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**When in doubt, (re-) turn to domestic
politics? The (non-) impact of the EU on
party politics in Poland**

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Abstract

This paper argues that although, if one seeks them out, one can find limited evidence of EU influences, in overall terms EU accession has had little significant direct impact on Polish party politics. We also find that there is no obvious linear relationship between party positions on European integration and the extent to which the EU had impacted upon a party and the nature of those impacts, although it appears to have been greatest in those parties that were members of the large European party federations and EP groupings. In terms of general comparative conclusions, our analysis highlights three main analytical and conceptual problems of examining EU impacts on domestic politics: how can they be properly conceived and measured; what expectations do we have of change and what benchmarks are we measuring these impacts against; and how do we trace change back to an EU source, given that many of the adjustments were subtle and 'indirect'? Our findings also suggest that, in many ways, 'Europe' appears to have been assimilated successfully into the logic of Polish domestic party politics. We conclude by suggesting that analysts should start from the assumption that all developments in party and electoral politics can be explained through 'domestic' factors and, only when we have exhausted these, should we look for 'European' explanations.

When in doubt, (re-)turn to domestic politics? The (non-) impact of the EU on party politics in Poland

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Until recently, the impact of the EU on domestic party politics was something of a Cinderella topic. Initially, most academic studies of the impact of EU on domestic politics, what some commentators have termed ‘Europeanisation’, looked at the way that EU integration had changed the logic of institutions or policy entrepreneurs: parliaments, executives, new policy networks or coalitions, administrative innovation, or the effects on national legal systems. In recent years, however, there has been upsurge of research on the impact of the EU on party and electoral politics. This has focused on: empirical studies of specific countries, parties or party families;¹ comparative studies of particular aspects of party politics such as party organisation,² Eurosceptic parties³ or the emergence and development of European trans-national party federations and European Parliament (EP) party groupings (the so-called Europarties);⁴ together with attempts to develop analytical and theoretical frameworks

¹ See, for example: Philip Daniels, ‘From Hostility to “Constructive Engagement”: The Europeanisation of the Labour Party,’ *West European Politics*, Vol 21 No 1, 1998, pp72-96; Kevin Featherstone, *Socialist Parties and European Integration*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988; John Garry, ‘The British Conservative party: divisions over European policy,’ *West European Politics*, Vol 18 No 4, 1995, pp170-189; Tapio Raunio, ‘Facing the European Challenge: Finnish Parties Adjust to the Integration Process,’ *West European Politics*, Vol 22 No 1, 1999, pp138-159; Robert Ladrech, *Social Democracy and the Challenge of the European Union*, Boulder, CO: Lynne Reiner, 2000; Karl Magnus Johansson and Tapio Raunio, ‘Partisan responses to Europe: comparing Finnish and Swedish political parties’, *European Journal of Political Research*, Vol 39 No 2, 2001, pp225-249; Nicholas Aylott, ‘Let’s discuss this later: party responses to Euro-division in Scandinavia,’ *Party Politics*, Vol 8 No 4, 2002, pp463-481; and James Sloam, *The European Policy of the German Social Democrats: Interpreting a Changing World*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

² See, for example: Thomas Poguntke, Nicholas Aylott, Elisabeth Carter, Robert Ladrech and Kurt Richard Luther, *The Europeanization of National Political Parties: Power and organizational adaptation*, London and New York: Routledge, 2007.

³ See for example: Petr Kopecky and Cas Mudde, ‘The two sides of Euroscepticism: party positions on European integration in East Central Europe,’ *European Union Politics*, Vol 3 No 3, 2002, pp297-326; and Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak (eds), *Opposing Europe: The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism In Contemporary Europe*. 2 volumes, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008.

⁴ See for example: Simon Hix and Christopher Lord, *Political Parties in the European Union*, London: Macmillan, 1997; Thomas Dietz, ‘Similar but Different? The European Greens Compared to Other

to guide further research.⁵ However, there has been very little empirically grounded, theoretically informed comparative research that has attempted to analyse EU impacts on domestic party politics in a comprehensive and holistic way.⁶

This paper contributes to this emerging literature by examining the impact, or rather lack of it, of the EU on party politics in Poland, focussing primarily on the post-accession period. The main, empirical section of the paper considers the impact of the EU on six parties and political groupings in four specific dimensions. The six political groupings examined are those that, as **Table 1** shows, won the most votes in the 2001, 2005 and 2007 parliamentary elections. Four of them secured election to the Polish parliament in all three elections: Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska: PO), the Law and Justice party (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość: PiS), the Democratic Left Alliance (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej: SLD) - which contested the 2007 election as part of the 'Left and Democrats' electoral alliance (Lewica i Demokraci: LiD) - and the Polish Peasant Party (PSL).

Table 1: Vote share (%) and number of seats won by the six main parties/groupings in the 2001, 2005 and 2007 Polish parliamentary elections

	2001		2005		2007	
	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats	Votes	Seats
Civic Platform	12.7	65	24.1	133	41.5	209
Law and Justice	9.5	44	27.0	155	32.1	166
Democratic Left Alliance*	41.0	216	11.3	55	13.2	53
Polish Peasant Party	9.0	42	6.7	25	8.9	31
Self-Defence	10.2	53	11.4	56	1.5	0
League of Polish Families**	7.9	38	8.0	34	1.3	0

Source: Polish State Electoral Commission

*In 2001 in coalition with the Labour Union, in 2007 as part of the 'Left and Democrats' electoral alliance

**In 2007 as part of the 'Right-wing of the Republic' electoral coalition

Civic Platform was formed in January 2001 as a liberal-conservative party to capitalise on former finance and foreign minister Andrzej Olechowski's relative success as an independent candidate in the 2000 presidential election. The liberal Donald Tusk became Civic Platform's sole leader in June 2003, the party having been previously led by a triumvirate that included Mr Tusk and Mr Olechowski. The party

Transnational Federations in Europe,' *Party Politics*, Vol 6 No 2, 2000, pp199-210; Simon Lightfoot, *Europeanising Social Democracy: The Rise of the Party of European Socialists*, London: Routledge, 2005; and David Hanley, *Beyond the Nation State: Parties in the Era of European Integration*, Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007.

⁵ See, for example: Peter Mair, 'The Limited Impact on Europe of National Party Systems,' *West European Politics*, Vol 23 No 4, October 2000, pp27-51; Robert Ladrech, 'Europeanization and Political Parties: Towards a Framework for Analysis,' *Party Politics*, Vol 8 No 4, September 2002, pp389-403; and Peter Mair, 'Political Parties and Party Systems,' in Paolo Graziano and Maarten Vink (eds), *Europeanisation: New Research Agendas*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005, pp154-166.

⁶ A very rare exception here, ironically focusing on the new post-communist states rather than longer-established EU members, is: Paul Lewis and Zdenka Mansfeldova (eds), *The European Union and Party Politics in Central and Eastern Europe*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

remained in opposition after losing the 2005 parliamentary election narrowly and Mr Tusk also lost the presidential election in the same year. However, the Civic Platform won the 2007 parliamentary election and formed a coalition government with the Polish Peasant Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe: PSL), with Mr Tusk becoming prime minister.

Law and Justice was a right-wing conservative party formed in April 2001 by Jarosław Kaczyński to capitalise on the popularity of his twin brother, Lech, during his brief stint as justice minister in the Solidarity Electoral Action (Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność: AWS) government towards the end of the 1997-2001 parliament. Law and Justice finished fourth in the 2001 election but when Lech Kaczyński became the first ever directly elected mayor of Warsaw in 2002, the party used this as a springboard for its successful 2005 parliamentary and presidential election campaigns. Initially, Jarosław Kaczyński declined the premiership, fearing that this would damage his brother's chances in the presidential election, and the party nominated Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz - who was not part of its top leadership - instead, although in July 2006, Mr Kaczyński took over as prime minister. However, although the party increased both its share of the vote and number of seats, it lost the 2007 parliamentary election and became the main opposition party.

The *Democratic Left Alliance* was formed at the beginning of the 1990s as an electoral coalition comprising various parties and groupings clustered around Social Democracy of the Polish Republic (Socjaldemokracja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej: SdRP), the direct organisational successor to the Polish communist party. It won the 1993 parliamentary election and was the main governing party between 1993-97 but lost the 1997 election to Solidarity Electoral Action. In June 1999 it was transformed into a single, unitary party and won the 2001 parliamentary election easily in coalition with the smaller Labour Union (Unia Pracy: UP), although falling just short of a parliamentary majority. However, the party then suffered a massive slump in support to finish fourth in the 2005 parliamentary election. The *'Left and Democrats'* was formed in 2006 as an electoral alliance of four centre-left parties, anchored by the Democratic Left Alliance but also comprising the Democrats (Demokraci), a small liberal party that included well-known figures from the Solidarity-led governments of the 1990s. Although the Left and Democrats finished third in the 2007 parliamentary election, its vote was less than the combined share won by the four parties that comprised the coalition in 2005 and it actually secured fewer seats than the Democratic Left Alliance had on its own in that year. Although, initially, the parties formed a joint parliamentary club, the Left and Democrats broke up in April 2008, when the Democratic Left Alliance left the coalition.

The *Polish Peasant Party* was formed in 1990 as the organisational successor to the former communist satellite United Peasant Party (Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe: ZSL). It was the junior coalition partner in Democratic Left Alliance-led governments between 1993-97 - with its leader, Waldemar Pawlak, prime minister from October 1993-February 1995 - and 2001-3. The party's share of the vote had been in steady decline since 1993, when it finished second behind the Democratic Left Alliance, and most commentators were surprised when it crossed the 5% threshold to secure parliamentary representation in 2005. However, the party made a comeback and finished fourth in the 2007 parliamentary election, joining the new government as Civic Platform's junior coalition partner, with Mr Pawlak becoming deputy premier.

Two of the parties examined, Self-Defence (Samoobrona) and the League of Polish Families (Liga Polskich Rodzin: LPR), only secured election in 2001 and 2005. *Self-Defence* was set up in the early 1990s as both a political party and farmers' union by Andrzej Lepper, one of the most controversial figures in Polish politics who first came to prominence as leader of radical farmers' protests against debt foreclosures. Mr Lepper returned to front line politics during farmers' blockades at the beginning of 1999 and surprised observers when Self-Defence emerged as the third largest party in the 2001 parliamentary election. The party held on to its share of the vote in the 2005 poll, while Mr Lepper finished a strong third in the presidential election scoring an impressive 15% of the vote. In May 2006 he became a deputy premier as Self-Defence joined the Law and Justice-led government as a junior coalition partner. However, the party suffered a massive slump in support and failed to cross the 5% threshold for parliamentary representation in 2007.

The *League of Polish Families* was formed in the run up to the 2001 parliamentary election as a coalition of right-wing and clerical-nationalist parties. However, it was registered and contested the election as one party (in order to be eligible for the lower 5% threshold for parliamentary representation) and was re-organised subsequently as a single, unitary party. The League held on to its share of the vote in 2005 and joined the Law and Justice-led government in May 2006 as a junior coalition partner with its leader, Roman Giertych, becoming a deputy premier. However, the party also suffered a huge drop in support in the 2007 election – which it contested in alliance with two other small right-wing parties as the League of the Right-wing of the Republic (Liga Prawicy Rzeczypospolitej, which also had the Polish acronym 'LPR') - and failed to cross the 5% threshold.

Like many others who have attempted this exercise, we draw upon Ladrech's pioneering article, which is one of the most influential (indeed very few) attempts in the parties literature to develop a comparative theoretical-analytical framework to analyse the impact of the EU on national parties by positing a number of overlapping fields of integration.⁷ Firstly, the way that the European issue or European developments have emerged (or failed to emerge) as an issue of contestation in inter-party competition, changed the logics of party competition and co-operation – by, for example, encouraging or preventing domestic actors from aligning with particular political forces - or even prompted the emergence of new parties around the European issue. Secondly, the number of references and sophisticated attention paid to the EU in party programmes, both in terms of: the amount of space devoted to European policy specifically; and mentions of the EU in other sections of party programmes devoted to policy areas that might previously have been considered the domain of 'domestic' politics. Thirdly, organisational changes driven by European integration, the impact of the EU on party organisation, especially the incorporation of European-level representatives, such as MEPs, and other so-called 'European policy specialists'⁸ into party structures. These might also include changes to party statutes to strengthen the role of such specialists and the creation of new party organisational structures

⁷ See: 'Europeanization and Political Parties'.

⁸ See: Elizabeth Carter, Kurt Richard Luther and Thomas Poguntke, 'European integration and internal party dynamics,' in Thomas Poguntke, Nicholas Aylott, Elisabeth Carter, Robert Ladrech and Kurt Richard Luther (eds), *The Europeanization of National Political Parties: Power and organizational adaptation*, London and New York: Routledge, 2007, pp1-27 (12-14).

specifically to consider European policy. Fourthly, the impact of relations with European trans-national party federations and EP party groupings, and bi-lateral links with parties in other EU member states.⁹ Some of these categories are, of course, extremely fuzzy and there is clearly a lot of overlap and inter-action between them. For example, one way of measuring the impact of the EU on inter-party competition is by examining the attention paid by parties to the EU in their election programmes. Relations with European party federations and EP groupings or bi-lateral links with other European parties may influence all of the other areas leading to programmatic and/or organisational change. However, for the purposes of this paper, and in the absence of any superior frameworks, we have chosen to use Ladrech.¹⁰ The paper concludes by reflecting upon the broader, comparative significance of the Polish findings and, in the course of doing so, considering some of the methodological difficulties involved in examining EU impacts on national party politics.

The paper argues that although, if one seeks them out, one can find limited evidence of EU influences, in overall terms EU accession has had little significant direct impact on Polish party politics. We also find that there was no obvious linear relationship between party positions on European integration and the extent to which the EU had impacted upon a party and the nature of those impacts, although it appears to have been greatest in those parties that were members of the large European party federations and EP groupings. In terms of general comparative conclusions, our analysis highlights three main analytical and conceptual problems of examining EU impacts on domestic politics: how can they be properly conceived and measured; what expectations do we have of change and what benchmarks are we measuring these impacts against; and how do we trace change back to an EU source, given that many of the adjustments were subtle and 'indirect'? Our findings also suggest that, in many ways, 'Europe' appears to have been assimilated successfully into the logic of Polish domestic party politics. We conclude by suggesting that analysts should we should start from the assumption that all developments in party and electoral politics can be explained through 'domestic' factors and, only when we have exhausted these, should we look for 'European' explanations.

In this paper we prefer to use the term 'EU impacts' rather than 'Europeanisation', which is the concept that many analysts, including Ladrech, use when examining the impact of the EU on domestic policy or politics. We do so for the simple reason that, as the research activities in this field have progressed the clarity of the concept has declined. In particular, confusion stems from the fact that the term tends to be

⁹ Analysis of the first two dimensions is based primarily on comparison of the party campaigns in the 2001, 2005 and 2007 parliamentary and 2005 presidential election campaigns particularly on: TV, press coverage and party websites; analysis of party's official party election programmes; together with some polling evidence. The third and fourth dimensions are examined primarily through interviews, conducted by the authors in April 2007, with party officials responsible for European policy and links with European party federations, EP party groupings and the parties' international counterparts.

¹⁰ Ladrech also identifies a fifth dimension that considers changes in party management and party-government relations driven by European integration, whereby inter-governmental bargaining may lead the government (and, therefore, party) leader to distance themselves from party programmatic positions. We do not examine this dimension in this paper for two reasons. Firstly, it is, in many ways, the most fuzzy and difficult to conceptualise and measure. Secondly, we cannot actually think of any examples of this phenomenon occurring in Poland either before or after EU accession. This is, therefore, one dimension where we can assert from the outset that there has been a definite EU 'non-impact'.

understood in two different ways. In some definitions it is seen from a 'top down' perspective, as a factor external to the national experience when the EU or something 'European' effects or impinges upon something in national politics or processes; which is the object of our analysis in this paper. However, in some other definitions, Europeanisation is posited as a bottom-up process relating to the development of structures of governance at the European level; in other words, as a synonym for the process of European integration itself. The notion of 'EU impacts on domestic politics' (in this case party politics) is, therefore, a much clearer formulation in our view. Obviously, it goes without saying that it is becoming increasingly difficult to separate out distinct 'European' and 'domestic' levels of analysis, that is: what is it in the national political system that can be 'effected' and what it is in Europe that does the 'effecting'? We shall return to this point when we reflect upon the methodological difficulties of identifying and measuring EU impacts on party politics in the conclusion.

1. The European issue and patterns of inter-party competition

Only one new party has been formed in Poland directly as a result of the EU issue, and that was prior to EU accession. The Polish Agreement (Porozumienie Polskie: PP) emerged in 1999 after seven clerical-nationalist deputies broke away from the governing Solidarity Electoral Action grouping the previous year because of their opposition to Polish membership of the EU.¹¹ This small faction provided the main focus for opposition to EU membership in the Polish legislature during the second part of the 1997-2001 parliament. The party's leader, Jan Łopuszański, ran as a candidate in the October 2000 Presidential election on the slogan 'Europe – Yes, European Union – No', and made opposition to Polish EU accession his dominant campaign theme.¹² However, the party never really took off and, after Mr Łopuszański won only 0.79% of the vote in the 2000 election, was subsumed within a broader clerical-nationalist League of Polish Families coalition in the run up to the 2001 election. The League was, of course, extremely anti-EU - indeed, it spearheaded opposition to Polish accession during the 2003 referendum - but this was not the catalyst for its formation. In the event, the Polish Agreement disappeared when the League of Polish Families became a unitary party after the election; and Mr Łopuszański ended up leaving it anyway.

So if the European issue has not - with one tiny exception, and that prior to EU accession - led to the formation of any new parties, how has it affected patterns of competition and co-operation among the existing parties? In order to evaluate this, this paper looks at the three most recent Polish election campaigns: the September 2001 parliamentary election, the last held prior to EU accession in May 2004, and the two that have been held since accession: the September-October 2005 parliamentary-presidential elections and the October 2007 parliamentary election.

The 2001 parliamentary election saw the electoral success of parties critical of or hostile to European integration: most notably Self-Defence and the League of Polish Families but also, although to a lesser extent Law and Justice and the Polish Peasant

¹¹ See: 'Razem przeciw integracji,' *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 26 April 1999.

¹² See: Aleks Szczerbiak, 'Europe as a re-aligning issue in Polish politics?: Evidence from the October 2000 Presidential Election,' *Sussex European Institute Working Paper No 48/Opposing Europe Research Network Working Paper No 3*, June 2001, Brighton: Sussex European Institute, p16.

Party. As **Table 2** shows, expert surveys conducted in the early 2000s confirm that these parties were certainly perceived by many analysts as being relatively Eurosceptic.¹³ This even led some commentators to talk about the 2001 election as representing a kind of ‘Eurosceptic backlash’.¹⁴ However, by virtually any measure ‘Europe’ was not a particularly salient issue in the 2001 campaign.¹⁵ Firstly, when measured by the number of times that parties ‘led’ on this issue during their daily press conference, most of them did not really give it much of a profile in their campaigns. Secondly, Europe attracted very little interest from voters: polls showed 4-7% of respondent citing it as an important issue, very low down the list of issues that would impact on their vote.¹⁶ Although statistical analysis of 2001 voters by Markowski found that the difference between the views of the main party electorates on the EU issue had indeed grown larger and become more pronounced compared with 1997,¹⁷ the EU issue was actually less important for voters in 2001.¹⁸ More significant differences between the parties on the European issue were also accompanied by greater inconsistency within party electorates about the saliency of the EU issue. Moreover, the voters of the two parties that were considered to be the most Eurosceptic, the League of Polish Families and Self-Defence, actually scored the EU issue lowest in terms of salience.¹⁹ Other research by Markowski and Tucker confirmed a strong correlation between those individuals who considered the EU issue to be an important one and support for EU integration so that, ironically, an increase in public Euroscepticism between 1997-2001 actually contributed to a *decline* in the salience of the European issue at the 2001 election.²⁰ Thirdly, this was re-inforced by polling evidence that showed that supporters of EU membership represented a majority among all parties, except the League of Polish Families but including Self-Defence. In fact, most anti-EU voters actually voted for the

¹³ See, for example: Aleks Szczerbiak, ‘Opposing Europe or Problematising Europe? Euroscepticism and Eurorealism in the Polish Party System,’ in Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczerbiak (eds), *Opposing Europe: The Comparative Party Politics of Euroscepticism in Contemporary Europe. Volume One: Case Studies and Country Surveys*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, pp221-242.

¹⁴ See, for example: John Reed, ‘Election result may deal blow to Poland’s EU hopes,’ *Financial Times*, 25 September 2001.

¹⁵ See: Aleks Szczerbiak, ‘After the election, nearing the endgame: The Polish Euro-debate in the run up to the 2003 EU accession referendum,’ *Sussex European Institute Working Paper No53/Opposing Europe Research Network Working Paper No 7*, May 2002, Brighton: Sussex European Institute, pp11-18.

¹⁶ See: *Ibid*, p17.

¹⁷ On an 11 point scale running from 0-10, where 10 indicated the lowest level of support for the EU and 0 the highest level, the most pro-EU grouping in 1997, Solidarity Electoral Action, scored 3.18 and the most anti-EU, the Polish Peasant Party, 4.36. In 2001, the most pro-EU grouping, Civic Platform, scored 3.68, while the most anti-EU, the League of Polish Families, scored 6.85. See: Radosław Markowski, ‘EU Membership and the Polish Party System,’ in Paul Lewis and Zdenka Mansfeldova (eds), *The European Union and Party Politics in Central and Eastern Europe*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp128-148 (134).

¹⁸ On an 11 point scale running from 0-10, where 10 indicated highest salience, the average salience of the EU issue to Polish voters fell from 7.3 in 1997 to 6.09 in 2001. See: *Ibid*, p133.

¹⁹ 4.96 and 5.39 respectively compared with the average of 6.09. The highest salience figure was highest for the pro-EU Freedom Union (7.6) and Civic Platform (7.13). See: *Ibid*.

²⁰ See: Radosław Markowski and Joshua Tucker, ‘Political Representation and EU Accession: Evidence from Poland,’ Paper presented to the 2005 American Political Science Association annual meeting, Washington, DC, 1-4 September 2005. However, in a subsequent paper, Markowski and Tucker argue that Euroscepticism was a significant factor accounting for the surge in support for Self-Defence and the League of Polish Families in 2001. See: Radosław Markowski and Joshua Tucker, ‘Euroscepticism and the Emergence of Political Parties in Poland,’ January 2008 at http://homepages.nyu.edu/~jat7/Markowski_Tucker_Euroskep_2006.pdf (Accessed 24 April 2008).

Democratic Left Alliance - which fought the 2001 election in coalition with the Labour Union (UP), a smaller left-wing party, and, as **Table 2** shows, was perceived by experts to be among the most pro-EU parties!²¹

Table 2: Expert surveys on Polish party position on EU integration, 2003-4

	Benoit/Laver (2003-4)	Rohrschneider/Whitefield (2004)
Freedom Union	19.2	7.0
Civic Platform	18.4	6.6
Democratic Left Alliance	18.3	6.4
Labour Union	17.3	5.8
Solidarity Electoral Action	13.9	N/A
Law and Justice	12.5	4.0
Polish Peasant Party	9.8	3.6
Self-Defence	3.6	1.2
League of Polish Families	1.5	1.0

Notes: For Benoit/Laver, the scale ranges from 1 (opposes joining the EU), to 20 (favours joining the EU); for Rohrschneider/Whitefield, the scale ranges from 1 (nationalist, ant-EU) to 7 (internationalist, pro-EU)

Source: Expert surveys

As far as the 2005 campaign was concerned, Poland's relations with the EU and possible changes to Poland's European policy trajectory only really emerged as a major issue of concern *after* the elections with the formation of a government led by the apparently Eurosceptic Law and Justice party which was dependent upon Self-Defence and the League of Polish Families for its parliamentary majority (and eventually, in May 2006, formed a coalition government with these parties). As in 2001, Poland's relations with the EU played virtually no role in the 2005 parliamentary elections and did not feature very prominently in most party programmes or in their campaigns more generally.²² For example, an April 2005 CBOS survey (admittedly, conducted at the very beginning of the campaign) found between 47%-57% of respondents did not know the stance on the EU constitutional treaty taken by the eight main parties contesting the elections. This was even the case among substantial numbers of the party's own supporters including: 21% of Civic Platform voters, 35% of Democratic Left Alliance voters, 31% of Law and Justice party voters, 40% of League of Polish Families voters and 45% of Self-Defence voters. Indeed, 48% of Law and Justice party voters, 28% of Self-Defence voters and 11% of League of Polish Families voters (together, more understandably, with 76% of Civic Platform voters) actually thought that their parties' supported the treaty!²³

²¹ See: Beata Roguska and Jacek Kucharczyk, *Wybory 2001 a integracja Polski z Unia Europejska*, Warsaw: ISP, 2001, p13.

²² See: Aleks Szczerbiak, 'Europe and the September/October 2005 Polish Parliamentary and Presidential Elections,' *European Parties Elections and Referendums Network Election Briefing No 22* at http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/epern_eb_22_poland.pdf.

²³ See: CBOS, *Polacy o Europejskiej Konstytucji*, CBOS: Warsaw, April 2005 (April 2005 data), p11-13.

Not surprisingly, given that foreign policy was felt to be an important part of the president's remit, European issues were a little more prominent during the four-week presidential campaign that followed immediately after the parliamentary elections. Both the two main candidates Lech Kaczyński (Law and Justice) and Donald Tusk (Civic Platform) visited Brussels for photo-opportunities with EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso.²⁴ Earlier, Mr Tusk used the fact that Civic Platform had more widespread contacts with European centre-right parties, particularly through its membership of the European Peoples' Party (EPP - examined in greater detail below), to invite German Christian Democrat leader Angela Merkel and the French Gaullists' then putative presidential candidate Nicolas Sarkozy to support his campaign. He hoped, thereby, to portray himself as part of the coming generation of European centre-right leaders.²⁵ Mr Tusk also used his European Peoples' Party contacts to organise a meeting in the European Parliament for Andzelika Borys, the recently deposed leader of the Union of Poles in Belarus, which attracted considerable media coverage.²⁶ For his part, Mr Kaczyński implied that Mr Tusk's desire for international acceptance meant that he would be insufficiently robust in defending Poland's interests abroad; arguing that he, in contrast, would never become a 'plasticine president'.²⁷ His campaign message also implicitly criticised outgoing Democratic Left Alliance president Aleksander Kwaśniewski for spending too much time back-slapping foreign leaders to allegedly little tangible benefit and made it plain that that he would give greater priority to domestic issues.

Interestingly, at one stage (spring 2005), it actually appeared that European issues might play a much more significant role in the election campaign. This was because it seemed that the Polish referendum to ratify the EU constitutional treaty would be held together with the first round of presidential election, to help secure the 50% turnout required to make such a referendum constitutionally valid.²⁸ However, the referendum was postponed when, following the strong rejection of the treaty in France and the Netherlands, opinion polls began to show a sharp fall in the number of respondents supporting ratification and the process was placed on hold.²⁹

European issues, and foreign affairs more generally, had a somewhat higher profile in the 2007 parliamentary election campaign.³⁰ This was partly because the Law and Justice-party led government's foreign and European policies were extremely controversial both in Poland and abroad among its EU partners, with a widespread and growing perception that Poland was turning into Europe's 'new awkward

²⁴ See: Anna Słojewska, 'Proeuropejska koalicja,' *Rzeczpospolita*, 1-2 October 2005.

²⁵ See: Paweł Wroński, 'Przedwyborcza debata o polityce zagranicznej,' at <http://serwis.gazeta.pl/kraj/2029020,34308,2913178.html> (Accessed on 13 September 2005).

²⁶ See: Anna Słojewska, 'Sami nie dadzą rady,' *Rzeczpospolita*, 9 September 2005.

²⁷ See: 'Kaczyński: nie będę prezydentem z plasteliny,' 17 October 2005 at <http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wyborzy2005/2029020,67805,2972443.html> (Accessed 18 October 2005).

²⁸ See, for example: Janina Paradowska, 'Co mamy pod sufitem?' *Polityka*, 11 June 2005.

²⁹ See: Aleks Szczerbiak, 'Why do Poles love the EU and what do they love about it?: Polish attitudes towards European integration during the first three years of EU membership,' *Sussex European Institute Working Paper No 98*, Brighton: Sussex European Institute, November 2007, pp34, 36.

³⁰ See: Aleks Szczerbiak, 'Europe and the October 2007 Polish parliamentary election,' *European Parties Elections and Referendums Network Election Briefing No 37* at http://www.sussex.ac.uk/sei/documents/epern_37_poland2007.pdf

partner'.³¹ For its part, Law and Justice made a virtue of the fact that it had significantly re-orientated Poland's approach to foreign policy which, it argued, needed to be 're-claimed' from a post-1989 establishment that had been over-conciliatory and insufficiently robust in defending the country's interests abroad, especially in the EU.³² Opposition parties, on the other hand, argued that, by poisoning relations with its EU partners, the Law and Justice-led government's rhetoric and unpredictable negotiating tactics were condemning Poland to ridicule and isolation in the international arena.³³ Another reason why Polish-EU relations played a more prominent role in this election was that the campaign coincided with the run up to an EU leaders meeting in Lisbon scheduled for October 18-19, two days before polling day, that was due to secure agreement on the reform treaty.³⁴ Finally, the fact that the three TV debates between leaders of the main parties contesting the election – Jarosław Kaczyński (Law and Justice), Donald Tusk (Civic Platform) and Aleksander Kwaśniewski (the Left and Democrats' candidate for prime minister) – which were watched by millions of Poles and played an important role in the campaign, devoted one third of the discussion to foreign affairs, also helped to raise the profile of European issues in the 2007 election.

Nonetheless, in spite of their somewhat higher profile in this campaign, EU – and, more generally, foreign policy – issues were still very much secondary to domestic ones in terms of party electoral strategies and appeals. Moreover, although it is difficult to evaluate this precisely without detailed statistical analysis, it is also unlikely that they were of primary importance for most Poles when deciding how to cast their vote. However, 'Europe' probably was significant in this election, in the sense that the 2007 poll was, essentially, a plebiscite on the performance of a controversial and polarising government³⁵ in which the way that EU relations and foreign policy had been conducted was an important component in determining more general overall attitudes towards that government. For supporters of the Law and Justice party, the new, more assertive foreign policy, and the fact that it exemplified a break with the policies pursued by the post-1989 political elites more generally, would have been an important factor contributing to their overall positive evaluation of the government. For opponents of the government, on the other hand, the Law and Justice party's foreign and European policy exemplified its more general incompetence and confrontational style of politics that they rejected. Indeed, echoing themes from the 2003 EU accession referendum,³⁶ at one point during the campaign Mr Tusk even attempted to frame the election as a 'civilisational choice' between East

³¹ See for example: Jan Cienski and Stefan Wagstyl, 'Twins are remaking Poland,' *Financial Times*, 30 August 2006; and 'A swamp of paranoid nostalgia,' *Economist*, 5 July 2007. For a lengthier analysis of Polish foreign policy during this period, see: Piotr Maciej Kaczyński, *Polska polityka zagraniczna w latach 2005-2007: co po konsensie?* Warsaw: ISP, 2008.

³² See, for example: 'Premier: Dziadostwo w polityce zagranicznej źle się kończy,' 28 September 2007 at <http://serwisy.gazeta.pl/wybory2007/2029020,85059,4529777.html> (Accessed 2 October 2007).

³³ See, for example: Bernadeta Waszkielewicz, 'Bartoszewski: PiS to dewianci,' *Rzeczpospolita*, 1 October 2007; and 'LiD prezentuje raport na temat polskiej polityki zagranicznej,' 28 September 2007 at <http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/Wiadomosci/2029020,80708,4530237.html> (Accessed 2 October 2007).

³⁴ See: Anna Słojewska and Wojciech Lorenz, 'Polska może opóźnić podpisanie traktatu,' *Rzeczpospolita*, 5 September 2007.

³⁵ See: Aleks Szczerbiak, 'The birth of a bi-polar party system or a referendum on a polarising government? The October 2007 Polish Parliamentary Election,' *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, September 2008, forthcoming.

³⁶ See: Aleks Szczerbiak, 'History trumps government unpopularity: the June 2003 Polish EU accession referendum,' *West European Politics*, Vol 27 No 4, 2004, pp671-690.

and West, arguing that under the Law and Justice government Poland was evolving more in the direction of Russia than a modern West European democracy.³⁷ In this sense, even in this election – where, on the face of it, Polish-EU relations appeared to be much more salient than in earlier campaigns - it was not so much European integration *per se* that was the issue but more the government's conduct of European policy so that 'Europe' became assimilated in more general domestic debates as a valence issue.

In fact, across the three elections, it was probably the radical Eurosceptic League of Polish Families that, in relative terms at least, gave most prominence to European issues in its campaigning. Interestingly, in the 2001 parliamentary election, League of Polish Families voters were the only ones among whom there was a majority opposed to EU accession: with 52% against and only 24% in favour (22% said that they would not vote, 2% did not know), suggesting that the EU might have been more of a factor in determining their vote.³⁸ In the 2005 election, the League and its presidential candidate, Maciej Giertych, launched a campaign to oppose introduction of the euro to replace the Polish złoty; although this never really received any national coverage in the mainstream media. Although none of the ten slogans that the party put up on its website as representing its 2005 'programme' referred to European issues, one of its national campaign leaflets devoted a third of its coverage to EU issues including: opposition to the EU constitutional treaty; criticism of Poland's allegedly poor EU accession terms; and praising the work of the party's MEPs.³⁹ In the 2007 election, one of the four main points in the League's one page 'election declaration' stated that the grouping was committed to securing a strong position for Poland (and particularly building up a strong Christian lobby) in the EU and opposed both the introduction of an 'EU constitution' and the euro, and any expansion of the competencies of what it called the 'socialist Brussels bureaucracy'. The League also devoted the most attention of any of party to EU issues in its TV election broadcasts, calling for the rejection of the euro and the EU reform treaty.⁴⁰

2. The prominence of European issues in party programmes

Turning to the question of the attention paid to the EU in party programmes, as noted above there are two principal ways that this dimension can be measured. Firstly, by examining the amount of space devoted to European policy specifically and, secondly, by considering the number of mentions of the EU in other sections of party programmes devoted to policy areas that might previously have been considered the domain of 'domestic' politics. However, it should be noted from the outset that there are methodological problems with comparing Polish party election programmes.⁴¹ A

³⁷ See, for example: Michał Kopiński, 'Platforma: my to Zachód, PiS to Wschód,' *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 17 September 2007 at <http://www.gazetawyborcza/2029020,75478,4493959.html> (Accessed 19 September 2007).

³⁸ See: 'After the election, nearing the endgame,' p17.

³⁹ See: 'Europe and the September/October 2005 Polish Parliamentary and Presidential Elections,' p11.

⁴⁰ See: 'Europe and the October 2007 Polish parliamentary election,' pp9-10.

⁴¹ For critical accounts of both the general methodological difficulties associated with determining dimensions of party competition on the basis of content analysis of manifestoes and party programmes, and the specific difficulties of applying this approach to the Polish case, particularly in evaluating the importance of 'hidden' dimensions such as attitudes towards the communist past and religiosity, see: Xymena Bukowska and Mikołaj Czeńnik, 'Analiza treści programów wyborczych polskich partii politycznych 1991-2000' in Radosław Markowski (ed.), *System Partyjny i Zachowanie Wyborcze:*

non-academic analysis of the 2007 election by Bobiński usefully summarised the “grey area” in Polish politics to which party election programmes belong, but nonetheless concluded that there was value in analysing them: “Their contents are rarely, if ever, reported in the media. They are almost never discussed by a political party’s rank and file, nor do party political activists contribute to their contents. They are also largely ignored by the party’s opponents for that matter. However...they are a useful, though, in so far as they provide a snapshot of the state of mind of a party’s political leadership as it faces the voters.”⁴² There are also particular problems associated with comparing party programmes in the 2001, 2005 and 2007 elections. On the one hand the fact that the six main parties elected to parliament in 2001 were also the only ones re-elected in 2005 and four of these were once again the only parties elected in 2007 (albeit that the Democratic Left Alliance was part of the Left and Democrats electoral alliance) should facilitate the process of temporal comparison. However, most of the parties did not produce full and up-to-date election programmes for all three elections and, even when they did, their length, varied enormously.

At one extreme, only the Law and Justice party published up-to-date detailed programmes for all three elections, with a particularly comprehensive and detailed 144-page document in 2005, while its 2001 and 2007 programmes were also substantial at 60 and 71 pages respectively. The Democratic Left Alliance/Left and Democrats and the Polish Peasant Party published up-to-date party programmes in all three elections, although these varied in length considerably. For example, in 2001 the Peasant Party produced a fairly short 16 page election declaration, in 2005 a slightly longer 23 page election declaration together with an 11 page election programme and 4 page programmatic statement, and then in 2007 only a much shorter 12 page election declaration comprising ten short chapters, each containing ten programmatic bullet points. In 2001, the Democratic Left Alliance produced a 21 page election programme but in 2005 the party only produced an 8 page election declaration and 5 page election manifesto. In 2007, the Left and Democrats produced two programmatic statements during the campaign. The first, titled ‘New policies, New hope’, was 70 pages long and the second was a shorter policy statement titled ‘100 specifics’ containing 100 very short paragraphs.

Civic Platform published up-to-date and detailed programmes in 2001 (44 pages) and 2007 (84 pages) but not in 2005. Indeed, until the last couple of weeks of the 2005 parliamentary campaign, the ‘programme’ section of party’s website simply contained a link to the party’s 2001 election programme. Eventually, stung by criticisms from the Law and Justice party about its lack of policies, the party began to refer visitors to its website to the personal web pages of its parliamentary group leader and prime ministerial candidate, Jan Rokita, which contained a series of short, thematic policy statements. Unfortunately, the link to the statement on ‘foreign policy’ never worked

Dekada Polskich Doświadczeń, Warsaw: ISP PAN, 2002, pp267-287; and Radosław Markowski Markowski, ‘Propozycja ‘Manifesto Research Group’: Metoda, Wyniki, Problemy – Komentarz’ in Radosław Markowski (ed.), *System Partyjny i Zachowanie Wyborcze: Dekada Polskich Doświadczeń*, Warsaw: ISP PAN, 2002, pp289-297.

⁴² See: Krzysztof Bobiński, *Poland’s post-election foreign policy – a turning point?* Warsaw: ISP, 2007, p4.

on the (numerous) occasions that the authors visited this site, both during the election campaign and subsequently!⁴³

At the other extreme, the League of Polish Families only published very short programmatic statements in 2001 (a 6 page programmatic statement and a leaflet containing 10 ‘programmatic theses’) and 2007 (a one page election declaration and a ten-bullet point ‘programme’). During the 2005 campaign, the League posted a lengthier, detailed 21 page programme on its website but this was actually published in 2003 and pre-dated the EU accession referendum; indeed, much of it actually set out the case for a No vote! Apart from that the League also published a 10-point party programme and programmatic campaign leaflet containing 10 short paragraphs during the campaign. Similarly, Self-Defence only produced a short leaflet as its election programmatic statement in 2001. Although the party produced some very detailed policy statements during the 2001-2005 parliament (including a 56 page document in the run up to the 2003 EU accession referendum), during the actual 2005 election campaign it confined itself to producing a 20 page election statement for Mr Lepper, as its presidential candidate, while in 2007 the party did not publish any election programme at all.

As **Table 3** shows, there does seem to be a broadly upward trend as far as the amount of space devoted to European policy in party programmes was concerned with all six political groupings surveyed devoting as much or more (or, indeed, as little) space in their 2007 programmes as they did in 2001. However, there are two important caveats that need to be mentioned here. Firstly, the trend is not a linear one: four of the six parties surveyed – Law and Justice, the Polish Peasant Party, Self-Defence and the League of Polish Families - also saw a decrease in the amount of space devoted to the EU between 2005 and 2007. Secondly, the increase in space devoted to EU policy often simply reflected changes in the overall length of the party programme. For example, the large increase in the space devoted to European policy that could be seen in the Law and Justice party programme from only 1 paragraph in 2001 to 6 pages covering 20 paragraphs in 2005 was, in large part, due to an increase in the overall length of the party programme from 60 to 144 pages over the same period. Similarly, the increased space devoted to European policy from only 3 paragraphs in the 2005 Democratic Left Alliance programme to 11 in the 2007 Left and Democrats’ programme was also due to the fact that the latter was much lengthier: an 8 page election declaration and 5 page election manifesto in 2005 compared to a 70 page programmatic statement and 100 paragraph policy statement in 2007. In fact, European issues actually had a *relatively* more prominent role in the 2005 Democratic Left Alliance programme: one of the five sections was titled ‘More Europe in Poland, more Poland in Europe’, while the party’s (separate) election manifesto mentioned EU accession as one of the outgoing Democratic Left Alliance-led government’s five key achievements. On the other hand, as note above, Civic Platform had no foreign policy section at all in its 2005 programme and Self-Defence barely produced election programmes for any of three elections (and none at all in 2007), so it was not

⁴³ See: <http://www.janrokita.pl/>. Subsequent requests by the author to both the party and Mr Rokita’s office for a hard copy of the party’s foreign policy programme failed to elicit any response. See also: ‘Wybory: programy mało internetowe,’ 22 September 2005 at <http://wiadomosci.gazeta.pl/wbyory2005/2029020.67805,2930298.html> (Accessed 22 September 2005).

surprising that these two parties devoted little or no space to European issues in their programmes at these elections.

Table 3: Space devoted to EU policy in 2001, 2005 and 2007 Polish party election manifestoes

Party	2001	2005	2007
Civic Platform	None	None	16 paragraphs
Law and Justice	1 paragraph	20 paragraphs	6 paragraphs
Democratic Left Alliance/ Left and Democrats	3 paragraphs	3 paragraphs	11 paragraphs
Polish Peasant Party	2 sentences	5 (short) paragraphs	2 sentences
Self-Defence	None	1 sentence	None
League of Polish Families	2 sentences	3 paragraphs, 2 sentences	1 (short) paragraph, 2 sentences

Source: Author analysis of party election programmes

As **Table 3** also shows, there was no obvious link between support for or opposition to European integration through the EU on the one hand, and the amount of space devoted to European policy in party programmes on the other. For example, in the 2007 election both the pro-EU Civic Platform and Left and Democrats devoted a substantial amount of space to their European policy. Civic Platform devoted ten pages of its 84-page programme to its foreign policy section titled ‘A Strong and Safe Poland in the EU’, most of which was, indeed, about European policy. The Left and Democrats produced two programmatic statements during the campaign. The first, ‘New policies, New hope’, contained eight (out of 70) pages in its foreign policy section, ‘Polish faith in Europe’, which set out its European policy priorities. The second, shorter policy statement titled ‘100 specifics’ included a foreign policy section titled ‘Poland in Europe’ that contained five short paragraphs referring to EU policy, re-iterating the main commitments contained in the longer document. At the same time, the more Eurosceptic Self-Defence and League of Polish Families devoted very little or no space to EU policy in 2007. On the other hand, Civic Platform said nothing about EU policy during either the 2001 or 2005 elections; even though its 2001 election programme was 43 pages long! Moreover, in 2005 the more Eurosceptic Law and Justice party devoted more space to European policy than any party had in any programme in any of the three elections (20 paragraphs over 6 pages), and in 2007 seven pages of the Law and Justice party’s 71-page programme were devoted to foreign policy, around half of which (6 paragraphs) was specifically about European issues. Similarly, in 2005 the radical Eurosceptic League of Polish Families actually devoted one third of the programmatic leaflet, which the party

produced to supplement the ‘programme’ that it published on its website, to European issues.

At the same time, **Table 4** also shows that mentions of the EU had become more prominent in other sections of party programmes that, prior to Polish accession, might have been regarded as primarily or solely the domain of domestic politics. This was particularly striking in the case of Civic Platform, the Law and Justice party and the Democratic Left Alliance/Left and Democrats. In the case of Civic Platform there was an increase from only 2 policy sections (containing 2 paragraphs and 1 sentence) where the EU was mentioned in 2001, to 4 sections (containing 7 paragraphs and 1 sentence) in 2005, and then to 10 sections (7 paragraphs and 19 sentences plus 4 pages on EU funds in the section on regional policy) in 2007. Interestingly, three of the eleven domestic policy chapters in the party’s 2007 programme (regional policy, agriculture and cultural policy) were also headed ‘Poland in Europe’. The Law and Justice party saw an increase in mentions of the EU from 4 sections (totalling 4 paragraphs and 1 sentence) in 2001, to 6 sections (26 paragraphs and 2 sentences) in 2005. A large part of this was accounted for by the increase in the overall length of the programme from 60 pages to 144, although the somewhat shorter (71 page), 2007 programme also saw references to the EU in 6 sections (16 paragraphs, 21 sentences). Although the Democratic Left Alliance saw a slight fall in the number of sections of its programme in which the EU was mentioned from 6 (3 paragraphs, 7 sentences) in 2001 to 5 (and only 7 sentences) in 2005, this was largely a reflection of the much shorter party programme that the party published that year (as noted above, an 8 page election declaration and 5 page election manifesto compared with a 21-page programme in 2001). Indeed, the number of policy sections in which there were references to the EU increased to 7 (16 paragraphs, 14 sentences) in the longer version of the 2007 Left and Democrats’ programme, while in its shorter 2007 policy statement, three of the other ‘one hundred specifics’ (in addition to the five bullet points in the foreign policy section mentioned above) also mentioned the EU.

Table 4: Mention of the EU in 2001, 2005 and 2007 party election manifestoes

	2001	2005	2007
Civic Platform	<p>Introduction (1 para) Agriculture (1 para, 1 sentence)</p>	<p>Security policy (1 sentence) Economic policy (2 paras) Transport (1 sentence) Agriculture (4 short paras)</p>	<p>Introduction (5 sentences) State reform (1 para, 2 sentences) State-owned companies (1 sentence) Economic policy (2 paragraphs, 2 sentences) Education (3 sentences) Security policy (3 paragraphs) Other foreign policy (5 sentences) Agriculture (4 paras, 1 sentence) Regional policy (4 pages) Cultural policy (4 paragraphs)</p>
Law and Justice	<p>Introduction (2 paras) Competition policy (1 para) Infrastructure policy (1 sentence) Construction policy (1 para)</p>	<p>Introduction (2 paras) Security policy (1 para) Other foreign policy (7 paras, 2 sentences) Economic policy (12 paragraphs) Education policy (2 paras) Agriculture (4 paras, 2 sentences)</p>	<p>Economic policy (12 paras, 6 sentences) Security policy (1 sentence) Other foreign policy (6 sentences) Agriculture (2 paras, 5 sentences) Regional policy (1 para, 3 sentences) Cultural policy (1 para)</p>

Democratic Left Alliance/ Left and Democrats	Introduction (1 sentence) Trade policy (1 sentence) Agriculture (2 sentences) Regional policy (2 paras) Institutional reform (1 sentence) Relations with Eastern neighbours (1 para, 2 sentences)	Introduction (1 sentence) Employment/social policy (3 sentences) Women's/minority rights (1 sentence) Institutional reform (1 sentence) Conclusion (1 sentence)	Introduction (3 sentences) Institutional reform (1 sentence) Civil rights (1 para) Education (1 sentence) Economic policy (2 paras, 2 sentences) Regional policy (2 paras, 2 sentences) Environment policy (3 paras, 2 sentences) Other foreign policy (8 paras, 3 sentences)
Polish Peasant Party	Introduction (1 para) Trade policy (1 sentence) Infrastructure policy (1 sentence)	Introduction (1 sentence) Agriculture (3 paragraphs) Rural policy (1 paragraph) Fiscal policy (1 paragraph) Cultural policy (1 sentence) Conclusion (2 paragraphs)	Environment policy (1 sentence) Security policy (1 sentence) Other foreign policy (2 sentences) Regional funds (1 sentence)
Self-Defence	Conclusion (1 sentence)	None	None
League of Polish Families	Introduction (1 sentence) Regional policy (1 sentence)	Economic policy (1 sentence)	None

Source: Author analysis of party election programmes

On the other hand, although the Peasant Party saw an increase in the number of policy sections with EU references from 3 (1 paragraph, 2 sentences) in 2001 to 6 (7 paragraphs, 2 sentences) in 2005, in 2007 the party bucked the trend and there was actually a drop to only 4 sections (5 sentences). In the case of the League of Polish Families, the 2005 programme actually contained *fewer* references to the EU in other policy sections (1 section, 1 reference) than it had in 2001 (2 sections, 2 references) and there were none at all in 2007. Similarly, while the 2001 Self-Defence programme contained only one reference to the EU in its conclusion, in 2005 there were no EU references at all in other policy sections (and there was, of course, no party programme in 2007).

However, once again, some of this was caused by changes in the length of party programmes. For example, as noted above, the increase in EU references in the Law and Justice programme from 2001 to 2005 could be accounted for largely by a substantial increase in its overall length from 60 to 144 pages. The increase in the number of mentions of the EU in other sections of the Left and Democrats' 2007 programme compared with that of the Democratic Left Alliance in 2005 and in the Civic Platform programmes from 2005 to 2007, as could also be explained by an increase in the overall length of the party programmes, noted above. Similarly, the decrease in the number of such mentions in the Peasant Party programme between 2005 and 2007 can, again, be explained, in part, by a concomitant reduction in the overall length of the party programme, also noted above. Nonetheless, changes in the length of party programmes notwithstanding, there does still appear to be a broad, secular upward trend across three elections – and, therefore, some clear evidence of an EU impact in this dimension at least.

3. The impact of European integration on party organisation

Overall, the impact of European integration on Polish party organisation was, with one or two exceptions, rather minimal. The greatest impact was on Civic Platform and the Democratic Left Alliance; although in the case of the latter the influence was already apparent before EU accession. As **Table 5** shows, both of these parties saw an increased role for European policy specialists within its party organisation. In the case of Civic Platform, this was through MEP participation in the party's parliamentary caucus, and national and regional boards. Here, MEPs enjoyed equal rights with parliamentary deputies, as well as being perceived as experts on international issues and representing the party abroad. They were also seen as a source of information, responsible for supplementing national parliamentarians' knowledge, as well as linkage to other European bodies and politicians.⁴⁴ To reflect this, the party established a new post of deputy secretary responsible for international affairs, who was in charge of a small office dealing with contacts with the party's MEPs and Civic Platform's sister parties. MEPs and party members specialising in European affairs were also felt to be very active locally particularly at the regional level in large towns,

⁴⁴ Author interview with Krzysztof Lisek, Civic Platform International Secretary, April 2007. This confirms the findings of an Institute of Public Affairs report on the activities of Polish MEPs which suggested that their greatest impact on European issues, although this often stemmed from the lack of interest in, and low level of importance attached by the parties, to European issues. See: Jarosław Ćwiek-Karpowicz, Piotr Kaźmierkiewicz and Magdalena Pucyk, *The Polish Members of the European Parliament: Their Activities and Impact on the Polish Political Scene*, Warsaw: ISP, pp58, 61.

helping to organise European contacts and raising awareness of the EU.⁴⁵ In the case of the Democratic Left Alliance, MEPs - together with parliamentary deputies and academics with European expertise - were all felt to be influential within the party, although this influence existed before EU accession and its impact was felt to be more indirect than direct: “raising consciousness” about how party politics operated in more advanced West European party systems.⁴⁶

Table 5: The impact of the EU on Polish party organisation

	Increased role for European policy specialists	Changes in party statute	New specialist EU policy bodies
Civic Platform	Yes	Yes	Yes
Law and Justice	No	No	No
Democratic Left Alliance	Yes – although always significant	Yes	Yes – but not new
Polish Peasant Party	No	No	No
Self-Defence	Minimal	No	No
League of Polish Families	No	No	Yes

Source: Author interviews with party officials, April 2007.

Indeed, as **Table 5** also shows, these were the only two parties of the six surveyed that actually changed their statutes as a result of EU accession. In the case of Civic Platform, MEPs could participate in meetings of the party’s parliamentary caucus and were ex-officio members of the party’s national and regional councils. Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, the leader of the party’s MEP delegation - whom one commentator argues had “managed to maintain strict control of the European policy of the party”⁴⁷ - was also one of the party’s five vice-chairmen and an elected (not ex-officio) member of the 15-strong party board.⁴⁸ After EU accession, the head of the Democratic Left Alliance’s MEP delegation was automatically an ex-officio member of the party’s 20-strong national board, its most powerful governing body.⁴⁹

As **Table 5** shows, these two parties were also, together with the League of Polish Families, among the three that had established some kinds of specialist bodies to consider EU policy-making specifically. At the time that our interviews were conducted Civic Platform was in the process of establishing a formal International Secretariat within its party headquarters, as well as planning to establish local plenipotentiary posts responsible for international contacts at the regional level.⁵⁰ The Democratic Left Alliance also had an International Secretariat, although this body already had existed prior to EU accession.⁵¹

⁴⁵ Author interview with Paweł Graś, Civic Platform Deputy General Secretary, April 2007.

⁴⁶ Author interview with Tadeusz Iwiński, Democratic Left Alliance parliamentary deputy, April 2007.

⁴⁷ See: *The Polish Members of the European Parliament*, p11.

⁴⁸ Author interview with Paweł Graś.

⁴⁹ Author interview with Tadeusz Iwiński.

⁵⁰ Author interviews with Paweł Graś and Krzysztof Lisek.

⁵¹ Author interview with Tadeusz Iwiński.

As **Table 5** also shows, the smallest impact of the EU on party organisation on Polish parties was evident in the cases of: the Law and Justice party, Peasant Party, Self-Defence and the League of Polish Families. Indeed, in the case of the Law and Justice party there appeared to have been virtually no impact at all by the relevant party officials.⁵² This may appear an usual finding given that two of the party's MEPs, Adam Bielan and Michał Kamiński, played a crucial role in developing the party's successful electoral and communication strategies in the run up to the 2005 parliamentary and presidential elections and were often the 'faces' of the party in the mass media.⁵³ However, the crucial role that these two MEPs played in the Law and Justice party did not stem from the European 'policy expertise' that they acquired through membership of the EP, but from their more general public relations and communications skills. Indeed, far from being an example of how EP experience has had an impact on party organisation in Poland, the case of Bielan and Kamiński is actually evidence of the opposite: politicians who treated the EP as secondary and much less important than domestic politics, on which they preferred to concentrate.⁵⁴

During the 1990s, the Peasant Party had a commission on international affairs and European integration linked to the party's central executive committee that prepared draft position statements for the party. However, this body ceased to function once Poland joined by the EU.⁵⁵ Prior to accession the Peasant Party had also convened a European forum which met quarterly in the party's headquarters between 1998-99 to discuss various aspects of European integration, and to which all political parties were invited. This was also discontinued due to lack of interest.⁵⁶ There were a large number of local Peasant Party councillors who, for practical reasons, had become familiar with European integration in order to be able to access EU regional funds.⁵⁷ There were also many specialists within the party on EU agricultural policy in other EU member states, and a group of assistants working for Czesław Siekerski, the party's only remaining MEP; who was also an elected (not ex-officio) member of the party's 18-strong central executive committee.⁵⁸ However, at the time of writing there was no official national Peasant Party body specialising in EU policy.⁵⁹

In the case of Self-Defence, the party's MEPs did participate in meetings of the party's parliamentary caucus and, given the lack of interest and expertise in European issues among the party's deputies in the Polish parliament, it was felt that they certainly had the potential to make a major impact. Indeed, a group of individuals

⁵² Author interview with Anna Piętak, Law and Justice party, Director, Union for a Europe of Nations Warsaw Office, April 2007.

⁵³ See, for example: Magdalena Grzebałkowska, 'Sztabowcy Kaczyńskich,' *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 18 October 2005; and 'Drudzy bliźniacy PiS', *Rzeczpospolita*, 6 March 2006. Kamiński actually resigned as an MEP in July 2007 to become work in Lech Kaczyński's Presidential Chancellery.

⁵⁴ See: *The Polish Members of the European Parliament*, p63.

⁵⁵ Author interview with Jan Borkowski, Lecturer at the Warsaw University Centre for Europe, Polish Peasant Party deputy 1993-97, Deputy Foreign Minister, 1996-7 and 2007-present, April 2007.

⁵⁶ Author interview with Jan Borkowski.

⁵⁷ Author interviews with: Jan Borkowski; and Czesław Siekerski, Polish Peasant Party MEP, April 2007.

⁵⁸ Author interview with Jan Borkowski.

⁵⁹ Author interview with Jan Borkowski. Although, rather confusingly, and apparently contradicting Mr Borkowski, in another interview Czesław Siekerski spoke of the existence of a 'party commission on European integration' of which he claimed he was a member. This was probably one of the informal groupings of which Mr Borkowski spoke, rather than an official party body.

interested in the EU had begun to coalesce around party's parliamentary caucus. However, according to the party spokesman, there were no 'European policy specialists' as such among the party's parliamentarians, simply those who had an interest in foreign affairs generally, and the potential for these specialists to use their expertise to make an impact on the national party had not really been utilised, beyond very some narrow technical issues that related specifically to the EU.⁶⁰

Similarly, although the League of Polish Families had established a number of specialist working groups to deal with the technical (rather than political) aspects of certain specific European issues, such as the euro or the EU constitutional treaty, these were not permanent standing committees. Although these working groups were formed on the initiative of the party's main board they were not formalised bodies. Rather, they were specific task-oriented groups: a particular expert was chosen to convene the body, he/she co-opted individuals with specific expertise, and then the groups were wound up when they had fulfilled their particular function. The party certainly did not introduce any formal structural changes to incorporate these 'European policy specialists' and no permanent specialist body or office was formed that was concerned with EU issues. 'European policy specialists' were not, therefore, seen as playing a particularly influential role in the party, with the only partial exception being the party's three MEPs (ten were originally elected to the EP on the League's ticket in 2004, see below) who were also used primarily as a source of information rather than having any particularly prominent role in policy making, in the European sphere or more generally. The leader of the party's group of MEPs, Sylwester Chruszcz, was also a party deputy leader at the time this research was conducted (and, in fact, assumed the party leadership following the party's October 2007 election defeat). However he did not hold this position ex-officio; rather it was as a result of the role that he played in Polish domestic politics as chairman of the party's West Pomeranian (Zachodnio-pomorskie) region. The party was keen to stress that its MEPs were simply an information source about what was going on in the EP, whereas the party's European policy was driven very much from Poland and according to Polish considerations.⁶¹

4. The impact of European trans-national party influences

Overall, the impact of relations with European trans-national party federations and EP party groupings, together with bi-lateral links with parties in other EU member states, have not been especially significant for most of the parties surveyed.⁶² As **Table 6**, shows the greatest impact was in the cases of Civic Platform and Democratic Left Alliance, the two parties that were members of large European party federations and their linked EP groupings, respectively: the European People's Party-European Democrats and the Party of European Socialists. European trans-national influences were felt to have been significant for Civic Platform and the party also co-operated closely with individual European People's Party members, especially the German Christian Democratic Union-Christian Social Union, which the party saw as

⁶⁰ Author interview with Mateusz Piskorski, Self-Defence Party Spokesman, April 2007.

⁶¹ Author interview with Daniel Pawłowicz, League of Polish Families parliamentary deputy and Secretary of State in the Office of European Integration, April 2007.

⁶² In this sense, our research largely re-reinforces Markowski's earlier finding that, "I see virtually no signs of any change in Polish parties because of their membership of a particular EP party group." See: 'EU Membership and the Polish Party System', p145.

something of an organisational model, but also the UK Conservative Party, the Austrian People's Party and the Spanish Popular Party.⁶³ Having, as noted above, established a new position of deputy party secretary responsible for foreign affairs it was felt that these influences were likely to increase in the future. For its part, the Democratic Left Alliance had long viewed working with social democratic international organisations like the Party of European Socialists as an important component of its drive to signal a clear break from its communist past and legitimate itself as a 'normal' European social democratic party. The party claimed to have particularly close bi-lateral links with the Swedish Social Democrats, Italian Democratic Left (itself a communist successor party) and the British Labour Party. It also claimed that there were many references in the party's programme to programmatic themes embraced by the Party of European Socialists and other European social democratic parties - such as the need for 'social Europe' and defence of the rights of women and sexual minorities - and it was felt that these programmatic links would deepen in the future;⁶⁴ although it was difficult to identify any *direct* impacts other than the prominent display of the European Socialists' logo on the party's website.⁶⁵

⁶³ Author interview with Krzysztof Lisek. At the time that the interview was conducted, Mr Lisek had made four visits to Berlin within the previous five weeks accompanied by various Civic Platform politicians. The party also enjoyed particularly close links with parties in other post-communist states including: the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania and Slovakia among EU member states; and Belarus and Ukraine among non-members.

⁶⁴ Author interview with Tadeusz Iwiński.

⁶⁵ See: <http://www.sld.org.pl/> (Accessed 23 April 2008).

Table 6: The impact of links with European party federations on Polish parties

	European party federation/EP grouping	Impact on national party	Other bi-lateral contacts
Civic Platform	European Peoples' Party-European Democrats	Yes – large impact	German Christian Democrats (mainly) UK Conservative Party Austrian People's Party Spanish Popular Party
Law and Justice	Union for a Europe of Nations	Yes – small impact	UK Conservative Party Fidesz (Hungary) Julia Tymoshenko Bloc (Ukraine)
Democratic Left Alliance	Party of European Socialists	Yes – large impact	Swedish Social Democrats Italian Democratic Left UK Labour Party
Polish Peasant Party	European People's Party-European Democrats	No	None
Self-Defence	None	No	None
League of Polish Families	Independence/Democracy initially – now none	No	UK Independence Party

Source: Author interviews with party officials, April 2007.

However, one exception here was the Polish Peasant Party where, in spite of the fact that it was a member of both the European People's Party trans-national federation and its MEPs had joined European People's Party-European Democrats EP grouping, the impact of transnational links was felt to have been quite small. This was because, at the time of writing, the party only had one MEP, Czesław Siekierski, which, however authoritative and respected a figure Mr Siekierski obviously was within in the party, obviously limited the scope of such trans-national party influences. Five Peasant Party MEPs were actually elected to the EP in June 2004 and - given that they comprised the party's top party leadership at the time, including the party's then leader Janusz Wojciechowski - the potential for these MEPs to have a significant impact on the party as a whole was obviously quite substantial. However, four of the five went on to defect from the party when Mr Wojciechowski was forced to resign as party leader and formed a new political grouping, the Polish Peasant Party-Piast (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe: PSL-Piast). The new party was closely aligned with Law and Justice (standing on the party's ticket in the 2007 parliamentary election) and its four MEPs went on to join the Union for a Europe of Nations EP grouping (see below).

On the other hand, the lack of impact of European trans-national party links was less surprising in the case of the other three parties examined: Law and Justice, the League of Polish Families and Self-Defence. Although the Law and Justice party observers in the EP prior to accession were also aligned originally with European People's Party-European Democrats, in September 2003 the party decided to switch allegiance to the Union for a Europe of Nations, which was not a significant EP grouping and did not have an affiliated trans-national party federation.⁶⁶ Although membership of this EP grouping was felt to have had some impact on the party - it was, for example, mentioned on the party's website - it was not thought to have been particularly significant. In terms of bi-lateral contacts, Law and Justice also had fairly good links with the UK Conservatives but the most important ones were actually felt to be those with other post-communist East European states, particularly Fidesz in Hungary and the Julia Tymoshenko Bloc in the Ukraine (a non-EU member state, of course).⁶⁷

The least impact was evident in the case of the case of the League of Polish Families and Self-Defence, for the fairly obvious reason that neither of them were members of any EP grouping or European party federation. 10 League of Polish Families' MEPs were elected in June 2004, the second largest Polish party delegation, and initially joined members of the UK Independence Party and Scandinavian MEPs led by the Danish Eurosceptic Jens Peter Bonde to create a new EP grouping: Independence and Democracy. However, following a split in the party, the League's EP delegation fragmented with most of its MEPs joining the Union for a Europe of Nations and two of the three who (at the time this research was undertaken) remained loyal to the party becoming non-aligned.⁶⁸ The League's most significant bi-lateral co-operation with another West European party was still with the UK Independence Party while other links with West European right-wing and conservative parties were loose and informal. Interestingly, once again, the League also appeared to have closer links with parties in other post-communist states; although, as with its West European links, these were not particularly formalised.⁶⁹ As for Self-Defence, the party was not a member of - nor, indeed, was it ever invited to join - any EP grouping or trans-national party federation and left the decision which one of the former to join up to its individual MEPs. Initially, the party's MEPs were non-aligned but then four went on to join the Union for a Europe of Nations and two joined the Party of European Socialists. Attempts by the party to develop more formal links between the party and the Party of European Socialists or the United European Left were largely unsuccessful.⁷⁰

5. Discussion and (tentative) conclusions

So what general conclusions can we draw about the impact of the EU on Polish party politics during the period since accession? Overall, this paper finds that EU accession has had little significant direct impact on Polish party politics. There is very little evidence of the EU or the European issue being used increasingly or impacting upon patterns of inter-party competition. Although at one point, when it looked like the referendum to ratify the EU constitutional treaty might be held at the same time, it

⁶⁶ See: 'PiS nie chce już do Europejskiej Partii Ludowej.' *Rzeczpospolita*. 13-14 September 2003.

⁶⁷ Author interview with Anna Piętak.

⁶⁸ See: *The Polish Members of the European Parliament*, p42.

⁶⁹ Author interview with Daniel Pawłowicz.

⁷⁰ Author interview with Mateusz Piskorski.

looked like European issues might be significant in the 2005 elections, in fact there was little evidence of the EU played any greater role in this campaign than it had in the previous one in 2001. Indeed, no party really focused very much on European issues in either campaign. Polish-EU relations, and foreign affairs more generally, had a somewhat higher profile in the 2007 election, but only because they were an important component in determining broader attitudes towards the key election issue, support for or opposition to a controversial and polarising government, and were, therefore, subsumed within a broader logics of domestic political polarisation. The impact of European integration on Polish party organisation and of relations with European trans-national party federations, EP party groupings, and bi-lateral links with parties in other European states, were, with one or two exceptions, not especially significant.

For sure, if one looks hard enough for ‘EU impacts’ on Polish party politics then one will certainly find them and in some of the areas examined in this paper we certainly found some clear, if limited, evidence of them. For example, the amount of space devoted specifically to EU policy in party programmes has increased since accession; although this varied a lot between the parties, the trend was not a linear one, and the increase (or decrease) in space often simply reflected changes in the overall length of the party programme. There was also evidence in most (although not all) parties that references to the EU had become more frequent in other policy areas that, prior to accession, might have been regarded as primarily or solely the realm of domestic politics. Similarly, if one seeks out the impact of MEPs and other European policy specialists or of European trans-national links then one can certainly also find evidence of these too. Nonetheless, our overall conclusion must be that EU accession has had little significant impact in terms of increasing the influence of the EU on Polish party politics. We would echo the findings of an earlier empirical survey of Polish parties by Markowski, focusing primarily on the pre-accession period, who concluded that: “In general I see very little direct EU impact on party ideologies, policy packages or concrete policy stances, apart from a general Europeanization of the political culture, constitutional arrangements and so on.”⁷¹

We also found that there was no obvious linear relationship between party positions on European integration - that is, a whether a party took a pro- or anti-EU stance - and the extent to which the EU had impacted upon a party and the nature of those impacts. For example, both very pro-EU parties, such as the Democratic Left Alliance and (in 2007 at least) Civic Platform, and Eurosceptic ones, such as the Law and Justice party, devoted considerable attention to European policy in their election programmes. Nor did we find any obvious linkages across and between the four different impact areas. For example, although the Law and Justice party devoted considerable space to European policy in its party programmes, EU accession had had little no apparent impact on the party’s organisation nor through the party’s trans-national European party links. The European issue played a relatively important role in the League of Polish Families’ election campaigning, but the EU had no impact on the party’s organisation nor has it been reflected in the party’s programmatic development. The EU had had a (relatively) high impact on Civic Platform’s party organisation and through its trans-national European party links but not, in terms of the attention devoted by the party to European issues in campaigning and inter-party

⁷¹ See: ‘EU Membership and the Polish Party System’, p145

competition nor, until the 2007 election at least, in the amount of space devoted to the EU in party's programme. The only possible exception here appears to have been the Democratic Left Alliance/Left and Democrats which seems to have been (again, relatively speaking) more open to EU impacts across all four areas examined.

The overall impact of the EU also appeared to have been greatest in the case of those parties that were members of the large European party federations and EP groupings such as Civic Platform in the European People's Party-European Democrats and the Democratic Left Alliance in the Party of European Socialists; although, in the case of the latter the influence was already apparent before EU accession. The impact was less significant in those parties who had links to the more minor EP groupings - such as the Union for a Europe of Nations (Law and Justice) and Independence and Democracy (the League of Polish Families, originally) - or where there are no such links (Self-Defence and subsequently the League of Polish Families). This was also the case in terms of EU impacts on party organisation, which was limited overall but, once again, greatest in the case of Civic Platform and the Democratic Left Alliance. These were the only two of the six parties surveyed to identify an increased role for European policy specialists and MEPs following EU accession and that actually changed their statutes to reflect this fact (although in the case of the latter the impact was felt to be largely 'indirect' and, once again, pre-dated EU accession). The Peasant Party was clearly an exception here: a member of large trans-national European party and federation and EP grouping (European People's Party-European People's Party) but on which the EU appeared to have little impact; although this was largely due to the fact the party only had one MEP at the time that this research was conducted.

So what general comparative conclusions can we draw from our analysis of the Polish case about examining EU impacts on national party politics? Firstly, our paper confirms, as Lewis has argued elsewhere, that the problem with examining EU impacts on domestic party politics is often less one of empirical analysis than of methodology and conceptual approach.⁷² Our analysis highlights the three main (linked) methodological problems that are involved here and that have been drawn attention to by other analysts. In the first place, as Lewis observes, the question of how can EU impacts be properly conceived and measured?⁷³ While we have observed an increase in the amount of space devoted to EU policy party programmes and references to the EU in other sections normally devoted to domestic policy, as Batory points out, what is the real importance of the number of these (sometimes only very vague) references that parties make? These may signal programmatic change, but this can hardly be deemed significant in the absence of evidence that they had discernable impact on the discourse, party competition, public opinion or party choice.⁷⁴ Moreover, as Mair has observed, often the 'direct' (measurable) impacts, such as the formation of new parties or changes to the dynamics or the format of the party system, appear to be minimal⁷⁵ and this is certainly borne out by our examination of the Polish case. However, the (apparently) more significant 'indirect' impacts are much more

⁷² See: Paul Lewis, 'EU and Party Politics in Central and Eastern Europe', in Paul Lewis and Zdenka Mansfeldova (eds), *The European Union and Party Politics in Central and Eastern Europe*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, pp1-19 (6).

⁷³ See: Ibid.

⁷⁴ See: Agnes Batory, 'The impact of the EU on party politics in Hungary: The dog that did not bark?', Paper presented at the 4th ECPR General Conference, University of Pisa, 6-8 September 2007, pp2-3.

⁷⁵ See: 'The Limited Impact of Europe on National Party Systems'.

difficult to measure. For example, Enyedi had argued, we should be looking not just direct mentions of the EU in party programmes, but for the spread of EU norms such as towards the treatment of minorities.⁷⁶ But how exactly does one go about measuring such diffuse phenomena? Second, what expectations do we have of change and what benchmarks are we measuring these ‘impacts’ (or lack of them) against? The assumptions that we have of change will, obviously, determine whether or not we consider such change to be ‘significant’ or not. As Batory notes, there is currently no consensus in the literature on this topic as to what constitutes reasonable benchmarks to identify ‘significant’ change.⁷⁷

Then there is the old social science conundrum of causality or, as Lewis succinctly put it, “how can the discrete impact of the EU be accounted for amid the vast range of mutual influences and inter-locking mechanisms that determine party development in a particular context?”⁷⁸, which is particularly problematic here. How, for example, do we know when the EU is the driver of change, merely one factor that contributed to it, or whether it made no difference at all?⁷⁹ In theory, it should be easier to drill down and identify the causes of change in a single country case study as we have embarked upon here with the Polish case. However, we have still found it extremely difficult to trace change back to an EU source, given that the many of the adjustments that we were analysing were subtle and ‘indirect’ rather than dramatic and ‘direct’. Moreover, as noted above, it is, anyway, difficult to distinguish top-down and bottom-up processes when examining the European integration process. For example, the fact that Civic Platform and the Democratic Left Alliance co-opted MEPs representatives onto various national decision making bodies and that other parties have not is certainly an interesting finding of organisational change. However, as Batory points out, how much does this actually tell us about the impact of the EU, as opposed to telling us about the party’s organisational culture, degree of centralisation or size? Moreover, how far can we stretch a causal link with European integration and at what point does the impact become not simply ‘indirect’ but non-existent?⁸⁰ As noted above, for sure, if you look for EU impacts on party politics hard enough, then you will certainly find them but what does this tell you about their significance? Without clear measurement tools, benchmarks against which to measure progress, and an ability to clearly trace back the causal mechanisms it is extremely difficult to judge the significance of such ‘impacts’ in objective way.

Secondly, our findings suggest that, in many ways, ‘Europe’ appears to have been assimilated successfully into the logic of domestic party politics. No new parties have been formed as a result of the European issue and the 2001, 2005 and 2007 election campaigns suggest that it has not really affected patterns of party competition and co-operation. Rather, it has simply been folded into domestic political debates and become, as Haughton and Rybar neatly put it, “an additional tool in the toolbox, but not much more.”⁸¹ We can see this most clearly in the case of the 2007 parliamentary

⁷⁶ See: Zsolt Enyedi, ‘The “Europeanisation” of Eastern Central European Party Systems,’ *Journal of Political Science*, Vol 5 No 1, June 2007, pp65-74 (66).

⁷⁷ See: ‘The impact of the EU on party politics in Hungary’, p4.

⁷⁸ See: ‘EU and Party Politics in Central and Eastern Europe’, p6.

⁷⁹ See: ‘The impact of the EU on party politics in Hungary’, p3.

⁸⁰ See: Ibid.

⁸¹ See: Tim Haughton and Marek Rybar, ‘An Additional Tool in the Toolbox, but Not Much More: The Limited Impact of the EU on Party Politics in Slovakia,’ Paper presented at the 4th ECPR General Conference, University of Pisa, 6-8 September 2007.

election campaign. On the one hand, Polish-EU relations, and foreign affairs more generally, did appear to be issues of significant controversy and contestation during this campaign and certainly had a somewhat higher profile than in previous elections. However, the divisions between the two main parties during the 2007 campaign about Polish European policy were essentially subsumed and folded into the over-arching domestic political debate. In other words, they reflected: firstly, competing views on different parties' effectiveness and competence in advancing the Polish national interest (with Europe treated as, in effect, a 'valence issue'); and, secondly, fed into more general evaluations of the competence of the outgoing government. In other words, 'Europe' was significant in the 2007 election but only because it, together with other foreign policy questions, was an important component in determining attitudes towards *the* key, over-arching election issue: support for or opposition to a controversial and polarising government.

Thirdly, given this apparent assimilation of Europe into domestic politics, perhaps, as Batory suggests, we need to turn our assumptions of EU impacts and change on their heads. Much of the European studies literature starts from the assumption that European integration should lead to re-alignments at the domestic level.⁸² But why should we expect the EU to have a significant impact on party politics when EU outcomes are pursued indirectly through governments rather than directly through parties?⁸³ As Mair has pointed it: parties have no direct channels into EU authoritative decision making and, therefore, little in the way of resources that can be translated into positive gain. Unlike other democratic systems, the EU is open to all kinds of actors and organisations but is relatively impenetrable and unresponsive to voters and, therefore, difficult to reach adequately by means of parties and elections.⁸⁴ Perhaps, therefore, we should, as Batory recommends, start from the assumption that all developments in party and electoral politics can be explained through 'domestic' factors and, only when we have exhausted these, should we look for 'European' explanations?⁸⁵

⁸² For a good discussion on and summary of the arguments for why one might expect European integration to impact upon national party politics, see: 'European integration and internal party dynamics.'

⁸³ I am grateful to Paul Lewis for this point.

⁸⁴ See: 'Political Parties and Party Systems'.

⁸⁵ 'The impact of the EU on party politics in Hungary', p3

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