

# **Views from Inside: The various aspects of French Political Parties' Europeanization**

The Lisbon Treaty has been analyzed as a new significant step for the deepening of the European integration process. The expanding of the European Union's competencies cannot be considered independently from numerous domestic political actors' evolutions. Academic literature underlines these changes and mutations using the term "Europeanization". This communication proposes to examine the likely effects of the ongoing process of European integration on French partisan organizations and to analyze their responses to the increasing relevance of the European paradigm. Domestic parties are key actors and operate in multiple arenas, both at the national and European levels. The variety of partisan responses is structured by a set of inter-related factors such as basic ideology, degree of parties' relevance, factionalism, leadership influence and autonomy, centrality of the European debate on the domestic political arena. Comparing distinct political families, some "still emerging", like the greens, and some "established", like the Socialist Party (PS), should lead us to a better understanding of how and why the partisan responses to the European Union do vary.

**Guillaume Duseigneur, Ph.D., Sc Po Lille-France**  
**guillaume.duseigneur@sciencespo-lille.eu**

***THIS IS VERY MUCH WORK IN PROGRESS-PLEASE DO NOT QUOTE***

The aim of this presentation is to assess the European Union's (EU) impact on French political parties. We would like to estimate the significance of the EU development as one of the factors that may contribute to parties' evolution in France. Since the early 1990's, there have been numerous and significant changes and developments of the EU. Naturally, the first dimensions to underline are the geographic enlargement and the increase of competencies of the UE. Such evolutions have direct impact on the political reality of the European project, and have mechanically changed the EU's decision-making process. The very last evolution, in the framework of the Lisbon Treaty can be considered as illustrations of the "slow but certain" shift of the EU from an almost classical intergovernmental logic to a more innovative supranational "*habitus*".

This context imposes to academic research to concentrate on the interactions between the EU arena and national institutions, actors and policies (domestic resistances or translations of EU legislations or norms).

The study of national political parties' interaction with the EU institutions and environment was not developed at the same time with the rest of European affairs. Let us precise already the lack or even the absence of researches based on actors of the integration process. For a long time studies have been concentrated on institutional debates. The academic interest has only quite recently focused on the relationship between European integration process and domestic political parties. If in the framework of the very first direct election of the European Parliament (EP) the study of European Affairs took into account the field of partisan actors, we must admit that it was not until the mid-1990's that scholars really conceptualized partisan responses to the EU (Ladrech 1994), mostly using the label of "Europeanization".

The various analyses on Europeanization have for long covered with different intensity a broad range of problems concerning questions on the EU impact on the politics, policy and polity dimensions. Thus, « Europeanization » is used to present and analyze the increasing policy competences of the EU institutions and its impacts. In 2002, J.P. Olsen tried to identify the "many faces of Europeanization", he was able to isolate five main meanings for the label: from the simple "changing national boundaries" to the ambitious fulfillment of a "political unification project". With Featherstone and Radaelli (2003, 333), we consider Europeanization not as "a new grand theory to replace those that have been discarded". We prefer to take it as "set of processes in need of explanation". In order to explain such processes, academics have recently been trying to reconsider their theoretical approaches and adapt them to recent evolutions. To invoke quickly these theoretical debates "Europeanization" has been defined as the growing significance of the European paradigm and the emergence of a supranational governance based in Brussels (Cowles et al 2001) as well as the national institutions and actors responses, adaptations (and resistances) to the EU construction process (Ladrech 1994, Radaelli 2000, Poguntke et al 2007). Thus, what we will consider here is the penetration of national political lives, competitions and actors by the emerging European center and its norms.

The legal and political realities of the context in which partisan actors operate have changed because of the EU. Historically, because of the domestic dimension of electoral competition, political parties are genetically linked to their own national states. Part of the literature presented the nature of the EU as a challenge to partisan actors. It creates a range of external, supranational, constraints which can be problematical for parties' ambitions to satisfy national and subnational demands and interests. Authors, like P. Mair, underline the fact that because of integration process the national parties' role in domestic

policy-making, especially their capacities to control it, is deeply reduced, even if the parties' systems were not transformed (Mair 1995, 2000). Sharing this analyze of domestic political parties impacted by the growing scope of EU policy-making, authors however insisted on the academic necessity to examine the effect of integration of the various dimensions of partisan bodies (Aylott 2002, Ladrech 2002, Bardi 2003, Poguntke et al 2007).

Thus, in this communication we will refer to "Europeanization" as the effects (impact and responses) of the Integration process on French party organizations. So, the integration process, the independent variable, has to be linked to dependent variables, chosen intra-party dimensions. Europeanization can be considered as a causal mechanism.

The reduction of available policy repertoire and instruments because of the European Treaties, habits and norms leads recent researches on parties' Europeanization (Ladrech 2002-2009, Raunio 2002, Johansson and Raunio 2001, Poguntke et al 2007) to focus on various intra-party dimensions such as ideological/programmatic change, patterns of party competition, organizational/structural evolution (factionalism, leadership influence), relations beyond the domestic party system.

This theoretical presentation leads us to our research questions: How should we consider and contextualize French parties' attitudes towards European integration process and the EU (1)? What are the organizational dimensions of the EU issues' management (2)? What are the effects of adaptations to the EU on partisan leaderships (3)?

The communication aims to participate to current above mentioned debates, with a French perspective. It is largely based on interviews with over 50 French parties' members mainly conducted in the last four years<sup>1</sup>

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1 Most of the interviews with socialists (Parti Socialiste, PS) and ecologists (Les Verts) were part of doctoral researches on national partisan responses to European Integration, comparing social-democrat and green parties in France, Sweden and the UK. Some interviews made in the framework of the Sixth EU framework program (FP6) for the research on the « 2004 European Elections-French Case», program CivicActive, have also been used.

## 1- Structure of French Parties' EU Orientations.

France, a founding member of the European community (1951, Treaty of Paris, creating the European Coal and Steel Community; 1957, Treaties of Rome, establishing the European Economic Community and the European Atomic Energy Community), has a ambiguous and sometimes paradoxical relationship with the European Union. It would be difficult and incomplete to characterize French people as Euroenthusiastic or Eurosceptics. Generally speaking it would not be exaggerated to underline that there is a global positive apprehension of the European construction and integration progress in the press. However, like in other members states, the EU is often perceived by the population as a technocratic arena, far from the "people's concerns" and facing a persistent democratic deficit, arguments that are naturally easily mobilized by eurosceptic organizations. However, as mentioned above qualifying the 2010 French attitudes towards the EU conducts us to underline the increasing negative perception and judgment of integration without dramatizing them. Thus, the very last EuroBarometer survey presents 44% of the French estimating EU membership is "a good thing" (EU27: 49%), with at the same time 51% saying France "has benefited from membership" (EU27: 53%). If, 47% of the French tend "not to trust the EU" (EU27: 51%), it should not be isolated from other EB 73 results: 57% of the French tend "not to trust their National Parliament" (EU27: 62%) or 71% of the French tend "not to trust their National Government" (EU27: 66%). Combining these results to the electoral ones mentioned in the following tables, we see French complex attitudes towards the EU, which have to be linked to national political context and cannot be understood independently from it.

This paradoxical situation contextualizes the parties' attitudes towards the EU. We will not try to deal here with the recurrent debate of knowing if the European integration must be considered as a structural cleavage that should be added to the classical cleavages analyzed by Lipset and Rokkan (Mair 2000). Questioning the programmatic responses to the EU of the domestic parties leads us to mention the analyze developed by T.A. Börzel and T. Risse in 2000 with the distinction of parties' projects which "fit" with the EU and other which "misfit". In the first case, when it "fits", parties do not have to adapt their political/ideological ambitions. The way the integration process and the agenda of the UE can be used as a mechanism of legitimation for parties' orientations. In the second hypothesis, when it "misfits", parties must choose between refusing the European project or presenting an European alternative strategy. This analyze underlines the complexity of European attitudes.

Relevant variables in determining European parties' attitudes must be precised. Thus, on the one hand, we have to consider support for or opposition to the European integration project as embodied in the EU (rather than a party's support for or opposition to their country's membership at any given time) and, on the other hand, attitudes towards further actual or planned extensions of EU competencies. (Szczerbiak and Taggart 2003). This combination leads us to present here a typology of partisan attitudes towards the EU which should help us to characterize French parties' European attitudes:

**Table 0: Structure of Partisan Attitudes towards the EU**

<i>Euroenthusiastic parties:</i> positive ideological attitudes towards integration idea and project (federalism or at least supranationalism) as well as positive analyze of the EU's reality (deepening and enlargement)	<i>Eurotepid parties:</i> positive ideological attitudes towards integration idea and project (federalism or at least supranationalism) as well as negative analyze of the EU's reality (deepening and enlargement)
<i>Europromoting parties:</i> positive pragmatic attitudes towards integration project as well as positive analyze of the EU's reality (deepening and enlargement)	<i>Strong Euroscepticism parties:</i> negative pragmatic attitudes towards integration project as well as negative analyze of the EU's reality (deepening and enlargement)
<i>Minimalist Eurosceptic parties:</i> negative ideological attitudes towards integration idea and project as well as positive analyze of the EU's reality (deepening and enlargement)	<i>Antieuropeist parties:</i> negative ideological attitudes towards integration idea and project as well negative analyze of the EU's reality (deepening and enlargement)

*Euroenthusiastic parties:* the Modem, as well as the former UDF, embodies the French political family historically the most in favor of the EU and the European idea (and even more since intra-dissensions appeared within the Greens on the European Constitution debate in 2004/05). This party is located in the center of the political scene, deeply institutionalized and presents its pragmatism as his main characteristic. The 2007 manifesto of his candidate mentioned 33 times the EU and had been analyzed as the one emphasizing the most the European dimension of current political life.

*Europromoting parties:* we consider that the two main French parties, UMP and PS, should be considered under this label. These two organizations are naturally deeply institutionalized and have a significant governmental experience. While in government they made the choice to support the European project: in 1983 during F. Mitterrand's presidency and in 1993/4 for the gaullist family. The “*gestionnaire*” aspect of these pro-UE lines is evident.

We can also place within this category the ecologists establishing the very same links between pro-UE attitudes and a process of institutionalization and government experience.

*Strong Euroscepticism parties:* among the main French parties we are presenting here only the PCF can be considered as “strongly eurosceptic”. Naturally, if in order to remain a hypothetical coalition partner for the socialists the PCF does not demand the French departure of the EU. Moreover, the internationalist background of the PCF's ideology conducts to a positive perception of supranational approach. However, the liberal dimension of the EU, its “reality”, is deeply criticized by the PCF.

*Antieuropeist parties:* the French Antieuropeist parties, FN and MPF, correspond to protest parties, with a structural absence of any governmental dimension. They are situated on the fringe (the far right) of the domestic political arena. This Antieuropeist parties emphasize the EU issue in their manifestos largely symbolically basing their protests and anti-systems critics on the European integration process. The “2<sup>nd</sup> order” dimension of EPE (the proportional electoral law as well as the lack of direct and significant impact of the votes) has always been a great opportunity for these organisations to realize their best electoral scores.

**Table 1: Results of National Referenda on Europe<sup>2</sup>**

	<b>TURNOUT</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
<b>1992 referendum on Maastricht Treaty (20<sup>th</sup> September 1992)</b>	26 695 951 votes 69.70%	13 162 992 votes 51.03%	12 623 582 votes 48.9%
<b>2005 referendum on the Constitutional Treaty (29<sup>th</sup> May 2005)</b>	28 988 300 votes 69.34%	12 808 270 votes 45.33%	15 449 508 votes 54.67%

**Table 2: EPE<sup>3</sup> results from 1989 to 2009**

	<b>TURNOUT</b>	<b>FN</b>	<b>MPF</b>	<b>UMP</b>	<b>MODEM</b>	<b>PS</b>	<b>VERTS</b>	<b>PCF</b>
<b>1989 EPE</b>	48.80%	11.73% 10MEPS		28.88% 26MEPS		23.61% 22MEPS		
<b>1994 EPE</b>	52.71%	10.52% 11MEPS	12.34% 13MEPS	25.58% 28MEPS		14.19% 15MEPS	02.95% 0MEP	06.89% 7MEPS
<b>1999 EPE</b>	46.76%	05.69% 5MEPS	13.05% 13MEPS	12.82% 12MEPS	09.28% 9MEPS	21.95% 22MEPS	09.72% 9MEPS	06.78% 6MEPS
<b>2004 EPE</b>	42.76	09.81% 7MEPS	06.67% 3MEPS	16.64% 17MEPS	11.96% 11MEPS	28.90% 31MEPS	07.41% 6MEPS	05.88% 3MEPS
<b>2009 EPE</b>	40.63%	06.34% 3MEPS	04.80% 1MEP	27.88% <sup>4</sup> 29MEPS	08.46% 6MEPS	16.48% 14MEPS	16.28% 14MEPS	06.48% <sup>5</sup> 5MEPS

Partisan orientations and programs are always a combination of ideological driven explanations and strategical driven motivations. How political parties would like that the social and political reality to be organized has to cooperate with the strategy that they analyze to be relevant to fulfill the parties' goal (votes, policies and offices). Moreover it is clear that parties' European orientations stability or evolution must not be understood only through their votes' seeking dimension. EPE's scores cannot be only linked to strictly European propositions (Reif and Schmitt 1980). Ideology in political parties, even in those which are apparently not much "ideologized", has a very specific importance. On the other

2 Sources: <http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/francais/les-decisions/acces-par-date/decisions-depuis-1959/1992/resultats-referendum-1992/decision-resultats-referendum-1992-du-23-septembre-1992.8851.html> and <http://www.conseil-constitutionnel.fr/conseil-constitutionnel/francais/les-decisions/acces-par-date/decisions-depuis-1959/2005/resultats-referendum-2005/decision-resultats-referendum-2005-du-01-juin-2005.996.html> (seen on 11/11/201)

3 EPE : European Parliament Elections. Let us precise here that until the 1999 elections France was only one constituency and from the 2004 elections the country has been divided into eight constituencies. This electoral reform has a direct impact in the way parties consider these EPE. It has been analyzed as a "de-presidentialization" of the election because national parties leaders had not to be candidate anymore.

4 This score is the result of the coalition led by the UMP (with small parties like Nouveau Centre or Gauche Moderne)

5 This score is the score of the coalition led by the PCF for the 2009 EPE named « Front de gauche »

hand strategy is essential for understanding their interactions with the social reality. Parties' European ideological ambitions have to be adapted to the political arenas where parties are active. On European matters, maybe even more than on many other questions of member states' political debates, it would be an error to separate rigorously strategy and ideology because they are very interdependent one from the other.

Thus, we can note, in France as elsewhere in Europe, partisan attitudes towards EU must be linked to the parties' positions within the domestic political competition (Kousser 2004). The effects of the intergovernmental dimension of the European integration process are numerous as we will see later when questioning the increasing autonomy of parties' leaderships, it can also be mentioned here as part of the explanation of the pro-UE convergence of most of the governmental parties in the EU. Thus, rejecting and even contesting the integration process appears to be the only repertoire of protest parties. These organizations have not governmental ambitions or prospective and do not have to present "*gestionnaire*" abilities (Hix and Marsch 2007). It is also very interesting to notice that pro-UE evolutions take place in parties which, thanks to a deeper institutionalization, wish to show to voters and to hypothetical coalition's partner, they accept the structural constraints of the political environment and would be pragmatic enough to be part of an executive power. Les Verts as well of the PCF faced this precise evolution in the late 1990's when they ambitioned to be part of a coalition government led by the PS. It is striking to underline that the European lines is a relevant indication of the parties' positions (and their evolutions) on the party competition spectrum. In the case of Les Verts and the PCF we face in 2010 ecologists still aiming to be partners of the PS in a potential future government and softening as often as they can their critics on the integration process, whereas the PCF appears to be more on a "protest line" and keeps on criticizing the EU as a symbol of the policies they reject. Since in the French political context it is very difficult to imagine a Eurosceptic party being part of a government (mainly because of the foreseeable paradox and difficulties eurosceptic Ministers would face in the Council meetings<sup>6</sup>). Thus pro-EU evolutions are signs of parties' changing culture from "protests to proposals".

## 2- The organizational management of European Integration

### *The right time and the right place for the EU debate?*

We are going to question here the way French parties structurally consider and manage the EU question. Let us first of all underline the recurrent absence of the EU from parties' Congresses the most sovereign partisan bodies for all the French parties (no matter if they correspond to the mass-party standards), as well as the rarity of EU debates within local groups, the most symbolical and significant partisan bodies in terms of identity.

Because of probable internal dissensions parties' leadership try to sequence the management of European matters. Thus, the timing of debating about Europe is quite significant. The fear of factionalism and its impact on the party's image and cohesion and then on electoral results (with the risk of dissident candidates) conducts parties to organize the rare internal debates they have once in opposition and far from campaigns and elections. Doing so parties' leaderships hope to anticipate and minimize the consequences

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6 Such a case would certainly be used by any opposition to denounce the decreasing French influence in the UE, and would give a great opportunity to domestic opponents to critic the government.

of foreseeable divisions. The organize time for reconciliation. The toleration of dissidents is easier in opposition and far from elections. This timing does not only underline the conflictual aspect of the EU, it is also an illustration of “2<sup>nd</sup> order” dimension of the issue, its lack of saillance. Parties’ leaderships bet on parties’ members’ rational behavior: a question like European Integration which does not “make the election” (voters usually do not abandon the party they vote for on general elections because of European disagreement) must not be over evaluated and causes irreversible cohesion damage. This is the very logic that makes of the EU a potential question to rise for internal minorities or intra-party oppositions: on the EU the prize of factionalism (up to a certain level naturally) is not too high to pay. On this issue of timing EU management, we have an interesting example with the way the PS and Les Verts organized their internal debate on the European Constitution: ten month before the national referendum and only two years after being back in opposition (and thus three years before the next general elections, presidential and legislative ones).

However this timing sequencing attention is not the only procedure imagined by parties to manage the EU issue. We must have a look on the structural management of the EU. Where and how do parties organize European consideration has a strong meaning. As N. Aylott stressed in the case of Scandinavian parties (Aylott 2002), we can notice that most of the French political parties try to “compartmentalize” the management of the EU. Parties ambition to compartmentalize the various arenas in which they operate, in order to isolate the damaging effects of European divisions. The first and more and more mobilized by parties’ procedure is the intra-party referendum. Direct internal democracy does not suppress or disqualify dissidents within the party; they are tolerated and can express their differences. Thus, they are part of the EU orientation-making process, which reduces strongly the risk of defections (Aylott 2002). In 2004, PS and Verts organized intra-party referendums on the European Constitution which allowed all the internal sensibilities to present their positions (Duseigneur 2005). More than the results (see Table 3), it is the procedure itself and its consequences that must be underlined.

The attention to quarantine the EU matters within limited arenas like internal referenda can be explained by one significant factor: the deep legitimacy of the orientation produced. Whatever the orientation decided is it is more likely to be respected by the party’s members because of the procedure. Moreover, it is relevant for the parties to give to the electorate an image of internal democracy instead of an impression of lack of cohesion or authority. Looking at the results we must underline the high turnout especially in the PS which confirms the perception of legitimacy of such procedures<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> The turnouts are higher than what can be observed in traditional intra-party consultation. Thus for the 2003 PS Congress only 76.9% of members participated to the delegates’ selection.

**Table 3:**  
Intra-

	<b>Turnout</b>	<b>Yes</b>
<b>Intra-PS referendum on Europ. Constit</b>	<b>83.2%</b>	<b>58.62%</b>
<b>Intra-Verts referendum on Europ. Constit</b>	<b>58.63%</b>	<b>52.63%</b>

**2004 parties'**

**referenda on European Constitution results**

Intra-parties' referenda are not the only way to compartmentalize the EU management for partisan organizations. Another partisan habit on European Affairs is to externalize the debate. The first possibility for parties to organize European debates outside the partisan structure, and thus not having to manage potential dissensions, is to instrument the various Think Tanks ideologically close to them. Thus, thanks to this external tools, parties can on the one hand authorize intra-party's opposition to present their positions (outside the partisan structure it is clearly less painful and less risky), and on the other hand parties can accentuate the expertise dimension of the EU management. Indeed, because of this exteriority debates within the Think Tanks have a minor political dimension (in terms of political competition) and underline the expertise aspect of the EU management. Most of the French parties used affiliated Think Tank in the recent European Debates: PS with *Terra Nova* and *Fondation Jeau Jaurès*; UMP with *Fondapol* (organization which was very active during President Sarkozy Presidency of the EU in 2008 and during the 2009 EPE campaign); Les Verts with *La Forge* or with the specifically EU dedicated *Fondation*; Modem with the *Centre de Réflexion et de recherche pour l'élaboration d'une alternative* or PCF with *Pour la République Sociale* or the *Fondation Gabriel Peri*.

We can notice approximately the same use of partisan youth organization and Europarties. Let us simply precise here that youth organizations are often used by internal minorities on the EU. These youth organizations are often strongly ideology driven and consider negatively any kind of "governmental pragmatism" which is associated to "renouncement". Thus, it might be relevant for intra-party opposition, especially within governmental parties (like PS or UMP) to invest this extra-party arena in order to embody "ideology" whereas the party's leadership would represent "renouncement towards European constraints". It is exactly the opposite logic we can underline in the case of the externalization of EU debate to the Europarties. Mobilizing the transnational partisan structure is relevant for partisan leaderships who need to strengthen their positions' legitimacy. It can often be perceived as a kind of pressure on party's members because of the symbolic force of transnational organizations. In 2004/05 when the European Socialist Party was involved in the French PS internal campaign one of the main argument in favour of supporting the treaty became: "*all the other socialist parties vote 'yes' we cannot reject the Treaty*". The "*gestionnaire*"/governmental dimension of European attitudes appears here clearly.

### 3- Is European integration a factor of the Increasing leaderships' autonomy?

Modern politics seems to be more and more based on personalities, leaders (Poguntke and Webb 2005, Blondel and Thiébault 2009). The EU affairs are a basis that might precondition changes in the national party politics structures; therefore the EU affairs might also centralize and increase the autonomy of the leader towards the party. French parties' leaders capitalize upon their own political 'persona' and can pretend to have a relationship of authority with their respective party's members (Gaffney 2010).

We just mentioned the various procedures used by parties' leadership to compartmentalize the UE issue. Structurally, very few parties give responsibility for managing European questions to specific intra-parties' bodies (Comity, Secretary or Commission). We can isolate only few of these internal structures with the responsibility to manage questions and matters related to the integration process. Only the greens (Les Verts) have a specific body (Commission Europe) to manage the issue, whereas the socialists (PS) and the Democrats (Modem) have identified members of their national executive responsible for the EU: two PS "*secrétaires nationaux*" (national secretary) have a very limited staff (around 3 persons) and the recent Modem's Shadow cabinet created an internal position of "*Responsable Europe*" (in charge of European Affairs). If the "Commission Europe" of the greens appears to be a quite independent group, whose members declare in interviews not working "under pressure of the leadership", the reality is quite different for the PS and the Modem since the specific sub-partisan groups and the politician in charge of it are mostly in this position because of a combination of EU expertise and proximity with the party's leader.

In most of the other parties, the party's senior MP member of the Parliamentary European Affairs Commissions (at the Sénat and the Assemblée Nationale) undertake an unofficial role of partisan spokesperson on EU debates, but we must underline that their positions are not very visible neither inside the party nor in the media. At the regional levels it is very rare to face EU sub-partisan groups (even if a tiny minority of the 100 Socialist federations, 13, presents local "responsible for Europe). The most common way to manage European affairs within French political parties is to concentrate most of the orientations making process within the executive bodies: Bureau Executif, Bureau Politique or Comité Central. Thus for the FN, the MPF, the UMP or the PCF it is clear the the national headquarters and the national leaderships (understood as a restricted number of actors around the leader) have a large autonomy of EU matters. We find decisive EU-specialist within this elite. Their authority, often linked to their expertise capacity as well as the ability to establish and keep links with the European arena (through transnational parties or MEPs) is a decisive advantage. If parties' leaderships are usually composed by a large part of parties' parliamentary groups we do notice that on EU matters, the decision is monopolized by the very top of the parties' hierarchy. There are numerous figures within French parties that are appointed directly by leaders. It is even more the case when we deal with EU-specialists. The parties seem to be powerless and unable to control these figures who very often work directly with parties' executives and leaders.

Naturally we note that with parties in government the influence (because of the expertise's monopole) of the party "real" leader has increased at the expense of the partisan organization itself: thus it seems clear to everyone at UMP that European questions are directly managed by President Sarkozy (even the Secretary of State in charge of European Affairs appears to have a restricted room for maneuver). T. Rauino stresses the strengthening of national parties' leadership due to Europe, especially in the case of a party in government, because of ministers or President's participation to Council of Ministers or to European Councils (Raunio 2003). Party representatives or even some ministers on the domestic arena have almost no ability to scrutinize Council meetings.

Once again here the principle of delegation appears to be very powerful.

The exercise of writing manifestos is also a good example of leaderships' authority on EU matters. Naturally we must confess here that traditional party programs do not say much on European Integration. However, what we can find is clearly controlled by EU-specialist and must correspond to the leaderships' conception of integration. The use of europarties in the writing of EPE's manifestos is an even more striking example of internal power shift to the advantage of EU-specialists, who represent their respective party in the transnational party. Because of the negotiations needed to produce such documents between all the members of europarties, the manifestos often lack of ambitious or just precise projects. However, in both case it has to be underlined that the monopole of EU-specialists close to the national leader does not create any kind of intra-party tension like it happens on other issues.

### *Leaderships' controls over partisan actors on the European scene*

A relevant way to test the leadership's control over EU matters, beside the structural organization of EU management is to analyze the links and the authority national leaders have over partisan actors on the European scene: MEPs as well europarties.

The best illustration of leaderships' control over MEPs appears in candidates' selection. Until 1999 the national leaderships because of the national dimension of the election were able to control the entire lists' constructions and thus able to place only candidates they wanted to be elected. Thus, the parties could structure the list as an illustration of parties' internal balance of power and EPE was an opportunity to satisfy all the partisan sub-groups (minorities and internal oppositions included). The 2004 EPE, because of the electoral reform (with the apparition of eight constituencies), was presented as the occasion for the parties and especially the grassroots and the local units to appropriate the candidates' selection. But this was not the case; the same logic in terms of candidates' selection is still active: the main capital remains proximity with partisan leadership, then representation of a partisan sub-group (minority) and finally European expertise. If the decrease of turnover within the French MEPs delegation underlines the increasing significance of European commitments as well as the relevance of European expertise, interviews show in all the parties that intra-party capital is still determinant in candidates' selection.

For a long time French parties had difficulties to keep tabs on their MEPs. It seems not be the case anymore. From the early 2000's it is now very common that MEPs are asked to take part to parliamentary groups' meetings and works. In the case of PS, Modem, UMP and Verts the EP delegation's leaders are part (formally or not) of the parties' executive works. The green party and the PCF have specific tools to integrate (and scrutinize) MEPs to the party's life, with meeting where MEPs work with domestic EU-specialists (from the leader's staff- national executive- but also from the parliamentary groups). MEPs from all the parties are now asked to organize meetings and debates within parties' local units and present their Brussels' achievements. The use of electronic newsletters is also more and more common and is good way for MEPs to present their actions as well as to prove to national leaderships they respect the party's orientations and priorities. The candidates' selection mentioned above gives even more importance for MEPs to publicize their actions and strengthen their intra-party's networks and affiliations.

The europarties are another dimension of leaderships' control over EU matters (Delwitt et al 2004). Interviews are very clear: grassroots have almost no link with these transnational structures. The question of direct membership for activist is often only formal and the europarties do not seem to be present in the grassroots' environment. The French parties, except the FN, have long traditions of international collaboration and engagement.

Once again except the FN, they all are part of transnational partisan federations or europarties and the MEPs traditionally seat in European parliamentary groups. This group and partis are naturally ideologically composed (Featherstone 1998).

Even if europarties' structures are quite different one from the other, we will try to consider them as one partisan structure type. In recent years, transnational parties have developed their structures (Costa and Kerrouche 2007). They have increased their role and visibility. Their role in writing manifestos for EPE is now established (France is one the member state where this transnational manifestos are often used, especially the PS, Verts, Modem and UMP, the governmental pro-EU parties). But what is the impact of europarties' growth on the internal power relations? Who are the people in charge of developing the link between national and European parties?

Managing relations with Europarties is held by parties' functionalities' as well as by parties' politicians. Most of the French parties have one representative within the coordination platform of the transnational organizations (PCF, Verts, PS, Modem, UMP and MPF). Thanks to these representative parties' leaders are very well informed of questions, dissensions and orientations debated in the europarties, and can use this information as power resources. This information is useful in the rare intra-party European debates, in particular in terms of pressuring intra-parties' minorities. Moreover, this positions are very useful for government parties because they are great tools of network building which is necessary in European decision making procedures (during the late 1990's the Eurosocialist meetings were real preparation for official European Council and were organized a couple of days before them). However, it would be over evaluated this position to say positions of relations management with transnational parties are deeply wanted. They are prestigious but should not be exaggerated.

**Table 4: 2010 French parties' affiliations to EP groups and Europarties**

	<b>Europarlimentary Group</b>	<b>Europarty</b>
<b>FN</b>	Non Attached	Alliance of European National Movements
<b>MPF</b>	Europe of Freedom and Democracy	Libertas <sup>8</sup>
<b>UMP</b>	European People's Party	European People's Party
<b>MODEM</b>	Alliance of Liberals and Democrats	European Democratic Party
<b>PS</b>	Progressive Alliance of socialist and Democrats in the EP	Party of European Socialists
<b>LES VERTS</b>	Green/European Free alliance	EuroGreens
<b>PCF</b>	European United Left	Party of the European Left

<sup>8</sup> The statutes of Libertas as a European Political Party is still contested and not recognized by the European Institutions.

## Concluding remarks:

French parties cannot ignore the EU. Irrespective from being pro or anti-UE, the integration process impacts them through its decisions, norms or opportunities that it offers.

French political parties are not deeply different from other domestic parties in other UE member states. Thus, the pro-EU programmatic orientations cannot be considered with a simple and unique ideological perception. They have to be linked with the parties' degree of institutionalization, their potential of coalition, their "*gestionnaire*" dimension, their governmental abilities. In 2010, parties' pro-UE stances are largely assimilated to governmental pragmatism. Pro-EU parties evolutions must be understood through this governmental aspect.

In this presentation, we have tried to present how French parties have adapted their structures to some of the realities of EU membership and some of its exigencies. Our main interest was to question how EU integration is active in strengthening some intra-parties' positions: partisan executive elites and UE-specialists. The EU affects political debate in the member states through often unknown, misunderstood or just complex mechanisms which may be an explanation for the increasing influence of this intra-party position.

We must remind here parties' formal structures have not been transformed because of the increasing saillance of the EU. The recent reevaluation of the MEPs role and the growing use made of their expertise by the parties' headquarters must not be overestimated or exaggerated. The governmental parties seem to imagine procedures of control of their respective MEPs' behavior in Brussels and Strasbourg which added to a EP candidates' selection largely controlled by the parties' direction underline the leaderships' control of the parties European activities

Programs' convergences among the major parties, the process of elites' monopolization and compartmentalization of the European debate must be considered as evolutions also linked to the European Integration (Ladrech 2009). They illustrate wider partisan changes and must be understood in the framework of recent political parties studies where the decreasing part of ideology on the European political scenes as well as the increasing significance of personalization and leaderships' effects appear more and more central.

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