

# CONCEPTUALISING PUBLIC EUROSCEPTICISM: the cases of Denmark, France and the United Kingdom<sup>1</sup> **\*WORK IN PROGRESS\***

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This paper substantiates the proposition that euroscepticism is a multifaceted phenomenon. Its hypothesis is that aggregate-level public scepticism towards the EU-of-the-day in Denmark, France and the United Kingdom (UK) assumes forms that, if not contradictory, are so diverse that we should be sceptical of the success of any endeavour to address eurosceptics with one message. The paper suggests that to some types of euroscepticism, the EU's communication plans, such as the newly invigorated Plan D, may even prove counterproductive. Four distinct dimensions of euroscepticism are discerned from existent literature and examined over time in the three member states through Eurobarometer polls.

## **Introducing euroscepticism**

While embryonic for decades at least,<sup>2</sup> the political birth of euroscepticism at the Danish referendum on the Maastricht Treaty in June 1992 came as a surprise to the generally pro-EU governments across the member states. The no-result prompted an instantaneous wave of self-conscious attempts at justifying the merits of the integration process and necessitated an acute awareness of the large abyss that had seemingly existed between 'Brussels' and the broader people. A widespread, general reaction, shared by most pro-EU politicians, was that democratising the EU and communicating its benefits to citizens would be the keys to counterbalancing public scepticism – tasks which by now have become institutionalized within the European Commission<sup>3</sup>, and resulted in many campaigns and other initiatives since 1992.<sup>4</sup>

But have endeavours to bridge the frequently declared EU-citizen gap helped? Certainly not if one uses referenda as a yardstick. More than half of the referenda on EU-issues held in the 15 old member states over the past six years have gone against the recommendation of the national governments, suggesting the persisting prevalence, and perhaps even increase, of euroscepticism. The

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<sup>1</sup> This paper is a revised edition of the paper *Types of euroscepticism*, which was selected for the EU-Consent PhD Award in June, and which is to be published on [www.eu-consent.net](http://www.eu-consent.net). This version nuances two of the four dimensions of euroscepticism and employs altogether different indicators. It should be regarded as 'work in progress'.

<sup>2</sup> Eurobarometer polls account from their outset in 1973 of public scepticism in several member states.

<sup>3</sup> In the shape of a Commissioner dedicated to this task. Communication issues have moreover been sparked to the top of the entire Commission's agenda.

<sup>4</sup> A brief non-exhaustive list of the consequences of this understanding includes the gradual strengthening of the European Parliament to improve the EU's democratic standing; the emergence of communication issues at the top of the Commission's priorities; the (re)invigoration of concepts such as subsidiarity and transparency; the increasing role of the European Ombudsman; the increasing use of referenda; and even modifications of the treaty (as with the modification to the citizen clause in the Amsterdam Treaty). Recently, as the paper will return to discuss, a 'D-plan' has been suggested as a strategy to winning the hearts of the Europeans, D standing for democracy, debate and dialogue.

positive equation between information and EU-support appears not to hold and its continued prevalence amongst many pro-EU actors may, in fact, merely point to the continued lack of a comprehensive understanding of euroscepticism. This paper recognises existing shortcomings in the conceptualisation of euroscepticism and seeks to improve our understanding of the phenomenon by engaging a combined conceptual, theoretical and empirical framework.

## **Conceptualising euroscepticism**

As most complex social science concepts, euroscepticism can be structured across three levels, according to the approach set out by American political scientist Gary Goertz (2005): a basic level, concerned with defining its positive and negative connotations; a secondary level of constitutive dimensions, identifying its various components from theory; and an indicator level, where each secondary-level dimension is specified in such detail that data can be gathered.

### *The basic level*

Problems involved with defining the positive concept are readily apparent and emerge at all three components of the term: euro, sceptic and -ism. From its popular usage in the press and in political and academic discourse, it is clear that 'euro' is not restricted to scepticism towards the euro (the single currency), nor to anything that has to do with 'euro'; however, it is not straightforward to replace the term with the slightly more concrete version, 'EU-scepticism'. While sometimes denoting sceptics of the EU as a whole, euroscepticism is more frequently used in relation to specific areas of concern, such as the Common Agricultural Policy, or the Constitutional Treaty. 'Sceptic', according to dictionaries, refers to 'doubt in the truth of something' – or, as pro-EU politicians have been keen to point out, to people being 'open to persuasion'.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, many eurosceptics are far more sincere in their opinions than this definition would imply; a non-negligible part of euroscepticism, for instance, aims for the complete breakdown of the Union. 'Ism' is the suffix attached to most ideology labels, lending the term to be incorporated into the domain of political belief systems (Flood: 3). However, whether or not euroscepticism can be seen as an ideology in its own right is a topic of on-going debate (Flood & Usherwood).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> British EU-Commissioner Peter Mandelson in *The Guardian*, January 27<sup>th</sup> 2005.

<sup>6</sup> Ben Crum and Harmen Binnema distinguish between thick and thin euroscepticism, where the thick dimension is conceptualised as a full-fledged ideology (Crum & Binnema). Some languages in fact permit the use of the term 'scepticism' without the -ism ending, such as the Danish 'euroskepsis', which may be more accurate.

Aleks Szczerbiak and Paul Taggart coined the perhaps most utilized definition of euroscepticism in 2001. While directed towards party-based euroscepticism, its two dimensions—soft and hard—can be applied to public scepticism as well. Soft euroscepticism is defined as the contingent or qualified opposition, while hard euroscepticism denotes the outright rejection of the process of European integration (developed by Szczerbiak & Taggart in 2003). As with attitudes and opinions generally, it makes sense to divide euroscepticism along an intensity spectrum – and several scholars have attempted to nuance Taggart and Szczerbiak’s simple dichotomy (for instance Kopecky & Mudde; Flood; Flood & Usherwood). Indeed, as most citizens can be assumed to be eurosceptic to some extent, defining importance in terms of measurement and comparison is allocated to questions of intensity. Nevertheless, the intensity issue arguably steps into the background when interest is shifted from predicting when a population is sceptical enough to vote no in an EU-referendum, to examining relative scepticism in view of illuminating the nature of the alleged gap between citizens and the political elite on EU-issues. At the basic level, this paper therefore contends with defining the positive concept of euroscepticism as *‘an opposition to, or scepticism towards, the EU reaching a certain degree and durability’*<sup>7</sup> – *which may be directed towards the Union in its entirety or towards particular policy areas or developments*<sup>8</sup>. The negative concept is borrowed from Leon Lindberg and Stuart Scheingold’s identification of the ‘permissive consensus’ (1970), which is taken to imply the lack of relative scepticism towards the EU, or particular policies and developments.<sup>8</sup>

#### *The secondary-level*

At the secondary level in Goertz’ concept structure, or a step down the ‘ladder of abstraction’ (Sartori 1970: 1943), the multidimensionality of euroscepticism appears. The link with the basic level is one of ontology, which means that the secondary-level dimensions in combination constitute what euroscepticism is.

The paper deduces four broad constitutive dimensions of euroscepticism from existent literature. To identify the dimensions—in other words, to establish the theoretical expectations about the nature of euroscepticism—the paper has relied on the emerging body of ‘euroscepticism theory’, a term which I use to denote literature mainly occupied with defining or explaining sceptic public attitudes towards

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<sup>7</sup> Degree refers to scepticism in relation to the EU-average (to be distinct from average, a difference of minimum five percentage points is required), and durability to trends that are sceptical over a minimum of two years. On some of the sub-questions employed by this paper, Eurobarometer does not allow for a two-year comparison – however, at least one indicator for each dimension allows for a long-term time perspective.

<sup>8</sup> This is thus no minute adoption of Lindberg and Scheingold’s own definition of the permissive consensus from 1970. This paper’s usage of the term does not distinguish between ‘europhile’ and ‘euro-indifferent’ attitudes; it only denotes the absence—for whatever reason—of the positive concept (euroscepticism).

the EU.<sup>9</sup> This literature, however, is still scarce and often highly empirical. It is therefore useful to root it in broader approaches dealing with the nature of public opinion in a supranational community. As will be demonstrated in the following four sections, devoted to the explication of each theoretical dimension, theories of European integration and political community contain ample clues.<sup>10</sup>

### Ideological euroscepticism

Ideological euroscepticism is a term employed by this paper to denote those variants of euroscepticism that are rooted in value-based evaluations of EU-cooperation. The interest is to distinguish value-based scepticism from other types of euroscepticism; however, as it is clearly beyond the scope of this paper to provide an illustration of all possible types of value-based euroscepticism, the paper will illustrate this dimension with reference to what is taken to be its two predominant forms in the existing literature: scepticism towards the level of democracy in the EU and scepticism due to the absence of a ‘Social Europe’. In addition to being prominent accounts in the literature, examining these particular expressions of value-based euroscepticism is appropriate as i) dissatisfaction with the level of EU-democracy is assumably only prominent if citizens accept that the EU should play an important role, where its decision-making mechanisms ought to resemble those of modern European nation-states (this is in contrast to ‘pure’ utility-based attitudes, for instance, to which it is arguably not a main concern that the EU functions according to certain ideological standards as long as it is economically utile); and ii) the EU has been predominantly concerned with market integration (at least from the 1950s to the 1980s, focus was on the economic community, as the Union’s then name also testified). There is presumably little disagreement that the EU has and should have an internal market. However, desire for a social Europe is arguably still largely unfulfilled today, wherefore a strong desire for social integration could constitute a source of ideological dissatisfaction with the current state of integration

Theories of value-based evaluations of the EU, broadly consumed by voting analysts under the heading of ‘issue-voting’, take their point of departure in the various types of contestation about

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<sup>9</sup> I also include studies of support for the EU, which depart from what is seen as sceptic public EU-attitudes. For this study, I am mainly interested in those studies that shed light on general public euroscepticism (i.e. not voting behaviour) at the aggregate country level.

<sup>10</sup> Indeed, theories intended to explain ‘the process and outcome of (European) integration’ (Wiener & Diez’ definition of integration theory) should be able to account for and contain a phenomenon that may pose a clear constraint on integration. However, in isolation, theories of European integration are likely to paint an incomplete portrait: while euroscepticism may indeed constitute a constraint on integration, it is by definition *not* integration (perhaps it may even be considered the opposite). By incorporating theories of political community into the theoretical framework, the paper acknowledges the contribution of the vast amount of literature on the EU that blossomed following 1992 and the Maastricht ratification crisis: writings on a European *demos*, national identity, and legitimacy, for instance, are not primarily occupied with the processes and ends of integration (thus arguably falling outside the realm of integration theory) but instead with particular features of, or problems posed by, the existing EU. With their focus on various elements of EU-cooperation that may be focal for public opinion, these accounts are in combination expected to form a comprehensive platform for discerning the constitutive dimensions of euroscepticism.

politics that characterise national politics. This allocates the classic schism between the left (socialism) and the right (liberalism) wings of the political spectrum a central role in constituting euroscepticism. Put crudely, contestation about the EU is merely contestation about politics at a higher level, where, for instance, citizens sharing socialist values are sceptical of too much liberalisation in the EU, and reverse. Indeed, issue-voting entails that citizens do position themselves in relation to the particular topics at stake at an EU-election, as opposed to ‘merely’ protesting against the incumbent national government (for a debate between these two positions, see Svensson 2002 (issue-voting) and Franklin et al. 1994 (the ‘protest thesis’)). The interpretation of the recent French referendum on the Constitutional Treaty in May 2005 as a rejection of a too liberal EU is an example of issue-based euroscepticism relevant to the paper.

Developed back in the early 1970s, Ronald Inglehart’s influential theory of post-materialism accords prominent importance to valued-based types of opinion: his hypothesis is that post-materialists (typically the post-war generations) have a more supportive attitude towards European integration and the EU than do materialists (typically the war-generations), as the issue of European integration fits in better with their value-orientations, and fulfils their intellectual needs and broad cosmopolitan horizons (e.g. Inglehart 1971). This is in contrast to materialists, who, to Inglehart, tend to be preoccupied with material concerns and devote less time to abstract issues like integration (Janssen: 445). Over time, more and more citizens should thus come to support the EU. Inglehart’s theory was in the early 1990s thoroughly criticised for being empirically unfounded (see Janssen), and was arguably dealt a serious blow by the Danish rejection of the Maastricht Treaty one year later.<sup>11</sup> However, criticism of Inglehart’s thesis rarely questions his assumption of value-based opinions, but centres instead on the direction of the causal arrow: political scientist Christopher J. Anderson, for instance, claims that post-materialism is in fact negatively correlated to support for EU membership (Anderson 1998: 586; cf. Anderson & Reichert 1995). Moreover, perhaps acknowledging that Western societies have generally become more post-materialist, as predicted by Inglehart, recent literature on EU-attitudes has shifted the focus from a ‘materialist/post-materialist’ to a ‘left/right’ or ‘social/liberal’ divide. Anthony Forster, for instance, has identified ideology and sovereignty as the two central axes of euroscepticism (Forster 2002), where ideology largely reflects a left/right positioning and sovereignty acknowledges the supranational character of the EU.

Especially since the Danish rejection of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, interest in the EU’s democratic standing increased – indeed, as suggested by the introduction, a widespread interpretation

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<sup>11</sup> Danes traditionally score high on indicators of post-materialism, such as concern about the environment and gay rights. According to Inglehart’s theory, Danes should arguably have been rather fervent EU-supporters.

of public euroscepticism became the now infamous ‘democratic deficit’ thesis. Eurobarometer started inquiring about citizens’ satisfaction with EU-democracy in 1994, and a recent manifestation of this interpretation of the nature of euroscepticism is the European Commission’s Plan D,<sup>12</sup> where Democracy is sought combined with Debate and Dialogue to respond to the French and Dutch rejection of the Constitutional Treaty. While the democratic deficit thesis may take on a number of rather different forms (see for instance Weiler et al. 1995; Follesdal & Hix 2005), the paper’s interest is limited to investigating whether the expectation of public scepticism towards the EU’s level of democracy is met in the three case countries.

### Utilitarian euroscepticism

The key rationale behind utilitarian euroscepticism, a prominent approach in the literature (for instance Andersen & Reichert; Gabel 1998a&b), is logically deduced: as the EU itself is driven by a largely economic agenda—integration started with coal and steel cooperation, and still today most initiatives have an anchor in the aim of completing the internal market—the public evaluates the EU according to its economic achievements. David Easton’s classic distinction between diffuse and specific support is often taken as the theoretical point of departure (Easton 1965; see for instance Gabel 1998a): As citizens’ affective (or diffuse) loyalties remain largely with the nation-state, the EU has to depend on securing utilitarian (or specific) support – an easily changeable matter.

The utilitarian hypothesis underpins much of the neo-functionalist perspective on European integration. The main ideas with relevance to the conceptualisation of euroscepticism is that public opinion, largely disinterested or passively compliant, would follow much the same logic as the opinion of political actors: citizens would gradually shift their loyalties from the national to the European level when becoming aware of, and getting used to, the functionalist, utility-maximising requirements of policies. It was thus assumed that integration almost automatically would foster increased support among the populations of the member states – although in later accounts it was recognised that this might be dependent on the EU’s ability to efficiently perform tasks of public utility (see Niedermayer & Sinnott 1995: 20, monitoring a shift in attitude in Ernst B. Haas<sup>13</sup>). Newer works by the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, including his famous concept of ‘constitutional patriotism’, also shares

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<sup>12</sup> Plan D (D for democracy, debate and dialogue) is the European Commission’s official response to the EU’s period of reflection, which was initiated following the French and Dutch no’s to the Constitutional Treaty in spring 2005; see [[http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005\\_0494en01.pdf](http://www.europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0494en01.pdf)].

<sup>13</sup> In Niedermayer and Sinnott’s account, Haas, perhaps the leading proponent of neo-functionalism, who virtually renounced the centrality of public opinion in his early works, came to accept that the process of generating public support for European integration might involve increased contact and familiarity with the EC, education and progressively rewarding experiences derived from the activities of the common market (Haas 1971, from Niedermayer & Sinnott: 20).

the perception of utility-based public EU-attitudes. Habermas argues that peoples emerge only with the constitutions of their states (Habermas 1998; 2003: 97), and that shared rights may form the foundation for the emergence and unity of a European people (and even for patriotic sentiments): Citizens will come to identify with a construction like the EU when they realise that it provides the infrastructure by which all their other attachments (local, national, gender, sexual, occupational...) can be managed and prevented from coming into excessive conflict with one another (Beetham & Lord: 42, paraphrasing Habermas' line of thought). The EU, in other words, obtains its *raison-d'être* from being utile. As such, these perspectives thus open the door for a type of euroscepticism that is based on the critique of lacking benefits from the EU or the inefficiency of the EU's set up (including fraud and bureaucracy).

On a more empirical note, testing the explanatory power of five different theories of public support for the EU, including Inglehart's notion of post-materialist values, political scientist Matthew Gabel finds support for the centrality of utilitarian EU-attitudes (Gabel 1998b). Although Gabel fails to consider a central independent variable in his test (concerns about national sovereignty), it does seem relevant, in light of these theoretical accounts, to investigate the claim that at least part of the publics in the member states of the EU build their opinion about integration on the ability of the EU to be utile. Whether this is the case with regard to euroscepticism will be investigated below with separate references to the perception of the absence of 'cool cash' or economic benefit, and the perception of EU-inefficiency in providing tangible societal benefits.

#### Sovereignty-based euroscepticism

As for sovereignty-based attitudes, it is not dissatisfaction with few economic benefits from integration, or a critique of its democratic standing, that defines euroscepticism, but a reluctance to increase the competencies of the EU and thereby potentially weaken national sovereignty and/or identity. Nationalism researcher, Professor Anthony D. Smith, conceptualises public *support* for the EU as being essentially utilitarian or ideological (Smith 2005: 1-2), while he perceives *scepticism* as generally signifying '*an emotional detachment from particular claims, doctrines and ideals*' (ibid: 1). It is thus not dissatisfaction with few economic benefits from integration that defines opposition, but an emotive stance—public euroscepticism, in other words, seconds utilitarian concerns in Smith's perception, while instead illustrating a lack of 'fit' between the Union and a person's identity and emotional attachments. Political scientists Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks conclude their paper 'Does Identity or Economic Rationality Drive Public Opinion on European Integration' with the finding that citizens '*do indeed take into account the economic consequences of European integration, but conceptions of group membership appear to be more powerful*' (Hooghe & Marks 2004: 415). They thereby suggest that while both theories bite, concerns

about national identity override. This hypothesis is also implicit in the liberal intergovernmentalist approach to integration theory (Moravcsik 1998), which holds that while utility is the very *raison-d'être* for cooperation in the EU, nation-states are to remain sovereign and independent actors, a concern which overrides potentially utility-maximising gains from pooling sovereignty.

These approaches hold that national institutions are the only ones to correspond to relatively uncontested identities and therefore the only ones that possess the capacity to settle major arguments authoritatively. In on-going debates about the relationship between democracy and identity, Smith is, contrary to Habermas, sceptical about the EU's ability to 'cultivate' a sense of belonging amongst the populations of the Union that is strong enough to legitimise true democratisation of EU-cooperation. In Smith's view, nation-state and national identity may well be constructed concepts, but they are 'frozen political identities' and non-transferable to the European level. The nation-state is the carrier of a 'special loyalty' that has been able to contain and arbitrate more diffuse identities in a manner which has made democracy possible (Smith 1991). Today's political leaders, at least, do not possess the mechanisms and means with which to construct a common identity that were available to their colleagues two centuries ago, wherefore citizens are likely to remain sceptical of EU-initiatives perceived to impair national integrity.

### Principled euroscepticism

The fourth, and final, constitutive dimension that the paper finds in the literature is that of principled euroscepticism.<sup>14</sup> By this term, I refer to the rejection of any kind of integration or cooperation: the very idea of the EU is rejected. While the intensity of ideological, sovereignty-based and utilitarian euroscepticism may, to some citizens, certainly be strong enough to constitute a *de facto* opposition to the Union, there is no telling of this from the unidimensional indicators, which measure these dimensions (see the following section on the indicator level). In other words, different indicators, distinguished by their intensity, are needed to account for the variant of euroscepticism that is principled of nature. To the individual person, rejectionist attitudes may certainly be based on any, all or none of the three theoretical dimensions identified above; what the principled dimension accounts for is simply attitudes that are distinguished by their intensity (wherefore, also, general levels of this type of scepticism are not expected to be high). Although the dimension might appear more appropriate in a study of 'eurorejectionism', than in a study of scepticism, it is included by the paper, as well as in most

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<sup>14</sup> This dimension assumes prominent representation in for instance Taggart and Szczerbiak's classic distinction between soft and hard euroscepticism (see above), where 'hard' essentially equals what I refer to by principled euroscepticism. I prefer the term 'principled' to denote that this dimension is primarily distinguished from other types of scepticism by surmounting to a rejection of the EU as such.

studies on defining euroscepticism (see for instance Flood & Usherwood 2005; Szczerbiak & Taggart 2003; Kopecky & Mudde 2002), in order to provide a fuller conceptualisation of euroscepticism as the absence of a permissive consensus.

According to the generational logic inherent in, for instance, Ronald Inglehart's theory of post-materialism, as well as to the 'information-thesis' of the utility approach to EU-attitudes, this type of scepticism should become less prevalent with time: As war generations are being replaced by younger generations, or as people get used to the necessity and advantages of European integration (perhaps through information campaigns, the successful construction of affective EU-attitudes or even a constitutional patriotism), they abandon principled scepticism. A different perspective on this advanced by this paper is that as European integration develops in both depth and width, it is bound to move closer towards the wishes of some and further away from the wishes of others. In this sense, principled scepticism is not seen as age-contingent but rooted in public perceptions of the 'EU-of-the-day'. I shall return to this discussion following the data-analysis.

#### *The indicator level*

The indicator level is where the four dimensions of euroscepticism are specified in such detail that data can be gathered. The data relied upon in this paper is the European Commission's Eurobarometer polls, from which relevant poll questions are used as indicators (see Annex 1 for a list of used polls).<sup>15</sup> The link between the indicator-level and the level of constitutive dimensions is one of substitutability, which means that each poll question is indicative of the dimension it pertains to. Multiple, unidimensional indicators are required in order to achieve an adequate measure of multifaceted concepts; thus indicators should logically appear to reflect one and only one dimension of euroscepticism, and the more indicators standing in for one dimension that indicate scepticism, the more prominent is that dimension. The main interest lies with determining relative scepticism, i.e. scepticism compared to the EU-average, with discrepancies within a plus-minus five percentage point ratio not considered a deviation. The paper adopts the following crude measure of absolute levels of euroscepticism: 0 - 4 percent: no euroscepticism. 5 - 24 percent: low euroscepticism. 25 - 49 percent: medium euroscepticism. 50 - 74 percent: high euroscepticism; and 75 - 100 percent: very high euroscepticism.

For the purpose of this paper, three or four poll questions are chosen as indicators for each of the dimensions. They are explicated by Table 1 below.

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<sup>15</sup> Focus is on aggregate public opinion in the 15 old member states as well as on relative scepticism (i.e. scepticism compared to the EU-average). The paper, therefore, does not aspire to establish when scepticism is 'severe' enough to for instance result in a no at an EU-referendum.

Table 1: Indicators

IDEOLOGY		UTILITY		SOVE-REIGNTY	PRINCIPLED	
	A 'Democracy'	B 'Social EU'	A 'Benefit'			B 'Efficiency'
<b>1</b>	Satisfaction with EU-democracy: 'Not very satisfied' plus 'not at all satisfied'	Fears about the EU: 'The loss of social benefits'	Meaning of the EU: 'A waste of money'	Meaning of the EU: 'Bureaucracy'	Unification of Western Europe: 'very against' plus 'partly against'	Opinion about membership: 'Bad thing'
Year	1994-2004	1996, 1999, 2000, 2004, 2005	2003, 2004x2, 2005	2003, 2004x2, 2005	1985, 1995	1986-2005
<b>2</b>	Reason for opposing the Constitution: 'Not democratic enough'	Reason for opposing the Constitution: 'Not enough social Europe'	Effect of the EU in specific areas (7 areas): 'Bad' plus 'very bad' effect'	Reason for opposing the Constitution: 'Too technocratic/ juridical/ too much regulation'	Reason for opposing the Constitution: 'Loss of national sovereignty'	Reason for opposing the Constitution: 'Against Europe/ European construction/ Euro pean integration'
Year	2004, 2005	2004, 2005	2005	2004, 2005	2004, 2005	2004, 2005
<b>3</b>	The European Parliament's ability to protect citizens: 'Not well' plus 'not at all well'	EU priorities: 'EU should give more attention to social justice' plus 'EU should give more help to socially excluded people in the EU'	Benefit from membership: 'No benefit'	Fears connected to integration: 'Decision taken more slowly because of bureaucracy'	A European Government : 'No support' (plus 'no need' in 1996)	Personal feelings about the EU: 'Rejecting it'
Year	1994, 1998, 2001	1996	1986-2005	1995, 2001	1987, 1995x2, 1996x2	2002, 2003, 2004, 2005
<b>4</b>	Ability to rely on the Council of Ministers to take decisions in one's interest: 'Can't rely'		Role of the EU in different areas: 'Rising prices/ inflation' plus 'the economic situation' – negative role	Effective-ness of EU-policies: 'Protecting the environment – not effective'	National or joint European decision-making (17 policy areas): 'National only'	Reason for abstention at European Parliament elections: 'Against Europe/EU'
Year	1995, 1997		2003	2003	1999, 2001	1999

The remaining parts of this paper are concerned with illustrating the relevance of the conceptualisation, and demonstrating different and perhaps even contradictory patterns of euroscepticism in Denmark, France and the United Kingdom, three long-term members of the EU in which a reasonable level of euroscepticism – in different areas – can be expected. Denmark and the United Kingdom have often been singled out in the literature as the ‘eurosceptic couple’ in the EU. France, on the other hand, sometimes seen as an extreme opposite to the UK in EU-affairs, has often been heralded as a pro-European driving force in the integration process. Nevertheless, the eurosceptic reputation of the French population, smouldering since its almost-rejection of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992, was cemented with its no to the Constitutional Treaty in May 2005. There is reason to believe that there should be both similarities and differences among the three countries in their types of public euroscepticism.

### **Prevalence and strength of ideological euroscepticism**

#### *Criticism of the EU's democratic standing*

The four Eurobarometer indicators accounting for this dimension range over an 11-year period, from 1994 to 2005. While Eurobarometer has posed a wide number of questions since the early 1970s, it is interesting to note that no suitable indicator for this sub-dimension could be found in the polls prior to 1994. This could reflect general unawareness or disregard by the drafters of the possibility of this type of public EU-attitude prior to the Danish rejection of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992.

Two of the four indicators inquire in a rather abstract manner about dissatisfaction with the level of democracy (‘Satisfaction with EU-democracy’ and ‘Reason for opposing the Constitution: not democratic enough’), while the remaining two inquire more specifically about the actual democratic functioning of the EU political system (‘The ability to rely on Council decisions being taken in one’s interest’ and ‘The ability of the European Parliament to protect one’s interests’). Common for sceptical responses to the three indicators dealing with the EU and its institutions is that the EU-average falls with the medium-level category of euroscepticism. For the indicator on the Constitution, sceptical responses fall with in the low-level category. The two indicators permitting a longer term overview reveal a slight decrease in the total number of sceptic responses over time.

With regard to the three case countries, a number of commonalities spring to the eye. Denmark, France and the UK generally classify as medium-level sceptics in their responses, like the EU-average, and they, similarly, observe a slight decrease in the saliency of this sub-dimension over time. There are,

however, interesting variations with regard to their levels of relative scepticism; with differences between the most and least sceptic case often superseding ten percentage points.

Put crudely, within this sub-dimension, Denmark is the most sceptic case compared to the EU-average, while the UK is the least sceptic. In the years surveyed, the Danes have distinguished themselves in a sceptical direction from EU-average on all the indicators; the French have on half indicators, while the Britons never have. Danes, for instance, differ from Britons and Frenchmen in sharing a relative scepticism towards the European Constitution's perceived lack of democratic credentials. Denmark is moreover the only case where the distinction from average sometimes supersedes ten percentage points, and it is only on the general indicator of satisfaction with EU-democracy that Denmark is not consistently distinguished for its scepticism throughout the surveyed years. It should be mentioned, however, that precisely within this abstract indicator, the decrease in absolute levels of scepticism has been rather marked in Denmark – it has fallen from 54 percent in 1994 to 40 percent in 2004.

France and the United Kingdom only distinguish themselves from the EU-average in two of the polled years: in 1998, the Britons were less dissatisfied than average with democracy in the EU, while the French were more dissatisfied (respectively 37 and 51 percent were dissatisfied, while the EU average was at 43 percent); and in 1997, the French joined the Danes in being more sceptical than average of the Council of Ministers' ability to take decisions in their interest.

#### *Criticism of a lack of 'social Europe'*

The three indicators of this sub-dimension of ideological euroscepticism span from 1996 to 2005. Like the above sub-dimension it was not possible to find suitable indicators of this dimension prior to the mid-1990s, and it is moreover still rather poorly accounted for by Eurobarometer: In the search for indicators for this paper, I only managed to find three direct indicators that illustrate whether or not citizens find the EU too weak on the social dimension – whether the EU should prioritise the development of a more social Union (two sub-questions read: 'The EU should give more help to poor and socially excluded people within the EU' and 'The EU should pay less attention to the economy and more to social justice'); whether the European Constitution was opposed because of 'not enough social Europe'; and whether cooperation in the EU breeds fears about a loss of social benefits.

Discounting the indicator on the Constitution, average levels of scepticism in the EU are high. In the three case countries, however, they range from 'medium' to 'very high', with the highest relative scepticism in France and the lowest level in the United Kingdom. On the indicator on the Constitution, scepticism because of too little social Europe was in 2005 negligible in the UK (2 percent) but 12

percentage points above EU-average in France (27 percent). In fact, while it is not possible to speak of relative euroscepticism in either Denmark or the UK on any of the indicators, France is distinguished by relative scepticism on all of them – and often by more than ten percentage points.

There is moreover an interesting contrast in the dynamics of opinion on the indicator allowing a nine year time span—measuring fears of a loss of social benefits as a consequence of cooperation between 1996 and 2005—with a gradual decrease in scepticism of 12 percentage points in Denmark but virtually no movement in France. The result is a 22 percentage point difference between fearful responses in the two countries. There is generally a large discrepancy between French and British opinion. For instance, 30 percentage points separated the French and the British when Eurobarometer in 1997 inquired about whether the Union should pay less attention to the economy and more to social justice.

### **Prevalence and strength of utilitarian euroscepticism**

#### *Criticism of the EU's ability to benefit the economy*

The four indicators of this sub-dimension allow the paper to adopt a 20-year time frame, from 1986 to 2005 (in fact, it would even have been possible to measure the indicator of general benefit right from the first Eurobarometer poll in 1973). The average level of euroscepticism in the EU is 'low' on the abstract indicators of 'general benefit' and 'meaning of the EU: a waste of money', and 'medium' on the more specific indicators of benefit, and the EU's role, in various named areas. As with the ideological dimension of euroscepticism, there are large discrepancies among the three case countries with regard to their level of scepticism. Today, the UK and France count as relative sceptics, while scepticism in Denmark on the contrary is much lower than the EU-average. This sub-dimension has moreover witnessed a contrasting development in scepticism over time: in short, scepticism has been rising in France, stable in Britain and decreasing in Denmark.

It is worth noting that on the indicator of EU-effect in seven specific areas,<sup>16</sup> Danes are not relatively sceptical in any area – in fact, Danish opinions are more than fifteen percentage point less sceptical than the EU-average in all but two of the seven areas (security and services). French scepticism, meanwhile, is relatively sceptical in all but three of the areas (security, agriculture and services), with scepticism often superseding the EU-average by more than ten percentage points. This evidently means that Danes and Frenchmen diverge considerably on this indicator. Danish scepticism is

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<sup>16</sup> The areas are: exports, industry, security, standard of living, agriculture, services and employment

generally 'low', while French scepticism is generally 'medium' or 'high'. On three indicators, the difference between the two cases even supersedes 30 percentage points (employment, standard of living and industry). The UK sends mixed signals, with relative scepticism in four of the areas (exports, industry, security and agriculture) and the absence of scepticism in two areas (standard of living and employment). Precisely that area where the British diverge the most from the EU-average in a non-sceptical direction (the employment situation) is the area where the French diverge the most from the EU-average in a sceptical direction.

On the indicator where the question of EU-benefit is specifically tied to named areas, the same picture is revealed. To a higher extent than EU-average, the French estimate the EU's role in the areas of 'rising prices/inflation' and 'the economic situation' as negative. The British are divided, finding the EU's role less negative than average on the former indicator while siding with the average on the latter. On both questions, the Danes are markedly less sceptical of the role of the EU than average.

Interestingly, the French are not distinguished in a sceptical direction on the two more abstract indicators of benefit-related euroscepticism. However, French opinions seem to conform to a general increase in the number of EU-citizens who feel their country has not benefited from membership. Thus, while scepticism both in France and on average in the EU is still low, there has between 1986 and 2005 been a gradual increase in sceptical opinions of nine and seven percentage points respectively.

On the indicator of 'meaning of the EU: a waste of money', neither Danes, Frenchmen nor Britons depart from the EU-average throughout the surveyed years (four polls between 2003 and 2005). However, as Denmark is consistently slightly below the EU-average, and France and the UK slightly above, this conformity should not cover the finding that Danish scepticism generally is within the lower level of scepticism (i.e. below 25 percent), while French and British scepticism fall within the medium-level category (25 – 49 percent).

### *Critique of the EU's effectiveness*

This sub-dimension moves the attention away from the weighing of expenditure against revenue to the EU's ability to function efficiently. As with the above sub-dimension, there are both abstract and specific indicators of this type of scepticism. Two abstract indicators examine whether 'bureaucracy' is something that is generally associated with the EU and whether the Constitutional Treaty was perceived as being too technocratic and regulative. Two more specific indicators examine citizens' evaluation of the effectiveness of a number of EU policies and whether citizens fear a heavy decision-making process is hampering decisions. The indicators cover a rather recent time span, with only one – the question of fears involved with cooperation – allowing a perspective from the 1990s. Opinions are rather stable on

this particular indicator (neither Denmark, France nor the EU-average witnessed a more than five percentage point change between 1995 and 2001); however, as it stands alone, it is not possible to say anything conclusive about the long-term development of scepticism within this sub-dimension.

The intensity of scepticism varies from indicator to indicator; however, with the exception of the indicator on the Constitution, the relative positioning of the cases vis-à-vis the EU-average is interestingly consistent with the pattern from the above sub-dimension of benefit-based euroscepticism – just with the reverse prefix for the Danes: on all the indicators, Denmark emerges as the most sceptic case; France is sceptic on the specific questions but neutral on the abstract question, while the UK is sceptic on the abstract question but neutral or more positive than the EU-average on the specific questions. Although Denmark is relatively sceptic also on the abstract indicator gauging the meaning of the EU, its overall level of scepticism is higher on the specific indicators, where it is almost consistently in the high-level category (50 – 74 percent). This often leaves a difference between Danes and Britons of some twenty percentage points on the indicator of EU effectiveness in various policy-areas.

On the indicator of attitudes towards the Constitution, all three cases side with the EU-average.

### **Prevalence and strength of sovereignty-based euroscepticism**

In this paper, four indicators measure EU-citizens' scepticism towards the idea of pooling national sovereignty in the Union. Since 1985, attitudes towards an EU government, EU decision-making and the political unification of the continent have been polled, and in connection with the ratification process of the Constitutional Treaty, attitudes towards its perceived impact on sovereignty were moreover polled. All four indicators present unequivocal differences among the three cases – or rather between France and the EU-average on the one hand, and Denmark and the United Kingdom on the other. While France generally share a 'low-to-medium' level of euroscepticism, Denmark—the most sceptical case over time—has never experienced a low level of scepticism of any of the indicators in any of the measured years.

Figures serve to underline the differences among the cases within this dimension. In 1985, 44 percent of Danes claimed to oppose the unification of Western Europe. The figure in France was six percent, while 15 percent Britons were against. In 1996, 63 percent of Danes were against the creation of an EU-government responsible to the European Parliament – compared to 18 percent in France and 32 percent in the UK. That year, Eurobarometer moreover asked citizens whether they thought such a government was necessary or not. 29 percent in France, and 39 percent in Britain, did not think so. The figure from Denmark was 82 percent. With regard to the level of decision-making, France is only

relatively sceptical towards EU decision-making on one of the 17 policy areas (health and social welfare). Denmark and the UK are more strongly opposed than average to EU decision-making on all of the policy areas. The indicator on the Constitution from 2005 shows that 14 percentage points fewer Frenchmen than the EU-average of 32 percent opposed the document because of its implications for national sovereignty. That is 24 percentage points fewer than in Denmark and the United Kingdom, where 42 percent expressed that opinion.

Movement in opinions within this dimension can be measured on the indicator on an EU-government from 1987 to 1996; on the indicator on the unification of Western Europe from 1985 to 1995; and on the indicator on EU decision-making in 17 policy areas from 1999 to 2001. On the first indicator, Denmark, France and the EU-average report stable opinions. Denmark is consistently within the category of ‘high’ euroscepticism, while France and the EU-average are in the ‘low’ category. The UK wavers a bit more but always within the ‘medium-level’ category. However, on the second indicator (unification of Western Europe), sovereignty-based euroscepticism increases over time in both France and the United Kingdom by 14 percentage points – and in the EU as a whole by nine percentage points. Denmark goes against that trend, witnessing a nine percentage point decrease in scepticism. This trend is repeated on the indicator on the level of decision-making. Here, Danish scepticism towards EU-involvement drops on most of the policy areas between 1999 and 2001. The UK witnesses a slightly smaller drop, while France, alongside the EU-average, sports stable opinions in this regard.

### **Prevalence and strength of principled euroscepticism**

As mentioned above, the dimension of principled euroscepticism is distinguished by its intensity, wherefore overall levels were expected to be low. The indicators confirm this expectation. Indeed, the only indicator suggesting a medium level of scepticism is ‘reason for abstention at EU-elections: against Europe/EU’ (polling abstention at the 1999 EP-elections), thus polling only interviewees who said they did not go to vote. It is not surprising that amongst this section of the population, principled euroscepticism is especially prevalent, as citizens rejecting the very idea of the EU may find it against their principles to vote on the composition of the Union’s Parliament.

One indicator—attitudes towards membership—allows for a long-term perspective on the development of principled euroscepticism. From 1986 to 2005, it reveals a stable, relatively high, level of scepticism in the United Kingdom; an initially high level of relative scepticism in Denmark, which over the years has decreased from 23 percent to 16 percent; and a low, but increasing, level of scepticism in France (gradually climbing from 6 percent who found membership a ‘bad thing’ in 1986

to 15 percent who shared that opinion in 2005). The EU-average has largely followed the same trend as in France, with scepticism increasing from nine to 16 percent over the time period.

It seems fair to say, however, that principled euroscepticism is still weaker in France than in Denmark. Till today, France has never distinguished itself by a relatively strong euroscepticism in this regard, while Denmark continues to do so on the indicator on the Constitution, which measures the amount of people opposing the document because they do not ‘support the principle of the EU’. Only the United Kingdom is distinguished by a relatively strong principled euroscepticism on all four indicators. 12 percentage points more Britons than average find membership of the EU a ‘bad thing’. 13 percentage points more than average oppose the Constitution because they do ‘not support the principle of the EU’. 16 percentage points more than average abstained at the 1999 EP-elections because they were ‘against Europe/the EU’, while ‘rejecting it’ came to the mind of six percentage points more Britons than average in the EU when they thought about the Union.

### Euroscepticism, an overview

Table 2 shows a crude overview of relative euroscepticism in Denmark, France and the United Kingdom.

Table 2: Overview of relative euroscepticism

<i>Distinguished from average?</i>	<b>Ideology</b>		<b>Utility</b>		<b>Sovereignty</b>	<b>Principled</b>
	‘Democracy’	‘Social’	‘Benefit’	‘Efficiency’		
<b>Denmark</b>	Mixed	No	No	Yes	Yes	Mixed
<b>France</b>	Mixed	Yes	Mixed*	Mixed*	No	No
<b>UK</b>	No	No	Mixed	Mixed**	Yes	Yes
<b>EU-level</b>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>	<i>Low/Medium</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Low</i>

Yes or No means that ALL indicators (latest year polled) conform to the same pattern.

\* Sceptic on specific indicators, not distinguished on abstract indicators

\*\* Sceptic on abstract indicators, not distinguished on specific indicators

*A mirror development: Is diffuse support eroding in France and growing in Denmark?*

The diversity amongst the cases and the varied development of the dimensions over time are dealt with below with specific regard to the EU’s current reflection period. Meanwhile, it is worth pausing for a moment on the dimensions where Eurobarometer allows for both abstract and specific indicators (we noted above how France was often neutral on several of the abstract indicators but sceptical on the

specific indicators).<sup>17</sup> While the indicators do not allow authoritative conclusions to be drawn on the development of euroscepticism over time, the slight, but gradual and steady, increase in the level of French scepticism on several abstract indicators, combined with the recent rather high level of French scepticism on several specific indicators, could support the ‘Eastonian’ argument on the relationship between diffuse and specific attitudes. In short, as was also mentioned in the theoretical part of this paper, to citizens in modern Western democracies, system support generally builds on diffuse attitudes, which are emotive and rather resistant to change, while support for day-to-day policies generally builds on specific attitudes, which are more susceptible to short-term variations (depending, for instance, on the economic situation).

However, if specific attitudes are strongly sceptical over a long time period, this may eventually have a bearing on diffuse support – in other words diffuse support may decrease. We may speculate whether this development is characteristic of French scepticism towards the EU. A founding member of the Union, France’s membership has for decades almost been taken for granted. This has yielded generally high levels of diffuse (or abstract) support, i.e. support for the EU as such (reflected in the low levels of principled euroscepticism and in the generally low levels of scepticism on abstract indicators of euroscepticism). Over recent years, however, specific areas of cooperation in the EU have met with considerable French scepticism *and* there has been a slow, but consistent, increase in ‘abstract scepticism’ – both the abstract indicators ‘feeling of having benefited from membership’ (benefit-based euroscepticism) and ‘attitude towards membership’ (principled euroscepticism), for instance, reveal a gradual increase in French scepticism.

In the United Kingdom, where membership has always been contested and a relatively high level of principled euroscepticism is prominent, abstract indicators of EU-attitudes have generally met with scepticism. However, asked about the EU’s impact on specific areas, the British are despite their eurosceptic reputation often no more sceptical than the EU-average.

Continuing the analogy to David Easton’s argument with the Danish case, Danes’ sceptical opinions towards several abstract indicators (satisfaction with EU democracy, attitudes to membership, feeling of having benefited from membership) have decreased rather considerably over a 15-year period. One could speculate that as the development of Danish opinions reveals almost the exact opposite situation than that in France, diffuse support for the EU is increasing in Denmark as the result

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<sup>17</sup> Ideally, all the indicators standing in for the same dimension would point in the same direction: apart from supporting the face validity of the indicators, it would moreover allude to a rational public opinion. While this paper does not take the finding of two to three mixed entries for each case to be alarming for the validity of its indicators, a closer examination of the indicators producing a mixed result in a case in fact opens up for a possible explanation, which neither deprecates the correspondence among the indicators nor the rationality of public opinion. This possible explanation is the topic of this section.

of a period with generally high levels of support for specific indicators.<sup>18</sup> These lines of thought reject the generational logic of Inglehart, discussed above, according to which principled euroscepticism should eventually (literally) die out. Instead, they support the argument that citizens do form abstract – but still issue-specific – perceptions about whether or not the EU-of-the-day merits support or scepticism. Nevertheless, the paper acknowledges the hypothetical nature of this possible explanation, which it is not possible to confirm by means of the used data.

### **A dilemma for Plan D**

On certain indicators, Danish, French and British attitudes all depart significantly from the EU-average – however, as we have seen, there are important differences among the three countries with regard to their type and level of euroscepticism. In general, there is no indication that euroscepticism is weakening in the EU – only, the picture is very nuanced: Danish attitudes, for instance, have in several areas (but not all) become more EU-positive over the past years, while French attitudes have become more eurosceptic. Precisely that area where one population wishes the EU to focus, risks being that area where another population fears its influence. It will depend on the type of euroscepticism characterising a country. Two examples serve to illustrate this point.

First, this dilemma may explain how the democratisation and transparency initiatives that the EU has undertaken in recent years at one and the same time seem to have contributed to increasing scepticism in some member states and alleviating it in others. The largely ideological understanding of euroscepticism among EU-leaders that emerged following the Danish rejection of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 has had its impact on cooperation – and most recently taken the shape of the ‘D-plan’. At the heart of such initiatives lie the rarely questioned – though as the brief examination of data above suggests: not thoroughly analysed – belief that democratic deficiencies and lack of information about the EU are the main foundation for public euroscepticism.

To the extent that citizens are aware of such democratisation initiatives of the EU, and perceive of them as successful, they are likely to reduce scepticism based on the critique of the EU’s democratic deficit. If this type of scepticism is not prominent in a country, the initiatives may, however, not play a particularly prominent role in diminishing euroscepticism, and perhaps even contribute to the contrary. Taking another look at the indicators for the variant of ideological euroscepticism, which perceives negatively of the EU’s level of democracy, Denmark is the only case with a relatively strong scepticism in this regard. It is, for instance, the only case where there is a relatively significant opposition to the

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<sup>18</sup> Lately, a repeated argument has been that Danes are ‘leaving’ the yes-no dichotomy when debating the EU to discuss instead the pro’s and con’s of particular aspects of cooperation.

European Constitution because of its lacking democratic credentials. However, we note on the abstract indicator on EU-democracy that sceptical Danish perceptions have dropped rather considerably over recent years: While sceptical evaluations in 1999 were shared by 60 percent of the population (22 percentage points above the EU-average), Danish dissatisfied figures had towards the middle of the decade dropped to 40 percent, which was in line with the EU-average. In France and the United Kingdom, negative perceptions of EU-democracy have since the mid-1990s consistently been in line with the EU-average in both countries and there has not been a marked change in this particular point of scepticism. Thus, only in the case country where criticism of the EU's level of democracy was relatively strong in the mid-1990s, has there been a significant decrease in this type of scepticism. This could indicate that the EU is moving in a direction that Danes like, which to some extent at least could be due to the above-mentioned democratisation initiatives undertaken by the EU.

Democratisation and transparency initiatives have certainly not been the only item on the EU's agenda over the past decade. Indeed, perhaps the most significant event of the past decade has been Eastern Enlargement, which is the second example used by the paper to illustrate the EU's dilemma when faced with different types of euroscepticism in the member states.

There is reason to believe that Eastern Enlargement may have a bearing on the dimensions of utilitarian and ideological euroscepticism. Utilitarian quite simply because it represents a potentially very costly development (it is common knowledge that all ten new members are poorer than EU-average), and ideological since it was a very diverse and sizeable enlargement, which may impact on normative ideas about the nature of cooperation: whether, for instance, citizens value a homogenous and social Union. On the contrary, as Eastern Enlargement could hardly in itself be perceived as a development furthering a full-fledged federal EU, it can be hypothesised as likely not to invoke a sovereignty-based euroscepticism. Eurobarometer figures show that amongst the 15 old member states in the EU, the French were often most strongly against Eastern Enlargement, while the Danes were frequently among the most positive: In 2002, 20 percent of Frenchmen saw EU-enlargement as a priority. The figure was 72 percent in Denmark. This supports the findings of the above case studies, as Denmark is characterised by a combination of low benefit-based euroscepticism and high sovereignty-based scepticism, and little desire for a homogenous, social union, while French figures virtually produced the reverse picture, with fertile ground for as well utilitarian and ideological euroscepticism – but no sovereignty-based euroscepticism.

In the United Kingdom, public opinion has not been relatively sceptical towards Eastern Enlargement (see for instance Eurobarometer 56 from 2001). Moreover, indicators of the four broad

dimensions of euroscepticism examined by this paper do not reveal a marked change in the level of British euroscepticism over the past years – and the slight movement that can be traced is towards less scepticism. The rather stable British attitudes may at least to some extent be explained with reference to the relative strength of principled euroscepticism in the UK. We may recall that this type of euroscepticism rejects the very idea of European integration or cooperation (or, considering the geographical status of the UK as an island, perhaps even Europe as such) and if not entirely dependent on generational change, this type of euroscepticism is, similarly to Easton's aforementioned category of diffuse attitudes, at least very rooted.

The persistency of these diverse types of euroscepticism characterising the EU's member states is a pessimistic conclusion for EU-leaders hoping to be able to rely on 'Plan Democracy, Dialogue and Debate' to bring the Union closer to Frenchmen, Danes, Britons and 22 other nationalities. Most likely, it is a win-lose dilemma. If in response to the French no to the Constitutional Treaty, politicians try to accommodate the critique of a lack of social engagement by the Union, they may succeed in making the French more content, but they are simultaneously likely to increase euroscepticism in the United Kingdom, as Britons generally do not share the wish for a more social Europe and would rather be worried about the initiatives' consequence for the EU's budget (utilitarian euroscepticism) or national social policy (sovereignty-based euroscepticism). What the EU-populations want from cooperation is very different. This not only poses difficulty for Plan D. It also poses difficulty for what is perhaps today the most popular discourse among many EU-leaders seeking a way forward for the Union: the EU has to focus on producing concrete results in areas where citizens want the EU to act.<sup>19</sup> Not surprisingly in light of the above account, however, the latest Eurobarometer survey indicated that peoples in the Union's member states want EU action in very diverse fields: In Germany, for instance, 74 percent believe unemployment to be one of the two major issues of today. A mere eight percent shares that opinion in Ireland. 32 percent in Denmark mentions terrorism. This figure is but one percent in Lithuania (Eurobarometer 64, 2005).

This paper conceptualised euroscepticism as a multifaceted phenomenon, containing four distinct dimensions—utility, ideology, sovereignty-based and principled—that manifest themselves with different strengths in the member states of the European Union. Depending on what type(s) of scepticism is prevalent and prominent in a country, public reactions to events on the EU-agenda vary considerably.

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<sup>19</sup> Recently, for instance, the Danish Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen (Liberal Party) has called for a 'Europe of Results'; see [<http://www.stm.dk/index.asp?d=2569&n=0&o=2&s=1>].

As the level of principled euroscepticism is generally low, the future of euroscepticism depends very much on the direction that the EU is taking. Bringing the public in, and being close to the citizens, are prominent EU-priorities at the time of writing. But if the EU aims to continue as a unity in all regards, while being proactive and productive, its leaders may, at least in the foreseeable future, have to accept that they cannot all leave the negotiation table as a winner in the eyes of their citizens. What people want from the EU is simply very different. To their consolation, this is not some unique pathology of the Union; it is a perfectly normal – and healthy – trait of any democratic political system.

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**Annex 1:** List of used Eurobarometer polls:

- 1985: Eurobarometer 23
- 1986: Eurobarometer 26
- 1987: Eurobarometer 28
- 1991: Eurobarometer 35
- 1994: Eurobarometer 42
- 1995: Eurobarometer 43 & 44
- 1996: Eurobarometer 45 & 46
- 1997: Eurobarometer 47
- 1999: Eurobarometer 51
- 2000: Eurobarometer 53 & 54
- 2001: Eurobarometer 55 & 56
- 2002: Eurobarometer 57 & 58
- 2004: Eurobarometer 61 & 62
- 2005: Eurobarometer 63 & 64
- 2005: Flash Eurobarometer 171

The polls can be downloaded here: [[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)]