II. RIGHT WING POPULISM IN EUROPE: A DISCOURSIVE RHETORIC FOCUSED ON EUROPEAN UNION, ETHNO-NATIONALISM, DEMOCRACY AND GLOBALIZATION

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1. POPULISM IN SOCIAL SCIENCES AND POLITICAL ANALYSIS.

Despite the fact that the term "populism" is highly ambivalent, it is increasingly used in the social sciences and has become a particular field in political analysis, without being precisely defined. Populism is a particular political rhetoric, which extremely simplifies complex problems and offers apparently easy, painless but at the same time vague solutions. However, due to the negative connotation of the term, far-right populist parties prefer to define themselves to be centrists, reject most of labels normally associated with them -conservative, right-wing, racist, xenophobic- and threaten to take legal actions or denounce in some cases media companies and journalists who do.

They present themselves as common men and women who understand and represent people, especially the under-privileged and under-represented

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segments, who know and voice their concerns, in contrast to the corrupt and established elites. Populism relies on charismatic leaders with decisive roles in their parties and on popular support. Populism respects the basic criteria of democracy but rejects all existing ideologies as insufficient for the particular society and tries to find and adopt its "own new path". However, it is characterised by a lack of any coherent and clear set of ideas, or any consistent ideology and policy for the long run. But the current and complex multidimensional socio-economic, political, cultural and discursive crisis our European societies are facing can be used to explain the re-emergence of populism today. They have become increasingly popular at a time when public trust in government is at the lowest level in the last at least 30 years due to the dramatic effects -unemployment, poverty, inequality- of the economic recession and financial crisis that started in 2008, due to the painful austerity plans implemented in many and due to the growing number of scandals of corruption and wrong doings by public officials. It is interesting to see how their current electoral successes began roughly at a time when public disillusionment with the established political elites was at its height due to corruption scandals and to their proven inability or unwillingness to find and adopt fair solutions to address the challenges of our European societies. Another reason is related to the consequences of the enlargement process towards Central and Eastern Europe, the recent lifting of controls on migration from Romania and Bulgaria, the arrival of young employed people from southern European countries, and the refugee crisis. These migration flows have led to political attacks by these right-wing populist parties on the impacts of central, eastern and southern European migrants on security, salaries, employment, welfare programs and social benefits, schools and hospital that hit home during a time of austerity and falling national budgets.

2. THE RISE OF RIGHT WING POPULISM IN EUROPE

Recent electoral evidence shows clearly a shocking and outstanding rise of right-wing populist movements and related political parties in most of European Union member states and beyond, like Norway, Switzerland, official candidate countries such as Serbia, and potential candidates like Ukraine. The interesting thing is that countries and world areas, such as Scandinavia, considered for decades to be a safe haven of liberal and stable democracy, cultural tolerance and social inclusion have also become examples of anti-immigration, Eurosceptic, and Islamophobic activism. Political and social movements promoting racist, xenophobic, ethno-nationalist, and populist extreme-right ideologies have grown substantially in the past two decades mobilizing a wide range of segments of European citizens, obtaining outstanding performances in local, regional, national and European Parliament elections, becoming a permanent feature and active players on the political stage, as well as champions of public debates, and influential agenda-setters.

These parties have carried out a clever strategy to obtain greater public acceptance and to expand their electoral support and political base. Current right-wing populism in Europe has dissociated itself from the non-democratic past, from the burden of racism and Nazism, has moved away from overt neo-fascist discourse, and has softened their language and rhetoric to obtain the support of a larger electoral base and to appear as a credible political force in regional, national and European politics. Right-wing populism has demonstrated an outstanding ability to take advantage of the huge possibilities offered by social networks and modern media democracies to create a permanent process of campaigning not only tied to electoral processes providing and securing a massive attention and cover from the media. Their

political communication has relied on a discursive and rhetorical strategy that simplify extremely complex phenomena, make false claims, deny the obvious, say the unsayable, transcend the limits of the permissible, and use double messages with calculated ambivalence related to race, culture, traditions, and national identity.

Right-wing populist parties in Europe have promoted an effective discourse and agenda very much single-issue oriented claiming an alternative to specific policies, like migration, globalization and European integration once they have changed considerably since their foundation, adjusted their rhetoric to the changing national and international political conditions and to the new citizens´ concerns. Another political and electoral strategy of these parties has been their ability to cut across, and transcend traditional left-right cleavages facilitated by the *Third Way* adopted by many social-democratic parties in the continent during the 1990s and 2000s. The broad consensus on economic and welfare issues between the traditional left-wing and right-wing parties provoked that many voters perceived those blocs as more or less indistinguishable inciting many of them to seek out to new political alternatives, and lead to a confrontation on moral and cultural issues and the risk of promoting a politicization and polarization of value issues which represents a great success of right-wing populism.

And finally, another crucial explanation to this outstanding performance of right-wing populism has been not only the use of increasingly sophisticated techniques of political communication and marketing, skilled use of new social media and networks within and across countries, a new political language, new tools of outreach and mobilization, but the role played by charismatic leaders with the ability to excite audiences at rallies and appeal to common people and make complicated things look easy using a populist tone and rhetoric.

But we should not forget the fact that right-wing populism is not a new phenomenon in Europe, but has a long-term history. Since the end of the Second World War, revisionist ideologies have circulated and have been promoted by neo-Nazi or far-right extremist parties and movements. But the true thing is that today this new kind of right-wing populism has specific features compared to the traditional far-right movements.

Among the main far-right populist parties in Europe, we could list the United Kingdom Independence Party （United Kingdom）, Swiss People´s Party -*Schweizerische Volkspartei-* （Switzerland）, Sweden Democrats – *Sverigedemokraterna-* （Sweden）, Kotleba- People´s Party Our Slovakia – Kotleba- *Ľudová strana – Naše Slovensko-* （Slovakia）, the Congress of the New Right - *Kongres Nowej Prawicy-* （Poland）, the Progress Party – *Fremskrittspartiet-* （Norway）, For Fatherland and Freedom/LNNK - *Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNNK-* （Latvia）, Northern League – *Lega Nord per l'Indipendenza della Padania-* （Italy）, JOBBIK, the Movement for a Better Hungary - *Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom-* （Hungary）, the Popular Association – Golden Dawn - *Laïkós Sýndesmos – Chrysí Avgí-* （Greece）, Alternative for Germany - *Alternative für Deutschland-* （Germany）, National Front – *Front National-* （France）, Finns Party – *Perussuomalaiset-* （Finland）, the Danish People´s Party - *Dansk Folkeparti-* （Denmark）, Flemish Interest – *Vlaams Belang-* （Belgium）, the Freedom Party of Austria - *Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs-* （Austria）, and the Party of Freedom -*Partij voor de Vrijheid-* （Netherlands）.

3. RIGHT-WING POPULIST RHETORIC.

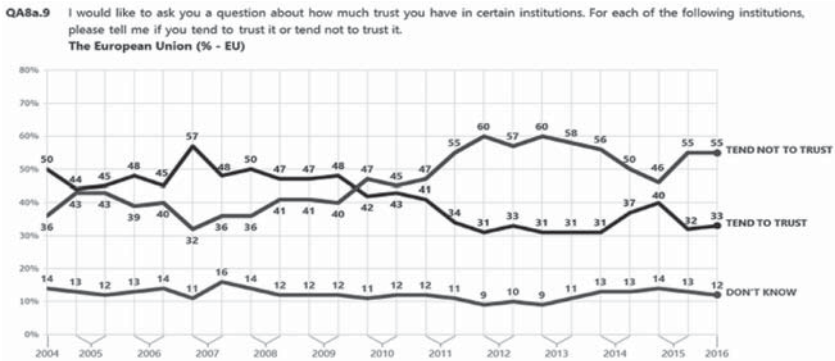Political scholars and sociologists describe those parties as right-wing

populist, whose strategies rely on a combination of ethno-nationalism, Euroscepticism, Islamophobia, anti-elite populist rhetoric and a radical critique of existing political institutions, with economic protectionism, zero tolerance approach to law and order issues, opposition to free migration, and firm defence and preservation of national culture, identity and values. They reject the common classification of the political spectrum in left and right and they see themselves as simply patriotic and centrist actors. I will analyse now their statements regarding the process of European integration, the democratic systems, the multicultural nature of our European societies, the process of Globalization, and trans-nationalization of this political and social movement.

3.1 RIGHT-WING POPULISM AND THE EUROPEAN UNION.

A crucial and primary emphasis of most of these right-wing populist parties has been on Euroscepticism calling for their country´s exit from the European Union, or for a complete transformation of the process of European integration. Being aware of the vagueness of the term Euroscepticism and the lack of consensus among scholars on it, we should understand it as a movement of opposition to European construction based on taking powers away from their national government undermining their national sovereignty. Data from Eurobarometer shows that trust in the European project has fallen not only in most EU member states, where there are a growing number of citizens with a negative image of the European Union.
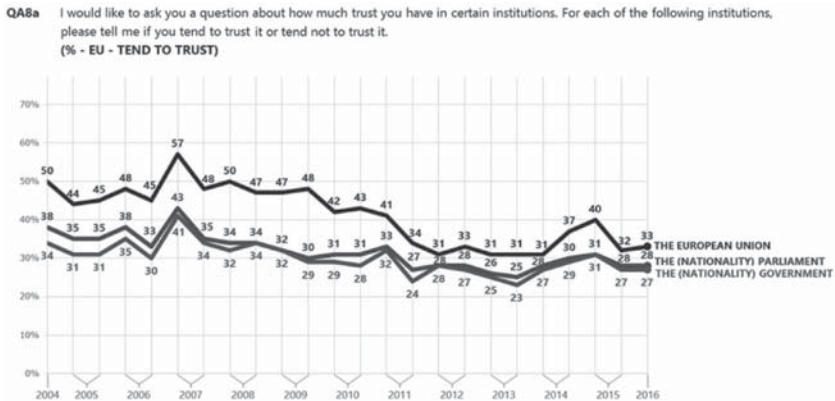
3.2 POPULISM AND DEMOCRACY.

Taking advantage of the clear apathy of the general public to mainstream politics and traditional governing parties and politicians and exploiting the damage caused by the countless cases of corruption and other scandals, far-

QA8a.9 I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.
The European Union (% - EU)

Graphic 1. European citizens' trust in the European Union.
Source: Eurobarometer EB85

right populism advocates for a rather different understanding of democracy and national and European politics and for a clearly anti-establishment position. These parties present populism as a noble ideology seeking to empower the people. Populism claims that people should govern themselves and intermediary actors of our representative democracies, like parliaments, and political parties, should be secondary instruments, as they have become potentially obstacles for true democracy. The established and corrupt political elite, with a particular agenda that exclusively satisfy their own individual or party self-interests, has betrayed the trust of the people, forgotten their democratic mandate, and ignored citizens 'concerns and demands. Right-wing populism asks for a new political system with a direct citizens involvement in the decision-making process, a new democratic order where people have more direct power, have a greater role in politics through increased use of plebiscitary tools of Swiss-style direct democracy, such as referendums, citizens' initiatives and recall. The representative democracy has created frustration, disillusion and disappointment among those segments of society

QA8a　I would like to ask you a question about how much trust you have in certain institutions. For each of the following institutions, please tell me if you tend to trust it or tend not to trust it.
(% - EU - TEND TO TRUST)

THE EUROPEAN UNION
THE (NATIONALITY) PARLIAMENT
THE (NATIONALITY) GOVERNMENT

Graphic 2. Citizens 'trust in Supranational and national political institutions.
Source: Eurobarometer EB85 – 2016.

that do not feel sufficiently represented. Then, the new expressed political goals of far-right populism are not anymore centralized totalitarianism but small government, a functioning state free of corruption in the public sphere and administration, combined with more direct democracy.

So right-wing populist parties creating an emotional identification with the people, identify themselves with the common and ordinary people, as their true representatives voicing their concerns and defending their demands, against an illegitimate and corrupt elite that seems to be responsible for corruption, mass migration, Europeanization, Globalization, and for the painful austerity measures adopted to face the economic and financial crisis. For instance, to distinguish themselves from the mainstream political establishment, the UKIP uses a populist rhetoric describing its supporters as the "people´s army", and in the same terms Jean-Marie Le Pen, former leader of the National Front, presented himself as the representative of the people against the "gang of four"（RPR, UDF, PS, Communist Party）.

3.3 POPULISM AND ETHNO-NATIONALISM.

As it was mentioned before, right-wing populism claims to speak on behalf of the people, and is rooted in the assumption that the "people" do exist. In their policies and rhetoric, they consider and advocate the existence of an ethnically and culturally homogeneous entity or society, and speak of a mythical nation, of a sovereign community that exists through time and is tied to certain space or geography. But the problem is their definition of the *demos*, who does and who doesn't belong to the people, who is included and excluded from their narrow definition. Right-wing populist parties ignore, overlook and reject traditional differences and cleavages based on class, generation, language, ideology or gender, within the people and societies. By contrast, their mythical nation is constructed in the negative, by opposing it to out-groups, and the people they are speaking for are defined by the exclusion of others. So, ethnically-based nationalism lies at the heart of right-wing populism. Their campaigns usually are accompanied by explicit xenophobic, racist or anti-Semitic propaganda in their respective nation states.

The ethno-nationalist populism shares an agenda aiming at the rejection of the cultural diversity and at the exclusion of or discrimination against sub-societies or different social groups. Today the enemy against whom right-wing populist movements and parties mobilized is a foreign enemy that succeeded in breaking into the fortress of the nation state, an ethnically, culturally and religiously foreign or defined other. The definition of the "other" is rather mutable according to the national scenario analysed. Their exclusionary, discriminative and aggressive discourse is directed against the Turks in Germany, the Roma in Central and Eastern Europe, the Jews in Britain, Austria, and Hungary, the Russian speakers in the Baltic countries such as Estonia or Latvia as a consequence of the massive demographic shifts

provoked by the large-scale immigration of Russian speaking industrial workers during the Soviet era, or the French-speakers in Belgium.

Right-wing populism has transformed immigration into a major political issue of the national agenda and public debate calling for a stop to immigration or at least a much more restrictive immigration policy and tougher integration in order to protect the cultural identity and social peace. They hold that Europe doesn't consist of naturally countries of immigration, don´t accept a multi-ethnic transformation of societies, and reject multiculturalism, described as a "national disaster". For these populist movements and parties, the answer to the increasingly complex and pluralistic societies is not multiculturalism, as was proposed by Will Kymlicka, that denationalize one´s own nation, deconstruct one´s own people, and endanger the cultural and political values of the nation-state and European Christian civilization. They believe in pure nations of homogenous peoples, so right-wing populism rejects meaningful forms of interaction between segments, and opposes social integration of marginalized groups asserting exclusionary essentialist boundaries. According to this logic, all that is alien must be firstly identified and ruled out, excluded from popular democracy, and have their rights limited, and called to return to their own fatherlands in order to ensure the nation´s/people´s survival. Ethnic identities are transformed into legitimate political topics leading to the *ethnicization* of national politics and social relations.

Another common feature of all these populist groups is the strong emphasis placed, not only on lowering immigration and rejecting multiculturalism, but also on what they call the "islamization" of Europe accompanied by an overt and blunt anti-Islam rhetoric. The growing concerns over Islamic fundamentalism and their anti-Islam stance appeared in the late 1980s and early 1990s with the *fatwa* against Salman Rushdie, the 1989 affaire *du*

foulard in France, and were aggravated with the jihadist terrorist attacks in the first half of the 2000s in United States（2001）, Spain（2004）, and the United Kingdom （2005）. Their campaigns are full of negative stereotypes presenting Islam as an totalitarian ideology, as a violent religion that try to take over the rest of the world, as a omnipresent threat not only to the Western liberal democracy, national traditions, customs and values, but also to the headlined Christianity and secularism, using an undercover cultural jihad consisting of mosques, minarets, burkhas and sharia councils.

This nativist prejudice *vis–a–vis* Muslim communities in Europe, has provoked that during the last years a prominent number of European radical right-wing populist parties have seek proximity to the state of Israel, excluding anti-Semitism from their rhetoric, recognising the holocaust and the right of Israel to secure its borders, and to defend itself, particularly against Islamic terror.

3.4 POPULISM AND GLOBALIZATION.

Another declared enemy of right-wing populism, along with the political *elites* and the defined others according to their ethnic, cultural or religious background, is globalization. Right-wing populist parties present themselves as advocates for the common and ordinary people. They search the support of those voters and citizens who are considered to be the modernization losers, those who feel threatened by globalization and the loss of national sovereignty, those who believe that socio-economic trend is directed against their social status, and the less privileged segments of European societies. Right-wing populism tends to be pro-state, criticizing the decline and dismantlement of social policy, and welfare state, and supporting a stronger role of the government on the realm of the economy. This rhetoric, traditionally

associated with the left-wingers, explains the outstanding performance of these parties among lower middle-class, unskilled workers, and blue-collar voters articulating their fears, protest and anger. Human and labor mobility associated with the globalization and the perceived negative impact on employment and wealth as well as the progressive social and economic marginalization of the working class in post industrial states, has become another central element of their official discourse and media appearance.

A significant number of right-wing populist parties analysed in this paper have combined left-wing economic policies, for instance progressive taxation or the re-institution of the wealth tax in fiscal affairs, strong support for the welfare state, healthcare, social service, elderly care and protectionism, with conservative social-cultural values, coupled with aggressive ethnic nationalism, anti-immigration and Euroscepticism. This effective political and electoral strategy has resulted in drawing support not only from left-wing parties 'voters but also from right-wing parties 'sympathizers and a self-proclaimed centrist label.

3.5 POPULISM AND TRANSNATIONALIZATION.

Another major feature of current right-wing populism in Europe is the attempt to transform itself into an all-European populist movement or party. They have created a complex web of connections among individuals, groups, and parties forming alliances across borders. This transnational phenomenon, along with the exploitation of new mass media, allows that radical ideas or successful initiatives adopted in one context prove highly contagious and truly infectious, travelling easily and effortlessly crossing boundaries, accessing diverse social audiences, receiving new adherents, attracting public attention and spreading further and faster serving as a kind of inspiration for a larger

transnational project designed to unite the European populist right under a common banner. Good examples of initiatives that were reproduced as a domino effect style across other European countries were the Swiss initiative to ban on minaret construction in 2009, and the Belgian and French restriction/ban on wearing the burkha in public spaces in the first half of 2010. Another example of transnationalization of European populist views was launched in early 2008, the European project Cities against Islamization, with the aim of serving as an ideological foundation and justification for campaigns against mosques, minarets and other Islamic symbols. Equally remarkable was the creation of the Alliance of European National Movements in Budapest on 24 October 2009[1] .

4. RIGHT WING POPULIST PERFORMANCE.

Without a coherent ideological framework but with an effective mixed set of beliefs, fears, stereotypes, attitudes and programmes based on a unique combination of exclusionary, chauvinist, nativist ideologies, neo-fascist ideas, anti-immigrant feelings, and ethno-nationalist sentiments, right-wing populist parties have obtained amazing performances in free and democratic elections gaining significant seats in decision-making assemblies to voice their demands and influence the decision-making process.

From an exclusively electoral perspective, the results of the most recent election to the European Parliament in June 2014 manifest a significant growth in right-wing extremist and populist parties that cannot be explained exclusively by the specificity of European elections and their second-order elections' status.

The 2014 European elections showed a peculiarity concerning the

Table 1. Percentage of vote / seats obtained in European Parliament Elections.

COUNTRY	PARTY	1989	1994	1999	2004	2009	2014
AUSTRIA	FPÖ		27,5 / 6	23,4 / 5	6,3 / 1	12,7 / 2	19,7 / 4
BELGIUM	VB		7,8 / 2	9,4 / 2	14,3 / 3	9,9 / 2	4,3 / 1
DENMARK	DF			5,8 / 1	6,8 / 1	15,3 / 2	26,6 / 4
FINLAND	SP!P					9,8 / 1	12,9 / 2
FRANCE	FN	11,7 / 10	10,5 / 11	5,7 / 5	9,8 / 7	6,3 / 3	24,9 / 24
GERMANY	AfD						7,1 / 7
GREECE	LS -CA						9,4 / 3
HUNGARY	JOBBIK					14,8 / 3	14,7 / 3
ITALY	LN	1,8 / 2	6,6 / 6	4,5 / 4	5,0 / 4	10,2 / 9	6,2 / 5
LATVIA	NA/TB/LNNK				29,8 / 4	7,5 / 1	14,3 / 1
NETHERLANDS						17,0 / 4	13,3 / 4
POLAND	UPR/KNP				1,9 / 0	1,1 / 0	7,2 / 4
SLOVAKIA	LsNS						1,7 / 0
SWEDEN	SD			0,2 / 0	1,1 / 0	3,3 / 0	9,7 / 2
UNITED KINGDOM	UKIP			6,5 / 3	16,2 / 12	16,5 / 13	27,5 / 24
UNITED KINGDOM	BNP			1,0 / 0	4,9 / 0	6,2 / 2	1,1 / 0

Source: Elaboration of data from ParlGorv Database http://www.parlgov.org/static/static-2014/
　　　　stable/documentation/table/view_election.html

ideological profile of the parties that benefited from the transfer of votes. The extreme-right Eurosceptic and populist parties were the main winners in 2014 European elections in several European countries. The UKIP in Britain (27,5% of the vote and 24 of UK´s 73 seats), the National Front in France (24,86% of the vote and 24 of France´s 74 seats), and the People´s Party in Denmark (26,6% of the vote and 4 of the Denmark´s 13 seats) became the best performing parties, while JOBBIK in Hungary (14,7% of the vote and 3 of the Hungary´s 21 seats) and the National Alliance in Latvia (29% of the vote and 4 of Latvia´s 9 seats) became the second best.

　　At national level, probably the most remarkable electoral achievement were in 2002 when the National Front candidate, Jean–Marie Le Pen, bypassed the socialist candidate and reach the second round challenging Jacques Chirac,

like happened in 2017 when her daughter, Marine Le Pen, reach the second round as well. Equally remarkable was the victory of the NO vote to the referendum on the Constitutional Treaty of the European Union in 2005. Similar performances were obtained in Switzerland, where the Swiss People´s Party obtained 29,4% of the vote in 2015, the best electoral result of any Swiss party since 1919. In Norway, the Progress Party obtained 23% of the vote in 2009, becoming the second largest party in Norwegian parliament, a position that was held for the first time in 1997 and subsequently in 2005. In Finland, the Finns Party won 19,1% of the vote in 2011 general elections, while in Denmark, the Danish People´s Party became in 2015 the second largest party after receiving the 20,6% of the votes. In Sweden, Sweden Democrats won 13% of the vote in 2014 election and secured the third position in Swedish parliament and party system, after obtaining parliamentary representation in Swedish *Riksdag* for the first time in 2010 general election（20 seats and 5,7% of the national vote）. In the Netherlands, the Party for Freedom won 20 seats （out of 150） in the 2017 Dutch general election becoming the second-largest party in the House of Representatives.

But certainly not less impressive was the electoral results recently obtained by the Austrian Freedom Party in 2017 general elections, 26% of the vote, Jobbik, 20% in 2014 general elections, the Czech ANO lead by Andrej Babis, 29,6% of the vote in 2017 general elections, and finally the Greek Golden Dawn, when in 2012 entered the Greek parliament for the first time after receiving 6,97% of the national vote and making them the third largest group.

Success is a word used to describe the rise of the radical populist right in contemporary Europe and can't be measured exclusively taking into account the electoral success of extremist parties in local, regional, national or European elections. Beyond their electoral performance, they have translated

their poll ratings into stronger political and sociocultural influence. In some countries, such as Austria, the Netherlands, Finland, Latvia, Denmark, Slovakia, Italy, Switzerland, and Czech Republic those parties have become power broker, supporting, participating and in some cases leading government coalitions. Their participation in national, regional or local government, their parliamentary representation, and their permanent presence in the media, allowed them to play an important role in influencing both public debates and policy interventions on issues such as immigration, multicultural policies,

Table 2. Participation of right-wing parties in national governments.

COUNTRY	PARTY					
AUSTRIA	FPÖ	1983 Sinowatz	1986 Vranitzky	2000 Schuessel 1	2002 Schuessel 2	2003 Schuessel 3
BELGIUM	VG	-	-	-	-	-
DENMARK	DF	-	-	-	-	-
FINLAND	SP!P	1983 Sorsa 6	1987 Holkeri 1			2015 Sipilae 1
FRANCE	-	-	-	-	-	-
GERMANY	AfD	-	-	-	-	-
GREECE	LS-CA	-	-	-	-	-
HUNGARY	JOBBIK	-	-	-	-	-
ITALY	LN	1994 Berlusconi 1	2001 Berlusconi 2	2005 BERLUSCONI 3	2008 BERLUSCONI 4	
LATVIA	NA/TB/LNNK	1997 KRASTS 1	1998 KRASTS 2	1998 KRISTOPANS 1	1999 KRISTOPANS 2	1999 SKELE 3
		2000 BERZINS	2002 REPSE	2006 KALVITIS 3	2007 GODMANIS 2	2009 DOMBROVSKIS 1	2010 DOMBROVSKIS 2
		2011 DOMBROVSKIS 4	2014 STRAUJUMA 1	2014 StraujumA 2	2016 Kucinskis	
NETHERLANDS	PVV				2013 Solberg	
NORWAY	Fr					
POLAND	UPR/KNP	-	-	-	-	-
SLOVAKIA	LsNS	-	-	-	-	-
SWEDEN	SD	-	-	-	-	-
SWITZERLAND	SVP	In the Federal Council since 1929 and being the leading ruling party since 2003?				
UNITED KINGDOM	UKIP	-	-	-	-	-
	BNP	-	-	-	-	-

Source: Elaboration of data from ParlGorv Database http://www.parlgov.org/

foreign affairs, and integration strategies. Probably the most astonishing case is the Swiss SVP, which has been part of the Swiss federal government since 1929.

Another type of influence or performance is related with the pragmatic concessions made by the so-called mainstream parties (centre-left and centre-right) in order to lure, appease and neutralize their far-right government or parliamentary partners and achieve short-term government stability in some cases, or in some other cases, to compete with those parties acting as safeguards against voter alignment to extremist parties. This strategy has resulted in the gradual appropriation and accommodation of far-right taboo ideas, attitudes, programs and discourses by political agents of the so-called political mainstream, traditional political parties and broad sectors of the society like the media. These gradual agenda-setting concessions by mainstream actors provoke basically two things: in first place, considerable evidence reveals that these extreme ideas, that were originally considered taboo, now become more legitimized and acceptable to a wider audience. And in second place, the normalization –banalization- of extreme agenda and rhetoric allows those right-wing populist parties to emerge as a credible political force without the negative stigma often attached to radical right parties in Europe. An interesting case too place in Denmark. The Danish People´s Party, which from 2001 to 2011 provided parliamentary support for the former Danish Liberal/Conservative government, and in return obtained a tightening of Danish immigration policy and stricter naturalization laws.

Another way to measure their performance has been the results of the opinion polls and surveys conducted these last years. The attitude of European citizens suggests that right-wing populist parties positions and ideas resonate and coincide with a significant segment of the public opinion when it comes

topics such as immigration policy, European integration, and Islam. The greatest achievement of far-right parties is the broad public support for these controversial measures and simplistic diagnoses that reveals a surprisingly high degree of social demand and the legitimation of their agendas across the public policy landscape.

8. CONCLUSION.

The effectiveness of those political and electoral strategies and their political performance have created an intense debate within political institutions as well as in civil society how best to develop strategies for responding to the growth of extreme right and racist movements and parties. The need of effective actions is required once that the general opinion that in Europe after the events that took place between the two great wars, the continent would be immune to these ideologies has shown wrong. Even if they don't enjoy a great deal of good reputation as well as developments in political culture make it difficult for the radical-right to become widely acceptable political players in many European countries, a set of mechanisms and instruments should be put in place to protect the achievements of Europe since the Second World War in terms of institutional consolidation, social inclusion and cultural tolerance, from such a threat.

The first kind of proposals is about establishing institutional obstacles or barriers against the proliferation of right-wing populist parties and making it more difficult for them to have access to parliamentary representation. A relatively high threshold of 5% of the national vote, adopted in Estonia and Germany, or the new electoral system of two-round voting introduced for the 2004 regional elections in France, in part in an attempt to reduce the National

Front influence in regional councils, are good and effective examples of institutional barriers. Another institutional instrument is the national legislation and parties regulation. In Germany, the German Constitutional Court has the power to prohibit and outlaw any party or group that exhibit a relationship to National Socialism whether in writing, speech, symbols or structure[2] . The strategically softening adopted recently by many right-wing populist parties cannot hide the fact that many leaders and members of those parties in Germany, Britain, Greece or Belgium have been regularly accused or convicted of offences of Holocaust denial, xenophobia and racism, etc.

In some other cases, like Sweden, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and now Germany, mainstream parties had established a joint strategy of isolating the right-wing populist parties and avoiding any debate with them and excluding them from electoral or executive alliances, *a cordon sanitaire*, which means that they wont collaborate with them in any way or at any level of government, and wont accept any anti-immigration rhetoric or political program. But the evidence shows, like in the case of Sweden, that in those municipalities where other parties formed coalitions to exclude Sweden Democrats, afterwards this party was electorally more successful.

Some other analysts and scholars propose to embrace them and give them the opportunity to assume government responsibilities, as there is evidence that populist parties can only exist in the opposition. Few right-wing populist parties have survived if elected into government because they lack the necessary programmes, strategies, and skills and professional abilities to fulfil the expectations and needs of its voters as a coalition partner. A clear example was the coalition between the ÖVP and the FPÖ in Austria or the coalition in the Netherlands with the participation of Pim Fortuyn in May 2002, how they returned back to the opposition but evidence also shows that their electoral

support grows quickly again there. But the Swiss case, where the Swiss People´s Party has been in the federal council for decades seems to contradict this theory, as it has become the largest party in the federal parliament.

What underlies in this topic is the weakening of traditional parties and politics, which have apparently lost touch with the larger portions of the society and are not capable anymore of responding to both local and global tendencies and changes in the social environment, and that situation provides a fertile ground for right-wing populist movements. The emergence of populism is a clear indication that voters have demands that have not been significantly considered by the established political parties, parties that have been less sensitive and not open to the electorate´s demands and making easy for these parties to win political influence. The challenge of populism requires that established parties handle this democratic dilemma. The best long-term strategy would be to extinguish the preconditions of contemporary populism, by satisfying the needs and fulfilling the demands of those who are potential electorate of the far right: the dissatisfied, frustrated and angry voters, articulating their socio-economic interests and improving their standard of living and specially the social security, and bringing security and stability to the labour market. As long as significant segments of society can be tempted by populist simplifications, by xenophobia rhetoric, by prejudices creating scapegoats, right-wing populism will play a significant role in democratic politics. The decisive answer to the challenge of populism has to come from the people, the citizens and the voters. The most effective solution will require more democracy, more responsiveness and effectiveness, or in other words more and better good governance.

Notes

1) Among its founding members were the France´s National Front, the UK´s British National Party, Italy´s Tricolour Flame, Sweden´s National Democrats, Belgium´s National Front and Hungary´s Jobbik, but this last one quit it years later.

2) Two political parties have been outlawed in Germany, the *Sozialistische Reichspartie –* SRP- in 1952, and the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschalands* –KPD- in 1956.