

Shaping of Czech Debate on the Euro: Position of Václav Klaus in 1999–2002 Period

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Abstract:** *The European Union (EU) has been changing since the start of the economic crisis in 2008. Many previously uncontested issues – among them the euro - have been challenged. As a result of these developments, attitudes usually labelled as Euroscepticism have become more accepted as a part of the political mainstream. This article tries to identify – on the basis of the analysis of the euro discourse of Václav Klaus, former Czech president and prominent Eurosceptic – whether the current critical atmosphere in the EU can be explained through assumptions of theoretically defined soft and hard Euroscepticism and can be thus seen as a manifestation of Euroscepticism. The article concludes that even if the euro discourse of Václav Klaus contains both elements of soft and hard Euroscepticism, an important level of expertise critique towards the euro that can be found in Klaus' discourse can not be explained by Euroscepticism.*

Keywords: *Václav Klaus, the euro, Euroscepticism, discursive analysis, Czech Republic*

1. Introduction

EU has been changing since the start of the economic crisis in 2008. Many previously uncontested issues have been challenged, and the general atmosphere in the EU political system has become more critical. As a result of these developments, attitudes usually labelled as Euroscepticism have become more and more accepted as a part of the political mainstream. To illustrate this, one can point to the statement made by former German Finance Minister Oscar Lafontaine in May 2013 claiming that it is time to abolish the euro, as it binds EU member states in their struggle with the economic crisis (Die Welt, 2013). Just a couple of days before Lafontaine issued this statement, former British Finance Minister Nigel Lawson called for the UK to withdraw from the EU in an article published in the Times (The Times, 2013). Euroscepticism has become a relevant part of a political

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debate also in countries where it has been for a long time successfully marginalized – an excellent example was provided by the last German election of September 2013 where Alternative for Germany (AfD), a new party opposing the euro, obtained 4.7% of voters and came close to get seats in the German Parliament.

The question remains, however, as to whether these remarks and demands are so new and whether they are necessarily a manifestation of Euroscepticism as it is traditionally defined. Do they indicate that even the EU political mainstream (e. g. Lafontaine is one of the politicians who implemented the first phase of the euro) has become more Eurosceptical and Euroscepticism can celebrate its victory? Or does this current spread of criticism on concrete EU policy mean something different?

This paper will try to answer these questions by analysing the importance of the euro issue for the Euroscepticism. After assessing the general trends of the Czech debate on euro, we will focus on the euro discourse of one prominent Eurosceptic – Václav Klaus, former Czech president. The paper will analyse Klaus' discourse on the euro during the period between 1999 and 2002 in order to reveal the substance of Klaus' critique towards the euro and its compliance with expected Eurosceptical position. We also depart from the assumption that Klaus is a Eurosceptic – which is not such a daring statement as Klaus has been considered as Eurosceptic both by scholars and politicians since the late 1990s. Klaus represents an ideal subject for such in depth analysis as his long-term lasting role in both Czech and European politics enables the detection of changes and stable factors in the euro debate. Moreover, as later mentioned in the section commenting the state of art, Klaus is a clear and strong opinion leader whose influence on the Czech/European political debate is obvious.

The analysis proceeds as follows: first, the state of research as well as the methodology and data used are explained. After introducing the features and trends of debate on euro in the Czech Republic, the focus shifts to the context of the period 1998–2002, taking into account both European and Czech perspectives. The next section offers an analysis of selected speeches, interviews or articles by Klaus in terms of their message, structure and language used. Finally, conclusions are presented together with the direction of future research.

2. State of research, methodology and data

There is little systematic, European-oriented research on Václav Klaus, a politician who has been active in Czech politics since the so-called Velvet Revolution. Existing literature comments on Klaus as an actor in Czech domestic politics, with the most complex picture provided by Klaus' political biography by Kopeček (Kopeček, 2012). Saxonberg (Saxonberg, 1999) analyses Klaus' political career in the 1990s and explains his political longevity through the concept of a charismatic leader. Another stream of work analyses Klaus in terms of dichotomy with his predecessor Václav Havel (Potůček 1999; Myant, 2005). This approach is also applied in the context of the European agenda (and its role in Czech politics); for example, Drulák and Beneš compare the different

metaphors of Europe emphasized by both former presidents during the periods 1990-1996 and 2003-2005 (Drulák and Beneš, 2008). Nevertheless, Klaus is predominantly analysed as an actor and agenda setter with regard to both the Czech Republic's overall stance towards the European integration and concrete events such as the Constitutional Treaty (Rakušanová, 2007).

In contrast to the sparse research on Klaus specifically, the former Czech president appears in almost every study on Czech Euroscepticism, as he is seen as a *spiritus agens* of Czech resistance to the European integration. This is usually done in the context of party-based research; Klaus himself is not a key object for these studies (Hanley 2004a; Hanley 2004b; Havlík 2009; Rulikova 2010; Nedelcheva 2009; Hanley 2010). However, his influence is perceived as very strong and persistent, as the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) did not lose its Eurosceptic label even after Klaus' leadership, after which he was replaced first by Mirek Topolánek and then by Petr Nečas. Surprisingly, there is no study systematically analysing whether Klaus is a Eurosceptic politician and, if so, the nature and content of his Euroscepticism and whether there has been any development in his attitude towards European integration.

Euroscepticism is not among the most popular topics for theoretical political science research as this phenomenon is vague and its definitions wide. A number of theoretical studies were published in the early 2000s and focused mainly on party-based Euroscepticism (Taggart, 1998; Kopecký and Mudde, 2002; Conti, 2003; Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2003; Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008a). This discussion was followed by a huge amount of empirical work, either in form of case studies or in articles working with comparative approach (e.g. Neumayer, 2008; Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2008b).

Looking back to the state of art of Euroscepticism research, one can quickly sum up that there never was one concept of Euroscepticism. Taggart (1998) who was the pioneer on Euroscepticism research distinguished four types of party based Euroscepticism (Taggart, 1998: 368-369), taking into account the degree of relevance of EU opposition for the respective party. Four years later, this initial typology was followed by a new typology developed by Taggart and Szczerbiak, splitting Euroscepticism between its soft and hard versions. According to this approach, which worked with two dimensions (opposition towards the EU and opposition towards the EU membership), "*hard Euroscepticism is where there is a principled opposition to the EU and European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integration as it is currently conceived*" (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2003: 6). Soft Euroscepticism occurs "*where there is not a principled objection to European integration or EU membership but where concerns on one (or a number) of policy areas 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 trajectory*" (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2003: 6).

Taggart and Szczerbiak's typology provoked several reactions (Flood, 2002; Conti and Verzichelli, 2004; see Crespy and Verschuere, 2009 for overview) and can be seen as the very take-off for intensive theoretical debate. The most influential contribution

was that of Kopecký and Mudde (2002) who raised two principal objections. The first of them concerned the category of soft Euroscepticism which they contested as too inclusive and thus including any disagreement with the EU and its policies. Second objection concerned the issue of EU membership. In their view this was not the crucial point. Instead of emphasising the support for EU membership of the given country (or lack thereof), they suggested taking two different factors into consideration: (1) the principle of ceding sovereignty of the nation state towards the supranational structures and (2) support for/opposition against further enlargement of EU sovereignty (as a contemporary trajectory of European integration). Combining these two dimensions led to a new typology consisting of four categories – Euroenthusiasts, Europragmatists, Eurosceptics and Eurorejects (Kopecký and Mudde, 2002: 303). Both Eurosceptics and Eurorejects articulate some reservations about EU – the former support the principle of ceding sovereignty and reject further strengthening of the EU competencies while the later fight against both the basic idea of the European integration and increase of its role.

Taggart and Szczerbiak reacted to this new typology by redefining their initial concept. Soft & hard Euroscepticism “version 2.0” abandoned the issue of EU membership and replaced this criterion with another which looks into support for (or opposition to) the transfer of political power from the states to the supranational centre. In their revised conception, hard Euroscepticism is “*principled opposition to the project of European integration as embodied in the EU, in other words, based on the ceding or transfer of powers to [a] supranational institution such as the EU.*” (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2003: 12) Soft Euroscepticism is then an attitude where “*there is not a principled objection to the European integration project of transferring powers to a supranational body such as the EU, but there is opposition to the EU’s current or future planned trajectory based on the further extension of competencies that the EU is planning to make.*” (Szczerbiak and Taggart, 2003: 12). What is important for our analysis, Taggart and Szczerbiak explicitly mention an opposition towards the common currency as a manifestation of soft Euroscepticism.

This study adopts the Szczerbiak and Taggart conceptualization as a point of departure for understanding Euroscepticism and Klaus’ approach, but takes into account that it is not uncontested (Crespy and Verschueren, 2009; Kaniok, 2012). However, in current political science this typology is widely used (e.g. Leconte 2009). In general, both categories of Euroscepticism are based on opposition either to the EU as a whole or to its key policies and activities in their current form.

This analysis is conducted through the lens of critical discourse analysis. As repeatedly stated by many authors, discourse analysis is a highly contested methodology because there are many ways to define the core term “discourse”. Howarth claims that there are five major approaches or ways to define and analyse discourse: positivistic, realistic, Marxist, critical discursive and post-structuralist (Howarth, 2000: 2-5). This analysis is similar to the fourth approach because it focuses on the linguistic features of texts, processes relating to the production and consumption of the text (discursive practice), and the wider social practice to which the communicative events belong, i.e. social practice (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002: 68). This paper deals mostly with the level of discursive

practise. Generally, and recognising that language matters in every debate dealing with the process of European integration, the authors believe that a discursive approach can offer a more in-depth perspective than the simple description of a politician's or political party's statement and matching it with a previously developed category or typology. Words and sentences are rarely important solely in their individual meaning, rather, their significance is built upon the context in which they exist or the way in which they are presented (e.g. textual structure, metaphors, etc.). Moreover, political stances and positions are seldom static as they interact within a given context and develop.

In order to reveal and identify the substance of Klaus' discourse towards the euro, we suggest (Table 1) possible conceptualisation of both soft and hard Eurosceptical discourses on the euro. Both categories are conceptualised on the basis of Taggart's and Szczerbiak's definition and take into account all dimensions relevant for critical discursive analysis with emphasis on the level of discursive praxis.

Table 1: Euroscepticism and its implication for the euro discourse

Form of Euroscepticism	Implication for discourse
Hard Euroscepticism	<p>Critique towards the euro based upon general rejection of the EU and European integration</p> <p>Absence of sophisticated or theory rooted argumentation (as the general opposition towards the EU is the main argument)</p> <p>Preference of nation state discourse and ultimate challenging of EU general discourse</p> <p>Negative and critical language tools (metaphors, parables) concerning the EU</p> <p>Absence of linguistic tools offering and discussing alternative solutions within the EU</p>
Soft Euroscepticism	<p>Critique of the EMU as tool of deepening of the EU/ European integration</p> <p>Rhetorical and argumentation focus on political arguments and symbolic dimensions of the euro</p> <p>Critical language tools (metaphors, parables etc.) concerning the euro and its political dimension</p> <p>General positive/neutral EU approach as a framework</p>

Source: Authors

In terms of publication activity, Václav Klaus is among the most productive politicians in Czech politics. As a result, it was necessary to reduce the number of sources studied, even though the analysed period lasted only four years (1999–2002). Moreover, many of Klaus' public appearances focused rather on domestic politics and touched on EU issues briefly. When determining the sources to analyse, only Klaus' appearances dealing

primarily with EU economic affairs were included in the analysis. Each year is represented by two texts chosen on the basis of their diversity both in terms of genre (articles, speeches and interviews) and audience (general public, foreign audience, opinion leaders) in order to get as diverse a picture of Klaus' discourse as possible. A total of eight textual units were analysed.

Table 2: Overview of data

Audience	Genre	Year
<i>Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung</i> , Germany – foreign general public	Commentary	1999a
EuroUnie conference, Czech Republic – opinion leaders	Transcript of speech	1999b
<i>Deník Bohemia</i> , Czech Republic – general public	Commentary	2000a
Speech in memory of Karl Schiller, Germany – foreign opinion leaders	Transcript of speech	2000b
Žofín forum, Czech Republic – opinion leaders, Czech Republic	Transcript of speech	2001a
<i>MF Dnes</i> – general public, Czech Republic	Interview	2001b
<i>Lidové noviny</i> – general public, Czech Republic	Commentary	2002a
<i>MF Dnes</i> – general public, Czech Republic	Commentary	2002b

Source: Authors

3. Context

3.1 General features and trends of Czech debate on euro

The Czech debate concerning the introduction of the euro currency was not one of the prominent features of the EU related discussions among the Czech politicians. Around 2004 when the Czech Republic entered the Union, vague declarations of pro-European parties (Christian and Social Democrats) that the Czech Republic will follow the mainstream as soon as possible were “challenged” by the same vague critique of given economic unsuitability of the common currency for the Czech economy by the soft Eurosceptic politicians (mainly from the Civic Democratic Party, much less detailed by Communists). Both parties in the argument fed it mainly with general and superficial statements without showing interest in serious discussion. That does not mean the entire absence of the topic, but rather prevalence of more academic economist debate over the political one concerning the pros and cons of the adoption of euro, the pace of it

and possible consequences of postponing or even forsaking of the obligation that arose together with entering the EU.

Among think-tank institutions and economic experts with some political ties, minor but steady attention has been paid to the common currency issues by the Institute for Democracy and Economic Analysis (IDEA) organized by the experts from the Czech Academy of Science and the Charles University in Prague around the presidential candidate of Czech moderate right and left Jan Švejnar who was using his expertise of professor of economy at the Columbia University to support active Czech approach to the solving of Eurozone crisis and to follow the pathway leading to the adoption of the euro currency after the crisis. Implicit pro-euro argumentation can be detected in papers produced by another Prague research think-tank, Centre for Social and Economic Strategies at the Charles University (CESES). Many researchers are politically close to the Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) thus in favour of increasing engagement of the country in the core of European integration processes, including monetary and fiscal matters. Eurosceptic voices among think-tanks are represented by the Democracy and Culture Studies Centre (CDK) close to some ODS politicians and, above all, by the Klaus Centre for Economics and Politics (CEP)¹ which has highlighted the notion of debate on the adoption of euro perhaps most strongly and most comprehensively among Czech think-tanks. This is consistent with the leading role Klaus already took in the period of 1998-2002 in the Czech discussion on the euro.

From the perspective of party politics, the euro lost severely on salience because of the crisis that made the perspective of the Czech crown replacement at best remote. Klaus who did not stop to tackle the topic was however even sounder among other politicians issuing still only general statements (when any at all). Nevertheless, recent elements of economic recovery have stimulated the political-publicist discussion to some degree and, for example, one of the important non-tabloid dailies *Hospodářské noviny* publishes regularly on the euro in regard to Czech economy as well as specialized economic weeklies where sometimes the party experts in economics enter the debate.

Political parties are stably positioned on the issue. ČSSD and Christian Democrats as well as TOP 09 are still supporting the euro, more lukewarmly than prior to the crisis though. ODS requires holding the referendum which is consistent with their soft-Eurosceptic stance since the Czech public opinion had already shifted from favour to hostility to euro at the turn of 2006 and 2007.² Generally, political parties are still very

¹ CEP has been integrated to Institute of Václav Klaus (IVK) established in 2013 after Klaus left the presidential office.

² According to the most recent poll on Czech citizens' stance on euro held in September 2013, only 18 per cent of respondents declared that they strongly agree or agree with introduction of euro in the Czech Republic while 76 per cent do not agree or strongly disagree with it (CVVM 2013: 3).

vague or even silent about this issue in their electoral manifestos prepared for premature parliamentary elections in October 2013.³

During the period of Nečas government (2010-2013), the clashes between supporters of closer cooperation of the Czech Republic in the project of the Fiscal Pact (TOP 09, pro-Pact position was shared by opposition ČSSD as well) and opponents (ODS) complicated even the relations between two major parties of government coalition (see Moučková and Němec 2013: 35-37), at least at rhetoric level.⁴

All in all, political debate is generally vague in regard to the euro and even parties in favour of adoption of the common European currency are postponing the debate pointing to the long term perspective one has to apply to steer the Czech economy towards the euro. A characteristic feature of the debate is that politicians already since the mid of the previous decade are perpetually postponing the horizon of adoption foreseeing the entrance of eurozone in roughly ten years ever since and bringing no precise pro or counter-arguments. Again we can conclude with pointing out the exceptional drive of Klaus whose position must be considered as a kind of benchmark in the Czech euro-debate; a benchmark of remarkable stability and relative depth of argumentation.

3.2 Domestic political context in the 1998-2002 period and its influence on Klaus

The period 1996–1998 was a difficult time for Klaus. After the 1996 parliamentary election, a stalemate emerged between the political left and right and Klaus found himself in the uncomfortable position of Chair of a minority coalition government. ODS' position was challenged by rising electoral support for the ČSSD led by Miloš Zeman (Kopeček and Pšejja, 2008: 322-328).

Klaus' position also worsened inside his own party. The faction led by Josef Zíeleniec claimed that the party strategy had to change in order to increase its capacity to attract voters in the centre of the political spectrum (Kopeček 2012: 80-93). One aspect of these disputes is of crucial importance for the purposes of this paper. Zíeleniec, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, embodied the pro-European camp inside the ODS, thus "pushing" Klaus to more radical statements than before. After Klaus' second government fell apart, prior to the 1998 election, the so-called Opposition Agreement (see Roberts, 2003) brought Klaus to the position of Chair of the Chamber of Deputies. Once outside executive office, he was able to voice his views in a louder way.

³ The range of positions of Czech parties according to their 2013 electoral manifestos varies a lot from strict "no" to euro declared by the ODS (not to mention hard Eurosceptic parties that however are of negligible relevance) through silence with negative connotations of Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia to a sort of positive silence of populist party ANO. Only "usual suspects" opted for euro introduction, however not in the near future. TOP 09 stated in the manifesto that Czech economy will benefit from the euro adoption and the scenario should lead to adoption of the common currency in the 2018-2020 period, ČSSD promised to "prepare the Czech Republic for entering the eurozone [...] in the moment when it will be an economic and social advantage for our country" (ČSSD 2013). Virtually the same view was shared by Christian Democrats.

⁴ Vote on proposal that the Czech Republic has to join the Fiscal Pact initiated by one of ČSSD leaders Zaorálek was supported only by part of ČSSD club in the Chamber of Deputies, most of the Civic Democrats voted against and TOP 09 deputies abstained from the vote.

During the period when Klaus viewed ODS' position in Czech politics as that of a besieged fortress, his soft Eurosceptic voice became a more prominent feature of his and his party's political campaigning. This trend peaked in the campaign before 2002, when a reserved position towards EU development (not entering the EU as such) became a prominent part of ODS' mobilization strategy. This was neither coincidence nor merely the product of internal shifts within ODS because the election of 2002 embodied the climax of the general level of Europeanization of the competition among Czech political parties (Hloušek and Pšeja, 2011: 104-107; Havlík, 2011).

4. Analysis

4.1 Discursive context

EU-related topics were not prevalent in Klaus' political speeches and writing until the turn of the millennium. The period 1998–2002 was a critical period for Klaus as the active leading Czech politician. He devoted much time and effort to commenting on and steering the situation inside his party and commented extensively on the economic policy of the Social Democratic Cabinet as well as the general political situation in the Czech Republic. In addition, environmental activism resurfaced in the first few articles and remarks from those years.

On the other hand, Klaus occupied himself with Europe and European integration in a systematic way as early as 1993–1994, and the question of European integration was part of his repertoire of minor topics.

From reading early papers, it is evident that Klaus' position towards the European integration in general was firm since the very beginning, consisting of a preference for economic over political integration, a clear preference for the intergovernmental principle over the supranational paradigm of integration building, an effort not to limit Europe to the EC/EU core, and strict rejection of any harmonization of differences among identities of European nations. The same applies to rhetoric on the EU. He even coined his well-known term *Europeism* in one of these early papers (a brief essay named "Not to melt in Europe"). On the other hand, Klaus never disputed the mainstream Czech foreign policy of the 1990s to join the EC/EU and in so doing to fulfil the claim from the time of the Velvet Revolution to "return to Europe". On the other hand, Klaus interpreted such a claim in a broader civilization and historical context and thought that such a return would happen with or without the EU by a successful transition to democracy and a market economy.

Inspirational sources for Klaus' thinking about Europe may already be identified in the first texts on this topic. The only declared political inspiration was the British Conservative Party, namely the position of Margaret Thatcher and John Major who, like Klaus, did not see the road towards the EU as the only possible cooperation project within Europe. Classical economic and political liberalism is another source of Klaus' European views (especially the teachings of the neoclassical monetarist Chicago School of Economics),

and especially the political thought of Friedrich August von Hayek and his concept of spontaneous order in complex societies. He is also influenced by German *Ordoliberalism* (Walter Eucken and the Freiburg School). As far as his writing on European monetary union is concerned, he is heavily influenced by the work of Robert Mundell, founder of the Optimum Currency Area concept.

Klaus entered the single currency debate as early as the mid-1990s. His first brief paper devoted to this issue, “Europe in Cannes” (reprinted in Klaus 2001c: 71–73), was written during the summer of 1995. In this paper, Klaus tries to present some advantages of a single currency, but also raises many economic objections to it, including the Optimum Currency Area argument. Klaus shared his detailed views on the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) in the summer of 1996 at the European Forum Alpbach, when he developed his argumentation and connected the single currency issue with the necessity to centralize decision making in the EU. He even presented the introduction of a single currency as a factor that would increase democratic deficit in the EU. He also gave other presentations devoted mainly to the euro in 1998, and he thus entered the hot phase of monetary integration far from unprepared. When reading papers from the period 1995–1998, one must come inevitably to the conclusion that Klaus’ position became more radical as he sharpened his critique based on economic arguments. His speech for Young Conservatives⁵ held in December 1998 in Prague embodies a kind of turning point (Klaus, 2001c: 127–132). The clear pessimism of his speech could be explained by the dramatic circumstances of his political decline of 1997–1998. On the other hand, his speech sketched a very pessimistic view on the course of European integration and the Czech Republic’s role in this process. Any elements of active participation present in his early speeches were definitely over; the main task was to face challenges endangering Czech identity.

As far as articles and speeches are concerned, Klaus was not entirely preoccupied or obsessed with EU matters, as the following table demonstrates.

Table 2: Number of EU-related items among Klaus’ public appearances during 1999–2002

Year	N	Share of EU-related items (%)	“Articles and Essays”	“Economic texts”	“Speeches and addresses”
1999	37	10.1	2/11	1/10	1/16
2000	93	15.1	9/64	0/11	5/18
2001	118	8.5	8/90	0/6	2/22
2002	89	13.5	7/57	2/14	3/18

Source: www.klaus.cz

⁵ Youth political organization that is close to ODS.

Note: Division among individual categories follows the original division of the web site content. Fractions show the number of EU-related items divided by the total number of entries in the respective category.

The table demonstrates that, although Klaus regularly devoted attention to European integration, he never made this topic a crucial focus of his publishing activity. On the other hand, the table shows that Klaus combined both a political and economic point of view and devoted attention to the matter both in written entries and in speeches. Even more striking is that Klaus very often addressed European issues in speeches held abroad. He shared his comments and criticism mainly with academic audiences or the wider public and his speeches were not held among leading European politicians. But we can see a clear ambition to bridge close borders of European debate in the Czech Republic and to enter a broader floor, Central European and potentially generally European – an ambition that was more widely developed in the later presidential period of Klaus' political career.

4.2 Textual analysis

Klaus' article for *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, leading German newspaper (Klaus 1999a) is not primarily aimed at the euro; it rather explains his conceptualisation of European integration. The article is based on one simple dichotomy – rational European cooperation that is complementary to the nation state versus dangerous, unknown and risky Europeanism. Klaus openly challenges the widely accepted metaphor “*return to Europe*”. According to his interpretation, “*return*” means return to the cultural and civilization context of Europe, not membership in an entity that is nothing more than an organization. Klaus constructs the Czech Republic as a self-confident state that is not subordinate to the EU, but that has the same right as well as predisposition to influence political development in the EU, stating, “*We don't apply for membership because we want to draw money from EU structural funds. We want to join because we possess self-confidence to co-decide current development in Europe and in the EU.*”

Klaus attacks his undesired (albeit not precisely defined) enemy mainly by using words and metaphors bearing negative connotations. Examples include presenting the current Czech EU debate as suffering from serious shortcomings (“*afflictions*” sliding on the surface, labelling, contest on “*who is the best European?*” – using a small “*e*”), the phenomena of Europe becoming a “*substitute topic for ambitious social engineers who don't feel well in defined structures...*”, “*artificial regionalization*”, “*non-standard understated groupings*”, and “*spectacular hurray Europeanism*”. The image of irrational support for an unknown entity (that is nevertheless portrayed as “*Fortress Europe*”, indicating an exclusive and hostile community) is constructed against an entity that is stable and functions well.

The argumentation in Klaus' second analysed textual unit (Klaus 1999b) is firmly rooted in economic theory, which is worth mentioning because his audience is the general public. Klaus constructs a discourse of expertise as he repeatedly quotes classics of economy theory and emphasizes their explanatory potential in relation to the euro zone (especially when speaking about the term Optimum Currency Area). Klaus points to fiscal transfers between rich and poor parts, as he doubts that either the labour market or wages

in the EU are flexible enough that these two variables can replace the flexibility of the exchange rate. Klaus roots his argument in economic theory, repeatedly mentioning his academic background *“everybody could have learnt what economic theory understands as an optimum currency area”* and connections to economic circles. He supports his argumentation with time defining words like *“repeatedly”*, *“already in the late ‘50s”*, *“there is always a trade-off”*, *“history tells us”*, thereby pointing out the evident truth of his arguments. Klaus stresses that his stance is common sense and obvious by using phrases such as, *“it is quite evident”*, *“elementary truth”*, *“it is evident”*, etc. The validity of Klaus’ points is also backed by the use of highly expert language, and his preference for economic discourse is evident.

Although Klaus analyses the common currency primarily in terms of economic theory, he also comments on and stresses its political dimension. He explicitly claims that there is just a one-way street from monetary to fiscal and ultimately political union. Monetary union without future political union is, according to Klaus, possible only in the case of strong economic homogeneity of the participants. Klaus doubts that such homogeneity exists in the current EU and, as a consequence of the current heterogeneity, claims that costs and benefits of EMU will be distributed inadequately among its member states.

Klaus concludes with two closing points: first, that the euro zone is not primarily for something, it is rather against something (e. g. USA, Asia); and second, that the euro zone is a substitute for the EU’s inability to cope with the welfare state and inability to conduct necessary economic liberalization reforms. To do so, he quotes an anti-Maastricht Belgian citizen calling the euro zone *“Maastricht’s eintopf”*, explaining it as *“shallow cosmopolitan intellectualism, shallow antinationalism, bad reading of history and bad economy”*.

The third document analysed (Klaus 2000a) is Klaus’ article oriented towards Czech readers published in a local newspaper. Its main focus is interpretation of the 2000 Danish referendum on the euro, which resulted in rejection of the common currency in Denmark. Klaus starts by establishing a discourse of expertise when quoting a public opinion poll. A series of numbers drawn from a Eurobarometer survey should expertly back his position that opposition to the euro does not necessarily mean Euroscepticism. Klaus’ interpretation of the Danish “NO” is full of metaphors and accents a variety of discourses other than a discourse of expertise. The most powerful is the discourse of patriotism, with Klaus again highlighting the nation state. The dichotomy of *“for centuries built”* and *“accelerated Delors led process lasting only one decade”* is evident. Klaus again uses the *“Eintopf”* metaphor, colouring the EU as the *“Babylon of a new era”*. Feeding on this feeling of fear, Klaus suggests that the EU is a threat to national language and thus identity, as language is much more than just a means of communication. The same logic applies also to currency. Klaus thus uses currency as a metaphor for sovereignty and culture.

Klaus’ speech for the Walter Eucken Institute (Klaus 2000b) can be seen as his masterpiece of the entire period, as it is the most complex as well as the longest document. The analysed transcript is based on aforementioned arguments and extends them. The same can be said of argumentation techniques and practises. As the speech is quite long, Klaus combines and develops various discourses in order to strengthen his key points.

The first among Klaus' clearly favoured techniques is to stress the speaker's competence and skills. Klaus' discourse of expertise (even when discussing purely political issues) is emphasized in this speech by frequent use of academic terms and phrases or by quoting respected authors (Schumpeter).

Another source of validity is his reference to personal connections and previously given lectures. Klaus recalls both of his lectures for the Walter Eucken Institute delivered in 1995 and his meeting with Karl Schiller, pointing out that in 1992 Schiller warned about the rapid launch of the euro. Klaus reframes the euro critique as an economic issue shared by mainstream economists, using the words *"I am aware that he was one of 60 German economists who in 1992 warned..."*. The credibility of Klaus' statements relies also on frequent reference to historical context and events. Klaus points to history as a source of inspiration, especially by providing a rather detailed analysis of Germany's reunification. It is evident that Klaus aims to market his opinions as an independent scholar rather than an engaged politician, whose opinions can simply be dismissed as biased.

In spite of his attempt to present himself as expert, speech analysis reveals the presence of simple persuasion techniques already used by Klaus in the third analysed document (Klaus 2000a). The first of them is fear as a motivator, which is often presented in binary opposition. Klaus usually presents only two available choices, such as *"either destruction or massive fiscal transfers"* or *"[t]he hopeful end of one leftist adventure did not lead to creation of liberal order, but it created an easy victory of social democracy...that is nothing more than the second way"*. He also personalizes complex phenomena in order to present them as a part of real, ordinary life, emphasizing *"the damper that came after that (after the exchange rate was abolished) caused a trauma for millions of people, contrary to their happiness caused by the end of communism"*.

The fifth paper analysed (Klaus 2001a) contains the key thesis for Klaus' 2001 speech for the Žofinské forum, a thematic meeting between the Czech political and economic elite. His speech is presented as a warning message, commenting on threats and dangers connected with potential EU membership, in which he declares, *"I have a bad feeling, which increased after the drama surrounding our Europhilism⁶ that such a threat really exists"*⁷. The Czech Republic's readiness for EU membership is presented in a black-white dichotomy (real integration versus formal accession to the EU, real readiness versus the Commission's evaluation reports, etc.). The speech is firmly rooted in economic theory and several concrete examples covering different periods and regions (USA, Germany, Estonia). However, in this context and for this audience, Klaus often uses also rhetoric that incites fear or threatens, mentioning *"an increase of unemployment and increase in migration"*, *"dependency on financial assistance"*, *"the poor periphery of a European super state"*, and *"the humiliating feeling of not only economic but also political periphery"*. He presents the image of the EU as a two-faced entity (Janus metaphor) where union, and the many implications of the term, or *"unionization"*, is perceived as a threat while the common market offers an opportunity for the Czech Republic.

⁶ Supporters of the EU are portrayed in negative and pejorative terms ("Europhiles", "Euro-enthusiasts" – all of these terms have rather negative connotations in Czech language, referring to an "active idiot" agreeing with everything).

⁷ Klaus refers to uncritical support for the EU.

Klaus' interview (Klaus 2001b) for the most-read Czech non-tabloid newspaper, *MF Dnes*, is rather interesting for the topic that it does not cover. Despite the fact that the interview is titled "*Our membership in the EU*", both questions and answers are focused on the pre-accession period. What is surprising is the absence of discussion about the euro zone or the euro. Otherwise, Klaus repeats his previously issued opinions – that European integration has two different faces, one desirable (liberal internal market, space of freedom) and the other less so as it contains regulations, unification, harmonization, etc. The interview visibly departs from the discourse of expertise and seems to rely on providing substantial argumentation. On the contrary, Klaus heavily uses emotionally charged language, stressing the "*huge democratic deficit*", "*extremely ambitious market engineering*" or "*mad way*". Such language is present in almost every answer.

The last year analysed is represented by two articles for daily newspapers. The first (Klaus 2002a) is a dispute with a previously published commentary on ODS' attitude towards the EU. Klaus claims that ODS can simultaneously support Czech EU membership while criticizing and contesting the current form of EU integration. In addition to this approach, Klaus plays a relatively new card – that of Europe's persisting post-war architecture, implicitly referring to Klaus 2000a in which he emphasized patriotic discourse. This new topic (Beneš decrees) obviously utilizes fear and allusions to the war, implying that EU membership can be a threat to Europe's post-war architecture, and thus we (ODS) want guarantees that such a step would not affect it.

The second textual unit is a commentary (Klaus 2002b) for *MF Dnes* in which Klaus analyses the launch of the common currency. In the article, Klaus returns to his line of argumentation close to the discourse of expertise, using terms such as "*wage elasticity*", "*monetary sovereignty*", etc. and several concrete examples covering different periods and regions (Italy, Argentina, Germany). Klaus uses words and rhetorical figures that either directly or indirectly accuse proponents of the euro of irrationality and social engineering.

5. Soft or hard: summing up Klaus' discourse on the single European currency

When looking at Klaus' papers and speeches devoted to the euro currency issue, a few basic discursive practices can be identified that help him to express and frame his remarkably stable view on the EU, including its monetary integration.

Klaus starts with a discourse of expertise concerning both European integration and the euro itself. He tries to frame both topics as issues for rational calculation of costs and benefits, believing that such analysis must produce results pointing to the disadvantages of the euro. Despite his slow, gradually decreasing use of this discourse (and replacing or at least completing it with patriotic discourse), economic argumentation can be found in almost all analysed documents, with Klaus repeatedly both directly and indirectly referring to his academic background. The language of the texts and speeches contains many specialized terms, and such an approach is usually chosen when the speaker wants to build an image of expertise and factuality. Language as a whole is based on an approach of preaching, teaching, or lecturing especially through the use of words

referring to common sense and general knowledge. The only exception is Klaus 2001b, where emotional verbs and adjectives stressing Klaus' message are highly prevalent.

Klaus' favourite rhetorical technique is to style and present his arguments in the form of oppositions or dichotomies, such as euro zone monetary union versus the simple free trade area he prefers (Klaus 1999b: 3), political decision to implement the single European currency versus the reasoning of economic experts doubting this step (Klaus 2000b), and real versus nominal convergence of the euro zone countries (Klaus 2001a: 2).

Of course, frequent use of dichotomies as a technique for presenting one's own ideas and views sometimes leaves little space for more sophisticated argumentation and could even be considered misleading. At the same time, in Klaus' hands it is a powerful tool for sorting pro- and counter-arguments and for structuring political debate. Klaus, backed by his economic knowledge clearly superior to that of a typical Czech or even European politician, was, in this respect, regularly ahead of his opponents.

Moreover, Klaus likes to make his own interpretations of opposing views. For example, he explained monetary union as a substitute for traditional anti-Americanism and solving the problems of European welfare states and welfare regimes (Klaus 1999b: 3-4) or as an alternative to substantial liberalization of societal, political, and economic order in Europe at the beginning of the 21st century (Klaus 2000b: 4). These interpretations were typically not founded by the arguments expressed by his adversaries.

Additionally, Klaus interprets his critics in the light that allows him to label support for further deepening integration as a product of illiberal or even anti-liberal politics. He likes to label political adversaries with ideological labels, such as *"Europeism"* (Klaus 2000b: 3; or Klaus 2001b: 2). He talks about the ideology of *"creeping unification of the continent and leftist ideology of Europeism based on a paternalistic state, bureaucracy, regulation, Social Charter etc. [...]"* and he considers it his *"[...]duty to fight this ideology of European social and Christian democrats, inside and outside the EU [...]"* (Klaus 2002a: 1).

Klaus uses other metaphors and metonymies as well. One of his favourites is to warn that the Czech Republic *"should not melt in Europe as a sugar cube in tea or coffee"* (Klaus 1999b: 2), repeatedly used since the early 1990s. Klaus also uses the common metonymy, *"Brussels"*, used by national politicians to refer to the EU as such (Klaus 2001a). In addition, he likes to use analogy to dispute the unproblematic view of euro zone cohesion and functionality by comparing the economic cost, for example, with costs of financial transfers between western and eastern Germany after German unification in 1990 (Klaus 1999b: 3; Klaus 2000b: 2; Klaus 2002b: 1).

Another constant feature is the presence of fear in Klaus' argumentation when describing the euro, as seen in *"increase of unemployment"*, *"poor periphery"*, and the topic of the Beneš decrees. In addition to outlining a concrete, anticipated negative scenario, he also personalizes the consequences. His use of this kind of argument slightly increases and can be identified especially at the end of the analysed period.

Klaus has been perfectly aware of the precise audience he would be addressing. He uses different styles when talking to economic experts or top European leaders and to the Czech public or his own party members. Klaus differentiated not only the material and logical arguments used, but the rhetorical tools as well. His language becomes less analytical, more colourful, simpler, and far more densely packed with metaphors whenever he addresses the masses. In these addresses, he tends to be more schematic in argumentation, is definitely more offensive when challenging the mainstream opinion on integration and is more concerned with political and cultural arguments, whereas he prefers economic argumentation when addressing his peers.

If we sum up all features and techniques that Klaus applied during the analysed period and match them with expected soft and hard Eurosceptical discourses, we may conclude that both can be identified. While Klaus several times repeated explicitly that he did not oppose Czech EU membership, he all the time dreamt about EU based upon purely intergovernmental principles. Klaus preferred nation state discourse and ultimately challenged general EU discourse. He constantly used negative and critical language tools concerning the EU. In this sense, Klaus' treatment of the euro can be categorized as a manifestation of hard Euroscepticism.

However, taking into account our results and expected features of soft Eurosceptic discourse, the picture is not complete with such conclusion. Klaus' discourse on the euro is much more colourful as it in some points also complies with the soft Eurosceptic stance. Klaus in particular emphasized the political and economic dimensions of the euro and advocates an evolutionary development of the process of European integration. Moreover, Klaus did not attack the very idea of common currency in Europe; he only criticized the set up of the euro and its hasty introduction.

Besides expected hard and soft Eurosceptical components our analysis revealed another important level of Klaus' argumentation towards the euro – theoretically rooted and well-built economic polemic with the euro that can not be explained neither by soft nor by hard Eurosceptical category. Such critique may (but in the same time need not) correlate with its author's general approach towards the EU as it is primarily driven not by political ideology but by expertise knowledge and background. In other words, the definition of Euroscepticism assumes that each form of EU critique (regardless of the substance and degree of this critique as well as its motivation) is a manifestation of Euroscepticism. This approach may explain why we do have so many Eurosceptics in the EU right now - because there is such a broad conceptualization of Euroscepticism that it includes both approaches towards the EU as a whole (hard Euroscepticism) and particular critique of some concrete EU policy (soft Euroscepticism). And if this concrete policy fell into troubles or simply did not work (as EMU did), almost everybody can be Eurosceptic.

6. Conclusions

As we stated in the beginning of this article, EU is currently facing a new political situation in which a lot of so far uncontested issues and policies are being challenged not only by “old suspects”, but also by mainstream politicians. Traditionally, this development should be explained as growing importance of Euroscepticism and thus being a serious threat for the European integration process. We tried to challenge this pessimistic interpretation by the analysis of the euro discourse (1999-2002) of Václav Klaus, prominent Eurosceptical politician. As a point of departure, we take the widely accepted typology of soft and hard Euroscepticism provided by Taggart and Szczerbiak.

Our analysis has revealed that Klaus' early euro discourse consists of elements that can be found in both categories and thus it is almost impossible to decide on the basis of one policy whether Klaus already in the late 90s inclined towards hard Euroscepticism. However, a more important finding of our analysis is the identification of important apolitical component of Klaus' critique that can not be explained neither by soft nor by hard Euroscepticism. Despite the preliminary nature of these findings based upon a limited period and data, the results obtained seem to challenge the concept of soft Euroscepticism. Taggart and Szczerbiak conceptualize it as opposition to the EU's current or future planned trajectory based on the further extension of competencies planned by the EU (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2008: 248). As mentioned, core part of this trajectory is, according to them EMU, where Taggart and Szczerbiak dispute the compatibility of support for the EU and opposition towards EMU (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2008: 250). However, after 10 years of EMU, it is obvious that its components and mechanisms are contested both by Eurosceptics and the so-called European mainstream. It also seems that Eurosceptic maybe right in evaluating such crucial EU policy as the EMU is - Klaus already in the first years of the new millennium stated that he expected a serious crisis and problems in the Eurozone and foresaw e.g. massive transfers between parts of the Eurozone. Prognoses seem to be pessimistic and critique towards the Eurozone seems to become mainstream in the European politics these days. Such situation does not necessarily mean that soft Euroscepticism prevails in contemporary EU politics but it might suggest that one policy of the EU might have been wrong or it might have followed a way leading to a dead end. It is thus questionable whether a category (in this case soft Euroscepticism) which aims to capture an actor's position can rest on attitudes towards a trajectory operationalised in terms of changing policy or policies. In the current EU, policies and trajectories change almost every month, which makes efforts to take them into account as a starting point for any typology more problematic. Such a “quicksand” point of departure is even more problematic when normative typologies or categories are the target.

Our findings are hardly the first wave of critique towards prevailing conceptualisation of Euroscepticism. Concerning Szczerbiak and Taggart typology, Crespy and Verschuere (Crespy and Verschuere, 2009) argue a typology should rather distinguish between the categories (difference in kind) instead of a differentiation within the categories (difference in degree) which Taggart and Szczerbiak typology of soft and hard Euroscepticism simply does not meet. Secondly, Euroscepticism as a term has clear negative connotations,

making it a strongly normative concept which can be fairly easily misused in political struggles (Crespy and Verschueren, 2009: 382-383). Thirdly, the hard Eurosceptic parties are (with a few exceptions) mostly considered extremist, whether of the Right or the Left (De Vries and Edwards, 2009; Crum, 2007). In political reality, the ranking of soft and hard Eurosceptics alongside one another renders problematic the position of the former, who are typologically (and in social discourse also rhetorically, given that mass media, commentators and analysts do not distinguish between soft and hard Eurosceptics) put into one imaginary camp with the latter (Katz, 2008: 155). The consequences of this association include reduction in political discussion and a refusal of soft Eurosceptic arguments as non-democratic, due to their association with hard Eurosceptics. Fourthly, Kaniok (Kaniok, 2012) argues that prevailing conceptualisation of Euroscepticism is based upon implicitly hidden premises concerning EU statehood and definition of EU support.

We are fully aware that our conclusion offers more questions and hypothesis than clear answers. However, there are several possible directions for further research that these hypothesis and questions open. Concerning Klaus, the study of how Klaus' argumentation developed during the following period, when he became President of the Czech Republic and the first shadows emerged over the single currency project, seems to be a first direction. Also a theoretical stream of research focusing on reconceptualisation of Euroscepticism (and probably putting it into a broader context of positive approaches towards the EU) could be promising.

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