

When political supply creates its own demand:  
The case of anti-EU politics in Visegrad countries

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“For if the future European order does not emerge from a broadening European Union, based on the best European values and willing to defend and transmit them, it could well happen that the organization of this future will fall into the hands of a cast of fools, fanatics, populists and demagogues waiting for their chance and determined to promote the worst European traditions. And there are, unfortunately, more than enough of those.”

Vaclav Havel Speech to European Parliament, March 1994

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## **Introduction.**

In the context of war in Ukraine at the borders of the EU, and large scale crime against humanity in Syria, Europe is experiencing strong anti-EU political shift. Since 2010, In Visegrad countries (V4, Hungary, Poland, Czech Republic and Slovakia) the Euroscepticism/Europhobic political parties are among the strongest in EU. In this paper we want to understand why, and how new EU members which were the most pro-European became less than ten years after their accession the most anti EU promoters. A proper analysis of V4 countries may help to understand actual and future political trends in the rest of the Europe.

Traditional analyse of political trends are centred on political demand. Little attention have been dedicated to study political supply. We assume that in certain circumstances the political supply matters more than political demand in order to understand the political radicalisation. In simple terms, to paraphrase Jean-Baptiste Say<sup>3</sup>, we assume that extreme political supply creates its own demand. In other words the nature of political campaigns and the manipulation of feelings (fear, nationalism, threats...) tend to create a context in which extremist political movements are easily winning votes especially when counter powers are weak and there is no political alternative. As they create instability and threats extremist parties create enabling conditions.

This is the reason why most of extremist movement in Europe first move is to limit counter power such as Supreme Court, newspapers, NGO's ...The classical and first example is Hungary. Last 30 years Balkan countries have experienced such political trends leading to the destruction of their economic and political development. We address in this paper to the unlearned lessons from this tragic experience. The ultra-nationalist movement in Serbia was developed both by extreme right and extreme left political movement; they very soon (1987) opposed to the Slovenian proposal to join Europe.

The following quote of Vaclav Havel is very clear about the risks of populism in Europe.

“The vision of Europe as a stabilizing factor in the contemporary international environment, one that does not export war to the rest of the world but rather radiates the idea of peaceful coexistence, cannot become reality if Europe as a whole is not transformed. The gauntlet simply must be taken up. What is going on in the former Yugoslavia should be a grave

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<sup>3</sup> *A Treatise on Political Economy*, 1803

reminder to any of us who think that in Europe we can ignore with impunity what is going on next door. Unrest, chaos and violence are infectious and expansionary. We Central Europeans have directly felt the truth of this countless times, and I think it is our responsibility repeatedly to draw others' attention to this experience, especially those fortunate enough not to have undergone it as often as we have.

Western Europe has been moving toward its present degree of integration for nearly fifty years. It is clear that new members, particularly those attempting to shed the consequences of Communist rule, cannot be accepted overnight into the European Union without seriously threatening to tear the delicate threads from which it is woven. Nevertheless, the prospect of its expansion, and of the expansion of its influence and spirit, is in its intrinsic interest and in the intrinsic interest of Europe as a whole. There is simply no meaningful alternative to this trend. Anything else would be a return to the times when European order was not a work of consensus but of violence. And the evil demons are lying in wait. A vacuum, the decay of values, the fear of freedom, suffering and poverty, chaos these are the environments in which they flourish. They must not be given that opportunity.

For if the future European order does not emerge from a broadening European Union, based on the best European values and willing to defend and transmit them, it could well happen that the organization of this future will fall into the hands of a cast of fools, fanatics, populists and demagogues waiting for their chance and determined to promote the worst European traditions. And there are, unfortunately, more than enough of those.” Vaclav Havel Speech to European Parliament, March 1994

Our approach is to identify the main causes of the anti-EU tendency and to provide empirical proposal to test the effect of political supply on citizens.

Our methodology is to mobilise data from the Eurobarometer survey in EU since 2004 in order to propose an explanation of recent political anti-EU trends in V4 countries The Eurobarometer survey allows us to explain the anti-EU adhesion confronting with political “affiliations” and several individual, household, settlement characteristics. We use both the entire dataset of 28 EU members’ overs 14 years. We have almost 400 thousands observations.

Our main findings are focussed on the future of V4 countries within EU and on the general trust and perception of EU future. From a careful study of Eurobarometer data we can say that most of the EU negative perceptions (EU untrusted, pessimistic view on EU and Visegrad potential exit from EU) took place in 2008 and 2011 surveys.

Not surprisingly, the extreme right and left are the most anti-EU political forces. In the Eurobarometer the same individual political perceptions are strongly unconfident with EU institutions. We found out that the economic crisis and household financial situation create a favourable context for the anti-EU perceptions, however the radical political supply is for us

the core mechanism explaining the votes. We also observe that less political discussion and the lack of access to internet reinforce these trends.

If thing is done in terms of political European offer the V4 countries and largely the EU may experience a destruction road similar to former Yugoslavia.

The paper is structured as follow. We present in the first section the literature revue on anti-European political movement. In the second section we analyse the recent political trends in V4 countries. In section 3 we present the descriptive statistics from Euro barometer. In the last section we analyse our regression results and conclude

## **Literature revue: what can explain Euroscepticism?**

The literature review will follow the following structure: first, we will define what “Euroscepticism” is and distinguish its different types; later, we will discuss different possible causes of Euroscepticism, its interaction with economic conditions and crisis, political institutions and media; and finally, we will examine the rise of Euroscepticism in V4 countries.

### ***Euroscepticism Spectrum***

As the political trends within the EU are moving toward anti-EU votes it is important to understand what behind it. Euroscepticism is defined as “the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration” (Taggart, 1998).

Euroscepticism has changed over the decades according to the context in the EU as a whole and its member states (Vasilopoulou, 2013). While in the 1980s Euroscepticism was seen as negative moods towards European cooperation, in the 1990s it was translated into opposition to Maastricht Treaty (1992 referendum in France) and deeper integration, and in the 2000s it was about hostility to the EU or the wish to leave it (see the evolution of pools for exit in graph 6). Moreover, ideology of apolitical party cannot always tell us about its attitude towards European project. Opposition is diverse in its origin: it has been openly expressed by extreme left, extreme right, and single-issue anti-EU parties. Thus, even though empirically

parties in the periphery of their party system tend to have anti-EU sentiments, mainstream parties, as for instance the British Conservatives, follow the same path (Vasilopoulou, 2013).

There are different classifications of Euroscepticism. “Hard” and “soft” Euroscepticism are distinguished. While “hard” one is about rejection of the EU as such and a wish for withdrawal, “soft” one is characterized by “qualified” or “contingent” opposition to European integration, which includes opposition to specific policies or national-interest opposition (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2001). However, Nicoli (2015) argues that while definition of “hard” Euroscepticism is, of straightforward, the definition of “soft” Euroscepticism is rather blurry as the institutionalization of the EU within the treaties implies that a criticism towards the policies is also a criticism towards the system itself to some extent. Moreover, other authors point out to four categories: Euro-enthusiasts, Europragmatists, Eurosceptics and Eurorejects (Kopecky and Muddle, 2002). Meanwhile, six-point continuum of rejectionist, revisionist, minimalist, gradualist, reformist and maximalist are defined (Flood, 2002). The nature of Euroscepticism from a public opinion perspective can be divided into four types: economic, sovereignty, democratic and sociopolitical Euroscepticism (Sørensen, 2008). Wessels (2007) makes distinction between critical Europeans, Eurosceptics and adamant Eurosceptics. While critics tend to demand a better or different EU, skeptics are against the EU as such.

	<i>Definition</i>	<i>Political Parties</i>
<i>Hard Euroscepticism</i>	a principled opposition to the EU and European integration, wish to withdraw from membership, or policies towards the EU that tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived.	Front National (France) Front de Gauche (France) True Finns (Finland) Jobbik (Hungary) Kotleba (Czech Rep) Freedom and Solidarity party and New Majority (Slovakia) UKIP (UK) AfD (Germany)
<i>Soft Euroscepticism</i>	no principled objection to European integration or EU membership but there are concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas that lead to the expression of qualified opposition to the EU, or where there is a sense that 'national interest' is currently at odds with the EU's trajectory.	Ataka (Bulgaria) Conservatives (UK) Sweden Democrats (Sweden)

Source: Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2001 and authors

Wessels (2007) distinguishes Euroscepticism towards “authorities, regime and community”. “Opposition to the authorities” refers towards negative attitudes towards public officials and institutional actors that exercise EU governance. “Opposition to the regime” refers to negative attitudes towards the political values, norms and structures of the EU. “Opposition to the community” refers to negative attitudes towards other citizens – fellow members of the EU. Kopecky and Muddle (2002) define “diffuse opposition” which is opposition towards the idea of European integration, and “specific opposition”, which is opposition towards the EU as the current embodiment of that idea. However, McLaren (2006) makes a point that negative attitudes towards the EU partly reflect negative attitudes towards integration efforts. Similarly Wessels (2007) mentions that skepticism directed towards “authorities” and “regime” will accumulate and be directed towards “community”. Meanwhile, according to the research by Hungarian Republikon Institute, four groups of critics were identified among Eurosceptic parties: the EU seen as abandoning national sovereignty, disappointment about failed economic development, not understanding how institutions work and, one’s disappointment about the recent recession. According to Yves Bertoncini, director of Jacques Delors Institute, it is important to make a distinction between “Eurosceptic” parties, which strongly voice their discontent with the EU, the Euro area or the Schengen area, but don’t favor their country’s withdrawal, and “Europhobe” parties which strongly advocate such a withdrawal.<sup>4</sup>

### ***Economic conditions and Euroscepticism***

The literature defines different causes of Euroscepticism. In the 1990s most of the authors explained public attitude toward the EU through economic reasons. Thus, Anderson and Kaltenhaler (1996) found that support for European integration increases with favorable national economic performance and decreases during times of economic hardship, in particular levels of unemployment and inflation are negatively related to a country’s support for the integration process.<sup>5</sup> Later works considered impact of individuals’ cost-benefit analysis on the attitude towards European project. Gabel (1998) asserts that the socio-economic location of individuals, such as economic positions, education or occupation, make individuals either winners or losers due to the process of the European integration. Higher

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.institutdelors.eu/media/2014europeanelections-bertoncini-jdi-may15.pdf?pdf=ok>

<sup>5</sup> <http://ejt.sagepub.com/content/2/2/175.full.pdf+html>

income earners benefit from continued integration because increased investment opportunities appear while lower income earners economically suffer due to increased capital liberalization.

According to Nicoli (2015), there is some limited evidence of an effect of the financial crisis on the rise of Eurosceptic parties, especially through the channel of youth unemployment and persistence of historically-high levels of unemployment. Serricchio, Tsakatika and Quaglia (2013) argue that the crisis did not substantially bring economic factors back in as an important source of Euroscepticism, confirming that national identity and political institutions play an increasingly important role in explaining public Euroscepticism. In our analysis of Eurobarometer data we found reinforce negative perceptions of EU in 2008 and 2011. This is corresponding, somehow, to the double-dip recession the EU faced. In our econometric analysis (see last part of the paper) we check for the economic crisis effect on the trust and pessimism about the EU.

### ***Political institutions and Euroscepticism***

Some authors argue that attitude towards the EU depends on domestic political institutions. Trust in domestic political institutions has a positive impact on attitude towards the EU (Anderson, 1998). On the contrary, Sanchez-Cuenca (2000) points out that decrease of trust in national political institutions increase public support for the EU, as EU institutions are seen as substitutes for ineffective domestic political institutions. Furthermore, the fall of confidence in traditional mainstream parties, especially during economic turndown, may lead to the increasing popularity of Eurosceptic parties (Anderson, 1998; Bellucci et al., 2012). Moreover, according to Haas (2003), Euroscepticism is a possible outcome in the form of nationalist reaction to progressive centralization of political power. In our regression we control for the perception of national institution. The non-confidence in the EU institutions are often correlated with the lack of confidence in national one.

### ***Media and Euroscepticism***

Other authors define media as one of the catalysts of Euroscepticism. According to Nicoli (2015) this is channeled through three main affects: a contagion effect, meaning that the success of a Eurosceptic party in one country can encourage developments of similar mechanisms in other countries Marks and Hooge, 2008); mediatisation of supranational

politics as a leading factor in explaining diffusion of populist movements (Kriesi, 2013); national media can play a role in providing asymmetric visibility to national politicians towards European policy-makers, creating space for the blaming game played by national parties towards the EU. Finally, the media can play a double role in both fueling and reducing Euroscepticism, depending on the pervasiveness of the news and individual-level characteristics. In our econometric model (see section 5) we test the different media (TV, radio, internet...) impacts of EU perceptions.

### ***Eurobarometer and previous studies***

There are previous studies which used data from the Eurobarometer survey in order to examine trends in attitude towards the EU among the Member States.

Arnold et al. (2012) aim to understand the determinants of trust in the institutions of the European Union and find that the majority of the variation in trust in the institutions of the European Union is driven by individual-level predictors.

Boros and Vasali (2013) relying on the Eurobarometer survey map trends within Euroscepticism, identify Eurosceptic demographics, and make recommendations for reaching Eurosceptic or apathetic European citizens.

Furthermore, Roth et al. (2011) analyse if the financial crisis shattered trust in the national and European institutions over the previous decade and comes to the conclusion that inflation reduces citizens' trust only when the economy runs smoothly.

### ***Euroscepticism in V4***

Very few academic papers analyze the rise of anti-EU trend in V4 countries. Different literature names different reasons for such a change. There is an increasing rise in populism and anti-EU sentiment in Central Europe as the EU is considered to be imposing too much. (Emmanouilidis, 2011). Some state that behind the anti-EU vote in the region stands "a protest against socio-economic problems at home". (Gros, 2014) On the other hand, some literature rejects the positive relation between the economic crisis and anti-EU sentiments in the region. Instead, Central Europeans display strong "Crisis-Europragmatist" sentiments, supporting European cooperation to solve the financial crisis as long as other, richer



economies bear the costs. (Heinisch & Mühlböck, 2015) Others highlight that the populist parties in the region win thanks to “the politics of historical memory” which they use as their ideological weapon. Moreover, Central European countries are characterized by the phenomenon of the emergence of personal parties, when citizens are more eager to vote not for the party programme but rather for well-known personalities. (Ágh, 2015). Furthermore, if in the 1990’s there was consensus over joining the EU and implementing reforms in Central European countries, support rates started to fall down as the direct benefits were not clearly seen by the society and thus populist leaders started to eventually succeed. (Grzymala-Busse & Innes, 2003). The EU join migration policy is very much criticized by anti-EU and populist leaders in the V4. In our econometric model (see last section of the paper), we present the perceptions toward the EU characteristics for the whole the EU sample and for V4 countries separately.

In the next section of the paper we present the political background in V4 countries.

### **Political background in V4 countries**

In this section we present the recent political trends in V4 countries. We present the main features of last elections in the four countries.

In February 1991 the Visegrad group was formed by former dissidents from Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, aiming at strengthening democratic institutions in their countries and bringing them closer to Western Europe. Most of the citizens supported the idea of joining the EU. Indeed, during referendums held in 2003 in all Visegrad countries the vote “For joining the EU” was dominant (see table 1). The goal was achieved in on 1 May 2004, when V4 joined the EU. Once Donald Rumsfeld, two-time US Secretary of state, called V4 “new Europe”. However currently we can see the emergence of the anti-EU sentiment among the ruling elites in four states.

For a decade political elites were supported by the electorate in Visegrad countries in their consensus on the market-oriented domestic policies and NATO/EU-oriented foreign policy. Central European countries saw their admission to the EU in the 1990s as a “return to Europe which meant more broadly a return to the West after the experience of Soviet domination.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ash T. History of the present: essays, sketches and dispatches from Europe in the 1990s, New York: Vintage, 2001.

EU accession was supported by both sides of political spectrum. Prior to the EU-accession even though coalitions in governments rotated, they all supported the same foreign policy. For instance, in Poland between 1997 and 2005 there were two right-wing and two left-wing cabinets, but they all were pro-European.<sup>7</sup> After successful democratic transition and achievement of the main goal “to join the EU”, the consensus among the politicians ceased to exist. The EU didn’t have any more legitimacy to push national government for specific national and foreign policies, the EU structural funds were received, reforms became unpopular among the electorate and as result among political elites. There was no more common idea which was uniting the whole society. Already during elections in 2005-2006 it became clear that political crisis arrived with emergence of populism underpinned by nationalism and Euro-skepticism.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> <http://cepa.org/index/?id=5fb37d5bbdbbae16dea2f3104d7f9439>

<sup>8</sup> <https://charter97.org/en/news/2016/5/30/206727/>

Table 1: 2003 joining the EU referendum results in V4 countries

Country	For	Against
<b>Poland</b>	77,45 %	22,55 %
<b>Czech Republic</b>	77,3 %	22,7 %
<b>Slovakia</b>	93,7 %	6,3 %
<b>Hungary</b>	83,8 %	16,2 %

Source: Constructed by the authors with the data from V4's Election Commissions.

### *Current anti-EU trends in the V4 countries*

#### **Poland**

After the EU accession, Eurosceptic parties played an important role in a political life in Poland. Thus, in 2005 nationalist conservative PiS, led by Jaroslav Kaczynski, gained victory in the parliamentary and presidential elections, forming a one-party government, later joined by LPR and Self-Defence. Disagreements between PiS and its coalition partners led to the early parliamentary election in 2007, when pro-European Civic Platform (PO) won. PO came top in the parliamentary elections as well in 2011.

According to Eurobarometer survey, in 2012, for the first time after Poland's accession to the EU, the percentage of population who "tend to trust" the EU (46 %) exceeded the percentage of population who "tend to trust the EU" (41%).<sup>9</sup>

Meanwhile from 2007 till 2015 the policies of the leading party Civic Platform (PO) were pro-European. It supported German economic orthodoxy during the financial crisis, claiming Poland's belonging to northern Europe. This showed Poland's shift from "new" member state to established member state.<sup>10</sup>

In October 2015 not only PiS regains its power, but becomes the first party to win outright majority in the Polish parliament since communism fell in 1989. PiS won 235 seats out of 460 in the lower chamber of parliament, Sejm, which allowed it to form a government without need for coalition. As well it gained an outright majority in the upper chamber of parliament,

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR79\\_EUROSCEPTICISM\\_BRIEF\\_AW.pdf](http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR79_EUROSCEPTICISM_BRIEF_AW.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/publications/ia/inta92-3-02-chopinlequesne.pdf>

the Senate, winning 61 seats out of 100.<sup>11</sup> The elections of 2015 showed a reversal of several trends present in Polish politics since 1989. The victory of PiS marked a shift towards nationalism and distrust of the European Union in Poland. Moreover, it is the first time in the history of Poland since 1989 that the left-wing parties are not represented in the Polish parliament. The new government passed two laws which would undermine judicial independence and media freedom. One law introduces a two-thirds majority rule instead of a simple majority in the constitutional court, which will make more difficult for judges to block new legislation. Another law would allow a government minister to appoint and dismiss the supervisory and management boards of public television and radio.<sup>12</sup> These actions of PiS want to centralize its power. Moreover, it opposes to accept refugees fleeing war in the Middle East and Africa. Lech Walesa, the first post-communist president of Poland and leader of the pro-democracy Solidarity movement, commented the victory of PiS by saying “This government acts against Poland, against our achievements, freedom, democracy.” Till recently Poland was seen by Brussels as a pro-EU country in the region. Moreover, the election of Donald Tusk as a president of the European Council in 2014 marked the important role of Poland in the EU. However, the new government has a different vision that Central Europe doesn’t have to follow Western Europe, but find its own path to prosperity. PiS’ rhetoric is based on the concept of national interest underpinned by a sense of historical injustice.<sup>13</sup> It has asserted that Poland has an inferior position in the European community and emphasized the importance of defending national sovereignty against “external threats”.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> <http://www.euractiv.com/section/central-europe/news/vote-count-confirms-outright-majority-for-polish-eurosceptics/>

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/01/11/brussels-shares-responsibility-polands-rule-law-crisis>

<sup>13</sup> [http://gef.eu/uploads/media/Populism\\_in\\_CEE\\_-\\_Challenge\\_for\\_the\\_Future.pdf](http://gef.eu/uploads/media/Populism_in_CEE_-_Challenge_for_the_Future.pdf)

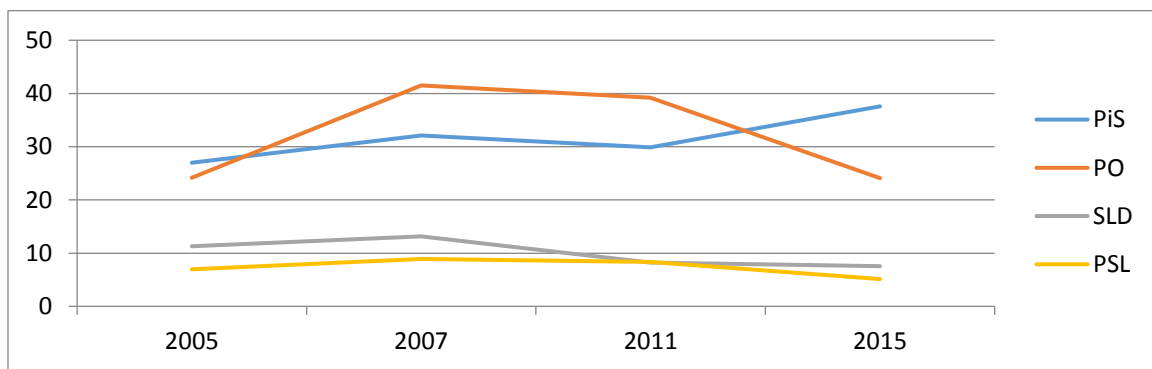
<sup>14</sup> József DÚRÓ, Party-Based Euroscepticism in the Visegrád (V4) Countries  
Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, European and Regional Studies, Vol. 6 (2014) 5–22

Table 2: Last Polish Parliamentary Election Results, 2015

2015 Polish Parliamentary Election Results		
Party and Orientation	Percent of Popular Vote	Parliamentary Seats
<b>PiS (right-wing)</b>	37,58 %	235
<b>PO (center-right)</b>	24,09 %	138
<b>Kukiz'15 (right-wing)</b>	8,81 %	42
<b>Nowoczesna (center-liberal)</b>	7,60 %	28
<b>PSL (center-right)</b>	5,13 %	16
<b>German Minority</b>	0,18 %	1
<b>Other</b>	16,61 %	0

Source: Constructed by the authors with the data from the European Election Database prepared by Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

Graph 1: Main political trends in Poland, 2005-2015



Source: Constructed by the authors with the data from the European Election Database prepared by Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

## The Czech Republic

Similarly to Poland, in the 1990s the EU was associated in minds of ordinary people in the Czech Republic with political stability, economic growth and efficient institutions.

However Euroscepticism has been quite spread in the Czech Republic. Former Czech president Vaclav Klaus used rhetoric which portrayed the EU as “they” who wanted to dictate to “us”. He even compared the EU to the oppressive Soviet rule.

Civic Democratic Party main theme is rejection of the EU membership, it criticized the economic overregulation of the EU and the threat to national interest. Moreover, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia constantly criticizes the EU for the democratic deficit and bureaucracy. The Party of Free Citizens on the basis of defending national

sovereignty wants that the Czech Republic leaves the EU. Populist Dawn party, often seen as “proto-fascist”, is calling for closure of the country’s borders to the Roma. Christian and Democratic Union advocates for “the protection of Czech interests”.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, current Deputy Prime Minister Andrej Babis and his party ANO often uses anti-EU rhetoric. Furthermore, Milos Zeman, President of the Czech Republic, opposed the EU’s migration policies and said that it is “practically impossible” for Muslim refugees to integrate.

A decade of such anti-EU rhetoric from national politicians had a strong impact on public opinion.<sup>16</sup> Thus, trust of the Czech population in the EU has decreased from 60% in 2010 to 24%, an all-time-low, in 2016.<sup>17</sup> The migration crisis in Europe contributed even more to the popularity of populist political forces in the Czech Republic. Now the EU became portrayed as a body forcing to accept migrant quotas. And the fear of the “Syrian immigrant” as “the unknown dangerous other” fueled anti-EU sentiments already embedded in the society.<sup>18</sup>

Fortunately, current Czech government is led by the pro-European Social Democrats and has joined some important EU initiatives as the fiscal pact and adaptation of a new civil service law based on EU standards soon, as the Czech Republic is the only EU member without a civil service law which would depoliticize the state bureaucracy and decrease corruption.

Table 3: Last Czech Parliamentary Election Results, 2013

2013 Czech Republic Parliamentary Election Results		
Party and Orientation	Percent of Popular Vote	Parliamentary Seats
<b>Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) (left-wing)</b>	20,46 %	50
<b>ANO 2011 (centrist)</b>	18,66 %	47
<b>Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) (far-left)</b>	14,91 %	33
<b>TOP 09 (liberal conservative)</b>	12,00 %	26
<b>Civic Democratic Party (ODS) (liberal conservative)</b>	7,73 %	16
<b>Dawn of Direct Democracy (ÚSVIT) (right-wing)</b>	6,89 %	14
<b>Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People's Party (KDU-ČSL) (Christian democratic)</b>	(6,78 %	14
<b>Other</b>	12,57 %	0

Source: Constructed by the authors with the data from the European Election Database prepared by Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

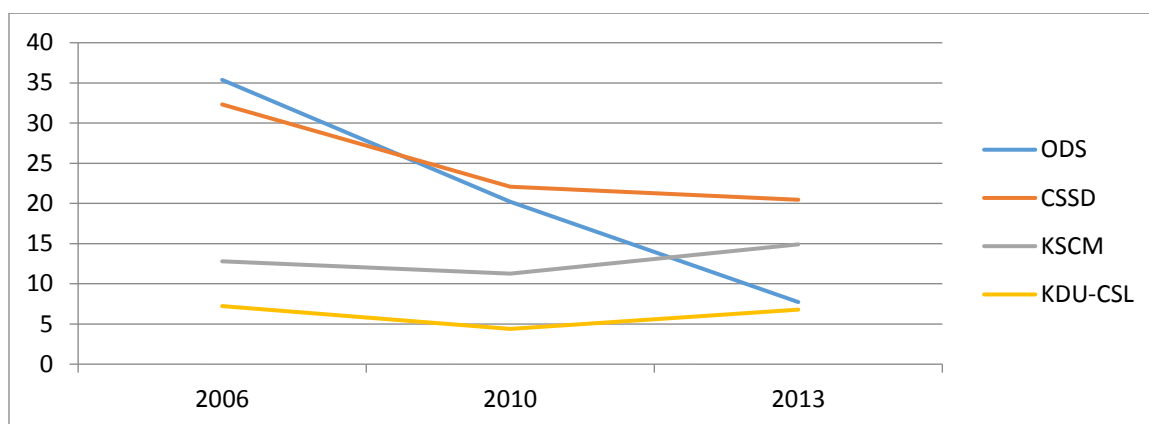
<sup>15</sup> <http://www.economist.com/news/europe/21602744-ten-years-after-joining-european-union-most-czech-parties-are-anti-eu-unloved-union>

<sup>16</sup> <http://en.theeuropean.eu/jiri-pehe/8464-how-the-czech-republics-eurooptimism-turned-sour>

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.socialeurope.eu/2016/06/czechs-losing-faith-eu/>

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.socialeurope.eu/2016/06/czechs-losing-faith-eu/>

Graph 1: Main political trends in Czech Republic, 2006-2013



Source: Constructed by the authors with the data from the European Election Database prepared by Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

## Slovakia

Meanwhile, in Slovakia Euroscepticism has been more marginalized. An openly anti-EU Slovak National Party won seats in Slovak Parliament in 2002, 2012 and 2016. Interestingly, the main political discourse of the party was moved from criticizing Hungarian minority to criticizing the EU.<sup>19</sup> Other anti-EU political parties in Slovakia are the Freedom and Solidarity (SaS) party and the New Majority (NOVA), which oppose the EU, because, according to them, it reduces national sovereignty. In recent parliamentary elections held on March 5 this year current Prime Minister Robert Fico's SMER party gained the most seats in parliament. However, its anti-EU and anti-immigrant rhetoric made it possible that the extremist party People's Party – Our Slovakia of Marian Kotleba entered the parliament for the first time. The party called NATO a terrorist organization and keeps attacking the EU and the euro. After the UK vote to withdraw from the EU, Our Slovakia announced that it would begin to collect signatures to organize the same referendum at home.

Furthermore, it seems that the electorate is rather EU-apathetic as in European parliamentary elections in 2004 and 2009 Slovakia recorded the lowest turnout in the history of European elections (17% and 19,6% of eligible voters, respectively).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> <https://euobserver.com/eu-elections/123960>

<sup>20</sup> <http://theconversation.com/eu-election-slovakia-where-apathy-vies-with-euroscepticism-25789>

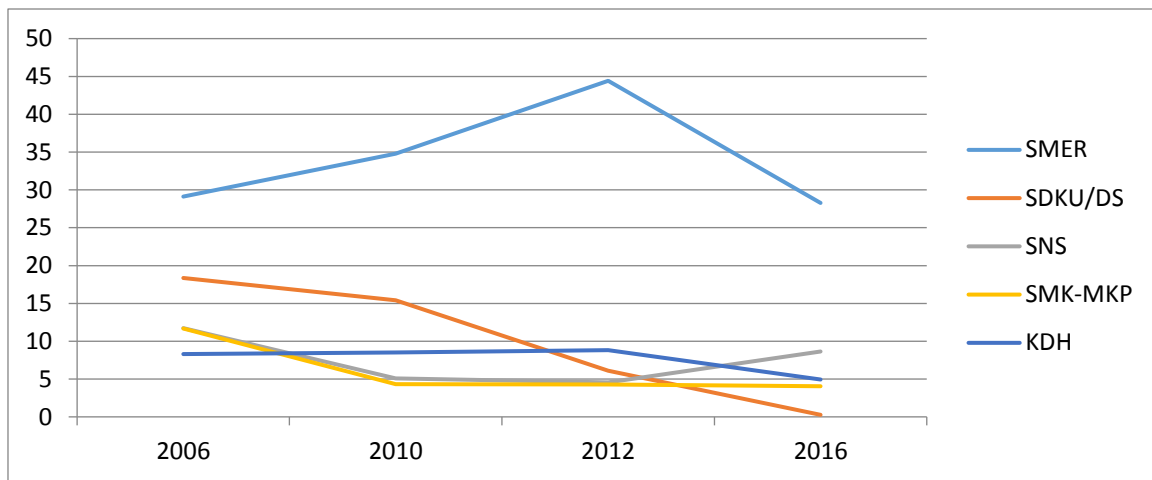
Table 4: Last Slovak Parliamentary Election Results, 2016

<b>2016 Slovak Parliamentary Election Results</b>		
<b>Party and Orientation</b>	<b>Percent of Popular Vote</b>	<b>Parliamentary Seats</b>
<b>Direction – Social Democracy Smer (left-wing)</b>	28,28 %	49
<b>Freedom and Solidarity (centre-right)</b>	12,10 %	21
<b>OEANO–NOVA (centre-right)</b>	11,03 %	19
<b>Slovak National Party (right-wing)</b>	8,64 %	15
<b>Kotleba – People's Party Our Slovakia (far right)</b>	8,04 %	14
<b>We Are Family (centre-right)</b>	6,63 %	11
<b>Most–Híd (centre)</b>	6,50 %	11
<b>Network (centre)</b>	5,61 %	10
<b>Other</b>	13,17 %	0

Source: Constructed by the authors with the data from the European Election Database prepared by Norwegian Centre for Research Data.



Graph 3: Main political trends in Slovakia, 2006-2016



Source: Constructed by the authors with the data from the European Election Database prepared by Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

## Hungary

In 2010 a new nationalist party Jobbik gained seats in the National Assembly. It considers the EU to be a threat to national sovereignty of Hungary and sees the EU accession as the colonization of Hungary by Western Europe. Moreover, Jobbik spreads racist, anti-Semitic, anti-Roma and Eurosceptic messages. Jobbik leader Gabor Vona said that the EU is a colonial empire, where the stronger member states use the poorer ones for cheap labour and market access. The latest parliamentary elections meanwhile confirmed the increasing popularity of this political force.

Moreover, in 2010 current Prime Minister Viktor Orban's party Fidesz came to power. It limited the constitutional court's powers, introduced a new constitution, changed the electoral system and set up a new media regulator in order to stay in power. In this way the party used its four years in office in order to shape every aspect of the electoral system to its advantage.<sup>21</sup> Orban compared EU bureaucrats to Soviet apparatchiks. Furthermore, he said that his government started the freedom fight to defend Hungarian national sovereignty against foreign speculators and international bodies as the EU and the IMF.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.fpri.org/2014/04/recent-elections-in-central-europe/>

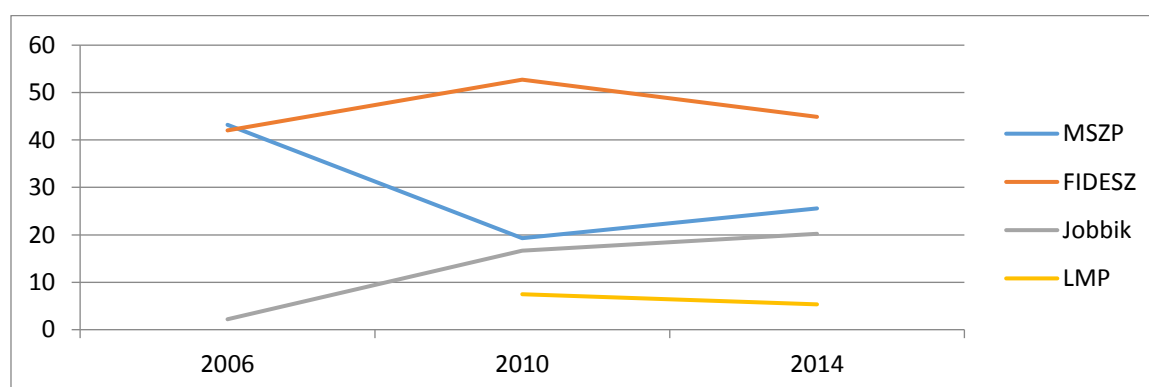
<sup>22</sup> [http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR79\\_EUROSCEPTICISM\\_BRIEF\\_AW.pdf](http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR79_EUROSCEPTICISM_BRIEF_AW.pdf)

Table 5: Last Hungarian Parliamentary Election Results, 2014

2014 Hungarian Parliamentary Election Results		
Party and Orientation	Percent of Popular Vote	Parliamentary Seats
<b>Fidesz (right)</b>	44,54 %	133
<b>MSZP (left)</b>	25,99 %	38
<b>Jobbik (far-right)</b>	20,54 %	23
<b>LMP (left)</b>	5,26 %	5
<b>Other</b>	3,67 %	0

Sources: <sup>23</sup>

Graph 4: Main political trends in Hungary, 2006-2014



Source: Constructed by the authors with the data from the European Election Database prepared by Norwegian Centre for Research Data.

In overall, on issues other than migration, current governments in Slovakia and the Czech Republic have been more pro-EU in comparison to Hungary and Poland. V4 have been recently united by anti-immigrant sentiment. In September last year Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia voted against proposed by the European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's proposal of a quota system for refugees based on country's size, DGP, and unemployment rate. Moreover, V4 have been opposing the EU's climate policies.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.fpri.org/2014/04/recent-elections-in-central-europe/>

The question on Russia-Ukraine conflict divided the V4 group, as Poland has been the only member which from the beginning openly opposed the Russian annexation of the Crimea and consequent intervention in the east of Ukraine, demanding the concrete actions. Meanwhile, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia were initially opposing economic sanctions against Russia, preferring to save their economic relations with the latter.

Such political change in the countries of V4 has been explained by Stefan Lehne from Carnegie Europe “The EU accession process was artificially imposing discipline on the ruling elites in these countries, all of which advocated a change from post-communism to liberal democracy because they wanted to join the EU. Temporarily, this led to a modicum of good governance and a reform momentum, but once accession was achieved, a heritage of decades of dictatorship returned to the fore”.

Judy Dempsey, senior associate at Carnegie Europe, stated that if the Visegrad group turns away from Berlin and Brussels, the big winner will be Russia. And the big losers will be Central Europeans. And this definitely contradicts the founding principle of the Visegrad group.

Nevertheless political leaders in Central Europe share anti-EU views, opinion polls show that a majority of population in the region wish to stay in the EU.

## **Eurobarometer and descriptive statistics**

Eurobarometer is a series of multi-topic, pan-European surveys undertaken for the European Commission since 1970 on attitudes towards European integration, institutions, policies, social conditions, health, culture, the economy, citizenship, security, information technology, the environment and other topics. Eurobarometer allows us to use individual and household characteristics, such as gender, age, education, professions, family structure, marital status, type of settlement, as control variables in our regressions.

Standard and Special Eurobarometer surveys are conducted in two waves per year, consisting of approximately 1,000 face-to-face interviews in the 28 EU member states. Standard and Special Eurobarometer coverage is from 1970 to 2016.

The objectives of the first “Standard” Eurobarometer were:

- To assess how European citizens perceived the activities of the European Communities;
- To forecast, as far as possible, public reaction to a given institutional or other initiative;
- To measure changes in European public opinion over time and across countries using the data collected via this barometer of opinion based on two survey waves a year in the Member States.

*Special Eurobarometer* reports are based on in-depth thematic studies carried out for various services of the European Commission or other EU Institutions and integrated in the Standard Eurobarometer's polling waves.

*Flash Eurobarometers* are ad hoc thematic telephone interviews conducted at the request of any service of the European Commission. Flash surveys enable the Commission to obtain results relatively quickly and to focus on specific target groups, as and when required. The Eurobarometer also includes *qualitative studies*, which are used to gauge the motivation, feelings and reactions of certain selected social groups with regard to a given subject or concept, by listening to them and analysing their way of expressing themselves in discussion groups or in undirected interviews. They supplement the quantitative surveys available to the Commission. They are used to upstream/downstream of quantitative Standard or Flash Eurobarometer surveys:

- Upstream: to define more clearly a problem and/or to design a questionnaire for a future survey to be used to quantify the results of the qualitative phase;

- Downstream: to examine in greater depth certain results obtained from a quantitative survey and to gain a better understanding of the reasoning and motivation of individuals.

Eurobarometer has three essential features: The repetition at regular intervals of certain questions i) always worded in the same way ii) using the same reliable methodology iii) in all the European Union Member States and the candidate countries, meaning that it is possible to present this survey as a truly revealing indicator of changing opinion, the evolution of which can be perceived with precision. Eurobarometer contains a series of questions commissioned by various Directorates-General of the European Commission. The use of a data collection method which is consistent over time and space makes it possible accurately to compare changes in opinion in different Member States and at different periods. This is essential for getting an overview of European public opinion and for identifying disparities between Member States.

Today's Standard Eurobarometer surveys cover the 28 Member States of the European Union, five candidate countries for accession to the European Union - Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey - and the northern part of Cyprus that is not controlled by the government of the Republic of Cyprus. In addition, the surveys occasionally include three member states of the European Free Trade Association - Norway, Switzerland and Iceland as well as the United States. As a result, Eurobarometer has become one of the largest opinion polls in the world with a unique cross-national and cross-temporal survey programme.

In our analysis, because the data are comparable, we use data from 2004 until 2016.

Studying the Eurobarometer trends over the last years, we may observe a shift toward more anti-EU positions. The survey do not show V4 countries as particularly anti-EU except recently for the EU migration policy and somehow for a possible exit from EU (see graphs 6 and 7).

The EU perceptions are generally negative especially since 2008. A first drop is registered in 2008 and second one in 2011 (see graphs 5 and 8). The economic crisis is certainly responsible for part of the anti-EU trend, as EU was supposed to insure economic growth and wealth. This findings are in line with Kaltenhaler (1996).

However, in the Eurobarometer survey, we have quite a large heterogeneity across V4 countries (see graphs 14-16). The V4 countries have common political patters but also some specificities. For instance, Hungary is often the most critical country toward the EU. Hungary

is for example the less optimistic, not considering benefiting from the EU. The rise of Europhobic political parties in the region is sometime even happening before the crisis and correspond to specific political campaigns like the anti-migrants/refugees argumentation. The V4 countries (especially Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia) are among the most critical EU countries toward migration from outside EU (see graph 16).

Migration is one of the traditional thematic of anti-EU political movement and it is used a “fear” political argument against immigration common EU policies.

## **Econometric Analysis**

We present our results in following tables (Tables 6 and 7 in appendix). We use simple nonlinear econometric models: probit and ordered probit. We provide detail understanding of the individual, household and political characteristics for EU countries and separately for V4 countries.

We discuss the results for the variables on trust in EU institutions, EU future and possible exit from the EU for the whole sample and the sub-sample of V4 countries.

For the whole sample, we found standard results for individual characteristics: women, young people and educated are rather more confident with EU institutions and more optimistic for EU. In large cities people are also more confident with EU institutions. This is also true in V4 countries.

Political and economic self-assessment are significant for the trust in EU and the EU perspectives in the future. Not surprisingly radical political positioning (1-2 or 9-10) on the 10 ladders self-assessment political scale are among people not confident and pessimistic about EU future. More unexpected, people positioning themselves on the right scale (conservative) are more pro-EU. People feeling or facing economic difficulties are less confident with EU institutions.

Not having access to internet and not discussing political issues with friends or relatives reinforce the global pessimistic views on EU. It looks like the more people are isolated, not

using internet and not socially discussing their political position the more they tend to be unconfident with EU.

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## Appendix

Table 6: Probit regression on the EU trust, EU whole sample, 2004-2016

	Baseline	Baseline + country dummies	Baseline + country & year dummies	Baseline + country dummies + specific questions	Baseline + specific questions + V4
<i>Please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust The European Union?</i>					
Gender	-.0240745*** (.0048362)	-.0367324*** (.0048837)	-.0368746 (.0049211)	.0082416 (.0134264)	.028686* (.0126506)
Age	-.002498*** (.0002084)	-.0021582*** (.0002112)	-.0010935*** (.0002136)	0000866 (.0006393)	.0001746 .0005996
High School	-.0658838*** (.0085133)	-.0750228*** (.0087351)	-.0370948*** (.0088276)	-.036389 (.0278472)	-.0046408 (.0251451)
Completed High School	.1119217*** (.0089123)	.0470381*** (.0091118)	.1030476*** (.0092244)	.0790405** (.0291198)	.1916814*** (.0257406)
University	.2169932*** (.00814)	.1771738*** (.0083733)	.2355524*** (.0084889)	.2294878*** (.0279786)	.3434825*** (.0245732)
Self-employed	-.1981122*** (.0131983)	-.1919177*** (.0133333)	-.2037181*** (.0134328)	-.182731*** (.0405504)	-.1548811*** (.0364403)
Managers	-.0863096*** (.0121436)	-.0849172*** (.0122606)	-.0914583*** (.012349)	-.13419*** (.0365837)	-.0418066 (.0331385)
Other white collars	-.1918078*** (.0120066)	-.201037*** (.0121273)	-.1987613*** (.0122163)	-.213499*** (.0366237)	-.1594676*** (.033254)
Manual workers	-.256190*** (.011261)	-.267870*** (.0113665)	-.271026*** (.0114516)	-.29086*** (.0351148)	-.205481*** (.0316938)
House persons	-.147925*** (.0139122)	-.1547726*** (.0140577)	-.1849449*** (.0141744)	-.221843*** (.045799)	-.1992039*** (.0413877)
Unemployed	-.3878192*** (.0126931)	-.3977077*** (.0128183)	-.3673081*** (.012928)	-.31037*** (.0384641)	-.2108756*** (.0344198)
Retired	-.1669692*** (.013923)	-.1955334*** (.0140667)	-.2063693*** (.014175)	-.198666*** (.0416275)	-.2108756** (.0344198)
Rural area or village	-.0294522*** (.0059821)	-.0510711*** (.0060902)	-.0540299*** (.0061389)	0015432 (.0177714)	.0429042** (.016284)
Small/middle town	-.0367213*** (.0058568)	-.0254903*** (.0059671)	-.0207349** (.0060152)	-.0223215 (.0164344)	.0010478 (.0150495)
Internet				-.0184068* (.0089344)	.0211533** (.0080246)
Left-right placement				.0731833*** (.0086989)	.0982593*** (.0080729)
Discuss national matters				-.04787** (.0141424)	-.0164661 (.0130158)
Discuss EU matters				-.029246* (.0141136)	-.0460262*** (.0129412)
Bills				.3507046*** (.0232094)	.2966948*** (.0202539)
V4					.1809934** (.0558709)
ageV4					.028686**

					(.0126506)
Constant	.2758471*** (.0136136)	.258823*** (.0179475)	.058528*** (.0200562)	-.235741*** (.0668992)	-.4999391*** (.0520416)
Year dummies	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
Country dummies	No	Yes	Yes	No	No
N° of obs.	293025	293025	293025	39353	42641
Log likelihood	-199837.26	-196079.34	-192444.98	-25510.3	-28855.317
Pseudo R2	0.0152	0.0337	0.0516	0.0645	0.0236

Notes: 0-No trust; 1-Trust; Reference modalities are: secondary school, large cities, and student.  
Eurobarometer data 2004-16

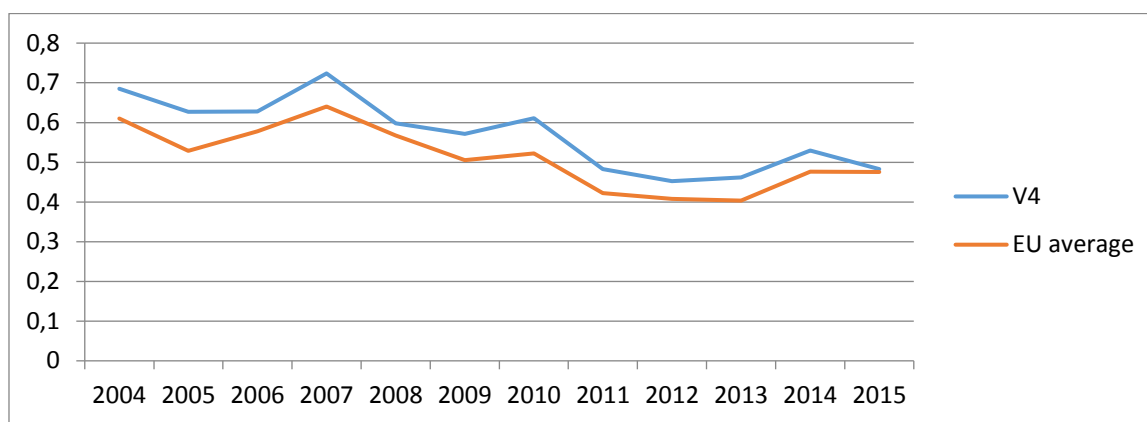
Table 7: Ordered Probit on the future outside the EU, EU whole sample, 2012-2016

	Baseline	Baseline + country dummies	Baseline + country & year dummies	Baseline + country dummies + specific questions	Baseline + + specific questions + V4
<i>Future outside EU</i>					
Gender	.0590797*** (.0070991)	.0541114*** (.0071523)	.0539797*** (.0071534)	.0354292** (.0112456)	.0862363*** (.0134868)
Age	-.003498*** (.000313)	-.002733*** (.0003189)	-.002724*** (.0003194)	-.004422*** (.0005309)	-.006422*** (.0006418)
High School	.0147312 (.0136926)	-.0451665** (.014425)	-.0476287** (.0144303)	-.0348406 (.0235258)	.0179291 (.0283845)
Completed High School	-.092272*** (.0140476)	-.17480*** (.0149246)	-.17775*** (.0149334)	-.155478*** (.0246214)	-.0581334* (.0292195)
University	-.30799*** (.0131216)	-.338977*** (.0141468)	-.338977*** (.0141579)	-.315320*** (.0237968)	-.248554*** (.0276892)
Self-employed	.077779*** .0204183	.0347341* (.0205713)	.0351733* (.0205754)	.0824654* (.0343001)	.1414445*** (.0404946)
Managers	-.0611324** .0186204	-.07452*** (.0187474)	-.074351*** (.0187505)	-.0051155 (.0308589)	.0738998* (.036127)
Other white collars	.0918019*** .0183246	.0665641*** (.0184708)	.0664628*** (.0184735)	.1135457*** (.0308016)	.1868602*** (.0364841)
Manual workers	.1488292*** (.0174519)	.1624735*** (.0175751)	.1624708*** (.0175778)	.1914992*** (.0297198)	.2161367*** (.0352635)
House persons	.0448207* (.0223833)	.0882326*** (.0226659)	.0874862*** (.0226734)	.0944743* (.0385785)	.031018*** (.0459508)
Unemployed	.1881586*** (.0190997)	.1926286*** (.0192389)	.1951436*** (.0192459)	.1863544*** (.0329747)	.1957425*** (.0396673)
Retired	.1157359*** (.0213016)	.0866761*** (.0214582)	.0875962*** (.0214628)	.1015571** (.0351891)	.1346942** (.0418468)
Rural area or village	.0185529* (.0090845)	.044841*** (.0093275)	.0439318*** (.0093297)	.0371833* (.0149303)	.0545885** (.0175273)
Small/middle town	.0229927** (.0086172)	.0424187*** (.0088537)	.0437645*** (.0088597)	.0552504*** (.0137639)	.0432338** (.0160651)
Internet				.0541535*** (.0076203)	.094501*** (.0089533)
Left-right placement				.0256718*** (.0073133)	.0243011*** (.008685)
Discuss national matters				.0675699*** (.0120327)	.0982476*** (.0143448)
Discuss EU matters				-.032922** (.0119815)	-.022794 (.01424)
Bills				-.235497*** (.0195421)	-.202766*** (.024136)
V4					.1939957** (.0600462)
ageV4					-.0002226 (.0011363)

Country dummies	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Year dummies	No	No	Yes	No	No
N° of obs.	97541	97541	97541	40029	40029
Log likelihood	-126911.05	-124557.82	-124476.61	-50753.337	-24790.009
Pseudo R2	0.0096	0.0280	0.0286	0.0339	0.0257

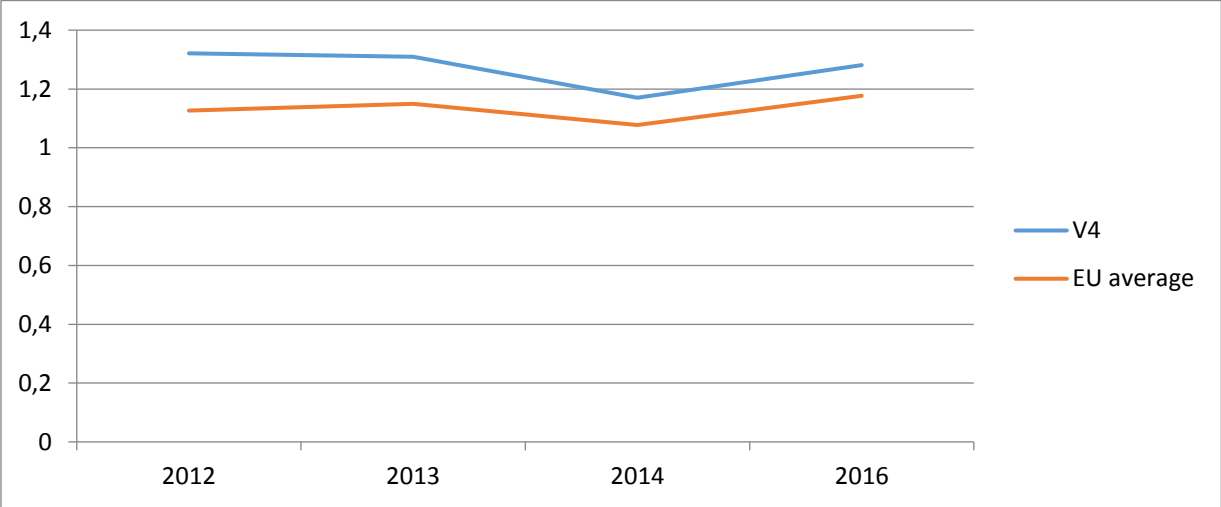
Notes: 0 – totally disagree; 1 – tend to disagree; 2 – tend to agree; 3 – totally agree. Reference modalities are: secondary school, large cities, and student

Graph 5: TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS: EUROPEAN UNION



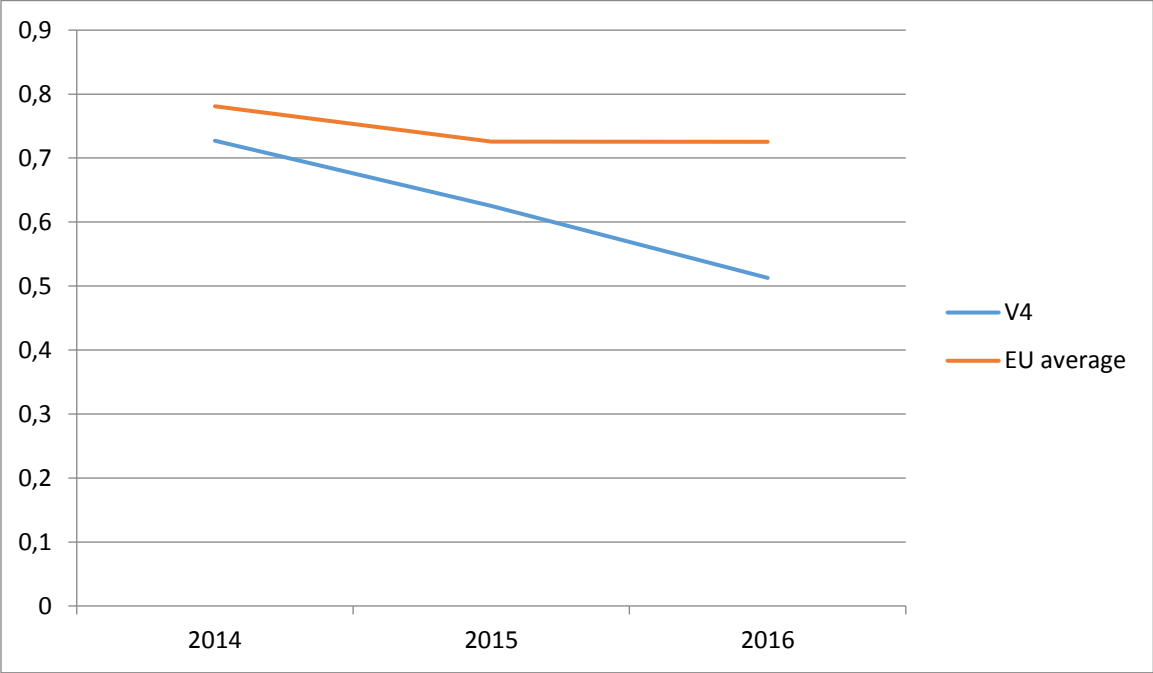
Sources: Author's construction, Eurobarometer data (2004-2015) Note: 0-No trust; 1-Trust

Graph 6: EU STATEMENTS: BETTER FUTURE OUTSIDE EU



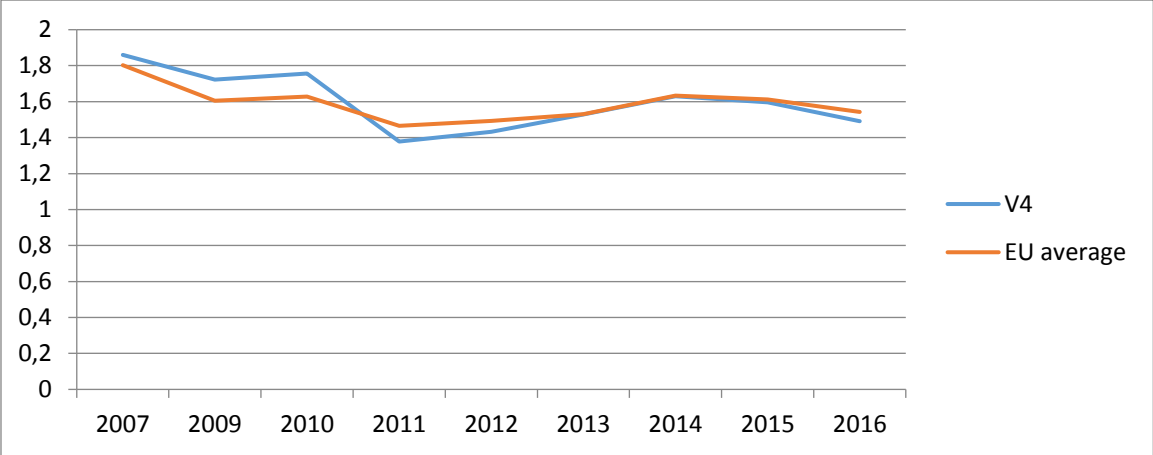
Sources: Author's construction, Eurobarometer data (2012-2016), 0 – totally disagree  
1 – tend to disagree; 2 – tend to agree; 3 – totally agree

Graph 7: EU PROPOSALS: COMMON MIGRATION POLICY



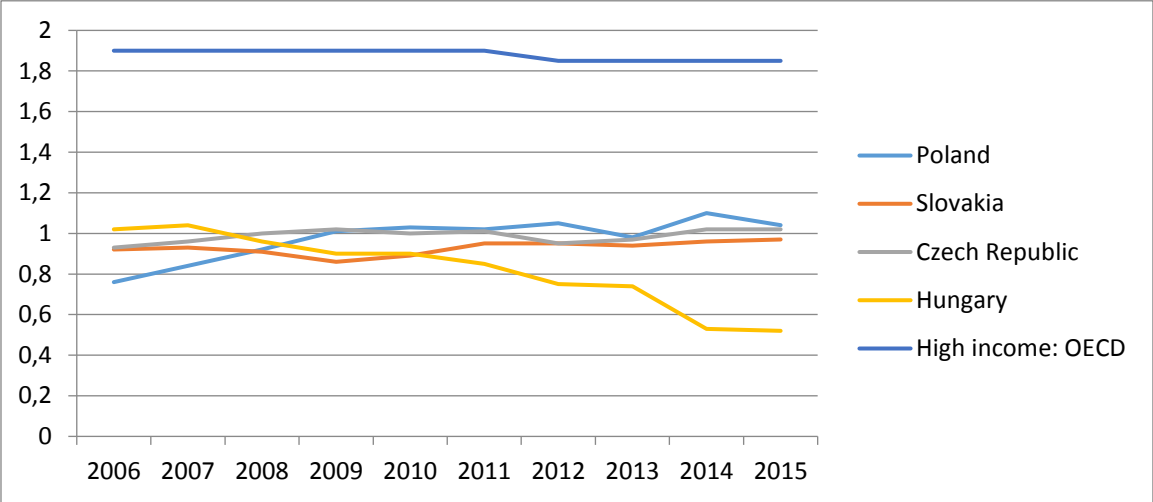
Sources: Author’s construction, Eurobarometer data (2004-2015). Note: 0-Against; 1-For

Graph 8: EU FUTURE - OPTIMISTIC/PESSIMISTIC



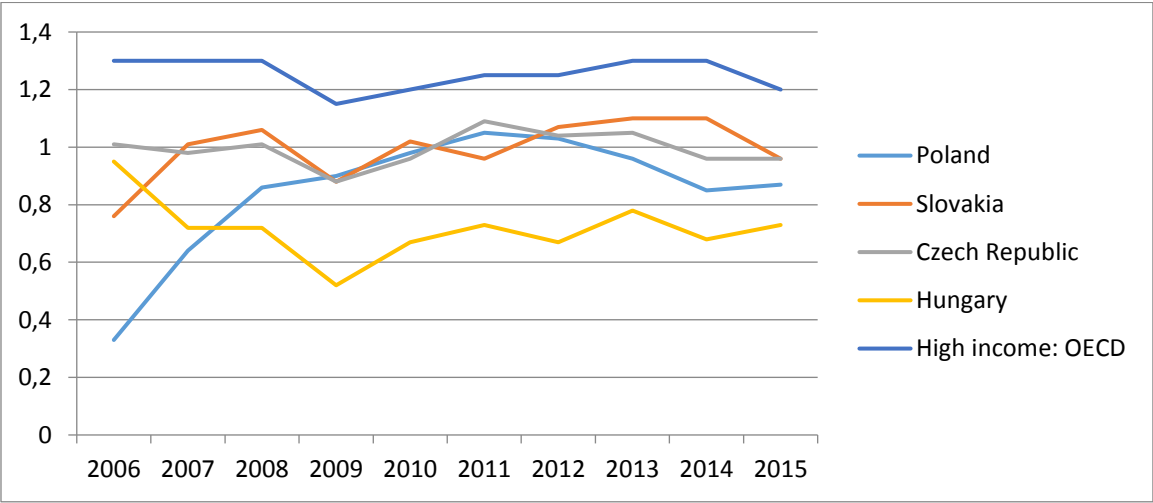
Sources: Author’s construction, Eurobarometer data (2007-2016), 0-Very pessimistic; 1-Fairly pessimistic; 2-Fairly optimistic; 3-Very optimistic

Graph 9: Voice and Accountability in V4 countries compared to OECD



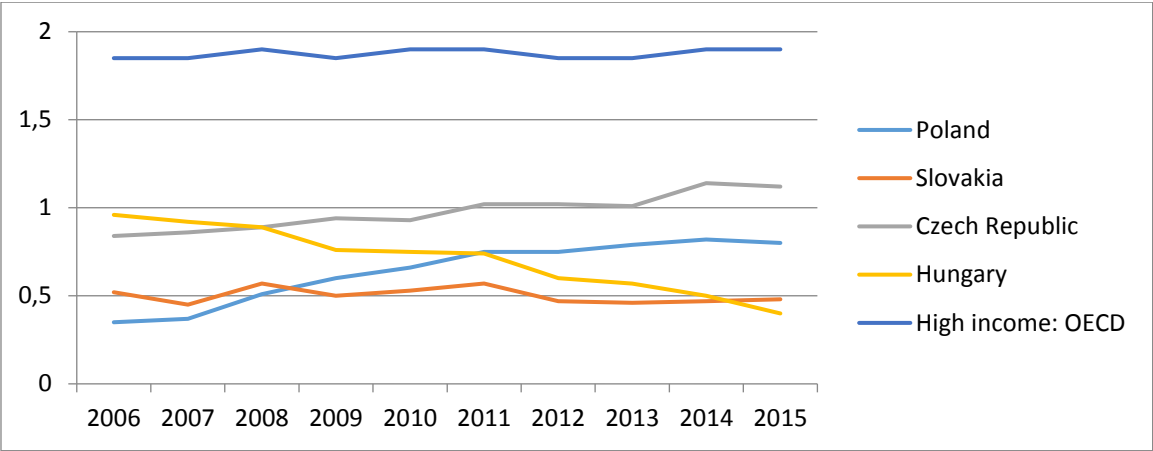
Sources: World Bank, Governance Indicators, 2016

Graph 10: Political Stability in V4 countries compared to OECD



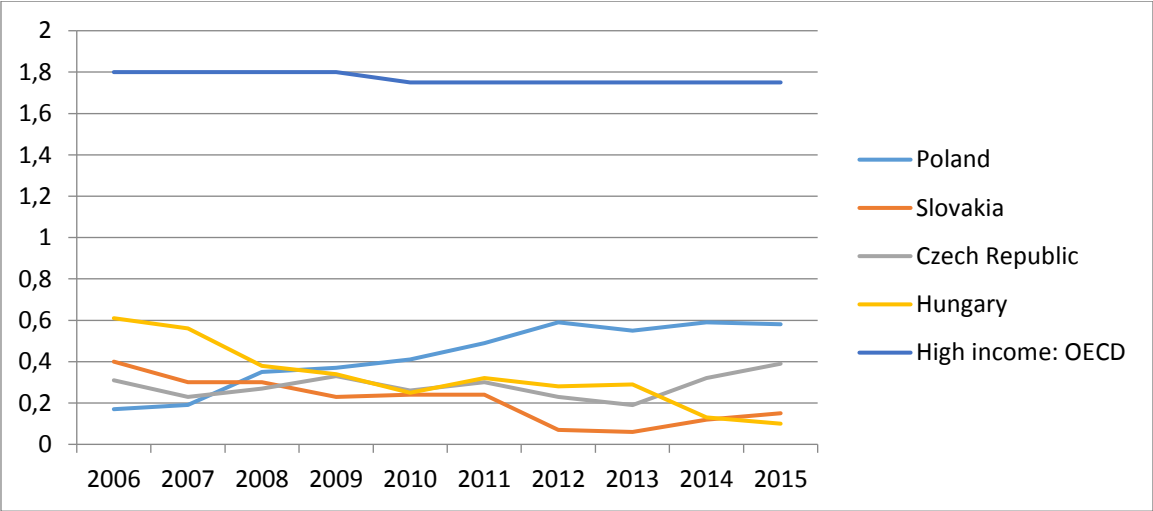
Sources: World Bank, Governance Indicators, 2016

Graph 11: Rule of Law in V4 countries compared to OECD



Sources: World Bank, Governance Indicators, 2016

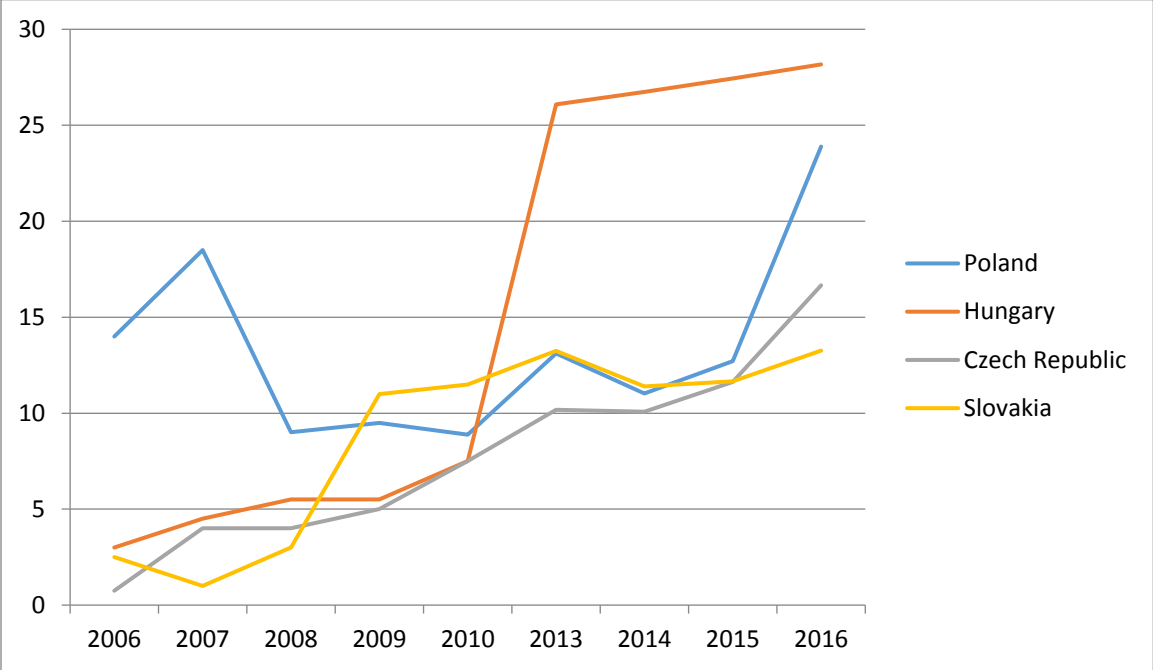
Graph 12: Control of Corruption in V4 countries compared to OECD



Sources: World Bank, Governance Indicators, 2016



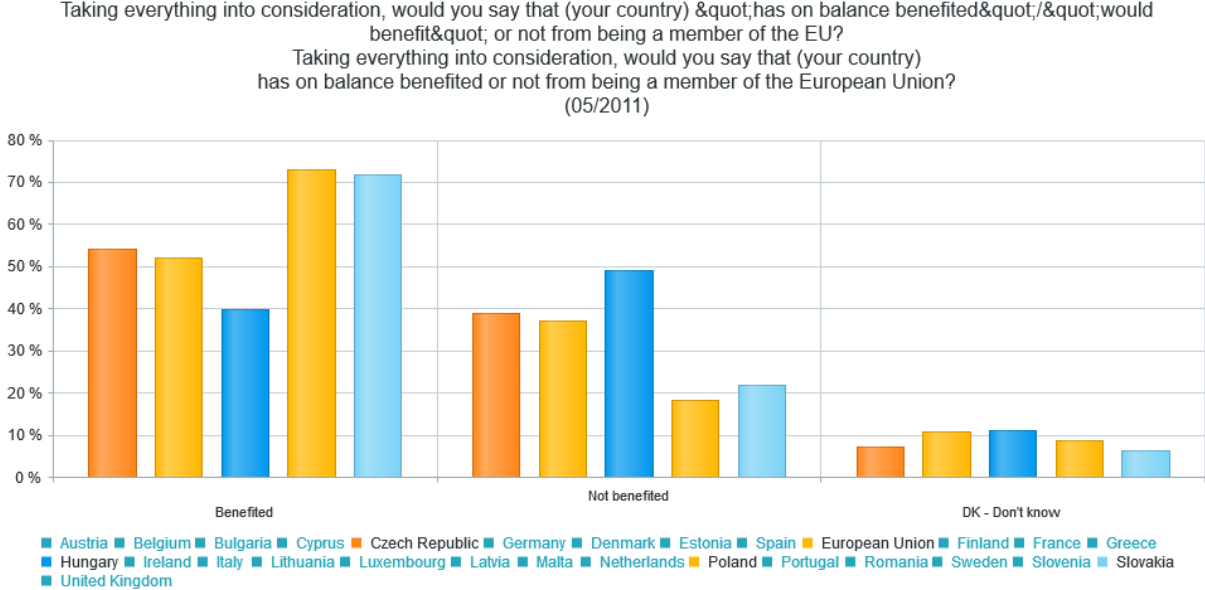
Graph 13: World Press Freedom Index in V4 countries



Sources: World Press Freedom Index, 2016

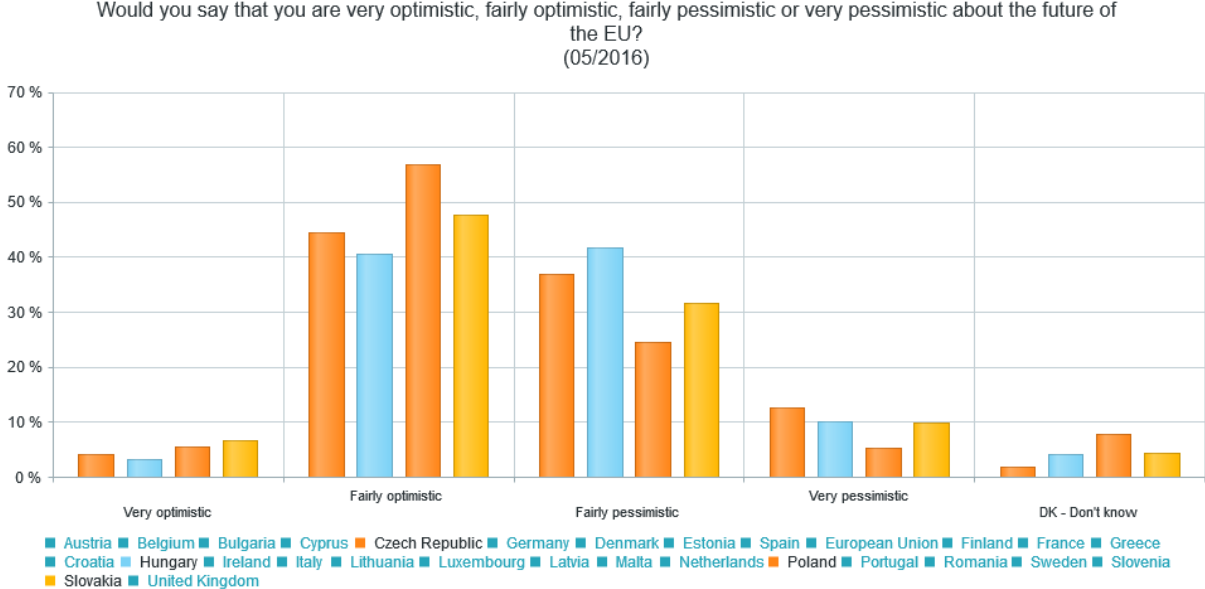
**Note: From 0 to 15 points: Good ; From 15.01 to 25 points: Fairly good ; From 25.01 to 35 points: Problematic ; From 35.01 to 55 points: Bad ; From 55.01 to 100 points: Very bad**

Graph 14: Benefits from being member of the EU in 2011, across V4 countries



Sources: Eurobarometer, 2011

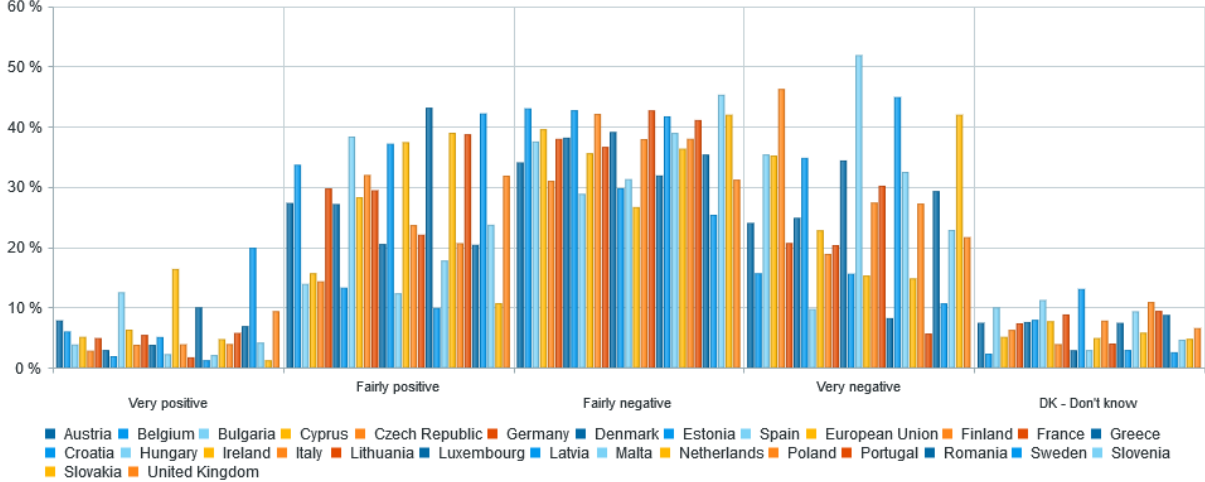
Graph 15: Optimism about future of EU in 2016, across V4 countries



Sources: Eurobarometer, 2016

Graph 16: Immigration from outside the EU in 2016, across EU countries

Please tell me whether each of the following statements evokes a positive or negative feeling for you.  
 Immigration of people from outside the EU  
 (05/2016)



Sources: Eurobarometer, 2016