

**ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF EUROPEAN INTEGRATION:
EUROPEANIZING THE ROMANIAN PARTY SYSTEM?**

By Diana Ioana Toda

Submitted to
Central European University
Department of Public Policy

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

Supervisor: Professor Ágnes Bátory

Budapest, Hungary
2008

ABSTRACT

The literature on European integration has moved more and more towards studying the impact of the accession process on the member states. Also referred to as the Europeanization, the process signifies the domestic adaptation of member states to the new European environment. Attempts are currently being made to extend the area of research towards the newest members of the EU.

Accordingly, within this context, the present thesis assesses the influence of Europeanization on the Romanian party system. Using document analysis as a research method, the paper attempts to identify those signs of the Europeanization of the Romanian political scene. Special emphasis is given to studying the impact of Europeanization on inter-party relationships which is believed to be a sign of the party system's adaptation.

Drawing upon the employed analysis, the thesis concludes that the signs of the Europeanization of the Romanian party system can be identified starting the opening of the accession negotiations. Additionally, although the accession to the EU appears to influence political parties primarily in terms of programmatic changes, changes in party competition and transnational cooperation can also be identified. Finally, the thesis reveals the emergence of the EU theme as a valence issue in party politics, parties competing on the efficiency of its delivery.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I offer my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Ágnes Bátorý, without whose help this thesis would not have been completed. Prof. Bátorý's valuable suggestions, critique and support have proved invaluable on both academic as well as on personal level.

In addition special thanks and appreciation goes to the Public Policy Department at Central European University, Budapest. I attribute the level of my Master degree to their efforts and dedication.

Finally, I would like to thank my family. Their unconditional support, patience and love have always been a source of inspiration. This thesis is dedicated to them.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: EUROPEANIZATION - GENERAL THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS	3
1.1 GENERAL OVERVIEW	3
1.2 DEFINING EUROPEANIZATION	3
1.3 EUROPEANIZATION AND POLITICAL PARTIES	6
1.4 CONCLUSION	9
CHAPTER 2: EUROPEANIZATION AND THE ROMANIAN POLITICAL PARTIES	10
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	10
2.2 PROGRAMMATIC CHANGES OF THE ROMANIAN PARTIES AND THE SALIENCE OF THE EU ON THE POLITICAL AGENDA	11
2.2.1 <i>The Social Democratic Party</i>	12
2.2.2 <i>The National Liberal Party</i>	14
2.2.3 <i>The Conservative Party</i>	15
2.2.4 <i>The Democratic Liberal Party</i>	16
2.2.5 <i>The Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania</i>	17
2.2.6 <i>The Greater Romania Party</i>	18
2.3 ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE WITHIN ROMANIAN PARTIES	19
2.4 CHANGING PATTERNS OF PARTY COMPETITION	20
2.5 THE NATURE OF PARTY-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS AND COOPERATION BEYOND THE NATIONAL PARTY SYSTEM	22
2.6 CONCLUSION	25
CHAPTER 3: EUROPEANIZATION AND THE PARLIAMENTARY INTERACTION OF ROMANIAN PARTIES	26
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	26
3.2 PARLIAMENTARY INTERACTION DURING THE 2004 ELECTORAL YEAR	26
3.3 THE ADOPTION OF THE ACCESSION TREATY AND THE OPPOSITION'S MOTIONS OF CENSURE BETWEEN 2005-2006	28
3.4 EUROPEANIZATION AND PARLIAMENTARY INTERACTION AFTER JANUARY 1, 2007 ..	33
3.5 CONCLUSION	35
CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH	37
REFERENCES.....	40

INTRODUCTION

The literature on Europeanization and its effects on domestic politics has been growing extensively over the past few years. The majority of the studies in the field (see, e.g., Buller, Evans and James 2002; Green Cowles, Caporaso and Risse 2001; Hix and Goetz 2000; Knill 2001; Schimmelfennig 2005) explain the phenomenon primarily as the domestic adaptation of party systems to the EU. This is of course not to say that Europeanization manifests itself only at this level but that politics remains one of the areas that are more susceptible to change once the countries advance on their path towards the EU. Furthermore, the studies on Europeanization reveal considerable variation in the way the process manifests itself in the European Union's member states.

Therefore, building upon these observations, the thesis will analyze the impact of Europeanization on one of the newest members of the EU: Romania. This is why the aim of the present thesis is to determine how European integration influenced the Romanian party system as a whole and what important changes in individual party politics on the one hand and on inter-party relations on the other hand did the country's accession to the European Union (EU) trigger. To this end an analysis of the dynamics of the Romanian party system prior to and after Romania's accession to the EU will be conducted.

To assess the impact of Europeanization on the Romanian party system as a basis for understanding the consequences of accession on the domestic political scene, the research will be constructed by employing document analysis as a qualitative method. Thus, an exploration of the party groups' manifestos and governing programs, as well as the investigation of the records of parliamentary debates will be carried out.

As the various theories demonstrate, within the field of Europeanization research a multitude of studies have been employed to explain the various effects Europe has on

domestic politics. Nevertheless, this thesis differs from the existing academic literature in two respects. First, despite the extensive research in the field, the previous studies have focused primarily on the older EU countries, rather than on the new members. Thus, the present research will not only contribute to the existing literature on Europeanization by elaborating on one of the newest members of the Union, but it will also help to better understand the particularities of the Romanian party system and the party relations within the country.

Secondly, much of the previous literature addresses the effects of the EU integration on the national party systems by analysing the individual adaptation of parties to the new environment. While the impact of the Europeanization process on individual party groups is indeed significant, less attention has been paid to the possible Europeanization of inter-party relations. Consequently, identifying the relationship between Europeanization and the patterns of party interaction becomes crucial for ensuring the adequate tools for understanding the impact of the EU on domestic politics.

Thus, the thesis is structured as follows. The first chapter introduces some of the most prominent theories in the Europeanization literature. Focusing primarily on conceptualizing Europeanization as the domestic adaptation of the party system to the European environment, the following chapters successively develop several hypotheses regarding the potential impact of European integration on individual party behaviour and on parliamentary party interaction. The final remarks outline the complexity of the Europeanization process and the difficulty in attributing domestic changes to European integration as well as some prospects for future research in the field.

CHAPTER 1: EUROPEANIZATION - GENERAL THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

FOR EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

1.1 *General Overview*

The eastward enlargement of the European Union (EU) towards Romania and Bulgaria opened the door to an unprecedented transformation. Aside from the economic dimension, the last EU enlargement is believed to have caused major changes in the course of political development in the member states. But how exactly does European integration influence domestic politics in the new-coming countries?

Since no in depth studies have been conducted on the impact of Europeanization on the Romanian political system, best attempts will be made to present some of the most prominent existing theories on Europeanization and its impact on domestic politics as a point of departure for my empirical analysis. Accordingly, this introductory chapter explores the theoretical considerations behind the notion of Europeanization. It starts with a definition of the phenomenon and goes on to identifying the mechanisms through which institutional and policy transformations and adaptation are induced. Finally, it concludes that the broad principle of Europeanization needs to be used as a tool for understanding the transformations taking place in the various spheres of the political life, whether we are talking about the national political system as a whole or about the party system in particular.

1.2 *Defining Europeanization*

"The impact of European integration on national political systems is widely discussed in the literature. Definitions of Europeanization range from describing Europeanization as a 'de jure' transfer of sovereignty to the EU level (Lawton, 1999: 92) to a process by which the domestic policy areas are influenced by European policy-making (Börzel, 1999: 574).

Moreover, it is argued that Europeanization is the major factor influencing party systems and political parties in those states subjected to European integration (Enyedi, 2005: 2). Consequently, the principle of Europeanization has been broadly used as a tool for understanding the transformations taking place in the various spheres of the political life" (Toda, 2008).

"Nevertheless, the great variety of definitions attributed to the process, the interchangeable use of the terms Europeanization and European integration, and the lack of a consensus on the process's effects on domestic politics calls for a more in depth analysis of the phenomenon. For Vink (2002: 1) for example, Europeanization refers to the change in domestic systems caused by European integration. European integration involves certain processes that shape to a greater or lesser extent the degree of transformation in national political systems. Accordingly, Europeanization requires some degree of adaptation and as Grote (2003: 4) argues, it is about 'the adaptive capacities of domestic policies to European challenges'. Consistent with this line of thought, one could also say, following Ladrech (1994: 69), that Europeanization constitutes a process of incremental reorientation in the direction and shape of politics. Thus, domestic politics adapt to new developments having a mediating effect on the influences of European integration" (Toda, 2008).

In another important contribution, Europeanization is defined as a set of processes through which the new EU influences become "incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies" (Radaelli, 2000: 4). Consequently, drawing on the idea of adaptation, Radaelli stresses the importance of understanding Europeanization not only as convergence, harmonization and political integration but as an adaptive process to a changing environment and accordingly, a consequence of European integration.

Setting out to explain Europeanization as a two-way process, both the penetration of EU issues into the domestic arena and the transformation of the EU arena, Hix and Goetz (2000: 12) suggest that the process should primarily be regarded as how a newly created institutional dimension at European level provides "structures of opportunities" for domestic actors. Furthermore, while accepting that Europeanization influences both the domestic and the EU levels, Cowles et. al (2001: 3) stresses the need for research to focus primarily on the "downward causation" that generates domestic adaptation.

Other scholars have pointed out that Europeanization represents foremost European integration and institution building (Stone Sweet and Standholtz, 1998; Colino, 1997; Moravcsik, 1999). Notably, Europeanization comprises a set of institutional and ideational changes that by virtue can ultimately affect national policies, practices and politics (Schmidt, 2002). Moreover, Europeanization is considered similar to modernization (Hood, 1998). Thus, Europeanization should be first understood as the emergence of different structures of government at the European level, more specifically, legal, political and social institutions that encourage increasing interaction among actors (Cowles, Risse and Caporaso, 2001).

As the studies analysed above demonstrate, the concept of Europeanization remains quite complex. The lack of a single definition and a consensus among scholars concerning the character and effects of the phenomenon are nothing else but good indicators of the debate surrounding the topic. Nonetheless, most academic work on Europeanization primarily focuses on the adaptation of the domestic structures to the changing environment.

While the studies employ different definitions of the term, it is predominantly agreed that Europeanization represents change in domestic political systems (Hix and Goetz, 2000). Consequently, it is in this context that I analyze the concept of Europeanization. While not denying that Europeanization is a two-way process, with domestic actors "uploading to the EU level and downloading from the EU level into the domestic arena" (Bache and Marshall,

2004: 3), I conceptualize the phenomenon above all as domestic adaptation to the newly EU environment.

The most apparent advantage of such a definition is the possibility to explore the potential changes induced by the integration process. I attempt to prove that European integration determines indeed the so-called Europeanization of domestic politics, which is to say the adaptation of the national party system to the changing environment. This nevertheless has further implications for the theoretical analysis. An overview of the effects that Europeanization has on the political parties can be employed for a better understanding of the underlying influence European integration exerts on the domestic arena.

1.3 *Europeanization and Political Parties*

"The Europeanization of domestic politics requires first and foremost a deeper understanding of the possible transformations of the national party systems. The literature in the field is divided between two contrasting opinions. On one hand, a connection between the change and adaptation of national institutions and the policy-making style, and the political parties' ability of performing their traditional functions exists (Ladrech, 2002: 394). On the other hand, there is no clear evidence that Europeanization directly impacts the format and structure of national party systems. As Mair (2000: 4) argues, 'of the many areas of domestic politics which may have experienced an impact from Europe, it is party systems in particular that have proved to be most impervious to change'" (Toda, 2008).

By this statement Mair claims that Europeanization has had little or no direct impact on the mechanics of party systems. Nonetheless, he acknowledges the indirect impact of the integration process by emphasizing the constraining power that integration exerts on the national governments' freedom of movement and the hollowing out effect it has on those parties with a governing aspiration. As such, European integration "promotes a degree of consensus across the mainstream and an inevitable reduction in the range of policy

alternatives available to voters" (Mair, 2000: 48-9). Thus, European integration influences indirectly the operating environments of national governments and national party systems. Therefore, the Europeanization of national political parties will be reflected in the adaptation to this changing environment.

"However, this is not to say that Europeanization impacts party systems equally. The response to Europeanization varies across political systems and across national political parties. These can either respond to the changes induced by the integration process or remain unaltered when these influences contravene to the parties' or governments' desired mode of functioning. Nevertheless, despite the contextual character of the impact of European integration on national party systems, it is possible to identify those aspects that might reflect the effects of the Europeanization process" (Toda, 2008).

"First, one of the most explicit effects of Europeanization is considered to be the programmatic change in the parties' platform (Ladrech, 2002: 396). Europeanization brings about a reorientation towards European issues as a driver of domestic policies. Programmatic references to the role of the EU in policies such as employment, immigration and asylum will strengthen as the impact of the EU on the domestic sphere becomes more clear (Ladrech, 2002: 396)" (Toda, 2008).

"Secondly, European integration can generate organizational change (Ladrech, 2002: 396). Changes in party practices and power relations are likely to occur as a result of the integration process, although an explicit statutory change in parties may not be that obvious (Raunio, 2000). Essentially, the changes in party organization reflect the formal and informal distribution of power within the party that allows the pursuit of the preferred goals (Poguntke et. al, 2007). European integration has induced an organizational change within domestic parties favouring the shift of power into the direction of party elites and EU specialists who have gained the freedom of manoeuvre in carrying out their aspirations" (Toda, 2008).

"Thirdly, the politicization of the EU in the domestic arena leads to new patterns of party competition (Ladrech, 2002: 396). European integration can determine a change in the way parties capitalize on the EU issue but also the emergence of new parties. Furthermore, the significance of the EU issues in the domestic arena can cause the repositioning of parties in terms of preference or adversity towards integration" (Toda, 2008).

"Fourthly, Europeanization can be reflected by a change in the relationships between the political parties and the government (Ladrech, 2002: 396). The increasing salience of EU matters can influence the relationships within the party and lead to a divide on specific policy issues. Accordingly, "party-government relations on EU matters may become 'push-pull' in nature" (Ladrech, 2002: 398). According to Ladrech (2002: 398), on the one hand the government is pushed to a maximalist position on those issues close to the party's programme. On the other hand, the government is pulled to a minimalist position on aspects that run counter to its sovereignty" (Toda, 2008).

"Finally, Europeanization may result in the development of new relations beyond the national party system (Ladrech, 2002: 396). New prospects for transnational cooperation between the various political parties of the member states are generated as a result of the organizational and programmatic process of adaptation to the new environment induced by EU integration" (Toda, 2008).

Bearing in mind that I conceptualize Europeanization as domestic adaptation to the new EU environment, I attempt to search for those pieces of evidence indicating the adaptation of the party system to this changed environment. Thus, the Europeanization of Romanian political parties should be reflected by the changes in the previously mentioned areas: programmatic content, party organization, party competition, party-government relations and transnational cooperation. Assuming that Europeanization determines adaptation, I expect national parties to respond to the impact EU exerts on domestic politics.

From my perspective, using these five areas of investigation in order to identify the various changes in the functioning mechanisms of domestic parties will not only give a detailed insight into the effects Europeanization exerted on the Romanian party system, but will also allow to compare the various responses of parties to the EU across countries.

1.4 Conclusion

Drawing on the existing literature on Europeanization, this chapter highlighted some of the most important theories of Europeanization and its impact on domestic politics. As the variety of definitions attributed to Europeanization demonstrates, there is an ongoing debate about the phenomenon's form of manifestation. Yet, despite the different starting points, the majority of the studies conceptualize as domestic adaptation to the changing environment induced by European integration.

In terms of understanding the effects of Europeanization on domestic politics, the chapter made two major observations. First, studying Europeanization requires an in-depth analysis of its various effects on the national party system. In this case, an approach emphasizing the various changes in the program and organization of domestic parties can best indicate the adaptation of the domestic arena to the changing EU environment. Secondly, the domestic impact of European integration is apparent not only in the changing organization of party systems, but also in the interaction of political parties. Thus, employing a framework emphasizing the changes in the way parties interact and coordinate in the parliamentary arena allows for a thorough analysis of the effects integration process exerted on the member states.

The following two chapters present empirical considerations for the highlighted theoretical framework. For this purpose, in what follows I focus on the domestic impact Europeanization exercised on Romanian politics and its two previously identified dimensions: the Romanian political parties and the parliamentary coordination of parties.

CHAPTER 2: EUROPEANIZATION AND THE ROMANIAN POLITICAL PARTIES

2.1 *Introduction*

Romania's accession to the European Union represented not only a major turn in the country's economic and social development but also the transformation and adaptation of the Romanian political agenda to the new European reality. Accordingly, the relevance of European integration for domestic politics needs to be understood in terms of its impact on the national party system and implicitly on the domestic parties. Using Robert Ladrech's framework as a point of departure in our analysis, this chapter attempts to present the various changes in the program, organization and mechanics of the Romanian parties and party system as a whole, caused by EU integration and the process of Europeanization.

Furthermore, the chapter suggests that the influence of Europeanization can be translated into the parties' programmatic and organizational adaptation to the changing environment. Europeanization can shape the relationships between parties and the government as well as the previous patterns of competition between the domestic actors. The Romanian case reveals the fact that European integration involves a very complex process of adjustment in terms of institutional and policy change. Although the influence of Europeanization on national political parties is very much contextual, we can conclude that European integration has the power to guide the development of domestic politics and the orientation towards specific policy issues.

2.2 Programmatic changes of the Romanian parties and the salience of the EU on the political agenda

While it was not before 2007 that Romania became a member of the EU, the growing role of the EU on the political agenda can be attributed to earlier stages in the development of the Romanian party system. The opening of the accession negotiations triggered the reorientation of Romanian parties towards the promotion of the European issues as a means of ensuring Romania's democratic development. The political discourse became centred on the necessity of Romania's accession to the EU. However, despite the increasing importance of the EU issues, the focus remained on those domestic political matters that would generate the desired transformations within the country and that would advance Romania on its path towards the EU.

The signing of the accession agreement in 2005 brought an ever more pregnant emphasis on EU-related matters. While precedence was still attributed to domestic issues, Romanian parties began to incorporate the EU theme in their political discourses, advancing not only the priorities for European politics, but also those issues that could determine the development of new ways to tackle domestic concerns. Thus, it is plausible to argue that the prospect of EU integration influenced the Romanian politics by introducing programmatic change.

In order to evaluate the impact of Europeanization, it is helpful to determine the major changes on Romanian parties' programs. To briefly discuss this aspect we will look for changes in all the political groups present in the Romanian parliament: the Social Democratic Party (PSD), the National Liberal Party (PNL), the Greater Romania Party (PRM), the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR), the Conservative Party (PC) and the Democratic Liberal Party (PD-L). For the purpose of our analysis we will consider the party statutes and party programmes elaborated prior to Romania's accession to the EU, as well as

the electoral programmes for the 2007 European Parliament (EP) elections that clearly reflect the influence of the Europeanization process.

2.2.1 The Social Democratic Party

The Social Democratic Party (PSD) represents the major political group in Romania. Previously known under the name of the Democratic National Salvation Front (FDSN), the PSD governed Romania from 1992 to 1996 and later from 2000 to 2004. Nevertheless, November 2004 marked the end of the PSD legislature, the party being consigned to the opposition.

Following its centre-left ideology, the Social Democratic Party has traditionally given great salience to social issues. The 2004 electoral campaign stood under a powerful social message. The PSD's electoral platform promoted two main action directions: decreasing poverty on the one hand, and the successful integration on the other hand (Institutul Pro, 2004). Nevertheless, the social dimension was prevalent in PSD's discourse.

Building on its governmental achievements, the party emphasized the need to continue reforming and modernizing the educational, sanitary and pension systems. Thus, major points on the electoral agenda included: taking measures to provide the necessary didactic material in all schools situated in rural areas; the introduction of privately administered pensions; facilitating access of young farmers to credits; revitalizing the existing mining areas; and increasing the state allowance for the raising of children (Monitoarul Neoficiale, 2004).

"This social orientation is also reflected by the 2005 Statute of the Social Democratic Party (PSD, 2005), which includes various references to social solidarity and equality among people as essential prerequisites for the general progress of society. The party originally committed its mandate to four key aspects: the finalization of the accession negotiations, the promotion of social democracy as a concrete way of action, the creation of a 'European Romania' and of a new model of European solidarity" (Toda, 2008).

"References to European issues are formulated in an independent section of the PSD's statute ("PSD-The Political Force of European Integration") which emphasises the party's role as the sole political force with considerable successes in the area of European integration. However, despite its acknowledgement of the importance of European integration and its support in this respect, the 2005 statute criticized the over importance attributed to the European orientation which in turn had the power to create artificial priorities that could contravene to the pursuit of national interests" (Toda, 2008).

"The 2007 elections for the EP brought about an increasing emphasis on the PSD's interest on EU-related issues. While still committing itself to the promotion of social policies, the PSD's platform included new aspects such as: the promotion of Romania as a responsible and credible partner for the European structures; promoting equal access to social protection within the European Union; the liberalisation of the member states' labour markets; facilitating the access of new members to the Euro zone or facilitating the absorption of Euro funds" (Toda, 2008).

Comparing the platform of the PSD prior to and after Romania's accession to the EU, we can identify several trends: first, before 2007, the PSD's program was mainly centred on the idea of social solidarity. Second, despite the presence of the EU-issues on its political agenda, the references to these issues remained quite general, not giving any specific details with regard to the domestic implementation of these issues.

However, EU integration seems to have brought programmatic changes in the PSD's platform. While priority is still given to the social dimension, these issues are considered in a broader European context. Moreover, the program of the 2007 elections to the European Parliament signals an orientation towards the values promoted by the Party of European Socialists (PES), whose doctrine reflects a preference for the creation of what could be called a 'united social Europe'.

2.2.2 The National Liberal Party

The National Liberal Party (PNL) represents the second most important party in Romanian politics and is a perpetrator of the liberal doctrine advocating for both social and economic liberalisation. In 2004, the PNL joined the PD to form the Justice and Truth Alliance, an alliance that would cease its existence in April 2007 due to the political infighting.

Similar to the PSD, the PNL has been also pursuing a policy of closeness to EU-related issues. Nonetheless, prior to the country's accession to the EU, a greater salience was assigned to issues such as fostering capitalism and the further development, liberalization and stabilization of the Romanian market economy or the openness to foreign investment.

Consequently, consistent with its liberal ideology, the party has traditionally preferred economic issues over social matters. This orientation was strongly reflected also in the electoral program for the presidential elections of 2004. The program mirrored the liberal values by focusing on the consolidation of democracy in Romania, the reaffirmation of the role of the Romanian state, equality between citizens and the successful integration of Romania to the European Union (PNL, 2003).

Furthermore, the PNL's 2005 Statute (PNL, 2005) outlined the party's political priorities. Again, points such as ensuring economic and social cohesion, combating corruption and the elimination of all administrative barriers in the way of the free flow of capital, services and persons were identified as necessities for the success of the liberal doctrine. References to European integration were rather brief and only stipulated facilitating the integration process while at the same time preserving the national identity and promoting Romania's interests.

"A rather different orientation in the party's doctrine was revealed in the 2007 EP elections. While still highlighting the importance of national interest, the PNL acknowledged

the significance of the European dimension in the pursuit of this interest. Major points on the electoral agenda included the following: the promotion of peace through the creation of a Union of the citizen; the consolidation of the EU as a global actor; building the democracy and responsibility of EU institutions as a way to attract the European citizen; guaranteeing the fundamental rights of the European citizens; and the consolidation of the economic governance after the adoption of the EURO" (Toda, 2008).

2.2.3 The Conservative Party

Known before 2005 under the name of the Romanian Humanist Party (PUR), the Conservative Party (PC) was established in 1992. With a doctrine promoting the humanistic values, the PC positioned itself towards the centre of the political spectrum, a position that would trigger the affirmation of conservatism in Romanian politics.

The PC has traditionally dedicated its political program to the promotion of social matters. The Charter of PC's values¹ (PC, 2005) puts forward a series of principles among which the promotion of individual values, social solidarity, the idea of family and Christian tradition play a key role. Moreover, Romania's accession to the EU is regarded as a process of cultural reintegration into a wider European culture that has the power to encourage the creation of a solid democracy and a competing economy. Thus, the idea of Europe and the necessity of the accession process have always been on the PC's agenda.

The 2004 elections brought the affirmation of the PC on the Romanian political scene. Forming an alliance with the PSD and thus, entering the parliament, the party embarked on a program of modernization and restructuring. The two parties' joint governing program was regarded as a natural step in solving the economic and social problems that the country was faced with prior to its integration to the EU (CPISC, 2004). Additionally, the program aimed

¹ Translation from Romanian: Carta Valorilor PC.

to ensure the implementation of the European social and economic development model as well as guaranteeing Romania's significant contribution to the European project.

Nevertheless most of the program's objectives were subordinated to the social-democratic vision. Thus, primacy was attributed to aspects related to macroeconomic and social policy. Some examples include: maintaining the monetary and financial policies at a prudent level; accelerating the process of institutional reform; reducing the budget deficit and keeping inflation into reasonable limits; the modernization of social assistance services as well as the promotion of policies targeted at handicapped people; or the rehabilitation of the health and education system (CPISC, 2004).

However, the 2007 EP elections emphasized once again the opportunity of using Romania's new member status as a means of affirming the individual and the Romanian state. Some of the major points on PC's electoral program included the following: the creation of a Social Solidarity European Fund that would guarantee higher pensions; the development of a national strategy against the massive waves of migration or the improvement of the sanitary system.

2.2.4 The Democratic Liberal Party

Formed as an alliance between the former Democratic Party (PD) and the Liberal Democratic Party (PLD), the Democratic Liberal Party (PD-L) emerged only after the EP elections, in December 2007. While supporting Romania's membership in the EU, the new party's program outlined the idea that Romania's primary objective should be the urgent attainment of a European standard of living. Thus, all other objectives should be subordinated to this strategic goal. However, the new party's orientation did not differ much from its successors' program as both the PD and the PLD' program for the 2007 EP elections had put forward Romania's sound economic development and profound modernization.

As far as the 2004 elections are concerned, the party's platform outlined a series of objectives such as the strengthening of the administrative capacity; the modernization of the industrial sector; the development of agriculture, exports and tourism; or the promotion of a stimulating fiscal policy and free competition (DA PNL-PD, 2003). Along these lines, the PLD's program represented a program of economic and industrial reconstruction as early as 2004.

Nevertheless, despite this economic orientation, the PLD's governing program for 2005 placed an important emphasis on the European dimension. Accordingly, the Romanian government needed to target three important goals: complying with the obligations assumed towards the EU; the successful institutional integration; and the attainment of convergence with the European economic structures (DA PNL-PD, 2005).

2.2.5 The Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania

Established in December 1989, the Democratic Union of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR) is the main political group representing the Hungarian minority in Romania. Nevertheless, the UDMR also acts as one of the main party groups in Romanian politics. This position is proved by the results in the elections obtained between 1990 and 2007, the UDMR being a member or supporter of every government.

The UDMR's program has always given precedence to the interests and needs of the community it acts for. Thus, the 2004 campaign foresaw widening the rights attributed to the Hungarian minority, as well as the adequate representation of Hungarians in all the major local, regional and national institutions (RMDSZ, 2004).

However, the campaign for the EP brought an emphasis on wider issues such as the improvement of the quality of life and of the standard of living or the increase of net revenues (Monde Diplomatique, 2007). Furthermore, the protection of the rights of the EU's minorities, the liberty to work in the EU as well as an economy based on knowledge and the

implementation of a rational rural development plan are other priorities on the UDMR's agenda for the 2007 EP elections (RMDSZ, 2007).

2.2.6 The Greater Romania Party

The most eloquent example of changes in attitudes towards European integration and the EU in general is given by the Greater Romania Party (PRM). The PRM was set up in 1991 as a right-wing political group. Promoting strong nationalistic policies, the PRM has originally viewed Romania's accession to the EU with scepticism. Concerns about the worsening of the population's standard of living and the rise in prices represented the main arguments against the future integration.

However, the official accession brought a change in PRM's political discourse. The campaign for the 2007 EP elections stood under the slogan "With Great Romania in a United Europe" (Cotidianul, 2007). Capitalizing on the affirmation and conservation of national identity and the adaptation of the Romanian economy to the particularities of the EU, the PRM became one of the advocates for Romania's successful and complete integration to the EU. Thus, the PRM constitutes the perfect example of change in the political discourse. A reason for the shift in political discourse might be the potential of the EP elections to influence the outcomes of future national elections by allowing the PRM to realign itself to the voters' preferences and appeal to a broader segment of the population. Notwithstanding the explanation behind this change in attitudes towards integration, the PRM constitutes a perfect illustration of parties' adaptation to the changing environment brought about by EU accession. Moreover, it is reasonable to argue that the integration process determined in PRM's case a reorientation in the patterns of competition, the 'battle' for power being framed by the salience of the EU issue, rather than its traditional nationalistic orientation.

In conclusion, the prospect of Romania's integration to the EU and the integration itself had very differing effects on the strategies employed by the various political parties.

While parties such as the PD-L, the PC and the UDMR did not experience major changes in their political discourse, the developments in the PSD, PNL and most notably the PRM's program prove the shifting focus in domestic politics brought about by European integration. Although, the EU-issue had been present in party programs even before Romania's accession to the EU, the integration process defined the way in which domestic politics should respond to the new changing environment.

2.3 Organizational change within Romanian parties

"Assigning statutory changes in parties to the Europeanization process can be rather difficult. However, it is possible to identify the changes in the practices and the power relations that govern a particular party. Poguntke et. al (2007) identifies four elements that suggest the organizational Europeanization of national parties. These refer to the following: the presence of European specialists within party bodies; the regularized access of specialists in European issues to the party staff; the growing access of European specialists to material resources; and the increasing access to information for European specialists" (Toda, 2008).

"Prior to the accession, Romania was required to compile a list of proposed party members that would be given the statute of Euro-observers in the European Parliament until the time of the first elections for the EP. Despite the importance assigned to these representatives, no specifications with regard to their roles were included in the parties' statutes or official documents. Moreover, in November 2007, the first elections for the European Parliament, marking the investiture of the former Euro-observers into the position of Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), were held. A number of 35 MEPs were elected, their distribution according to party groups being the following: PNL-PD - 12; PSD - 12; PRM - 5; UDMR - 3; PC - 2; Independent - 1. Once again, no explicit references to their functions were included in the parties' statutes" (Toda, 2008).

"Despite their expertise in the field of EU issues and their role as delegates in the EU's institutions, no changes in their position within the represented party occurred. It is worth mentioning that the majority of the newly elected MEPs did not witness any changes in the party positions they were holding prior to the EP elections. Thus, out of the 35 MEPs only 5 hold the positions of Vice-president, Secretary General or Executive Secretary of the party they represent. Examples include: Roberta Anastase, Secretary General of the PD; Silvia Ciornei, Vice-president of the PC; Adrian Mihai Cioroianu, Vice-president of the PNL; or Titus Corlătean, Secretary General of the PSD" (Toda, 2008).

Furthermore, an analysis of the Romanian MEPs activity in the EP reveals that their actions remain rather invisible, the number of presences in the parliamentary sessions and the interventions being quite small (ISI, 2008). As the study shows, the declarations during the plenary sessions have a rather unprofessional character and mostly target the political recognition within the country.

As a conclusion, it is misleading to claim that the integration process had a definite and direct impact on the organizational structure of domestic parties and on the distribution of power among the various members. Nonetheless, the accession determined indeed a more obvious orientation of Romanian politicians to issues of European importance. Moreover, the process of adaptation of the Romanian MEPs to the European policies and procedures is still underway.

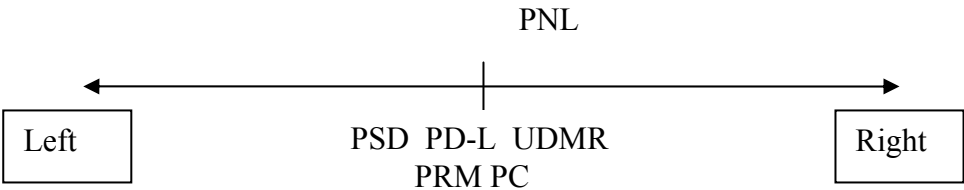
2.4 *Changing patterns of party competition*

The transformation of the Romanian party system induced by the integration process can be found not only in the varying programs and organization of parties, but also in the altering patterns of competition among the various party groups in Romanian politics. As we have seen, the prospect of accession and later on the accession itself determined Romanian parties to adopt new political discourses capitalizing on the European issue. If before the

opening of the accession negotiations the political discourses focused more on the ideological orientations of parties towards either the economic dimension or the social one, after, parties repositioned themselves in terms of preferences towards integration.

Given the previously analysed party platforms and governing programs, one might argue that the integration process determined the refocusing of parties on the European issue. The common orientation towards the EU diminished the traditional differences in the parties' discourses. Accordingly, Figure 1 attempts to depict the current position of the different parties in the Romanian parliament on the left-right dimension.

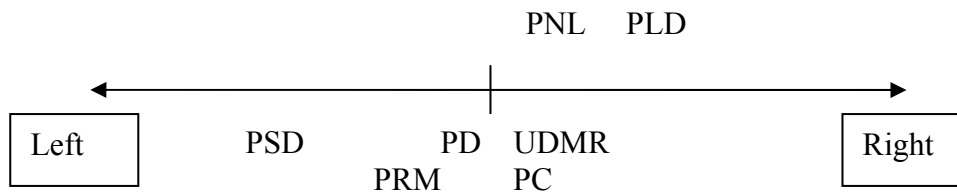
Figure 1. 2007 Romanian Party Positions in Left/Right Terms



Source: Elaborated by the author according to the parties' platforms or governing programs in 2007

Nevertheless, the electoral programs for the 2004 elections reflect a slightly different ideological orientation (Figure 2). As we have seen, the PSD was the only party adopting a pure left ideology meant to ensure social solidarity, whereas the PRM and the PD positioned themselves towards the centre-left side of the political spectrum. On the centre-right we find the PC, the UDMR and the PNL, while the PLD is the only party adopting a predominantly right ideology.

Figure 2. 2004 Romanian Party Positions in Left/Right Terms



Source: Elaborated by the author according to the parties' platforms or governing programs in 2004

Thus, it is reasonable to argue that the integration process and the inclusion of the European issue in the political discourses determined the blurring of the major ideological differences in the parties' programs. However, as we have seen, we are witnessing a concentration towards the centre of the political spectrum, with parties paying equal attention to the economic and the social dimensions. In conclusion, since all Romanian parties circumvolute the centre we can suggest that the party competition is no longer based on ideological considerations but rather on a common European discourse.

2.5 The nature of party-government relations and cooperation beyond the national party system

"Europeanization is also believed to affect the nature of party-government relations. Ladrech (2002: 398) argues that the government is induced towards a maximalist position on issues close to the governing party's program and towards a minimalist position on institutional change. Nevertheless, tracing the influence exerted by political parties on the government proves to be rather difficult. One way to overcome this is to analyze the impact that transnational cooperation between parties has on the government's strategies" (Toda, 2008).

"In general, transnational linkages may distance the government from party programmatic positions in an unintended fashion" (Petrova, 2006: 18). The prospect of accession led Romanian parties to adopt the political discourses promoted by their European counterparts. As we have previously observed, the EU issue and its link to domestic policies was echoed long before integration occurred. The actual accession brought an even more obvious orientation towards complying with the requirements of the EU, many times at the expense of other domestic issues.

"A great salience was given to the fight of corruption whose high levels had received constant criticism from the competent EU institutions. Furthermore, the government embarked on a program of strengthening the institutional capacity that would enable the active participation of the country to the European construction and the proper capitalization of the technical and financial support received from the EU. Additionally, the participation of party leaders in European gatherings, the affiliation of Romanian parties with their European counterparts and the acknowledgement of the necessity to meet the EU's requirements has exerted a vast influence on the Romanian party system and government" (Toda, 2008).

The PSD's association with the Party of European Socialists (PES) has shaped its social-democratic discourse by bringing in the spotlight issues such as the reform of the pension and of the health system. Furthermore, PNL, the ruling party since 2004, adhered to the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe (ALDE). This not only strengthened the party's position in the domestic arena but also headed the government towards ensuring all the necessary conditions for the creation of a favourable investment climate and the development of a competitive economy. Additionally, EPP-ED's criticism related to the issue of corruption led the government to take measures to eliminate incompetence in ministries and other authorities.

What is more, the PD-L's association with the EPP-ED triggered important consequences at the level of domestic politics. By receiving international legitimacy as a centre-right party "an important clarification was brought in the centre-right sector of the Romanian political scene, where the electorate was confused by the too many and small parties self-claimed as Christian democratic" (Voinea, 2006). Additionally, PD-L's adherence to the EPP-ED also determined an increased competition with the PNL over the traditionally right electorate (Voinea, 2006).

But PSD, PNL and PD-L were not the only parties to build strong collaboration relationships with the various party groups in the EP. The UDMR and the PC also became members of the EPP-ED, respectively ALDE. UDMR's affiliation to the EPP-ED presumed first of all adopting the political priorities that the group was promoting in the EP. Thus, as we have seen in the section analysing the changes in the UDMR's political discourse, its mission became subordinated to the EPP-ED's 4 main priorities: creating a Europe of values, making Europe a safer place, promoting a Europe of growth and prosperity, and achieving greater solidarity in Europe (EPP-ED, 2007).

Like the PNL, the PC declared its affiliation to ALDE. This translated into a reorientation of the PC's doctrine towards the values promoted by the ALDE. The cooperation between the two political groups gave birth to several joint programs targeted at the adoption of a strategy to stop the demographic decline, the improvement of European regulations regarding the prevention of human trafficking, but also the promotion of European policies in the field of energy (PC, 2007).

All in all, it is possible to argue that the prospect of integration and later on the actual accession to the EU enhanced cooperation with the various party groups in the EP. This in turn had an important impact on domestic politics by bringing about a change in the parties' political discourses and governmental priorities. Thus, although, cooperation between the

various European groups and the domestic parties existed before January 1 2007, the accession strengthened the influence exercised by the European party families on the Romanian party groups.

2.6 Conclusion

The role of European integration in determining the domestic adaptation of party systems has been widely disputed in the literature on European Politics. While scholarly works remain divided between the Europeanization's direct or indirect impact on domestic politics, most opinions converge towards acknowledging the importance of the phenomenon in understanding the domestic changes brought about by EU integration.

Chapter 2 attempted to identify some of the effects that the integration process had on the Romanian party system and its composing political parties. We began by ascertaining the key potential effects of Europeanization on the domestic political arena according to one of the most prominent theories in the literature. Thus, as the analysis reveals, the influence of Europeanization is translated first and foremost into the parties' programmatic and organizational adaptation to the changing environment. Furthermore, it appears that Europeanization can shape the relationships between parties and the government as well as the previous patterns of competition between political groups.

As the Romanian case demonstrates, European integration involves a very complex process of adjustment in terms of institutional and policy change. Still, the influence exerted by the EU on national party systems remains very much contextual. That is to say that Europeanization can manifest itself differently according to the differing time of accession of the member states as well as according to the state of development of their party system. Even so, it looks as if European Integration has indeed the power to guide the development of domestic politics and the orientation towards more specific European policy issues.

CHAPTER 3: EUROPEANIZATION AND THE PARLIAMENTARY INTERACTION OF ROMANIAN PARTIES

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter has successfully outlined the various transformations of Romanian parties in terms of programs, organization, party competition and transnational cooperation. Nevertheless, the Europeanization of a party system does not only involve the individual adaptation of parties to the changing environment, but also altering patterns of inter-party interaction and coordination. Thus, for a complete understanding of the possible effects that the integration process had on Romanian politics, an analysis of the way in which parties interact is required.

Accordingly, this chapter attempts to trace those signs of changes in the parliamentary coordination and interaction of parties that can be attributed to European integration. I suggest that the Europeanization of the Romanian party system should be translated into modifying patterns of party interaction during and between electoral periods. Furthermore, the politicisation of European integration should be expected to alter relationships between parties by bridging or widening the government-opposition divide. To evaluate the role Europe plays in altering party relations, I employ an analysis based on the parliamentary debates of the Chamber of Deputies and of the Senate's joint sittings prior and after 2007.

3.2 Parliamentary Interaction during the 2004 Electoral Year

As Chapter 2 outlined, the 2004 electoral year brought a reorientation in party discourses towards the European theme. Nevertheless, although the Europeanization of party programs can be tracked back as far as 2004, it does not give any insight on the state of

parliamentary interaction at that particular time. Accordingly, this section attempts to identify signs of the Europeanization of party relations in 2004.

The records of the parliamentary sessions before November 28² reveal that no specific debates concerning Romania's future accession to the EU or other EU issues were held. Thus, the EU theme does not appear to have been used as a valence issue between political parties. The majority of the debates concerned internal issues such as the adoption and approval of various public institutions' budget (CDEP, 2004a).

In short, the electoral year of 2004 signified the transition from the social-democratic government to a liberal one. As a result, the outcome of the parliamentary elections brought the dissatisfaction of the PSD manifested by acid remarks on the PNL-PD Alliance. In a speech in front of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, Victor Ponta, member of the PSD noted:

"[...] what the government proposes today has nothing to do neither with social equity and economic development nor with the responsibility and seriousness of forming a government that would lead Romania towards the European Union and the Romanian people towards a better life [...]"³ (CDEP, 2004b)

The positions of the other parliamentary groups with regard to the new liberal democratic government were quite varied. While the members of the Alliance, the PNL and the PD, as well as the UDMR believed in the validity and competency of the new government, the PUR and the PRM expressed their disapproval with the governing formula (CDEP, 2004b).

Several conclusions can be drawn based on the facts enumerated above. First, it appears that the contestation between the opposition represented by the PSD and the government formed at that time by the PNL-PD Alliance is based more on ideological

² This was the date of the 2004 legislative and presidential elections.

³ Translation from Romanian: "Ceea ce guvernul propune astazi nu are nimic de-a face nici cu echitatea sociala si dezvoltarea economica, nici cu responsabilitatea si seriozitatea formarii unui guvern care sa avanseze Romania spre Uniunea Europeana si poporul roman spre un trai mai bun."

considerations, rather than on the role the parties play in delivering the EU theme. Secondly, the prospect of the country's accession to the EU in 2007 does not appear to influence the party relations between the political groups in the Romanian parliament. The parliamentary debates reveal that in expressing their positions towards the various issues discussed, parties do not invoke the EU theme and their proficiency in delivering it. Along these lines, it remains to be seen if whether the closer the prospect of accession, the more parties compete on EU issues and the more inter-party relations are shaped by the prevalence of the EU theme.

3.3 The Adoption of the Accession Treaty and the Opposition's Motions for Censure between 2005-2006

In 2005 the Accession Treaty giving Romania the privilege to join the European Union on January 1 2007 was signed. The historic event did not only mark the successful completion of the accession negotiation process and Romania's ability to fulfil the minimum set of requirements imposed by the EU, but also the glorious end to more than 15 years of waiting and the assimilation to the big European family.

Following the European Parliament's decision to support Romania's accession to the EU, the Romanian parliament adopted on 25 April 2005 the Declaration regarding the signing of the Accession Treaty (CDEP, 2005a). Acknowledging the importance of the event as well as the responsibilities ahead and the necessity of ensuring the successful completion of the accession process, the Declaration was unanimously adopted by all the political groups in the Romanian parliament. Thus, all the Romanian parties supported the integration process believing that the accession to the EU would be beneficial for the country's future development. Consequently, no contestation on the issue existed and the party positions were quite similar.

Nevertheless, despite the wide consensus, the European issue would later be used as a political tool for achieving the dismissal of the government. In June 2005, just one month

after the adoption of the Accession Treaty, the opposition presented a motion for censure against the ruling party. Also known under the name of "The dictatorship and the incompetence of the Tariceanu⁴ Government against Romania's integration to the EU"⁵ (CDEP, 2005b), the motion emphasized the government's inability in successfully ensuring Romania's accession on January 1, 2007. Elaborated as a response to the government's legislative initiatives, the motion highly criticised the laws concerning the restructuring of the judicial system and the amendments to the landed property laws. Accordingly, in a speech in the Romanian Parliament, Dan Mircea Popescu, member of the PSD argued:

"[...] The Romanian nation wishes the integration to the EU starting January 1st 2007. Nevertheless, the Government's legislative initiative, through its form and fond, jeopardises the attainment of this objective. The citizens of Romania desire, indeed, more order and social justice. They can not accept, however, this to be attained by breaching their rights and going back to authoritarianism [...]"⁶ (CDEP, 2005b).

The responses of the various party groups in the Romanian parliament to the PSD's initiative constitute a good point of departure in analysing the nature of inter-party relationships and the role that the European issue played in altering these relationships. However, some additional remarks need to be made. First, 2004 marked the end of the PSD's governing period. This lead not only to brutal attacks against the activity and performance of the coalition, but also to a number attempts to achieve the elimination of the PNL-PD Alliance from power. Second, 2004 was also the scene for internal dissent within the governing PNL-PD Alliance. Under such circumstances, it would be reasonable to expect that the ruling parties' positions regarding the motion of censure would be influenced by this internal dissent. This assumption is based on the simple hypothesis that if a party member

⁴ Calin Popescu Tariceanu holds the position of Prime Minister of Romania.

⁵ Translation from Romanian: "Dictatura si incompetenta Guvernului Tariceanu impotriva integrarii europene a Romaniei".

⁶ Translation from Romanian: "Națiunea română dorește integrarea în Uniunea Europeană cu începere de la 1 ianuarie 2007. Inițiativa legislativă a Guvernului, prin forma și fondul ei, amenință însă atingerea acestui obiectiv. Cetățenii României vor, într-adevăr, mai multă ordine și dreptate socială. Ei nu pot accepta, însă, ca ordinea să se facă prin încălcarea libertăților lor și întoarcerea la autoritarism".

would be critical of the current government's behaviour, he or she would have no incentive to vote against the motion of censure.

Yet, the majority of the party groups in the Romanian parliament expressed their disapproval towards PSD's initiative. An exception was represented by the PRM who supported the opposition by claiming that "the draft law for the reform of property and justice, as well as other adjacent measures, will only determine disaster and anarchy in Romania, blocking the accession to the EU" (Excerpt from Gheorghe Funar's speech, member of the PRM, CDEP, 2005b)

Even so, out of the total number of 451 senators and deputies present, only 186 were in favour of the proposal (CDEP, 2005b). What is more, the PC formerly known as the PUR, member of the opposition's alliance in 2004, was also opposed to the motion for censure. The motion, even though emphasizing the threat that the reform of the judiciary and property might constitute to Romania's successful accession to the EU, was regarded as a strategic move on behalf of the opposition, meant to discredit the government in the eyes of the public opinion and the parliamentary groups.

Building upon these observations, several conclusions regarding the role the EU plays in altering the relations between parties can be drawn. First, the opposition's motion of censure emphasizes the emergence of the European theme as a valence issue. While most of the motion's content highlights internal issues, the European theme appears to be used as a basis for increased party competition. More precisely, parties compete on which one is more effective in delivering a program elaborated closely to the European theme and that can ensure the successful completion of the accession process.

Second, although a close collaboration between party groups would be expected having in mind the prospect of the country's accession to the EU, the parliamentary debates vis-à-vis the motion of censure reveal the polarisation of Romanian politics into two separate

blocs: the PSD and the PRM on the one hand, and the PNL, PD, PUR and UDMR on the other. Thus, it appears that the politicisation of the European issue can alter relationships between party groups, in this case by widening the government-opposition divide.

But the 2005 motion was not the only attempt of the opposition to discredit the liberal government. On June 22 2006, the PSD presented another motion for censure against the government, known under the name of "The Tariceanu Government - Facts and Lies"⁷ (CDEP, 2006). Again, the opposition's discourse emphasized the alleged incompetence of the government and its inability to guarantee the successful accession to the EU on January 1, 2007:

"[...] Romania's European trajectory is endangered by those invested by the citizens with trust and legitimacy in December 2004. The incompetence, mediocrity and lack of responsibility are the characteristics of a government that can compromise the European future of millions of Romanians [...]"⁸ (CDEP, 2006).

Moreover, the government was believed incapable of honouring its commitments to the EU regarding the fulfilment of the Maastricht criteria. As the PSD highlighted, "[...] these refer first of all to indicators such as the rate of inflation, the budgetary deficit, the total public debt as part of the GDP and the exchange rate. In 2005, due to the economic 'performances' registered by the government, Romania estranged significantly from the European targets [...]" (CDEP, 2006).

Once again, the PSD's initiative gave birth to strong reactions from the various parties represented in parliament. While acknowledging some of the flaws in the current government's accession strategy, the PNL and the PD expressed their disapproval with the PSD's initiative qualifying it as a mere attempt to regain the support of the public. Furthermore, the UDMR and the PC also expressed their support for the government by

⁷ Translation from Romanian: "Guvernul Tariceanu - Fapte si Minciuni".

⁸ Translation from Romanian: "Traseul european al României este însă periclitat de cei pe care cetățenii României i-au investit cu încredere și legitimitate în decembrie 2004. Incompetența, mediocritatea, lipsa de responsabilitate sunt caracteristicile unei guvernări care poate să compromită viitorul european al milioanele de români".

rejecting the motion for censure. The PRM represented again an exception. Regarding the opposition's motion as an attempt to eliminate the government in order to make room for a social-democratic one, the PRM abstained from voting.

All in all, out of the total number of 383 deputies and senators present, 235 voted against the motion for censure, while only 145 in favour. Based on these figures and the above mentioned facts, several observations can be made. First, once again the European theme appears to be used as a tool for achieving the attainment of a specific political goal, in this case the discrediting of the government in the eyes of the public and the other parliamentary groups. Second, the prospect of accession can influence the parliamentary position of party groups. It is certainly the case of the PRM which switched from supporting the PSD's attempts to eliminate the government from power in 2005 to a more neutral position towards the end of 2006. The reason for this shift in position, as highlighted by the PRM itself, was constituted by the belief that such an initiative could endanger the successful completion of the accession process on January 1, 2007.

Consequently, the European theme appears to be an important factor in explaining patterns of interaction between the various party groups in Romanian politics. What is more, the influence of the EU on party discourses can be observed long before the country's actual accession to the EU. As we have seen, the closer the prospect of the accession the bigger the divide between the PSD and the PNL-PD government is. At the same time, the imminence of the country's actual integration appears to determine a softening of certain parties' positions towards the government. Accordingly the PRM has shifted from supporting the PSD's initiatives in 2005 to a neutral position towards the second half of 2006. Thus, one might argue that while the divide between the main two political groups in Romanian politics widens the closer we get to the accession moment, the prospect of integration appears to bridge the divide between the other parliamentary groups.

Nevertheless, one has to wonder whether the influence EU plays on inter-party relations remains unchanged after the actual integration process. Thus, the next section will attempt to trace those signs of changes in party interaction after January 1, 2007.

3.4 *Europeanization and Parliamentary Interaction after January 1, 2007*

On January 1, 2007 Romania became a member of the EU. As shown in Chapter 2 this also marked the organization of the first elections for the EP. These determined not only a change in the discourses of the various political groups, but also a change in the orientation of domestic politics overall. Still, all of these developments predominantly refer to the individual behaviour of parties. Thus, it becomes necessary to identify those possible effects the actual integration process had on the interaction of parties at parliamentary level.

The previous sections successfully pinned down the evolution of inter-party parliamentary relations up to January 1, 2007. Consequently, in what comes the analysis will focus on those signs of alteration in party relations after Romania's accession to the EU. I suggest that parliamentary relations between parties do not remain unchanged after integration. Quite on the contrary, it appears once again that the EU issue continues to alter the way in which political parties interact even after accession has been achieved.

The accession process did not bring any major changes in the parties' positions towards the current government. Whereas before, the Tariceanu government enjoyed the support of the parliamentary majority, after January 1, 2007 this support continued to be more or less the same.

Still, some particularities can be observed. In April, the governing PNL-PD Alliance was dissolved. This not only led to brutal attacks between the two party groups, but also to severe criticism addressed to the prime-minister on behalf of the President. The PSD criticised once again the government's inability of elaborating a consistent and efficient post-accession strategy but also proposed the dismissal of the President (Institutul Pro, 2007).

Furthermore, in September 2007, the opposition presented a new motion for censure against the government entitled "1000 days of chaos. The end of the right government"⁹. Once again, the PSD emphasized the poor performance of the coalition and its inability to bring Romania closer to the European practices in terms of justice, economy, agriculture but also social services (CDEP, 2007). The motion of censure noted among others:

"[...] how is it possible to talk about strengthening Romania's influence in the EU, when there is no clear vision with regard to a political Europe - borders, competencies, institutions, decision-making procedures? [...] the integration to the EU is a historical chance that we will not miss even if some struggle to confiscate it for their own benefit." (CDEP, 2007)

Consequently, the actual accession did not put an end to the permanence of the EU theme as a valence issue, parties still competing on the effectiveness of its delivery. Still the positions of the parliamentary groups remained quite similar to those exhibited prior to January 1st. While PSD's stance on the necessity of dismissing the current government remained unaltered, a very interesting phenomenon can be observed. The PD, formerly a member of the governing alliance, expressed its support for the dismissal of the government, while parties such as the PC, PNL, PRM and the UDMR highly disapproved the initiative. In the end, although the number of votes in favour of the motion (220 votes) highly outweighed those against (152 votes), the document could not be adopted because the parliamentary majority (232 votes) had not been met.

Nevertheless, several interesting observations can be made. First, it looks like the actual accession process does not influence the government-opposition relationship. Thus as observed in the previous sections, the EU theme is used as a valence issue, widening the government-opposition divide. Although it would be expected that the completion of the integration process would determine the abandoning of the EU theme as a pretext for political cleavages, the Romanian case reveals quite the contrary. Secondly, the actual accession to the

⁹ Translation from Romanian: "1000 de zile de haos. Sfarsitul guvernarii de dreapta".

EU does not appear to determine major changes in party-government relations. An exception is constituted by the PD, the cause being on one hand the internal dissent within the former PD-PNL alliance and the president-prime minister conflict on the other hand.

3.5 Conclusion

The Europeanization of the Romanian party system should be reflected not only in the adaptation of party programs and political discourses of the various parties in Romanian politics, but also in the changing patterns of inter-party relations between political groups. Accordingly, identifying the possible effects that the integration process has on the development of inter-party relations presupposes an analysis of the parties' behaviour in the parliamentary arena.

As Chapter 3 attempted to demonstrate, the Europeanization of inter-party relations can be tracked back before Romania's actual accession to the EU. While in 2004, party interaction at parliamentary level appears to have been shaped by ideological considerations, starting with 2005 inter-party interaction has begun developing around the EU theme. Accordingly, the EU issue appears to be used as a valence issue, which is to say that parties compete on the efficiency of its delivery.

Moreover, the EU is believed to alter inter-party behaviour by bridging or widening the government-opposition gap. The Romanian case reveals that the EU theme contributed to widening the government-opposition divide. Thus, the closer the prospect of accession is, the wider the divide between the two parts. However, while the gap between the PSD and the PNL widens as Romania advances towards the EU, the divide between the other political groups within the Romanian parliament and the government seems to bridge. A possible explanation for this behaviour could be the parties' desire to promote a unitary and coherent policy that would secure the country's accession to the EU.

All in all, the analysis employed in Chapter 3 shows that indeed the Europeanization of the Romanian party system is to be found not only in the changing individual behaviour of party groups, but also in the way they interact with each other at parliamentary level. Furthermore, although internal issues are still prevalent in parliamentary debates, the EU theme has become more and more visible in shaping attitudes of parties towards each other.

CONCLUSIONS AND PERSPECTIVES FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

While the increasing bulk of literature studying the impact of the EU on the member states proves the emergence of Europeanization as a new research agenda, not enough attention has been paid to the latest wave of accession which has brought Romania and Bulgaria to the European family. It is in this context that the paper attempted to contribute to the literature on Europeanization by investigating a rather unexplored area of research. Furthermore, the possible Europeanization of party interaction has also been under-researched. Accordingly, the present thesis represents an endeavour to fill this gap.

This thesis put forward the idea that, in spite of Romania's rather recent accession to the EU, several signs of the influence exercised by Europe on the country's party system can be identified. Additionally, the research provides a comprehensive picture of the Romanian parties' ideologies, programs and mutual interaction. The main findings of this paper can be summarized as follows:

First, the empirical findings suggest that the EU began to exert its influence on the Romanian party system starting at the opening of the accession negotiations. Although it is difficult to attribute the changes in party discourses and governing programs directly to the EU, the facts indicate a reorientation in party behaviour towards the European theme. Thus, it appears that the accession process and the prospect of Romania's integration to the EU on January 1 2007 provided parties with the incentive to align their ideologies to those of their European counterparts. Nevertheless, while internal issues remained the basis for formulating party programs, the adoption of a more European orientation proved indispensable for securing Romania's successful accession to the EU.

Second, the influence of the EU on the Romanian parties appears to manifest itself especially in terms of programmatic changes. However, this is not to say that this is the only area influenced by Europeanization. Although organizational change as a consequence of the

integration process is not so visible, other areas such as party competition or transnational cooperation between party groups appear to have witnessed more significant variation. On the whole, the prospect of accession to the EU has determined not only the concentration of parties towards the centre of the political spectrum, but it has also enhanced cooperation with the various groups in the EP.

Third, while an analysis of individual party behaviour may give an insight into the nature of the Europeanization in the selected country, it is not enough for evaluating the effects of the phenomenon on the Romanian party system as a whole. Consequently, an assessment of inter-party relations becomes necessary. The Romanian case has revealed the emergence of the European theme as a valence issue, parties competing on the efficiency of its delivery in the parliamentary arena. Nevertheless, while in the case of the PSD and the PNL, the EU appears to further widen the government-opposition divide, in the case of the other parliamentary groups the EU acts as a binding factor.

Despite the validity of the findings, obviously there are a number of limitations resulting from the analysis of a single, isolated case. Although similarities between the experiences of the EU's various members exist, the impact of Europeanization is very much contextual and does not affect member countries equally. This might be caused for example by the countries' different historical background, by the characteristics of the political system or by the different times of accession.

Still, identifying the effects of European integration on the Romanian party system as well as extending the area of investigation to include parliamentary party interaction can indicate the direction in which research on the Europeanization of party systems can proceed in the future. First, the Europeanization of party systems should be studied not by analysing the behaviour of its components individually, but in interaction. By employing such an

approach, the thesis revealed that Europeanization impacts not only party orientation but also the patterns of party interaction.

Second, more research is needed on the political aspects of the Europeanization process. Most of the existing literature focuses on the mechanisms through which European Integration influences the party systems of the member states. Thus, future research should shift its focus from how and where change is generated, to the actual consequences the process of Europeanization has on the various components of the party system. By concentrating on the actual impact the process has on party systems, Europeanization can shed light on the relationship between the EU as a political entity and its member states.

Finally, while studying the changes in party systems offers a unique perspective in understanding the core characteristics of the integration process, an emphasis on its significance on governance is needed. As such, future research needs to link the developments of the party systems to the changing patterns of governance. It is in this context that the scholarly work on Europeanization will bring together both politics and policy into a comprehensive and practice-oriented discipline.

REFERENCES

- Bache, I. and Marshall, A. 2004. 'Europeanisation and Domestic Change: A Governance Approach to Institutional Adaptation in Britain'. *Europeanisation Online Papers*, Queen's University Belfast, no. 5.
- Buller, J., Evans, M., and James, O. (eds) 2002. 'Understanding the Europeanisation of Public Policy'. *Special issue of Public Policy and Administration*, 17 (2).
- Börzel, T. 1999. 'Towards Convergence in Europe? Institutional Adaptation to Europeanisation in Germany and Spain'. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, no. 37, pp. 573-575.
- CDEP. 2004a. 'Parliamentary Debates. Joint Sitzings of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate in 2004'. [Online]. [Accessed 20 July 2008]. Available from: <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.calendar?cam=0&an=2004&idl=1>
- CDEP. 2004b. 'Parliamentary Debates. Joint Sitzings of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate of December 28, 2004'. [Online]. [Accessed 20 July 2008]. Available from: <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=5788&idm=4&idl=2>
- CDEP. 2005a. 'Parliamentary Debates. Joint Sitzings of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate of April 27, 2005'. [Online]. [Accessed 25 July 2008]. Available from: <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=5854&idm=2&idl=2>
- CDEP. 2005b. 'Parliamentary Debates. Joint Sitzings of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate of June 22, 2005'. [Online]. [Accessed 25 July 2008]. Available from: <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=5894&idm=2&idl=2>
- CDEP. 2006. 'Parliamentary Debates. Joint Sitzings of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate of June 22, 2006'. [Online]. [Accessed 27 July 2008]. Available from: <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=6145&idm=2&idl=1>
- CDEP. 2007. 'Parliamentary Debates. Joint Sitzings of the Chamber of Deputies and Senate of September 27, 2007'. [Online]. [Accessed 27 July 2008]. Available from: <http://www.cdep.ro/pls/steno/steno.stenograma?ids=6371&idm=3&idl=2>
- Colino, C. 1997. 'The Manifold "Europeanization" of the Audiovisual Sector: Expanding European Initiatives and German Domestic Responses'. *Paper presented at the Final Workshop on the European Policy Process organised by the Human Capital and Mobility Network*, University College Dublin, May 8 10th 1997.
- Cotidianul. 2007. 'Eurocandidatii au campanii narcisiste'. [Online]. [Accessed 10 July 2008]. Available from: http://www.cotidianul.ro/eurocandidatii_au_campanii_narcisiste-35733.html
- CPISC. 2004. 'Uniunea Nationala PSD+PUR'. [Online]. [Accessed 25 June 2008]. Available from: http://www.cpisc.ro/files/program%20PSD_PUR.pdf

- DA PNL-PD. 2003. 'Platforma Program a Aliantei PNL-PD'. [Online]. [Accessed 30 June 2008]. Available from: <http://www.dapnl-pd.ro/docpage.php?docid=11&pagno=1>
- DA PNL-PD. 2005. 'Program de Guvernare 2005-2008'. [Online]. [Accessed 30 June 2008]. Available from: <http://www.dapnl-pd.ro/docs/program-de-guvernare.pdf>
- Enyedi, Z. 2005. 'Europeanisation of Central Eastern European Party Systems'. *Paper prepared for the POLIS Plenary Conference 2005, Workshop 8: Party Systems and European Integration*. [Online]. [Accessed 18 February 2008]. Available from: <http://www.epsnet.org/2005/pps/Enyedi.pdf>
- EPP-ED. 2007. *Presentation of the EPP-ED Group*. [Online]. [Accessed 15 July 2008]. Available from: http://www.epp-ed.eu/Activities/docs/0711leaflet_group/en.pdf
- Green Cowles M., Caporaso J. and Risse, T. (eds.) 2001. *Transforming Europe: Europeanization and Domestic Change*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Grote, J. 2003. *Delimiting Europeanization*. Paper for presentation at the Marburg Conference Session, ECPR, Marburg 18-21 September 2003. [Online]. [Accessed 17 February 2008]. Available from: <http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/>
- Hood, C. 1998. *The Art of the State*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hix, S. and Goetz, K.H. 2000. *Introduction: European Integration and National Political Systems*. West European Politics, Vol. 23, No. 4, pp. 1-26.
- Institutul Pro. 2004. *Year 2004 - The Romanian Elections*. [Online]. [Accessed 20 June 2008]. Available from: <http://www.institutulpro.ro/analize/doc/analiza-eapc.pdf>
- Institutul Pro. 2007. *Ianuarie 2007 - Un bilet de efect*. [Online]. [Accessed 29 July 2008]. Available from: <http://www.institutulpro.ro/analize/doc/analiza-ianuarie-07.pdf>
- ISI. 2008. *Activitatea Europarlamentarilor din Romania*. [Online]. [Accessed 12 July 2008]. Available from: http://www.isi-cluj.ro/images/Activitatea%20europarlamentarilor%20din%20Romania_ianmart_2008.pdf
- Knill, C. 2001. *The Europeanization of National Administrations: Patterns of Institutional Change and Persistence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Knill, C. and Lehmkuhl, D. 2002. *The National Impact of European Union Regulatory Policy: Three Europeanization Mechanisms*. European Journal of Political Research.
- Ladrech, R. 1994. *Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions - the Case of France*. Journal of Common Market Studies 32(1), 69-88.
- Ladrech, R. 2002. *Europeanization and Political Parties: Towards a Framework for Analysis*. Party Politics 8(4), 389-403.

- Lawton, T. 1999. *Governing the Skies: Conditions for the Europeanisation of Airline Policy*, Journal of Public Policy 19: 91-112.
- Mair, P. 2000. *The Limited Impact of Europe on National Party Systems*. West European Politics 23(4), 4-51.
- Monde Diplomatique. 2007. *Competitia pentru alegerile europarlamentare*. [Online]. [Accessed 5 July 2008]. Available from: <http://www.monde-diplomatique.ro/Competitia-pentru-alegerile.html>
- Monitoarul Neoficiale, 2004. *Ofertele Electorale ale partidelor*. [Online]. [Accessed 20 June 2008]. Available from: <http://lird.blogspot.com/2004/11/ofertele-electorale-ale-partidelor.html>
- Moravcsik, A. 1999. *Is Something Rotten in the State of Denmark? Constructivism and European Integration*. Journal of European Public Policy, 6(4): 669-681.
- PC. 2005. *Carta Valorilor PC*. [Online]. [Accessed 25 June 2008]. Available from: <http://www.pur.ro/carta-valorilor-pc>
- PC. 2007. *Problematica pensionarilor in atentia liberal democratilor din Parlamentul European* [Online]. [Accessed 15 July 2008]. Available from: <http://www.pur.ro/2007/la-initiativa-pc-problematica-pensionarilor-in-atentia-liberal-democratilor-din-parlamentul-european.html?28;602>
- Petrova, 2006. *Differential Impact of EU Enlargement on First and Second Wave Applicants: Europeanizing Political Parties in Poland and Bulgaria*. CDDRL Working Papers, No. 65. [Online]. [Accessed 15 July 2008]. Available from: http://iis-db.stanford.edu/pubs/21151/Petrova_No_65.pdf
- Poguntke, T., Aylott, N., Ladrech, R. and Luther, K.R. 2007. *The Europeanization of National Party Organizations: A Conceptual Analysis*. European Journal of Political Research 46.
- PNL. 2003. *Alianta PNL-PD - Platforma Program*. [Online]. [Accessed 21 June 2008]. Available from: <http://www.pnl.ro/index.php?id=alianta-platforma>
- PNL. 2005. *Statutul Partidului National Liberal*. [Online]. [Accessed 21 June 2008]. Available from: <http://www.pnl.ro/index.php?id=statut0107&offset=1>
- PSD. 2005. *Statutul Partidului Social Democrat*. [Online]. [18 February 2008]. Available from: <http://www.psd.ro/documente.php>
- Radaelli, C. 2000. *Whither Europeanization? Concept Stretching and Substantive Change*. European Integration Online Papers, Vol. 4, No. 8. [Online]. [Accessed 17 February 2008]. Available from: <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2000-008a.htm>
- Raunio, T. 2000. *Losing Independence or Finally Gaining Recognition? Contacts between MEPs and National Parties*. Party Politics 6: 211-23.

- RMDSZ. 2004. *Program UDMR*. [Online]. [Accessed 5 July 2008]. Available from: http://archivum.rmdsz.ro/script/docs/otProgram_alapelvekro.doc?PHPSESSID=55bab061997a4edbc45321697d6d40c
- RMDSZ. 2004. *Program UDMR*. [Online]. [Accessed 5 July 2008]. Available from: <http://www.rmdsz.ro/stiri.php?hir=304>
- Schimmelfennig, F. and U. Sedelmeier. 2005. *The Europeanization of Central and Eastern Europe*. US: Cornell University.
- Schmidt, V. 2002. *Europeanization and the Mechanics of Economic Policy Adjustment*. *Journal of European Public Policy* 9, 6: 894-912.
- Stone Sweet, A. and W. Sandholtz. 1998 *European Integration and Supranational Governance*. *Journal of European Public Policy* Vol. 4, No. 3.
- Toda, D. 2008. *National Parties and the Impact of European Integration: An Insight into Romanian Politics*. Paper elaborated for the course Comparative Political Institutions as part of the MPP Program. Budapest: Central European University.
- Vink, M. 2002. *What is Europeanization? And Other Questions on a New Research Agenda*, Paper for the Second YEN Research Meeting on Europeanization, University of Bocconi, Milan, 22-23 November 2002. [Online]. [Accessed 17 February 2008]. Available from: http://www.essex.ac.uk/ecpr/standinggroups/yen/paper_archive/2nd_yen_rm_papers/vink2002.pdf
- Voinea, G. 2006. *Political Report: The Democratic Party from Romania became an Associate Member of the European People's Party*. [Online]. [Accessed 15 July 2008]. Available from: http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_9672-544-2-30.pdf