

Elites' Trust in Institutions: the Hungarian Political Elite Compared

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Abstract: *After 2006 dissensus became predominant in the Hungarian elite concerning national issues. Empirical analyses however stressed that regarding the positive evaluation of the European integration there were no considerable differences. In international comparison the Hungarian political elite's European attachment and trust were among the highest ones.*

Based on elite surveys from 2007 and 2014 in nine EU-countries, the present paper seeks the answer to the question to what extent are these reflected in the findings of new research highlighting trust in institutions.

First it is recalled what characterized the Hungarian elite's trust towards institutions in 2007, the year before the global crisis and the ensuing political transformation.

The next section compares the level of trust put by the Hungarian political, economic, administrative and media elite segments into institutions. It is to be seen to what extent these elite segments are unified or fragmented in terms of confidence in institutions. Our results reveal that the Hungarian elite segments do not differ significantly from each other regarding their trust in EU institutions, but they significantly differ as to their trust in national ones.

That is followed by a discussion of the political elite's (national MP's) trust in institutions in 2014 in an international perspective. The main determinants of political elite's institutional trust are ideological self-positioning and party affiliation all over in Europe. However, in international comparison the Hungarian political elite became one of the most sceptical ones towards the EU. Recently it trusts less in EU-institutions than the Hungarian population.

Introduction

Institutional trust – the presupposition that institutions work in a predictable and fair way – is considered to be a source of legitimacy on behalf of the population. Trusting the European institutions is a precondition for the legitimacy of the European Union, and for that reason the trust in supranational institutions can be interpreted as a measure for the evaluation of the European Union. If elites are minorities with excessive capabilities of influencing social reproduction – and we are inclined to accept this working definition -, then elites' institutional trust is of exceptional importance in the knowledge about the legitimacy of the EU as a supranational polity.

We are faced with a multilevel crisis of trust. In several European countries' citizens are suspicious of both the domestic and the European political institutions, extreme social and political views have strengthened, a growing portion of the population is wary of the immigrants and of diverse minorities. The expansion of mistrust has a detrimental effect on social cohesion and economic performance. Theorists and empirical researchers of the social capital have often warned that trust is indispensable for well-being, for the functioning of democracy and for trade (Coleman 1990, Putnam 2001, Gambetta 1988, Cook 2001, Granovetter 2017).

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The Hungarian situation traces a spiral in several regards and is therefore worthwhile to be analysed separately. It can be taken for as an experiment which – contrary to federalist or intergovernmentalist solutions – tries to realize the program of populism and economic nationalism from governmental position, relativizing the values of liberal democracy yet envisioning its position within the European Union up to now. It is therefore significant to examine to what extent the Hungarian elites trust the institutions of the EU and how this trust changes upon the impact of the global crisis.

As regards the population, the economic crisis alone does not explain sufficiently their Euroscepticism. Already between 2004 and 2008 there was a constant decrease in the rate of EU supporters in Hungary (from 46% to 34%). In addition, trust in EU institutions had also been going down from Hungary's joining in 2004 in the European Union from 64% to 41%, in the European Parliament from 67% to 52%, in the European Commission from 61% to 51% between 2004 and 2015. Trust in the Council of Europe also decreased, though to a lesser extent, from 59% to 50% from 2004 to autumn 2013. By contrast, the rate of those who professed a European identity in Hungary had been on the rise since the country's entry from 35% in 2004 to 67% in autumn 2015 (Standard Eurobarometer 84). If the hypothesis suggesting that the spread of the European identity has a positive impact on the evaluation of the integration (Hooghe and Marks 2005) were true, trust in the European Union would have to increase in Hungary.

Nor do utilitarian-instrumentalist considerations which claim that the greater the gain, the greater the support given to the EU by the population, play important role in Hungary, for Hungary is one of the major net beneficiaries of the EU budgetary period lasting until 2020, and the decisive majority of Hungarian state investment is financed from EU resources.

It appears therefore plausible that underlying the growing Euroscepticism of the Hungarian population one may discern a shift in the attitude of the political elite to Europe, a change in public discourse and the evaluation of the Hungarian economic situation (Martin 2013). The Centre for Empirical Social Research of Corvinus University of Budapest carried out a survey about the correlations between the elites, the economic crisis and the European integration within an international comparative research. The goal of the research was to get to know the opinions of the political, economic, media and administrative elites about the crisis and the European integration. By elite we understood the members of Parliament and the supreme leaders and decision-makers of key organizations.

The sample and the methodology

The base of the current paper² is a series of international empirical investigations carried out in 2007, 2009 and 2014 to explore how the meaning of the notion of citizenship had changed with the deepening of integration and enlargement of the EU.³ The research project examined the effect of integration and decentralization from the aspect of three factors of citizenship: identity, representation and the scopes of governance. The 2007 and 2009 European elite researches took place in 18 countries among members of the national parliaments (MPs), among economic and media elites respectively, and within the population. The third wave of this international elite research project started in September 2014 with the goal to examine the attitudes of elite groups to European identity, scopes of governance and representation in 11 EU countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy,

² European National Elites and the Crisis (ENEC), <http://www.uni-corvinus.hu/index.php?id=56330>; Integrated and United: A quest for Citizenship in an ever closer Europe (IntUne)

³ To the previous waves see „*The Europe of Elites*” (Best, H. et al. eds. 2012). <http://www.uni-corvinus.hu/index.php?id=23241>; „*A magyar politikai és gazdasági elit EU-képe*” [The EU-perception of Hungarian political and economic elites] (Lengyel Gy. ed. 2008), <http://portal.uni-corvinus.hu/index.php?id=23242>

Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain. For comparability with the previous waves, the main questions of the research questionnaire were included unchanged.

In the 2014 leg of the Hungarian elite research representatives of elite segments – a total of 154 people – were queried in the period between October 2014 and February 2015. The representatives of parliamentary parties (57) were involved in proportion to their party representation, gender, and new or repeated mandates. Next to the political elite segment we explored the attitudes of three other elite segments: the economic elite formed by the 34 top leaders of the greatest banks, enterprises and employers' organizations; 34 persons of the media elite and 29 of the administrative elite. The paper-form questionnaire was completed individually in 30 minutes on average.

The elite group representatives surveyed in 2014 and analysed in the present paper are characterized by being mostly male (88%), aged above 40 (76%, but only 65% among political elite) and almost exclusively holders of university degrees or higher qualifications (92%). Four of the 154 mentioned having foreign birthplaces, and 38% lived abroad longer than three months (mostly the members of the economic and media elite). A minimal 9 persons (5 from economic elite, 3 from political elite and 1 from media elite segment) noted that they had no contacts with EU institutions or representatives in the previous year, while 55% are often and 39% rarely in touch with them. In the whole sample 52% self-reported to be on the right on a left-right scale, 34% in the centre and 15% on the left; 11 people refused to expose their ideological stance.⁴ The majority of the political elite is the member of the FIDESZ (59%), followed by MSZP (14%), KDNP (8%), LMP (3%) and independents 5%, that is, the elite of the governing parties is 67% as against 33% of the opposition.⁵

Our analysis is not representative for the all elite groups from Hungary but mirror the opinions of those elite segments surveyed in this research. Since all of the respondents are outstanding representatives of the given elite group as top leaders of economic and other institutions, their opinions represent meaningful positions worthy of consideration, similarly to expert groups in which the standpoint of each individual member is deliberated in the process of preparing or making a decision.

The text of the questionnaire slightly differed in some cases, depending whether members of the political elite or the rest of the elite segments were to be asked. For instance, in the political elite we only inquired about their trust in EU institutions (European Parliament, European Commission, European Council of Ministers), while in the rest of the elite groups we were also interested in their trust in national institutions in addition to EU institutions (Hungarian Parliament, government, local governments). Just like in the previous waves, we measured the trust in institutions on a 10-point scale with the following question:

„Please tell me on a score of 0-10 how much you personally trust each of the following EU institutions to usually take the right decisions. 0 means that you do not trust an institution at all, and 10 means you have complete trust.”

In this paper the trust in the institutions of the European Union as reflected in the opinions of the Hungarian political, economic, administrative and media elites is to be presented. We mainly focus on the Hungarian case but try to put it in the international context when it possible. Firstly, we sum up the findings about trust in institutions before the economic crisis in 2007, followed by the results of the research in 2014, focusing on trust in EU institutions. The paper ends with a comparison in a European perspective and a brief summary.

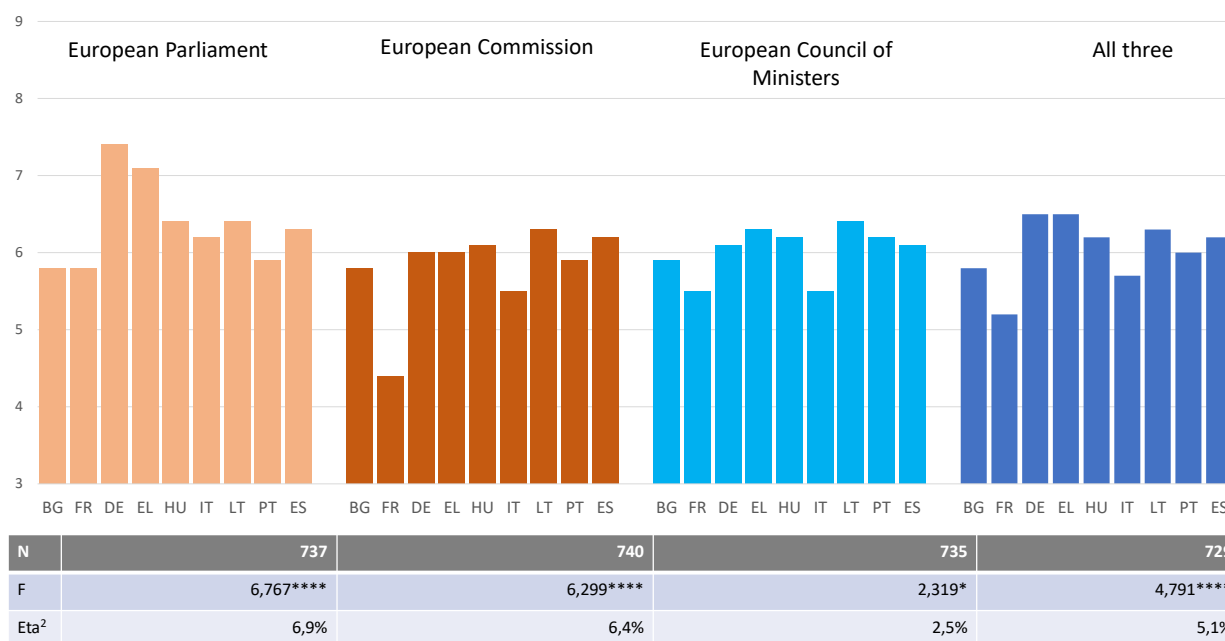
⁴ „On a left-right scale where 0 means the left and 10 means the right, where would you place yourself?” We encoded this variable for the descriptive analysis as follows: left: 0-3; centre: 4-6; right: 7-10.

⁵ The political elite was weighted according to the proportion in the parliament; when the findings are presented by party affiliations, the weighted figures are used.

Trust in European institutions before the 2008 economic crisis

The comparative analysis of the data on trust in institutions by the European elites surveyed in 2007 was published in 2012.⁶ A main conclusion of the analysis is that the contradictory evaluation of the EU institutions by the elite cannot be simply derived from the divergence of opinions between those who oppose and those who support the European integration. Several shades of the federalist attitude, the sovereignist attitude and the unionist attitude to the Union can be differentiated. Besides, the attitude to the EU institutions also depends on what the different elite groups regard as the main aim of the European integration. In other words, the rifts in the evaluation of the EU institutions are governed by diverse ideological differences, but only a small portion of the European elite belong to the real Eurosceptics. Analysing the European countries as a whole, the authors have found that contrary to preliminary hypotheses the political and economic elites' attitude to EU did not deviate: the economic elite did not display more sympathy and support for the integration than the political elite, and no differences could be discerned in the economic elite's attitude by sectors, either. The opinions about the integration of the political and economic elites of a country were closer to one another than those of the same group of elites from different countries. This rhymes with the finding that the factors determining the positive attitude to the integration and the EU institutions most powerfully are national affiliation and the given country's historical experience.

Figure 1. National political elites' trust in European institutions (averages, 0-10 point scale, 2007)



Source: Intune 2007-2009

In 2007 the western countries were among the determined supporters of the integration and the EU institutions (though the French, German and Portuguese elites were rather divided on the issue) while the east European elites were mainly among the critics – except for members of the Hungarian elite: in

⁶ Gaxie, D. and N. Hube in Best, H. et al. (2012). The Europe of elites. (<http://www.etk.uni-corvinus.hu/index.php?id=23240>)

2007 the Hungarian elites were more supportive than critical of the integration and evaluated the EU institutions positively.

Next to the positive view of the Hungarian elites on the European institutions, another important conclusion from the 2007 Hungarian analysis was that mostly those had trust in the three EU institutions who had rich connections with decision-making actors and institutions. A third conclusion was that well-informedness might also negatively influence the Hungarian elite's trust in European Union institutions (Bakonyi 2008).⁷

Table 1. Trust in EU institutions by Hungarian elite groups, 2007 (means on 0 to 10 scale)*

| | European Parliament | European Commission | European Council of Ministers | The 3 EU institutions together |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Elite groups: | | | | |
| Political elite | 6,4 | 6,1 | 6,2 | 6,2 |
| Economic elite | 5,6 | 5,7 | 6,1 | 5,8 |
| Contacts with EU officials or civilian actors: | | | | |
| Elite with a lot of political contacts | 6,3 | 6,2 | 6,0 | 6,2 |
| Elite with a lot of civilian contacts | 6,1 | 5,9 | 6,0 | 6,0 |
| No contacts | 5,9 | 6,0 | 6,3 | 6,1 |
| Informedness (stay abroad, knowledge of foreign language, studies abroad, following foreign media): | | | | |
| Not informed | 6,2 | 6,1 | 6,2 | 6,2 |
| Informed | 5,9 | 5,8 | 5,9 | 5,9 |

*Except for trust in EP differences between the means of trust of the political and economic elites are statistically not significant. Source: Bakonyi (2008), pp. 99-102.

Back to the international results from 2007 the researchers found that next to the national affiliation another important determinant of the attitude to the integration and the EU institutions was commitment to the ideological right or left, but quite differently from what had been expected. The European Union is usually regarded as a market-oriented process, yet it was the elite members of leftist orientation who were in favour of the integration and supportive of the EU institutions in 2007, both in the political and the economic elites. Among those who defined their place on the left side on the left-right scale were the supporters of the EU and its institutions; even the extreme leftists were pro-integration. Those who self-reported to belong to the centre ideologically also had a positive attitude to the integration, though divergent views among them were also considerable. The rightists and extreme rightists were the critics of EU.

National attachment and ideological views influenced the opinions on the integration and the EU institutions independently of one another. The ideological orientation had a geographic aspect: east Europeans were on the right and West Europeans were on the left in 2007. Yet irrespective of their right/left attachment, the elite members from pro-EU countries were more supportive of EU than elite members coming from EU-critical countries. Also, independently of the geographic position of the country, the rate of those with a positive attitude to EU grew as the ideological stance moved from right to left.

⁷ That does not mean to say that the less informed are more satisfied with the functioning of these institutions because they are faced with less negative information, but it means that the well-informed are interested in the working of the given institution and hence may have more concrete expectations (Bakonyi 2008).

The attitude of the European elites' to European institutions did not depend on their demographic, religious, political position or qualifications, it was explored from the 2007 data. By contrast, well-informedness (studies abroad, knowledge of foreign languages) was positively correlated with the opinions about the EU and its institutions: the better informed were more positively disposed toward the EU and its institutions – not as it was in Hungary.

Trust in European institutions in 2014: the Hungarian case

Trust of the Hungarian elite in the supranational institutions

Our descriptive work in this chapter meant to shed light on tendencies, in view of and compared with the findings of the previous Hungarian research and the surveys conducted in European countries. We intention also to check the hypothesis and the results of Gaxie and Hube (2012), namely that the attitude of the European elites' to European integration and institutions is mainly defined by their national affiliation at the one hand, and by their left-right ideological self-identification on the other; and these factors affect independently the attitudes toward the integration.

The first factor related to the trust in institutions we look at is the type of elite. The Table 2. shows the average trust in EU institutions by the surveyed elite group. Measured on a 0 to 10 scale we got means slightly above midpoint but the average trust of no single elite group and for no single EU institution came up to 7 or fell below 4. While in 2007 the Hungarian elite had a relatively positive attitude to the integration (Bakonyi 2008), the 2014 data suggest that the Hungarian elite had only medium level of trust in the EU institutions. The differences are noteworthy: comparing the mean values of trust in the European Commission, European Parliament and European Council of Ministers, the *political elite* has significantly lower trust in these institutions than the other group of elites. They have the least trust in the European Commission⁸ and in the European Council; and they together with the media elite trust least the European Parliament as well (Table 2). The highest degree of trust in EU institutions was found in the *administrative* and *media elites*. The *economic elite* trusts all three institutions of the European Union more than the political elite, however only the difference in trust in EC is statistically significant.

Table 2. Trust in the European Union institutions by elite groups, 2014 (means on 0-10 scale)

| | European Parliament | European Commission | Council of Europe | 3 institutions together |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Political elite (n=57) | 5,2 | 4,8 | 5,6 | 5,2 |
| Economic elite (n=34) | 5,4 | 5,9 | 6,0 | 5,8 |
| Media elite (n=34) | 5,3 | 6,0 | 6,0 | 5,7 |
| Administrative (n=28) | 5,5 | 5,9 | 6,7 | 6,0 |
| <i>F</i> | <i>ns</i> | 4,524** | 2,374* | 2,220* |
| <i>Eta</i> ² | | 8,4% | 4,7% | 4,4% |

***sign.* <0.05, **sign.* <0.10. Source: ENEC 2014.

If those who marked their trust in an institution above 5 on the 0-10 scale are regarded as having a positive attitude towards the institution and those who marked 5 or below as having distrust, similar results are also arrived at: the economic elite trust far more than the political elite in the EU institutions

⁸ Let us emphasize that out of the EU institutions it is the European Commission which is independent of the member states – and the Hungarian political elite puts least trust in this EU institution, and among all the elite groups they have most distrust in this EU institution.

and this applies to the rest of the elites, too. While in 2007 there was no significant difference between the political and economic elites in their trust in EU, the difference became significant by 2014.

While Gaxie and Hube (2012) have found that a quarter of the European elite is rather critical of the European integration and another quarter only supports it reluctantly, Bakonyi's 2007 data showed that the Hungarian elite was more confident than not in the EU institutions (Bakonyi 2008). The 2014 analyses have confirmed that the pro-EU members of the elite are the majority in Hungary as well (Table 3). The exception is the political elite among whom the rate of the sceptics about the European institutions is higher than the rate of the supporters.

Table 3. Share of those who trust and those who don't trust the EU institutions, by elite groups 2014 (%)

| | European Parliament | | European Commission | | Council of Europe | | 3 institutions together | |
|----------------------|---------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|-------------------------|----------|
| | Trust | No trust | Trust | No trust | Trust | No trust | Trust | No trust |
| Political elite | 43,9 | 56,1 | 35,1 | 64,9 | 54,4 | 45,6 | 33,3 | 66,7 |
| Economic elite | 61,8 | 38,2 | 64,7 | 35,3 | 67,6 | 26,5 | 50,0 | 44,1 |
| Media elite | 52,9 | 47,1 | 58,8 | 38,2 | 58,8 | 38,2 | 44,1 | 50,0 |
| Administrative elite | 48,3 | 48,3 | 62,1 | 34,5 | 82,8 | 13,8 | 48,3 | 48,3 |

Source: ENEC 2014.

Similarly to both Gaxie and Hube (2012) and Bakonyi (2008) conclusions about the European and Hungarian elites, respectively, the 2014 data has proved again that the pro-EU attitude and trust in EU institutions did not correlate, or correlated just weakly with demographic variables. Only women had more trust than men in EU institutions, but no other significant correlations we found between the institutional trust and demographic characteristics (age group, educational level, or birthplace) of the elite.

Table 4. Trust in EU institutions by demographic variables, means on 0-10 scale, 2014

| | European Parliament | European Commission | Council of Europe | 3 institutions together |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Male | 5,2 | 5,4 | 6,0 | 5,5 |
| Female | 6,1 | 6,4 | 6,2 | 6,2 |
| <i>F</i> | 3,647* | 5,065** | | 3,609* |
| <i>Eta</i> ² | 2,4% | 3,3% | <i>ns</i> | 2,4% |

**sign <0.05, *sign <0.10. Source: ENEC 2014.

Important, statistically significant differences we found in the average level of trust in EU institutions by the *self-rating left-right ideological affiliation*. The highest rate of trust is found among those who report to belong to the left, and the lowest is among the rightists (Table 5). The average level of trust of the political centre is placed around the middle of the scale. These findings rhyme with the tendencies discerned by Gaxie and Hube (2012) from a comparative European analysis: namely, the elite members with commitment to the left have more trust in the integration and the EU institutions than those attached to the right; and also with the tendencies found in the most recent elite survey from 2014.

Considering only the attitudes of political elite, the tendencies suggest that the right-wing political elite has the least trust and the leftist political elite has the most trust. In the economic elite this differentiation is not so clear-cut; we would tend to presume that in the economic elite the commitment to the left or right does not play a role in shaping the trust in EU institutions.

Table 5. Trust in EU institutions by self-rating on the left-right axis (mean on 0-10 scale, 2014)

| | European Parliament | European Commission | Council of Europe | 3 institutions together |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| Total sample | | | | |
| Left | 6,3 | 6,5 | 6,3 | 6,4 |
| Centre | 5,5 | 5,8 | 6,1 | 5,8 |
| Right | 5,0 | 5,1 | 6,0 | 5,3 |
| <i>F</i> | 5,245*** | 4,668** | <i>ns</i> | 4,497** |
| <i>Eta</i> ² | 7,0% | 6,3% | | 6,2% |
| Political elite | | | | |
| Left | 7,0 | 6,6 | 6,3 | 6,6 |
| Centre | 5,3 | 4,7 | 5,8 | 5,3 |
| Right | 4,7 | 4,4 | 5,5 | 4,9 |
| <i>F</i> | 6,613*** | 5,335*** | <i>ns</i> | 4,521** |
| <i>Eta</i> ² | 20,6% | 17,3% | | 15,1% |
| Economic elite | | | | |
| Left | 4,8 | 6,3 | 5,0 | 5,7 |
| Centre | 5,5 | 5,8 | 6,4 | 5,9 |
| Right | 5,6 | 5,9 | 5,2 | 5,6 |
| <i>F</i> | <i>ns</i> | <i>ns</i> | 3,907** | <i>ns</i> |
| <i>Eta</i> ² | | | 22,4% | |

***Sign <0.01; **Sign <0.05. Source: ENEC 2014.

The political elite trusted the European Parliament in *opposition* more than the *governing elite* in 2014 (Table 6). However, these findings do not rhyme with Gaxie and Hube's (2012) results who have concluded that the opposition was more sceptical than the elite of the ruling parties. Of course, they examined the entire European elite and here we only concentrated on the Hungarian elite. Our findings of 2014 are closer to those of the 2007 investigation which found that the then (leftist) governing MPs had greater trust than the (rightist) opposition representatives (Jáger 2008). When *party affiliation* is considered, the MSZP, KDNP⁹ members and independent members of the political elite put more trust in the EU institutions (with the LMP also giving more trust to the European Parliament) and FIDESZ, Jobbik and LMP are more sceptical. As compared to other factors examined here, the explanatory power of the party attachment of the political elite is the highest one in relation to the trust in EU institutions: it is between 25% and 45% (Table 6).

Table 6. Trust in EU institutions of the political elite by party attachment (means on 0-10 scale, 2014)

| | European Parliament | European Commission | Council of Europe | 3 institutions together |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| OPPOSITION – GOVERNMENT PARTY | | | | |
| Government party | 4,9 | 4,7 | 6,0 | 5,2 |
| Opposition | 6,0 | 5,4 | 5,5 | 5,6 |
| <i>F</i> | 3,865** | <i>ns</i> | <i>ns</i> | <i>ns</i> |
| <i>Eta</i> ² | 6,5% | | | |

⁹Christian democrats were advocates of the European integration for a long time, present already at the launching of EU. In June of 1947 the French Council of United Europe was founded (later merged with the European Movement in 1953), then in 1965 the „Nouvelles Equipes Internationales” was set up with Christian democratic support, later called the European Christian Democratic Union.

| (cont.) | European Parliament | European Commission | Council of Europe | 3 institutions together |
|---|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| PARTY AFFILIATION OF POLITICAL ELITE | | | | |
| Fidesz (34) | 4,8 | 4,5 | 5,9 | 5,1 |
| MSZP (8) | 7,3 | 7,5 | 7,4 | 7,4 |
| Jobbik (6) | 3,9 | 2,4 | 3,6 | 3,3 |
| KDNP (5) | 5,7 | 6,0 | 6,3 | 6,0 |
| LMP (2) | 6,0 | 3,5 | 3,5 | 4,3 |
| Independent (3) | 7,0 | 7,0 | 5,3 | 6,4 |
| <i>F</i> | 3,495*** | 8,392*** | 4,474*** | 6,331*** |
| <i>Eta</i> ² | 25,4% | 45,0% | 30,4% | 38,2% |

****Sign* <0.01. Source: ENEC 2014.

One of the most important conclusions of the 2007 survey of the Hungarian elite was that those had the greatest trust in the three EU institutions who had a *wealth of contacts* with political, decision-making actors and institutions; and also, that *well-informedness* had a negative influence on the Hungarian elite's trust in EU institutions (Bakonyi 2008). In the 2014 survey we used a proxy variable to measure the openness or informedness: *Have you ever lived abroad for at least three months?* In 2014 we found no statistically significant correlation between the frequency of contacts with EU institutions and trust in them. On the other hand, those who lived abroad for at least three months have more trust in EU institutions than those who didn't. This is especially true for the Hungarian political elite group, as well: those who lived abroad trusted the European Commission and the European Council of Ministers more than those who didn't live abroad. That is to say the 2014 findings rhyme with the previous European and Hungarian research results: openness and foreign experience entails greater trust in EU institutions and even differentiates the attitude of the normally most critical political elite.

Table 7. Trust in EU institutions by informedness (means on 0-10 scale, 2014)

| | European Parliament | European Commission | Council of Europe | 3 institutions together |
|--|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|
| LIVED ABROAD FOR AT LEAST 3 MONTHS, total sample | | | | |
| Yes | 5,6 | 5,9 | 6,4 | 5,9 |
| No | 5,1 | 5,3 | 5,8 | 5,4 |
| <i>F</i> | | 3,416* | 5,071** | 4,102** |
| <i>Eta</i> ² | <i>ns</i> | 2,3% | 3,4% | 2,8% |
| LIVED ABROAD FOR AT LEAST 3 MONTHS, political elite | | | | |
| Yes | 5,8 | 5,7 | 6,6 | 6,0 |
| No | 5,0 | 4,4 | 5,4 | 4,9 |
| <i>F</i> | | 3,762* | 4,023** | 3,666* |
| <i>Eta</i> ² | <i>ns</i> | 6,5% | 6,9% | 6,4% |

***sign*<0.05; * *sign*<0.10. Source: ENEC 2014.

Experts on this research topic emphasize that the attitude to the EU institutions largely depends on the evaluation of the main objectives of the European integration. Some lobby forces regard the market integration as the most important aspect; the radical left claims that social protection has first priority; social democrats wish to promote welfare through a common fiscal policy and the extension of EU's scope of employment and social regulation; the Greens hope to see the vision of a multicultural society realized through the integration (Hooghe and Marks, 2008). Gaxie and Hube (2012) also concluded from

their European analysis that the evaluation of EU institutions was governed by these ideological lines. During the survey of 2014 the respondents had to say how much they agree with the statements: “*The European Commission ought to become the real government of the European Union*”, and “*The scopes of jurisdiction of the European Parliament ought to be extended*”. Those who agreed with these statements, obviously had more trust in the respective institutions. The correlations were examined within each elite group and similar tendencies were found. The political elite and the economic elite differed significantly in their attitudes in these both aspects.

Connections between trust in EU institutions and trust in national institutions in Hungary 2014

The explanations based on *information deficit* in analyses of opinions about EU start out from the premise that the average population, and certain elite groups have little information, or defective knowledge about the EU and therefore in their judgments of the EU institutions they start out from an attitude to the national institutions (“cue-effect”, Anderson 1988).

All but the political elite segments were asked about their trust in national institutions in 2014: rating the trust in Hungarian parliament, government, and local governments. However, the responses of the administrative elite regarding their trust in national institutions clearly revealed their commitment to the current national government: this elite put more trust in the Hungarian parliament and Hungarian government than in the EP and the European Commission, and they trust significantly more the national institutions than the other elite segments as well (Table 8). In the administrative elite very few people (1 to 4) marked values below 5 on the 0-10 scale, that is, only 1 to 4 out of 29 indicated that they did not trust the national institutions. However, only the administrative elite included members – 6 to 7 out of 29 – who refused to answer this question. We conclude from this that those of the administrative elite who did not trust the national institutions rather chose not to answer the question.

All but the administrative elite displayed lower trust in national institutions than in EU institutions. The national institution that elicited the greatest trust was the local government in every elite group except for the administrative elite who – meaning those who answered at all – trusted most the Hungarian government (mean 8.1). Such high average trust was not found in any other institution, be it European or national, in any studied elite group.

Table 8. Trust in EU and national institutions by elite group (means on 0-10 scale, 2014)

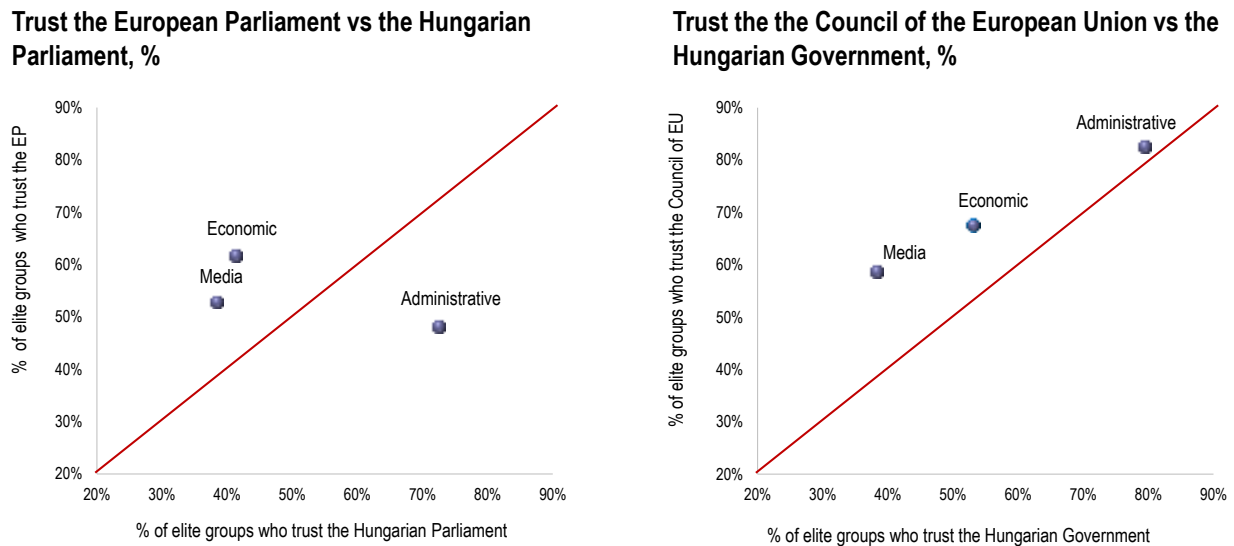
| Type of elite: | Hungarian Parliament | European Parliament | Hungarian government | EU Council | European Commission | Local governments | EU institutions together | HU institutions together |
|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|------------|---------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Economic | 4,8 | 5,4 | 4,9 | 6,0 | 5,9 | 5,6 | 5,8 | 5,1 |
| Media | 4,7 | 5,3 | 4,3 | 6,0 | 6,0 | 5,4 | 5,7 | 4,8 |
| Administrative | 7,7 | 5,5 | 8,1 | 6,7 | 5,9 | 6,8 | 6,0 | 7,5 |
| <i>F</i> | 11,649*** | <i>ns</i> | 16,584** | 2,374* | 4,524** | 3,806* | 2,220* | 12,468*** |
| <i>Eta</i> ² | 21,1% | | 27,4% | 8,4% | 8,4% | 8,0% | 4,4% | 22,5% |

***sign.* <0.05, **sign* <0.10. Source: ENEC 2014.

What implications can be revealed when trust levels in the two directly elected representative institutions, the European Parliament and the Hungarian parliament are compared? And how about trust in the Hungarian government (comprising ministers) and the European Council of Ministers? As the below figures clearly show, the administrative elite stand aloof of the rest of the elite groups: it is the

only elite group that trusts the Hungarian parliament more than the EP. Though they trust the Hungarian government far more than any other elite group, the European Council still enjoys slightly more of their trust. The trust of the economic and media elite is higher in European institutions than in Hungarian institutions. The most positive attitude is clearly displayed by the economic elite for both EU and national institutions (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Trust in national versus supranational institutions, 2014



Source: ENEC 2014

Level of trust of the Hungarian political elite in international perspective

For the sake of comparability between 2007 and 2014 we selected those 9 countries which were investigated both in the INTUNE and in the ENEC research, providing comparable data for studying trust in institutions in 2007 and 2014. As we have already presented in Table 1, in 2007 German, Greek and Lithuanian elites trusted in these European institutions above the average, while French, Bulgarian and Italian elites below that. The Hungarian political elite trusted in the EU institutions in 2007 around or slightly above the average.

National elites' trust in the European Parliament in 2014 is about the level it was in 2007, while trust in the European Commission and the European Council of Ministers slightly decreased on the average. Behind this slight average decrease however there are significant changes. While German and Greek elites maintain their over-average trust in EP, they do trust in the other two institutions below the average. Lithuanian elite kept its over-average trust in supranational institutions, Spanish and Bulgarian elites became over-average trustful in the meantime. French elites remained sceptical and all respects and - this is of particular importance in our study - the Hungarian political elite became one of the most sceptical concerning trustfulness in the EU's representative institutions.

On the average of the three European institutions in 2014 Bulgarian, Lithuanian and Spanish elites trust over-the average, while French, Greek, Hungarian and Portuguese elites below the average (German and Italian elites are close to the average).

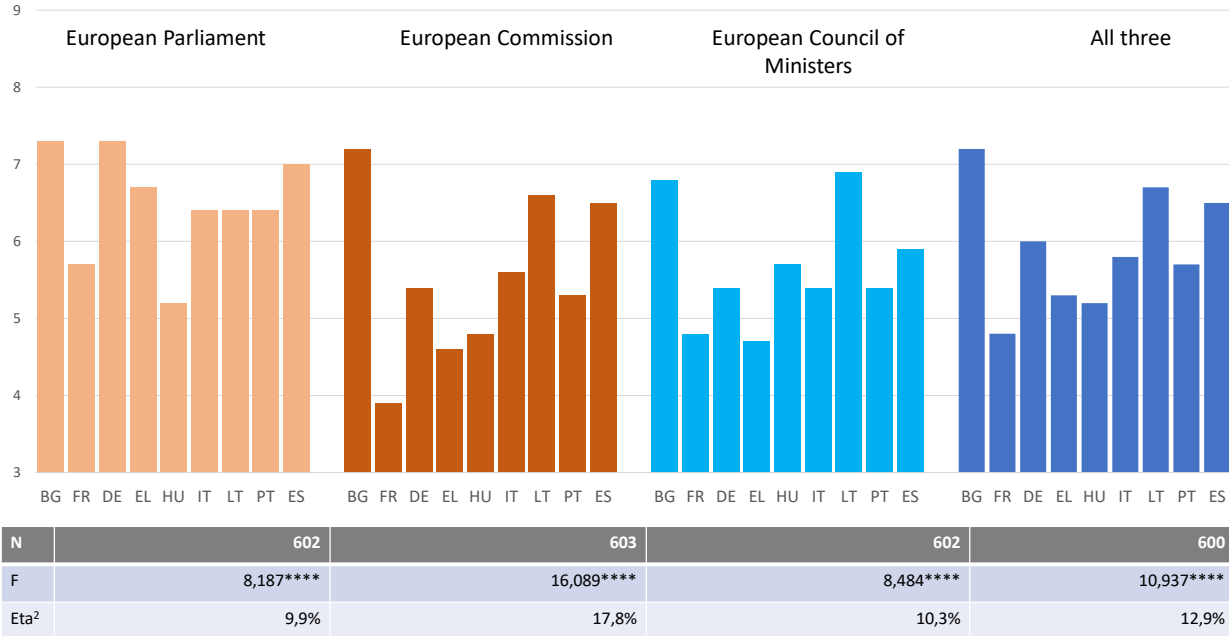
In 2014 national political elites' trust in the Commission and in the Council of Ministers is lower than trust in the EP. Female MPs trust more in the EU institutions than male and in the case of the European Parliament this difference is significant. It might be interesting to note that newcomer MPs trust significantly more in the European Parliament than the rest. Those in a federalist position evidently trust

more in European institutions than the rest (although in the case of the European Council of Ministers the difference is not significant). Intensity of European contacts have positive connection with trust, although the connection is not significant in the case of the European Parliament.

Ideological left-right self-positioning has an interesting connection with trust in EU-institutions. Those positioning themselves on the left (0-3 on a 0-10 scale) trust over-average in the European Parliament and below-average in the other two institutions. Those positioning themselves on the right (7-10 on this scale), on the contrary trust over-average in the Commission and in the Council of Ministers and below-average in the Parliament. Those positioned themselves in the centre trusted over-average all three European institutions. The connection between ideological position and trust in European institutions proved to be significant in all, but Parliament.

The impact of party families is significant concerning trust towards EU-institutions. Extreme left (including communists and new left) and extreme right party members are below-average trustful towards EU-institutions. Liberals in general are more trustful than the average, but right-liberals within them are sceptical toward the European Parliament. Greens, on the contrary, trust over-average in the Parliament, but distrust the Commission and the Council. Socialists, social democrats - members of the largest party family - trust around or slightly above the average, while Christian democrats significantly above the average in all respects. Conservatives - the second most numerous party family - above average trust the Commission and the Council of ministers, but slightly below the average concerning the European Parliament. Finally, regionalists, ethnic minority party members - who just like liberals are mostly centrists, but left and right ideological orientations are also present among them - trust below the average in any of the European institutions.

Figure 3. National political elites’ trust in European institutions (averages, 0-10 point scale, 2014)



Source: ENEC 2014.

The Hungarian elites differ from the rest in the below-average trust toward the European Parliament and toward the European Commission, but don't differ in terms of the perception of the European Council of Ministers. Hungarian political elites are the most sceptical towards the European Parliament, which is partly due to the relatively great proportion of far-right presence in the Hungarian Parliament. The other reason is that the governing coalition belongs also to the sceptical camp.

This is a relatively rare constellation, because on the average *governing party* MPs trust significantly more in the European institutions than opposition party MPs. French elites are also below the average in terms of trust in the European Parliament. French, Greek and Hungarian MPs are especially sceptical concerning the Commission (Figure 3). French and Greek MPs trust below the average concerning the Council of Ministers as well (Hungarian MPs are on the average in this respect). That center-periphery or regional location is not the explanatory factor of trust in European institutions could be illustrated with the fact that not only French, but German and Italian MPs trust slightly below the average in one or two EU-institutions. On the other hand, the most trustful national MPs were the Bulgarian, Lithuanian and Spanish elites.

The multivariate analysis of the supranational trust of political elite in the European institutions

As presented above we find from the international comparison from 2014 that the ideological left-right self-positioning, as well the impact of party affiliation of political elite has a significant impact concerning the trust towards the European institutions. We are aware of the hierarchical and nested structure of the data regarding the elite type and the national affiliation and also of the interactional effect on trust of the type of the elite and the nationality (country) of the elite. To check how the main contributing factors affect the trust in the European institutions individually or in interaction with the nationality, we use Multiple Hierarchical Anova analysis. Our goal is to check if the party affiliation or the left-right ideological self-positioning – the factors with highest explanatory power towards the trust in descriptive analysis – has an independent effect on supranational trust or this effect is not independent by the nationality?

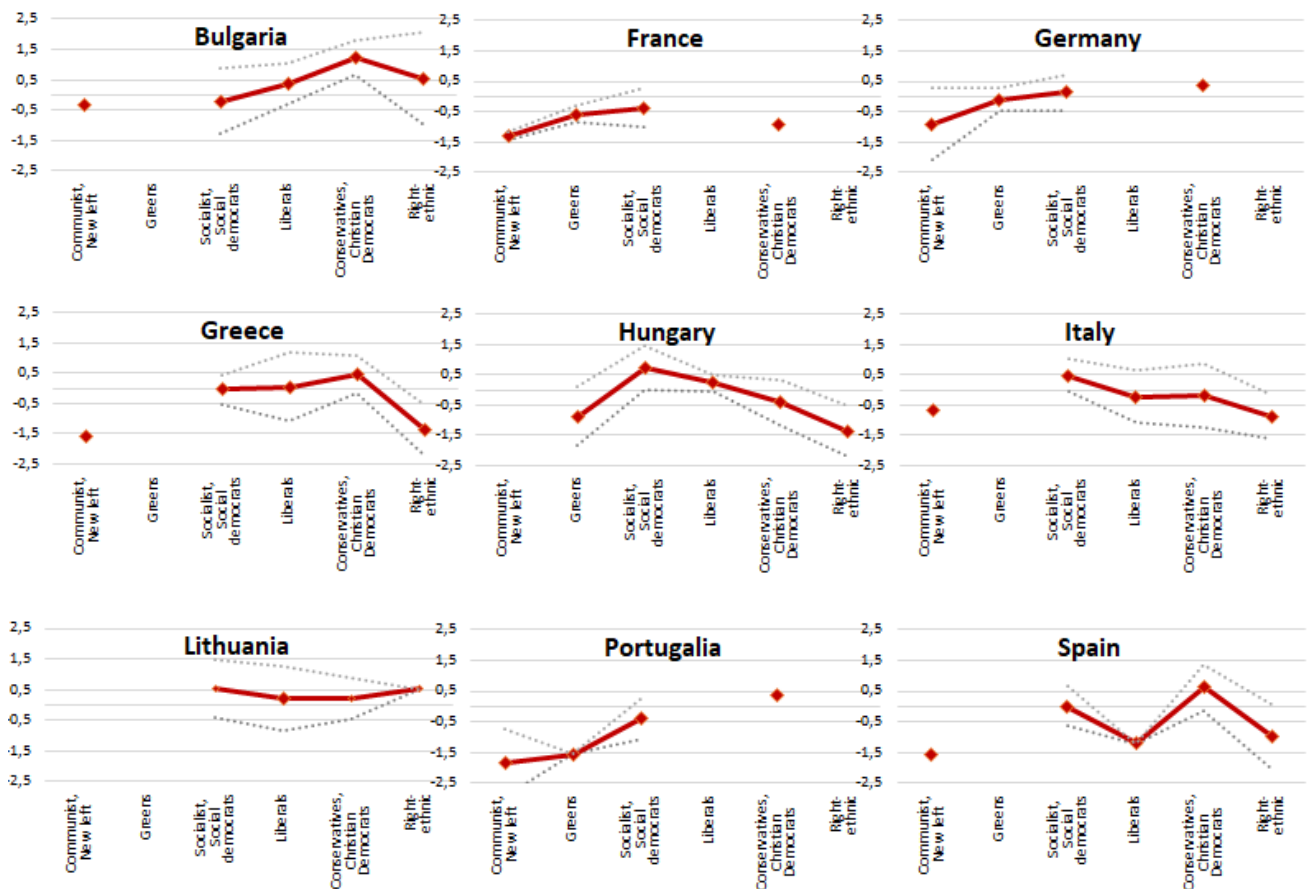
The dependent variable is a constructed index from the three trust variables: it is the regression factor score variable of the trust in EP, EC and Commission of Europe. The explanatory variables are country and party family (in model 1), as well the country and the left-right self-identification (in model 2). Both individual and interaction effects are significant and the effect of party family remains significant even when it is controlled for country. It differs according to nationality which party family trusts more in the supranational institutions. In Bulgaria, Germany, Greece, Portugal and Spain the right-wing conservative, while in Hungary, Italy, France and Lithuania the left-wing party families trusted more in the EU.

Table 9a. The effect of party family affiliation on trust in EU-institutions, 2014 (One-way and Two-way Hierarchical Anova, Model Goodness of fit, R square)

| Dependent var. | Explanatory var. | F | R ² | Partial effect (eta ²) |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Individual effects | | | | |
| Trust in EU institutions | Country | **** | 13,4% | |
| Trust in EU institutions | Party family | **** | 17,3% | |
| Partial and interaction effect | | | | |
| Trust in EU institutions | Country | **** | 47,1% | 19,2% |
| | Party family | **** | | 29,1% |
| | Country*party family | **** | | 19,5% |

**** sign. < 0,001. Source: ENEC 2014.

Figure 4. The cross effects of country and party family affiliation towards the trust in supranational institutions, averages, 0-10 point scale, 2014



Source: ENEC 2014.

The explanatory power of the model slightly increased when the governing vs opposition party variable has been involved as a covariate. The partial effect of governing/opposition party position was greater than party family itself. Involvement of ideology (as a covariate) did not improve the model.

Table 9b. The effect of party family affiliation and governing vs opposition party on trust in EU institutions, 2014 (Two-way Hierarchical Anova, Model Goodness of fit, R square)

| Dependent var. | Explanatory var. | F | R ² | Partial effect (eta ²) |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Partial and interaction effect | | | | |
| Supranational trust index | Governing party | **** | 48,6% | 23,2% |
| | Country | **** | | 19,8% |
| | Party family | **** | | 15,1% |
| | Country*party family | **** | | 17,8% |

**** sign. <0,001, Source: ENEC 2014.

The left – right ideological position’s direct effect explained only 7% from the variance of supranational trust, but the effect of its interaction with country proved to be strong. Besides of party family, ideological self-positioning is important, although due to the overlapping between the two variables they don’t add-up too much to each other’s effect.

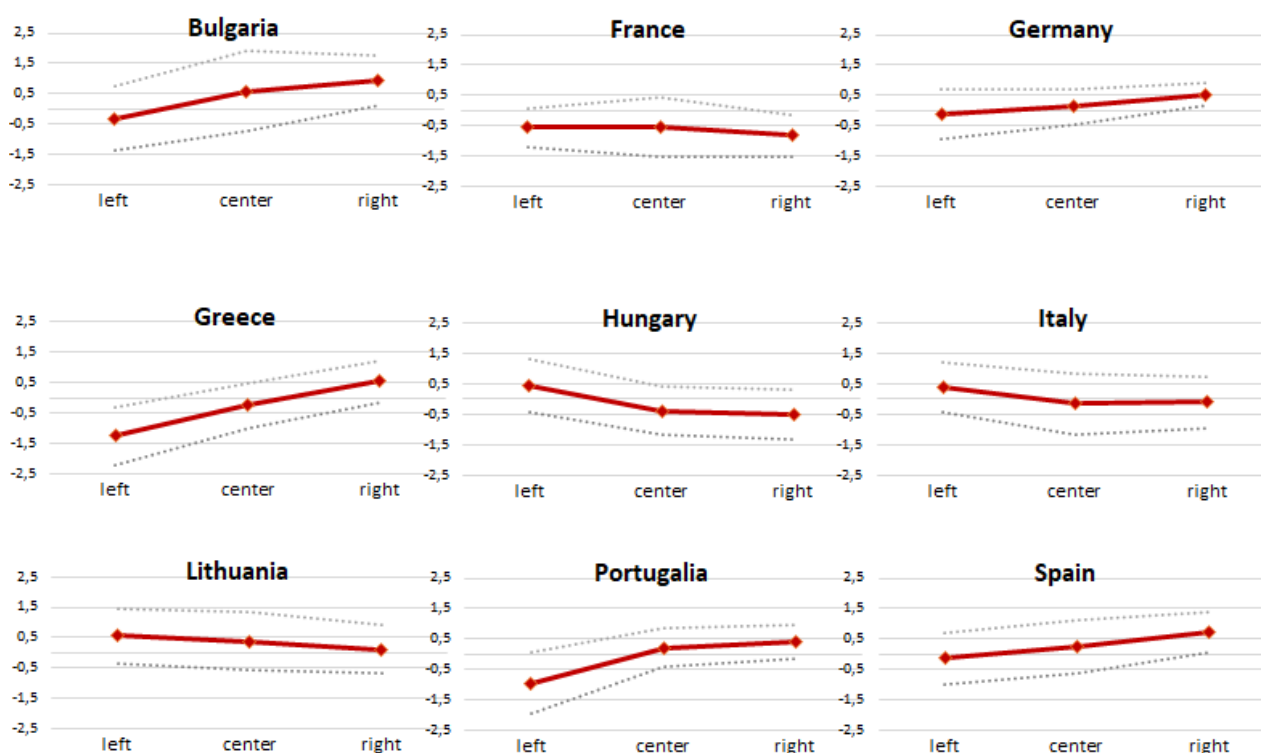
Table 10. The effect of ideological self-positioning on trust in EU institutions, 2014 (Two-way Hierarchical Anova, Model Goodness of fit, R square)

| Dependent var. | Explanatory var. | F | R ² | Partial effect (eta ²) |
|--|---------------------------|------|----------------|------------------------------------|
| Individual effects | | | | |
| Supranational trust index | Country | **** | 13,4% | |
| Supranational trust index | Left-right scale | **** | 7,0% | |
| Partial and interaction effects | | | | |
| Supranational trust index | Country | **** | 43,9% | 18,6% |
| | Left-right scale | **** | | 13,1% |
| | Country* left-right scale | **** | | 28,7% |

**** sign. < 0,001, Source: ENEC 2014.

For the graphic representation of the interaction effect of nationality and left-right self-identification on the supranational trust we encoded this variable as follow: left: 0-3; centre: 4-6; right: 7-10 (Figure 5). While the Bulgarian, Greek, Portuguese and Spanish right-wing elite trust the EU institutions, in Hungary, Italy and Lithuania the left-wing elite trust it.

Figure 5. The cross effects of country and left-right self-identification towards the trust in supranational institutions, averages, 0-10 point scale, 2014



Source: ENEC 2014.

The elite-population gap concerning supranational trust

In *general population* there was a significant difference between trust in European and national institutions Europe-wide: EU-institutions were trusted with 15-20% points more than national ones in 2007. There was no exception in this respect concerning countries. As an effect of the crisis one can see that trust in political institutions did drop significantly. This drop was greater in the case of EU-

institutions (12-13% points on the average), than in the case of national ones (5-6 %). In some countries like the Mediterranean ones, especially Spain and Greece the drop was enormous. In Germany there was a drop in trust toward European institutions and an increase in trust toward national parliament and government. In Lithuania both trust in EU and national institutions has grown, while in Bulgaria and Hungary the changes were not as big as elsewhere. All in all, the absolute majority of those who trusted EU-institutions has gone. The gap between trust in EU and national institutions was reduced, but still exists, favouring EU-institutions in all investigated countries, but Germany.

Table 11. Population's trust in European and national institutions (% of those who trust, 2007, 2014)

| | 2007 | | | | 2014 | | | |
|-----------|------|----|----|----|------|----|----|----|
| | EP | EC | NP | NG | EP | EC | NP | NG |
| BULGARIA | 58 | 46 | 11 | 16 | 52 | 46 | 14 | 19 |
| FRANCE | 58 | 54 | 40 | 42 | 38 | 46 | 23 | 17 |
| GERMANY | 52 | 46 | 41 | 40 | 43 | 36 | 49 | 48 |
| GREECE | 77 | 69 | 52 | 46 | 32 | 23 | 14 | 11 |
| HUNGARY | 67 | 61 | 35 | 34 | 52 | 51 | 29 | 33 |
| ITALY | 53 | 50 | 25 | 23 | 39 | 33 | 18 | 18 |
| LITHUANIA | 57 | 53 | 13 | 24 | 61 | 58 | 17 | 32 |
| PORTUGAL | 63 | 59 | 37 | 30 | 44 | 43 | 20 | 17 |
| SPAIN | 62 | 53 | 47 | 49 | 28 | 26 | 10 | 11 |
| Total | 55 | 50 | 35 | 34 | 42 | 38 | 30 | 28 |
| <i>N</i> | 9583 | | | | 9776 | | | |

EP=European Parliament; EC= European Commission; NP= National Parliament; NG= National Government. Sources: Eurobarometer 68, 82.

On the average *elites* did trust more in the European Parliament and European Commission than their respective public in 2007. It was the case in Hungary as well. The general picture remained the same in all but one countries in 2014 and the absolute majority of national political elites trusts in EU-institutions (table 12), while among the public the absolute majority has evaporated (Table 11).

Table 12. Political elite's trust in European political institutions (% of those who trust, 2007, 2014)

| | 2007 | | 2014 | |
|-----------|------|-----|------|-----|
| | EP | EC | EP | EC |
| BULGARIA | 55 | 53 | 80 | 81 |
| FRANCE | 58 | 30 | 60 | 15 |
| GERMANY | 92 | 57 | 83 | 54 |
| GREECE | 85 | 58 | 72 | 44 |
| HUNGARY | 71 | 65 | 44 | 35 |
| ITALY | 60 | 52 | 74 | 58 |
| LITHUANIA | 73 | 72 | 61 | 71 |
| PORTUGAL | 58 | 63 | 71 | 55 |
| SPAIN | 69 | 70 | 83 | 70 |
| Total | 69 | 58 | 70 | 54 |
| <i>N</i> | 742 | 747 | 596 | 597 |

EP=European Parliament; EC= European Commission; 6 or more on a 0-10 scale; Source: own calculation, ENEC 2014

The Hungarian case is worth of interest not only because there was a huge drop in political elite's supranational trust, but because due to this development the political elite's supranational trust became lower than that of the Hungarian population. It was not without antecedents: it did happen with the French and Greek elites in the case of the European Commission, while Bulgarian and Portuguese elites trusted slightly less in the European Parliament than their population. By 2014 the elite-population gap has grown in terms of supranational trust in all investigated countries, but Hungary (where it did turn around). More exactly, the absolute value of the trust gap has grown in Hungary as well, but while previously – like everywhere else – an elite-population gap could have been observed, now a population-elite trust gap became predominant.

If elite and public opinion get closer to each other it might be interpreted in terms of adaptation and responsiveness. Even among the circumstances of mutual trust and elite responsiveness, responsibility (to use Sartori's terms (Sartori 2005)) may dictate and legitimate moves in the opposite direction, leading to growing elite-mass gap. But if the rare case occurs that the elite-mass opinion gap turns upside down (typically elites were more supportive while people reluctant and now it is the other way around) it refers to an extremely sharp political turn. In principle it may or may not have good reasons, but certainly may have unforeseen consequences as well. Besides of more calculable international consequences it may confuse and divide the public, may contribute to turning away from public affairs and undermine civic morale.

Conclusion

In a comparative European elite research based on data collected in 2007 Gaxie and Hube (2012) has found that a quarter of the European elite are fairly critical of the integration and another quarter only supports it "reluctantly". The survey in 2007 of the political and economic elites actually revealed that the Hungarian elites had above average trust in the EU institutions (Bakonyi 2008).

With the exception of the political elite, the majority of the different elite groups in Hungary still had a positive attitude to the EU institutions in 2014. The majority of the political elite, by contrast, do not trust the European Parliament or the European Commission. Consequently, the distrust in EU institutions found in the political elite and the criticisms they voice about the European Union in accord with or fed by their distrust might be an indication of the strengthening Euroscepticism. It is also to be noted that while in the comparative European elite research based on the 2007 data prompted the analysts to emphasize that among the elites of the East-Central European countries - who on the whole belonged to the critics of the EU - only the Hungarian elite had a positive attitude to the integration and the EU institutions, on the basis of the 2014 data we have concluded that the Hungarian elite is below the average level of trust in the EU institutions.

Since the European integration concentrated on the economy from the start, the theorists of this issue also presumed that the European economic elite would have a positive attitude to the European Union and its institutions. However, research findings have revealed that the political and economic elites did not deviate in their attitude to the European Union: the economic elite was not more supportive of the EU than the political elite. The analyses of the Hungarian elite of 2007 did not find differences between the political and economic elites in their trust in EU institutions (Bakonyi 2008). By contrast, the findings of our 2014 analyses clearly suggest that the economic elite had greater trust in the EU institutions than the political elite. As against 50% of the economic elite only 33% of the political elite trusts the three EU institutions. The political elite was significantly more distrustful of the EU institutions than all other studied elite groups.

The left – right ideological attitude and the party attachment in the Hungarian political elite provided the greatest explanatory power for trust in EU institutions. Those who professed to stand on the left had the highest rate of trust in EU institutions (67% in the European Parliament and 68% in the European Commission), corresponding rates being the lowest among those who self-reported to be on the ideological right (41% and 45%, respectively). These findings tally with the international and Hungarian data of the 2007 research which also found that the left-wing elite supported more the EU integration and institutions than the right-wing elite. Analysing the trust in EU institutions by party adherence, we have found that members of the political elite attached to the MSZP and KDNP as well as the independent members trust the EU institutions most and FIDESZ, Jobbik and LMP members trust least.

By multivariate analysis we have proved that both individual and interaction effects of nationality and party affiliation are significant. Namely, the effect of party family remains significant even when it is controlled for country; and it differs according to nationality which party family trusts more in the supranational institutions. Not only the party affiliation, but also the governing/opposition party position has significant effect on trust in institutions. The left – right ideological position's direct effect explained only 7% from the variance of supranational trust, but the effect of its interaction with country proved to be strong. Our results lead to the conclusion that besides the party family affiliation of the elite groups, also the ideological self-positioning is important regarding the trust in EU institutions and these effects are significantly modified by the elites' nationality.

While trust in EU institutions is significantly differ among political elites and other elite groups, in case of the national institutions the opinions of administrative elite differ significantly from the other elite groups. Conspicuously the administrative elite had a high rate of those who refused to answer these questions; we suppose that those who didn't trust the national institutions chose not to answer. With the exception of the administrative elite, all elite groups (economic, media) displayed less trust in national institutions than in EU institutions. Out of the three Hungarian institutions local governments enjoyed the greatest trust, which is true for all elite groups but the administrative elite, who trust the Hungarian government most.

The Hungarian political elite's over-average trust towards EU-institutions significantly decreased between 2007 and 2014 as a result of the economic crisis and the accompanying populist turn in national politics. The Hungarian political elite – together with the French and Greek ones – became the most sceptical toward supranational EU-institutions.

The general tendency is that national political elites trust more in supranational solutions than their respective public. Now the Hungarian specificity is that the political elite trusts less in EU-institutions than the population. That raises questions about the content of responsiveness and responsibility of elite behaviour and provides an example of elite-driven populism.

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