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“More meddling from Brussels is not going to help”

Eurosceptic behaviour in the ECR and ID group in the European Parliament

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Abstract

This thesis aims to provide better insight into how Eurosceptic actors operate within the political groups ECR and ID in the European Parliament. Through a qualitative textual analysis inspired by discourse and rhetorical analysis, this within-case study looked at manifestations of cooperative ties between MEPs from ECR and ID, Eurosceptic behaviour, shared identities and group socialisation during plenary debates. The main findings are that there are few manifestations of intra- and interparty cooperation in the speeches but voting results showed that there could be more cooperative behaviour than manifested, mainly in policy areas that are of interest to Eurosceptics. For other policy areas, there is less voting cohesion, which makes cooperation unlikely. The behaviour of Eurosceptics during plenary debates is heterogenous and varies among the MEPs, with some not showing any Euroscepticism and others being highly influenced. The analysis of shared identities also showed varying results, but there is always a clear “other” referring to the European Commission, all the EU institutions, or the opposing side in Parliament. The degree of socialisation also varied, depending on individual choices and the hierarchy of values and goals. The analysed speeches showed that the behaviour of Eurosceptics that did not conform to the institutional norms is constrained by (social) sanctions.

Key words: Euroscepticism, European Parliament, ECR, ID, New Institutionalism, politics, behaviour, shared identity, group socialisation

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1. Introduction

Eurosceptic voices have for a long time been marginalised, and have historically only had little impact on the European integration (Brack, 2012; Brack & Costa, 2017). Even though these voices have had little influence on policymaking both in member-states and at the supranational level, Euroscepticism has slowly gained ground (Brack & Startin, 2015). Brexit in 2020 illustrated that Euroscepticism did, in fact, influence European politics (Leruth et al., 2017). This trend will likely continue in the near future (Cunningham et al., 2024).

The European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) think tank predicted an increase of forty mandates for the Eurosceptic and national conservative Identity and Democracy (ID), as well as an increase of eighteen mandates for the “Eurorealist” European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) (Ibid.) This poll also showed that it is likely that Eurosceptic populist parties will become the largest parties in Austria, Belgium, Czechia, France, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, and Slovakia, as well as the number two or three in Bulgaria, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Portugal, Romania, Spain, and Sweden (Ibid.). That could mean that, provided that there is cooperation to some extent, the Eurosceptic members of the Parliament may have a greater influence on policy-making than ever before.

Euroscepticism, defined as being opposed to EU integration (Taggart & Szczerbiak, 2008), is understood as a threat to the European Union. However, several studies have showed that so far, the contestation of Eurosceptics in the European Parliament is not organised enough to pose a threat to European integration, mainly because of ideological, national and behavioural differences (Börzel & Hartlapp, 2022; Brack 2012). Eurosceptic Members of the European Parliament are elected to represent the European citizens in a body that they are essentially against; in order to make good use of the power these Eurosceptic members have received from the people and to actually influence the outcome when it comes to policymaking on a European level, it is necessary to work with the system and to cooperate with other political parties (Brack, 2015). Without cooperation, it becomes difficult to gain a majority in plenary on law proposals or amendments. An improved comprehension of Eurosceptic behaviour will lead to more insight on how and why Eurosceptics influence policy making the way they do, but also on why Euroscepticism is attractive to the European citizen. This is necessary for how we consider Eurosceptic voices, academically and in our day-to-day understanding, since Euroscepticism is an integral part of European democracy.

1.1 Aim and Research Questions

Since there are still many gaps existing in the field of Euroscepticism studies, this present study aims to provide a better insight into how Eurosceptic actors operate within the political groups in the European Parliament. Brack (2015) notes that previous studies usually “have highlighted the heterogeneity and complexity of attitudes towards the EU and the influence of institutional, national, ideological and strategic factors”, but that there is a “limited literature on Euroscepticism at the supranational level and its implications” (Ibid.). This study focuses on the European Parliament specifically and not the other EU institutions, because the influence of Euroscepticism on the Parliament is the clearest: Eurosceptic actors are easier to pinpoint, in comparison to the other institutions. What also makes the Parliament interesting to study further, is the paradoxical situation for the MEPs: they have been elected to a body that they are working against, which creates contradicting strategies and views on how to use their power to get their message across.

Instead of focusing on the micro-level, this study aims for an improved understanding of how Euroscepticism works on the level of the European political groups ECR and ID. This is of interest and of relevance, especially because the latest polls are predicting another increase of mandates for the Eurosceptic political parties after the European elections in June 2024. The questions raised by for example Szczerbiak and Taggart (2017) about the effect of Eurosceptic actors on policy making are highly connected to how, why and to what extent Eurosceptic MEPs can and are willing to cooperate. To gain power in policy-making processes, you need to be able to cooperate. If there is a high number of Eurosceptic MEPs, but the will or ability to cooperate is lacking, there will not likely be a big impact when it comes to decision-making. This leads to the questions this thesis aims to answer:

1.) How are cooperative ties, both intra- and interparty, between MEPs from the Eurosceptic parties ECR and ID manifested in plenary debates?

2.) To what extent is the political and social behaviour of the MEP's, as presented in their language use, reflective of Euroscepticism, shared identity and group socialisation?

1.2 Previous Research

This thesis has drawn inspiration from the study called *Eurosceptic Contestation and legislative behaviour in the European Parliament*, executed by Börzel & Hartlapp (2022). This study is placed in a broader field of Euroscepticism studies aiming to understand how contestation can influence policy outputs in the European Parliament, where they draw on

examples of scholars such as Kantola & Lombardo (2020), Kantola & Rolandsen Agustín (2019) and Warasin et al., (2019) in the field of gender equality. They also give the example of Cavallaro et al. (2018) when it comes to economic policies. What sets the Börzel & Hartlapp study apart from the previously named, is that they work with a comparative analysis to give more general conclusions, that not only focuses on one policy area. To do this, they make use of studies such as Hooghe et al. (2002) and Hix et al. (2005) on contestation along the traditional left/right division, as well as the GAL/TAN¹ line, which is said to be a good predictor of Euroscepticism. Börzel and Hartlapp wanted to know what role Euroscepticism plays in MEPs voting behaviour and how Eurosceptics influence policy-making practices in both committees and during plenary debates. They “focus on the potential of Eurosceptic contestation to shape rather than oppose EU policy-making contributing to a potentially more responsive and differentiated European integration” (p.99).

The study consisted of a quantitative analysis of roll-call votes, followed by a qualitative analysis of six case studies. The analysis of the roll-call votes was meant to determine the policy fields where there are strong differences between Eurosceptics and Europhiles and the areas where Eurosceptics don't display signs of cohesion. Eurosceptic polarisation is defined as “the proportion of votes in which the Eurosceptic plurality dissents from the Europhile plurality” (p.98). This means that if the majority of the Europhiles vote differently than the Eurosceptics, it is a polarised vote. Eurosceptic cohesion is defined as “how likely Eurosceptics are to vote with their peers in Eurosceptic political groups” (Ibid.). Eurosceptic cohesion is the most important factor when it comes to actual influence on policy-making. In the second part of the study, Börzel and Hartlapp analysed two case studies in three different policy fields where they expected different degrees of contestation and cohesion, to get a better understanding of the processes behind and the complexity of Eurosceptic contestation and its influence on policy output.

Börzel and Hartlapp found that Eurosceptic contestation is in fact polarised, depending on ideology and national interests. There is usually a bigger cohesion when it comes to policies related to ‘new cultural cleavages’ within the European Parliament, usually divided along the GAL/TAN axis. The Eurosceptic cohesion is usually lower when it comes to policies that are divided among the left/right or when national interests are at play. Börzel and Hartlapp also found that there is more contestation in the committees than expected, but that based on the policy field this contestation can be vary.

¹ Green, Alternative, Liberal vs Traditional, Authoritarian, Nationalist.

The present study will differ from the Börzel & Hartlapp study in several ways. Instead of a quantitative approach, this study will make use of a qualitative approach with the analysis of Eurosceptic behaviour presented in MEPs language use during the plenary debates, to see whether or not the individual members of the groups are showing cooperative ties or not. This will be supported by an analysis of the roll-call votes. Another important difference is that the present study will focus on only right-wing Euroscepticism during the ninth legislature and will not take left-wing Euroscepticism into account.

1.3 Limitations

The present study is limited in several ways. First of all, this study will focus on right-wing Euroscepticism and will not take left-wing Euroscepticism into account. There are more right-wing Eurosceptic MEPs in the ECR and ID groups and there is an abundance of accessible material, compared to left-wing Euroscepticism. The disadvantage is that this study will not be able to draw conclusions about Eurosceptic behaviour in general, but only about right-wing Euroscepticism. Secondly, this study is limited because it is formed as a *within-case study*, consisting of four instances. This means that this study will not be able to draw conclusions about the behaviour of Eurosceptic MEPs in all policy fields, but only about the combination of the policy fields analysed in these specific contexts.

The third limitation is that the political group meetings are taking place *huis clos*. This means that the material that would seem the most relevant, e.g. video material or minutes of the political group meetings of ECR and ID, are not available. Some material about the ECR meetings is available, but there is nothing for ID, so that cannot be analysed. The same applies to informal behaviour and informal meetings, that are of importance for policy making processes, but cannot be traced back to officially produced material.

The last limitation is that the debates will be analysed with the English interpretation, provided by the European Parliament. Many MEPs speak in their mother tongues during the plenary sessions. Because interpretation is not the same as direct translation, the original phrasing or intonation might get lost. Interpretation compared to literal, word-by-word translation limits some aspects of the understanding, but enables others, such as emotion.

1.4 Disposition

This thesis commences with a discussion and motivation for the choice of material in Chapter 2. In the following chapter, a contextualisation of the functioning of the European Parliament

and the two political groups ECR and ID will be provided. In Chapter 4, the theoretical background, and a selection of theories will be addressed: a theoretical overview of Euroscepticism, possible classifications of Euroscepticism, the behaviour of Eurosceptic MEPs, and New Institutionalism. Chapter 5 addresses the choice of a within-case study, combined with a qualitative text analysis inspired by discourse and rhetorical analysis. The explanation of the use of methods is followed by the analysis of the material in chapter 6. After the analysis, the findings will be summarised in the conclusions in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 will provide a discussion and proposals for further research.

2. Material

The material that is used for this study consists of the video material and verbatim reports of four plenary debates. The four debates (instances) together form one case. The instances have been selected based on a combination of the most-likely and least-likely approach (Koivu & Hinze, 2017), where two of the instances are most-likely to be influenced by Euroscepticism, and two instances are less likely. All material has been taken from the last year of the ninth parliamentary legislature, with the earliest dating from June 2023 and the latest from April 2024. This specific time frame has been chosen to limit the differences in contexts. Many impactful events have happened in the world during this legislature and the context has changed: a global pandemic, war in Ukraine and the Israel-Palestine conflict, climate change, and economic crises, all events that can influence the manifestation of Euroscepticism. The material has been taken from the European Parliament's official website and its media centre. The analysis consists of the speeches held by MEPs from ECR and ID in the instances that have been selected. The number of speeches varies between the debates and the political groups. This is based on the number of MEPs that participated in the debate.

The first instance is the Nature Restoration Law, because it is said to be a law proposal where Eurosceptic voices had a great influence on the outcome based on the national interests and the interests of farmers in the member states (Drea, 2023). The analysed material consists of seventeen speeches, ten from ECR and seven from ID, taking place during the plenary debate in Strasbourg on 11 of July, 2023.

The second instance that will be analysed is the discussion on 30 years of the Copenhagen criteria and the possible future enlargement of the Union, with a focus on the candidate member states Ukraine and Moldova. This debate took place on 22 November 2023 in Strasbourg. The analysed material consists of five speeches, one from ECR and four from

ID. This instance has been selected based on the differences in the opinions about the accession of Ukraine between ECR and ID (Neubert, 2024).

The third instance is a law proposal on extending the list of EU crimes to hate speech and hate crimes. This instance has been selected because, at first glance, Euroscepticism in this case is not so self-evident, but is situated along the GAL/TAN division as named by Börzel and Hartlapp (2022). The debate took place in Strasbourg on 17 of January. The analysed material will consist of 11 speeches, 4 from ECR and 7 from ID.

The final instance that was analysed is about the Right to Repair. On this topic, Euroscepticism does not seem evident, but perhaps Euroscepticism plays a bigger role than expected. The debate on the Right Repair took place on 22 April during the plenary session in Strasbourg. The analysed material consists of 4 speeches, 3 from ECR and 1 from ID. To ensure that the material is concise and relevant blue-card questions, their answers and speeches in writing will not be considered in the analysis.

3. The Functioning of the European Parliament

The European Parliament is one of the co-legislators in the European Union, together with the Council of the European Union (Burns, 2022). In the ordinary legislative procedure, the Parliament gets to amend and to approve law proposals that the Commission has drafted and to find a consensus with the council (Best, 2022, p.239). What differentiates the Parliament from the other two institutions, is that it is the only body that has been directly elected by the European citizens (Burns, 2022). The Parliament is not only co-legislator, they also must hold the Commission accountable, meaning that they have to approve new Commissioners and the President and that they have the right to dismiss the Commission. The Parliament also exercises budgetary powers, where they can amend and approve of the EU budget (Ibid.). Other, value-based responsibilities of the Parliament are to “defend freedom, equality and the rule of law across the EU” (Youth Outreach Unit, DG COMM, 2024, p. 17), as well as promoting “democracy, fair elections and human rights around the world” (Ibid.).

The Parliament currently consists of 705 directly elected members, which will increase to 720 members in the tenth legislature. The number of members per member state is based on the number of inhabitants, with a minimum of six and a maximum of ninety-six (Ibid.). The members of the European Parliament (MEPs) represent over 200 national political parties (European Parliament^a, 2023). These national political parties are grouped together in seven European political groups, based on their ideologies: The Left (Gue/NGL),

the Socialists and Democrats (S&D), the Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA), Renew Europe (Renew), the European Peoples Party (EPP), the European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR) and Identity and Democracy (ID) (European Parliament^a, n.d.). The political groups consist of at least 23 members that represent at least a quarter of all the EU member states. The MEPs that do not belong to any of the political groups, are known as the non-attached (NI) members (Ibid.).

The members not only cooperate in the political groups. Most of the preparatory work before the vote is done in committees (European Parliament^b, n.d.). Twenty committees are responsible for different policy fields and the committees consist of between twenty five and eighty eight members. The committees' responsibilities are to “draw up, amend and adopt legislative proposals and own-initiative reports” (Ibid.). A law proposal is thus first discussed in the committees, then in the political groups and finally voted on during the plenary sessions.

There are two main differences between the European and national parliaments. First of all, there is no pre-decided coalition. A new majority has to be formed with every new law proposal and that this coalition can look different depending on what is being discussed. Second, party discipline is not as important in the European Parliament, mainly because of the sizes of the political groups and differences in national backgrounds.

3.1. ECR and ID

The European Conservatives and Reformists, founded in 2009 call themselves “a centre-right political group in the European Parliament”. ECR currently consists of sixty eight members from seventeen different countries. Some national political parties that are being represented, are the Polish *Law and Justice*, *Fratelli d'Italia* and the *Sweden Democrats*. ECR's main goal is to “to deliver common sense solutions”, with the “hardworking tax payers” in mind (who we are? // ECR group, n.d.). ECR calls their party “Eurorealist” and they focus on decentralisation of European politics, prioritising free trade, energy security, controlled immigration and more individual freedom.

Identity and Democracy is the most right-wing European political group. ID was created following the 2019 election and is the successor of the Europe of Nations and Freedom Party (ENF) (Huet, 2019). The party currently has fifty nine members from eight member states, with the majority of the members coming from the *Italian Lega per Salvini*,

the French *Rassemblement National* and the German *Alternative für Deutschland*². The ID group proposes a different rhetoric about the EU, where no more power should be given to Brussels. ID wants a simpler EU, closer to its citizens. ID also focuses on jobs and economic growth, as well as security, less migration and putting a halt to the “Islamisation of Europe” (ID group, n.d.). The group is currently not represented among the Parliament’s vice presidents (European Parliament, 2024^a) nor among the chairs of the different committees (European Parliament^b, 2023), positions that are generally seen as influential.

Both parties are quite close to each other when it comes to priorities and ideologies, thus it is not surprising that it has been discussed several times to merge the two parties (Neubert, 2024). The only difference is the different views on foreign policy, the ongoing war in Ukraine in particular. If these issues are to be resolved, the two parties could form one political group that suddenly can compete with the biggest party, EPP.

4. Theoretical background

To provide a theoretical background that gives a better understanding of manifestations of the cooperative ties between the Eurosceptic MEPs in four plenary debates, as well as how the MEPs present themselves in terms of shared identity and group socialisation, a combination of theories of Euroscepticism, Eurosceptic behaviour and theories of institutionalism is made. The chapter will be concluded with an analytical framework.

4.1. Euroscepticism

Euroscepticism is a phenomenon that has no clear-cut definition, since it is such a vast and ever-evolving concept. Like Leruth, Startin and Usherwood (2017, p.3) write: “as a phenomenon, Euroscepticism seems to touch on everything and to be found everywhere”. This complexity of Euroscepticism makes it difficult to understand what it entails in detail, why it exists, or the meaning of its existence. In the broadest sense, Euroscepticism is “some form of hostility towards the EU” (Leconte, 2010, p. 4), an opposition to the European integration processes, as a whole or to aspects of it. Taggart (1998) first defined Euroscepticism as “contingent and conditional opposition to European integration as well as total and unconditional opposition to it.” This vague definition does not provide information about what this opposition is, what it looks like or why it exists.

² Please note that this thesis was written before the AfD was kicked out of the ID group on the 23rd of May 2024, this does not influence the analysis in this thesis.

Taggart's broad definition does allow for the plurality of the different ideologies that it can be connected with, varying from the extreme left to the extreme right (Ibid.). Euroscepticism does not offer any ideas, ideals or a view on the functioning of society, other than the opposition to European integration, or as Leruth, Startin and Usherwood (Ibid, p. 4) write: "Euroscepticism is 'actually' just another label for something else, such as populism or anti-politics or nationalism, while neglecting to see that, while it contains all aspects of these, it is not defined - in fundamental terms - by them". Marks and Wilson (2000) argue that Euroscepticism already has its roots in the historical ideologies of Christian democrats, liberalism, social democrats and conservatism and where the general division of left and right also can be included. This could mean that Euroscepticism can be understood as an aspect of ideologies. Kopecky and Mudde (2002, p. 15) add here that the broader ideology influences a party's attitude towards European integration, while more policy oriented Euroscepticism is a question of strategy.

A problem that arises when it comes to such a broad definition of the meaning of Euroscepticism is defining what is *not* Euroscepticism. When it comes to opposition to the enlargement of the EU, you do not have to be a Eurosceptic, neither does questioning the democratic processes of the EU have to be Eurosceptic per se (Leconte, 2010). Neither does Euroscepticism have to be a threat to European integration. As Brack (2015) argues, Euroscepticism might be an asset for the EU's legitimacy, showing that the political system in the EU is open to conflict. The mandate of Eurosceptic MEPs could decrease the cleavages between the EU institutions and Eurosceptic citizens. By electing a Eurosceptic representative, the European Parliament becomes a forum where the citizens' dissatisfaction can be discussed. This makes the Parliament more representative, open to the plurality of political opinions and the diversity of society. Even though Eurosceptics might not participate actively in policy making, they do participate actively in the European elections.

Euroscepticism also brings politicisation into debates (Ibid.). Oftentimes, European politics are based on consensus and comprehension, and not as much on political ideologies. The discourse in policy making is usually technical and focused on finding alliances, instead of political conflicts. This means that explaining European politics and ongoing debates, is usually technical and difficult to understand for normal citizens, which creates cleavages between the EU and its citizens, who have insufficient understanding of the functioning of the institutions and the idea that Brussels' politics are far away from daily life. These ideas are only being amplified when there is no clear place for opposition. And in the absence of an organised opposition to the government like in the parliaments of the member states, the

opposition becomes one of an opposition to the whole EU (Ibid.). The Eurosceptics bring back the politics into the consensus and usually work with a clear language and narrative concerning European integration. Brack (Ibid., p.347) thinks this could be regarded as an asset, while noting that: “This could help the EU to switch from a negotiating democracy to a debate democracy since this increased contestation through politicisation is a core element of a consolidated and ‘normal’ political system”.

4.2. Hard and Soft Euroscepticism

The problem with the broad definition of Euroscepticism is that it embodies countless types of opposition to European integration. Several scholars have tried to break down, specify and conceptualise the definition of Euroscepticism. In 1998, Taggart wrote: “opposition to and support for the EU are rarely either binary or absolute” (p.365), meaning that Euroscepticism varies in what the opposition looks like and how it relates to different ideologies. Later on, Taggart and Szczerbiak (2001) divided Euroscepticism into *hard* and *soft* Euroscepticism. They found a clear division between those actors that display signs of hostility towards the European integration as a whole, or limited hostility to aspects of the integration. Taggart and Szczerbiak (Ibid., p. 3), define *hard Euroscepticism* as: “outright rejection of the entire project of European political and economic integration, and opposition to one’s country joining or remaining a member of the EU”. *Soft-Euroscepticism*, on the other hand, “involves contingent or qualified opposition to European integration” (Ibid, p.4). Here, the sub-categories of what Taggart and Szczerbiak (Ibid.) call policy Euroscepticism and national-interest Euroscepticism are included. Policy Euroscepticism is an opposition to specific policies - including political parties or Members who could be Europhile in general, but Eurosceptic when it comes to a specific field. National-interest Euroscepticism is about defending the rights and what is best for the member-state. Policy Euroscepticism and national-interest Euroscepticism are not mutually exclusive.

Taggart and Szczerbiak received a lot of criticism on this categorization. Kopecky and Mudde (2002) highlighted that (dis)approval of EU membership is a poor indicator of whether the type of Euroscepticism displayed is principled or contingent. Instead, focusing on future tracks of integration is much more telling. They also criticised Taggart and Szczerbiak’s definitions of *hard* and *soft* Euroscepticism for being too inclusive; every criticism on European integration can be deemed as Eurosceptic, when it not necessarily has to be so.

This led to a reworking of the definitions of *hard* and *soft* Euroscepticism by Taggart and Szczerbiak (2017, p.13), where *hard Euroscepticism* was redefined as “principled opposition to the project of European integration project of transferring powers to a supranational power such as the EU” and *soft Euroscepticism* as “not a principled objection to the European integration project of transferring powers to a supranational body such as the EU, but there [is] opposition to the EU’s current or future planned trajectory based on the further extension of competencies that the EU [is] planning to make” (Ibid.).

When it comes to the classification of Euroscepticism, it is difficult to come up with a gradation system that classifies different types of Euroscepticism and parties. Oftentimes, the type of data that is necessary to come up with a good division is not available: many political parties do not go into detail about their views on the EU and oftentimes, the division between for example hard and soft Euroscepticism is subjective and based on what the political environment looks like in different countries. Flood and Usherwood (2005) have for example tried to create a system that worked with the categorisation of EU-rejectionist, -revisionist, -minimalist, -gradualist, -reformist and -maximalist. The University of North Carolina (Hooghe et al., 2002) has also tried to work with a gradation system of 1-7, varying from EU enthusiast to EU sceptic, but here, too, it is difficult to establish the quality of the data and its objectivity, and the continuum of the gradation.

4.3 Types of Behaviour of Eurosceptic MEPs

Nathalie Brack (2015) studied the strategies of different Eurosceptic MEPs following the 2014 elections. She came up with a four-fold categorization of behaviour of Eurosceptic MEPs. In her analysis, Brack examines the strategies and behaviour of Eurosceptic MEPs, both left and right-wing, once they are elected. Her research is based on a bottom-up approach, where she assumes that behavioural choices MEPs make on an individual level, as well as the meaning and motivations they give, can provide new insights on how the EU democracy works as a whole. Following a series of semi-structured interviews, she came up with 4 typologies: the ‘absentee’, the ‘public orator’, the ‘pragmatist’ and the ‘participant’, that will serve as a base for the analysis of this thesis.

The absentees are MEPs that are marked by a low participation in the plenary and a preference for the national level. They participate in a very limited way and do not think involvement or participation on the institutional level is necessary. Instead, all their energy goes towards the national and local levels, where their voters are. Most of their time is spent

in their home countries, advocating for a change in the national debates and in the public opinion, all against the EU. The mandate in the EP is seen as a way to increase their visibility and legitimacy in the national field. This group of absentees is characterised by low attendance and little involvement when it comes to parliamentary tools, such as speeches, proposals and rapporteurship, which makes them a quite homogeneous group (Brack, 2015).

The second group of Eurosceptic MEPs are the public orators. This group is characterised by the ‘public speaking and dissemination of negative information on European integration’ (Ibid, p. 341). These Parliamentarians make use of their speeches in a way to defend the Eurosceptic citizens and to delegitimize the Parliament at the same time. These Members are more present, but their only goal is to ‘criticize, criticize, criticize’ (Ibid.). This means they do not cooperate in a constructive way and vote against most law proposals, no matter the policy field. This group is, like the absentees, also marked by low involvement when it comes to committees and is not interested in any responsibility. What is different from the other three categories, is that the public orator does not shy away from conflict, insults and personal attacks. The public orator sees it as their duty to inform the public about the negative consequences of European cooperation and they want to remind their colleagues that the Parliament is not supported by a part of the European citizens. These MEPs know the importance of outward communication with the press, through social media and the availability to speak to anyone. This group is also quite homogeneous, with public speaking as the only tool that is being used and no role for other involvement (Ibid.).

The third category of Eurosceptic MEPs are the pragmatists. The pragmatists are here to find a balance between achieving results and following their Eurosceptic beliefs (Ibid.). The pragmatists participate in the system and adapt to the rules but in a limited way. They are, as one MEP phrases it, a “constructive opposition which makes reports and proposals”. The pragmatists try to find a balance in their dual nature as Eurosceptic MEPs: opposition to the European Parliament but elected to represent the citizens. The pragmatists can be divided in two subcategories: MEPs who try to control and limit the power of the EU institutions through amendments, but only in those areas where the EU should play a role in Eurosceptic eyes. The second subcategory of the pragmatists is more focused on defending national and regional interests on the supranational level. In this way, they hope to gain attention for specific problems and to attract extra funding to address these issues. The pragmatists spend a lot more time and engage actively in for example committee work, compared to the first two categories. The pragmatists are also a more heterogeneous group than the previous two. Even though this group takes more responsibility, they only make a small impact on the legislation.

The ‘participant’ is the final category of Eurosceptic MEPs, which has as main goal to influence the decision-making processes. As Brack (Ibid., p. 344) states: they “see themselves first and foremost not as opposition players but as legislators, whose mandate is to ‘formulate European initiatives, discuss them with other MEPs and to find a middle ground that can be shared’”. In comparison to the other three categories, the participants conform to the EP rules, try to find coalitions and consensus, which means that they can sometimes accept that their ideological background and cooperation with other groups is not always compatible. In order to exercise influence, these MEPs are involved in several committees and participate in networks with the other EU institutions. Their main playing field is on the supranational level, but they keep in touch with the national level, through the media and visits during the green weeks. These different kinds of activities make the ‘participants’ a very heterogeneous group, with big differences in influential power, where some of them have become (vice)president of committees, Quaestors or rapporteurs (Brack, 2015).

In another study done by Brack & Behm (2022), the differences between Eurosceptics and non-Eurosceptics were analysed. They found that overall, Eurosceptics show less involvement in policy-making compared to their non-Eurosceptic colleagues, but that the Eurosceptics are more interested in publicity than the non-Eurosceptics. They also found that soft-Eurosceptics are more likely to be integrated and to participate in writing reports and opinions, whereas hard-Eurosceptics are even more involved with publicity. Lastly, they found that ideology and policy congruence are not the main reasons why Eurosceptics join European political groups, but that these groups are more seen as a platform for socialising.

4.4. New Institutionalism

Institutionalism studies how institutions affect the behaviour of individuals (or countries) and the outcomes of these behaviours (Steinmo, 2001). New Institutionalism is derived from the reintroduction of institutions to different fields of theories, such as behaviourism and Marxism, where they previously did not play a role (Pollack, 2009).

Antje Wiener defines institutions as: “formal and informal procedures, routines, norms and conventions, embedded in the organizational structure of the polity or political economy” (2006, p.36). Sven Steinmo (2001, p.1) gives an even clearer explanation, “In the broadest sense, institutions are simply rules”. These rules, both formal (e.g. laws, constitutions) and informal (e.g. norms) form the base of any political system (Ibid). Institutions can vary from political institutions to universities and families and can influence

politics in several ways. First of all, institutions shape political behaviour by shaping actors and their political strategies. Second, institutions define who can participate in politics, and third, institutions could influence the individual's ideas on possible outcomes and desirable behaviour (Steinmo, 2001). The EU is an institutionalised system filled with actors who behave in a certain way to ensure outcomes that are as close as possible to their interests (Rosamund, 2019, p. 86).

Within new institutionalism, there are three approaches: Rational Choice Institutionalism, Sociological Institutionalism and Historical Institutionalism. Since the latter is interested in the effects of institutional choices, it is not as relevant as an approach for this study and will not be taken into account. What differs Rational Choice Institutionalism and Sociological Institutionalism is the idea of *how much* the institution matters when it comes to shaping individuals' behaviour (Rosamund, 2019). RCI sees institutions as the sum of many years of self-seeking behaviour, while sociological institutionalism means that behaviour is shaped by the institutions.

RCI is closely related to the idea present in liberal intergovernmentalism: human beings behave rationally and strategically, aiming to fulfil their goals (Rosamund, 2019). These goals are organised hierarchically, some goals are prioritised over others. Institutions with their own formal and informal rules do not influence the priorities of individual actors, but they do influence how individuals can reach their goals and their behaviour. Changes in the functioning of an institution (e.g. how votings take place), will change the behaviour of the individual actors that are involved (Ibid.). There are several points of criticism when it comes to RCI. RCI usually only looks at formal rules when it comes to institutions and neglects the importance of informal rules of behaviour, such as norms, on political behaviour (Pollack, 2009). Another point of criticism is RCI's view of institutions as a stable entity, meaning that change is not sought after (Steinmo, 2001). Changing the institution means changing the rules and will give many unexpected outcomes that cannot be calculated. This means that RCI is a theory that tries to predict but cannot explain institutional changes (Ibid.).

What sets RCI and Sociological Institutionalism apart is their difference in ontology (Rosamond, 2019, p. 90). Where RCI is based on the idea that interests come from the outside world and are external to interaction, Sociological Institutionalism, closely related to constructivism, is based on the idea that interests come from within the interaction (Ibid.). Or as Risse (2009, p. 145) phrases it: "human agents do not exist independently from their social environment and its collectively shared systems of meanings". This means that the social environment we live in, defines our identities, our ideas and behaviour.

Both Sociological Institutionalism and constructivism study ‘soft’ institutions, such as “ideas, social and cultural norms, rules and routinized practices” (Wiener, 2006). Sociological institutionalism is preoccupied with the culture of the institutions and the role of both communication and persuasion (Rosamond, 2019, p. 90-1). Sociological institutionalism argues that social behaviour both constrains and gives opportunities to individual actors (Ibid.). Risse (2009, p. 148) highlights that individual actors behave the way they do because they want to do the ‘right thing’, where norms not only define our behaviour but also our identity. Following or not following rules, formal or informal, will either be rewarded or punished, based on the institution's underlying values (Nee, 1998).

Jeffrey Checkel (2005) defines socialisation as: “a process of inducting actors into the norms and rules of a given community”. As a result, an individual complies with these internalised new norms, and instead of following logic, the individual follows “appropriateness” (p. 804). Checkel divides socialisation into two types. According to Type I socialisation, individuals know about appropriate behaviour and take on a conscious role. Type II socialisation on the other hand, “implies that agents adopt the interests, or even possibly the identity, of the community of which they are a part” (Ibid.). Shared identities can be created when type II socialisation takes place, which results in *ingroup* and *outgroup* members (Greenaway et al., 2014). Because of the shared identity with ingroups, communication is easier and individuals are more likely to change their behaviour to adapt more to the ingroup, as well as they interpret the ingroup behaviour in a way that meets the norms and values of the shared group (Ibid.).

4.5. Analytical Framework

The combination of theories that have been discussed in the theoretical framework will provide a better understanding of to what extent MEPs from the ECR and ID group manifest cooperative ties and how their behaviour is related to Euroscepticism, shared identity and group socialisation. The concept of Euroscepticism and an understanding of the broader field and different ideologies it could be related to, is an evident choice of theory to include, since understanding the plurality and diversity of what Euroscepticism can look like is vital when it comes to analysing Eurosceptic behaviour. The classifications of Euroscepticism, as presented by for example Taggart and Szczerbiak’s (2008) hard- and soft Euroscepticism as well as the different kinds of behaviour of Eurosceptic actors within the European Parliament, as described by Brack (2015), provide clear tools when it comes to analysing the speeches of

Eurosceptic MEPs and the portrayed behaviour. The theory about the behaviour of Eurosceptic MEPs provides a bridge to the theories of institutionalism, where the different ontological views influence different ideas about where specific behaviour comes from and whether or not individuals have a rational choice or are more inclined to be socialised by the prevailing culture in the European Parliament. The combination of these theories provides the base of the analysis, formulated in the following questions:

1. Is there Euroscepticism present in the speech? What does it look like and why?
2. What kind of behaviour, following Brack's typology, is portrayed?
3. Are there any cooperative ties visible? How are these ties manifested?
4. Are there shared identities manifested in the language use? What group does it refer to?

The first question combines the chapter on Euroscepticism and hard and soft Euroscepticism, the second question is related to the types of behaviour of Eurosceptic MEPs. These questions together form a base to answer both research questions. The third and fourth question combine the chapter on behaviour together with a direct answer to the first research question.

5. Method

For a better understanding of how cooperative ties are manifested in the plenary debates and the behaviour of the Eurosceptic MEPs, this study will be designed as a within-case study, based on a qualitative text analysis, inspired by discourse and rhetorical analysis. The chapter will be concluded with a methodological reflection and a final evaluation of the methods.

5.1. A Within-case Study

According to VanWynsberghe and Khan (2007), case studies have often been wrongly defined as a method, methodology or as a research design, while that is not the case. A case study is not a method or methodology, even though it is suggested by some scholars (e.g. Gerring, 2004, Fidel, 1984, Yin, 1994). A case study could be better understood as a part of the research design, since it is simply a part in the selection of material. VanWynsberghe and Khan (2007, p. 80) propose a new definition: "a transparadigmatic and transdisciplinary heuristic that involves the careful delineation of the phenomena for which evidence is being collected (event, concept, program, process, etc.)". Case studies can be used across all different kinds of research paradigms, regardless of ontology and epistemology.

Transdisciplinary means that case studies are valuable across all fields and is not limited to, for example, social sciences.

VanWynsberghe and Khan (2007) formulated several features of a case study. First of all, a case study requires a low number of cases to be analysed in order to provide a profound analysis. Large amounts of cases will not be as effective, since analysing cases is time consuming and quantity does not mean quality. Case studies are also known to be highly detailed and contextualised, as well as case studies analyse units that are natural (without influence of the researcher), and bound to a specific time and place. Case studies make use of several sources of data and can be extended to include other cases of a similar phenomenon for a better understanding (VanWynsberghe & Khan, 2007).

This thesis could be understood as the analysis of several cases, but based on the earlier named features, it is decided to design the research as a within-case study. All the different debates can be seen as an extension of one and the same case: the Eurosceptic MEPs from the European political groups ECR and ID and their behaviour during plenary debates. The different instances within this case are meant to provide different contexts of behaviour that will provide a better understanding of the Eurosceptic behaviour of these MEPs in general and the study will have a higher validity. The instances have been selected on the most-likely and least-likely approach (Koivu & Hinze, 2017). The most-likely cases have been selected based on the idea that the topics of the debate would make the MEPs more inclined to show signs of Euroscepticism, where the cases that are least-likely have been chosen as a way to contrast, where cases where Euroscepticism is not thought to have as much of an influence and could serve as a contrast.

5.2. Qualitative text analysis, inspired by discourse and rhetorical analysis

The analysis is formed as a qualitative text analysis, based on the questions that were formulated based on the theoretical background in Chapter 4.5. This method is inspired by both discourse analysis and rhetorical analysis, because it uses language to analyse political and social behaviour, socialisation and collective identities, makes use of contextualisation for a better understanding of the speeches and looks at strategies of convincing.

Discourse analysis studies societal phenomena with a focus on language (van Dijk, 2015). Hjelm (2021) defines discourse analysis as “the study of how to do things with words”. To this simple definition, he adds “discourse analysis examines how actions are given meaning and how identities are produced in language use”, where discourse analysis

looks at how social construction works (p.229). Language is not a direct reflection of reality but instead helps to shape the reality we live in (Bergström & Boréus, 2012). Discourse analysis is based on the idea that perceptions of how people understand our surrounding world are changeable, based on time and society, as well as the idea that how we use language to categorise and understand the world has consequences for people (Boréus, 2011). In this way, discourse analysis is close to the constructivist idea that how we speak about (social) phenomena and the practices surrounding them, defines our way of thinking about them (Ibid.) Alternatively, according to radical constructivism, identities and realities become what they are because of *how* we talk about them and structure our actions with them, meaning that our language use influences how we understand the world, but also vice versa: our surroundings influence our acts and use of language (Ibid.).

Fairclough and Wodak (1997, p. 258), defined discourse as used in critical discourse analysis, not only as “the use of language in speech and writing”, but also as “a form of social practice”, where what is said always stands in relation with the specific context. A discourse is shaped (constituted) by the situation and social structure it takes place in, but shaping (constitutive) at the same time, where it creates new situations, knowledge and identities (Ibid). Discourse analysis offers a view of language and its use where it is not seen as a neutral vessel, but rather a subjective one (Bergström, 2011). This means that discourse analysis rejects a more positivist ontology where there is an objective truth and rather sees reality where there are several, subjective truths (Ibid.).

Discourse analysis also includes the (social) context, outside of the spoken or written word, differentiating it from other text analysis methods. The discursive sphere shows connections with phenomena taking place outside of the discourse, such as power. Power relations become visible in the spoken or written language. According to Gee (2014, p. 119-21), a context is more than just shared knowledge that is necessary to understand the meaning of what is being said, it is also everything else that surrounds the discourse: gestures, emotions, a shared cultural knowledge.

The analysis combines a linguistic approach to analyse specific words, phrasings and concepts that are used by MEPs to present their identities and possible ties of cooperation, as well as how they talk about others, which is important for our understanding of socialisation. The analysis will not take all aspects of language use, such as grammatical structures, because the speeches will be analysed in English interpretation. Since the difference between the speaker and the interpreter in *how* something is said (e.g. technical difficulties, a stutter or a pause) is not always clear, that could lead to conclusions about the language use of the

MEPs that cannot be made. This study differs from discourse analysis, is that it will not look at the debate as a whole (Lacity & Janson, 1994). Instead, the study will focus on just the speeches by the MEPs from the ECR and ID group and contextualise with information from the debate as a whole when necessary. This choice was made because analysing the debate as a whole will not necessarily give a better understanding of the Eurosceptic behaviour than the in-depth qualitative analysis of just the ECR and ID speeches.

The method of analysis has also been inspired by rhetorical analysis. Some aspects of language use are overlooked by discourse analysis, but are of importance when it comes to behaviour and convincing others. Higgins and Walker (2012) write: “Rhetorical analysis can assist to understand some of the reasons for the underlying social effects of discourse” (p.197). Rhetorical analysis provides a better understanding of strategies on how to convince people, other than just using logical reasoning (Boréus, 2011). Rhetorics are oftentimes used as a synonym for discourse, but rhetorics have a strong emphasis on persuasion. Rhetorical analysis is built on rhetorical theory in the way it approaches speeches (Zachry, 2009).

This thesis will make use of the concepts *ethos*, *pathos* and *logos* where suited. These concepts have been defined by Aristotle and form the base for all approaches to rhetoric analysis (Ibid). *Ethos* is how an orator presents himself. Here we can think of the speaker’s character, identity, and credibility. This can be manifested in how a speaker presents similarities with the audience, his expertise or the use of *we* and *us* in a speech (Higgins and Walker, 2012). *Ethos* alone is not enough to persuade your audience, you also need *Logos*. *Logos* can be defined as the contents of a speech and logical reasoning. *Logos* does not necessarily need to be logical reasoning but has to appear as such. *Pathos* can be defined as how the orator wants to appeal to the public's emotions, for example through the use of emotion in the language, the intonation or gestures.

This thesis will analyse the speeches of Eurosceptic MEPs from the European political groups ECR and ID, taken from specific debates that take place during plenary sessions between July 2023 and February 2024. The speeches will be analysed, as named earlier, in their English interpretation and regarding the context in which it takes place, aiming for a better understanding of manifestations of cooperative ties between the MEPs from ECR and ID, as well as their political and social behaviour related to Euroscepticism, shared identity and group socialisation. The contextualisation consists of an overview of the debate, the results of the votes and the committee meetings. The analysis aims to find similarities, differences and interesting concepts that are used by Eurosceptic MEPs to

present themselves, their parties and how they discuss European cooperation, while trying to reveal indications to cooperative ties and socialisation within the Parliament.

For this study, not all behaviour of the orators can be analysed completely. This study makes use of the English interpretation of the speeches, since the MEPs usually speak in their native languages. It is important to take into account that usually, the plenary debates are not necessarily meant to persuade the Members of Parliament. Most of the preparatory work has already been done in earlier debates. An important reason why the speeches are being held in the 24 different EU languages, is because the MEPs want to persuade their potential voters. With the interpretation, some aspects of the original speech might get lost, even though the interpretation allows emotions to shine through.

5.3. Methodological reflections

It has also been considered using content analysis, argumentation analysis or video data analysis, but it was finally decided to use a qualitative text analysis, inspired by discourse analysis and rhetorical analysis. Argumentation analysis is closely related to rhetorical analysis, but does not analyse the construction of identity as a speaker (ethos), nor emotions, two aspects that are vital when it comes to analysing manifestations of cooperation and identity building, especially in the case of Euroscepticism. Lastly, a visual approach such as video data analysis has been considered but because the nature of the videos is quite static, the visual aspect will not add much substance to the analysis.

The method that was used for the analysis has proved to give interesting, but limited results. Because of the nature of the material in combination with qualitative text analysis, there is a part of the MEPs that are not considered, simply because their interests are elsewhere. This means that the orators of the analysed speeches usually show similar behaviour. The contextualisation with the final vote can lead to unexpected outcomes, mainly because the behaviour of those MEPs that vote differently has not been studied. To counteract this, a better understanding of those who did not participate in the debate, but do participate in the vote, is needed, but impossible with textual analysis. Another difficulty with this method is that it can only be used to analyse formal settings, and not informal behaviour.

6. Analysis

The analysis of the speeches of the MEPs from the ECR and ID group will be done in chronological order, as to follow the debate close to the original sequential order. First, the

Nature Restoration Law will be analysed, followed by the *Resolution on the 30 years of the Copenhagen Criteria* and the *Proposal to extend the list of EU crimes to hate speech and hate crimes*. The chapter will end with the proposal on the *Right to Repair* and some general reflections.

6.1. Nature Restoration Law

On 22 June 2022, the European Commission proposed the *Nature Restoration Law* (Halleux, 2024). According to the Commission, this law is envisions to “restore ecosystems for people, the climate and the planet” (European Commission^a, n.d.). Concretely, this law envisions restoring at least 20 percent of the EU’s land and sea by 2030 and all degraded ecosystems by 2050. The Council found an agreement on the law proposal in June 2023 (Council of the EU, 2023).

In the European Parliament, the law proposal was referred to the ENVI³ committee, with Cesar Luena (S&D) as rapporteur. The AGRI⁴ and PECH⁵ committees were appointed as associated committees, with Caroline Roose (verts/ALE) and Anne Sander (EPP) as associated rapporteurs. Both the AGRI and the PECH committees rejected the proposal and the vote in the ENVI committee was a tie (44 - 44) (Halleux, 2024). Because there was no majority in favour of the law proposal, the ENVI committee was forced to consider a rejection of the law as proposed by the Commission (Ibid.). The committee votes show that ECR and ID both had the same voting behaviour and did not have any deviations (ENVI committee, n.d., AGRI committee, n.d., PECH committee, 2023).

To understand the complexity of the debate, the stance of the EPP on the *Nature Restoration Law*, with Manfred Weber as the EPP president, is important. In the weeks leading up to the plenary session, the EPP was negotiating and planning on voting in favour of the nature restoration law. At the last minute, Weber recommended voting against, hoping to reject the entire proposal. This led to a strong division between the left and right and no clear majority (European Parliament^c, 2023).

The first speaker of the ECR group is Alexandr Vondra, from Czechia. He starts with a reply to the left-wing parties:

Victor Orban supported this in Council, I say that to the left. This proposal is not a good one, it's contradictory. Yes, it's good for the birds that are disappearing, it's good for the water but it makes life

³ Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

⁴ Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development

⁵ Committee on Fisheries

very difficult for farmers and it brutally infringes upon the prerogatives of member states, and it generates a cost burden. In Council, some of the problems were eliminated, thank goodness, for example, the power given to the NGO's. But the Commission... Frans, Frans, where are you? Decarbonization on a global level isn't bringing us anything. China is riding a wave, it's still hot everywhere and our own situation is getting worse. We have a divided house now and we only have ourselves to blame.

Vondra starts by saying that “Victor Orbán supported” the law proposal when it was discussed in the Council, trying to convince the left that the right is not completely against the proposal and nuances the two ideological and opposed sides in this emotive debate. Vondra is critical of the law proposal, saying it “is not a good one, it’s contradictory”. He then goes on to explain why it is contradictory, it is supposed to be good for nature, but it will be harmful to the member states and their economies. It is clear that Vondra is sceptical about the role of Europe, stating the law proposal “infringes upon the prerogatives of the member states”, as well as in “thank goodness, for example, the power given to NGO’s”. Vondra is also critical towards the Commission, or rather said to the Commissioner that was responsible for the first draft, as is seen in “But the Commission... Frans, Frans, where are you?”, which is speaking directly to former Commissioner Frans Timmermans, who was absent during the debate.

The behaviour portrayed during the speech shows clear signs of a public orator, who wants to criticise and defend the Eurosceptic citizens, embodied by the reference to the farmers in this speech. Vondra also wants to delegitimize the European institutions. All is done in this short speech, where both the Parliament and the Commission are subject to criticism, and only the Council, maybe because they represent the voice of the member states, escapes unscathed. The economy is what is important for Vondra, the law proposal is not allowed to hurt the economy in any way. Vondra believes that decarbonisation will not do anything for Europe and will only decrease the economic competitiveness, where China will “ride a wave” and make use of the situation that is being created. The collective identity that Vondra creates is twofold, one is the identity of the European citizens, when he uses “our own situation”, the second is the members of the European Parliament, in the use of “ we have a divided house”, which shows signs of socialisation type II, where Vondra creates a shared identity. It is clear that there is a Eurosceptic tone in this speech, as visible in “it brutally infringes upon the prerogatives of the member states”. With Vondra’s behaviour during this speech as a public orator, the absence of manifestations of cooperative ties is explained.

The goal of Vondra’s speech is not necessarily convincing other MEPs, but mainly delivering criticism. In this way, many of the Eurosceptics derogate from the “standard”

behaviour in Parliament, which could be explained with RCI: Vondra's priority is to be found in the outside world, his voters, and not inside the institution.

After Vondra, the debate continues with a speech from Aurélie Beigneux, a French MEP from the ID group. She states:

Thank you, mister President, rapporteur. The European Commission and the left have come up with an absolutely crazy idea which is bad for farmers and bad for the member states. There were members who wanted an impact analysis, who were threatened by the Commissioner responsible for the Green Deal. This is scandalous and anti-democratic. We have an imminent food crisis and you still have these utopian-type dreams. You're sacrificing our farmers on the altar of your ideology. Why do you want to meddle with the urban policy of our member states? It's up to the member states to decide how they organise their towns and cities! And certainly not a Commission that thinks it has exclusive power over all policy areas. Forests are also national business. The European Commission therefore has no legitimacy in this respect. This text was rejected in three committees and the left are now, in an undemocratic way, bringing the matter back to plenary with amendments. Thank you, Mister [inaudible] for your very useful comments. The rejection of this text must be definitive in order to send a clear message to the European Commission. And to the left I say: yes to the preservation of nature and farmland, but no to this absurd and oppressive proposal from the European Commission. It's about time that you stopped hurting our farmers, stopped damaging the interests of our member states in the interests of your lobbies and on the basis of your ideology.

Beigneux is sceptical about the fact the law proposal is even up for debate, as she shows in “an absolutely crazy idea which is bad for farmers and bad for the member states” and spreading the idea that members of the Parliament were threatened by the commissioner Timmermans, which she calls “scandalous and anti-democratic”. During her speech, she uses the dichotomy of “we” and “you”, creating an in- and an outgroup. The shared identity that is created stands for the European citizens. The “you”, referring to the Commission and the Left-wing parties, is the outgroup under constant attack, which shows a strong anti-European discourse. Baigneux portrays signs of a harder Euroscepticism than Vondra, as is visible in “why do you want to meddle with the urban policy of our member states? It's up to the member states to decide how they organise their towns and cities!” as well as in “certainly not a Commission that thinks it has exclusive power over all policy areas”.

The way Beigneux expresses herself shows signs of the public orator. Beigneux tries to delegitimize the EU and the MEPs in favour, by calling the proposal “scandalous and undemocratic” and saying that they have “utopian-type dreams” and want to “sacrifice farmers”. The Commission, she says, has “no legitimacy in this respect”. The way Beigneux uses her ornamented language and how she presents herself, as one of the few who actually stands up for the rights of the farmers and the normal citizens, also fits with the public orator.

During her speech, Beigneux does refer to “there were members who wanted an impact analysis”. According to Beigneux, there were members who were perhaps open to

negotiate, based on the outcomes of the analysis. How these members were treated led to the decision not to cooperate. She also implies some kind of cooperation with the members of her group in the committees, where she is following the same line as them and opposes the regulation. “The rejection of this text must be definitive in order to send a clear message to the European Commission” could also be seen as a call by Beigneux to further cooperate on an interparty level in plenary, to ensure that there will be a majority against.

Then, the Dutch MEP Ruissen from the ECR group takes the floor:

Thank you, President, Commissioner. In Mariënheem, a village in the east of our country, there's a big problem. There's a busy dangerous road, that goes straight through the village. Now the bypass that would relieve that village traffic won't be coming anytime soon. Now, an important reason for this, alongside the shortage of funds, is the suffocating Natura 2000 legislation which even makes road safety subordinate to nature. President, if we're to vote in favour of the nature restoration law tomorrow, we will be generating comparable situations all over Europe as a result. Rural areas will simply have to shut up shop. The rule of primacy, that nature always comes first, will then apply to many other areas outside Natura 2000 areas. And then the proposal doesn't take population density into account at all and that makes things all the more complicated. Nature is important but the Commission's approach is simply not good enough. Let us support grassroots initiatives. Let's give the regions enough flexibility to be able to take their own responsible decisions. More meddling from Brussels is not going to help. The amendment to reject merits all your support, thank you.

Ruissen has a different approach when it comes to convincing his audience. He uses a Dutch village to exemplify the problems of the existing Natura2000 regulations and how they affect traffic and road safety, and Ruissen even goes as far as saying that “road safety is subordinate to *nature*”, which increases his pathos. It is clear that Ruissen is against more top-down involvement of the EU, as is made clear in “the Commission’s approach is not good enough” and “more meddling from Brussels is not going to help.”, which shows that Euroscepticism is at play. Instead, he wants to encourage the Parliament to support bottom-up approaches, such as “grassroots initiatives” or “the regions”. This speech shows signs of being policy-Euroscepticism. Other analysed speeches of Ruissen (p.59) show that he does not always manifest signs of Euroscepticism, which places this kind of Euroscepticism among the soft-Euroscepticism. This does not necessarily mean that Ruissen is opposed to restoring nature, he just disagrees that the EU should be responsible.

The Eurosceptic behaviour that is portrayed in this speech, shows signs of the pragmatist. Ruissen shows constructive opposition and tries to represent the European citizens, mainly those living in the rural areas, and he is trying to limit the power of the EU by encouraging others to vote in favour of the amendment to reject the proposal. Ruissen also clearly shows that he wants to defend regional problems, with his example of Mariënheem, perhaps in the hope of achieving some additional funding.

Even though there are no clear manifestations of cooperation in this speech, Ruissen finishes his speech with a clear call for cooperation against the law proposal, as is seen in “The amendment to reject merits *all* your support”. The “we” refers to the members of Parliament, which means that he does identify as a part of the Parliament and shows socialisation type II. Ruissen is trying to operate within the system to maximise the chances that he will reach his goal, although the system is constraining and limits possibilities for the individual, resulting in the call for cooperation against the regulation.

After Ruissen, it is French MEP Gilles Lebreton from the ID group who takes over:

Colleagues, the European Green Deal is amazing with all its unrealistic and dangerous legislation following the industrial emissions directive revision. Now, we have all the farmers being attacked by the Commission with its nature restoration law. Generations of farmers before us have worked to this land, preserved it, and transmitted it to future generations. It's crazy to restore ecosystems by 2050. This would be a disaster for our future. The plans for rivers would be fatal. Every member state should decide for itself. This text has been rejected three times, so a clear message has been sent by this parliament. Stop these crazy environmental plans which are destroying our agriculture. All we're doing is creating even more pollution with your plans.

Lebreton opposes the proposal and the Green Deal in general with a use of strong language, calling the Green Deal and the *Nature Restoration Regulation* “unrealistic and dangerous”, “a disaster for our future”, “crazy” and even “fatal”. Lebreton presents himself as Eurosceptic, which is shown by “every member state should decide for itself”. At the same time, Lebreton identifies as the one who fights for the farmers' rights, highlighting that farmers have preserved the land and transmitted it to the following generations. He even calls on the rest of the Parliament to “stop these crazy environmental plans which are destroying our agriculture”. We do not know if this is policy-based Euroscepticism or a broader kind of Euroscepticism. The kind of Euroscepticism that is present refers to only one aspect of European integration and makes no reference to other policy areas, which makes it difficult to place the Euroscepticism on the scale of hard and soft Euroscepticism. During this speech, Lebreton portrays signs of the public orator, defending the rights of farmers, as well as trying to delegitimize the European institutions.

Lebreton has an interesting way of self-identifying, where he identifies as a part of the European Parliament on one side, but also very clearly situates himself within the opposition, creating and in- and outgroup within a group he identifies with. The “we” he uses, for example in “all we're doing is creating even more pollution with your plans”, refers to the EU institutions, where he is included. On the other hand, it is contrasted with the “your”, meaning the Commission and the left-wing parties.

Lebreton implies some cooperation with the representatives in the committees, with a reference to the fact that two of the committees rejected the proposal and one committee could not find an agreement on the topic. Lebreton positions himself in line with these committees and as a part of the opposition. His call to “stop these crazy environmental plans”, could be understood as a call for his colleagues to vote against the law proposal.

After Lebreton, it is the Polish MEP Anna Zalewska from ECR who speaks:

Mr. President, Commissioner. All of this shouting, all of this blackmail, makes clear that this is a bad regulation. It's not well thought through. It attacks nature and attacks people. If something is impossible, impracticable, then you get the opposite effect to what you wanted. This is a bad regulation, it interferes with privacy and property. We're not going to reduce the temperature in Strasbourg if we take land away from farmers. Farmers, foresters and fishers love nature, at least as much as those who pretend to care for nature. This is a bad regulation because it hands too many powers to the European Commission, which is going to be monitoring, reporting and taking decisions itself. So, on the one hand, the things are prohibited and then more things are prohibited. I think you should all go and see some farmers to find out how to really care for nature.

Zalewska is referring to the many emotions that are at play during the debate. She names the “shouting” of all the different MEPs and “all of this blackmail”, referring to both Manfred Weber and the EPP, as well as Timmermans and the Commission. Zalewska is critical and calls the law proposal “not well thought through”, “impossible, impractical” and “bad”. At the same time, she defends the European farmers, foresters and fishers, by saying that they “love nature”. This is followed by an attack on the people in favour of the nature restoration regulation, who she refers to as “those who pretend to care for nature”.

In this speech, Zalewska presents herself as Eurosceptic when it comes to this policy, making it policy Euroscepticism, but it could also be just opposition to the proposal. Zalewska thinks the power to decide on nature and its restoration should not be handed to the Commission, that would be in charge of “monitoring, reporting and taking decisions itself”, she would rather have the member states to decide. It is unclear, based on this speech alone, whether this Euroscepticism is based on this particular policy area, or if it stretches further than that. Zalewska portrays some signs of the public orator, trying to defend the farmers, foresters and fishers of Europe, as well as she is trying to delegitimize the majority of the Parliament, by saying “I think you should all go and see some farmers to find out how to really care for nature”, implying that the Commission and the left do not have the knowledge. Zalewska identifies herself as opposition to both the Commission and the left-wing parties, whom she addresses as “the other” by the use of “you”. Although there is a clear division between the “you” and the “I” in the speech, there are no references made to a shared identity (except for a general “we”, not referring to a particular group) and neither to cooperative ties.

After Zalewska, it is Sylvia Limmer from Germany, member of the ID group, participating in the debate. She says:

The nature restoration regulation is nothing more than a huge expropriation and destruction program. Formerly, there were 15,000,000 farms and in 2040, 3.6 million are left. And that's not even taking into account your huge mis-sold nature laws. Let's not forget there's food that has to be flown around the world before we get it on our plates. We need to support domestic farmers by keeping arable land, not by getting rid of it. You're well aware of this but instead of looking at objective arguments, you'd rather say: "oh it's the EPP", "oh you've been adopting the AFD right wing ideology". Not this green-red ideology doesn't just show your lack of ideas but is quite simply politically anti-democratic and shameful.

Limmer, just like many others from ID and ECR, is strongly opposed to the proposal, calling it "nothing more than a huge expropriation and destruction program". To give herself more credibility and to increase both her logos and ethos, Limmer makes use of statistics on the number of farms. Even though Limmer opposes to the new regulation, her speech is not Eurosceptic per se, she is just critical towards the nature legislation that has previously been adopted and how the debate is going, which is made clear by her comments: "oh it's the EPP" and "oh you've been adopting the AFD right wing ideology", as well as calling the whole process "anti-democratic and shameful". She does not phrase herself sceptically towards the role of the EU, other than "your huge mis-sold nature laws". This could be a manifestation of a more profound hostile attitude towards the EU, but it is unclear if Limmer is opposed to how the regulation is formulated and how it was tabled in plenary, or if she opposes to the regulation being discussed on EU-level. Limmer does show some signs of the pragmatic and the public orator in her speech, with some points of criticism that could be seen as points of improvement, but in most of her speech, she is trying to delegitimize her opponents.

The collective identity that is constructed in "we need to support domestic farmers by keeping arable land, not by getting rid of it", could both refer to the EU institutions and the people in power, or a general "we" that is used to refer to Europe and its citizens, which is in strong contrast to the "you" Limmer makes use of, referring to those in Parliament with a "green-red ideology" and the Commission.

There are cooperative ties manifested, although not ones where Limmer is participating. Instead, Limmer says "the green-red ideology", referring to the Greens, S&D, the Left and Renew, who all have been very clear in their support of the *Nature Restoration Regulation*. The remarks about the EPP and the AFD also highlight the same green-red cooperation, who during the debate from different sides expressed disappointment in the EPP and spoke out against the will of the right-wing parties to stop the law proposal.

Margarita De La Pisa Carrión, Spanish member of the ECR, also shows her opposition to the new regulation:

Thank you, President, colleagues. The European Commission is showing that it has no scruples about imposing its will on Europeans and destroying our primary sector, using a supposedly environmental concern as an excuse. The so-called nature restoration law says it's about restoration but, actually, it's threatening a significant proportion of our arable land, which has already been severely curtailed by previous legislation. Our arable and livestock farmers with their millennial experience and vital know-how are being chased off the land because of this green excuse. There are forest fires in Spain because the law prevents forest cleaning. Dams and reservoirs are destroyed, when we need water in a drought. We're not going to allow you to risk our ability to feed ourselves and take us to the brink. What we need is strong governments that bring some common sense back to our policies, rather than indulging in climate fanaticism.

De la Pisa Carrión presents herself as Eurosceptic, as is visible in how she ends her speech: “what we need is strong governments that bring some common sense back to our policies, rather than indulging in climate fanaticism”. This makes clear, especially the use of the plural in “policies”, that it is no policy-Euroscepticism that is limited, but rather a broader, national-interest Euroscepticism. The national interest is also reflected in the examples of how the Commission is destroying Spain with its “climate fanaticism”: forest fires, destroyed dams and reservoirs, droughts and the risk that Spain will not be able to provide the food that is necessary for the Spanish citizens. With this, de la Pisa Carrión portrays signs of the pragmatist, defending the national interest on the supranational level.

Margarita de la Pisa Carrión identifies first and foremost as a defender of the rights of the Spanish people and the citizens of Europe, to whom the “we” that she uses, is referring, creating a shared identity and a specific ingroup. This shows that, during her speech, she is speaking not only to her colleagues in Parliament but also to her voters. De la Pisa Carrión does not reveal any signs of cooperative ties between the Eurosceptic political actors.

After de la Pisa Carrión, Danish MEP Anders Vistisen, part of the ID group, also speaks his opinion:

In the debate we're having here, it seems that the right is being pitted against the left. [Inaudible] the question of the crisis of biodiversity, how come we've come to the state of play? Well, the Common Agricultural Policy column, fisheries policies, these are now in the purview of the EU. When you're blaming farmers and the fishers for the state of nature, well, they're the ones who are having to assume the rules that you have been producing. I think it's more the Commission that's responsible for the state of nature. And now to give the Court of Justice a blank check so that they can aggregate more powers unto themselves, is ridiculous. In local authorities, in towns and villages, but those of us who live in rural areas as well, we're the ones who can save nature, not in Strasbourg or in Brussels.

Anders Vistisen questions how the debate turned away from the biodiversity crises and instead turned into a discussion about ideology, where “the right is being pitted against the left”. The “we” that he makes use of refers to the members of Parliament, showing that he

identifies as part of that group. Visitisen also presents himself as someone that is included in “those of us who live in rural areas”, as well as in “we’re the ones who can save nature”, while not in “in Strasbourg or in Brussels”, implying that he identifies himself more as a citizen of Europe in rural areas, than as a member of the Parliament during this debate.

His speech shows clear signs of Euroscepticism, especially in “local authorities, in towns and villages, [...] we're the ones who can save nature, not in Strasbourg or in Brussels”, where authorities on lower levels are in clear dichotomy with the EU institutions, especially the Parliament, in Brussels and in Strasbourg. We can also assume that this Euroscepticism is broader than just regarding this policy area, as Visitisen not only attacks the Commission and the Parliament, but also the Court of Justice. When looking at the behaviour Visitisen displays during his speech, it is difficult to place him among a specific type as mentioned by Brack, because he does not portray clear signs of any type and more information is needed.

Italian member of the ECR group, Fiocchi, phrases himself in the following way:

Nature restoration was rejected by AGRI, PESCA and ENVI. Going beyond Natura 2000, if you look at what has happened in Italy as a result of Natura 2000, we've seen drugs and prostitution rushing into abandoned areas and violations of principles of privacy. We're also throwing subsidiarity and the member states' sovereignty down the toilet. To the commissioner, I would say that the 25 kilometres of free river, how is that going to be used for renewable energy production? Is that going to be our hydroelectric strategy? We need to look at agricultural production, as well as the environment. We do want restoration of nature but we should not become accomplices to the destruction of the rights of the citizens of Europe.

And finally, a personal comment. If I had carried out the environmental impact study of the Commission applying it to the social and economic dimensions when I was at school I would have flunked all of my final exams, so go back and do better.

Fiocchi is trying to convince people to vote against the proposal by playing on emotions and using biased language for the possible consequences of the *Nature Restoration Law*, by giving an example of what happened after the Natura 2000 regulation, “drugs and prostitution rushing into abandoned areas and violations of principles of privacy”, which increases his pathos. Fiocchi presents himself Eurosceptically in this speech, stating that: “we're also throwing subsidiarity and the member states' sovereignty down the toilet”, meaning that the European Union is taking over policy areas that belong to the member states to decide on. We could assume that this Euroscepticism is policy-Euroscepticism: Fiocchi finishes his speech with “go back and do better”, which could be interpreted that Fiocchi is not opposed to restoring nature with regulations on EU-level but that he disagrees with the writings of the current proposal, which is also implied in “we do want restoration of nature but we should not become accomplices to the destruction of the rights of the citizens of Europe.” Not only is

Fiocchi opposed to the content of the regulation, he also expresses himself quite negatively and sceptical about the quality of the writings, where he states that he would have flunked his exams if he were to have carried out the study himself in high school.

Fiocchi shows signs of being a pragmatist, which is visible in example of Italy and the constructive criticism with points of improvement. The “we” that is used, is referring to first the Italian citizens, then the Parliamentarians and finally the whole opposition in “we do want restoration of nature but we should not become accomplices to the destruction of the rights of the citizens of Europe”, which means that there are some ties of cooperation visible since Fiocchi decides to present himself as a part of the “we” of the opposition and speaks for all of the opposition, not just him.

Fiocchi is followed by Estonian MEP Jaak Madison, member of ID, who says:

Thank you very much. First of all, I'm not sure how many people here have read this regulation from beginning to end. There's been a lot of emotive talk, people for, people against, people who want to save the planet. I've read this regulation many times and I have a number of questions. It is said that this isn't going to hurt our farmers, and yet, by 2030, peat extraction must stop and 30% of peat [inaudible]. Now, peat is a vital ingredient for farmers, how is that going to be compensated? By 2050, according to the regulation, half of the peat areas have to be restored to bog. Who is going to compensate the foresters for the fact that they're going to lose their timber as a result of the left wanting their utopian bogs? This is going to hurt farmers. It is going to hurt to foresters. And I wonder who is going to pay for this. We are looking at society as a whole, you are thinking in terms of your utopian dreams. Thank you.

Madison tries to delegitimize his opponents and their arguments, by wondering “ how many people have read this regulation from beginning to end”. To contrast this, Madison presents himself as the expert, saying that he has “read this regulation many times”, which enhances his ethos. Other than opposition to the regulation, there are no manifestations of Euroscepticism in this speech. Madison does try to protect what is in Estonia’s best interest: peat. Estonia is one of the countries with most peatlands in the world (Küttim, Küttim and Pajula, 2018), and Madison is the only MEP naming peat, which implies that it is not as important for other member states. Madison too, fits into the criteria of the pragmatist: ensuring that the best interests of Estonia are not forgotten about, as well as providing constructive criticism.

Madison also manifests implied ties of cooperation, even though he does not name them explicitly. He says: “we are looking at society as a whole”. The “we” could be understood as the whole opposition (i.e. the right-wing), whose position Madison is defending during his speech. The opinion of those in favour of the regulation is being

downplayed and othered, as phrased in “you are thinking in terms of your utopian dreams”, which leads to the creation of an outgroup.

Madison’s speech is then followed by the speech of Zbigniew Kuźmiuk, a Polish member of the ECR group, who resigned in October 2023.

Thank you very much, Madam President, Commissioner. We're all interested in the improvement of biodiversity, but the regulation is bad for farming, bad for forestry, bad for investment. As regards farming, well environmental protection and biodiversity are in the Common Agricultural Policy and about 1/3 of the CAP budget of more than €100 billion Euro is allocated every seven years to that. We've also got the eco-schemes for plants and animals in the CAP. Farmers are voluntarily doing all of this and they're getting money for it. And yet in this regulation we have coercion and not a Euro given for doing these things. Moreover the Commission isn't saying where the money is to be come from and the Commission is taking on powers which have no basis in the treaties. So the Polish delegation in the ECR will be voting against this regulation, thank you.

Kuźmiuk’s main criticism is that there are no incentives for the groups that would experience disadvantages of the proposal, that the Commission “is taking over powers which have no basis in the treaties”, and that “the Commission isn't saying where the money is to be come from”. This could be understood as policy-based, soft Euroscepticism, but it could also be opposition towards this specific law proposal. Kuźmiuk could be seen as a pragmatist who provides a clear direction that he wants to see in the regulation. Kuźmiuk gives an explicit example of cooperation, where the Polish delegation is named as a cooperative group within the ECR. This is not too surprising, considered that the majority of the Polish delegation comes from the same political party, Law and Justice.

After Kuźmiuk, it is the Italian MEP Rosanna Conte from ID who speaks:

Thank you, President, Commission. Rejected in fisheries, rejected in agriculture, rejected in environment. Fourth time lucky? No way, Jose. We're actually calling on plenary to ensure it *isn't*. Once again, hoping it will be the final time we aim to reject a regulation that harms productive activities while hiding behind the noble intention of defending nature. Less land for farmers, less sea for fishermen, less activity for businesses and fewer European products and jobs for *our* citizens. These are the heavy repercussions of the proposals contained in a regulation permeated with ideology and counterproductive to nature itself. It is not what we want and more importantly it's not what our citizens and the planet *deserve*. The European Commission should stop selling us out to third countries. After all, they're the ones who benefit from this hypocritical environmentalism.

Rosanna Conte portrays signs of cooperation with her use of “we” in “we're actually calling on plenary to ensure it isn't”, although it is not completely sure whom she is referring to: it could be her political group or the opposition in general. In this speech, Conte is not necessarily against the EU. Her criticism is only focused on this particular policy area, so no assumptions about whether or not she is Eurosceptic can be made, based on this speech alone. This makes it difficult to place her behaviour in one of Brack’s categories.

Conte presents herself as a part of a group within the European Parliament that is interested in representing the European citizens. The focus on “our” in “*our* citizens” highlights that not only the right wing is representing the European citizens, but that the left also is supposed to, which is underlined with the intonation on “deserve”. The outgroup that Conte presents, is not to within the European Parliament, but in the Commission, who she says is “selling us out to third countries” that profit from the “hypocritical environmentalism”.

Polish MEP Bogdan Rzonca from the ECR group phrases his criticism as a question, addressing the left and the European Commission:

Are we aware of the fact that there are companies, big companies, leaving the EU to China, the United States, the United Kingdom? They're moving out because of the tax burden. This regulation could cause unemployment in farming and forestry. Things are only going to get worse. Are you not worried that these restrictive measures are going to lead to higher unemployment, which the European Union will have to deal with? I'd like to hear what you have to say on the subject, thank you.

Rzonca is also phrasing criticism, but rather than attacking the law proposal as a whole, he is contextualising the regulation with companies leaving the EU for places with fewer taxes. This in combination with his concern that the *Nature Restoration Regulation* will lead to unemployment, raises his question about how the EU will deal with higher rates of unemployment. Rzonca does not portray any signs of Euroscepticism in this speech and neither does he imply any cooperative ties within his political group or with other groups.

Rzonca's use of the collective “we” relates to the Parliament as a whole, where he is included, showing that he identifies as a part of this ingroup and socialisation type II. This, in combination with constructive criticism on the subject, and an openness to hear about the opinions of the MEPs in favour, as he says in “I'd like to hear what you have to say on the subject”, shows that he is not completely opposed to the regulation, but that he is not convinced about what the regulation looks like in the current writing.

MEP Teuvo Hakkarainen, from Finland and a member of the ECR, shows that the opposition to the law proposal does not have to follow Eurosceptic lines, but offers a nationalist perspective. This shows that the two do not have to overlap in discourse:

Thank you, Mr. President. We've always said that Finland lives from its forests and that's still true. This regulation would affect our forestry industry, our farming and private property as a whole. In some EU countries, forests are just a memory and they seem to want to damage ours. If this regulation were to be adopted, the government of Finland should ignore it. I oppose this regulation as a whole, thank you.

Hakkarainen does not portray any signs of Euroscepticism during his speech on the *Nature Restoration Law*. This means that not all opposition of Eurosceptics has to be based on

Euroscepticism, but can also follow other lines of ideologies, such as nationalism. The shared identity that is used, for example, refers to the Finnish people, as is visible in “we’ve always said that Finland lives from its forests and that’s still true”, as well as in “ours”. Hakkarainen is convinced that the law proposal is damaging to the forests and therefore the “forestry industry, farming and private property as a whole”. This is contrasted with the “other”, the countries in Europe where there are no real forests anymore, only the “memory” of a forest and they want to damage the Finnish ones. Hakkarainen then addresses the Finnish government, saying that they should ignore the regulation if it were to be adopted.

There are no references in this speech to the EU or the European Parliament, and neither are there any signs of cooperation or socialisation of Hakkarainen in this speech. This could be because Hakkarainen is not in the plenary to cooperate or address his colleagues when it comes to this law proposal, but rather he is talking to his possible voters in Finland, something that is underlined by his use of Finnish in the original speech. This could mean there is socialisation type I, where Hakkarainen follows the norms of the Parliament, but does not necessarily identify as a part of it.

Following Hakkarainen, Roman Haider, an Austrian member of the ID group, states:

With this so-called nature restoration law, I think, in truth, there's only one thing we can do with it and it's reject it out of hand. It expropriates farmers, it is going to artificially create shortage of food in Europe and those countries dependent on Europe, it will bring bottlenecks and lead to an increase in prices. With this nonsensical draft you see the equally nonsensical Commission with also von der Leyen that you could get rid of at the same time. These sort of ideologically driven policies should be got rid of and rightly so. The policies of this Commission have been destructive: we've seen increasing prices across the board, the lack of certainty and provision of energy, increase of unemployment. You've just brought a curse upon Europe. Every day that this Commission remains in office, is a black day for Europe.

Haider portrays a clear Euroscepticism, directed towards the European Commission, something that is visible in his use of “so-called”, as well as his repetitive use of “nonsensical”. Haider is not in favour of the Commission, nor of Van der Leyen. He would rather see them leave than stay in office, while saying “you could get rid of at the same time”, “you’ve brought a curse upon Europe” and “every day that this commission remains in office is a black day for Europe”. Haider’s behaviour places him more towards the hard-side on the Euroscepticism spectrum. He not only condemns the *Nature Restoration Law*, he also criticises all different kinds of policies that have led to “increasing prices across the board, the lack of certainty and provision of energy, increase of unemployment”. Haider, like several others, portrays himself as the protector of the rights of the European citizen, which is enhanced by the use of “we”, referring to the people of Europe.

There are no manifestations of cooperation and with how strongly Haider expresses himself against the European Commission, it could be assumed that Haider is there to be the public orator and to spread a negative view on the EU. He is not there to cooperate and influence law proposals, but only to criticise. It is clear that Haider is not afraid of conflict and insulting. With the behaviour he portrays during his speech, Haider stands out from the crowd and that he does not conform to the behavioural norms in the Parliament.

Polish MEP Krzysztof Jurgiel, a member of the ECR group, stands in big contrast with Haider and expresses himself as follows:

Madam President, Commissioner, I'm very worried about the proposals for farming. In Poland, were we to adopt this, we would destroy thousands of farms. This would lead to a major weakening of Poland's competitiveness on the single market. The planning management and monitoring provisions are very vague. I understand national authorities would have to infringe on private property rights. This would seem to conflict with the aims of other Union policies, such as those to do with food supply chains. So I'll be voting against the Commission proposal, thank you.

Jurgiel's speech, in comparison with some of the others analysed, has far from a harsh tone. Instead, Jurgiel expresses his worry for the Polish farmers. Jurgiel offers constructive criticism of the law proposal, stating that the "the planning management and monitoring provisions are very vague" and noting the conflict with other policies.

In this speech, there are no clear signs of Euroscepticism other than opposition to the law proposal, which means no conclusions about Jurgiel and Eurosceptic behaviour can be drawn based on this speech alone. Neither does Jurgiel try to construct a collective identity other than the "we" that is used in "were we to adopt this, we would destroy thousands of farms", where the "we" creates an ingroup referring to the Parliamentarians, which shows a type II socialisation. In the rest of his speech, Jurgiel keeps it very close to himself with the use of "I", that is not contrasted with an outgroup.

Spanish MEP Mazaly Aguilar from Spain is the last person from ECR to express her opinion:

Thank you, Madam President. I'm still at a loss to understand how you can have three committees, agriculture, fisheries and environment, to reject a proposal and then still put it forward tomorrow? It's meaningless and harmful to farmers and fishers and, on top of all that, they're saying that funding should come from our fisheries and other EU policies. So those in the sector would see their income drop even further. So what are people in Europe going to eat? It will be imports. We have less arable and livestock land and have more photovoltaics and wind farms and so on, what are we going to eat? So tomorrow we need to defend the farming and fisheries sectors. The socialists must be really worried about those forthcoming general elections in Spain, they're using this podium to attack the EPP and VOX, it's probably just because they're so worried about the elections.

Aguilar, too, questions the debate and the vote while the law proposal was rejected in PECH, AGRI and ended in a tie in ENVI. She calls the regulation “meaningless and harmful” in relation to both farmers and fishers, two important categories of European citizens she is representing. That Aguilar represents the European citizens is also visible in her use of “we”, in “we have less arable and livestock land”. There is an implication of cooperation in the use of “we” later on in “so tomorrow we need to defend the farming and fisheries sectors”, where the “we” is referring to either the opposition or could be seen as a call to all the members to vote against. Aguilar tries to downplay the arguments of the socialist party, saying that they are attacking the EPP and the Spanish party VOX because they are worried about the upcoming elections in Spain, how exactly Aguilar’s implication has to be interpreted is unclear: does this worry keep them from coming forth with logic arguments or are they attacking the EPP and VOX, Aguilar’s party, for the Spanish socialist party to gain more votes on the national level? In this speech, Aguilar doesn’t display clear signs of Euroscepticism.

In general, many of the analysed speeches show that the Eurosceptic parties are all opposing to the nature regulation, albeit to different extents. members of the ECR seem to offer more constructive criticism than members of ID, which could imply that ECR could be more open to cooperating. The speeches overall offer the same opinion and little nuance into the debate. Almost all of the arguments are along economic lines where the regulation would be bad for farmers, food production and the member states economies. This could be a sign that there is both intra- and interparty cooperation, although there is only a handful of actual manifestations of cooperations. Many ties of cooperation that are named are also pointing to those in favour of the regulation and not necessarily to the ECR and ID group. There are also some signs pointing to cooperation with members represented in the different committees.

Overall, the debate is a very emotive one, where Euroscepticism plays an important role. Much of the debate, at least on the side of the members of ID and ECR, is not actually on the nature restoration regulation, but about the tensions in the plenary between the left and the right. There is a link between the use of a very emotive and harsh language and Euroscepticism that is portrayed. It is clear that for the Eurosceptic members, the member states’ interests comes first. This is made clear in the othering that has been used by many of the MEPs, where the “we” in many cases refers to the European citizens, although there are also many references to the “we” referring to the Parliament, which could be understood that the Eurosceptic MEPs are socialised to and identify as a part of the Parliament. The outgroup usually takes form as the European Commission or the EU in general.

The *Nature Restoration Law* gained a slight majority of 336 votes in favour, 300 against and 13 abstentions (European Parliament^d, 2023). The proposal of rejection did not gain a majority, with 312-324, 12 abstentions (Ibid.). When looking at the voting behaviour, many of the members of ECR and ID vote in the same way, with a high voting cohesion even in the amendments (European Parliament^e, 2023), which suggest that there could be more cooperation than the analysed speeches suggest. It could also mean that all the MEPs have an interest in a bigger role for the member states than for the EU and that based on similar opinion, there is similar voting behaviour but without cooperation necessarily.

6.2 30 Years of the Copenhagen Criteria

The resolution on 30 years of the Copenhagen criteria is an instance that differs slightly from the others: it is a resolution and not a law proposal that will lead to a directive or regulation. The proposal for a resolution was tabled by the political groups EPP, S&D, Renew, Greens and the ECR and the debate took place 22 November 2023 (European Parliament^f, 2023).

The debate is about the Copenhagen criteria, approved during the 1993 Copenhagen European Council. The Copenhagen criteria are a list of conditions that a candidate member state needs to fulfil before it can successfully become a member state. The criteria are based on political, economic and administrative criteria, such as democracy and the rule of law, respect for human rights and a free market economy (European Commission^b, n.d.).

Two weeks before the debate took place, the European Commission recommended the Council to open negotiations with the candidate member-states Ukraine and Moldova, as well as Bosnia Herzegovina and to discuss the candidate membership status of Georgia (European Parliament^f, 2023). To contextualise the debate, keeping the ongoing war in Ukraine, as well as the threat of Russia to Europe's stability in mind, is necessary (European Parliament^g, 2023). The first, and only MEP speaking on behalf of the ECR, is Bulgarian Angel Dzhambaski:

The criteria from Copenhagen are something wonderful, however they're not being respected, they're not complied with as they should. They should provide for an opportunity for certain communities to self-identify as Europeans. Countries such as North-Macedonia have to have a chance to self-identify as European and join European Union. However, they don't have the right, as of now. People are being denied the right to self-identify as Bulgarian and all of you here should know that, especially our colleagues from former Yugoslavia. You very well know that pressure should be put on the government in Skopje so that we see happening what we want to see happening. All of us want to see northern Macedonia join the European Union, their place is here. We all know, however, that there is a lot of pro-Kremlin propaganda there and we should stop it. It is your role to put pressure on this government. It is your role to put pressure on them and allow those Bulgarians there to self-identify as Bulgarians, so that this country can negotiate with the European Union. Thank you.

Dzhambaski phrases himself critically towards the use of the Copenhagen criteria. He thinks they are “wonderful” criteria, but that “they’re not being respected, they’re not complied with as they should”. Dzhambaski thinks it is important to use the Copenhagen criteria as a way for candidate member states to slowly “self-identify as Europeans”, before they join the EU. What exactly is meant with “however, they don't have the right, as of now”, is unclear, but it could be interpreted as the right to self-identify through compliance with the Copenhagen criteria is taken away when the negotiations are opened, even though the criteria are not reached yet. Dzhambaski wants that the EU pressures Skopje in North Macedonia more, to counteract the amount of pro-Kremlin propaganda and to make sure that the Bulgarian minority gets the chance to self-identify as both European and Bulgarian.

Dzhambaski is not showing any signs of Eurosceptic behaviour in this speech, which makes that he can, based on this speech, not be classified as a specific type of Eurosceptic MEP. Dzhambaski does, however, present himself as the defender of the Bulgarian minority in North-Macedonia, which is similar to defending the national interest, although the national interest in this case is not a country but a minority.

Dzhambaski’s speech could be understood as directly speaking to his colleagues in the plenary, which is made clear by the repeated use of “you”. He wants to urge his colleagues from the different institutions to put pressure on the government in Skopje. This “you” is contrasted with general a “we”, where Dzhambaski is included, which shows that they have the same goals and that there is socialisation. This “we” is seen in “we see happening what we want to see happening” and “all of us want to see northern Macedonia join”, which could be referring to either the parliament or the citizens of Europe, represented by the Parliament.

Although Dzhambaski does not show any signs of cooperation, we do know that the ECR group was one of the groups who tabled the debate, meaning that there is probably more cooperation behind the scenes than Dzhambaski shows.

After Dzhambaski, it is French MEP Mariani from the ID group speaking:

For France, the 2007 EU-enlargement wasn't only a disappointment but an accelerator for [inaudible] the page of history. We need to look at the promises for peace and to social influence, our own influence in the world, have all been misleading promises. Look at the anniversary of the Copenhagen criteria, what an irony. The European Commission has given a favourable opinion on Ukraine's candidate status when it is quite clear that [inaudible] doesn't respect the criteria or the credibility of the European construction is undermined thereby because these wonderful principles can quite easily be circumvented depending on circumstance. Bringing the Balkans in, more mafia here in the French country site, Ukraine bringing war into the EU. And to accelerate this, you want France to accept a sacrifice of its own rules and its own rights. So that we have systematic use of [inaudible]. It is inconceivable that a member of the UN Security Council should depend upon decisions taken by others delegating powers to NATO and as anyone embarks on a bellicose folly would be dragged along if we

cannot manage to muster a majority against. We've had too many sad precedents we can only do rightly fear what the future will bring.

Mariani phrases himself in a Eurosceptic way, opposing further enlargement, which makes him a soft-Eurosceptic according to Taggart and Szczerbiak's definition, although it is harder than just policy-based Euroscepticism. Mariani has the French national interest in mind, as is seen in "For France the 2007 EU-enlargement wasn't only a disappointment [...]", "more mafia here in the French country site" and "you want France to accept a sacrifice of its own rules and its own rights". Mariani also phrases himself discontent with the European Commission, saying that "it is quite clear that [...] doesn't respect the criteria or the credibility of the European construction" and even calls a further enlargement a "bellicose folly", if the EU would allow Ukraine to join. Mariani finishes by saying that the earlier enlargements have been "too many sad precedents" and that the future should be feared.

During his speech, Mariani portrays signs of the public orator, trying to delegitimize the European Union and the Copenhagen criteria, by calling them criteria that "can quite easily be circumvented depending on circumstance". At the same time, Mariani is presenting himself as the defender of the rights and interests of France and its citizens. Interestingly enough, the "we" that Mariani uses, is not referring to France, but to the Parliament, showing that he does identify himself as a part of this group. The "you" it is contrasted with, is those in favour of an (accelerated) enlargement, but the "you" is not othered as much, although it is connected to negative sentiments when it comes to France having to abandon its rights. Mariani's speech does not manifest any ties of cooperation.

Danish Anders Vistisen from the ID group expresses the following:

15 years after the large enlargement towards the east, we are here again. We have a situation, where majority here, where the Commission, the Council President wants us to enlarge towards the east. But have we learned from the past? Have we learned from the chaos the last enlargement caused, because people didn't play by the rules? We have seen a wave of social dumping, we've seen a wave of organised crime. Even 15 years after the large enlargement round, there's still member states who still don't have access to the Schengen area or the Eurozone because they're not ready yet. And in that situation, you now talk about further enlargements, with about 55,000,000 more citizens all coming from countries that are even poorer and are faring even worse when it comes to rule of law than in Hungary. So, when will we stop the hypocrisy? The same people who at every plenary sessions wants to attack the Hungarian government, the Polish government, they now say let's get more of that inside the Union. When you look at corruption, when you look at LGBTI rights, and the things we usually care about, it's easy to see where these countries are now. And yet you want to welcome them but I say you need to take responsibility for the consequences.

Anders Vistisen shows the feeling of enlargement fatigue in his speech, which is made clear in the use of "we are here again", and the repetition of "have we learned from the past". The repetition is a clear link to the repetition of the enlargement and inspires the same feeling of

“having heard it before”. Vistisen connects the enlargement with all kinds of negative concepts, such as “social dumping” and “organised crime”, as well as by highlighting that some member states are not even fully integrated yet, even after more than a decade of being a member and even calling it “hypocrisy” to further enlarge. Based on all these arguments, it can be assumed that Vistisen is opposed to further enlargement, but he also knows that it probably cannot be stopped, which explains why he ends his speech with “you want to welcome them but I say you need to take responsibility for the consequences”.

Vistisen is Eurosceptic and does not agree with the steps of further integration, which makes that he is placed on the side of soft-Euroscepticism, although he is more leaning to the hard-side than when it comes to just policy-Euroscepticism. During his speech, Vistisen shows signs of being a public orator, who is trying to delegitimize the EU and the EU policies, by saying that they have a double standard. He is trying to present himself with what is the best for the member states and their citizens in mind, referring to things that need to be avoided and drawing attention to issues such as the Schengen and Eurozone that not all member states have access to yet.

This feeling that Vistisen represents the people of Europe is further strengthened by the use of “we”, that could be understood as the EU as a whole, including the citizens. This “we” is contrasted with a “they” that consists of both the EU institutions and the majority of the MEPs in favour of further enlargement. Vistisen, like Mariani, does not suggest any signs of ties of cooperation. The last MEP of this debate that was analysed is Jean-Lin Lacapelle, a French representative of the ID group. He says:

President, colleagues. The Copenhagen criteria which have been the basis for policy for 30 years, set parameters for compliance with democracy, economic and social policy criteria, too, are the basic criteria for EU accession. I would like to ask you to reflect on these stability situation in Moldova, with Transnistria, Ukraine under aggression from Russia, with all the arms that are present there. Where's the stability in Kosovo, which is persecuted and where is the economic prosperity in the western Balkans, when the situation there is of rampant corruption? Where is the social market economy in Albania which is suffering from the scourge of corruption and arms trafficking and money laundering? Where is the democracy in Turkey? Need I continue? This is simply blatant hypocrisy. Erdogan has showed us exactly what phantom criteria they are. He clearly has no idea, no inclination or intention of doing anything about the Armenian genocide. These criteria, criteria based on variable geometry, subject to random and biased interpretation and they are simply not fit for purpose. Thank you.

Lacapelle names that the Copenhagen criteria are “the basic criteria for EU accession”, while asking to reflect on the situation in some candidate member states, with the implicit question if there is place for instability, war and corruption within the EU. Lacapelle is very clear that “these criteria, criteria based on variable geometry, subject to random and biased interpretation and they are simply not fit for purpose.” He is trying to convince his audience

by listing all the problems that are still present in the candidate member states, by asking questions, that are all supposed to be answered negatively, finishing with “need I continue?”, meaning that there are many more examples. Lacapelle, just as Vistisen, calls the further enlargement and the use of the Copenhagen criteria “blatant hypocrisy” and Lacapelle goes even as far as saying that the Copenhagen criteria are “phantom criteria”.

Lacapelle is opposed to both how the Copenhagen criteria are used and to further enlargement towards the East, based on the non-compliance with the criteria. The objection to the further enlargement based on the current situation in this speech, we can identify as soft-Euroscepticism. Based on the different kinds of behaviour defined by Brack, Lacapelle shows signs of being a public orator, based on his long list of criticism. Just like the other members of the ID group, Lacapelle does not imply any ties of cooperative behaviour.

During the debate on the resolution on the Copenhagen Criteria, it is clear that there are strong differences between the ECR and ID group, which explains why this is the topic that keeps the two groups from merging. All the members of the ID group pronounced themselves Eurosceptically and opposed to future enlargement, while Dzhambaski is open to enlargement, but highlights the importance of the Copenhagen criteria.

Although none of the analysed speeches implied cooperative ties, there is probably more cooperation than manifested: ECR cooperated with other groups to get the resolution tabled. This could also explain the lack of other ECR representatives, since there is a general consensus and no need to express their support or opposition other than what Dzhambaski highlighted. The members of ID also generally followed the same line of opposition, which could imply that they follow the same party line, or that they just all happen to have the same opinion. The fact that the three analysed speeches portrayed signs of the public orator, makes that the mentioning of possible cooperation is less likely, since the members all want to stand out from the crowd and focus the attention on themselves in order to gain more votes.

The vote on the resolution ended in a majority in favour, 468- 99 with 58 abstentions (European Parliament^h, 2023). An analysis of the vote shows that the voting behaviour of both members of the ECR and the ID is mixed. For example, many of the Italian members of the ID group (18) voted in favour of the proposal, 33 voted against and no abstentions. This could imply that the national aspect could be of more importance than Euroscepticism and that cooperation within the national delegation is likely. For the ECR group, 40 voted in favour, 12 against and 7 abstained, without a clear indication why, showing polarisation. This is surprisingly, especially because the ECR group was one of the groups responsible for tabling the resolution.

Compared to the debate on nature restoration, this debate was less emotive, more consensus and a clear majority, which could explain why many Eurosceptics did not feel the need to participate in the debate and why the number of speeches analysed is much lower. The outcomes of the nature restoration vote were a lot more cohesive than the voting behaviour on the Copenhagen criteria.

6.3. Extending the List of EU Crimes to Hate Speech and Hate Crime

In the treaty on the functioning of the European Union we can find a list of areas of serious crime with a “cross-border dimension”. The Council and the Parliament co-decide on the minimum rules of what is seen as a crime, and the Council can add to this list of areas of cross-border crimes, with the approval of the European Parliament (Bąkowski, 2024). The directive should counteract the misuse of internet and social media as a way of spreading and encouraging the use of hate speech, as well as a focus on minors and bullying both in schools and online (Ibid). In December 2021 the Commission published a communication where they invited the Council to take such a decision on extending the list of crimes in the TFEU, after that the commission could draw up a law proposal that would follow the ordinary legislative procedure. In the Council, a majority was in favour of this idea but they have, as of now, not yet reached the unanimity that is needed in amendments on article 83.

In Parliament, the file was handed over to the LIBE⁶ committee with Maite Pagazaurtundúae (Renew) as rapporteur and with the FEMM⁷ committee for an opinion, with Vera Tax (S&D) as rapporteur (Bąkowski, 2024). The LIBE committee adopted the report the 13th november 2023 following the suggestions of the FEMM committee. The votes were 36 in favour, 5 against, and one abstention. All the ID representatives (4) voted against (LIBE committee, 2023). There are no results available about the ECR representatives from the committee minutes. The debates main discussion is about the limits of freedom of speech (European Parliament^b, 2023)

The first speech in this debate was by MEP Patricia Chagnon, elected in France and member of the ID group. She thinks the debate is actually not about hate speech and hate crimes, but about something else, as she says in:

You struggle against hate speech, in actual fact, is a different struggle in disguise. You're seeking to protect an ultra-minority ideology, trying to remove any kind of debate, any kind of public discussion. I mean, if I were to say, for instance, I don't want minors to receive hormonal treatment or other medical treatment, that's not hate speech against transgender persons. It is a declaration of love for children. If I

⁶ Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

⁷ Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality

fight against excessive migration into my country or continent, if I speak about the consequences of your awful migration pact, I'm not moved by hatred, I'm moved by love for my country, love for our continent. I don't think you're really in a democratic the discussion anymore, you're sort of in the sphere of theocracy. You don't want political debate, you want some kind of inquisition. You're not on the side of reason, you are on a quasi-religious discourse here and you are actually moving us into dark times, renewed dark times. So please let's open up the debate. Let's not stifle free debate. Thank you.

Chagnon starts her speech by saying that the debate on hate speech seeks “to protect an ultra-minority ideology”, and that the left-wing of the Parliament is trying to “remove any kind of debate”. Chagnon thinks about hate speech in a different way than most in the Parliament, where she says that hate speech is no act of hate for the “other”, but instead of love the “self”. Chagnon could be seen as Eurosceptic, although she never explicitly phrases herself that way. With her references to religion and the Middle Ages to downplay the people in favour of the proposal both in the Commission and the Parliament, with the words “theocracy”, “inquisition” and “quasi-religious”, as well as “dark times”, we can understand that she thinks the Commission (or the EU in general) is taking over too much power, while not listening to the member states, only following an “ultra-minority ideology”. The “renewed dark times” could also be implying that Chagnon sees this law proposal as a part in the process of change, because it is unlikely to express yourself in such a way if you only oppose to one field of policy, which makes that Chagnon is leaning more towards hard-Euroscepticism.

Chagnon portrays signs of the public orator, as she is trying to delegitimize the European Parliament and Commission by saying that they defend “ultra-minority ideology”, and by doing so implies that she is defending the majority of the Europeans. She also does not shy away from using harsh comparisons and saying that there is no free debate possible.

Chagnon works with a strong “other” that is portrayed by the “you” and that is by the use of all the references to the “dark times” almost alienated. At the same time, she attributes good qualities to herself, such as loving children, loving her country and continent and even minimizing her behaviour and standpoints on gender identity issues and migration by turning it around by not calling it hate. She also says that she is open to free debate - although how open, after calling her opponents theocratic and an inquisition, is questionable.

After Chagnon’s speech, Patryk Jaki, a Polish member of the ECR shares his opinion:

Thank you, Madam President, Commissioner. Given this draft to fight hate, you say that if you if the LGBT-people [inaudible] a migrant has committed a crime, he can be locked up. It's about fighting religious freedom, too. Expressing your religion and saying that there are two biological genders, that would also be a crime. And you're putting that, dressing that in nice words. You know what repressive tolerance means. This is a tolerance against the right from the left. It's terrorizing, it's not at the freedom. You don't tolerate freedom. We can't accept this proposal.'

Jaki rephrases the proposal as “fighting religious freedom” and calls the proposal “terrorizing”. To those in favour of the proposal, he says: “you don’t tolerate freedom”. Jaki states that the current situation is one of “repressive tolerance”, meaning that the right wing accepts the behaviour of the left, knowing that it is damaging the European citizens. Jaki finishes by saying “we can’t accept this proposal”, but to whom the “we” refers remains unclear, it could either be the Polish delegation in the ECR, the ECR as a whole or the complete opposition.

Jaki does not present himself necessarily as a Eurosceptic in his opposition to the proposal. Jaki is opposing the majority of the Parliament and bringing politicisation into the debate, but he does not speak about the role of the European Parliament as an EU institution, nor about what the role of the EU is supposed to be. Jaki’s speech is then followed by Italian Silvia Sardone, from the ID group, who shows a harder tone:

You want to be Big Brothers. You want to instigate thought crimes as to limit freedom of speech and expression. You want to take over the powers of member states so as to use new rules to attack anybody who's against your ideology. We are obviously in favour of trying to tackle genuine hate crime and discrimination. We are against fighting or bullying in schools and bullying online. These are real risks which threaten the well-being of young people. However, using the excuse of preventing crimes, you now want to start policing the web and social media, so as to remove posts and use from certain parts of the political spectrum, using the Digital Service Act. You have already made it clear that you can talk about rebel voices which aren't in line with the left and those voices must of course be silenced. You want to promote a model, where the ideas and thoughts of our people can be silenced by simply labelling fake news. I would like to know what types of speech really would be characterised as hate. What are the areas where you can say things which are parts of the general convention, the mainstream? Once again Brussels is trying to import the Chinese model here in Europe.

Sardone accuses those in favour of the proposal wanting “to be Big Brothers”, a reference to Orwell's 1984, where “Big Brother” is monitoring everything. With her accusations, Sardone makes use of a dividing kind of othering, where the “you” is almost alienated through comparing it with “Big Brothers”, “limiting freedom of speech and expression”, as well as “taking over the powers of the member states [...] to attack anybody who is against your ideology.” Sardone highlights that an undefined “we” is “against fighting or bullying in schools and bullying online”, but that the majority in the parliament wanted to censor the Internet when it comes to some ideologies, as she mentions in “you now want to start policing the web and social media, so as to remove posts and use from certain parts of the political spectrum”.

Sardone expresses herself in a Eurosceptic way, where she is not only opposed to the proposal, but to many different aspects of the EU, criticising the Digital Service Act, the

freedom of speech and what she calls “a model, where the ideas and thoughts of our people can be silenced”. This makes that Sardone is leaning more towards the hard side on the spectrum of Euroscepticism. During this speech, Sardone’s behaviour shows signs of both the public orator and the pragmatist (Brack, 2015). Sardone criticises the EU and takes on the role of the protector of the people, yet she also comes with constructive criticism. Sardone implies some kind of cooperation when she expresses herself using “we”, but what group she refers to exactly is unclear: is it her national party, the ID group or the opposition in general?

Hakkarainen, a Finnish MEP from the ECR group, states:

Thank you, Madam President. The term of hate speech is a new word. You might think that there's nothing but racism, you're taking the model from the Soviet Union. In my country's legislation, we've had a term of defamation which we've managed with. People can't talk without hurting somebody. There are also an army of civil servants who do very little and it's dangerous to bring terms like this into legislation, it ends in self-censorship and in the end in dictatorship.

Hakkarainen, too, proclaims himself against the law proposal, and makes use of a slippery slope argument, where including hate speech and hate crimes on the list of EU crimes will end in “self-censorship and in the end dictatorship”, while comparing the EU with “the model from the Soviet Union”. Hakkarainen is also justifying not extending the list of EU crimes, saying that Finland “managed” with a comparable situation, as well as “people can’t talk without hurting somebody” and “it’s dangerous to bring terms like this into legislation”.

In this speech, Hakkarainen contrasts a “we”, the Finnish, with the “you”, referring to the EU. The “we” is clearly associated with the idea of finding solutions and managing difficult situations, while the EU is being portrayed as censoring and controlling. Hakkarainen doesn’t show any ties of cooperation, nor does he identify himself as a part of the European Parliament.

Hakkarainen is not explicitly Eurosceptic, but the Euroscepticism is implied in how he compares the EU to a “dictatorship” which is bad for the citizens and the member states. Hakkarainen too, could be placed leaning towards the hard side of Euroscepticism, because his criticism implies that he is discontent with a lot more than just this proposal, which would justify the comparison to the Soviet-model, and the slippery slope to the dictatorship, which makes that Hakkarainen displays signs of the public orator in this speech.

Belgian MEP Filip de Man from the ID party expresses himself as follows:

Colleagues, this is the first debate we've had on so-called hate speech which have to be tackled on Internet. Why is it the traditional parties so stubborn about such issues? They are clearly losing control over public opinion. People can read and say whatever they want in Internet. This is something which the regime can't accept, The regime wants the people to read only those things that the regime authorizes, anything else should be banned. That seems to be the opinion of most people in this house. Anybody who is opposed to mass immigration is a racist. Anybody who opposes the madness around

gender or somebody who makes a joke about a fat person or a thin person or a transgender person or a black person or a Jew, those people are guilty of crimes. Whereas when it comes to stupid jokes about old white men, that should be fine.

Filip de Man starts his original speech in Dutch by saying, contrary to the English interpretation, that this is the umpteenth debate on hate speech, that now needs to be tackled on the internet too. De Man expresses himself negatively on the traditional parties, which he compares with “the regime”, that is trying to control what people read, say and think. De Man’s original speech in Dutch is even harsher in tone than the interpretation, where de Man doesn’t even shy away from using the n-word. He ends with: “soon, only boring jokes about stupid blondes or old white men are allowed. That, colleagues, is self-hate.”⁸

De Man calls his opponents “stubborn”, and says that they are “clearly losing control over public opinion”, implying that the political groups in favour of the proposal are not in line with what the people of Europe want. De Man uses condescending language while explaining that “people can read and say what they want in Internet”, saying that the “regime”, referring to the Commission and the majority in Parliament, cannot accept this fact. De Man sees freedom of speech as a very clear division, you are either in favour of freedom of speech, including hate speech, or you are favouring censorship resembling a dictatorship-like society. His final remarks on the jokes that are allowed is almost a complaint that racism is not socially allowed anymore.

His final remarks do show that there is socialisation and that the behaviour is shaped by the institution, as explained by social institutionalism. The majority in the Parliament shapes the norms and culture within the institution and the use of respectful language within the parliament during debates seems to be one of them, although de Man criticises this, it looks like he usually complies to this cultural norm within the institution, afraid of social sanctions when not. But in this case, de Man portrays behaviour that could be better explained with RCI: he decides to go against the norms. Even though there might be social sanctions, de Man has something to gain, votes. And these votes for him are worth more than social acceptance within the Parliament.

Although there are no clear references to Euroscepticism, the behaviour he portrays shows signs of the public orator. De Man is delegitimizing the European Parliament, criticising the behaviour of the majority of the members and is actively looking for conflict with, ironically, his use of hateful language during a debate on hate speech.

Beata Kempa, a Polish representative in the ECR group, states:

⁸ My translation

Thank you, Madam President. Today, we're talking about hate speech, however we have to start by defining what this concept means. Given the lack of a definition we find ourselves facing a situation where hate speech could actually give rise to severe criminal sanctions without a definition. We can't use this concept of hate speech to be used to condemn other concepts in society. Freedom of expression in society must not be undermined by allowing people who have different ideas about life, different ideologies, to be condemned. So, for example, the suggestion is that people speaking out against mass immigration would be accused of hate speech, so for example, if you were to like a post, a post proving that mass immigration is dangerous, would that be hate speech? I hope not. We have to be reasonable, we have to avoid hate, we have to avoid harassment. Clearly, I'm in favour of the freedom of expression but I'm against publicly hanging or promoting hate.

Kempa is, compared to other MEPs in this debate, not as harsh in her rejection of the law proposal. She even says that “we have to be reasonable, we have to avoid hate, we have to avoid harassment”, as well as “I’m in favour of the freedom of expression, but I’m against publicly hanging or promoting hate”. It is interesting, because she doesn’t seem to be convincing the left-wing side of the Parliament, but rather her colleagues within her own political group to open up to the debate and to not to reject the proposal completely, which would imply that she is cooperating although not among the expected lines of cooperation. This doesn’t mean that she is not critical: Kempa wants a definition of hate speech before the regulation is adopted and asks the Parliament to be “reasonable”.

There are no signs of Euroscepticism in Kempa’s speech, she just explains her opposition to the current writings in the policy draft, but is not against the role of Europe when it comes to this proposal. This means that she cannot be placed in one of the categories proposed by Brack, based on this speech alone. Kempa clearly identifies herself as a member of the Parliament first and foremost, which is made clear in the use of “we” that always refers to the Parliament and that is not contrasted with an “other”.

Ivan David, from Czechia and based in the ID group says during his speech:

Madam President, I'm going to quote a list of fundamental freedoms according to article 21. Any discrimination of political thought or other opinions is banned in the EU, which is another sign of hypocrisy. Here, president of the parliament Sassoli declared a cordon sanitaire against our group, ID, and he used lies but also hate when he spoke about this, which is why the other political groups have decided not to give us the representation in the bodies of the parliament and on committees. Citizens of the EU are discriminated against on the basis of their nationality, which is again a policy that leads to poverty. You yourselves are incited to hatred. We have to remove the causes of hatred. Inreality, you are looking for excuses to suppress opinions that you don't like. You're talking about rights but you're introducing censorship. You are punishing emotions that you yourself incite.

David wants to enhance his ethos and logos by quoting from the list of fundamental freedoms, saying that “discrimination of political thought or other opinions is banned in the EU”. With an example, he wants to prove the hypocrisy. President Sassoli, who passed away several months before the debate, is accused of having excluded the ID group from policy making, as well as spreading lies and hate. This could be understood as a way of social

sanctions following the behaviour of the members of the ID group, who were not conforming to the norms of the parliamentary culture. In David's speech there are clear ties of cooperation within the ID group, who together were discriminated against, as well as there are ties of cooperation implied within the other parts of the European Parliament.

With his example about the discrimination of ID, he presents himself as someone who has experience of being treated unfairly and who is standing up for the rights of the citizens in the EU who have been discriminated against based on their (EU) nationality, a discrimination created by the EU. This dichotomy, of the EU against the EU citizens, represented by ID, is further illustrated by the use of "you yourselves are incited to hatred. We have to remove the causes of hatred".

David's language implies that he is Eurosceptic, based on the fact that he thinks that the EU is hypocritical and anti-democratic in not letting the ID group participate in the same way as others. It is implied that this is not limited to just this policy area, so we can assume that David is leaning more to the hard-side of the Euroscepticism spectrum. David portrays signs of the public orator, with his efforts to try and delegitimize the Parliament.

The next speaker of the ECR group is Andrey Slabakov, from Bulgaria:

Thank you, Madam President. This is an attempt to incriminate personal opinion of people who do not actually agree with the Bolshevik ideology of the powerful. Certain identities have [inaudible] here and each criticism of them is viewed as hatred and fascism because it's easier to jail our opponents. Why do we talk about hate speech only when it targets minorities, gay people and so on, or else there is no hate of heterosexual people or Christians. This issue does not concern 90% of the European citizens. They, may included, care about honesty, integrity, compassion and sympathy. Political affiliation, sexual orientation, ethnic origin are private matters. This claim has not been put forward by citizens but by politicians. The European Community needs justice and fairness, not perks for minorities. Thank you very much indeed.

Slabakov states that the proposal is "an attempt to incriminate personal opinion of people who do not actually agree with the Bolshevik ideology of the powerful", where he justifies hate speech by downplaying it to personal opinions, as well as that he tries to place the opinions of the parliamentary majority in bad light by comparing it with bolshevism, which has a negative connotation. Slabakov talks about a "we" that refers to the Parliament. It is clear that he identifies as a member of Parliament who is chosen by the European citizens and he sees it as his duty to defend the opinion of his citizens, by highlighting that "this issue does not concern 90% of the European citizens", "this claim has not been put forward by citizens but by politicians" and "the European Community needs justice and fairness, not perks for minorities". He also lists the values of these citizens, which he, as their defender, by definition also stands for: honesty, integrity, compassion and sympathy.

Slabakov is not opposed to the EU, but he is opposed to the EU involvement on this matter. He doesn't think the proposal is representative of what the citizens want. It could also be policy opposition, but it is unclear whether his opposition is based on his ideology or the fact that he doesn't think this is for the EU to decide or both, since these reasons could very well overlap. This means that we Slabakov could be policy-Eurosceptic, which places him on the softer side of Euroscepticism. Into what category Slabakov would fall based on the speech is not entirely clear, but he does portray some signs of being a public orator in the way how he presents himself as defending the interests of the European citizen. Slabakov's speech does not manifest any signs of cooperation.

ID representative Georg Mayer from Austria says:

The majority of the examples which we've heard cited as covering hate speech today, they're actually covering something else. The vast majority of penal codes in Europe actually cover all of these acts and they're currently subject to fight sanctions. This is highly sensitive and controversial issue we're talking about, I simply don't believe you when people say that this legislation would not be used to silence or muzzle those who express opinions you don't like. So let's take the example of Hungary, somebody from Hungary who is not popular with the groups of the left here, supported by the EPP, are muzzled. Our colleague Barley of the S&D said this very clearly beforehand: she referred specifically [inaudible] the AFD, condemning. My hope is that what she said, Madam President, will be examined very carefully in the minutes, to see whether that damage [inaudible] this house. I would prefer to see the European Parliament devoting more energy to efforts to elucidate the corruption scandals which S&D governments have been involved.

Mayer highlights that many of the speeches are not about the proposal and he himself uses his speaking time not to address the law proposal. Instead, Mayer focuses on the freedom of speech within the Parliament and how the members of the Hungarian Fidesz party have been "muzzled", as well as that other members are "condemning" when talking about the AFD. Mayer complains about the (social) sanctions the right wing parties have experienced, because their opinions do not conform with the norms and values of the majority of the parliament. At the same time, Mayer expresses that he hopes that what was said by Barley about the AFD "will be examined very carefully in the minutes" and could lead to social sanctions of her after expressing herself, where we can understand similarities. Both use the freedom of speech to phrase their opinions, but only one of them is sanctioned.

Mayer tries actively to delegitimize the European Parliament, by saying that the voices of the Fidesz party and the AFD are not taken into account, as well as by saying that the parliament should devote "more energy to efforts elucidate the corruption scandals which S&D governments have been involved", showing that Mayer thinks the Parliament turns a blind eye when it comes to S&D parties. Based on Mayer's angry tone, we can assume that he is against the proposal. The Euroscepticism that Mayer portrays is only focused on the

legitimacy of the European Parliament, so we do not know exactly where on the scale of Euroscepticism Mayer is located. But with the criticism of the legitimacy of the functioning of the Parliament, Mayer does portray some signs of Brack's public orator.

French Gilles Lebreton from the ID group states:

Colleagues, the Commission and the majority in the Parliament are proposing including hate speech in the list of European crimes under article 83 in the treaties. I'm against this for two reasons. First of all, the notion of hate speech is so vague and subjective that it [inaudible] to censure and political persecution. The report is besides xenophobic speech and what they're proposing is supporting migration and is against democratic life. Secondly, the Commission proposal is against the respect of the French constitution because it takes up the words of the available law and which is undermined freedom of expression. The national constitution is superior to all treaties including EU treaties, which has been pointed out by the constitutional court in November 20th, 2004 the EU institutions can't impose on France any law, which is anti-constitutional.

Lebreton presents himself as a clear opposition to the majority of the parliament, which he explains with two reasons of critique: the vagueness of the term of hate speech, as well as that the law imposes on the national constitution of France. It is clear that Lebreton is opposed to the content of the proposal but not necessarily the proposal as a whole. Lebreton doesn't present himself explicitly as Eurosceptic. It is clear that Lebreton is worried that the commission takes over powers from France and goes against the national constitution but since national constitutions are protected in the treaties, it is an understandable concern and not necessarily Euroscepticism.

Lebreton seems open to finding a consensus and cooperation with the majority under certain conditions, which would place him under the category of the participant, according to Bracks typology. This could be confirmed by Lebreton's participation in several committees and the many reports and opinions he has written as (shadow)rapporteur. Lebreton does not present any ties of cooperation within ID or with the other opposing groups.

The last speaker of the ID party is Susanna Ceccardi, from Italy:

Freedom of thought is one of the foundations of the Western world. Freethinkers, scientists, philosophers are the people who built the pillars of freedom here in Europe, the pillars of our well-being. At the same time, we now have a left bureaucracy who wants to drive us back to the dark ages. I agree that freedom of thought must be subject to certain limits, of course, however, do you know that Italy has decriminalised the crime of insulting people? However, it's the left here who are now trying to preach to us from their pulpits. We agree that hate, social jealousy, or political resentment can often be negative sentiments. Last week, a woman committed suicide following a hate speech which was triggered off by influencers who were referring to the left. So I strike a note of caution for the left. Stop trying to adopt these laws which are simply designed to damage your political adversaries, particularly when you're actually doing the opposite in reality.

Ceccardi starts her speech by saying that "freedom of thought is one of the foundations of the Western world", which she then exemplifies by naming "freethinkers, scientists,

philosophers”, as the responsables for freedom and well-being in Europe. She contrasts this with the left who is moving Europe back to the “dark ages”. The dichotomy between the left and right in this debate is further clarified in “it's the left here who are now trying to preach to us from their pulpits”. The use of “us” and “we” refers to the right-wing opposition in this law proposal. Especially “we agree that hate, social jealousy, or political resentment can often be negative sentiments” suggests that there is some kind of cooperation and that Ceccardi has decided to present herself as part of a group, to increase her credibility. It is not only her opinion, but a shared opinion with many others. In the speech there are no traces of Euroscepticism. The criticism Ceccardi phrases, is directed to the left-wing politicians in the Parliament, not the Parliament as an institution, nor the other EU institutions.

Ceccardi agrees up to a certain level that the freedom of speech has limits, but she does not use her speech for the proposal. Instead, she warns about the left-wing “hypocrisy”, as phrased in “ Stop trying to adopt these laws which are simply designed to damage your political adversaries, particularly when you're actually doing the opposite in reality”.

The emotive nature of the debate on hate speech and hate crimes is visible in the harsh language that was used, as well as in the comparisons with negative connotations to for example the Soviet Union, religion and the Dark Ages. The debate is marked by a big difference in attitudes between the left and right wing, based on the difference in the hierarchy of underlying values. Where the left in this question prioritises solidarity and respect, the right prioritises freedom.

In this debate, there are more traces of Euroscepticism than expected. At first glance, it was expected that Euroscepticism perhaps could play a role based on the location of this policy area on the GAL/TAN division, but not necessarily. It was unexpected that it would be influential to the degree as was portrayed during the speeches. Once again, the most common types of behaviour that were portrayed were the public orator and the pragmatist, simply because the absentee is not participating and the participant is more influential behind the scenes, which cannot be analysed correctly in a formal setting.

There are few explicit manifestations of ties of cooperation, which is the same result as in the earlier instances. But during this debate, the majority culture within the institution is a lot clearer than in the other debates, as well as the constraining role it can have by the (social) sanctions that are used. With several references to these sanctions to, for example, the ID group as a whole in different ways, it is clear that there is more cooperation is implied.

The final vote on this debate ended in a majority of 397-121 in favour, with 26 abstentions, meaning that the proposal was adopted (European Parliament^c, 2024). The

majority of the members from both the ECR and ID groups vote against it, which could imply that there is some kind of cooperation and a party line to follow. This shows that there is a high voting cohesion when it comes to this policy area. Only 2 members of ECR and 2 of ID voted in favour of the proposal (Ibid.). Most surprisingly, Filip de Man, who during his speech was very harsh in tone and seemingly against the proposal, was one of them. This shows that the behaviour portrayed in the plenary does not necessarily have to align with the voting behaviour. Interestingly enough, it was expected that MEPs present themselves as more individualistic in the plenary debate than during the voting since the outcome of the debate is usually decided beforehand. Still, in this case, it is the other way around. During his speech, de Man presents himself as being closer to the other group members, but during the vote, he goes against both the group and his earlier behaviour. Of course, this could have been a mistake or perhaps there were other interests involved, but the exact reason we will not know, since there is no explanation of the vote accessible.

6.4. The Right to Repair

On the 22nd of March 2023, the Commission proposed a directive on *the Right to Repair* (Spinaci, 2024). The *Right to Repair* aims to make it easier for consumers to repair goods, within and beyond the guarantee term. The law proposal is beneficial for consumers and is a step forward in achieving the EU Green Deal goals (European Commission^e, 2023). The European Council and the Parliament reached a provisional agreement during the trilogue, before it was officially agreed by the Council during Coreper and before the final debate and vote in plenary (Council of the EU, 2024).

In Parliament, the IMCO⁹ committee was responsible for the file, with René Repasi as the appointed rapporteur (Spinaci, 2024). The ENVI¹⁰ and JURI¹¹ committees were asked for their opinions. The final report was presented during the IMCO committee meeting and was adopted with a majority of 38 - 2, no abstentions (Ibid.). The debate took place during the last plenary session of the legislature, meaning that MEPs are busy with campaigning (European Parliament^d, 2024).

Beata Mazurek, a Polish MEP in the ECR group, starts her speech by thanking the rapporteur:

Thank you very much. I would like to thank Mr. Repasi for the work that we've done together and thank you for the effective negotiations during the trilogues. And the effect of this cooperation is the

⁹ Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection

¹⁰ Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

¹¹ Committee on Legal Affairs

text that we have, the text which will ensure advantages for consumers and not too much additional burden for business. The right to repair is good for consumers because it will extend the lifespan of products, such as dishwashers and washing machines, fridges, vacuum cleaners, and so on. When these products break down, sometimes they have to go in the bin because it's too expensive or difficult to find the spare parts. So, it will be good for independent repair services, especially if they have access to spare parts and cross-border services. It will be particularly good for Polish business because, for many years now, we have had a culture of repairing these types of goods and so it will help us to roll out this potential. I'm also very happy with the fact that in its final version, this text talks about a right to repair, not an obligation. Because the original Commission version did not let consumers choose. Here, we can encourage but the final choice lies with consumers and this encouragement is done through the fact that consumers have the option to extend their warranty by 12 months for a repaired goods. This is an excellent solution, thank you very much.

Beata Mazurek is positive about the negotiations that took place during the informal meetings between the different EU institutions. This shows that there is, from her side, a will to cooperate and to be actively involved in the process making, which is also shown in “the work that we've done together”. In this speech, Mazurek does not present herself as Eurosceptic at all, she even highlights the European added value with “cross-border services”, which means we cannot place her in one Brack's categories, although Mazurek does present signs of being a participant. Mazurek highlights that it is a very beneficial proposal for consumers and that it will not hinder businesses. Mazurek also has the national interest in mind, saying the proposal will be good for Poland, since Poland has a culture of repairing and with this law proposal, there is a lot of potential for Poland.

Mazurek makes use of a uniting “we”, that refers to the EU institutions and that is not contrasted with an outgroup, showing that Mazurek presents herself as socialised in the Parliament and that she is operating within the system in order to achieve the results that are in her best interest. In this speech, taking good care of the European citizens and the economy goes hand in hand with the value of sustainability.

Mazurek's positive outlook on the law proposal stands in contrast with the speech delivered by Virginie Joron, a French MEP from the ID group. Joron is the only member from the ID group present during the debate. She states:

Thank you very much, President, commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, rapporteur. I'm from the French Rally Party and I support the idea of repairing. Throw away society hasn't brought us anything, it's not a good model for society and it's not our model. Recycling and repair also means local jobs here in France. I know that some of my colleagues don't like this but the people who pay our salaries, are not people far away. It's our French workers were supposed to be serving. Then, for political reasons, you don't didn't want our amendments. Brussels can't serve, they can annoy us, you'll soon realize that you've destroyed entire [inaudible] of European industry. The right to repair must establish proper balance between the purchasing power of the consumer and acceptable costs for the industry but the Commission in Brussels has destroyed our industry with ridiculous proposals which meant that gas and electricity prices rise. Can Fessenheim power station be repaired, what about Nordstream? Is that something to throw away or is it something to repair? You've destroyed our automobile industry, you've

closed the Fessenheim nuclear power station, you're wasting energy in Europe and you're chasing our industry out of Europe. How have you served Europe? How have you served France? We're always lagging behind. France it's now as the same level as Greece when it comes to GDP. Who's going to repair our trains after decades of destroying our industry? It is time to repair Europe. I hope that you will vote on the 10th of June [sic].

This is probably the most interesting speech of the debate: Joron agrees with the law proposal, but uses most of her speech politicising the debate. Compared to many other MEPs, she highlights first what national party she is from, which shows she identifies as a member of the French Rally party, and not necessarily as a member of the European Parliament.

She starts her speech by saying “I support the idea of repairing” and explaining that it is not good for society and that it is not “our model”. Who she implies exactly with “our”, is unclear. This could be the European citizens, the French people, or the people of the French Rally party. Joron then goes on to say that “some of my colleagues don’t like this” and here, too, it is unclear who she actually refers to: her colleagues in the Parliament, or more specifically her colleagues in her (national) political party? Then, she criticises the European Union, by saying that “for political reasons, you don’t want our amendments”, which then turns into the idea that Brussels has destroyed the French industry, as is visible in “the Commission in Brussels has destroyed our industry with ridiculous proposals which meant that gas and electricity prices rise”. Joron wants the French economy to be repaired and lists many things that have contributed to the industrial downfall, such as the closing of both the Fessenheim power plant, the Nord Stream pipeline, the automobile industry and many companies moving to third countries. The “you” that is employed is a direct attack on the European Commission, as well as the Members of parliament supporting the commission, which is in strong contrast with the “our” and “I”, who are against. “How have you served Europe? How have you served France?” shows that Joron thinks of this as a longstanding issue, where the Commission and the EU are neglecting the needs of France, something that becomes clear again in the use of “decades of destroying our energy”. She then ends with “it is time to repair Europe”, where we can see that she turns to the European citizen, and the need to vote for someone who will change this for France.

The last phrase of the speech is not entirely clear. “I hope that you will vote on the 10th of June” could be understood as an encouragement to the European citizen to go vote, even though the date is incorrect. The original French speech is clearer on this point, saying “Rendez-vous le 10 juin.”, which instead would mean that the audience in the room is addressed, implying that the people of Europe will vote to show what they prioritise and the results will be clear on the 10th of June, after the elections.

The behaviour that is portrayed in this speech has clear links with Bracks “public orator”, who is there to criticise no matter what and will take the possibility to make her voice heard, even when she actually agrees with the law proposal. The Euroscepticism is more hard Euroscepticism than soft, where it is clear that Joron shows hostility towards not only one or a few policy areas, but rather towards the EU in general. With the only interest she has in mind is the national interests of France, she portrays clear signs of national interest Euroscepticism.

This speech is an example of self-seeking behaviour in the Parliament, where Joron is trying to gain more votes by speaking out to the European Commission and defending French interests, when this debate is on a entirely different topic. She goes against all other speeches and wants to stand out, which could be a part of a strategy for gaining more votes, as suggested by Kopecky and Mudde (2002). This means that the behaviour that Joron portrays is closer to the one that is described by RCI, where Joron is behaving strategically to achieve her goals, with a focus on the outside world (her voters).

Joron’s speech is also clearly contrasted with the speech made by Bert-Jan Ruissen, a Dutch MEP from the ECR group, who only shows support for this proposal:

Thank you very much, Madam President. People want new stuff, I mean that's entirely reasonable. Our society tends to want the new but it's not always necessary. For example, I've got a 30 year old bicycle and I can assure you that it still works very well indeed. So, I think we need to put an end to this idea that we produce ever more waste through these single use products, because you can live very well reusing things. So it's important that there be an opportunity to have things repaired at a reasonable price if your appliances no longer work. So I very much welcome this idea. It is really excellent, it's very useful to be able to get our mobile phones and our irons repaired, beyond their periods of warranty or guarantee and this should become a matter of course, it's common sense and it goes hand in hand with the protection of the environment.

In this debate, Ruissen doesn’t portray any signs of Euroscepticism, on the contrary, he thinks that this is an “excellent” idea. He even refers to the priorities of his political group, calling the right to repair “common sense”, just like the ECR slogan “bringing common sense back” (ECR group, n.d.). This speech shows that Ruissen is cooperative and the reference to the ECR slogan might suggest that there is reason to believe that this cooperation is both intraparty, within the ECR and interparty, with the majority of the parliament. To be even more convincing, Ruissen gives personal examples of reusing a bike for over 30 years, as well as he calls the proposal “common sense”. It is difficult to disagree when something is portrayed as only beneficial, for both society and the environment.

The collective identities that are being portrayed by Ruissen is unifying instead of dividing and a general “we” is used in “we need to put an end to this idea”, which refers to

society as a whole. Since Ruissen is very content with the proposal, there is no need to identify an “other” to be the scapegoat.

When it comes to the *Right to Repair* debate, the members of ECR do not portray any signs of Euroscepticism during the debate, while the one representative of the ID group uses her time to still criticise the European Union, even though she agrees with the law proposal. The absence of more speakers from both ECR and ID, shows that this is not a controversial area of policy making and that there is no need (with one exception), to express discontent towards the EU, which is in line with the expectations. Interestingly enough, there are more signs of cooperation when it comes to this law proposal, when those are not as clearly manifested in other policy fields. The main explanation could be that proposals with a high degree of consensus are not likely to be emotive. The earlier analysed debates were all showing signs of different kinds of emotions and there is a clear link when it comes to emotions and Euroscepticism, since discontent is the core to Eurosceptic attitudes.

The final vote was not a controversial one, where the majority of 584-3 voted in favour, with 14 abstentions (European Parliament^e, 2024). Interestingly enough, most of the votes against and the abstentions are composed of members of the ECR and ID group (although Joron voted in favour), meaning that there is less of a general consensus within the groups than the speeches do appear. This would assume that in cases where for example Euroscepticism or nationalism is not as important, these groups have less of a party line and are less able to cooperate than in other policy fields, which is in line with the earlier findings of Brack (2012) and Börzel and Hartlapp (2022).

6.5. General reflections

Due to the nature of the choses material, two of out of four categories of behaviour described by Brack, the absentee and the participant, go unnoticed, which makes that the portrayed behaviour that is analysed mainly focused on MEPs showing signs of the public orator and the pragmatist. Especially the orator, because of their goal to be seen as an individual who goes against the mainstream ideas, could be less inclined to show ties of cooperation, because it goes against their public persona. In general, there are less manifestations of cooperation than expected, which also could be explained by the platform that was used, since the speeches during plenary sessions are used as a way to connect with the possible voter and not necessarily aimed towards the other MEPs.

The debates where Euroscepticism was more prevalent, were the more emotive debates, which could imply a relation between the use of emotions as a way of convincing and Euroscepticism. Surprisingly, there were more manifestations of Euroscepticism in the debate on hate crimes and hate speech, than in those on Copenhagen criteria. The debates where Euroscepticism plays a bigger role also have a higher voting cohesion, which could imply that cooperation is easier in these fields. The results of the votes in other policy areas are more polarised, showing that there are differences in ideologies and between the different nationalities, which is in line with the Börzel & Hartlapp study from 2022. The debates with high amounts of Euroscepticism are more polarised, which is also visible in the use of othering and the creation of outgroups, where the alienated “other” refers to the European Commission or the EU in general, but usually not to the Council. This could be explained by the transnational versus the international nature of the different institutions.

When looking at the behaviour of MEPs in all the analysed speeches, all different actors in the debate are trying to do the “right thing” (Nee, 1998), but the “right thing” takes different forms. The left is thinking long-term and in terms of values, while the right, with the analysed speeches included, think more short-term and in terms of economic gains. These values lead to different goals, hierarchy of these goals and different norms of behaviour within the different groups. Since their goals differ, the MEPs show different behaviour to reach these goals (Rosamund, 2019). For Eurosceptics, one of the goals is to be heard, which means they sometimes go further in self-seeking behaviour than what is considered the norm. Interests (such as votes and the interests of the own member state) do not only come from the outside world, as suggested by RCI, because to reach these interests, a combination has to be made with interests within the institution that align with the outside interests: there are both constraints and opportunities within the institution. Especially in the debate on hate speech, there were clear references to how the majority of the Parliament are those who set the cultural and behavioural norms and that deviation of these norms will lead to (social) sanctions and aversions to cooperation. In order for Eurosceptics to influence policy making more than has been the case historically, the Eurosceptics will have to comply more with the cultural norms, or the behavioural norms will have to change, which is more likely to happen if the Eurosceptic parties are to gain more mandates.

7. Conclusions

This study aimed for a better understanding of how Euroscepticism works on the level of the European political parties ECR and ID and focused on the cooperative ties that were

manifested in plenary debates, as well as how the behaviour of MEPs is reflective of Euroscepticism, shared identity and group socialisation. In the analysed instances, Euroscepticism was present in different degrees. As expected, the debate on nature restoration was influenced considerably. The debate on the Copenhagen criteria was less influenced by Euroscepticism than expected, while the debate on the inclusion of hate crime and hate speech in the list of EU crimes was more affected than expected. Euroscepticism was not of substantial influence when it came to the *Right to Repair*.

In the debates where Euroscepticism was present to a higher degree, the debates were more emotive and made use of stronger language. Euroscepticism, both implicitly and explicitly, was heterogeneous in how it was portrayed, with a variety of intensity and preferred outcomes. What makes it difficult to analyse, is that policy opposition, without necessarily having to be Eurosceptic, and Eurosceptic behaviour as portrayed in a singular speech overlap. Neither does opposition have to be along the lines of Euroscepticism, it could also be based on, for example, nationalism, although these, too, can overlap.

The behaviour that was portrayed by the MEPs during their speeches could mostly be traced back to what Brack (2015) called the public orator and the pragmatist. This can be explained by the nature of the two other types. The absentee, as the name states, is marked by a absence in the plenary, making these MEPs less likely to speak. The participants' influence is mostly behind the scenes, something that could not be analysed with the used material.

There were very few references to cooperation and if there were manifestations of cooperation, these were usually implicitly and unclear in reference with whom the MEP in question was cooperating. Usually, the opinions and speeches of the MEPs follow roughly the same line, which makes it seem that cooperation could be possible and could even be likely, but that it is a choice of the MEPs to present themselves as individuals rather than as a cooperating group, especially with the voter at home in mind.

An analysis of the votes gave varying results based on the topic. On the topics where Euroscepticism is prevalent, a voting cohesion is more likely. This cohesion could be based on cooperation, but could also be based on similar opinions, all influenced by Eurosceptic attitudes. Where Euroscepticism is not as prevalent, voting cohesion is lower and the votes could even be polarised among the Eurosceptic actors, which implies there is no cooperation. This could be based on bigger differences in ideology and national backgrounds. Voting behaviour is usually in line with the behaviour portrayed during the speeches, but since a part of the MEPs vote, but do not participate in the debate, go unnoticed, the outcomes sometimes were different than expected.

There are also big differences between the analysed speeches when it comes to group socialisation and shared identities. In some speeches, the shared identity references to the citizens of a member states, of Europe in general, but also the European Parliament and the European Institutions. The referenced shared identities can be different even within the same speech. Looking at the outgroup the ingroup is contrasted with, there is a clearer pattern. The “other” is usually taking the shape of the European Commission, the EU institutions, or the opposing side in Parliament but never to the Council alone.

Group socialisation also varies among the MEPs, where individuals make the choice to conform in varying degrees to the prevailing culture of the institution. It seems that the Eurosceptic members have a different hierarchy of values, as is made very clear in the debate on hate speech and hate crimes, which means that they behave differently than their non-Eurosceptic counterparts and that there are different behavioural norms in these different groups. The different patterns of behaviour by the Eurosceptics can lead to sanctions from the majority, which limits the influential powers of Eurosceptics in policymaking. If the Eurosceptics would conform more to majority institutional behaviour or if the institutional norms were to change, for example with a higher number of Eurosceptics, this could change.

To conclude, the findings of this study are in line with previous studies done by Brack (2012) and Börzel and Hartlapp (2022). In general, the speeches of the MEPs of the ECR and ID group show few manifestations of both intra- and inter-group cooperation. An analysis of the votes showed that in debates where Euroscepticism is more prevalent, there is a higher voting cohesion than in debates where Euroscepticism is of less influence. This could imply that cooperation is more likely in fields that are marked by Euroscepticism, although national and ideological differences make cooperation more difficult when it comes to other policy areas. In the speeches, the behaviour of the MEPs was influenced to a certain extent by Euroscepticism, although that was not the case for all. The shared identities referred to varied ingroups, but there was usually a common “other”. There were signs that the group behaviour of ECR and ID does not always conform to what is expected by the majority of the institution and which would lead to different kinds of (social) sanctions that limit the Eurosceptic influence. But with the European elections in sight, this might change.

8. Discussion and future research

The conclusions of this thesis have been influenced by both the material and the choice of method, giving limited results. Based on the material, a part of the Eurosceptics is not taken

into account: the absentee and the participant are difficult to recognise. The public orator is more inclined to make use of every opportunity to make their voice and criticism heard. Another difficulty posed by the material and method, is that the analysis is based on a short speech by all the MEPs, meaning some context gets lost. The MEPs' behaviour outside the plenary room and involvement in other policy fields, is not shown. For that, the scope of this study is simply too small. And Especially because individual MEPs portray big differences in behaviour, it is difficult to study the political groups as a whole using textual analysis alone.

Not only the material and method are to be discussed. A difficulty when it comes to the analysis of Euroscepticism, is the difficulty of the concept of Euroscepticism, that embodies nothing but everything at the same time. The lines between just opposition and Euroscepticism are unclear, especially based on a one-minute speech (Leconte, 2010).

To counteract these difficulties that were present in this study, more research is necessary for a better understanding of the behaviour of the Eurosceptic MEPs when it comes to the level of the European Political groups. First of all, more research on the informal behaviour of MEPs needs to be done. Several scholars (e.g., Häge& Kaeding, 2007, Bressanelli et al., 2016, Broniecki, 2019) agree on the importance of informal behaviour, outside of the plenary room, when it comes to policy making. Based on a bottom-up approach, ethnography where shadowing an MEP, such as done by Cherry Miller (2022), could give us a better understanding of how Eurosceptic MEPs behave during different meetings and an exhaustive empirical ethnographic study that follows several MEPs could perhaps identify trends. Another possible option is to make use of interviews, where MEPs and their staff could tell about their strategies and insights when it comes to cooperation. The problem is that, with a researcher being present, the results could always be influenced, but this can also tell about how the politician in question wants to present themselves and could thus be enriching in its subjectivity.

Second, more research on Euroscepticism needs to be done in general. As of now, the right tools to systematically analyse Euroscepticism are still lacking. Instead of using a (subjective) scale of gradation, it would be easier to employ a typology of different kinds of Euroscepticism, where the typologies could overlap. This would make for an easier and systematic analysis of different kinds of Euroscepticism. An example could be the earlier named national interest and policy Euroscepticism, but also based on for example ideology. A better analysis of Euroscepticism will lead to a better understanding of Eurosceptic behaviour, the attraction to Euroscepticism and its influence on policy making processes.

9. Bibliography

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10. Annexes

10.1. Nature restoration Law

Alexandr Vondra, *za skupinu ECR*. – Pane předsedající, pro kolegy nalevo, Viktor Orbán to v Radě podpořil. Ten návrh, který máme na stole, není dobrý a je vnitřně rozporný. Ano, je dobré, že může pomoci mizejícím ptákům, opylovačům, pomůže zadržet vodu v krajině. Na druhé straně komplikuje obživu sedlákům, to víme. Brutálně zasahuje do kompetencí členských států a vytváří nekryté náklady.

V Radě se některé tyto nedostatky, třeba ta zběsilá moc, která se předává nevládním organizacím, podařilo odstranit. Díky bohu za to. Ale hlavní chybu udělala Komise a Frans Timmermans. Kde je Frans Timmermans? My jsme – a i tahle sněmovna – hystericky upřednostnili dekarbonizaci, která lokálně všechno zdražuje, ale globálně nepřináší žádné výsledky. Horko je furt a Čína generuje zisky.

Kdybychom o tomto návrhu hlasovali před dvěma lety, tak se vsadím, že projde jak nůž máslem. Teď máme rozdělenou sněmovnu a můžeme si za to jenom my sami.

Aurélia Beigneux, *au nom du groupe ID*. – Monsieur le Président, Monsieur le rapporteur, la Commission Européenne et les groupes de gauche nous ont habitués à des inepties économiques et politiques quand il s'agissait du pacte vert.

Mais cette proposition a atteint un niveau inégalé d'absurdité, de déconnexion et de mépris envers nos agriculteurs et nos États membres. Pire encore, cette fois, la Commission a menacé directement de représailles les députés qui demandaient légitimement une étude d'impact sur notre production alimentaire. D'ailleurs, où est M. Timmermans, vice-président de la Commission Européenne, chargé du pacte vert, pour défendre ce texte si important? Visiblement, il n'assume pas son attitude scandaleuse et antidémocratique.

Alors que nous faisons face à une crise alimentaire imminente, vous persistez dans vos chimères utopiques, sacrifiant nos producteurs sur l'autel de vos fantasmes idéologiques et écologiques. Pourquoi voulez-vous vous immiscer dans les politiques urbaines des États membres? La végétalisation de nos villes est certes une bonne chose et apporte de nombreux avantages, mais il revient aux États et aux élus locaux de prendre ces décisions et certainement pas à une Commission qui pense avoir l'exclusivité de toutes les politiques.

Je rappelle également que les forêts sont du ressort des nations. Les objectifs contraignants imposés par la Commission Européenne n'ont donc aucune légitimité. Alors que ce texte a été rejeté dans les trois commissions, les groupes de gauche, au mépris de la démocratie, essaient de le ressusciter avec des amendements de plénière. Le rejet de ce texte doit être définitif pour envoyer un message clair à la Commission Européenne et donc aux groupes de gauche.

Alors, oui à la préservation de la nature de notre patrimoine et de nos terres agricoles. Et non à cette proposition absurde et oppressive de la Commission Européenne. Il est grand temps que vous cessiez de nuire à nos agriculteurs et à nos États membres, au nom de vos lubies idéologiques.

Bert-Jan Ruissen (ECR). – Voorzitter, geachte commissaris, in Mariënheem, een dorp in het oosten van ons land, hebben ze een groot probleem: een drukke, gevaarlijke weg dwars door het dorp. De rondweg die het dorp moet ontlasten, komt er vooralsnog niet. Een belangrijke oorzaak – naast geldgebrek – is knellende Natura 2000-wetgeving die zelfs verkeersveiligheid ondergeschikt maakt aan natuur.

Voorzitter, als wij morgen instemmen met de natuurherstelwet creëren we op grote schaal overal in Europa vergelijkbare situaties. Ons landelijk gebied gaat op slot. De voorrangsregel “natuur gaat altijd voor” gaat dan immers op heel veel plekken ook buiten Natura 2000 gelden. En met bevolkingsdichtheid houdt het voorstel al helemaal geen rekening. Dat maakt het allemaal nog gecompliceerder.

Natuur is belangrijk, maar de aanpak van de Commissie deugt niet. Laten we waardevolle initiatieven van onderop ondersteunen en ondertussen de regio's voldoende flexibiliteit bieden om eigen verantwoorde keuzes te

maken. Nog meer Brusselse bemoeienis gaat niet helpen. Het verwerpingsamendement verdient daarom alle steun.

Gilles Lebreton (ID). – Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, le pacte vert pour l'Europe n'en finit plus de nous étonner par son cortège de législations irréalistes et dangereuses. Après la modification de la directive sur les émissions industrielles, qui voudrait faire payer aux éleveurs la facture climatique, c'est à l'ensemble de l'agriculture que la Commission s'attaque, avec son projet de règlement visant – rien de moins – qu'une restauration de la nature. C'est à nos terres qu'elle s'en prend, ces terres que des générations d'agriculteurs avant nous ont travaillées, entretenues, préservées, puis transmises.

Les mesures proposées sont insensées: restaurer une grande partie des écosystèmes terrestres d'ici 2030, puis 100 % d'ici 2050, serait catastrophique pour notre sécurité alimentaire. Et libérer 25 000 kilomètres de rivières serait désastreux pour la gestion de l'eau. Sans compter l'accroissement de la bureaucratie avec les plans de restauration de la nature que chaque État membre devrait élaborer.

En rejetant ce texte par trois fois, le Parlement a délivré un message clair: cessez de nous imposer des ambitions environnementales délirantes qui détruisent notre agriculture et abandonnez plutôt votre dogme libre-échangiste qui ne fait que produire davantage de pollution.

Anna Zalewska (ECR). – Panie Przewodniczący! Panie Komisarzu! Emocje, krzyki, szantaż – to dowód na to, że jest to złe rozporządzenie, nieprzemyślane, niepoliczalne, uderzające w naturę, uderzające w człowieka. Dlatego że coś, co jest niemożliwe do wykonania, powoduje, że osiąga się efekt odwrotny do zamierzonego. To rozporządzenie jest złe dlatego, że ingeruje w prywatność i we własność. Naprawdę, nie obniżymy temperatury w Strasburgu, jeżeli zabierzemy rolnikom ich ziemię. Ktoś musi nas żywić. Zresztą rolnicy, leśnicy, rybacy kochają przyrodę nie mniej niż przedstawiciele, którzy z pozoru domagają się dbałości o tę naturę. To rozporządzenie jest również złe, bo oddaje zbyt wiele kompetencji Komisji Europejskiej, która będzie skarżyła, monitorowała sprawozdawała i sama podejmowała decyzje. W diagnozie jest napisane, że nie udało się ustalić obszarów Natura 2000, więc mówi się „nie” i robi się jeszcze więcej. To zła droga. Proponuję, żeby zamiast udawać się na wakacje do hotelu z klimatyzacją, poterminować u rolnika, nauczyć się, jak dbać o przyrodę i o zwierzęta.

Sylvia Limmer (ID). – Herr Präsident! Die Naturwiederherstellungsverordnung ist nichts anderes als ein gigantisches Enteignungs- und Existenzvernichtungsprogramm für Landwirte. Eine Studie schätzt, dass von den ehemals 15 Millionen Höfen in der EU 2040 nur noch 3,6 Millionen übrig bleiben. Und da ist Ihre Öko-Bio-Klima-Mogelpackung noch gar nicht eingepreist.

Wer gute, bezahlbare und einheimische Lebensmittel will, die nicht erst um die halbe Welt geflogen wurden, bevor sie auf unserem Teller landen, der muss einheimische Landwirte unterstützen, auch beim Erhalt ihrer Ackerflächen und nicht bei der Abschaffung. Sie wissen das auch! Aber statt fachlicher Argumente ätzen Sie lieber, dass eine EVP endlich auf unserem vernünftigen und konservativen ID/AfD-Kurs einschwenkt und gemeinsam mit uns gegen diese Verordnung der Abschaffung der Ernährungssicherheit stimmt. Das, werte grün-rote Ideologen, zeigt nicht nur Ihre Konzeptlosigkeit, sondern ist einfach nur politisch peinlich und antidemokratisch.

Margarita de la Pisa Carrión (ECR). – Señor presidente, señorías, la Comisión Europea está demostrando no tener escrúpulos a la hora de querer imponerse e intentar destrozarnos nuestro sector primario utilizando una supuesta preocupación medioambiental como excusa.

La mal llamada «ley de restauración de la naturaleza» habla de restaurar, pero, en realidad, está amenazando una gran parte de nuestra superficie cultivable, que ya estaba muy restringida por normativas anteriores.

Se desprecia a quienes tienen la experiencia de milenios —nuestros agricultores y ganaderos—, cuya actividad es imprescindible para nuestro sustento, por imponer un absurdo discurso verde.

En España los bosques arden porque no se pueden limpiar. Se derriban presas cuando el agua será necesaria en la sequía.

No vamos a permitir arriesgar nuestro alimento. Nos llevan al precipicio.

Necesitamos Gobiernos fuertes que devuelvan la sensatez a nuestras políticas y no sucumban al fanatismo climático.

Anders Vistisen (ID). – Hr. formand! Når man i den her debat skal tage venstrefløjen og den grønne NGO-verdens ord for pålydende, så står vi i en kæmpe biodiversitetskrise. Og det første naturlige spørgsmål må så være: Hvordan er vi havnet der i Europa? Landbrugspolitik, Fiskeripolitik, har altid været EU-enekompetence. Så hvis man mener, at det er fiskeriet, hvis man mener, at det er landbruget, der har hovedansvaret, så er de ansvarlige regulatorer med ansvaret for den situation, vi står i, her i salen, i Kommissionen, i Rådet. Hvad er svaret fra jer så på den krise? Giv os mere magt! Giv EU indflydelse til at bestemme endnu mere! Lad os give en blankocheck til Kommissionen, lad os give en blankocheck til EU-domstolen til at tiltage sig flere kompetencer på vegne af medlemsstaterne!

Jeg tror, at naturen reddes bedst der, hvor den leves, ude i lokalmiljøerne, derude, hvor man har et forhold til den. Ikke iblandt Europas storbyer, som det er blevet fremhævet her, men hos os, der rent faktisk bor i landdistrikterne. Det er der, naturen reddes, ikke fra et glaspalads i Bruxelles og Strasbourg, som selv har skabt problemerne med deres enekompetence på disse områder.

Pietro Focchi (ECR). – Signor Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, il regolamento sul ripristino della natura è stato bocciato in tre commissioni, AGRI, PECH ed ENVI, dovremmo chiederci il perché.

Il fascicolo prevede un vincolo sulle nuove aree al di fuori della rete Natura 2000 – venite in Italia a vedere cosa succede nelle aree Natura 2000, abbandonate perché è vietato qualsiasi tipo di attività umana, sono diventate centri di spaccio di droga e di prostituzione.

Poi sussiste una palese violazione del principio della proprietà privata, per cui sussidiarietà e proporzionalità li buttiamo nel gabinetto.

Infine un tema caro al Commissario Sinkevičius: i 25 000 chilometri di fiumi a scorrimento libero. Come la mettiamo con la produzione delle energie rinnovabili e quindi l'energia idroelettrica? È qui c'è un palese contrasto dell'azione della Commissione.

Per cui voteremo per il rigetto della proposta, proprio perché siamo a favore dell'ambiente ma non a scapito della produzione agricola; siamo a favore della natura ma non a scapito della produzione delle rinnovabili; siamo a favore del ripristino della natura ma non ci renderemo complici di cancellare i diritti dei cittadini Europei.

Infine un commento personale: se io avessi fatto gli studi di impatto ambientale che ha fatto la Commissione sulle questioni sociali, economiche e ambientali al liceo, mi avrebbero bocciato. Per cui forse la Commissione è meglio che vada a scuola e rifaccia questi studi.

Jaak Madison (ID). – Austatud istungi juhataja! Esiteks, ma ei ole kindel, kui paljud selle saali inimestest on lugenud selle määruse algusest lõpuni läbi, sest debatis esitatud väited on suuresti emotsionaalsed: kes on poolt, kes on vastu, kes tahab päästa planeeti. Planeeti, kus kogu atmosfääri CO2 massist alla nelja protsendi on tekitatud inimese poolt, kuid sellegipoolest päästame planeeti. Mina olen lugenud selle määruse korduvalt läbi ja mul on kohe mitu head küsimust. Kui väidetakse, et see ei löö põllumehi ja meie toidutootmist, siis kui määrus näeb ette, et turbaaladest tuleb aastaks 2030 lõpetada turba kaevandamine 30 protsendil aladest ja vähemalt veerand sellest tuleb taas vett täis lasta ja taassoostada, ja me teame, et turvas on üks oluline komponent põllumajandustootjatele, et tagada suuremat saagikust, siis kuidas me peaksime kompenseerima põllumeestele selle kahju? Aastaks 2050 muide on määruse kohaselt vaja lausa pool turbaaladest soostada. Lisaks sellele näeb määrus ette, et tuleks lasta metsal mädaneda, et tekitada liigirikust. Kes hüvitab metsameestele korraliku puidu raiskulaskmise, selleks et mõned vasakpoolsed saaksid oma utoopiat ellu viia? Selles määruses on väga palju konkreetseid asju, mis selgelt löövad põllumehi, metsaomanikke ja toidutootjaid, kuid kes selle kinni maksab? Ma saan aru, et vasakpoolsetel tuleb raha ainult pangaautomaadist ja majandusest nad suurt midagi ei tea, ja see

ongi meie vahe. Meie vaatame ühiskonda tervikuna, teie vaatate ainult utoopiat selleks, et oma globalistlikku ideed ellu viia.

Zbigniew Kuźmiuk (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie Komisarzu! Wszyscy jesteśmy zainteresowani odbudową zasobów przyrodniczych, ale propozycje zawarte w rozporządzeniu są nie do przyjęcia, bo szkodzą rolnictwu, gospodarce leśnej, a także procesom inwestycyjnym. Jeśli chodzi o rolnictwo, to przecież ochrona środowiska, a także ochrona bioróżnorodności są wpisane we wspólną politykę rolną. W każdym 7-leciu przeznaczamy na ten cel około jednej trzeciej środków na WPR, a więc ponad 100 mld Euro. Co więcej, od 1 stycznia tego roku wpisaliśmy we wspólną politykę rolną także ekoschematy: roślinne, zwierzęce. Ale rolnicy uczestniczą w ich realizacji dobrowolnie. Co więcej, za ich realizację otrzymują dodatkowe dochody. To jest dokładnie odwrotnie niż w Pana rozporządzeniu, gdzie mamy obligatoryjność, przymusowość i ani jednego Euro za wykonywanie dodatkowych obowiązków. To jest po prostu nie do przyjęcia. Co więcej, nie ma wskazanych źródeł finansowania, a Komisja uzyskuje kompetencje, które nie są zawarte w traktatach. Z tego powodu delegacja polska w EKR będzie głosowała przeciwko temu rozporządzeniu.

Rosanna Conte (ID). – Signora Presidente, signor Commissario, onorevoli colleghi, bocciato in commissione PECH, bocciato in commissione AGRI, bocciato in commissione ENVI e, si direbbe, il quarto viene da sé. E in questo caso è ciò che chiediamo a questa plenaria.

Ancora una volta, sperando che sia l'ultima, puntiamo a rigettare un regolamento che danneggia le attività produttive, nascondendosi dietro il nobile intento della difesa della natura.

Meno terre per gli agricoltori, meno mare per i pescatori, meno attività per le imprese e meno prodotti Europei e posti di lavoro per i nostri cittadini. Ecco i pesanti contraccolpi delle proposte contenute in un regolamento permeato di ideologia e controproducente per la natura stessa.

Non è ciò che vogliamo, e soprattutto non è ciò che meritano i cittadini e il pianeta!

Bogdan Rzońca (ECR), pytanie zadane przez podniesienie niebieskiej kartki. – Jesteśmy świadomi tego, że w tej chwili z Unii Europejskiej firmy uciekają do Chin, do Stanów Zjednoczonych, do Wielkiej Brytanii. Tam budują swoje kampusy, bo uciążliwości podatkowe są bardzo duże. Rozwiązanie, o którym dzisiaj dyskutujemy, może przysporzyć bezrobotnych w obszarze rolnictwa i leśnictwa. Te dane już są i te wyłączenia, które będą, spowodują przyrost w tej materii. Czy Pan nie obawia się, że wprowadzenie tych restrykcyjnych rozwiązań po prostu przyniesie nieoczekiwany problem, czyli wzrost bezrobocia, z czym Unia Europejska też będzie musiała się zmierzyć? Więc chciałbym poznać Pana stanowisko w tej sprawie.

Teuvo Hakkarainen (ECR). – Arvoisa puhemies, meillä on aina ollut sanonta, että Suomi elää metsästä ja se pitää paikkansa edelleenkin. Tämä asetus uhkaa vakavasti muun muassa metsäteollisuuttamme, maatalouuttamme ja yksityisomistusta yleensä. Monissa EU-maissa metsät ovat vain muisto. Siksi halutaan Pohjoismaiden kärsittäväksi laittaa koko kauheus. Suomesta erityisesti yritetään tehdä joku lahoppumuseo. Vihreä hulluus ei näköjään osoita laantumisen merkkejä. Jos tämä asetus tulisi hyväksytyksi, Suomen hallituksen ei pidä missään tapauksessa noudattaa sitä. Vastustan jyrkästi ennallistamisasetusta kokonaisuudessaan.

Roman Haider (ID). – Frau Präsidentin! Mit diesem sogenannten *Nature Restoration Law*, dieser Verordnung zur angeblichen Wiederherstellung der Natur, kann man in Wahrheit nur eines machen, nämlich es in Bausch und Bogen ablehnen. Es enteignet die Bauern, es schafft künstliche Nahrungsmittelknappheit in Europa selbst und in den von Europa belieferten Ländern, es führt zu Engpässen, und es führt zu noch mehr Teuerung. Mit diesem unseligen Entwurf kann man die ebenso unselige und bürgerfeindliche EU-Kommission unter Ursula von der Leyen gleich mit entsorgen.

Die Mehrheit der Bürger lehnt ihre ideologiegetriebene Politik ab, und das zu Recht. Die bisherigen Auswirkungen der Politik dieser Kommission sind verheerend: massive Teuerung in allen Bereichen, unsichere Energieversorgung, zunehmende Deindustrialisierung, steigende Arbeitslosigkeit. Sie haben bisher nur Unheil über die EU gebracht. Jeder Tag, den diese Kommission länger im Amt ist, ist ein schwarzer Tag für Europa.

Krzysztof Jurgiel (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie Komisarzy! Jestem szczególnie zaniepokojony skutkami proponowanych przepisów dla sektora rolno–spożywczego. W Polsce wprowadzenie w życie rozporządzenia w obecnym kształcie mogłoby doprowadzić do likwidacji lub w najlepszym razie do konieczności przeprofilowania działalności tysięcy gospodarstw rolnych, a w konsekwencji utraty źródła utrzymania wielu rolników i osłabienia konkurencyjności polskiego rolnictwa na wspólnym rynku.

Gospodarstwom rolnym w całej Unii Europejskiej grozi obciążenie niewykonalnymi, słabo doprecyzowanymi obowiązkami w zakresie planowania, zarządzania, monitorowania i sprawozdawczości. Istnieje ponadto ryzyko, że w przypadku stwierdzenia naruszenia zapisów rozporządzenia organy krajowe będą zobligowane do podejmowania działań ingerujących we własność prywatną właścicieli gospodarstw o lasów. Ponadto cele rozporządzenia wydają się być w kolizji z innymi celami unijnych polityk, takimi jak budowa odpornych łańcuchów dostaw żywności i bezpieczeństwa żywnościowego. W związku z powyższym będę głosował za odrzuceniem projektu Komisji Europejskiej w całości w jutrzejszym głosowaniu.

Mazaly Aguilar (ECR). – Señora presidente, sígo sin entender cómo, después de que tres comisiones —Agricultura, Pesca y Medio Ambiente— rechacen esta ley, todavía se va a votar mañana. Esta ley es un sinsentido y un peligro para los agricultores y para el sector pesquero. Todo esto, además, pretenden financiarlo con los fondos de la política agrícola común o del Fondo Marítimo y de Pesca, lo que llevaría, además, a nuestros agricultores y pescadores a una reducción de los ingresos muy drástica.

Si se limita la producción alimentaria, ¿de qué va a comer Europa? ¿De las importaciones de terceros países? Y mientras se intentan limitar los espacios para cultivos y ganadería, ¿se están recalificando los terrenos para los molinos y los espejos fotovoltaicos? ¿Este es el objetivo final de esta insensatez? Mañana hemos de votar defendiendo a nuestro sector privado y pesquero.

Y perdónenme por este párrafo que voy a incluir: mal deben de ver las cosas los socialistas en España de cara a las próximas elecciones generales, cuando su jefe de filas se ha permitido el lujo de utilizar este atril para atacar al Partido Popular y a Vox.

10.2. 30 years of the Copenhagen criteria

Ангел Джамбазки, от името на групата ECR. – Г-н Председател, копенхагенските критерии са нещо много хубаво, само че не се спазват. Не се спазват и не се прилагат така, както трябва да се прилагат. Това би трябвало да означава, че общностите, които могат и искат да се самоопределят по определен начин, би трябвало да могат да го правят. Особено държавите, които искат да бъдат кандидати за членове в Европейския съюз.

Такава една държава е, простете за повторението, Северна Македония. Там се отрича правото на национално самоопределение. То е потискано и то е отнемано и отказвано на тези хора, които са с македонско гражданство, но с българско национално самосъзнание. И всички колеги, които работите тук, би трябвало да го знаете. Особено колегите, които са от т.нар. бивша Югославия и колегите от Австрия. Работите по тази тема. Добре знаете, че трябва да се оказва натиск върху правителство в Скопие, за да може да се случи това, което ние всички искаме. Ние всички искаме Република Северна Македония да започне преговори и да се присъедини към Европейския съюз, защото нейното място е в Европейския съюз.

Ние всички знаем, че има про-кремълска и про-белградска пропаганда там и тя трябва да се спре. Но и ваша роля е да оказвате влияние върху това правителство. Вашата задача и роля да оказвате натиск върху това правителство и да позволите българите да се определят като българи, за да започне тази държава да преговаря с Европейския съюз.

Thierry Mariani, au nom du groupe ID. – Monsieur le Président, pour la France, l'élargissement de l'Union Européenne en 2007 n'a pas été seulement une déception, mais l'accélérateur d'une sortie de l'histoire. Alors que l'Union Européenne veut continuer sur le chemin de l'obésité, il est important de nous souvenir que les promesses de paix, du progrès social et d'amplification de notre influence dans le monde étaient trompeuses.

L'anniversaire des critères de Copenhague est d'ailleurs particulièrement paradoxal puisque la Commission Européenne a émis un avis favorable pour la candidature de l'Ukraine, alors même qu'il est évident que Kiev ne remplit pas ces critères. Toute la crédibilité de la construction Européenne est donc abîmée, puisque l'Union Européenne érige de grands principes qu'elle s'empresse d'oublier et de balayer en fonction des circonstances. L'intégration des pays des Balkans dans l'Union Européenne, c'est toujours plus de mafia dans les campagnes françaises. L'Ukraine dans l'Union Européenne, c'est la guerre dans l'Union.

Et pour accélérer tout cela, vous voulez en plus que la France accepte d'abandonner ses fonctions régaliennes pour que les votes à la majorité qualifiée soient systématisés au sein du Conseil Européen. Il me semble inconcevable qu'un pays membre du Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU devienne tributaire des décisions d'États qui ont délégué leur indépendance à l'OTAN. Avec vos propositions, la France pourrait être entraînée demain dans toutes les folies guerrières des uns et des autres s'il y a une majorité contre elle. Nombreux sont les Français qui ne veulent pas un nouvel élargissement de l'Europe, ils regrettent déjà suffisamment les précédents et ils ont bien raison de craindre les suivants.

Anders Vistisen (ID). – Hr. formand! 15 år efter den store østudvidelse står vi her igen. Vi står i situationen, hvor et stort flertal her i huset, EU-Kommissionen, Rådets formand, ønsker en stor udvidelse mod øst. Men har nogen lært af fortiden? Har nogen lært af det kaos, som østudvidelsen bragte, fordi man netop ikke holdt sig til de aftalte spilleregler? Vi har set en bølge af social dumping. Vi har set en bølge af organiseret kriminalitet. Ja, selv den dag i dag – 15 år efter vores sidste store udvidelse – har en række medlemsstater stadig ikke adgang til Schengensamarbejdet, stadig ikke adgang til Eurosamarbejdet, fordi man endnu ikke er klar.

Og i den situation, der taler man om at udvide EU med op til 55 millioner nye indbyggere, alle kommende fra lande, der er endnu fattigere og har en endnu dårligere tilstand på retsstatssituationen, end Polen og Ungarn, som dette hus elsker at kritisere. Så hvornår stopper hykleriet? De samme mennesker i dette hus, som på hver eneste plenarsamling, ønsker angreb på den polske regering, ønsker angreb på den ungarske regering, står nu og siger: Lad os tage noget mere af den type regeringer ind. Det er ikke svært at se, når man ser på korrupsion, når man ser på LGBT-rettigheder, når man ser på alle de parametre, I plejer at gå op i, hvor disse lande ligger. Alligevel står I og byder dem ind med åbne arme, og jeg siger bare: Så må I også tage ansvaret for konsekvenserne.

Jean-Lin Lacapelle (ID). – Monsieur le Président, chers collègues, les critères de Copenhague qui célèbrent leurs 30 ans sont une liste de critères relatifs à la santé économique, à la stabilité et au respect de la démocratie, critères que doivent respecter impérativement tous les pays désireux d'intégrer l'Union Européenne.

Alors je vous prends au mot. Où est la stabilité de l'Ukraine attaquée par la Russie? Où est la stabilité de la Moldavie, dans la région de Transnistrie qui a fait sécession avec 20 000 tonnes d'armes? Où est le respect de la démocratie au Kosovo qui persécute la minorité serbe? Où est la prospérité économique lorsque la plupart des Balkans sont sujets à une pauvreté énorme et une corruption massive? Où est l'économie sociale dans une Albanie gangrenée par les trafics d'armes, de drogue et de prostitution? Où est la démocratie en Turquie où des journalistes sont emprisonnés et les opposants brimés?

Stop à l'hypocrisie. C'est Erdogan qui a le mieux démontré l'inutilité de ces critères fantoches de Copenhague lorsqu'il a dit n'avoir aucune intention de reconnaître le génocide arménien car il ne figurait pas parmi ces critères. Ces critères sont en réalité à géométrie variable, idéologiques, secondaires dès lors que l'Union Européenne a décidé qu'elle voulait poursuivre son projet expansionniste, mais terriblement funeste pour l'avenir de l'Europe.

10.3 Extending the list of EU crimes to hate speech and hate crime

Alexandr Vondra, za skupinu ECR. – Paní předsedající, pro nás z bývalého Východního bloku je svoboda slova klíčová hodnota. Jsme citliví na její omezování i ve prospěch zdánlivě šlechetných cílů. Navíc si nelze nevšimnout, že cílem je dost často spíš ochrana levicových dogmat než konkrétních osob. Třeba tabuizace diskuse v oblasti migrační politiky v důsledku strachu z nařčení z šíření nenávisti nás přivedla do situace, kdy – a to je strašné – v evropských metropolích pochodují statisíce lidí s vlajkami teroristů a opěvují masakry na

Židech. Teď tu máme snahu toto tabu ukotvit legislativně a celoevropsky. I to nám z Východního bloku bohužel připomíná důvěrně známý způsob řešení problémů. Ve svém životě se každý musí vyrovnat s kritikou, která může být i nemístná nebo dokonce bolestivá. A pokud přesahuje meze práva na ochranu individuální nebo skupinovou, disponuje každý stát prostředky k tomu, aby tomu udělal přítrž. Harmonizace na evropské úrovni není potřeba. Já sám pocházím z neateističtější země v Evropě, ale opravdu bych nerad viděl, že u nás před soudem stojí političky za citaci z Bible, jako jsme viděli ve Finsku

Patricia Chagnon, au nom du groupe ID. – Madame la Présidente, votre combat acharné contre les discours de haine est en réalité une offensive wokiste déguisée. Vous voulez protéger les activistes idéologiques ultra minoritaires de toute contestation, et pire même, de tout débat ou de discussion publique.

Quand j'affirme, par exemple, que je ne veux pas qu'on touche aux mineurs avec des traitements hormonaux et autres interventions médicales, ce n'est pas un discours de haine contre les personnes transgenres, mais une déclaration d'amour pour les enfants. Quand je me bats contre la submersion migratoire de mon pays, de notre continent, quand je dénonce les conséquences de votre funeste pacte d'immigration, ce n'est pas la haine qui m'inspire, mais un profond attachement et amour pour mon pays et pour notre vieux continent.

En réalité, vous n'êtes plus dans la discussion démocratique, mais dans une censure théocratique. Vous n'êtes plus dans les débats politiques, mais dans l'inquisition. Vous n'êtes plus dans la raison mais dans les imprécations de nature quasi religieuse. Vous nous faites rentrer dans un nouvel obscurantisme. Ouvrons des débats, chers collègues, plutôt que d'étouffer la liberté d'expression.

Patryk Jaki (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Panie Komisarzu! Według tego projektu walki z mową nienawiści chcecie wsadzać do więzienia swoich wrogów. Za co? Czytamy np.: za krytykę nielegalnej imigracji czy środowisk LGBTQ. Czyli, jak rozumiem, jeśli teraz obywatel Unii Europejskiej przeczyta dane policji, z których wynika, że migranci popełniają więcej przestępstw, to pójdzie do więzienia. Albo jak inny obywatel, zgodnie ze swoim prawem wolności do wyznawania własnej religii, zdrowym rozsądkiem i wiedzą naukową z biologii stwierdzi, że są tylko dwie płcie, a nie, tak jak wy uważacie, 256, to co? Też do więzienia?

Wy jesteście spadkobiercami komunistycznych ideologii i tak jak oni posługujecie się pięknymi hasłami, ale marzycie tylko o zniszczeniu wolności. Herbert Marcuse, wasz ulubiony ideolog, napisał wprost w „Tolerancji represywnej” o tym, co wy ukrywacie w tym dokumencie. I zacytujmy go teraz: Wyzwalająca tolerancja oznaczałaby zatem nietolerancję wobec prawicy i tolerancję dla ruchów lewicowych. Chcecie więc wszystkich zastraszyć, sterroryzować – nie dla wolności, ale dlatego że nienawidzicie wolności i chcecie wprowadzić cenzurę. I nigdy nie będzie na to zgody.

Silvia Sardone (ID). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, volete il Grande Fratello, volete istituire una serie di reati di opinione per controllare le idee e limitare la libertà di espressione, volete appropriarvi delle competenze degli Stati membri per contrastare con nuove norme posizioni a voi sgradite.

Sia chiaro, noi siamo favorevoli a combattere le varie forme di discriminazione e i reati d'odio, in particolare per noi è giusto contrastare il bullismo nelle scuole e il cyberbullismo, fenomeni particolarmente gravi che mettono a rischio i minori.

Non vorremmo tuttavia che, con la scusa di impedire reati, si vogliano rimuovere per esempio dal web e dei social network notizie e opinioni sgradite a una certa parte politica.

D'altronde, già con il Digital Services Act avete fatto capire che, se sei una voce ribelle e non allineata al pensiero unico della sinistra, puoi e devi essere silenziato e che volete essere promotori di un modello in cui si cancellano i contenuti dei pensieri dei cittadini con il pretesto della lotta alle fake news.

Io mi chiedo: chi valuterà quali sono i discorsi che possono essere equiparati all'odio? Quali saranno i temi sui quali non si potrà più esprimere una voce fuori dal coro? Insomma, noi abbiamo il timore di un nuovo bavaglio, con Bruxelles pronta a voler importare il modello cinese anche in Europa.

Teuvo Hakkarainen (ECR). – Arvoisa puhemies, vihapuhekäsite on viherpunikkien keksimä uusi sana ja keino rajoittaa sananvapautta. Jos viherkommunisteja kuuntelee, maailmassa ei muuta olekaan kuin vihapuhetta ja rasismia. Ottavat mallia Neuvostoliitosta. Näin suun tukkiminen sielläkin eteni.

Kotimaan lainsäädännössä ovat käsitteet solvaus ja herjaus, ja niillä on tähänkin asti pärjätty. Ihmisen on mahdotonta puhua niin, ettei joku loukkaantuisi. Tätä varten netissä vaanii puolestaloukkaantujien armeija. Tehtävään on palkattu rääkymään myös tyhjämpäiväisiä viranhaltijoita. Näiden täysin tulkinnanvaraisten vihapuhekäsitteiden ujuttaminen lainsäädäntöön on vaarallinen tie. Aluksi se johtaa itsesensuuriin ja lopulta diktatuuriin.

Filip De Man (ID). – Voorzitter, collega's, vandaag het zoveelste debat over zogenaamde haatmisdrijven, die nu ook op het internet moeten beteugeld worden.

Waarom die hardnekkigheid?

Simpel, de traditionele partijen zijn hun greep aan het verliezen op de opinievorming. Op het internet kan iedereen lezen wat hij wil en ongeveer zeggen wat hij wil. Dat is voor het regime uit den boze. Het volk moet lezen wat het regime voorschrijft en dissidente meningen moeten verbannen worden. Dat is het doel van de meerderheid in dit Parlement.

Wie zich verzet tegen de massale immigratie, is een racist. Wie kritiek heeft op de genderwaanzin, die discrimineert. Wie aangebrande moppen vertelt over een dikke mens, over een magere mens, over een transgender, over negers, over joden, die pleegt een misdrijf. Straks zijn alleen nog aangebrande moppen toegelaten over domme blondjes of oude witte mannen. Dat, collega's, is zelfhaat.

Beata Kempa (ECR). – Pani Przewodnicząca! Mówimy dzisiaj o mowie nienawiści, ale trzeba to zdefiniować, to nie może pozostać bez definicji. Dlatego że coś, co jest hejtem, zasługuje na najwyższą karę – ja się z tym zgadzam, jestem przeciwna hejtowi. Ale nie może być tak, że pod mowę nienawiści będziemy podciągać tak naprawdę karanie za poglądy. I tu jest ta zasadnicza różnica, że tutaj wola i to wzmożenie, które następuje, ma być karaniem za poglądy, wyeliminowaniem osób, które mają inne poglądy, nawet z działalności politycznej czy generalnie z życia społecznego.

I dlatego np. sprzeciw przeciwko masowej, nielegalnej imigracji, to też jest mowa nienawiści? Tak zostaliśmy z panem posłem Jakim potraktowani. Za podanie „lajka” ostrzegającego, czym może grozić nielegalna migracja – powtarzam – nielegalna, dostaliśmy pouczenie, że tak nie można. Mamy być pod sądem, mamy być ukarani, mamy być wyeliminowani z życia publicznego. Tak ma wyglądać karanie za rzekomą mowę nienawiści? Nie. Jestem za wolnością słowa, ale jestem przeciwna hejtowi.

Ivan David (ID). – Paní předsedající, cituji z dokumentu o základních právech v EU. Podle článku 21 Listiny se zakazuje jakákoli diskriminace politických názorů či jakýchkoli jiných názorů. To je ukázka pokrytectví. Zde v Evropském parlamentu předseda Sassoli vyhlásil *cordon sanitaire* proti naší frakci Identita a demokracie, o níž se vyjadřoval nejenom lživě, ale i nenávisně. Proto se ostatní frakce dohodly, že nebudeme zastoupeni ve vedení Parlamentu, výborech a delegacích. Občané v EU jsou diskriminováni na základě státní příslušnosti a majetku, což EU zhoršuje svojí politikou, která vede k bídě. Sami se chováte tak, že vzbuzuje nenávisť. Nenávisť je emoce. Odstraňujte příčiny nenávisťi a tato emoce nevznikne. Ve skutečnosti hledáte záminky k potlačování vám nepohodlných názorů. Proto mluvíte o právech, ale zavádíte cenzuru. Trestáte emoce, které sami vyvoláte.

Андрей Слабаков (ECR). – Г-жо Председател, това е опит да се криминализира личното мнение на хората, които не са съгласни с большевишката идеология на управляващите. Тук се защитават специфични идентичности и всеки опит за критика към тях се определя като омраза и фашизъм. Защото е много по-лесно да хвърлиш своите противници в затвора.

Защо речта на омразата е такава, само когато е насочена към малцинства или хомосексуални? Нима няма омраза, насочена към хетеросексуалните или към християнството?

Този въпрос не е важен за 90 % от хората в Европейския съюз. Те, както и аз, се интересуваме дали някой е почтен, честен, милосърден и състрадателен. Политическата пристрастност, сексуалната ориентация или евентуалната етническа принадлежност са нещо твърде лично.

Ето защо това искане не представлява хората, а политиците. Европейската общност се нуждае от справедливост, а не от привилегия за малцинствени групи.

Georg Mayer (ID). – Frau Präsidentin! All diese Beispiele oder die allermeisten dieser Beispiele, die hier heute für *hate speech* gebracht wurden, finden bereits eine Abdeckung. Nämlich in den allermeisten der Strafgesetzbücher in Europa ist das schon längst abgedeckt und wird dort auch bestraft.

Und Sie wissen genau das ist eine heikle Materie, über die wir heute reden. Und ich glaube Ihnen das nicht. Ich glaube Ihnen das einfach nicht, wenn man dieses Haus kennt, dass das nicht dazu genutzt werden wird, um eine Meinung, die Ihnen nicht passt, mundtot zu machen.

Denn wie das hier passiert, das sieht man ja auch ganz deutlich am Beispiel Ungarn. Da wird jemand, der ungemütlich ist hier der linken Mehrheit dieses Hauses, die Unterstützung von der EVP genießt, mundtot gemacht.

Und die Kollegin Barley von der S&D hat es ja sehr ehrlich und deutlich gesagt in ihrer Wortmeldung. Die hat nämlich in Bausch und Bogen die AfD hier heute als Nazis bezeichnet. Frau Präsidentin, dies bitte ins Protokoll aufzunehmen, ob das nicht der Würde des Hauses auch widerspricht.

Alles was rechts ist, ist böse und muss mundtot gemacht werden. Und von diesem Haus würde ich mir eher wünschen, dass man so viel Energie in die Aufklärung des Korruptionsskandals der S&D steckt wie in diese Thematik.

Gilles Lebreton (ID). – Madame la Présidente, chers collègues, la Commission et la majorité du Parlement Européen propose d'inclure les discours de haine dans la liste des crimes Européens recensés par l'article 83 du traité sur le fonctionnement de l'Union.

Je m'y oppose fermement pour deux raisons. D'abord parce que la notion de discours de haine est tellement floue et subjective qu'elle ouvrirait la porte à la censure et à des persécutions politiques. Le rapport qui nous est présenté l'indique clairement en donnant comme exemple les propos prétendument xénophobes des mouvements populistes contre les migrants. Ce qu'il propose est donc de criminaliser la simple dénonciation de la submersion migratoire, au mépris de la liberté d'expression et du pluralisme nécessaire à la vie démocratique.

En second lieu, la proposition de la Commission pose un problème de respect de la Constitution française, car elle reprend les termes de la loi Avia, que le Conseil constitutionnel a annulée le 18 juin 2020 en raison de l'atteinte qu'elle portait à la liberté d'expression. Or, en droit français, la Constitution nationale est supérieure à tous les traités, même aux traités Européens. C'est ce qu'a rappelé le Conseil constitutionnel dans sa décision du 19 novembre 2004. Les institutions Européennes n'ont donc pas le pouvoir d'imposer à la France une règle qui est jugée anticonstitutionnelle

Susanna Ceccardi (ID). – Signora Presidente, onorevoli colleghi, la libertà di pensiero è il fondamento dell'Occidente. Liberi pensatori, filosofi, scienziati hanno costruito le colonne della libertà Europea e del nostro benessere e un manipolo di burocrati di sinistra, invece, ci vogliono far ripiombare nel più buio oscurantismo.

Io sono d'accordo che alla libertà di pensiero debbano essere posti dei limiti, va bene. Sapete però chi in Italia ha depenalizzato il reato di ingiuria? Proprio la sinistra qualche anno fa! In Italia siamo liberi di offendere chiunque. Quindi proprio la sinistra ci fa la morale, da che pulpito!

Io sono d'accordo che l'odio, l'invidia sociale, il risentimento politico siano sentimenti assolutamente negativi; la scorsa settimana una donna si è suicidata in seguito a una campagna d'odio scatenata da influencer che fanno riferimento alla sinistra.

Quindi, fate attenzione: a sinistra prima fate le leggi per danneggiare i vostri avversari politici, e poi queste solite leggi vi si ritorcono contro.

10.4. The right to Repair

Beata Mazurek, w imieniu grupy ECR. – Pani Przewodnicząca! Chciałabym podziękować sprawozdawcy Panu René Repasi za wspólną pracę, którą wykonaliśmy w Parlamencie, za skuteczne negocjacje podczas rozmów trójstronnych. Efektem tej współpracy jest tekst, który zapewnia optymalne korzyści dla konsumentów i minimalne obciążenia dla przedsiębiorców. Nowe przepisy oznaczają łatwiejsze i bardziej dostępne naprawy dla wszystkich konsumentów, co z kolei przyczyni się do przedłużenia żywotności produktów takich jak pralki, zmywarki, lodówki, odkurzacze czy wyświetlacze elektroniczne. Obecnie, gdy nasze sprzęty domowe ulegają usterce, często są po prostu wyrzucane, bo części są drogie albo ich w ogóle nie ma.

Ta dyrektywa to także duża szansa dla niezależnych serwisów naprawy, dzięki zapewnieniu szerokiego dostępu do części zamiennych oraz ułatwieniu świadczenia tych usług transgranicznie. Zyska na tym nasza gospodarka. Szczególnie widzę w tym miejscu nowe możliwości dla polskich przedsiębiorców, gdyż od dawna istnieje u nas kultura naprawiania urządzeń. Czas wykorzystać nasze mocne strony i wyzwolić ten potencjał.

Chciałabym także podkreślić swoje zadowolenie z faktu, że w ostatecznym kształcie dyrektywa będzie rzeczywiście prawem do naprawy, a nie przymusem, gdyż pierwotna propozycja Komisji odbierała wolność wyboru konsumentom pomiędzy naprawą towaru a jego wymianą. Możemy stosować różne zachęty, ale wybór musi pozostać po stronie konsumenta. Taką zachętą będzie rozwiązanie zapewniające konsumentowi decydującemu się na naprawę w okresie gwarancji otrzymanie dodatkowej 12 miesięcznej ochrony prawnej na swój naprawiony produkt. To bardzo dobre rozwiązanie.

Virginie Joron, au nom du groupe ID. – Madame la Présidente, Madame la Commissaire, chers rapporteurs, chers collègues, en tant que députée française du Rassemblement national, je soutiens évidemment cette proposition visant à promouvoir la réparation des biens. Oui, l'ère du «tout jetable» et de l'obsolescence programmée ne nous a mené nulle part. Ce n'est pas notre projet de civilisation et ce n'est pas notre modèle.

Le recyclage et la réparation, ce sont aussi des emplois locaux, ici en France, ici en Europe. Je sais que c'est un gros mot inconvenant pour certains macronistes, mais ceux qui payent notre salaire, ce ne sont pas vos amis lointains, ce sont les travailleurs Européens. Ce sont eux que nous devons servir. Et nous l'avons fait par voie d'amendement, mais malheureusement, pour des raisons politiciennes, vous les ignorez. «Bruxelles ne sait pas servir, mais Bruxelles peut nuire,» comme disait Molière.

Alors aujourd'hui, à Bruxelles ou à Berlin, vous réalisez bien tard que vous avez détruit des pans entiers de l'industrie Européenne. Nous ne supportons plus ces leçons fréquentes et ces douceurs feintes de la majorité Macron/von der Leyen, tous ces prédicateurs assaisonneurs de vertu. Le droit à la réparation doit trouver un juste équilibre entre le pouvoir d'achat des consommateurs et un coût acceptable pour les industries. Or, cette Commission de Bruxelles a cassé notre industrie avec des décisions absurdes qui ont fait exploser les prix du gaz et de l'électricité, et font fuir nos emplois.

Est-ce que nos voitures diesel sont réparables ou jetables? Est-ce que la centrale de Fessenheim est réparable ou jetable? Est-ce que Nord Stream est réparable ou jetable? Vous avez cassé notre industrie automobile, vous avez brisé notre élan nucléaire et fermé la centrale de Fessenheim, alors qu'elle fonctionnait. L'Allemagne démonte ses éoliennes qui ne marchent pas pour reprendre le charbon. Vous gaspillez l'énergie des Européens et faites fuir nos entreprises. Quels services avez-vous rendu à l'Europe et à la France? Nous sommes toujours à la traîne. La France est désormais descendue au niveau de la Grèce en termes de part de l'industrie dans le PIB. Si nous réparons les trains en Bulgarie, qui réparera la SNCF? Où est le décollage du numérique français, sinon Européen? Après des décennies de destruction industrielle, il est aussi temps, oui, de réparer l'Europe. Rendez-vous le 10 juin.

Bert-Jan Ruissen (ECR). – Voorzitter, altijd maar het nieuwste van het nieuwste willen hebben, dat is toch eigenlijk wel een heel naar trekje van onze wegwerpmaatschappij.

Natuurlijk, soms zijn nieuwe spullen gewoon nodig, maar vaak ook helemaal niet. Ik rij zelf bijvoorbeeld op een fiets van dertig jaar oud en dat gaat nog gewoon prima. Ligt hier niet een belangrijke sleutel in het voorkomen van enorme afvalbergen? Namelijk: stoppen met alles zomaar weggooiden en tevreden zijn met wat je hebt.

Zo leven kan, maar dan moet je wel de mogelijkheid hebben om spullen die stuk gaan betaalbaar en eenvoudig te kunnen laten repareren. De deal over recht op reparatie bij elektronische producten juich ik daarom van harte toe. Hij kan enorm helpen om het laten repareren van onze telefoons, strijkijzers en ga zo maar door ook na de garantieperiode weer normaal te laten worden.

Hier gaan gezond verstand en zorg voor het milieu hand in hand.