# EU Policies and Populist Radical Right Parties' Programmatic Claims: Foreign Policy, Anti-discrimination and the Single Market*

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## Abstract

In recent national elections and in those to the European Parliament, populist radical right parties (PRRPs) have gained many more votes than in previous decades. What could that mean, at least in the long run, for EU activities in such areas as for example, the internal market, defence and security and the fight against discrimination? Beyond these parties' general eurosceptical attitude, little is known about their agreed plans for specific EU policies. Therefore, we have collected and analysed their programmatic statements. In this article we discuss how coherent or incoherent the demands of different PRRPs in the EU actually are, in terms of comparing their policies. How much do they agree or disagree when it comes to reforming EU policies?

**Keywords:** populist radical right parties; EU policies; political groups; European Parliament

*Introduction: EU Policy Areas in Times of an Impending Shift to the Populist Right*

By February 2019, European governments are led much more often by representatives of the political right than those of the left, and of the 11 populist parties in government, seven are what is called in the literature populist radical right parties (PRRPs; see definition in section 1, Research Design). Moreover, the 2019 elections made PRRPs even stronger in the European Parliament (EP). Little doubt remains that right-wing populism will have a part in shaping the future of European integration – only the ways and degrees to which they will do so remain to be established.

There is a rich literature on PRRPs covering election campaigns and voter motives[1] as well as, in general terms, the relevant parties[2] and party families.[3] By contrast, there are hardly any in-depth studies about what changes these comparatively new actors could bring about for the EU – especially, if we refrain from considering European integration as a one-dimensional enterprise that can only be pressed towards either increased or

[1]See Aichholzer *et al.* (2014), Gómez-Reino and Llamazares (2013), Zhirkov (2014).
[2]See Goodliffe (2012), Jungar and Jupskås (2014), Rosenfelder (2017). In addition, the studies by Brack (2013, 2018) deal with the different strategies in carrying out their mandate of eurosceptic members of the European Parliament (MEPs); most of whom are from the populist radical right.
[3]See Art (2013), Hainsworth (2008), Ignazi (2003), Mammone *et al.* (2013) and Mudde (2007).

reduced intensity. In fact, the EU in its daily workings consists of different policies with many sector-specific actors, procedures and basic rationales. Enquiring into the various parties' ideas for the reform or abolition of these policies therefore seems urgent; first, to fill the gap in empirical knowledge in contemporary political party research; and second, to lay the foundation for an educated debate about how the success of populist radical right parties could actually impact upon the EU's policy output in the future.[4]

In principle, PRRPs may influence policy outcomes both directly (via their increased presence and voice in EU decision-making) and indirectly (by nudging other parties to take on board their preferred topics or even viewpoints). In the case of the EU, the direct voice will be used in the relevant institutions according to the weight of PRRPs in elections on both national and EU levels. National election results are, however, largely filtered through the process of government formation as only parties in government have a direct voice in the Council of Ministers (and usually only they can appoint commissioners). The elections to the EP are a second major route towards potential influence for PRRPs. So far, the EP's informal grand coalition system has rather sidelined actors who veer towards the extreme. However, the 2019 elections saw the end of the majority for the grand coalition, which may have an effect on the influence of PRRPs.

Whatever the specific EU arena, it seems reasonable to expect the PRRPs' clout to be enhanced if they performed in a coherent manner. By contrast, if they pulled in opposite directions their claims could more easily balance each other out. It is a matter of current debate that the PRRPs could form a single party group for the next EP. Even if that were for purely strategic reasons, such as being eligible for additional funding and the advantages of office (Maurer *et al.*, 2008) or because two of their three EP party groups no longer seem viable after the exit of the British Tories and United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP), the issue of policy coherence will matter as it has been shown to be related to the stability and longevity of political groups in the EP (see for example, Bressanelli, 2012, p. 751-752, McElroy and Benoit, 2010, p. 396).

In the past the PRRPs have usually been considered one bloc by political scientists because of their relatively coherent choices regarding *national* policies and because of their *general* euroscepticism (see Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008). More recently, party research has started to study the EP party groups, including those on the right, relying so far mainly on indirect quantitative data to discern the PRRPs' intentions, such as data from surveys of national experts (most importantly, the Chapel Hill Expert Survey,[5] which were used by McDonnell and Werner [2018]). Other expert surveys have been used by McElroy and Benoit (2010) or Lefkofridi and Katsanidou (2018)[6] or from votes in the EP (Whitaker and Lynch, 2013). Our study is the first to assemble the programmatic documents of many

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[4]To be sure, many other factors also come into play, as discussed in the conclusion of this article.

[5]The Chapel Hill Expert Survey, (Chesdata, available online at https://www.chesdata.eu/2014-chapel-hill-expert-survey) of 25 September 2018. Expert surveys are precious instruments for how parties' positions are perceived, with broadness and currentness of data as possible key advantages. However, the party programmes we analyse are agreed statements and hence of prime relevance as sources for directly voiced claims regarding desired policy changes.

[6]The recently published findings by Lefkofridi and Katsanidou (2018) deserve mentioning as an insightful quantitative analysis of party position data from expert coding for the Voting Advice Applications EUProfiler and Euandi. Note that the relevant questionnaire items do not, however, specifically target EU policies as opposed to national ones (see Lefkofridi and Katsanidou, 2018, p. 1471). Their finding that general euroscepticism varies within the various PRRPs concurs with our results on individual EU policies.

different PRRPs and their EP party groups and to analyse using qualitative methodology their agreed and formally published claims on different EU policies. This seems a timely supplement to studies comparing either positions regarding national policies that may or may not mingle with views on EU policies, or overall euroscepticism (that is, pro or anti-EU positioning, in general, not considering that parties might favour or be averse to individual policies of the EU). In doing so, our study fills a gap in existing research that is crucial from the perspective of policy analysis. It allows us to see, for each EU policy specifically, what the various claims expressed by individual parties indeed are and if they could be added up to a single coherent trajectory. The qualitative approach offers in-depth information on individual parties' substantive particularities and the issues that are of actual relevance to them.

These findings matter even after the reshuffling of the EP's party groupings after the 2019 EP elections. It is indispensable to know their past claims to judge (1) where they may depart from their own earlier stances in either their own later programmes or any potential joint programme with other parties; and (2) where they may later be particularly prone to defect from a potential novel group's stance.

*Research Design, State of the Art and Expectations*

Our basic research question is: do the PRRPs' programmatic documents show a coherent overall vision for the EU's policies?[7] By answering this question, we are also responding to Cas Mudde's call to compare policies '*within* the group of far right parties' (Mudde, 2016b, p. 16) in order to further our understanding of these camps. To answer this question, we compared PRRP claims on EU policies between their groups in the eighth term of the EP (2014–19) and between all national PRR members of any of the EU-level groups – considering that they may well strive to form one EU-level group after the 2019 EP elections.

Various scenarios hint at different degrees of policy stability in case such parties would come into many more offices: Their programmatic ideas could move

- in different directions (hence, these parties would tend to block each other in specific policy-making processes)
- in the same basic direction but with different degrees of depth (hence, these parties would have to negotiate intensely to agree on the specifics of any reforms)
- in the same direction and at the same depth. Only this option would make it easy to agree on policy reform.

It is not the aim of our study to establish which of the universe of parties in the EU could or should be labelled populist radical right. We build on the current mainstream in political science and especially on a much quoted work by Cas Mudde (2007), according to which populist radical right parties are

- populist in that they present themselves as the sole legitimate representatives of 'the pure people' while the other parties are regarded as part of 'the corrupt elite' (Mudde,

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[7]All policy areas mentioned more than once in the relevant materials are included in our database.

2007, p. 23); in other words, these parties 'mobilize in the name of "the people"' (Kriesi, 2018, p. 10);

- radical in their 'opposition to some key features of liberal democracy, most notably pluralism and the constitutional protection of minorities' (Mudde, 2007, p. 25, see also Rydgren, 2007, p. 243)
- right in that they believe 'the main inequalities between people to be natural and outside the purview of the state' (Mudde, 2007, p. 26, see also Rydgren, 2007, p. 243-244).

Although the literature does not always use fully identical definitions, there is a mainstream consensus on the cluster of parties labelled populist radical right parties.[8] This includes three political groups in the EP (2014–19) and 14 of their affiliated national parties. Furthermore, we included the two PRRPs that currently do not belong to any political group in the EP to establish their agreement or disagreement with the rest. The three groups (listed 1) and 16 parties' programmatic claims for EU policy reform constitute the object of our study.[9]

To learn as much as possible about the PRRPs' claims on specific EU policies and compare the broadest possible range of PRR actors, we studied all available programmatic documents of both the EU groups and their national affiliates.[10] The 38 programmatic documents[11] studied encompass

- the election manifestos for the EP election of 2014 by all 16 PRRPs[12] and the relevant[13] party groups
- the official party programmes of all relevant national parties in force by the end of 2016 or, in the absence of such a document, the latest election programmes for the pre-2016 national elections
- five policy documents that present in depth the specific claims of a party with regard to a specific EU policy. The provisions contained in these documents were not only of enough importance to be discussed but were also agreed amongst the parties' elites, which gives them an outstanding importance.

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[8]Not all were originally covered by Cas Mudde, or existed then, and some became PRRPs only after his standard reference book was published (2007). Those that were later added to Mudde's (2007) PRRP cluster of the Austrian Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ), the Belgian VB (Vlaans Belang), the Danish DF (Dansk Folkeparti), the Italian LN (Lega Nord), the Swedish SD (Swedish Democrats) and the French FN (Front National), the Hungarian Jobbik, the German Alternative for Germany (AfD) and the Dutch PVV (Party for Freedom) (Mudde, 2016a, p. 43 ff., 2017, p. 15 f.) are the Latvian NA (National Alliance) (Auers and Kasekamp, 2013), the Polish PiS (Law and Justice) which significantly changed after 2007 (Pankowski, 2010), the Finnish PS (Finns Party) (Arter, 2010), the British UKIP after its recent transformation (Goodwin and Dennison, 2018), and finally, the Lithuanian PTT (Party of Party Order and Justice) (Van der Brug *et al.*, 2012).

[9]Note that the project covers only EP groups with more than one PRRP as our main goal was to study issues of coherence. The Hungarian governing party Fidesz is therefore not included. It should also be mentioned that Fidesz has not published a party programme since 2007 or an EP election manifesto since 2009. The Alternative for Germany (AfD) is included in the Europe of Nations and Freedom (ENF) because they were more active in that group for the timeframe covered in our study. The KORWiN party is considered as not attached because party leader Janusz Korwin Mikke was a not-attached MEP during the time frame covered by our analysis.

[10]We are aware that these are different categories, but the potential divergences between their claims are of major interest.

[11]All documents in other languages were translated into English by experts supervised by Georg Plattner at European Integration Research.

[12]Thanks to the Euromanifestos Project 2014 at the University of Mannheim for sharing the manifestos for the European elections 2014. The party programmes have been collected on the parties' websites and further documents either there or in sources mentioned in secondary literature.

[13]These need to include at least two PRRPs because we also wanted to study coherence within the group.

Table 1: Populist Radical Right (PRR) Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in Populist Radical Right European Parliament (EP) Groups or Non-attached (Overall: 172 of 751 MEPs, that is, 22.9%) Included in our Study

| EP group (N) | PRR members | English name | Abbr. | Country | EP seats (n) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ECR (European Conservatives and Reformists) (71) | Prawo i Sprawiedliwość | Law and Justice | PiS | Poland | 14 |
| | Dansk Folkeparti | Danish People's Party | DF | Denmark | 3 |
| | Perussuomalaiset | Finns Party | PS | Finland | 2 |
| | Nacionālā apvienība 'Visu Latvijai!'–'Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNNK' | National Alliance | NA | Latvia | 1 |
| EFDD (Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy) (41) | United Kingdom Independence Party | United Kingdom Independence Party | UKIP | UK | 20 |
| | Sverigedemokraterna | Sweden Democrats | SD | Sweden | 2 |
| | Alternative für Deutschland | Alternative for Germany | AfD | Germany | 1 |
| | Partija Tvarka ir teisingumas | Order and Justice | PTT | Lithuania | 1 |
| | KORWiN | KORWiN | KORWiN | Poland | 1 |
| ENF (Europe of Nations and Freedom) (39) | Front National | National Front | FN | France | 19 |
| | Lega Nord | Northern League | LN | Italy | 5 |
| | Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs | Austrian Freedom Party | FPÖ | Austria | 4 |
| | Partij voor de Vrijheid | Party for Freedom | PVV | Netherlands | 4 |
| | Kongres Nowej Prawicy | Congress of the New Right | KNP | Poland | 2 |
| | Alternative für Deutschland | Alternative for Germany | AfD | Germany | 1 |
| | Vlaams Belang | Flemish interest | VB | Belgium | 1 |
| N.A. (Not-attached) (21) | Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom | Jobbik | Jobbik | Hungary | 3 |
| | KORWiN | KORWiN | KORWiN | Poland | 1 |

*Source*: adapted from EP (2018).

To establish how coherent the PRRPs' policy ideas are we use a qualitative content analysis method (Krippendorff, 2004). Our coding units are all specific statements (over 500 claims[14]) contained in these texts that concern any EU policy or any instrument within a specific EU policy. The statements were compared with the EU's corresponding policy goals and instruments, as extracted from the EU's primary law (the Treaty on European Union [TEU], Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Charter of Fundamental Rights, and so on) and the relevant secondary law documents (such as directives and regulations).

To map the direction and depth of suggested policy reform, we drew on well-established concepts in the policy analysis literature. Regarding the direction, we followed

[14]Excluding duplicate claims with essentially identical content, the dataset consists of 366 claims. Similar claims are covered individually where they are contradictory. Our findings are aggregated on the level of policy items and later of entire EU policies. The number of claims cannot be increased: we worked with all relevant documents and all their relevant claims on EU policies.

Michael W. Bauer and Christoph Knill (Bauer and Knill, 2012; Jordan *et al.*, 2013) in discerning their increased or decreased governmental commitment in specific sectors. 'Policy dismantling' (their primary research interest) occurs when a policy goal is reduced or removed altogether, or when the number of policy instruments is reduced or the intensity of their settings is moderated; the status quo scenario means no changes have occurred; and policy extension is an upgrade of the goal or an increase in the number of policy instruments or in the intensity of their settings. With regard to the depth of suggested policy change, we followed Peter Hall's (1993) concept: a first order change refers to new settings of existing instruments; a second order change to new instruments or fewer instruments than before; and a third order change to a new (ordering of) goals in the policy or cancellations of previous goals.

Our differentiation of policy goals, instruments and settings for each EU policy relies on the EU's treaties and secondary law, as well as the policy-specific literature. To give an example: as the TEU states that the 'common security and defence policy shall include the progressive framing of a common Union defence policy' (Art. 42.2 TEU), we characterized a common union defence policy as a policy goal in the area of common foreign and security policy (CFSP) and common security and defence policy (CSDP). The TEU also mentions policy instruments to support such a defence policy, including EU missions (Art. 43.1). A statement like 'abolish EU missions' is therefore coded as claim for a second-order order change (dismantling). By contrast, a statement such as 'extend the portfolio of EU missions to include mission type X' is categorized as a demand for an extension on the first level of this policy.

Regarding the parties' coherence on the level of policy, we distinguished between absolute coherence and goal coherence. Absolute coherence is achieved if there are no inconsistencies on any level of claimed policy change.[15] Goal coherence means coherence at least on the proposed change on the level of goals,[16] which should be easier than absolute coherence to attain and may possibly suffice as a basis for fruitful intragroup dialogue. By contrast, a meaningful discourse about useful policy instruments or their ideal settings seems highly unlikely where even ideas about the basic goals of a policy are incoherent. In the conclusion, we also offer a comparative numerical measure for each policy.

According to the current relevant political science literature, the characteristic features of PRRPs are their nationalist orientation (see Mudde, 2007, p. 18-20) and their positioning against liberal values on Hooghe *et al.*'s GAL/TAN[17] dimension of the political space (Hooghe *et al.*, 2002). By contrast, they have no characteristic signature with regard to the old socioeconomic left versus right cleavage (Mudde, 2007, p. 25, Rydgren, 2007, p. 245). There is rich confirming evidence for this at the national level but so far no systematic analysis on EU policies.

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[15]That is, all want the same direction of change (status quo or extension or dismantling) in goals and instruments and settings in the policy.

[16]In our research design we agreed that the picture on the level of instruments or settings could be comparatively more varied and still warrant a qualification of coherence. If there is goal coherence, the overall picture can be considered *rather coherent* if at least 75+ per cent of the issues show coherence, and *'rather incoherent'* if 25+ per cent do not. As the concluding section outlines, this showed to be irrelevant to lack of goal coherence.

[17]GAL stands for green, alternative and liberal; TAN for traditional, authoritarian and nationalist (Hooghe *et al.*, 2002).

Drawing on characteristics highlighted for the national parties in the existing literature and extending that logic to the realm of EU policies, PRRPs could reasonably be hypothesized to

- opt against any additional shifts of competences to the EU level, regardless of the policy – especially for policies generally associated with core state powers (Expectation 1; tested here against the claims regarding defence and security),
- voice consistent views over dismantling policies that are associated with the new politics dimension on the GAL/TAN axis (Expectation 2; tested against anti-discrimination claims)
- hold incoherent views on political issues located on the economic left/right dimension such as, most importantly, more or less free trade (Expectation 3; tested for the single market).The rest of this article checks these literature-based expectations[18] against the relevant claims in the programme documents. Our database covers all claims by PRR parties and groups, but a full analysis can only be completed in the future. This article presents the results of an in-depth analysis of three crucial and topical areas, selected to represent different clusters of EU policies, covering what has been called the core state powers (see Genschel and Jachtenfuchs, 2013), the new politics dimension of the political space, and finally the economic dimension.

## CFSP and CSDP

Issues of foreign policy, security or defence were not part of the European Communities that were established in the 1950s. However, these matters gained increasing ground in later treaty reforms (compare for example, Dijkstra, 2013, Dover and Friis Kristensen, 2016, Smith, 2015), most recently under the somewhat complex headings of the CFSP and CSDP.

The CSDP is the EU policy with the greatest number of claims (46) in our database. Taken together, the CSDP and CFSP receive 59 claims. However, only one of the three PRR EP party groups (ECR) has officially taken a position on these two Common Policies. All other claims in these areas come from national PRRPs.

Considering coherence among all the national parties belonging to any PRR party group in the EP regarding, first, only CSDP, there would actually be goal coherence if the Austrian Freedom Party (FPÖ) did not opt for a higher level of common defence policy. In other words, nine PRRPs want to dismantle the goal of a common Union defence, but one wants to extend it. On the level of policy instruments in CSDP, the picture is quite mixed. All six claims regarding an EU army (a prospective instrument[19]) suggest abolishing the option. Regarding missions, three parties opt for extending the counterterrorism activities of the EU, one demands regional cooperation in order to participate in missions (Latvian, NA [National Alliance]), and four want to dismantle all missions. On

[18]These are not causal hypotheses, as our aim was not to explain the PRRPs' claims but to collect and analyse them systematically to improve our understanding of how these parties suggest reforming specific EU policies. Our results can be used as stepping stones in future theory-oriented work.
[19]An EU army is not specifically mentioned in the Treaty. It nevertheless represents a possible future instrument of CSDP and is as such discussed in EU military circles (see Andersson *et al.*, 2016) and by many PRRPs, hence we included it in our analysis.

Table 2: Direction and Depth of Claims on the Common Security and Defence Policy and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (joint representation)

| Depth: Direction: | Goals (third-order change) | Instruments (second-order change) |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Extension | *Developing a common defence policy*: Austrian FPÖ (ENF) | *Missions*: Latvian NA (ECR); Lithuanian PTT (EFDD); German AFD, Italian LN (ENF) *Common military procurement*: Italian LN (ENF) |
| Status quo | *Developing a common foreign policy*: Lithuanian PTT (EFDD) | *Eastern partnership*: ECR party group, Latvian NA (ECR) *PESCO*: Polish PiS (ECR) |
| Dismantling | *Developing a common defence policy*: Danish DF, Finnish PS and ECR group; Swedish SD (EFDD member); French FN, German AfD, Italian LN, Polish KNP, Dutch PVV, Belgian VB (all ENF) *Developing a common foreign policy*: Polish PiS, Latvian NA (ECR); German AfD, Belgium VB, Dutch PVV, Italian LN, French FN (all ENF) | *Missions:* ECR Group, Finnish PS (ECR), UKIP (EFDD); Austrian FPÖ, Dutch PVV (ENF) *Army* (prospective): Danish DF (ECR); Swedish SD, UK UKIP (both EFDD); German AfD, Dutch PVV, Belgian VB (all ENF) *Common military procurement*: Belgian VB (ENF), Finnish PS (ECR) *EEAS*: German AfD, Italian LN, Belgium VB (all ENF) *EU embassies*: Dutch PVV (ENF) |

*Source*: own compilation.
*Notes*: AfD, Alternative for Germany; DF, Dansk Folkeparti; EFDD, Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy; ENF, Europe of Nations and Freedom; ECR, European Conservatives and Reformists; FN, Front National; FPÖ, Freedom Party of Austria; KNP, Kongres Nowej Prawicy; LN, Lega Nord; NA, National Alliance; PESCO, permanent structured cooperation; PiS, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość; PTT, Order and Justice; PVV, Partij voor de Vrijheid; SD, Swedish Democrats; UKIP, United Kingdom Independence Party; VB, Vlaams Belang; EEAS, European External Action Service.

the issue of joint procurement, there is also incoherence: two parties oppose any harmonization (Finnish PS [Finn's Party], and Belgian VB [Vlaams Belang]) while the Italian LN [Lega Nord] wants to extend this instrument.

In terms of CFSP, there would be absolute coherence towards dismantling goals and instruments if the Lithuanian Order and Justice Party (PTT) did not support the CFSP in rather general terms and if the ECR group and Latvian NA did not support the Eastern Partnership. Dismantling is demanded seven times over the goal of developing a common foreign policy and four times over instruments (Table 2).[20]

In short, the PRRPs' claims do not represent a coherent vision that could easily be translated into joint action in the fields of CSDP and CFSP. This is true for the specific goals and instruments of EU foreign, security and defence policy (as shown in the last few paragraphs), but it is even more striking with regard to who should be the main ally of the EU. Four parties and one group are pro-NATO, pro-USA and anti-Russia, and four parties favour Russia or are anti-USA or anti-NATO. This is a dramatic cleavage over what is usually regarded a truly basic choice in the field of external relations.

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[20]In the table, depth refers to the levels of goal, instrument or the setting of an instrument; here, no reference to any setting occurred.

Having analysed the PRRPs' claims over the foreign and defence policy area, at large, we can discard the literature-based Expectation 1, as those who assume that PRRPs are never tempted to ask for increased supranational cooperation are wrong. *Principled nationalism is at best promoted by many, but not all*, members of that party family. These findings reveal that the PRRPs are not all heading in one direction, and they are not so strongly nationalist, as a matter of principle, that they would never pledge to have more EU-level policies (even related to core state powers).

### Anti-discrimination Policies

In the original EU treaties social issues were secondary, as establishing a common market was the key goal and the anti-interventionist camp won over those who called for the minimum harmonization of social standards to prevent 'social dumping'. Only much later was the so-called social dimension of European integration developed, but today the EU has an elaborate set of norms and activities to fight various kinds of discrimination (see Bell, 2011; Mazur and Pollack, 2009; Rubery, 2015), based not only on its treaties and regulatory decisions but also on the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights.

This area forms part of the cultural dimension where, from the perspective of the new transnational cleavage literature (Hooghe and Marks, 2017), the PRRPs are generally expected to be opposed to liberal policies. Indeed, we found significantly less incoherence in this field than in EU foreign and defence policies, at large; which does not bode well for principles such as freedom of religion, in particular from the position of those (perceived to be) of Muslim faith.

Altogether 30 claims have been analysed (42, including double claims) that deal with the topics of equality between men and women, the right to life, the right to found a family and non-discrimination based on sexual orientation, ethnic origin or religion and belief. Only one of three EP party groups has spoken out in this area: the other pledges stem from 15 national PRR parties.

Most claims in this area target the freedom of religion or belief and they all pledge against the EU's stance (ten different claims). The PRRPs who spoke out are also united on dismantling when it comes to either the right to found a family (five different claims) or equality between women and men (four different claims).

Three national parties stand in the way of absolute coherence of the PRRPs on policies against various forms of discrimination. One is the Austrian FPÖ, which is the only party that positions itself against the reintroduction of the death penalty, whereas three other parties are support the death penalty (the French FN, the Polish Congress of the New Right (KNP) and the Polish KORWiN; but 12 of the 16 national parties and all three of the political groups do not speak on this issue in their programme documents). The second outlier is the support for non-discrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning and intersex (LGBTQI) by the Dutch Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV) (the Polish PiS and Italian LN strive to dismantle it). Although this claim has been voiced in the context of anti-Muslim agitation ('Gay emancipation: We defend our homosexuals against the advancing Islam' [Partij voor de Vrijheid, 2012, p. 45]), the well-known Dutch culture of liberalism in terms of sexual orientation suggests that this pledge should not be taken lightly but may indeed reveal serious intra-group divergence. Third, the position of the Hungarian Jobbik on the issue of non-discrimination against ethnic minorities warrants

Table 3: Direction and Depth of Claims regarding EU Anti-Discrimination Policies

| Depth: Direction: | Goals (third order change) | Instruments (second-order change) |
|---|---|---|
| Extension | Non-discrimination against ethnic minorities | Hungarian Jobbik (N.A.). However they voice a self-interested claim for Hungarian minorities elsewhere |
| Status quo | Non-discrimination against LGBTQI | Dutch PVV (ENF) |
| | Right to life | Austrian FPÖ (ENF) |
| | Non-discrimination against ethnic minorities | French Front National (ENF); Danish DF (ECR) |
| | Non-discrimination against LGBTQI | Polish PiS (ECR); Italian LN (ENF) |
| Dismantling | Right to life | French FN (ENF); Polish KNP (ENF); Polish KORWiN (N.A.) |
| | Right to found a family | Lithuanian PTT (EFDD); European Group ENF; German AfD (ENF); Austrian FPÖ (ENF); Italian LN (ENF) |
| | Equality between men and women | Polish PiS (ECR); German AfD (ENF); Austrian FPÖ (ENF); Polish KORWiN (N.A.) |
| | Freedom of religion or belief | Danish DF (ECR); Lithuanian PTT (EFDD); Swedish SD (EFDD); British UKIP (EFDD); ENF; French FN (ENF); German AfD (EFN); Austrian FPÖ (ENF); Dutch PVV (ENF); Belgian VB (ENF) |

*Source*: own compilation.
*Notes*: AfD, Alternative for Germany; DF, Dansk Folkeparti EFDD, Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy; ENF, Europe of Nations and Freedom; ECR, European Conservatives and Reformists; FN, Front National; FPÖ; Austrian Freedom Party; KNP, Congress of the New Right; LGBTQI, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, and intersex; LN, Lega Nord; N.A., Not-attached; PiS, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość; PVV, Partij voor de Vrijheid; PTT, Order and Justice Party; SD, Swedish Democrats; UKIP, United Kingdom Independence Party; VB, Vlaams Belang.

further discussion. It is the third obstacle to absolute coherence (opposing the French FN and Danish DF who claim for dismantling). The party is vocal in their support of the Hungarian minorities in other EU countries, a topic that comes up several times in the documents analysed. While they are not the only party to speak about the issue of national minorities abroad,[21] they are the only one that specifically demands that the EU takes action.[22] Technically, at least, this constitutes a call for an extension of the policy of non-discrimination, even though Jobbik promotes improvements for only one specific minority (their own ethnic group abroad) and therefore prioritizes this group over all others. Beside these three claims by specific PRRPs, all 27 statements on EU anti-discrimination policies call for the dismantling of the six identified goals (see Table 3 below)[23] of relevant EU policy. Nevertheless, only half the issues are goal coherent.

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[21]The Austrian FPÖ frequently talks about the old Austrian and German minorities in South Tyrol (Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs, 2013, p. 2).
[22]'The cause of Hungarian minorities has become debated on EU political forums on a daily basis, as Hungarians are the biggest disenfranchised minority of the EU (Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom, 2014, p. 48).
[23]In the table, depth refers to the levels of goal, or instrument, or setting of an instrument; here, no reference to any instrument or setting occurred.

Table 4: Direction and Depth of Claims regarding the Single Market

| Depth: Direction: | Goals (3rd order change) | Instruments (2nd order change) |
|---|---|---|
| Extension | Common market without internal frontiers: ECR group; Latvian NA (ECR); Polish KNP (ENF) Establishing a Functioning Energy Market: ECR Group, Latvian NA (ECR); Italian LN (ENF) | Supranational EU competition policy: German AfD (ENF) Regulation of Services of General Economic Interest: ECR group |
| Status quo | Common Market without Internal Frontiers: Finnish PS (ECR) | Right of Establishment: Latvian NA (ECR) |
| Dismantling | Common Market without Internal Frontiers: ENF group; Belgium VB (ENF); Italian LN (ENF); French FN (ENF); Swedish SD (EFDD); Danish DF (ECR); Hungarian Jobbik (N.A.) Establishing a Functioning Energy Market: Hungarian Jobbik (N.A.); Belgium VB (ENF) | Supranational EU Competition Policy: ENF group; Danish DF (ECR); Hungarian Jobbik (N.A.); French FN (ENF); Italian LN (ENF) Regulation of Services of General Economic Interest: German AfD (ENF); French FN (ENF) Right of Establishment: Italian LN (ENF); Polish PiS (ECR); Hungarian Jobbik (N.A.) |

*Source*: own compilation.
*Notes*: AFD, Alternative for Germany; DF, Dansk Folkeparti; EFDD, Europe of Freedom and Direct Democracy; ENF, Europe of Nations and Freedom; ECR, European Conservatives and Reformists; FN, Front National; NLN, Lega Nord; NA, National Alliance; PiS, Prawo i Sprawiedliwość; Polish KNP, Congress of the New Right, N.A., not attached; SD, Swedish Democrats; VB, Vlaams Belang.

*The EU's Single Market*

Let us, finally, turn to the third area studied. It is the EU's major policy initiative of all, the internal market (for details, see Egan, 2016, Young, 2010). The EU's major instruments to realize this are what is called the 'four freedoms', that is, the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital (see Art. 26 TFEU).

In our study, 29 claims have been analysed that deal with various aspects of the internal market. On the level of EP groups, the two groups who voice claims (ECR and **Europe of Nations and Freedom [**ENF]) are directly contradicting each other: The ECR group is pro single market in every coded statement, whereas the ENF group is opposed to it, favouring national models.

Overall, of the 29 claims voiced by the PRRPs on the single market, eight are calling for an extension of a policy goal or instrument, whereas 19 call for dismantling, and two are in line with the status quo. While the overall number of statements shows tendencies towards dismantling, the greatly differing positions on the level of goals do not allow for an assessment as rather coherent. The differences between the parties that prefer protectionist, national economic policy, and those who are generally in favour of unrestricted competition are clearly visible, as suggested by Expectation 3. Defenders of nationalizing product standards and competition rules such as the Danish Dansk Folkeparti or the French Front National oppose marketeers like the Polish KNP. Among the controversial items are not only the often desired freedom to alter standards at free will and the end

of supranational competition policy, but also the EU's freedom of establishment, and the regulation of services of general public interest. If the PRRPs continue their electoral success, difficult times may hence come along for the Internal Market as the – hitherto – core of European integration (Table 4).[24]

## Conclusions

This article has presented Europe's PRRPs programmatic claims for the reform of the EU in three crucial policy areas: foreign/defence, anti-discrimination, and single market policies. We found the highest proportional amount of coherence in the area of anti-discrimination, where 50 per cent of the issues raised by more than one party or group are coherent. In contrast, we did not find a single coherent issue in the whole single market area, while the third area studied only showed a small amount of coherence (30 per cent, see Table 5).[25] All in all, the findings indicate that the first of the three scenarios studied in our research design (section 2) seems the most realistic: the PRRPs may frequently block each other when it comes to specific policy reform processes. At the least, adopting unanimous positions among this entire group will indubitably be difficult.

However, some EU policy areas (that is, anti-discrimination policies) are characterized by relatively more harmonious statements, with fewer outliers than others (especially geopolitical orientation and internal market).

In terms of the depth of the debate about EU policies in the party programmes, it is striking that no party speaks about fine-tuning existing instruments in any of the three policies discussed here. The claims target mainly the level of goals of EU policies, or of instruments.

Overall, it needs to be stressed that many more statements ask for EU policy dismantling in our three areas (77%) than for policy extension (14%) or preserving the status quo (9%), which confirms again that these parties have hostile attitudes to the EU. From the perspective of the EU institutions this is a dire outlook. However, most of the 16 parties and three party groups studied do indeed seek to extend at least one, if not more, EU policies (specifically, one EP group and 11 national parties do so). This suggests that most of the parties studied here may be ready to discuss not only 'more or less Europe' but also, at least to some degree, 'which Europe' (Börzel and Risse, 2018, p. 100).

This is not a study of bloc formation on either the theoretical or the empirical level. However, based on our findings one can make educated guesses on the prospects of a single unified PRR EP party group after the European elections of May 2019. If it is correct that a coherent party grouping would need to build on (essentially) harmonious policy ambitions to stand good chances of stability (McElroy and Benoit, 2010, p. 381), we see little prospect for a stable unification of all PRRPs studied here, unless such a reunion were to happen without addressing faithfully what their party programmes say about EU policies by the year 2018. It seems as if this prediction has proven correct so far by the developments in the EP after the 2019 elections.

[24]In the table, depth refers to the levels of goal, or instrument, or setting of an instrument; here, no reference to any setting occurred.
[25]An issue is coherent if all statements that are coded as belonging to it are made on the same level of depth and in the same direction of policy change.

Table 5: Numerical Depiction of Coherence of PRRPs and Groups in Three Policy Areas

| Policy area | Issues raised (n) | Coherent issues (n) | Coherent issues (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| CFSP and CSDP | 10 | 3 | 30 |
| Anti-discrimination Policies | 6 | 3 | 50 |
| Single market | 5 | 0 | 0 |

*Source*: own compilation. Notes: CFSP, common foreign and security policy; CSDP, common security and defence policy.

Consider that forceful voices in the broad range of PRRPs both promote the EU's internal market and its completion ('The economic competition should be honest and with equal opportunities for all. NA works with the goal of making the market for services absolutely open' (Nacionālā apvienība "Visu Latvijai!"-"Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNNK", 2014, p. 2) and condemn it: 'The EU, Trojan horse of the ultraliberal globalisation: The European treaties impose [...] the dogma of [...] undistorted competition, prohibit (for ideological reasons) [...] all forms of economic patriotism' (Front National, 2011, p. 10). Such contradictions on the level of even the basic goals of a policy (see Peter Hall's categorization, section 2) should in all likelihood pose a major hurdle to joint agreements on relevant policy reforms.

This does not imply that the PRRPs cannot pose a viable threat to the stability of the EU. For example, cooperation on other issues, more selective coalition building and nudging other parties may still happen regardless of overall cohesion. However, the quest for achieving a unified right in the EU appears to be complicated. Other authors have already pointed to important domestic sources of splits among PRRPs in the EP (most importantly, McDonnell and Werner [2018] with their 'respectable marriage' theory). Our in-depth study of claims now adds the dimension of programmatic incoherence over their EU policies. Even if (some of) these disagreements should be glossed over in a potentially forthcoming broader PRR EP group formation, these findings matter as they flag the fields of most likely conflict and even intra-group defection in the future.

How do these findings tie in with existing research? It is important to stress that ours is the only study dealing with the EU policy positions of PRRPs from a qualitative and comparative perspective, which makes placing our work in the frame of earlier scholarship a challenge. We cannot calculate statistical distance or closeness to other, more quantitative, findings. Nevertheless, results from relevant related research point to similar conclusions (Cavallaro *et al.*, 2018 on incoherence over socioeconomic issues). Other findings lead in different directions.[26] However, note that the questions asked in these earlier studies are not the same. For example, Cavallaro *et al.* (2018) focus on coherence in socioeconomic matters only, and McDonnell and Werner (2018) consider four specific parties and their reasoning for not joining the ENF. Some of the studies do not distinguish between PRRP and non-PRRP group members (Cavallaro *et al.*, 2018; Lefkofridi and Katsanidou, 2018). Furthermore, some on the EP use data from the seventh period (Cavallaro *et al.*, 2018; Whitaker and Lynch, 2013), which makes it difficult to compare the findings due to the massive surge in PRR MEPs after 2014.

[26]Lefkofridi and Katsanidou (2018) find coherence in PRRPs' support for gay marriage. McDonnell and Werner (2018) generally find a strong closeness of policy positions.

Much remains to be done in future research on PRRPs and EU policies. Programmatic statements are clearly only one of several sources that can be used for exploring policy claims. Election speeches and interviews with candidates or office-holders could be used to embed our results in recent statements. It would be interesting to know the extent of parallels and dissonances between different sources of demands. Moreover, it remains to be seen in the long run how stable the PRRPs' claims will be regarding not only general EU scepticism but, more specifically, concrete EU policies. In case there will be new programmes for future EP elections, we could study whether they depart from the pre-2017 claims analysed here, and why.

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