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Chapter 6

EUROSCEPTICISM IN CROATIA: ON THE FAR SIDE OF RATIONALITY?

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the characteristics of euroscepticism in Croatia, defined as a combination of distrust in the European Union and distaste for membership. An analysis of the dynamics of the two dimensions shows that initially these two factors did not coincide, but that after 2004 they converged. Starting off from a theoretical model according to which the attitude to the EU is affected by both utilitarian or pragmatic as well as ethnic-cum-nationalist (symbolic) factors, the analysis of data collected at the end of 2003 on a probabilistic national sample draws attention to the heterogeneous motives behind euroscepticism, which calls into question the effectiveness of any single intervention strategy. Exclusive nationalism and its socio-cultural, political and economic premises have been confirmed as an important source of euroscepticism. As against symbolic motivations, the impact of utilitarian motives on the attitude to the EU turned out to be marginal, but it is not clear to what extent this result is the consequence of methodological constraints. The data also show that lack of trust in the EU partially reflects distrust in national institutions. The paper concludes with a brief list of recommendations, focused particularly on ways of increasing trust in both national and EU institutions.

Key words:
European Union, euroscepticism, attitudes towards accession, public opinion, trust in the European Union, trust in national institutions, Croatia

INTRODUCTION

The last five years have seen a marked decline in the desirability of joining the EU in Croatian public opinion.[i] Unlike the views of the political elite – that is, most of the political parties, including the two biggest – fewer than 50% of Croatian citizens now support EU accession (Gfk Hrvatska – Omnibus, 2006). This dissipation of enthusiasm must be alarming for the Government and the Parliament, who have proclaimed entry into the EU the core of the country's foreign policy objectives.[ii] This is particularly striking if we bear in mind the fact that a little more than two years ago, the great majority of Croatian citizens shared the views of the politicians.

A number of press commentaries and analyses have been written on the reasons for the reduced support for accession. Although we are still waiting for detailed empirical studies, several explanations of the dynamics described have been put forward. The reasons range from bruised national pride (the issue of the extradition of a suspected general to The Hague) and the strengthening of the appropriate symbolic resistance, via economic fears (the rise in the price of real estate as a result of demand from foreign purchasers, the import of cheaper agricultural products, the obliteration of indigenous products and the like), to loss of trust in the whole of the EU project after the shipwreck of the European Constitution in France and Holland. Most commentators have stated several reasons behind the fall in the support for EU accession, emphasising the complexity of the situation as well as the questionable success of any attempt to reverse the trend.

In this short paper, I shall attempt to throw light on the growth of euroscepticism in Croatian public opinion, analysing particularly the dynamics of support for Croatia's joining the EU, and trust in the EU. Although it handles an issue that has already received a fair share of debate, the advantage of the paper is in its use of empirical analyses founded on a nationally representative dataset. On the other hand, it is precisely here that the shortcoming of the proposed analyses inheres. Unfortunately, the research study (*South East European Social Survey*

Project; SEESSP-A and SEESSP-B) was not designed to measure, or test out public opinions to do with the EU.[iii] From this point of view, the indicators that are available are anything but ideal.

The first part offers a definition of euroscepticism and sets forth the current state of knowledge concerning the symbolic and material interests that affect its dynamics. In the second part I outline the dynamics of two basic dimensions of euroscepticism in Croatia; the rise in the disinclination to joining and the relative stability of the lack of trust in the EU. The lack of association between the two dimensions in the period prior to 2004 is discussed, as well its occurrence in 2004. The third section is devoted to an analysis of the social-demographic profile of local eurosceptics, and to testing the relative influence of symbolic and materialistic factors on the basic dimensions of euroscepticism. The last, fourth, part puts forward a debate that places the findings in the context of the debate on the rational (pragmatic) and irrational (symbolic) bases of euroscepticism in general. The paper ends with a brief list of recommendations founded upon the results of the analyses carried out with the aim of increasing trust in national and European Union institutions.

EUROSCEPTICISM: THEORY AND PRACTICE

As mentioned, this paper does not investigate the euroscepticism of the political elites. For this reason I use the expression popular euroscepticism throughout the rest of the paper to describe *the degree to which members of the public in Croatia express the lack of trust in the EU and/or their disinclination to join the Union*.[iv] Popular euroscepticism, in other words, can be either more theoretical (the utterance of lack of trust) or practical (the disinclination to accede) and it can vary in degrees, with radical euroscepticism being marked by a high degree of distrust in the EU as well as unconditional opposition to Croatian accession.

Although it might seem at first glance that these dimensions of popular euroscepticism are almost identical, it should be noted that someone might have trust in a given institution and yet still be of the opinion that it is better for him or her to stay out.[v] This has, for example, been to date the majority viewpoint in Norwegian public opinion. A similar situation can be found in the case of the opposition of most Swedes to replacing their national currency by the Euro. The differen-

ce between the wish to accede and trust is clearly contoured in a case when they are marked by a cause-and-effect relationship. After the fall of communism, in the countries of Central Europe there was very quickly a highly marked desire for EU accession that, irrespective of the lack of information, resulted in emphatic trust in the EU. On the other hand, precisely the opposite relationship is also possible. If Norway and Switzerland ever join the EU, the readiness of their citizens for their countries to accede will necessarily reflect widespread trust in the effectiveness of the Union's institutions.

Research to date into euroscepticism in the post-communist countries of Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe has concentrated on two aspects: (i) the connection of the phenomenon with party dynamics and (ii) non-party causes of popular euroscepticism. This approach is well illustrated by the frequently quoted works of Taggart and Szczerbiak (2002; 2004), who claim that the euroscepticism to be seen in all the post-transitional countries (except, perhaps, for Bulgaria) is the consequence of the opposition's confrontation with the Europhile parties in power (Sitter, 2001). Because of the relative marginality of parties that stand for hard-line euroscepticism, party-induced popular euroscepticism should be of a quite limited extent. Although most eurosceptic or indeed Europhobic parties belong to the right, within which the process of European integration is criticised with the rhetoric of nationalism, sometimes they can be found on the left as well (Evans, 2000). Here the attack on the EU seems to be based on a critique of neo-liberalism and globalising capitalism.

Research focused on the viewpoints and values of public opinion very often discuss the influence of symbolic (cultural, identity-related) and materialistic (economically rational) factors in euroscepticism.[vi] The authors, in other words, endeavour to quantify the relative contribution of these two dimensions to the negative attitude of the public vis-à-vis the EU. The impact of what is usually called exclusive national identity on popular euroscepticism has been borne out in several studies (Care, 2002; McLaren, 2002; Hooghe and Marks, 2004).[vii] Within this value pattern, the integration, multiculturalism and cosmopolitanism that EU-isation embodies are considered a threat to the national culture and indigenous traditions. Resistance to the EU is thus perceived as an act of patriotism.

The analyses also throw light on the powerful influence of economic rationalism, that is, the importance of pragmatic calculation of the costs and benefits of accession (Hooghe and Marks, 2004; McLa-

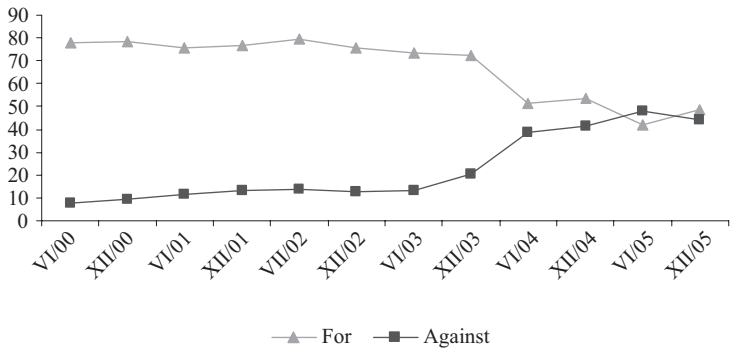
ren, 2002; Tucker et al., 2002).[viii] Both the macro and the micro dimension are at issue here. In the first case, popular euroscepticism will depend on the success of the country during transition. As suggested by Linden and Pohlman (2003), countries that have successfully carried out the transition will have less benefit from joining than countries that are still grappling with the transitional processes. The Czechs, hence, necessarily showed less enthusiasm for joining the EU than, for example, the Romanians today (Linden and Pohlman, 2003:328).[ix] Differences in success at the macro level can work in another way as well. Since the economic benefits of joining are smaller in successful transition countries, the weakening of economic interests in such countries could well affect the increase in the perception of the symbolic costs (fear of loss of identity, for example).

At the micro level, inside both successful and less successful transition countries, the affinity for euroscepticism tends to depend on personal perception of the costs and benefits of joining. Somewhat simplified, the greater the human resources that the individual can deploy (education, skills, age, professional status, income) the greater are the potential benefits from European integration and the smaller the likelihood of euroscepticism. Empirical research has provided some support for these hypotheses, showing that popular euroscepticism is mainly a marker of transitional losers (Szczerbiak, 2001; McLaren, 2002; Jacobs and Pollack, 2004; Tucker et al., 2002).

EUROSCEPTICISM IN CROATIA

The proposed working definition of popular euroscepticism brings out two basic dimensions: disinclination to join the EU and distrust in the EU. The first of these, the point of view that rejects Croatian joining in European integration, has in the last two years been much more widespread than in the earlier period. As Figure 1 shows, unwillingness to join was until the very end of 2003 quite marginal (up to 20%). During 2004 a dramatic growth ensued (to about 40%), which, though with considerably diminished dynamics, went on in 2005. In the last year, the number of those who were opposed to Croatia joining the EU was more or less the same as the number of those who expressed the opposite viewpoint.

Figure 1 Dynamics of attitudes concerning accession to the European Union, Croatia 2000-2005



** Source: Gfk Croatia − Omnibus, 2006*

Unlike the first, the second dimension of popular euroscepticism, lack of trust in the EU, is not regularly measured. Still, an overview of the existing studies carried out on probabilistic national samples provides at least a rough picture of the dynamics of lack of trust in the EU in the last ten years (Table 1). Unlike the dynamics of attitudes toward accession, distrust in the EU is relatively stable during the period. On average, distrust of the EU was felt by 54% of the population.[x]

Contrary to expectations, the dynamics of the two dimensions of popular euroscepticism do not overlap. How are we to explain their different dynamics up to 2004? Since they show greater instability, it should be hypothesised that the attitudes toward joining the EU are more affected by situational factors than is the case with the dynamics of trust in the EU. It is also plausible that respondents may think the EU is generally a good idea, but not necessarily for their country. Theoretically, then, a situation in which there is a relatively high degree of trust in the EU and a relatively low level of willingness to join need not be unusual. The problem though is that up to 2004, exactly the opposite situation was present in Croatia: the desire to join the EU (80% for) was widespread in spite of the relatively low degree of trust in the Union (34%).[xi]

Bearing in mind the low level of information about the EU among the members of the public during the nineties, it seems reasonable to assume that the majority support for the accession of Croatia to

the EU was based on motives typical of the initial reactions of transitional societies to European integration (Malova and Haughton, 2002).

Table 1 Trust in the European Union, Croatia 1995-2005 (%)*

	WVS[a] 1995	EVS[b] 1999	SEESSP-A[c] 2003	EB-62[d] 2004	EB-63[d] spring 2005	EB-64[d] autumn 2005
Yes	32	38	31	42	28	35
No	57	54	58	43	58	52
Don't know	12	8	11	16	14	12

* *No precise comparison between the 1995-2003 and 2004-2005 periods is possible. Up to 2004, trust in the EU was measured on a scale of one to five ("a great deal of trust", "quite a lot", "not very much", "none at all" and "I don't know"), and in the Eurobarometer research (2004 and 2005) only two categories of answer to the same question were provided: "I am inclined towards trust", "I am inclined towards distrust". The data collected in the 1995-2003 period were recoded so that "a great deal" and "quite a lot" were taken to denote trust, while "not very much" and "none at all" denote distrust in the EU.*

[a] *World Value Survey – Croatia (Erasmus gilda, Zagreb; N = 1196)*

[b] *European Value Survey – Croatia (Catholic Theology Faculty, Zagreb; N = 1103)*

[c] *Southeast European Social Survey Project (international consortium; N = 1250)*

[d] *Eurobarometer Research (Eurobarometer, 2004; 2005a; 2005b; N = 1000)*

This is on the whole a desire to show that they belong to Europe, both in a cultural sense and in terms of political compatibility, and a belief that becoming a member of the EU will result in a rapid increase in the standard of living. When the negotiation process started, this naïve idealism dissolved fairly rapidly in the countries that recently became EU members. A similar process, it would seem, has been at work in Croatia in the last few years. As shown by the most recent public opinion survey carried out in Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria by the Austrian Paul Lazarsfeld Institute, most citizens of Croatia do not believe that entry into the EU will result in a diminution of corruption in the country or in a rise in wages. On the other hand, more than 90% of respondents thought that joining the EU would result in a price rise (Iancu, 2006).

If, then, the earlier inclination towards joining can be understood in terms of a need for the legitimation of the Croatian state (and its post-communist political and socio-cultural achievements) – which was unaffected by relatively low levels of trust in the EU – it is very likely that different reasons are behind the current convergence between

disinclination to join and distrust in the EU.[xii] Furthermore, the stability of popular euroscepticism in the last two years suggests that euroscepticism is today a coherent socio-political option with relatively stable motives.

THE BOUNDED RATIONALITY OF CROATIAN EUROSCEPTICISM?

The claim that from 2004 onwards euroscepticism is a coherent social and political option that could be marked by relatively stable symbolic and materialistic interests needs to be verified empirically. The used data (SEESSP) were collected in December 2003, and mark the transition between the period in which the two dimensions of popular euroscepticism were disparate (1995-2003) and the later period, marked by convergence.

With this objective, in the rest of the paper I present two analyses. The first attempts to draw the social and demographic profile of disinclination of joining and lack of trust in the EU. Bearing in mind recent findings suggesting that euroscepticism is more prevalent among the transitional losers (McLaren, 2002; Jacobs and Pollack, 2004; Tucker et al., 2002) it can be expected that age, education, income and occupational status will be important determinants of popular euroscepticism in Croatia.

The findings presented in Table 2 suggest that there is no clear socio-demographic profile of Croatian eurosceptics. Although the analysis does show that the older and lesser educated respondents are more inclined to say no to accession, the effect of both variables is weak. In case of trust in the EU, none of the demographic and socioeconomic indicators has proved a significant predictor. In contrast to expectations, the analysis suggests that popular euroscepticism is determined neither by human capital nor by personal success, or the lack of it, during the transitional years. Does this mean that the perception of the EU in Croatia is based on purely irrational motives and bizarre situational effects?[xiii]

*Table 2 The socio-demographic profile of attitudes toward the accession and trust in the European Union**

	SEESSP-B (N = 802)[a] Accession to the EU[b]	SEESSP-A (N = 793)[a] Trust in the EU
	Beta (p<)[c]	
Gender	0.02 (n.s.)	-0.01 (n.s.)
Age	-0.10 (0.05)	0.07 (n.s.)
Education	-0.10 (0.05)	0.02 (n.s)
Occupational status[d]	0.02 (n.s.)	0.04 (n.s.)
Household income	-0.04 (n.s.)	0.08 (n.s.)
Size of domicile	-0.01 (n.s.)	-0.05 (n.s.)

* *Multiple (linear) regression analysis*

[a] *This concerns the statement "Croatia should join the EU", to which respondents replied on a scale of 1 (I do not agree at all) to 5 (I wholeheartedly agree)*

[b] *This concerns separate SEESSP samples, each of which covered 1,250 subjects*

[c] *n.s. – association is not statistically significant*

[d] *The variable was dichotomised, in such a way that 1 denotes occupations requiring some level of expertise and 0 denotes all other occupations*

The impossibility of identifying Croatian eurosceptics suggests either certain fluidity or a micro-diversity of motives, but the issue is whether they can be considered irrational. If we should characterise popular euroscepticism in Croatia as irrational, this would imply that the eurosceptics have no materialistic expectations from European integration. If citizens form their expectations of the EU on the basis of their experience with national institutions, such expectations are not irrational, but, rather, boundedly rational. In this case, bounded rationality describes the indirect but personally (and materially) relevant perception of the EU. Put more simply, when we cannot evaluate the EU institutions on the grounds of our own experience (which the citizens of a non-member country cannot have), but use proxies – assessing local or national institutions – such a procedure can not be termed irrational. This is the so called proxy mechanism, elaborated in the well known paper by Anderson (1998). Anderson claims that in the absence of information about the EU institutions, citizens will have to make their assessment on the basis of their experience with local or national institutions.[xiv]

The findings in Table 3 provide some empirical arguments for the irrationality vs. (bounded) rationality debate regarding the motives for trust or lack of trust in the EU. The analysis included seven po-

tential correlates of trust in the EU. The first two, trust in the national government and the legal system, are indicators of Anderson's proxy mechanism. Occupational status and social self-positioning are indicators of utilitarian motives, pointing to the cost-benefit assessment of the EU.[xv] Political self-positioning is an indicator of compatibility of political values, with the existing literature predicting association between right-wing political positioning and lack of trust in the EU (Carey, 2002; McLaren, 2002). The last two indicators, the index of national exclusivity and membership in cultural and art associations, measure the presence of symbolic motives. While the first variable represents the impossibility of establishing complete trust between different ethnic and national groups, the second indicator reflects loyalty to (and personal importance of) ethnic and national culture.[xvi]

Table 3 Predictors of trust in the European Union

	SEESSP-A (N = 624) Beta (p<)[a]
Trust in the legal system	0.10 (0.05)
Trust in the government	0.40 (0.001)
Occupational status	-0.06 (n.s.)
Social self-positioning (top-bottom)	-0.05 (n.s.)
Political self-positioning (left-right)	-0.12 (0.01)
Index of national exclusivity[b]	-0.11 (0.01)
Membership in culture and art associations	0.01 (n.s.)
R^2	0.22

[a] *n.s. – association is not statistically significant*

[b] *The index is composed of the following four statements: "Ethnically mixed marriages are always more unstable than others"; "A man can feel completely safe only if he lives in a community in which his/her own ethnic group constitutes the majority"; "Among various peoples cooperation can be achieved, but never absolute trust"; "In the choice of a marriage partner, ethnicity should be one of the most important factors". The index has excellent reliability (Alpha = 0.86)*

The findings point to a coexistence between symbolic and boundedly rational motives. The correlation between trust in national institutions and trust in the EU confirms Anderson's proposition (Anderson, 1998; Rimac and Štulhofer, 2004). On the other hand, negative association of right-wing political self-positioning and exclusive nationalism with trust in the EU lends cogency to the proposition concerning the impact of symbolic factors.

THE STRUCTURE OF CROATIAN EUROSCEPTICISM

The analysis of the factors that affect trust or lack of it in the EU drew attention to the importance of two processes. The first is assessment-making on the basis of the proxy mechanism, concerning which there will be more below. The second process is the influence of symbolic values on the attitudes toward the EU, the findings indicating the central role of exclusive nationalism.[xvii] The association between the exclusive variant of the nationalistic worldview and popular euroscepticism seems to a great extent self-evident. But in this way it would be easy to underrate the complexity of their relationship, which exceeds mere disdain of multiculturalism and resistance to the supranational processes (Vukman, 2004). The symbolic foundations of popular euroscepticism include socio-cultural, political and, somewhat more seldom in evidence, economic convictions (McLaren, 2002).[xviii]

As for the socio-cultural dimension, exclusive nationalism blames European integration for the fragmentation of the national identity and the attack on traditional communal values, particularly their religious foundations − all in the name of contemporary liberal individualism. Also, the integration processes are often perceived as an insult to the national pride (the "conditions" imposed for accession), which indirectly contributes to the destruction of the collective identity and national values. The political aspect is particularly visible in the concern for the loss of national sovereignty, and the claimed inherently fraught position of small countries within the EU decision-making processes. Although less often present, economic ideas are no less important an element of exclusive nationalism. In general, these consist of various types of criticisms of global, neoliberal capitalism, which is held responsible for the demise of corporate social organisation and related welfare of the people. At the level of everyday practice, exclusive nationalism is quite often at odds with the ultimate consequences of the free market that European integration takes as its point of departure, for it sees them as a threat to domestic production.

The predominance of symbolic over utilitarian motives in the attitudes toward the EU in Croatia should be viewed with caution. Although the authors of a recent paper concluded that nationalism is a more powerful predictor of support to European integration than economic rationality (Hooghe and Marks, 2004:3), the marginal impact of utilitarian motivations on the Croatian public assessment of the EU co-

uld also be the consequence of methodological shortcomings, such as the absence of quality indicators (a list of personal expectations from EU accession). This limitation does not call into question the importance of exclusive nationalism, but it warns that it would be a mistake to conclude, on the basis of the presented analyses, that utilitarian (materialistic) motivations are completely irrelevant for the dynamics of popular euroscepticism. The impact of utilitarian motives remains to be investigated (see Bagić and Šalinović, 2006).

Analyses shown in the previous chapter confirmed the existence of the proxy mechanism (Anderson, 1998), a specific cognitive strategy through which respondents evaluate institutions the workings of which they are insufficiently informed about on the basis of their assessment of institutions that they do have experience with. This, according to the findings, relates particularly to trust in the national government, which has turned out to be the most powerful predictor of trust in the EU. Although the proxy assessment is not an irrational procedure, its results can be highly problematic, not the least since trust in national institutions can be based on the general perception of corruption in society rather than on concrete evidence about the functioning of the institutions in question (Štulhofer, 2004; Rimac and Štulhofer, 2004; Štulhofer, 2001).

The use of the proxy mechanism does not depend only on availability of information about the EU. In countries with low levels of participation and/or widespread disbelief that citizens can have any influence on the making of political decisions this mechanism might have a practical purpose, particularly as justification for apathy and opting-out. The assumption that derives from this is that the success of information campaigns, the objective of which is to increase knowledge about the EU, will depend on the reputation of national institutions associated with the campaigns.

As already point out, the empirical analyses presented in this work suffer from some serious methodological limitations. The first relates to the instruments used. The fact that SEESSP questionnaires were not designed to explore views about the EU, but were intended to measure a broad range of social attitudes and values, has as its consequence a highly limited choice of relevant variables. Each of the questionnaires entailed a single indicator of attitudes towards the EU – trust in the EU in SEESSP-A and views about the accession in SEESSP-B. Questions concerning the understanding of the institutional structure and manner of working of the EU, personal expectations from Croatia's

joining the EU or reasons for (dis)trust in the EU were not covered by the questionnaire.

Another limitation is the timing of the SEESSP field work. Data collection started at the end of 2003, just before the parliamentary elections. Although it is not entirely clear in which direction the pre-election mood might have systematically biased the results, it is likely that various situational factors are embedded in the dataset. In itself, this is not a problem as long as it is possible to quantify (and control for) these situational effects. In the SEESSP study this was not the case.

The final limitation is related to the dynamics of attitudes toward joining the EU, that is, to the fact that the SEESSP data were collected at the time point that immediately preceded the period characterized by a sudden disappearance of the majority support for Croatian membership in the EU (Figure 1). Since the change happened in the first half of 2004, it is plausible that the end of 2003 (the time when the SEESSP field work took place) was in a certain sense a period of transformation.[xix] Following this logic, the SEESSP dataset could contain only indications of the change of attitudes toward the EU, but not completely clear and coherently formed (new) viewpoints.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Put briefly, the analyses presented suggest the following:

- Several factors affect the dynamics of euroscepticism. It would seem that various social groups, the members of which do not necessarily share the same or similar social positions, state various motives for a negative perception of the EU. If so, it would be a mistake to believe in any single successful strategy for the reduction of euroscepticism.
- Exclusive nationalism and its socio-cultural, political and economic premises are an important source of popular euroscepticism. In comparison with these symbolic motives, the influence of utilitarian motives on the attitude to the EU has turned out to be marginal, although it is not clear to what extent this could have been the consequence of the methodological shortcomings.
- Some of the dynamics of popular euroscepticism are determined by situational influences, which are often generated by the tactical (polemical) use of the idea of European integration in party competition, which is then picked up by mass media.

- Trust in the EU is formed partly through trust in national institutions. The reputation of the EU, an institution of which citizens of non-EU countries are less knowledgeable of, is at least partially a reflection of the reputation of the national government, the parliament and legal system.

From these conclusions a short list of recommendations could be composed. Their main aim is to contribute to a reduction in popular euroscepticism, particularly through increasing (better-informed) trust in the EU. It could well be that increasing citizens' trust in institutions is a public good in itself, irrespective of the speed and ultimate outcome of the processes of European integration (Uslaner and Badescu, 2004).[xx]

Recommendation 1: Continued provision of information about the European Union, the integration processes and the course of the negotiations

As the experience of the new European ten indicates, acceptance of the EU idea and trust in its institutions are inseparable from the ongoing process of informing citizens about the pertaining symbolic and material benefits, as well as about certain costs of integration (Vetik, 2003; Rulikova, 2004). As a project that was created from the top, through the agreement of political elites, the EU has always included the risk of the absence (or evaporation) of public support. This public opinion-related vulnerability was clearly shown in the recent European Constitution referenda, which resulted in debates about slowing down further enlargement, the aim being to restore public trust in the very idea of the EU.

Data concerning the degree to which Croatian citizens are informed about the EU are relatively meagre. Eurobarometer research would suggest that Croatian citizens systematically overestimate their knowledge about the EU (Eurobarometer, 2004; 2005a; 2005b), which, as a potential obstacle, should certainly be taken into account in the drawing up of the strategy of a systematic information campaign.[xxi] A substantial rise in the understanding and the knowledge of the EU in Croatia requires continuous dissemination of information rather than a new campaign. Bearing in mind the likelihood that the negotiation process will additionally strengthen popular euroscepticism, as suggested by the experience of the ten new members of the EU, systematic information dissemination will not only have to be better designed and planned, but also efficiently and vigorously executed. According to the fin-

dings presented in this paper, it will be necessary to diversify content, approaches and messages to address the various fears, dilemmas and prejudices. Efficient implementation of systematic information dissemination will require a core of high-quality journalists who will specialize in reporting on the EU related issues.

Recommendation 2: Implementation of measures that increase trust in national institutions

This is an activity of exceptional importance, as the Government acknowledged, at least in principle, in the recent presentation of the proposal of the National Plan for Combating Corruption, 2006-2008. According to the existing research (Štulhofer, 2001; 2004; Rothstein, 2003; Uslaner and Badescu, 2004) citizens' trust in national institutions is strongly correlated with the perception of corruption among civil servants. Measures that increase professionalism, effectiveness and transparency, measures that clearly identify responsibilities and entail concrete sanctions against the government employees who break the laws and rules of professional conduct are an important part of the strategy of reducing euroscepticism. An increase in trust in the national institutions should result in a reduction of distrust in the EU institutions and may even encourage utilitarian stance toward the integration processes – for better or worse.[xxii]

Recommendation 3: Creating counterbalance to exclusive nationalism

The relationship between the symbolic and the utilitarian expectations from the EU depends on a number of structural and situational factors. In brief, the current domination of the first cannot be dismissed as the fleeting outcome of political and/or media manipulations. Strengthening rational attitudes toward the EU is dependent on the success of the government in creating the conditions for utilitarian assessment of the accession to the EU. This has at least partially been touched on in both of the previous recommendations. It is almost trivial to remind the reader that the implementation of structural reforms, aimed at increasing competitiveness of the Croatian economy, restructuring social services and improving the local and national governance, are key steps in this direction. It is less inconsequential to stress the need for a new national cultural policy, which will encourage an open understanding of national identity, the one that is essentially unfinished (unclosed) and continuously "under construction" (Katunarić et al., 2001). Exclusive nationalism feeds on a rather mythical concept of traditional

culture and on the idea of a fixed (somehow given) ethnic-cum-national identity, which any changes and influences from abroad will necessary threaten. This kind of anti-modern, essentially xenophobic and chronically frustrated and "besieged" vision of national culture and identity can be found in other European societies as well, but its scope is on the whole marginal. To marginalise such a position in Croatia would assume redefining the historical and literary canons represented in the national curriculum during the last 15 years, as well as strategic promotion of an open ("not yet completed") concept of the national culture that replaces exclusive nationalism with an enlightened patriotism.

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* *The author would like to thank the anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions.*

i *To a small extent, this paper is based on the address Trust in the EU: Croatian 1995-2003 (Štulhofer, A., Landripet, I. and Rimac, I.), prepared for the UACES 35th Annual Conference and 10th Research Conference "The European Union: Past and Future Enlargements", Zagreb, September 5-7, 2005.*

ii *Although a waning of enthusiasm for EU entry was recorded in most post-transitional CE countries that recently became EU member states, this negative trend was related to the negotiation process (Jacobs and Pollack, 2004:5). In Croatia it has preceded the negotiations, which means that the negotiation process could have an additional negative effect of the perceived desirability of the EU.*

iii *Because of it large initial size, the SEESSP questionnaire, which was designed to measure a wide range of social attitudes and values, was divided into two separate surveys (SEESSP-A and SEESSP-B). They were carried out simultaneously on probabilistic nationally representative samples, each including 1,250 respondents. Only a portion of questions were asked in both surveys. Unfortunately, the indicators of attitudes toward the EU were not among these core questions. Trust in the EU was included in SEESSP-A and the attitude toward Croatia joining the EU in SEESP-B.*

iv *This definition differs from the frequently used one according to which Euroscepticism is a well-founded or unfounded opposition to the process of European integration (Taggart and Szczerbiak, 2002:27). The difference between the two lies primarily in the degree to which they can be operationalised.*

v *It is also possible to imagine a viewpoint in which European integration is good for a large but not for a small country.*

vi *The same terminology was applied in a recent analysis of European identity (cf. Giannakopoulos, 2004).*

vii *Unlike inclusive national identification, exclusive nationalism is marked by distrust and social distance toward other ethnic or racial groups (Carey, 2002).*

viii *For a more detailed debate of the range of potential costs and benefits of joining the EU, see Samardžija [et al.] (2000) and Malova and Haughton (2002).*

ix *Another research study pointed that the highest scores on the composite index of trust in the EU were recorded in Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey, and the lowest in the Czech Republic and Slovenia (Gfk Gral-Iteo, 2002).*

x *In 1995-2005 period distrust means "a little" trust in the EU or "none at all".*

xi *The explanation, it is worth observing, cannot be sought in the amount of information about the EU, because it is on the rise (Gfk Croatia – Omnibus, 2006).*

xii *The relatively low level of trust in the EU during the nineties might be the consequence of the disappointment with the way it handled the wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.*

xiii *A good example is a recent public campaign that warned Croatian citizens that the accession to the EU would end the production of the much-vaunted locally produced cottage cheese and sour cream.*

xiv *It should be observed that such a procedure, irrespective of the outcome, is not irrational as long as there is a systematic shortage of reliable information on how the EU works and what it is about.*

xv *Social position was measured by respondents' estimations of their position on the social hierarchy scale where 1 means the bottom and 10 the top.*

xvi *For adherents of exclusive nationalism the EU is a multicultural and transnational entity that threatens cultural identity of smaller nations. The definition of exclusive nationalism assumes the existence of the inclusive variation, which is sometimes simply called patriotism.*

xvii *The finding was partially corroborated by a recently published study. Using data collected on another probabilistic national sample, the authors reported on the negative impact of general national pride on the desirability of European integration (Lamza Posavec [et al.], 2006). When the components that constitute the scale of general national pride are considered, four of the five variables denote exclusive nationalism (Lamza Posavec [et al.], 1006:145).*

xviii *Another regression analysis (not presented in the paper) has revealed a clear socio-demographic profile of a propensity for exclusive nationalism. The predictors are age ($p<0.01$), education ($p<0.05$), income ($p<0.05$) and the degree of urbanisation of the domicile ($p<0.001$). Exclusive nationalism is overrepresented among older, less educated, less economically well-off and less urbanized respondents.*

xix *Also indicated by the Puls Crobarometer data (Bagić and Šalinović, 2006).*

xx *Particularly in the light of the beginning of negotiations with the EU and their impact on institutional evolution (cf. Malova and Haughton, 2002).*

xxi *In both 2004 and 2005 Croatian citizens provided higher estimates of their knowledge about the EU than the EU citizens. In sharp contrast to this self-assessment, the results of the Eurobarometer knowledge quiz show that Croatian citizens are less knowledgeable than their EU counterparts.*

xxii *During 1995-2003, trust in national institutions fell sharply (Štulhofer, 2004). In 1995, the level of trust in national institutions was much lower in Croatia than in Slovenia, Austria and Italy (Štulhofer, 2003).*

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