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THE COMPLEXITY OF NORWEGIAN EUROPEANISM

Introduction

Norway is a powerful country in the Nordic region and, despite being outside the EU structures, it is located also in the EU territory. Norwegians have voted twice against the EU membership. The two referenda were held in the 1970s and the 1990s. The scepticism connected with the integration can be, among others, the result of a good economic situation of Norway. In spite of its citizens' negative opinion concerning the EU membership, Norway cooperates with the EU in most issues. In 2001 the country joined in the collaboration within the Schengen Area. As for the security and defence policy, Norway engages its civil and military personnel to perform the EU operations in crisis prevention and management. Norway is more closely connected with the EU peacekeeping missions than Denmark, which is an EU member. The country makes an annual contribution to the European budget to reduce social and economic inequalities within the European Economic Area (EEA). Its annual contribution into reducing social and economic disparity in Europe amounts to EUR 350 million. In May 2004 the country established two financial mechanisms, i.e. the EEA and a separate Norwegian mechanism to support the new member countries. Although the opinions concerning the EU membership are divided, Norwegian politicians generally agree that Norway should remain an active and constructive partner in European cooperation. Currently, being outside the EU, it contributes to the social and economic development and ensures stability on the Old Continent. The relations between Norway and the EU can be described as a complicated course of events, which is difficult to follow.

European identity in the EU documents

In December 1973 in Copenhagen the countries of the European Community signed "The Document on the European Identity", which states: "The Nine wish to ensure that the cherished values of their legal, political and moral order are respected, and to preserve the rich variety of their national cultures", and continues, "the construction of a United Europe (...) is open to other European nations who share the same

ideals and objectives”. The nine member states emphasised that “European unification is not directed against anyone, nor is it inspired by a desire for power”.¹

The declaration was an important confirmation of the Community's solidarity and openness towards the world. However, the subsequent events proved that some of its provisions were too optimistic (it assumed the European Union would have been established by the late 1970s), and the trust in European solidarity was much too exaggerated.

The term “European identity” appeared again in 1992 in the Maastricht Treaty, which mentioned “strengthening of the European identity”. The European Union Treaty contained a provision about “confirming its identity on the international arena”. The process of ratification of the Maastricht Treaty put even more emphasis on the identity of the member states. The Amsterdam Treaty pointed out that the EU “respects the national identity of the member states”. The Lisbon Treaty was extended with the provision which stated: „The Union shall respect the equality of Member States before the Treaties, as well as their national identities, inherent in their fundamental structures, political and constitutional, inclusive of regional and local self-government”.²

The crisis in the Eurozone revealed tensions and disagreements among European countries. The EU does not encompass the entire Old Continent. There are many countries outside the EU, which play a very important political role and which are the “voice of Europe”. Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine and Russia, as well as other countries from outside the EU are a part of the wider European identity. They can be characterised as a mixture of religions, traditions and languages, and they are home to many different populations, not only from Europe. What consolidates the mosaic is the belonging to the same civilisation. Closer regional cooperation strengthens the sense of European community based on similar values. This, in turn, arouses many questions and controversies. What does it mean in practice to be a European? What are our norms and values? How important for Europeans are their culture, religion and language? What distinguishes the people of Europe from the people of other continents? Should we talk about European identity or rather the identity of Europe? Does it refer to immigrants from outside Europe? Do multiethnic populations change European society? Do we constitute common European identity by living together on the same continent? Do the fundamental ideas such as citizenship, nationality, the country and its territory evolve together with the changes in the identity of Europe, and how does it happen? Is European identity the basis of a greater integration, should it replace the national identity or supplement it?

¹ *Document on The European Identity published by the Nine Foreign Ministers on 14 December 1973, in Copenhagen* http://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1999/1/1/02798dc9-9c69-4b7d-b2c9-f03a8db7da32/publishable_en.pdf [December 13, 2015].

² *Consolidated Version Of The Treaty On European Union*, “Official EN Journal of the European Union”, C 326, 26.10.2012, pp. 13-45.

Observing the inhabitants of the Old Continent, it can be assumed that European identity may take different forms, depending on various political, social, geographical and national realities.

The essence of Norwegian Euroscepticism

There are many definitions of Euroscepticism. In Oxford Dictionary the term *Eurosceptic* is defined as „a person who is opposed to increasing the powers of the European Union.”³ The word *Euroscepticism* appeared for the first time in British *The Times* newspaper of 11th November 1985. It was used to describe scepticism and objection to the European Union and its policy (the term seemed more flexible than *Euro-phobia* or *anti-European*). *Euroscepticism* became even more popular when Margaret Thatcher, the British Prime Minister, objected to the idea of federation and centralisation of European Communities in her Bruges speech of 1988.⁴ In the public discourse the term started to appear after the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, which established the European Union and became the basis of cooperation in many areas (security, justice, domestic and foreign affairs). Since then, *Euroscepticism* has been used to describe a negative attitude towards European integration and the European Union.⁵ Taggart and Szczerbiak distinguish “soft” and “hard” Euroscepticism. The “hard” one totally opposes the process of European integration, whereas the “soft” one refers to the objection to some aspects of integration i.e. one currency, agricultural policy or fisheries policy.⁶

Neither political parties nor the public exist in a vacuum, therefore, the situation of the EU in the early 1990s had an impact on the public assessment of the changes which were the effect of newly-created mechanisms and the ongoing integration. A consultative referendum concerning the EU membership was held in Norway on 28th November 1994. 52.2% of Norwegians voted against, while 47.8% voted “yes” with the turnout of 88.6%. The result effectively wiped out the Labour Party's plans connected with the EU membership, and it was a major blow for Gro Harlem

³ See: *Eurosceptic*, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/Eurosceptic> [December 3, 2015].

⁴ M. Spiering, *What is British Euroscepticism*, [in:] *Euroscepticism: Party Politics, National Identity and European Integration*, eds. R. Harmsen, M. Spiering, “European Studies”, no. 20, 2004, p. 128 and the following.

⁵ P. Taggart, *A Touchstone of Dissent: Euroscepticism in Contemporary West European Party Systems*, “European Journal of Political Research”, no. 33 (3), 1998, p. 366.

⁶ P. Taggart, A. Szczerbiak, *Opposing Europe: Party Systems and Opposition to the Union, the Euro and Europeanisation*, “OERN Working Paper”, no. 1, 2000; P. Taggart, A. Szczerbiak, *Parties, Positions and Europe: Euroscepticism in the EU Candidate States of Central and Eastern Europe*, “OERN Working Paper”, no. 2, 2001; P. Taggart, A. Szczerbiak, *The Party Politics of Euroscepticism in EU Member and Candidate States*, “OERN Working Paper”, no. 6, 2002; P. Taggart, A. Szczerbiak, *Theorising Party-Based Euroscepticism: Problems of Definition, Measurement and Causality*, “EPERN Working Paper”, no. 12, 2003, No. 12.

Brundtland, the Prime Minister, for whom Norway's membership in the EU was a political priority.⁷

The advocates of the EU membership focused on Norway's potential and the need of cooperation with other countries to strengthen the economy in the times of expansion and changes. The government listed benefits of the EU membership, such as maintaining the welfare system, high employment and strong economy growth, securing Norway's environment, Nordic solidarity in the EU and securing the defence of Norway.⁸ C. Archer claims that one of the fears of the advocates of Norwegian EU membership was that after another referendum the country would be marginalised in Europe.⁹

The opponents argued that the EU membership could violate Norway's independence and its control over oil and other natural resources. The differences in macroeconomic policy and economic structure between Norway and the EU were also emphasised (with Norway's economy being based on natural resources, such as oil and fisheries, and the EU supporting industry). As a member state, Norway would be obliged to introduce the monetary union. The fact is, however, that because of a specific economic structure (based on export), Norway is the country in Western Europe where the Euro would be the least appropriate. The success of the Norwegian economy exemplifies the value of maintaining state control over national currency and macroeconomic policy. Moreover, there is a widespread conviction that democratic values are mostly respected on the national, local level, not on the Union one. The opponents of the integration emphasised that the EU is undemocratic, neo-liberalist, and makes the rich richer and the poor poorer.¹⁰

Norwegians remain sceptical, and they are concerned about the concept of economic liberalism built in the consecutive EU treaties. Their vision of Europe contains a different concept of liberty than the four liberties of the EU's inner market. They are advocates of autonomy and freedom which allow the authorities to limit free market, if it is necessary in order to achieve important social purposes. Supranational arrangements are sometimes required, but must be a support for the grass roots decisions and need to be limited to the absolutely indispensable. In the debates, other challenges emerged to be resolved by the EU, i.e. growing unemployment, declining welfare states, disintegrating communities, health problems, drug abuse and increasing levels of crime and violence. Moreover, the representatives of Norwegian anti-EU movement argued that the EU should be limited to tackling challenges which could only be controlled at the international level: cross-national conflicts, problems of environmental

⁷ Before that, in a similar referendum of 1972, for the first time in the country's history, Norwegians voted against joining the European Community. The membership was rejected with 54% voting against and 46% voting for.

⁸ C. Archer, *Norway and European Integration since 1994*, "Queen's Papers on Europeanisation", no. 12, 2001.

⁹ *Ibidem*.

¹⁰ M. S. Skinner, *Norwegian Euroscepticism: Values, Identity or Egotism? A Multi-level Mixed Methods Investigation*, University of Bath 2011, p. 174.

pollution, common minimal standards in the labour market and social imbalances between the regions of Europe.¹¹ The anti-EU activist, leader of the Norwegian Centre Party and anti-EU campaign, Anna Enger Lahnstein stated after the referendum: “We have said Yes to Europe and Yes to international solidarity - but we don't want to join the Union.”¹²

The results of the referendum exemplify scepticism towards moving the centre of decision-making outside Norway. Many voters saw the proposal of joining the EU as a paradox when the country's economic situation was so good.¹³ It was difficult to convince the public opinion about the economic benefits of the membership. Many Norwegians believed that the future would be more secure and stable if they chose the status quo. Voting for the membership was considered more uncertain than voting against.

The second referendum was held 21 years ago. During that time the European Union has changed. Despite that, Norway is unlikely to apply for the membership before the politicians from the governing parties make sure the result of the referendum will be positive. The third “no” could be definite. Political costs are considered too high. In 2002, before the parliamentary election, professor Tor Bjoerkelund from the University of Oslo stated that nobody wanted to talk about it, as it would mean questioning the public verdict, which was still new. Mentioning the problem would be a tactical mistake, it would undoubtedly make the voters move towards small Eurosceptical parties. Although many years have passed, this opinion is still prevailing. In 2009, Espen D. H. Olsen, PhD, from “ARENA” Centre for European Studies in Oslo pointed out that there were so called “suicide paragraphs”, meaning that the issue of the EU membership could not be raised in the forthcoming parliamentary term, or otherwise, the coalition would fall apart. Thus, it could be concluded that the domestic policy was more important than the EU matters. In his opinion, in both campaigns the “no” party managed to show the EU as the elite project, which as such was not rooted in citizens. The group of EU advocates was a coalition between the conservatists, socialists and trade unions, while on the opposite side there were left-wing socialists, farmers, fishermen and the representatives of counterculture movements.¹⁴

In 1969 the future of the Norwegian economy changed due to the discovery of oil in the North Sea, which made the country the sixth largest exporter of oil in the world. Therefore, it is often assumed that Norwegian Euroscepticism is deeply rooted in the fear of losing control over the vast resources of oil and natural gas. Professor Dag

¹¹ *The rationale for opposing Norwegian membership in the European Union*, http://www.nei.tileu.no/articles_in_foreign_languages/the_rationale_for_opposing_norwegian_membership_in_the_european_union [December 28, 2015].

¹² *1994: Norway votes 'no' to Europe*, http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/november/28/newsid_4208000/4208314.stm [December 3, 2015].

¹³ In 1994 Norway's GDP increased by 5.1%. The unemployment was 5.4% of the labour force (in many EU countries it was twice as much), and the inflation was 1.4%. Norway had a positive trade balance.

¹⁴ J. Woliński, *Referendum w Norwegii – komentarze ekspertów*, <http://www.psz.pl/168-archiwum/referendum-w-norwegii-komentarze-ekspertow> [February 5, 2016].

Harald Claes from the Institute of Political Sciences at the University of Oslo says that Norway remains outside the EU as a result of the two referenda, however, it must be explained why the majority of the society voted against. It is partly a the result of the belief that the assignment of sovereignty would be widespread and, consequently, Norway would lose control over its natural resources, such as oil, fisheries and fish.¹⁵ There are, however, many aspects which must be considered in the assessment of the phenomenon, and which together constitute the system of interconnected vessels. These are the following:

- exceptional history – Scandinavia has not always been a peaceful and harmonious part of Europe. The history of the region has come a long way since the times of the Vikings in the 9th century. A thousand years ago the people of Scandinavia started to form a community. Before that, the inhabitants of the North, who invaded many territories, were known as the Vikings or Varangians. Except for piracy, they were engaged in trade, which stimulated an energetic exchange between the major cities of the Baltic area. This led to the region's prosperity, goods exchange, and intensified contacts between the Baltic lands and the rest of the civilised world. With the introduction of Christianity, that period was over, and so were the days of raids and plundering. Occasionally, there were wars between the Scandinavian kingdoms. The oldest times of the region still remain a mystery, however, it is known that at the end of the 11th century, the Northern territories were divided into three newly-created kingdoms of Denmark, Norway and Sweden. For most of the time in its history, Norway was controlled by Swedes and Danes. After 500 years of conflicts and partnership, it finally became an independent country in 1905. Its sovereignty, however, was claimed by the Nazis during World War II. Therefore, independence weighed heavily in the history of Norway. It was a key element in both referendum campaigns, in which national identity was so important. The Maastricht Treaty and converting the Community into Union evoked negative associations of the Union with Sweden and Norway's loss of sovereignty.
- religion – the main religion in Norway is Protestantism. It assumes that material possessions, as well as physical and intellectual abilities should be used to serve other people. The followers are forbidden to drink alcohol or take drugs, every man is obliged to develop his/her abilities and take care of the spiritual life. Puritan morality with its emphasis on work, devotion, and production, as well as simplicity, moderation and modesty in consumption are the characteristic features of the Norwegian society. Despite being quite wealthy, the majority of society still value thriftiness and simplicity. Luxury goods are heavily taxed, and alcoholic beverages can only be purchased in government-owned liquor stores at very high prices; protestant work ethic, social solidarity, and exceptional fairness distinguish Norway from other European countries.
- the sense of identity – the process of cultural changes evokes many concerns in the

¹⁵ Ibidem.

inhabitants of the country of fjords. Some Norwegians are afraid of their cultural individuality's erosion, and their "resistance" to the EU membership is the result of fear, but also shows strong and lasting cultural awareness; some complain about the pressure of Anglicisms in the local dialect, some are worried about standardisation and alienating influence of the mass culture in American style. When a local café is replaced with a McDonald's restaurant, it certainly becomes a reason for nostalgia in this country.

- geographical factor – Norway's location in the peripheral Europe implies concerns whether Norwegian voice can be heard in the Union's institutions. Norwegians are advocates of decentralization and creating facilities for citizens in their local areas. Therefore, they have exceptionally well-developed road infrastructure (numerous bridges, tunnels connecting small islands with the mainland; almost 50 airports built for the population of four million inhabitants); language (which is decentralised to such extent that every valley has its own, semi-official dialect which at least some inhabitants are proud of); social infrastructure (educational centres, universities are accessible in every county, also regional hospitals, libraries, post offices and administrative offices are located in many towns and cities. In 1990 the National Library was moved from Oslo to a remote town of Brønnøysund (5000 inhabitants). Thus, it can be assumed that by prioritising peripheral areas, Norwegian identity is a kind of "rural and provincial identity". In case of Norway, the popular saying "small is beautiful" remains still relevant.
- high level of social capital, the success of welfare state and the sense of national solidarity characteristic for the inhabitants of the Nordic regions can be endangered if Norway becomes the EU member. The influx of workforce from other countries of the Union may cause the increase of immigration (especially from the countries with lower social capital), and this, in turn, may lead to the erosion of the quality of Norway's social capital.
- Norway's foreign policy and its international reputation of an arbitrator, contributing to the reconciliation of conflicts – Norway as a promoter of public diplomacy and peace may consider the EU membership as a potential obstacle. It is internationally recognised as a key mediator and intermediary in political conflicts, especially in peace missions in Somalia, Guatemala, the Republic of South Africa, the Philippines and the Middle East. This unique position and involvement may be lost with Norway's accession to the EU. Thanks to the close relations with the Union, but also its position outside, Norway may act as a "bridge builder" on the international arena, support coalitions and secure wider international support for key initiatives. Therefore, the fear of losing its independence in the international politics prevailed among the EU opponents. The EU turned out to be too small for Norway.
- Norway's dependence on export sectors – access to the EU would mean permission to the institutional control and regulations in key sectors and resources (fish, oil, natural gas and timber). Also the financial crisis of 2008 and the current problems of the Eurozone may have contributed to Norway's caution towards Europe

and the increase of Euroscepticism. According to the OECD data, Norway is one of the countries with the fastest growing economy. Measuring and comparing per capita GDP, the Nordic countries have higher income than the EU. All Scandinavian countries have higher GDP per capita than the EU. Norwegian GDP is twice as big as the EU's, which positions Norway among the countries with the highest standard of living. When the economies of Portugal, Spain and Greece were in recession, Norway's economy prospered. When many member states introduced austerity measures, causing social unrest, Norway had a budgetary surplus. In 2008 its economy grew by almost 3%.¹⁶ Moreover, many Norwegians voted "No", as they were afraid that their policy of subsidies and state aid to the farmers may be replaced by the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (as one of the richest countries of the world, Norway subsidises its farmers generously with approximately 2.4 billion dollars yearly. Without the state support, competition on the international market would be very difficult, considering the harsh Northern climate).¹⁷

The Norwegian "No" to the EU membership did not end the cooperation with the member states. "Europe is facing enormous challenges. The creation of a democratic, stable and secure Europe will take a lot of hard work and resources, and must be based on specific projects of co-operation. We have to join forces and grasp this opportunity. Co-operation has to take place at the governmental, regional, European and international levels. Norway is both willing and interested in assuming its share of the responsibility associated with the European challenges", said the Norwegian Secretary of State Siri Bjerke in the Institute of European Affairs, Dublin, November 1995, during the debate concerning the Norwegian perspective on European cooperation¹⁸. Norway's public debate on the European integration focused mainly on the issue of membership, good or bad aspects for the state, enterprises and individuals. The society's attitude towards the process of integration was overlooked, though it is not denied by Norwegians. It can be exemplified by the relations between the countries in the Nordic region. The Nordic integration has made many decisive steps and reached the level which the EU has unsuccessfully tried to achieve since its very beginning. There were, however, some failed attempts of integration in the region. Since 1948 the Nordic

¹⁶ *Nordic economies on road to recovery*, <http://www.norden.org/en/news-and-events/news/nordic-economies-on-road-to-recovery> [December 24, 2015]; *Nordic Statistical Yearbook 2012*, <http://www.norden.org/en/publications/publikationer/2012-001> [December 31, 2015]; *OECD Economic Surveys: Norway 2014*, http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/economics/oecd-economic-surveys-norway-2014_eco_surveys-nor-2014-en [December 3, 2015]; compare: S. Sheriffdeen, *Explaining Norwegian Euroscepticism*, <http://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/explaining-norwegian-euroscepticism-4674/> [December 3, 2015].

¹⁷ T. H. Eriksen, *Being Norwegian in a shrinking World. Reflections on Norwegian identity*, [in:] *Continuity and Change: Aspects of Modern Norway*, eds. A. Cohen Kiel, Scandinavian University Press 1993; compare: J. Lindsell, *The Norwegian Way. A case study for Britain's future relationship with the EU*, London 2015.

¹⁸ S. Bjerke, *A Norwegian perspective on European co-operation*, https://www.regjeringen.no/en/aktuelt/a_norwegian_perspective_on_european/id261362/ [December 3, 2015].

Committee of Economic Cooperation had worked on the project of common market NORDEK, but it turned out to be a failure.¹⁹ The concept failed because of Finland's relationships with the Soviet Union, and together with Denmark, Norway and Sweden's access to the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). Despite that, the Nordic Council was established as an institution of inter-parliamentary cooperation (it was appointed in 1952), also the Nordic Passport Union (in 1954) and the Nordic Council of Ministers (1971) as an inter-governmental forum of cooperation were created.

Forms and areas of cooperation between Norway and the EU

Norway is involved in international cooperation, and it is a member of many institutions which aim to bring the EU countries together in many areas. It has been a member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) since 1960, it has been a part of the European Economic Area (EEA) and the Schengen Agreement (accessed in 2001). The EEA Agreement entered into force on 1st January 1994 and has been the cornerstone of the relationships between Norway and the EU. The Area consists of the 28 EU member states and three countries of the EFTA, i.e. Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. It is based on four fundamental freedoms of labour, capital, goods and services. The EEA Agreement encompasses cooperation in other important areas such as research and development, education, social policy, environment, protection of consumers, tourism and culture. It also enables the countries of EFTA/EEA to participate in various EU programmes. The EEA Agreement does not cover the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) or the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), the Customs Union (Norway may have its own external tariffs), the Monetary Union or the Common Commercial Policy. The Agreement does not refer to the former pillar 2 of the Maastricht Treaty – the Common Foreign and Security Policy (within the Common Security and Defence Policy, Norway concluded separate agreements with the EU to take part in civil and military operations, as well as in the activities of European Defence Agency. Norway has a long-lasting tradition of foreign policy on the Old Continent, also as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) founder, member of the European Council and the OSCE) or the former pillar 3 – of Justice and Home Affairs (Norway cooperates with the EU, combating transborder crime or illegal immigration, together they face the challenge of managing the stream of refugees; the activities result from various agreements, of which the Schengen Agreement is the most important). The central principle of the EEA Agreement is homogeneity, meaning that the

¹⁹ Since its beginning the Nordic Council attempted to create the common market. However, when Denmark, Norway and Sweden joined the EFTA the issue became less interesting. See also: R. Ławniczak, *NORDEK a problem skandynawskiej unii celnej*, „Przegląd Zachodni”, no. 5, 1969; A. Grochulski, *NORDEK – nowy etap integracji krajów skandynawskich*, „Sprawy Międzynarodowe”, no. 3, 1970; B. KołECKA, *Rada Nordycka, Nordycka Rada Ministrów*, [in:] *Europejskie struktury współpracy*, eds. S. Parzymies, Warszawa 2000, p. 182.

same rules and conditions of competition must apply to all economic operators within the EEA. To maintain homogeneity, the EEA Agreement is continuously updated.

The EEA Agreement guarantees that Norway benefits from the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital, which allows Norwegian enterprises to access the “common market”, consisting of 31 countries and the population of 500 million. The European regulations ensure equal rules of competition for all operators. The EEA Agreement gives Norwegians the right to live, work, and learn in other European countries. It also helps to cooperate within civil protection and emergency planning. Stability, security, wealth and welfare system make Norway an attractive place to settle down, despite cold climate and peripheral location. Almost 200 000 EU/EEA citizens are currently working there. More than 7% of Norway's labour force are now EU/EEA citizens.

In 2014 Norway's total import amounted to NOK 560 723 million, of which 63.8% came from the EU countries (NOK 357 605 million). At the same time export amounted to NOK 897 810 million, of which 81.6% went to the EU (NOK 723 470 million). Norway is one of the world's largest exporters of fish. About 60% of total Norwegian seafood exports go to the EU. A protocol to the EEA Agreement regulates trade between Norway and the EU in the area of fish and seafood. On the basis of separate agreements, Norway and the EU negotiate annual quota of fishing and annual tariff quota for trade in other agricultural commodities such as cheese, meat, fruit and vegetables, as well as flowers. Norway and the EU cooperate closely on the management of maritime resources, including monitoring and enforcement of regulations. They join efforts to combat the problem of illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU). Moreover, Norway cooperates closely with the EU on resource management and protection of the marine environment, it participates also in EU programmes and acts as a partner in the development of European marine policy.²⁰

Energy and climate change are important issues for both Norway and the EU. Norway is fully integrated into the internal energy market under the EEA Agreement. It is the third largest exporter of natural gas, and also one of the world's largest exporters of oil. Almost all Norwegian gas is traded on the European market. Norway is the second largest supplier of energy products in the EU (after Russia), including oil and natural gas. Norway is also one of the world's largest producers of hydropower. Norwegian natural gas can play an important role in Europe in a transition to a low-carbon economy (CO₂ emissions can be reduced by replacing coal with gas; gas can also be an important supplement to solar and wind power). This is a fundamental aspect of the relations with the EU, for which combating global warming and the reduction of greenhouse gases emissions are the main objectives of climate policy. Therefore, the EU is a key partner for Norway in introducing the strategies of mitigating climate change.

²⁰ *Norway and the EU – partners for Europe*, Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.eu-norway.org/Global/SiteFolders/webeu/Norway_and_the_EU_2015.PDF [April 1, 2016].

The EEA Agreement has brought changes into Norwegian law in the form of more than 10,000 EU legal acts. Norway has had no say on the adoption of these laws. How can that be explained to Norwegian citizens? When they voted against the EU membership in 1994, the EEA Agreement was already in place, thus the EEA was an alternative to membership. Clearly, the intention of the agreement is to ensure Norway's participation in the single market, which is connected with the necessity of incorporating all legislation that is relevant to the single market.²¹

The EEA, EFTA and Schengen agreements are the main reasons why Norway is building economic, political and social relations with the EU. These agreements shape national policy on different levels and in various areas. That is why Norway is actively involved in creating strategies on the European level. Vidar Helgesen, Norway's Minister for EU Affairs in Erna Solberg's government says that it lies in Norway's interest to cooperate closely with the EU and participate actively in the ongoing political processes in Europe. But in order to influence the decisions effectively, Norway's voice must be clear, strong and active in the debate on the EU policy. He states as follows: "For us it is more important than for any member state to be active early on, before the decision or the proposals are tabled. So we do take part and we have the right to take part in committees under the Commission where Norwegian experts do participate. (...) A lot of these discussions are technical. If and when there are bigger political issues, our shortcomings are more evident, because we are not at the table when the decisions are made".²² Additionally, Norway's Prime Minister Erna Solberg stated: "Norway has no seat at the meetings where EU decisions are taken. So access to the EU single market is expensive and entails a "democratic deficit" for Norway".²³ The leader of the Socialist Left Party, Audun Lysbakken, is another critic of the EEA arrangement, and also refers to the democratic deficit in the EU: "Our participatory democracy is being undermined by the EEA agreement, reducing Norway to a passive recipient of EU legislation. It leads to widespread regulation of details, and harms Norwegian regional policy as economic policy. The agreement has significantly more disadvantages than advantages".²⁴

In addition to the established structure of contacts provided for by the EEA Agreement, various bilateral high-level meetings take place between members of the Government, members of the Commission and the European Parliament.²⁵

²¹ V. Helgesen, *Our EEA contribution costs almost as much as EU membership*, <http://www.euractiv.com/sections/global-europe/vidar-helgesen-our-eea-contribution-costs-almost-much-eu-membership-314369> [December 28, 2015].

²² Ibidem.

²³ Quoted in: A. Leer, *Norway's EU deal 'not right for UK'*, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-22188028> [December 12, 2015].

²⁴ Ibidem.

²⁵ The European Parliament invites Norway to present its views on topical issues such as Norway's energy policy, its involvement in the Middle East, the Arctic and the High North. Norway is the only non-EU country with a designated liaison officer for the European Parliament.

Norway's contribution into social and economic development of the EU member states

Norway does not intend to become an EU member, although being part of the EEA costs the country as much as being a full EU member. The amount of annual contribution is calculated on the basis of the relative size of their GDP compared to the GDP of the EEA as a whole. During the recent programme period of 2009-2014 Norway contributed NOK 15 billion (EUR 1.8 billion, Poland, being the main beneficiary, received EUR 578,1 million) for the EU member states to reduce social and economic disparities (in the years 2004-2009 it was EUR 1.3 billion). In 2014 Norway's contribution was EUR 306 million, which constitutes 97% of the total EEA / EFTA contributions. The support is channelled through 150 programmes. In the programme period of 2014-2020 Norway's contribution will increase substantially. On 20th July 2015 Norway and the EU agreed on the amount of the next contribution into the social and economic unity of Europe which will be NOK 3.3 billion a year (EUR 388 million, which is to increase up to EUR 550 million in 2020). The current agreement covers the period 2014-2021. The increase in funding compared to the agreement from 2009 is more or less in line with inflation²⁶.

“Norway cooperates with the EU and its member states because we share a common set of values and because we need joint solutions to shared challenges,” reads the Government's Work Programme for Cooperation with the EU 2015. Among the priorities were: competitiveness and growth, research and education, climate and energy, justice and migration, security and foreign policy.²⁷ Norway's Minister for EU Affairs, Vidar Helgesen announced: “The EEA and Norway Grants for the new period will primarily be used to promote innovation and growth through research, education and increased mobility in the European labour market. This will in turn contribute to reducing the unacceptably high unemployment rate among young people in Europe”. He also added: “At the same time we will put emphasis on strengthening energy security in Europe and contribute to a proactive climate policy”.²⁸

From December 2015 Elisabeth Aspaker is the new Minister of EEA and EU Affairs. In February 2016 she presented a new program of cooperation with the European

²⁶ It is worth mentioning that the Agreement was negotiated parallel to another one on better access for Norway to the EU market for its seafood. The new tariff free quotas that were agreed on are very important for the Norwegian seafood industry.

²⁷ *Norway in Europe. The government's work programme for cooperation with the EU 2015*, April 2015; compare: *Norway in Europe. The Norwegian Government's Strategy for Cooperation with the EU 2014–2017*, https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/norway_in_europe/id762511/ [December 29, 2015].

²⁸ Quoted in: *Norwegia i UE zgodne co do funduszy norweskich i bezcłowych kontyngentów*, http://www.amb-norwegia.pl/news_and_events/pomoc-z-EOG/EOSAktuell/Norwegia-i-UE-zgodne-co-do-funduszy-EOG-i-bezcłowych-kontyngentow/#.VcZuxXHtmko [December 8, 2015].

Union. It builds on efforts from previous years, but due to the current flow of migrants into Europe, this year's programme has focus on justice and home affairs.²⁹

Climate change, energy and innovation are priority areas that receive significant funding (about 40%) in order to create better conditions for smart and sustainable development, economy growth, and to combat social exclusion in Europe. Research and education are also important elements of Norway's cooperation with the EU. Through the EEA Agreement, Norway participates in education programme Erasmus+ and in the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (Horizon 2020). Norway's contribution to major EU programmes for research, innovation and education will amount to EUR 2.7 billion in the period 2014–2020.

Norway supports democracy-building, protection of human rights and promotion of social inclusion. Special attention is given to strengthening civil society and improving the capacity of non-governmental organizations. Norway aims to establish tripartite dialogue and cooperation between workers, employers and government organisations. It also provides support for improving health, security and environment standards. Moreover, it is a major long-term investor in the EU. In January 2014 the Government Pension Fund Global invested a total of EUR 235 billion in stocks and bonds of the EU countries (which is around 40% of the Fund's global stock and bond investments).³⁰

Conclusion

The above analysis may lead to posing a question with no straightforward answer: is it a success or a failure of the European community? Norway is a part of Europe, not only in terms of geography, but also history, finances and culture. The EU remains the main partner for Norway's trade, the EU policy has influence on many sectors of Norwegian life. Thus, Norway participates actively in the construction of Europe, where solidarity and security are of special importance. Norway is in a privileged situation, in which the cooperation with the EU could be voted on. It may enjoy the freedom of trade and movement, without the necessity of joining the CAP (Common Agricultural Policy), CFP (Common Fisheries Policy) or the Customs Union. The EU would accept Norway's membership instantly, as it would certainly become the driving force for European economy. Norway is politically stable, and its economy prospers. Norwegians guard their high GDP. According to the data of the International Monetary Fund, in 2014 Norway's per capita GDP was USD 97 013 335.2 billion, and its GDP based

²⁹ *Norway in Europe. The Government's Work Programme For Cooperation With the EU*, Oslo 2016.

³⁰ *Norway and the EU – partners for Europe*, <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/dokumenter/norway-and-eu-partners/id2401293/> [April 1, 2016].

on purchasing power parity amounted to USD 66 937 billion (ranked 2nd in Europe after Luxembourg and 6th in the world).³¹

Another question can be asked: does Norway need the EU? The EU is an effective tool to repair social and economic relations in the countries with the beneficiary status. Opening Norwegian market would mean the increase of competitiveness and stimulation of small and medium enterprises. For Norwegians it would bring lower prices of food and other goods. From the political point of view, Norway's membership would give its authorities the power to coordinate the EU. However, Norwegians reject that perspective. It is worth noticing that Norwegians' „No” did not only result from their fear of Brussels' domination and the assignment of sovereignty, but had a clear economic dimension. They do not intend to share the profits of fisheries or natural resources. They have a healthy economy which prospers well without being the EU member. Norway has only been slightly affected by the world's economic crisis. Thus, its absence in the EU is just self-preservation instinct. Norwegians' Euroscepticism is based on their attachment to autonomy. Due to all these factors the debate on the EU membership has not been resumed. The important fact is, however, there is no contradiction in being Norwegian, Scandinavian and European.

Streszczenie

MEANDRY NORWESKIEJ EUROPEJSKOŚCI

Norwegia to kraj silny w regionie nordyckim i pomimo pozostawania poza strukturą Unii Europejskiej (UE) – również na jej obszarze. Unia Europejska jest najważniejszym partnerem handlowym tego państwa, a polityka UE ma wpływ na wiele sektorów życia norweskiego. Dlatego kraj ten aktywnie włącza się w konstrukcję Europy, w której solidarność i bezpieczeństwo mają kluczowe znaczenie. Norwegowie dwukrotnie – podczas referendum w latach 70. i 90. XX wieku – zagłosowali przeciwko członkostwu w UE. Sceptycyzm dotyczący integracji wynika m.in. z dobrej ekonomicznej sytuacji Norwegii. Mimo negatywnej opinii mieszkańców w sprawie przystąpienia do UE, kraj ten ściśle współpracuje z Unią w większości kwestii. Norweska nieobecność w UE jest więc niczym innym jak instynktem samozachowawczym, a eurosceptycyzm Norwegów jest oparty na przywiązaniu do autonomii. Suma tych czynników powoduje, że debata na temat członkostwa kraju w Unii Europejskiej nie powraca. Ważne jednak jest to, że nie ma konfliktu interesów między byciem Norwegiem, Skandynawem i Europejczykiem.

Słowa kluczowe: Norwegia, eurosceptycyzm, Unia Europejska

³¹ *World Economic and Financial Surveys. World Economic Outlook Database.* International Monetary Fund April 2015.

Резюме

ИЗВИЛИНЫ НОРВЕЖСКИЙ ЕВРОПЕИЗМУ

Норвегия – страна сильна в скандинавском регионе и, несмотря на оставшиеся вне рамок Европейского союза (ЕС), также на ее территории. Европейский Союз является основным торговым партнером этой страны, в том политика ЕС оказывают влияние на многие секторы норвежской жизни. Таким образом, Норвегия активно участвует в строительстве Европы, в которой солидарность и безопасность имеют решающее значение. Норвежцы дважды – во время референдумов в 70-х и 90-х годов двадцатого века – проголосовали против членства в ЕС. Скептицизм в отношении интеграции вытекает, среди прочего, с хорошей экономической ситуации в Норвегии. Несмотря на негативное мнение жителей о вступлении в ЕС, страна тесно сотрудничает с ЕС по большинству вопросов. Поэтому норвежское отсутствие в ЕС не что иное, как инстинкт самосохранения и норвежской евроскептицизм основывается на приверженности автономии. Сумма этих факторов делает, что дискуссия о членстве страны в Европейском Союзе не возвращается. Важно, однако, что нету никакого конфликта интересов между жителями Скандинавии, Норвегии и других стран Европы.

Ключевые слова: Норвегия, евроскептицизм, Европейский союз

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