approve a little indicates that pro-EU sentiment is not all of one nature, and that some pro-EU citizens are nevertheless Euroskeptics, according to Taggart and Szczerbiak’s formulation. The dominance of Euroskepticism in the population accords much political space to parties, which may base part their agendas on Euroskepticism.

Romania: The Dog That Didn't Bark

By all indications Romania is a country in which Euroskepticism should flourish. Many of the underlying factors one would expect as a root cause of this sentiment are present in Romania. By virtue of history, political culture, nature and pace of transition, economic situation and treatment by European organizations, there should be evidence of strong sentiment against the EU but there is not. Why might this be so? This discussion will offer some background on

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Kopecky and Mudde, “Empty Words.”

Romania since 1989, describe attitudes toward the EU and explore possible explanations of the remarkable persistence of positive views of the organization.

Background

The Romanian revolution of 1989 put an end to one of the most brutal and bizarre of the communist regimes in East Europe. Led since 1965 by Nicolae Ceausescu, the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) party exercised a near totalitarian control over its population to an extent not seen since Stalin's time. Unlike Hungary, there was no legal private property; unlike Poland, there was no independent church, national labor opposition or independent peasantry; unlike Czechoslovakia there was no alternative philosophical challenge with an international reputation like Charter 77 or Vaclav Havel. The regime's suffocation of even embryonic civil society extended to individual dissidents such as Doina Cornea and Paul Goma, universities and trade unions and was facilitated by a security police apparatus that was the most pervasive in the region.⁵³

Economically, the country had the capacity for industrial development--with size, population, key waterway access and potential agricultural and oil resources. But these were appropriated and mismanaged during the communist period. Ceausescu and his coterie exploited the country and its people in an attempt to establish what economic autonomy it could from the USSR. Imbalanced growth policies combined with western eagerness to wean a Soviet ally produced high levels of foreign debt, leading Ceausescu to squeeze the country even further in order to pay it off by the mid-1980s. By the time of his fall in 1989, living standards in Romania were the worst in the region outside of Albania.

⁵³ Dennis Deletant, *Ceausescu and the Securitate: Coercion and Dissent in Romania, 1965-1989* (London: Hurst and Co., 1995); Mark Almond, *The Rise and Fall of Nicolae and Elena Ceausescu* (London: Chapman's Pubs., 1992).

When the upheavals occurred in East Europe in 1989 only in Romania was there large scale violence. An estimated 1,100 people died in the fighting, mostly in Bucharest, fueled by a security apparatus desperate to save its position but ultimately overwhelmed by the courage of people in the streets and the Romanian army. The execution of Nicolae Ceausescu and his wife on Christmas day 1989 ended the fighting but did not signal a clean break with the country's communist past. Ion Iliescu, once a high functionary in the party, and his supporters utilized their organizational recourses and experience and took advantage of the absence of an organized "Forum" opposition (as in Czechoslovakia) or proto political parties (as in Hungary) to take power. In 1990 control of their National Salvation Front (NSF) was ratified through open though not very competitive elections.⁵⁴

Romania's Transition

Rhetorically, Iliescu and his movement-cum-party were committed to join Europe, as were virtually all of the post-1989 East European leaders and their populations. Iliescu's approach was hedged, however, with concerns over the cost to the country of too rapid an establishment of a competitive market economy and the stringency of international competition. Moreover Iliescu's constituency, drawn from the countryside and those in the cities fearful of the consequences of rapid change, was not urging radical movement. There was no shock therapy in Romania.

Iliescu survived an electoral challenge in 1992 and his part of the now split National Salvation Front movement retained a 28% plurality in the parliament. Over the next few years the government move closer to conservative and nationalist groups, including the Party of

⁵⁴ Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Reinventing Politics : Eastern Europe from Stalin to Havel* (New York: Free Press, 1992), pp. 223-36; 267-72.

National Unity of Romania (PUNR), the Greater Romania Party (GRP) and RCP-descendant Socialist Labor Party (PRM), to form a governing majority in parliament. This coalition did not last long but movement forward on critical reform of the economy all but ceased. A new center-right government and president were elected in 1996, pledging change but instead quickly became bogged down in internal political squabbles, fierce opposition to the costs of reform, and ever widening corruption scandals.⁵⁵

For Romanians, any changes at all improved the miserable living standards that were a legacy of the Ceausescu era, but economic growth returned only in 1993 and then at an anemic level of 1.5%. Three relatively robust years followed as domestic demand was stimulated by the government while full scale privatization and enterprise reorganization was avoided. Then the economy slumped markedly, inflation averaged more than 75% per year and unemployment returned to double-digits levels. By the end of the decade, Romanian GDP was just over three-quarters of where it had been in 1989. With little to attract them and many suitors, foreign investors went elsewhere. For the years 1989 to 2000 foreign direct investment per capita was the lowest of any of the East European and Baltic states except for Albania and some of the former Yugoslav republics.⁵⁶ "Romania," write Alan Smith, "was facing its deepest economic crisis since the collapse of communism."⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Thomas Carothers, "Romania: Projecting the Positive," *Current History*, Vol. 95, No. 599 (March, 1996), pp. 118-123; Marian Chiriac, "Deadlocked Romania," *Current History*, Vol. 100, No. 644 (March, 2001), pp. 124-128.

⁵⁶ Economic data can be found in European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Transition report 2001: Energy in transition* (London: EBRD, 2001), pp. 59, 61, 68; for unemployment, see *Transition report 2000: employment, skills and transition*, p. 101.

⁵⁷ Alan Smith, "The Transition to a Market Economy in Romania and the Competitiveness of Exports." in Duncan Light and David Phinnemore, eds., *Post-Communist Romania: Coming to Terms with Transition* (Hampshire, UK: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 127-149.

Romania did move to join or apply to join Europe's organizations. It joined the Council of Europe in 1993, signed a trade and cooperation agreement with the EC in 1990 and a Europe Agreement in 1993. The country formally applied for membership in 1995. In 1994 Romania became the first country to sign on for NATO's Partnership for Peace program. Trade with Europe increased, as Romania was actually in a better position than its former allies to switch economic orientations toward the west. Trade with EU countries went from just under one-third of the country's trade to more than half by the mid-nineties but also quickly moved into deficit.

In 1996 the first center-right government was elected in Romania with former university president Emil Constantinescu installed as president. His Democratic Convention coalition only controlled a 30% plurality in the parliament but by forming a coalition with the Democratic Party (once part of the NSF) and the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania, the Convention was able to create a parliamentary majority. The CDR owed its success to the continued weakness of the country's economy and the considerable coolness of the West toward Ion Iliescu whom many considered an insufficiently reformed communist. Western organizations, including both the EU and NATO, while welcoming the change and even praising Romanian political progress, were nevertheless not ready to begin negotiations on eventual membership. In 1997 both NATO and the EU told Romania it would have to wait and both adopted programs to evaluate annually candidate countries' progress.⁵⁸

Only in 1999 did the EU extend negotiations toward future membership to Romania, along with five other countries. But this action was accompanied by a series of highly critical

⁵⁸ David Phinnemore, "Romania and Euro-Atlantic Integration since 1989: a Decade of Frustration?" in Light and Phinnemore, *Post-Communist Romania*, pp. 245-69. The EU's Annual Reports can be accessed at: <<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/report2002/#report2002>>; NATO's Membership Action Plan is described at <www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2001/hb030103.htm>.

annual reports issued by the European Commission which identified several dimensions on which Romania was lagging, including continued institutionalization of orphaned children, treatment of Roma, weak local government and reliance on ordinances and emergency declarations instead of legislation. In 1999 and again in 2000 the Commission concluded that Romania "cannot be considered a functioning market economy" noting the "lack of significant progress in structural reforms." A somewhat milder judgment was issued in 2002, saying the county "continued to make progress toward being a functioning market economy."⁵⁹

Romania was frequently compared with Bulgaria--often unfavorably--and at the Copenhagen European Council in 2002 was grouped with that country as likely to become a member of the EU only in 2007, after no less than six other EE states will have joined (scheduled for 2004).⁶⁰

Attitudes toward the EU: People and Parties

The Romanian population has consistently indicated highly favorable views of the EU. Surveys by the Central and East European Barometer over 1991-1995 show that a higher percentage of Romanians held a positive views of the EU than was true in any of the Baltic or East European countries except Albania.⁶¹ Romanians supported their country's association with the EU and full membership.⁶² In 1995, for example Romanians, along with the Poles, were the most likely to vote for joining the EU in a hypothetical referendum.⁶³ but unlike the Poles whose

⁵⁹ These reports can be accessed at:

< <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/romania/index.htm#2001>>

⁶⁰ "Presidency Conclusions," Copenhagen European Council, 12 and 13 December 2002, accessible at: <<http://ue.eu.int/pressData/en/ec/73774.pdf>>.

⁶¹ European Commission, *Central and Eastern Eurobarometer*, (Brussels: European Commission) No. 5 (1995), pp. 37-41; No. 6 (1996), pp. 44-49.

⁶² European Commission, *Central and Eastern Eurobarometer*, (Brussels: European Commission.), No 2 (1992), Annex Figure 37, 38; No. 3 (1993), Annex Figure 46, 47.

⁶³ European Commission, *Central and Eastern Eurobarometer*, No. 6 (1996) Annex Figure 31.

support has dropped precipitously, Romanians' views of the EU have stayed consistently positive. Even as the organization proved cool to Romanian efforts to join and put off eventual membership, Romanians' support for joining exceeded 80%.⁶⁴ Similar results were reported in 2002.⁶⁵ In both recent surveys Romanians reported nearly the highest level of trust in the EU and were most likely to see membership as benefiting the country.

Nor have political parties sprung up with anti-EU platforms or even main dimensions of their programs. Iliescu's own Party of Social Democracy (PDSR) might be considered the most "Euroal" among the mainstream parties, though this judgment is based more on its reluctance to push (especially large-scale) privatization or other economic reforms required for eventual admission. Iliescu's main opponent, the Democratic Convention was more outspoken in its orientation toward the EU but not notably more successful in implementing such a program.⁶⁶

On the extremes of the political spectrum the most likely challenge to be mounted was from the right. Romania did have and continues to have a descendant of the hard line communist party, the Romanian Workers' Party, but its electoral success has been minimal and the resonance of its message, evidently, equally marginal. Parties on the right, however, have demonstrated some success. During the mid-1990s the PUNR, as noted, even became part of the government for a short time, along with PRM. When this dalliance looked like it would harm the government's chances of receiving a favorable judgment from NATO, the Romanian

⁶⁴ European Commission, *Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 2001* (Brussels: European Commission, 2002), pp. 56-58; accessible at: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion>.

⁶⁵ European Commission, *Candidate Countries Eurobarometer 2002*.

⁶⁶ According to the IMF, as of 2000 Romania ranked last among East European states in large scale privatization. The UNDP reported that "the bulk of companies that were state owned in 1990 are still under state control." See Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, ed., *Romania after 2000: Threats and Challenges* (Bucharest: United Nations Development Programme, 2002), p. 63. See also Annette Freyberg-Inan, "Which Way to Progress? Impact of International Organizations in Romania." in Linden, *Norms and Nannies*, pp. 129-64.

government chose to pursue a policy of reconciliation with its neighbor and frequent adversary, Hungary, the nationalists were purged from the government.⁶⁷

More serious has been the challenge posed by the Greater Romania Party led by one time Ceausescu court poet Corneliu Vadim Tudor. Once a marginal movement, the party has benefited from the charismatic, if quixotic, antics of its leader, from the disintegration of the rival PUNR and most significantly from the resounding failure of several CDR governments to succeed from 1996 until 2000. In 2000, the GRP scored an extraordinary success by winning 20% in the parliamentary elections and having Tudor himself earn 28% in the first round of presidential elections, enough to deny Ion Iliescu a majority and force a second round. Though Tudor was defeated soundly in that round, the GRP remains the second largest party in parliament and a consistent avatar of a message of nationalist extremism, anti-Semitism as well as anti-Roma and anti-Hungarian sentiment.

However this party has not articulated and stood by an anti-EU message despite its consistently nationalist approach to the country's problems and fierce defense of Romania's sovereignty in the face of real and imagined enemies. This is even more surprising considering that the GRP support stemmed mainly from those who have lost in the country's transition, mostly economically, and who are least well equipped to handle the consequences of full integration into the EU. As Alina Mungiu-Pippidi put it

Tudor is the favourite candidate of the poor in better-off regions, of the urban neighbourhoods created by the command economy and bankrupted by transition.

These people feel strongly that they have 'lost the transition'...Members of this

⁶⁷ Ronald H. Linden. "Putting on Their Sunday Best: Romania, Hungary, and the Puzzle of Peace." *International Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 44 (March, 2000), pp. 121-45.

group are endorsing most of Tudor's conspiracy theories and his general paranoid political outlook, for instance blaming the West and the ethnic minorities for Romania's troubles.⁶⁸

While Tudor's message has been simplistic, nationalistic and characteristic of what Michael Shafir calls "radical continuity,"⁶⁹ it has only utilized what could be characterized as a mildly Euroskeptical message, insisting that international organizations respect "the dignity and traditions of our people."⁷⁰

The Romanian Puzzle

How does it happen that Euroskepticism is not in evidence in Romania? Why haven't the factors that contribute to Euroskepticism elsewhere in Europe, either East or West, also stimulated or supported strong or even moderate anti-EU positions in Romania?

Roughly speaking, we can group the factors examined in the literature on support for or opposition to the EU into three categories: 1) party-based strategic opposition; 2) ideological opposition, both mass and elite-based and 3) socioeconomic orientation. Let us consider each of these and ask a pointed question: why have none of these stimulated or supported significant Euroskepticism among the Romanian population? The answers at this point will have to be suggestive and await more exhaustive empirical investigation. But even at this point they might

⁶⁸ Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, "The Return of Populism--The 2000 Romanian Elections," *Government and Opposition*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (Spring, 2001), pp. 250-51.

⁶⁹ See Michael Shafir, "Marginalization or mainstream? The extreme right in post-communist Romania." in Paul Hainsworth, ed., *The Politics of the Extreme Right* (London: Pinter, 2002), pp. 247-55; Michael Shafir, "Radical Politics in East-Central Europe, Part VIII: Radical Continuity in Romania: The Greater Romania Party," *RFE/RL East European Perspectives*. Vol. 2, No. 16 (16 August 2000).

⁷⁰ *Doctrina Partidul Romania Mare*, <www.romare.ro/partid/doctrina/polext.html>: Dec. 20, 2002.

suggest particular modifications of our notion of where and how attitudes toward the EU are involved in domestic politics.

According to the "strategic" line of thinking, emphasized by Taggart,⁷¹ political parties will utilize the EU as a device to gain support for themselves by mobilizing or taking advantage of anti-EU sentiments. Parties which engage in this behavior might come from different realms of the political spectrum but all are marginal or likely to be. Thus they use the anti-EU position to differentiate themselves, gain attention and votes from a presumably disaffected public. Romania clearly has had marginal parties; hundreds have come and gone; some as factions of mainstream parties, others returned from the country's past or offering mystical visions of its future. None, however, has made much headway utilizing anti-EU sentiment as their vehicle. I would argue this is the case for three reasons. First, the overwhelming support for the EU evident in numerous surveys suggests little prospect for electoral successes through an anti-EU strategy. Thus a utilitarian calculation would lead parties away from trying to ride such an unlikely vehicle. Second, the volatility of the Romanian party system,⁷² the weak social roots and strong dependence of parties on charisma of personalities has created a Romanian electorate that tunes out party messages or is unable to differentiate them.⁷³ A mobilization strategy based on specific issues, like joining the EU, would be less likely to resonate than bread and butter issues like

⁷¹ Paul Taggart, "A touchstone of dissent;" see also Nick Sitter, "The Politics of Opposition and European Integration in Scandinavia: Is Euroskepticism a Government-Opposition Dynamic?" *West European Politics*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (October, 2001), pp. 22-39.

⁷² Michael Shafir points out that 29% of those who voted for Emil Constantinescu in the 1996 presidential race and 23% of those who voted for Ion Iliescu voted for Corneliu Vadim Tudor in 2000. Twenty-three percent of supporters for the Democratic Convention (CDR) in 1996 and 17% of PDSR supporters at that time voted for Tudor's party in 2000. Michael Shafir, "The Greater Romania Party and the 2000 Elections in Romania: A Retrospective Analysis (Part 1), *RFE/RL East European Perspectives*, Vol. 3, No. 14 (22 August 2001).

⁷³ Mungiu-Pippidi, "The Return of Populism," p. 244.

living standards and, especially, corruption.⁷⁴ Third, this volatility and the public's distance from parties is a function of and reinforces substantial public distrust of all parties. This distrust is reported in numerous surveys⁷⁵ and would tend to undercut the likelihood that an anti-EU party could mobilize substantial support based on an anti-EU message. A public that evidences a high level of trust in the EU⁷⁶ would not trust an anti-EU message.

The ideological approach includes both a party-based strand and one based on mass political culture. Both strands base their expectation of opposition to the EU on political philosophy. That is, parties and people will oppose the EU to the extent that it conforms with their political orientation. Both radical views of the left (opposition to private property, involvement with international capital, bourgeois notions of individual liberty, etc.) and radical views of the right (xenophobia, hypernationalism, visions of the nation under threat, protection of national sovereignty) should provide the context for political parties and people to oppose supranational organizations in general and the EU in particular.⁷⁷ This would be due, in the

⁷⁴ James Mitchell, "Corruption, the Electoral Process, and the Politics of Transition in Romania," *Romanian Journal of Society and Politics*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (May, 2002), pp. 30-44.

⁷⁵ See, for example, European Commission, *Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 2001*, pp. 24, B-21: drawing on the Public Opinion Barometer of the Soros Foundation from November, 2000. Grigore Pop-Eleches reports that "86% of Romanians had little or no trust in political parties." Grigore Pop-Eleches, "Whither Democracy? The Politics of Dejection in the 2000 Romanian Elections," (Berkeley, CA: Berkeley Program in Soviet and Post-Soviet Studies), p. 5.

⁷⁶ European Commission, *Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 2001*, pp. 52, B-64

⁷⁷ Lauren M. McLaren, "Public Support for the European Union: Cost/Benefit Analysis of Perceived Cultural Threat?" *The Journal of Politics*, Vol. 64, No. 2 (May, 2002), pp. 551-66; Kopecky and Mudde, "Empty Words or Irreducible Core?"; Sara De Master and Michael K. Le Roy, "Xenophobia and the European Union," *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 32 (July, 2000), pp. 419-36.

former case, to that organization's clear preference for free markets and capitalism and in the latter, because of its imposition of international norms on the behavior of the sacred state.⁷⁸

Romania has parties which belong to such "families" and most give evidence of the expected orientation toward xenophobia, conspiracy theories in which the villains are both outside the country and among their fellow travelers within, and which postulate a "pure" nation unyielding to the demands of foreigners or their organizations. The most notable of these parties is the Greater Romania Party of Vadim Tudor who has repeatedly talked of external conspiracy and threats to the country.⁷⁹ Despite this and despite an explicit anti-Western content to his views, the party did not offer an anti-EU position and in fact supported the country's integration into the organization, by signing the 1995 Snagov protocol among Romania's parliamentary parties. Tudor squares this conceptual circle by utilizing both a more vague formulation and a more explicit one. The vague argument generally blames "the West" for the country's troubles, thus allowing the party the room to play to public support for the EU. More specifically, the major external demon alluded to by Tudor and his party is Hungary, aided, in their view, by Romania's 1.9 million Hungarians. Thus the party and its leader can both invoke foreign conspiracies, condemn in general terms the machinations of "West" and yet still support Romania entry into the EU.

Room for such a seeming contradictory set of position is created also by three other key elements of Romanian public political culture. First, the Romanian public has traditionally and most recently been more suspicious of the designs of the Soviet Union and, after 1991, of Russia

⁷⁸ Mudde makes this point with regard to the Republikaner and Deutsche Volkunion parties in Germany. Cas Mudde. *The Ideology of the Extreme Right* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2000). pp. 48, 68.

⁷⁹ Shafir. "Radical Politics in East Central Europe."

than of the West.⁸⁰ This in itself is not unusual in East Europe.⁸¹ But the Romanian view of the nation's security has typically identified Russia as the major threat to a greater extent than is done in almost any other East European state. Thus the public sees joining western organizations as part of an opportunity to escape once and for all from the position it was left in after World War II, part of the Soviet sphere of influence. That Russia and not western organizations is the great threat to the country underlies the high level of support Romanians give to both the EU and NATO and makes it possible for political parties to warn of foreign dangers but still embrace the EU.

Second, even if the EU is not specifically a security organization, it represents to most Romanians "the West": security, prosperity and Europe. The organization has substantial and positive recognition among the Romanian public⁸² and enormous symbolic significance as the country's rightful place. This is reinforced by what Mihnea Nastase calls a "boomerang effect" in which Romanians' strong negative memories of the Ceausescu era cause "unconditional acceptance of European integration in order to enter the 'new Europe.'"⁸³ Despite the fact that a majority of Romanians worry that "international organizations such as the EU or IMF should not tell Romanians how to run their country,"⁸⁴ an even larger majority favor the adoption of

⁸⁰ Alina Mungiu-Pippidi, "Romania: From Procedural Democracy to European Integration," in Mary Kaldor and Ivan Vejvoda, *Democratization in Central and Eastern Europe* (London: Pinter, 1999), p. 147; see also, Geoffrey Pridham, "Romania and European Union Accession: The Domestic Dimension," *Romanian Journal of Society and Politics*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (November, 2001), n. 21.

⁸¹ Grabbe and Hughes. "Central and east European views on EU enlargement," 190.

⁸² European Commission, *Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 2001*, pp. 42, 46; B-34, B-36

⁸³ Mihnea Nastase. "Communist Legacies and the Quest for European Union Membership," *Problems of Post-Communism*, Vol. 49, No. 5 (Sept.-Oct., 2002), p. 56.

⁸⁴ Michael Shafir. "The Greater Romania Party and the 2000 elections in Romania: A Retrospective Analysis (Part 2)," *RFE/RL East European Perspectives*, Vol. 3, No. 15 (5 September, 2001).

democratic processes and want to "follow the western [political] model."⁸⁵ Thus, ideologically it is possible to be both nationalistic and pro-European. Indeed a survey after the 2000 elections found that higher percentage of supporters of Vadim Tudor believed that joining the EU would benefit the country than was true for voters for Ion Iliescu or the general population.⁸⁶

Finally, this blurring of distinctions among various international organizations and between the national boundaries and international subordination--the resulting ability of political parties to be both nationalistic and pro-EU--is made possible because to this point most Romanians actually know very little about the EU. Their knowledge of how the organizations operates, what joining would mean for the country and its national prerogatives is generally low. Delia Dumitrica calls it a "quasi-ignorant view of integration."⁸⁷

A generally low level of specific information about the EU also suggests a powerful reason for continued EU support even in the face of economic distress. Substantial literature suggests that EU support is directly related to the economic situation and expectations of people in application countries. Put briefly, "winners" or those likely to be winners support joining the EU while "losers," i.e., those whose situation has deteriorated or who lack the skills or prospects to succeed in the new post- communist environment will oppose joining.⁸⁸ Romania not only has

⁸⁵ Ioan Marginean, "Indicators of Democratization in Romania," *Social Indicators Research*, 42 (1997) pp. 363.

⁸⁶ Pop-Eleches, "Whither Democracy?" p. 16.

⁸⁷ Delia Despina Dumitrica, "Scapegoat and Scarecrow: A Romanian view of EU integration," *Central Europe Review*, Vol. 2, No. 40 (20 November 2000); Feb. 20, 2003. One illustration of this is the fact that the Applicant Countries Barometer found that 74% of Romanians "tended to trust" the EU--the highest percentage in the region, but when asked whether they trusted particular bodies of the EU (e.g. the European Parliament, Commission or Council of Ministers) only the parliament received the trust of more than a majority. See European Commission, *Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 2001*. pp. B-64, B-66.

⁸⁸ Joshua A. Tucker, Alexander C. Pacek, Adam J. Berinsky, "Transitional Winners and Losers: Attitudes Toward EU Membership in Post-Communist Countries," *American Journal of Political*

its share of potential and real "losers," but by all counts has suffered the greatest economy dislocation in the transition and made the least progress. Economy stratification has grown, some elites have grown wealthy while as many as 40% of the people live below the poverty line. The average Romanians' purchasing power is below 50% of what it was in 1989.

Understandably, large sectors of the population are not satisfied and view their situation as worse off than it had been.⁸⁹ More than a decade after ending communist rule, Romania still waits at the back of the queue for membership in the EU and yet support for joining the EU persists.

One reason for this is that suggested above: most Romanians know little about the EU or what joining the organizations will mean. Instead they see the EU as their possible savior, as their ticket out, as likely to make their lives better. In fact, Romanians are more like to see membership in the EU as benefiting them personally than are people from any other East European country.⁹⁰ Precisely because actual negotiations have been at the elite level and because Romania is not close to joining, the particulars about how adopting the *acquis communautaire*, for example, will change the country's situation are vague.⁹¹ Political elites have no incentive to clarify this, as Delia Dumitrica explains:

Science, Vol. 46, No. 3 (July, 2002), pp. 557-71; Piret Ehin, "Determinants of public support for EU membership: Data from the Baltic countries," *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol. 40 (2001), pp. 31-56; Aleks Szczerbiak, "Polish Public Opinion: Explaining Declining Support for EU Membership," *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 39, No. 1 (March, 2001), pp. 105-22).

⁸⁹ European Commission, *Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 2001*, pp. 13, 14. This was also true in mid-decade, according to the Public Opinion Barometer of the Soros Foundation, accessible at: <www.osf.ro/bop/cercetare.html>.

⁹⁰ European Commission, *Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 2001*, pp. 59, 60, B-60.

⁹¹ Grabbe and Hughes, "Central and east European views on EU enlargement," p. 191. In a recent "rural Eurobarometer" survey conducted in Romanian villages by Gallup International, 69% of respondents said they would vote in favor of joining the EU in a referendum. However on a scale of 1-10 measuring their own judgement of their knowledge of the EU, 63% gave themselves a 4 or less, with fully 25% choosing the rating, "I do not know anything at all." *Ziua*, 27 February 2003 (Foreign Broadcast Information Service, 27 February 2003).

Out of electoral fears politicians avoid explaining what the accession requirements really mean. Whilst the masses expect an immediate profit out of the accession procedures. Disillusioned by the dramatic decrease in the standard of living, many Romanians look to the EU as a possible savior that will heal all economic wounds and provide better jobs, salaries and immediate wealth.⁹²

It is not accidental that in other parts of East Europe, the closer countries move to joining, the lower support is for doing so.⁹³ By contrast, nearly 70% of Romanians want the EU to play a more important role in their lives, compared to 50% of Hungarians and only 39% of Czechs.⁹⁴ This may yet happen in Romania but neither proximity to joining nor the attendant falloff in desire have yet occurred.

Second, and perhaps more important, though there is clear dissatisfaction with the country's economic situation, the target of anger for this is not the EU or the country's attempt to join, but the incumbent government. This applied to both the first Iliescu government, which ended in 1996, and the Constantinescu government, which ended in 2000. As Pop-Eleches puts it "voting patterns in the recent elections reflect a pervasive dissatisfaction with the country's political elite."⁹⁵ Clearly economic issues predominate as the most salient issue and the focus of Romanian dissatisfaction has been the various governments and the parties that led them. This is seen in the shift of approval ratings of various leading parties and the willingness of supporters of parties that seem to be at different ends of the spectrum to nevertheless abandon their party

⁹² Dumitrica, "Scapegoat and Scarecrow."

⁹³ Kopecky and Mudde, "Empty Words or Irreducible Core?" p. 8; Ehin, "Determinants of public support for EU membership," pp. 41-42; Grabbe and Hughes, "Central and east European views on EU enlargement," p. 186.

⁹⁴ European Commission, *Applicant Countries Eurobarometer 2001*, p. 67.

⁹⁵ Pop-Eleches, "Whither Democracy?", p. 1; see also. Mungiu-Pippidi, "The Return of Populism," p. 244.

and vote for rivals. Voters were attracted to the GRP because of its anti-corruption message and abandoned in massive numbers the CDR which had failed to move the country ahead economically. Joining or not joining the EU was not a major theme in the elections; getting the country moving economically and ending corruption was. Moreover, there is little evidence that support for Tudor reflected a general rejection by Romanians of the democratic system or its values--and thus the EU.⁹⁶

The Romanian Equation

We are thus left with a curious kind of paradox. An elite driven dynamic--the country's approach toward the EU--is indeed elite driven in Romania as elsewhere in East Europe. However the massive support shown by the public for joining the EU has in fact constrained political debate in the country. Either because the elites have done their job too well--convincing people of the need to join the EU--or because of a decades long hankering to join the west, to escape the domination of Russia, to be part of Europe or because they really do not know what is involved, the public is overwhelmingly convinced of the correctness of this course. Rather than the political cues going from top down, the public is giving a key political cue to the political elites. To quote Elizabeth Pond, "No politician who kept Romania isolated from the West could long endure in a system that now requires ratification of leaders voters."⁹⁷ They can challenge this consensus or their opponents on this question only at their peril. Much safer and more productive is the tactic of attacking their rivals' economic record, alleged secret deals, impotence in the face of corruption, or ties to various specified conspirators.

⁹⁶ Mungiu-Pippidi, *Romania after 2000*, p. 116.

⁹⁷ Elizabeth Pond, "Romania: Better Late Than Never," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Spring, 2001), p. 39.

As Grzymala-Busse and Innes describe it, the debate about the EU has shifted from a substantive one to a "technocratic one."⁹⁸ This leaves the pro-EU consensus intact but may mean a rude shock should the country ever come closer to joining and hard facts about the cost and benefits come to light. Whichever government brings the country to the table can probably count on a positive vote in a referendum, but this is to calculate without taking into account the greater flow of information that occurs as negotiations proceed and the possible fall in support that may accompany it.

Conclusion: Romania and the Czech Republic Compared

If we compare the situation in Romania and the Czech Republic with regard to Euroskepticism, some differences are apparent that relate directly to the phenomenon. At the level of the public, the broad and consistent support for EU membership in Romania acts as a constraint on political elites, especially political parties. It provides little political space for the development of either soft or hard Euroskepticism and little likely payoff for using this device as an electoral strategy. In the Czech Republic, by contrast, the public's, even suspicious, attitude toward the organization, provides the opportunity for a variety of parties to carve out and stand on a position likely to have resonance with voters. Vaclav Klaus' electoral success is proof of this, at least as far as soft Euroskepticism is concerned. But even hard Euroskepticism has shown to be somewhat effective as the growth of support for the KSCM shows.

The basis for all attitudes toward the EU in the two countries is also different. For Czechs the issue is national sovereignty which they see as threatened by absorption onto a supranational

⁹⁸ Anna Grzymala-Busse and Abby Innes, "Great Expectations: The EU and Domestic Political Competition in East Central Europe." *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Winter, 2003), pp. 64-73.

organization. For Romanians the danger is more prosaic: Russia. Despite the invasion of 1968, the Czech lands have historically not been threatened from the east but from the west. Hence, for example, the continuing sensitivity on the symbolic issue of repealing the Benes decrees and, for some, the possible practical consequence of allowing property claims against Czechs. Even apart from the decrees, for many Czechs membership in the EU with its broad "European citizenship" brings with it the risk of allowing returning Germans and German businesses to buy up Czech resources and lands. This is not an issue in Romania. If there is a historical external threat it is Russia. For those, like the GRP, who see an contemporary external threat, it is Hungary--which is not an EU member.

At the same time Czechs consider the issue of whether the country is part of Europe to be settled. Thus the EU offers little symbolic gain on this score. For Romanians, however, despite their self-styled position as "Latins in a sea of Slavs," the country's place remains undetermined. Uncertainty on this issue is reinforced by the disinclination of either NATO or the EU to extend invitations in 1997 and the latter's putting the country off once again in 2002. For Romania, "joining Europe" has real meaning and the outcome is neither automatic nor settled. Hence the appeal of the EU.

But even were the symbolic appeal not as strong, the data show that Romanians have a much higher utilitarian calculation of the advantages of joining than do the Czechs. Thus the gains for Romanians are seen as significant and worth pursuing while the Czechs are less certain. And precisely because Romania is well behind in the queue, there has been little serious public debate about the specifics of joining and its impact on the country. As a variety of studies demonstrate, as proximity to joining increases, both this debate and the level of Euroskepticism grow.

At the elite level, in contrast to the Czech Republic, the political parties in Romania have no incentive to broaden this debate, to point to difficulties and costs, as this would hurt them with their political base. In the Czech Republic for both soft and hard Euroskeptical parties this kind of information reinforces their message and helps them electorally. There are strategic gains for both kinds of Euroskeptical parties in the Czech Republic while in Romania there is no evidence of strategic gains available to most parties. With the economy struggling and everyday issues dominating in Romania, bread and butter issues have much more salience and usefulness in the elections. In that, Romania actually more closely resembles West Europe where, according to Mair, the EU issue has little spillover into national politics.⁹⁹

The comparison between the Czech and Romanian cases thus yields support for the operation of some key factors underlying Euroskepticism and, even more useful, some indications of how these factors operate in the particular cases. Moreover, it offers further insight into the significance of factors operating in one part of Europe, already inside the EU, and their different role in the context of the other part of Europe, still waiting.

⁹⁹ Mair, "The Limited Impact of Europe on National Party Systems;" for the view that European integration provides the basis for new electoral cleavages, see Gabel, "European Integration. Voters and National Politics."