

# Europeanization of public policy in Hungary: an empirical research\*

ANDRÁS BÍRÓ-NAGY, GERGELY LAKI\*\*

## Abstract

Empirical research about the European Union's impact on domestic public policy has been largely missing from academic research about Hungary. By presenting the results of analysis of three new databases, the aim of this study is to investigate the impact of the EU on Hungarian public policy between 2004 and 2018. The three aspects covered in this article are the Europeanization of law-making in the Hungarian parliament, the implementation of country-specific recommendations issued by the European Commission, and the similarities and differences between different governments in terms of handling infringement procedures. Our results show that the interaction between the Hungarian government (and in general, V4 governments) and the EU is much less conflictual at the policy level than what some high-profile political conflicts might suggest.

*Keywords:* European integration; Europeanization; public policy; policy implementation; European Semester; Euroscepticism

DOI: 10.5817/PC2022-2-1\*\*

## 1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to analyze the impact of EU membership on Hungarian public policy. Research on Europeanization (Radaelli, 2003) may concentrate on the impact of the EU on the political systems and institutions of the member states, on public policy decisions taken at the member state level, and how the soft context of policy (norms, values, perceptions, narratives) changes as a consequence of the constant interaction between national and EU policies. Of these three trends, our paper analyzes the public policy aspect of the Europeanization process in the period between Hungary's accession to the EU

---

\* This paper has been produced with professional support from the Bolyai János Research Scholarship, the New National Excellence Programme of the Ministry of Innovation and Technology registered under code number ÚNKP-20-5-CORVINUS-22, and Grant K 135347 from the National Research, Development and Innovation Office (NKFIH).

\*\* András Bíró-Nagy is a Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Social Sciences, Institute for Political Science, 1097 Budapest, Tóth Kálmán utca 4, Hungary, e-mail: biro-nagy.andras@tk.hu. ORCID: 0000-0002-7647-4478. Gergely Laki is a PhD student, Corvinus University of Budapest, Doctoral School of Political Science, 1093 Budapest, Fővám tér 8, Hungary, e-mail: gerlaki@gmail.com.

and the last Hungarian parliamentary elections (2004–2018) on the basis of the laws of the Hungarian Parliament, the European Commission's annual country-specific recommendations, and the infringement proceedings which represent one of the main fields of conflict between national governments and the EU.

The review of the laws passed by the Hungarian *Országgyűlés* according to the aspects of Europeanization helps to reveal the extent of the EU's impact on Hungarian legislation. The implementation of the country-specific recommendations of the European Commission shows how seriously member state governments take compliance with a softer public policy coordination instrument and not the fulfilment of obligations. Infringement proceedings are about non-compliance with obligations. In order to make quantifiable statements in all three areas, we built three databases, the content and results of which are presented in the sections below. Based on these three databases, we can assess on an empirical basis the impact of the EU on Hungarian public policy between 2004 and 2018. The study of the European origin of the laws is based on original data gathered by the a Hungarian research group, the Comparative Agendas Project (Boda & Sebők, 2018), which of the member states that joined in 2004 or later has so far been completed only for Hungary. Thus comparison with the Visegrad countries in the field of legislation is not possible but comparisons can be made in the fields of compliance with country-specific recommendations and infringement proceedings. For these latter two topics we analyzed the Hungarian data in a regional and EU comparison.

Following a brief presentation of the relevant academic literature, we present these three methods of measuring the relationship between the EU and Hungarian public policy. In all three areas, we review the logic of the interaction between EU and member state policy and the method by which we built our databases. In the fourth section, we present our results on the variance in the proportion of laws of European origin passed under different governments, the extent to which the Hungarian government implemented the country-specific public policy recommendations of the European Commission, and the similarities and differences between Hungarian governments after EU accession in the infringement proceedings. At the end, we draw conclusions about the impact of EU membership on Hungarian public policy.

## 2. Theoretical framework: Europeanization of Hungary

By fulfilling the membership criteria as a full-fledged democracy and a capitalist economy that is able to withstand competition in the single market, Hungary joined the European Union in 2004. A few years after gaining membership, the country's developmental trajectory both in political and economic terms took surprising turns. After the 2008 Great Recession, which heavily hit the global economy including EU member states, Hungary has experienced gradual democratic backsliding, and a shift away from the liberal economic policies that characterized the first two decades after the change of regime. Now scholars describe the deteriorating conditions of Hungarian democracy with various labels, such as a hybrid regime (Bozóki & Hegedűs, 2018), illiberal regime (Buzogány, 2017;

Krekó & Enyedi, 2018), autocracy (Ágh, 2015; Antal, 2019), and even mafia state (Magyar & Vásárhelyi, 2017). Similarly, the dependent market economy of Hungary built on neoliberal premises (Bohle & Greskovits, 2012) has gradually shifted to a new model, to which researchers apply various labels including authoritarian neoliberalism (Fabry, 2019), authoritarian capitalism (Sallai & Schnyder, 2020; Scheiring, 2021), and national neo-liberalism (Ban et al., 2021).

What is common in these profound institutional changes is that they represent a significant deviation away from core EU norms and values and violate the principle of rule of law, which is puzzling given the country's nearly 20 years of membership. Assuming that the European Union has a consolidating effect on its members, Hungary's case suggests a complete failure of Europeanization mechanisms. Even though pre-accession conditionality exerts much stronger pressure of compliance on candidates than the softer post-accession influence (Epstein & Sedelmeier, 2008; Sedelmeier, 2008), and even though the EU's economic impact on its members has been found to be much greater than its political effect (Epstein & Jacoby, 2014), the considerable deviation of Hungary from the EU's core norms remains puzzling.

While the so-far cited publications aim to grasp the big picture and explore and understand the systemic changes in Hungary's politics and political economy, surprisingly few scholarly studies consider the analysis of the public policy domain. This is also surprising because notable EU influences are present in various public policies that represent the main, although mostly quiet, battleground between the EU and Hungary. Only those public policies enter into the spotlight that become heavily politicized and contested in Hungary's EU relations, such as the media law (Batory, 2014), migration policy (Bíró-Nagy, 2021), and judiciary policy (Kovács & Scheppele, 2018). A systematic look at the evolution of the impact of the EU on policy-making in Hungary has been missing in the academic literature. Although some important comparative works have been published that aim to understand selected public policies within the EU regulatory context, for instance monetary policy and the policy towards the Eurozone (Arató et al., 2021; Piroška et al., 2021), development policy (Bachtler et al., 2014; Medve-Bálint, 2018), and environmental policy (Buzogány & Varga, 2018), they are separate attempts that do not provide an overall picture of the EU's impact on public policy in Hungary.

This paper aims to fill this gap by evaluating the level of Europeanization of laws adopted in the Hungarian parliament, implementation of country specific recommendations, and the track record of Hungarian governments in the infringement procedures. The main assumption of this research is that Hungarian public policy is much more aligned with the EU's norms and specific regulatory frameworks than one would assume based on the ongoing rule of law debates and political contestation of EU membership by the current Hungarian government. In this respect, we expect continuity of post-accession compliance before and after the Great Recession; in other words, we expect that the public policies do not reflect the authoritarian tendencies observed in the democratic polity. In short, we hypothesize that the impact of Europeanization in the public policy domain is much more stable and persistent than might be predicted based on the academic literature stressing the anti-liberal and authoritarian shifts in Hungary's politics and political economy. We contrast these expectations with those

views that argue that a ‘grand illiberal transformation’ has occurred in Hungarian public policy (Hajnal, 2021), according to which the policies have become entirely permeated with partisan interests and serve particularistic objectives (Magyar & Vásárhelyi, 2017). These perspectives neglect or at best downplay the EU’s constraining influence on public policy making.

However, we base our expectations on several academic studies of Europeanization after the EU’s eastward enlargement. Some results suggest a remarkably persistent Eastern European compliance with EU rules in competition policy (Lindstrom, 2021; Vukov, 2020) and cohesion policy (Bachtler et al., 2014; Tosun, 2014). Toshkov (2012) proved empirically that practical implementation and EU law application in CEE are not disastrous, and a look into the infringement procedures — the major enforcement instrument available to the EU institutions — confirms this picture. When it comes to infringement procedures, Börzel and Sedelmeier (2017) have shown that concerns that enlargement inevitably increases non-compliance by the new member states are unfounded. In his research about infringement procedures in Central and Eastern European member states, Sedelmeier (2008, p. 822) underlines that ‘the compliance laggards among the EU8 appear to be those with higher Euroscepticism within national parliaments’. When it comes to the non-compulsory element of cooperation with EU institutions, we assume that this is even more the case, as it opens the opportunity for Eurosceptic political actors to non-compliance, without serious political or policy consequences.

Concerning the Hungarian government during this period, it is important to point out that the Eurosceptic Orbán government has been in power since 2010, while pro-European MSZP-led governments ran the country during the first six years of Hungary’s EU membership (2004–2010). Data on Euroscepticism from the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Bakker et al., 2021) between 1999–2019 shows that PM Orbán’s Fidesz Party became strongly Eurosceptic after it returned to power in 2010. By 2019, Fidesz was considered more Eurosceptic than the formerly far-right Jobbik party. We will check empirically in this paper whether the Euroscepticism of the Orbán government has had a negative influence on the treatment of infringements and the domestic implementation of EU law, compared to the preceding Socialist governments.

### 3. Three forms of measuring the relationship between the EU and Hungarian public policy

#### 3.1. The impact of the EU on Hungarian legislation

In the process of Europeanization, formal and informal rules, procedures, public policy paradigms, and norms develop, spread, and are institutionalized (Ladrech, 1994; Ra-daelli, 2003). These are first defined at the EU level and then integrated into the political structures of the member states, public policy and public discourse. It also follows from the complex approach of Europeanization that the process can be grasped not only

through mandatory EU legislation, but also at which points it is necessary to identify when a government proactively makes a public policy change referring to EU trends, goals, and recommendations. The European Union can have a serious impact on national policy even if it does not have the power to impose binding regulations. Consequently, in our analysis, we place special emphasis on distinguishing between the laws that Hungarian governments had to adapt to Hungarian conditions (passive Europeanization) and those laws in which different governments clearly refer to European antecedents, but still, it was left to their own discretion whether to deal with the particular subject or not (active Europeanization). However, although sometimes some of the law is passive, it also contains proactive elements in the same text, depending on the intention of the member states – in which cases we applied the ‘mixed’ category.

Examining the impact of the European Union on public policy, it is also worthwhile to consider whether a more sceptical attitude towards the European Union influences the adoption of laws of European origin. We are also looking for an answer to the question of whether the post-2010 Orbán governments had a different approach to the implementation of laws of EU origin compared to the period of 2004–2010. Börzel and co-authors (2017) highlighted that the European Union has a transformative power for candidate states before accession. The promise of membership, and thus the existence of conditionality, has a positive effect on institution-building, which then eases the transposition of EU legislation and standards on a lasting basis in the post-accession period. The pre-accession period had a clearly positive impact on democratic relations and government efficiency in the candidate countries (Cirtautas & Schimmelfennig, 2010; Börzel & Schimmelfennig, 2017). We will therefore examine the extent to which the proportion of laws of EU origin and government proactivity changed in the period following EU accession, and EU-critical voices were raised more often in Hungarian politics after the change of government in 2010. This is worth addressing not only because it has also become clear in recent years that the confrontation between ‘Brussels’ and member state leaders may even increase the domestic political popularity of some governments (Schlippshak & Treib, 2017), which in principle may also make it more attractive for Eurosceptic EU actors to slow down or sabotage the implementation of legislation and standards.

We examine the Europeanization of Hungarian legislation by comparing the four post-accession government cycles. The comparison of the two periods (2004–2010 and 2010–2018) makes it possible to identify the similarities and differences between the activities of Hungarian governments with different EU attitudes in the implementation of EU legislation and recommendations in Hungary. First, we look at the proportion of laws adopted in the Hungarian parliament that are of European origin. We assume that, in line with research conducted in other EU member states (Brouard et al., 2012), that the laws of European origin are in a significant minority in the Hungarian case. At the same time, we expect that the Europeanization of legislation is influenced by the government’s attitude towards the EU, so that the Orbán government, which is more critical of the EU, will have a lower proportion of laws of European origin. As we consider the impact of political intentions on the proactive part of the Europeanization process to be of central importance, we examine the laws adopted in the periods 2004–2010 and 2010–2018 with

the presumption that active Europeanization was less common under the Orbán governments than under the socialist-backed governments.

The research was based on the legislative database built at the Centre for Social Sciences, Institute for Political Science (TK PTI) within the framework of the Hungarian Comparative Agendas Project (Boda & Sebők, 2018), the elements of which between 2004 and 2018 (in total 2511 laws) were completed with four new variables during the recoding process (identification of European origin by automated keyword search, manual coding of laws of European origin, examination of active and passive Europeanization, and classification according to EU competence). The research examined the text of laws passed in the 2004–2006, 2006–2010, 2010–2014, and 2014–2018 parliamentary terms. We used the selection method of Brouard et al. (2012) to define laws of European origin. Any law the wording or preamble of which *explicitly refers to the relationship with European Union* and refers specifically in some way to European integration (the EU itself, or an EU institution, recommendation, method of procedure etc.) can be regarded as an Europeanized law, i.e. a law of European origin. As the first step, we determined for each law whether it refers to the European Union in any form, using 21 EU keywords that are uniformly used in the case studies of Brouard et al. (2012).<sup>1</sup> If the text examined by us contained at least one keyword, it was marked with 1, and those where no such relationship was found were marked with 0. However, the mention of a keyword does not necessarily mean that the law is indeed of European origin. Consequently, in the next step, we examined all laws that contained at least one keyword to determine whether the law was indeed of European origin (1) or the text simply mentioned the European Union in some form only (0). The motivation for adopting legislation identified as law of European origin was divided into three categories: (1) active, (2) passive, and (3) mixed laws. In the final phase of coding, we looked at the competences of the European Union over each law. At this point, we based our policy classification on the CAP database and categorized all laws contained therein based on the 23 public policy areas as follows: (1) exclusive competence, (2) shared competence, and (3) supporting competence.<sup>2</sup>

### 3.2. Policy recommendations from the EU: how the European Semester works

Introduced in 2010, the European Semester is a mechanism for economic policy coordination, part of the economic governance framework of the European Union. The European Semester is an annual cycle in which EU member states coordinate their budgetary, macroeconomic and structural policies in line with the objectives and rules adopted at the EU level to tackle the economic challenges facing the EU (European Commission, 2020a). The mechanism allows member states to take EU considerations into account in their national budgetary procedures as well as in developing their economic policies, as during the process the European Commission (EC) makes recommendations to member states and provides *ex ante* opinions on national budgets. In other respects, the Commission also pursues an *ex-post* monitoring activity, as it assesses the extent to which national governments have complied with the EC recommendations. It is important to

emphasize that, although the introduction of the European Semester did not involve any abandonment of sovereignty by the member states vis-a-vis the EU, since the introduction of the mechanism, the EU institutions have become still more dominant in monitoring, examining and influencing the direction of the economic, fiscal and social policies of the member states (especially in the Eurozone) than ever before (Verdun & Zeitlin, 2018, p. 138).

With regard to the primary *output* of the European Semester, i.e. the country-specific recommendations (CSRs), it is important to emphasize that the European Commission does not impose mandatory measures on member states, but encourages them to reach commonly agreed targets after extensive consultations. The mechanism encourages the European Commission and national governments to engage in the broadest possible consultations, which also aim to increase the legitimacy of the European Semester through the increased participation of member states (Alcidi & Gros, 2017). In addition, it is important to stress that the European Commission does not prescribe exactly the policy changes member states should implement, but the recommendations emphasize the goals that national policies should set for themselves (Costello, 2017, p. 1). The Commission makes individual recommendations for each member state, except those covered by a macroeconomic adjustment programme – for Greece, for example, the Commission first issued country-specific recommendations in 2019. It should be added, however, that, in contrast to the second Barroso Commission (2010–2014), the EC chaired by Jean-Claude Juncker (2014–2019) made cross-cutting, integrated, better-targeted recommendations with more sub-recommendations (Alcidi & Gros, 2017, p. 6). Incidentally, the CSRs cover a wide range of policy issues, including areas (e.g. education and health) where the European Union has only very limited, supporting power.

The European Commission evaluates the implementation of the country-specific recommendations in the first half of the following year, when it reports on the addressing or failure to address the issues identified in the previous year's CSRs. The elements of this scale are the following: (1) no progress – the member state has not implemented any of the measures in the recommendation; (2) limited progress – the implementation of some measures was announced but they are insufficient to achieve the recommendation, or their adoption/implementation is in doubt; (3) some progress – the member state has notified or has already adopted all or part of the recommended measures, but the outcome of implementation is still questionable; (4) substantial progress – the member state has adopted the recommended measures, most of which have already been implemented; (5) fully addressed – all recommended actions have been successfully implemented.

Using this system, we explore the extent to which country-specific recommendations have been met in Hungary and how they relate to the indicators of other EU member states, especially the V4, based on a new database built from the assessment of addressing the recommendations published in the annual country reports of the European Commission. In our analysis, we also present the long-term fulfilment of the country-specific recommendations in the Visegrad countries, i.e. the extent to which the EU recommendations were implemented from 2011 to 2018.

### 3.3. Confrontation with Brussels: infringement procedures

One of the main tasks of the European Commission is to act as guardian of the EU Treaties and to be responsible for the development and implementation of EU policies (European Commission, 2020b). In this context, the Commission works together with the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) to enforce EU law. When the Commission detects a potential breach of EU law or receives a complaint about it (from citizens, companies or other stakeholders), it first tries to resolve the issue in the form of a structured dialogue with the member state concerned. This EU Pilot programme creates an opportunity for an informal dialogue between the EC and governments of the member states. In practice, this means that in the event of a possible infringement, the Commission sends questions to the government of the member state, which has ten weeks to provide factual or legal information to the CJEU on the case. The Commission also has ten weeks to assess the government's response. The purpose of this dialogue is to find a solution to the problem as soon as possible, but if the Commission feels that the response of a member state is insufficient, it can also formally launch infringement procedures against that member state. The launch of a formal infringement procedure is therefore conditional on the member state challenging the Commission's position or failing to take appropriate measures to remedy the situation that is in breach of EU law.

The formal infringement procedure can consist of five stages, and at the end of each stage, the Commission has the option of closing the procedure. In the first stage of the procedure, the Commission sends a Letter of Formal Notice (1) to the government of the member state, asking the cabinet to present their views on the non-compliance within two months. If no response is received from the member state or the EC does not consider the reply appropriate, the Commission explains in a reasoned opinion (2) why it considers the situation to be in breach of EU law. After that, the member state government has two months to harmonize its legal system with the Community requirements. If no response is received again or if the Commission considers the response of the member state insufficient, the (3) EC refers the matter to the CJEU and requests legal proceedings. If a member state fails to notify the Commission of the implementing measures relating to a given directive, the EC may at that stage ask the Court to order the member state government to pay a lump sum or penalty payment. Then the Court decides, after an average of two years, (4) whether a member state has in fact infringed Community law. The government of the member state is bound by the judgment, i.e. it must adapt its legislation and practice to that contained in the judgment and to settle the dispute as soon as possible. If the member state still does not take appropriate measures to settle the dispute, the Commission sends another a letter of formal notice to the member state and, if no response is received or the response is inadequate, the (5) Commission may refer the matter again to the Court, proposing that the Court impose a fine of either a lump sum or a penalty. The EC determines the amount of the penalties by taking into account the importance and impact of the infringement, the duration of the infringement, and the country's financial situation, but the Court may deviate from this proposed amount in its decision.



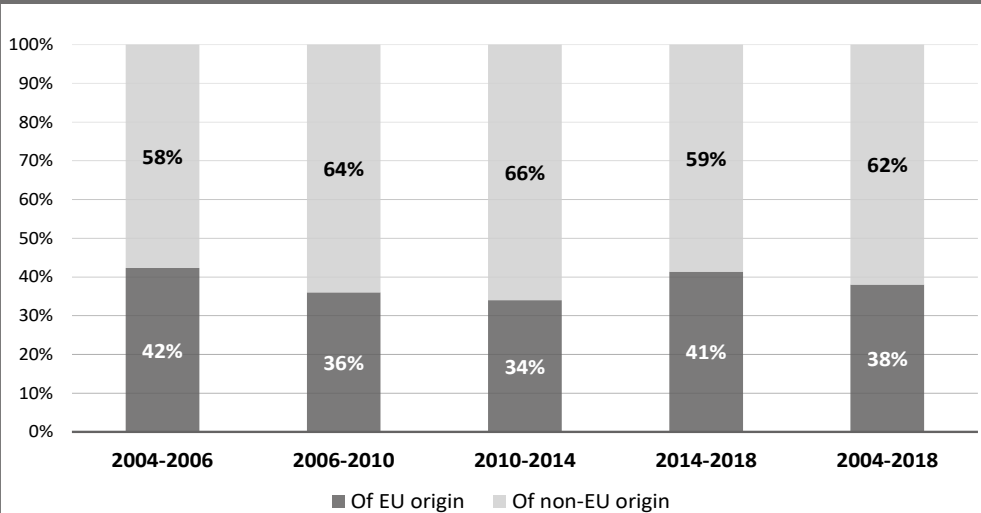
In the course of our research, we examined the trends that can be observed in the infringement proceedings between 2004 and 2018 for the EU as a whole, then within the Visegrad countries and, finally, in the field of the activities of each Hungarian government. We examined whether any pattern can be detected in terms of the number of infringement proceedings and the stage at which the procedure was closed. We examined whether the V4 countries, which have often been declared disobedient in the press, are more likely to impede the application of Community law than the other EU member states, as indicated by the number of proceedings launched against the Visegrad countries, namely Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and the conduct of the member states during the proceedings. We also investigated whether there is any connection between the number of infringement proceedings initiated against the various Hungarian governments between 2004 and 2018 and the phases of closures and the worldviews of these governments and their European policies. Thus, we also wished to test the hypothesis that the left-liberal governments before 2010 had a more constructive and cooperative attitude towards the European Commission than the second and third Orbán governments, with their EU-critical rhetoric in the case of infringement proceedings. The research was based on a database we created, in which we collected the infringement proceedings initiated against all EU member states between 1 May 2004 and 8 April 2018, based on data freely available on the European Commission's website. Our database shows each procedure, exactly in relation to which policy the potential infringement took place and at what stage of the procedure the problem was resolved.

## 4. Results

### 4.1. Laws of European origin in the Hungarian parliament

The laws adopted between Hungary's accession in 2004 and the 2018 parliamentary elections show that the European public policy environment affects a significant portion of Hungarian legal regulations, but not the majority. As in all the member state case studies so far, in the Hungarian case the laws of national origin prevail. The proportion of laws of European origin was 38% in Hungary for the entire 14 year period (Figure 1). At the same time, the degree of Europeanization of Hungarian legislation is high in comparison to other member states. In Finland and the Netherlands, the proportion was 12%, in Italy 15%, France 18%, Austria 25%, Germany 26%, Luxembourg 29%, and Spain 35% (Brouard et al., 2012).

Our preliminary assumption that the government's attitude towards the EU affects the proportion of laws of European origin has not been confirmed. In the two left-wing government cycles, the proportion of laws considered Europeanised was 42% (2004–2006) and 36% (2006–2010), while in the second and third Orbán governments, the ratios were 34% and 41%, respectively. Thus, no major differences can be observed between left and right-wing governments. It should also be added to these data that during the term of

**Figure 1: Proportion of laws of European origin in the Hungarian Parliament, 2004–2018**

*Source: Authors' calculation based on the recoding of the Hungarian Comparative Agendas Project legislative database.*

the Fidesz–KDNP governments, the parliament adopted many more laws than before 2010: while the Hungarian parliament passed 352 laws between 2004 and 2006 and 585 between 2006 and 2010, it adopted 846 laws during the second Orbán government and 729 between 2014 and 2018. It follows that numerically more laws of European origin were adopted after 2010 (2010–2014: 286; 2014–2018: 302) than before, although it should be added that the duration of the Socialist-backed governments was two years shorter (2004–2006: 149; 2006–2010: 213). The proportion of laws of EU origin was also quite stable over time, even if the data are examined in a yearly breakdown. If the short period before the 2018 elections is ignored (when parliament passed only four laws), the differences are no more than eight percentage points in each year compared to the 14-year average: the proportion of Europeanized laws did not fall below 31% and never went above 46% in any year. The year 2017 was the peak in this respect, when almost every second law had some European origin, but in absolute numbers, the Hungarian Parliament passed the most Europeanized laws in 2013 (103).

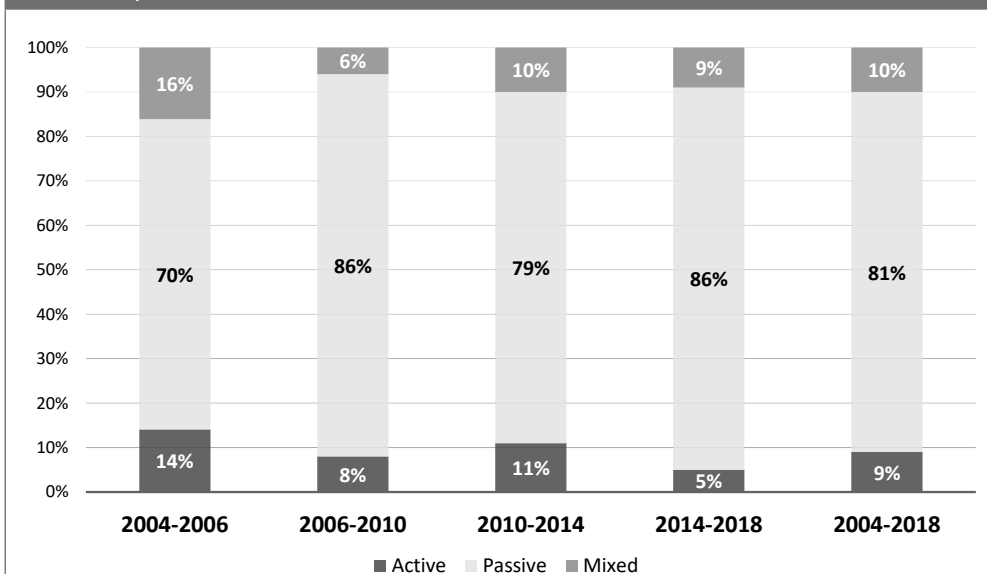
Comparing the figures of the Socialist and Fidesz governments, we see that the proportion of Europeanized laws was not significantly affected by the attitudes of the different governments to the EU. By 2010, 39% (362) of the 937 laws passed under the left-wing governments had some European origin, compared to the 37% adopted under the post-2010 Orbán governments (588 of the 1,575 laws had some European influence).

Community law includes legal acts of various kinds. Although the main principle of EU law is the primacy of EU law over the laws of the member states, not only binding acts (directives, regulations, decisions) but also non-binding legal acts (recommendations, opinions) are adopted. In addition, member states sometimes create laws on their own initiative that can be linked to the European Union, following European trends. Europeanized

zation is considered ‘active’ if a member state voluntarily creates laws of European origin, and ‘passive’ if the laws are the result of a binding act. Thus, active and passive Europeanization is usually present in the legislation of a member state at the same time. Analyzing the legislative motivation of the member states, it is clear that the mandatory form of EU influence, i.e. the proportion of laws classified in the passive category, far exceeds the proportion of legislation of the active and mixed categories (Figure 2). In the 14 years since accession to the EU, 9% of Hungarian laws were the result of proactive Europeanization government behaviour (19% if mixed laws are also included).

The active and mixed laws reflect the behaviour of a member state or a government, as they are not (or are only partially) mandatory binding laws, but stem from the member state’s voluntary adaptation to the European public policy context. In our related hypothesis, we assumed that among the Hungarian legal regulations of European origin, the proportion of active Europeanization laws would be higher during the 2004–2010 Socialist governments than during the second and third Orbán governments. Of course, the reason for this is that in principle a Eurosceptic government that takes the rejection of EU influence seriously not only verbally but also in practice, might be willing only to implement mandatory EU laws in its own country, and reluctant to adapt to European frameworks voluntarily.

**Figure 2: Proportion of active and passive laws of European origin in the Hungarian Parliament, 2004–2018**



*Source: Authors' calculation based on the recoding of the Hungarian Comparative Agendas Project legislative database.*

This assumption has not been fully confirmed either, although there are differences between individual government cycles. On the one hand, the proportion of active and mixed laws was also the highest between 2004 and 2006 (14% and 16%). However, by the time of

the second Gyurcsány and then the Bajnai government, the level of proactivity decreased so much that the proportion of active and mixed laws was 3 percentage points lower than during the second Orbán government (to which it should be added that in 2010–2014, more laws were passed than between 2006 and 2010). Then, from 2014 onwards, the government's negative attitude towards the European Union may have had a greater impact on legislation, as the proportion of active Europeanization laws decreased significantly (but only to the level where it stood in the period of 2006–2010).

Looking at the whole period on an annual basis, we can see that there has been a significant decline in 'active Europeanised' laws since 2015. In terms of the proportions of active and passive Europeanization, we can therefore see differences between different government cycles, yet the quality of Europeanization is not primarily determined by the worldview of the respective governments. In the fractional post-accession cycle, the rate of active and mixed laws was high, presumably due to the enthusiasm stemming from Hungary's recent membership, while in the case of the third Orbán government, perhaps increasing Euroscepticism from the beginning of the cycle may have contributed to the decline in active Europeanization. All in all, looking at full cycles, there is no significant difference between the socialist and right-wing governments. With a strong predominance of binding laws adopted in the framework of passive Europeanization, government proactivity can be observed in 5% to 14% of laws of European origin (and 14% to 30%, including mixed laws as well) in all cycles.

## 4.2. Compliance with country-specific recommendations

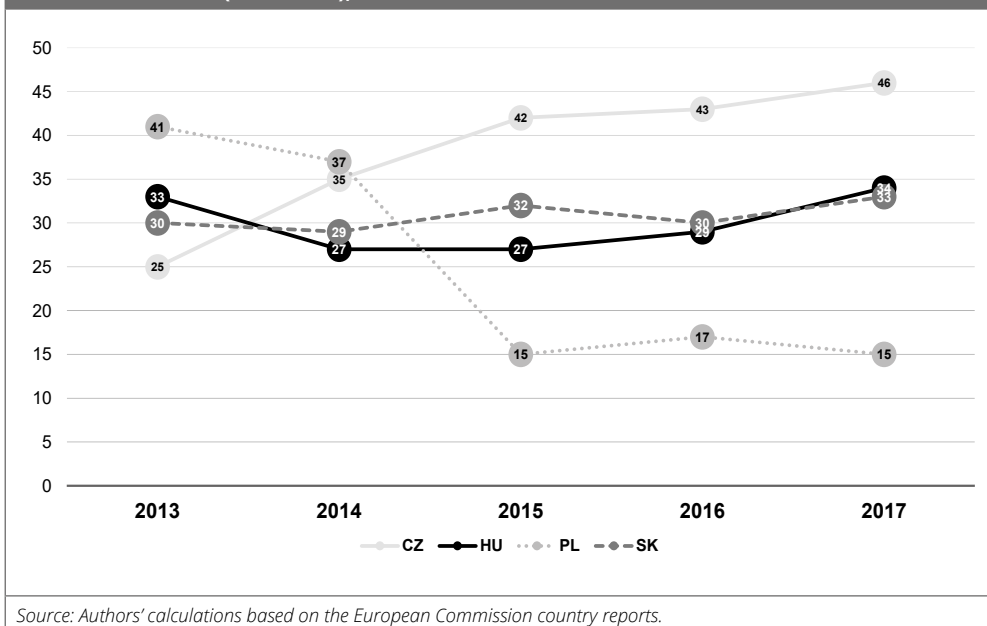
In this section, we review the implementation of the country-specific recommendations in Hungary in a European comparison, especially with regard to the Visegrad countries. Compliance with country-specific recommendations was assessed on a scale of 0 to 100 based on the database built from the official assessments by the European Commission. Recommendations in areas where no progress was made were given 0 points, those where limited progress was observed by the European Commission scored 25 points, 50 points were given where some progress was made, 75 points where significant progress was made and, finally, 100 points were given where the recommendations were fully implemented by each member state.

Regarding the research methodology, it is important to note that the European Commission led by Jean-Claude Juncker changed the previous practice. While the EC, led by José Manuel Barroso, made six to seven recommendations per country each year, the body led by Jean-Claude Juncker made fewer but more complex policy proposals to national governments: It made four to five country-specific recommendations to member states after evaluating their plans in 2015, followed by only 2–3 in 2016 and 2017. In the vast majority of cases, the recommendations consisted of several different sub-recommendations, which were assessed separately by the European Commission. Therefore we took into account the assessment of each sub-recommendation instead of the overall assessment of the recommendations in all cases. As the European Commission has prepared evaluations of the comprehensive recommendations broken down into sub-recommendations only

since 2013, the period examined by us developed accordingly: we analyzed the implementation of the 2013–2017 recommendations at the national level.

For the four Visegrad countries, there were no significant differences in the implementation of the country-specific recommendations of the European Commission. If we observe the annual performance assessment, on average 30–35 points can be observed on the 100-point scale for all four Visegrad countries over the five-year period of 2013–2017 (Figure 3). This means that in relation to an average recommendation, the governments of the Visegrad countries made somewhat less progress than the one year average, with data ranging from ‘limited progress’ to ‘some progress’. This, without exception, ranks the Visegrad countries in the second half among EU member states, significantly lagging behind the leaders during this period. Finland (53 points), the United Kingdom (51 points) and Slovenia (48 points) showed the highest compliance with EU recommendations. The Czech Republic was 17th, Poland 18th, and Hungary and Slovakia tied for the 25th and 26th places in meeting the country-specific recommendations in terms of annual performance.

**Figure 3: Fulfilment of country-specific recommendations in the Visegrad countries, in an annual breakdown (2013–2017), on a scale of 0–100**



In addition to the five-year averages, it is worth taking a look at trends over the five years. This clearly shows that while there was a trend in improving the implementation of EU recommendations in the Czech Republic, there was a clear decline in Poland. The break occurred in 2015, when the Law and Justice Party came to government in Poland and conflicts with the EU became a key element of Polish government policy. In the years after 2015, the implementation of country-specific recommendations in Poland

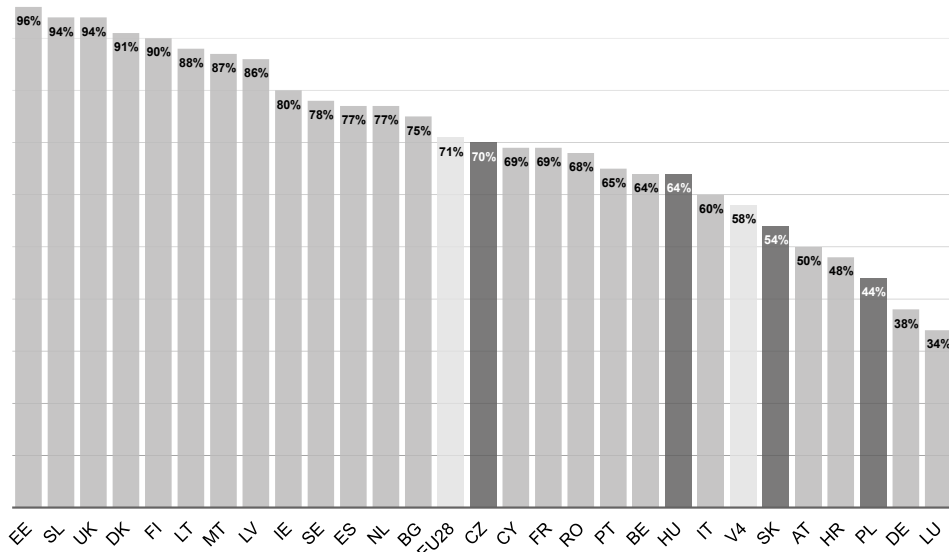
did not even reach the average rating of 'limited progress'. The opposite trend can be observed in the Czech Republic, where the rate of compliance with EU recommendations rose from 25 points in 2013 to 46 points five years later. In Hungary and Slovakia, these five years did not see any significant changes in the extent to which EU recommendations were incorporated into national public policy decisions, and the performance indicator fluctuated around 30 points in both countries. Overall, the Czech Republic increasingly embraced the Brussels proposals, Poland paid less and less attention to the European Commission's guidance, and Hungary and Slovakia were ranked between the two by the end of the five-year period. Thus, in the implementation of recommendations, Poland dropped from the top position to the lowest place and the Czech Republic shifted course during the five years.

Among the Visegrad countries, Hungary received the most recommendations: the European Commission made 91 recommendations during the period under review. Twenty of these were completely ignored by the second and third Orbán governments, limited progress was made in 36 cases, moderate implementation was achieved in 25 cases, significant progress in four cases and one partial recommendation was fully implemented. During the period under review, we found five recommendations that were not evaluated by the Commission. Overall, the Hungarian governments scored 30 points in the evaluation of the implementation of the European Commission's recommendations. In Hungary, there were no significant differences in the extent to which the recommendations were met: in 2013 Hungary scored 33 points, it implemented the fewest EC recommendations in 2014 and 2015 (27 points each year), in 2016 the score was slightly higher (29 points), while the best evaluation (34 points) was made in 2017.

The European Commission not only evaluates the implementation of each recommendation on an annual basis, but also examines the extent to which each member state has complied with each recommendation over a number of years. The aim is to assess the implementation of the recommendations over the long term, not just on an annual basis. In the summary below, we show the extent to which the European Commission measured compliance with recommendations issued even many years earlier, from the launch of the European Semester to the 2018 country reports (Figure 4). In its annual reports, the European Commission places particular emphasis on the extent to which member states have implemented each recommendation at least at a medium level over the long term. Recommendations are considered fulfilled in the long run when progress reaches at least the middle of the five-point scale, reaching the level of 'some progress'.

It is clear from the long-term aggregation that, from a few years' perspective, many more EU recommendations have a meaningful impact on national policies and are implemented by national governments. The Visegrad countries are no exception: apart from in Poland, there has been 'some progress' in at least half of the EU's public policy recommendations. In this longer-term perspective, the Orbán government took action on almost two-thirds of the EU's recommendations (64%), which the European Commission evaluated as progress. This is the second-best rate among the Visegrad countries; only the Czech Republic implemented more EU recommendations, at least in part. At the same time, it is striking that among the V4 countries, even the best-performing Czech Republic (70%) remained just below the EU28 average (71%). The average of the Visegrad countries

**Figure 4: Proportion of country-specific recommendations with at least 'some progress' in a multi-annual perspective, according to the long-term evaluation of the European Commission (2011–2017)**



Source: Authors' calculations based on the European Commission country reports.

(58%) is 13 percentage points lower than the EU average. Based on this, it can be stated that although in the long run the EU recommendations have a major public policy impact in the Visegrad countries, they are more likely to be ignored over the course of a few years than in most member states. As Poland implemented only 44 percent of the recommendations according to the long-term evaluation, it has the third-worst rate in the whole EU. The Czech Republic is 14th, Hungary 20th and Slovakia 22nd in the long-term implementation of EU recommendations.

### 4.3. Infringement proceedings against Hungary in a European context

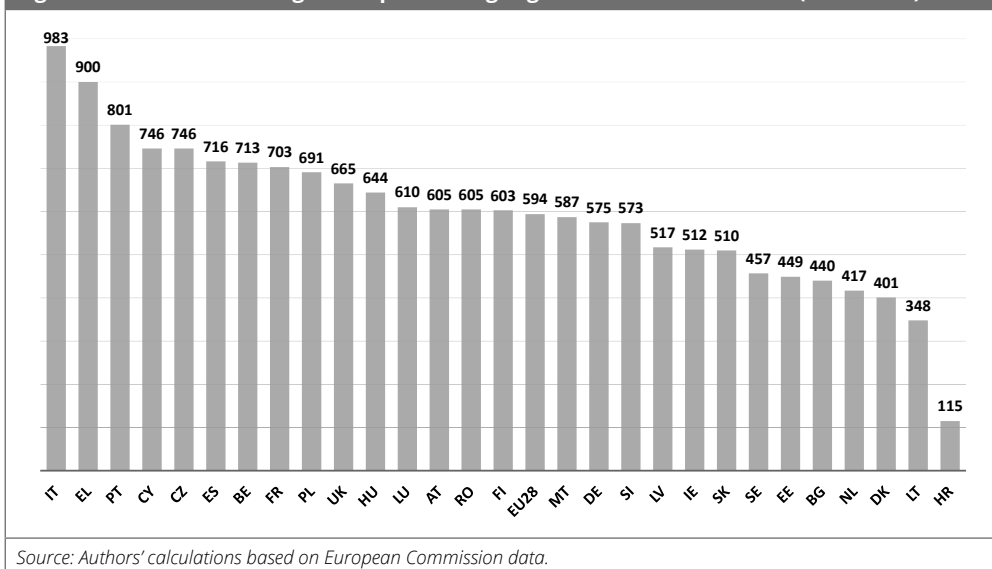
Between the 2004 enlargement of the EU and the 2018 Hungarian parliamentary elections, the European Commission launched in total 16,633 infringement proceedings against 28 member states of the European Union. There were in total 11,558 occasions, representing more than two thirds of the cases (69%), when member states and the EC managed to settle the dispute at the first stage of the procedure, meaning that the national governments sent a satisfactory response to the EC letter of formal notice. In 3,601 cases, i.e. 22% of all infringement proceedings, member states were able to remedy the infringement only after receiving a detailed reasoned opinion from the Commission. In these cases, the EC did not accept the member states' response (if at all) to the letter of formal

notice, and the European Commission therefore detailed in a new official document why it considered the member state to be in breach of EU law. However, on a further 1,474 occasions, representing almost one in ten (9%) infringement proceedings, member states did not remedy the infringement and the Commission referred the matter to the Court of Justice of the European Union seated in Luxembourg for a decision.

In this nearly decade and a half, the Commission initiated an average of 594 infringement proceedings per member state (Figure 5). There are three southern European member states at the tail end of the imaginary ranking: Italy, Greece and Portugal. Italy, one of the founding members of the European Union, was suspected of infringement of community law most frequently, as the EC had to open almost a thousand (983) proceedings against the various Italian governments, followed by 900 cases against Greece, and 801 against Portugal, between May 2004 and April 2018. Thus, the EC generally initiated proceedings against member states in the southern part of the continent more often than against the Nordic countries, but the number of proceedings does not really reflect the East-West divide. If Croatia, which joined in 2013, is not taken into account, a new member state, Lithuania, is considered to be the most compliant country: the Commission initiated only 348 infringement proceedings against this Baltic state since its accession. Otherwise, the fewest proceedings were initiated against Denmark (401) and the Netherlands (417) during these years. Hungary was in 11th place, at the top of the middle ranking, with 644 infringement proceedings initiated in almost a decade and a half. (Among the Visegrad countries, an even higher number of proceedings were initiated against the Czech Republic and Poland).

Denmark's particularly exemplary record is also reflected in the proportion of procedures that have reached various stages. In addition to the fact that few cases were initiated against the Nordic country, in 82% of cases a letter of formal notice was enough to close

Figure 5: Number of infringement proceedings against EU member states (2004–2018)

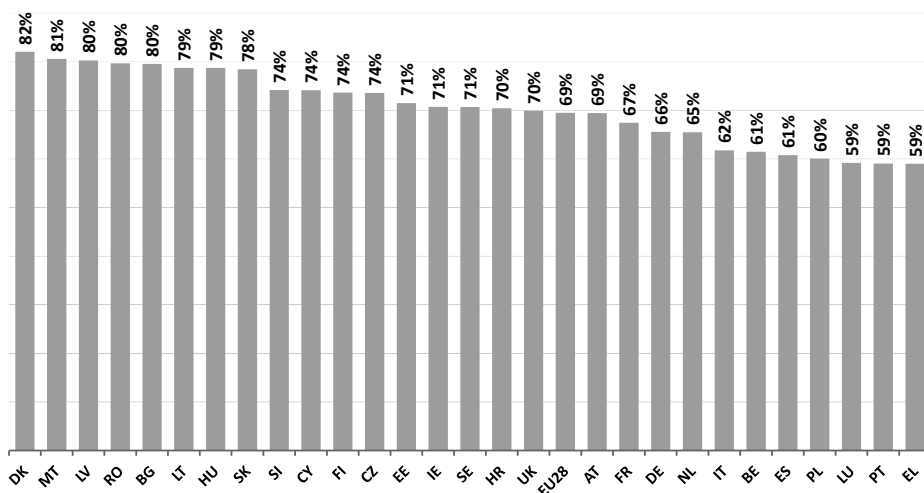


Source: Authors' calculations based on European Commission data.



the procedure, which is the highest rate in the whole EU (Figure 6). Interestingly, with the exception of Poland, in all countries that joined after 2004, the proportion of cases where a letter of formal notice was sufficient to resolve the dispute was higher than the EU average (69%). In contrast, among the six founding member states and the southern European countries (Spain, Portugal, Greece), the EC accepted fewer responses (if there were any) to the letter of formal notice than the average, and further action was needed from the Commission in a large number of cases. Three member states had the same lowest ratio of cases that did not go beyond the letters of formal notice: for Luxembourg, Portugal and Greece, the Commission's formal indication to deal with the problematic situation in dispute was sufficient only in 59% of the proceedings. The latter two countries are interesting because the EC launched the most infringement proceedings against these two member states, and the dispute was resolved relatively quickly in only 59% of these cases. In the other cases, the proceedings were extended. This means that, in addition to being at the forefront of non-compliance with the legal obligations arising from EU membership, Portugal and Greece did not cooperate with the European Commission in these cases, either.

**Figure 6: Proportion of cases that reached the stage of a letter of formal notice within all proceedings**

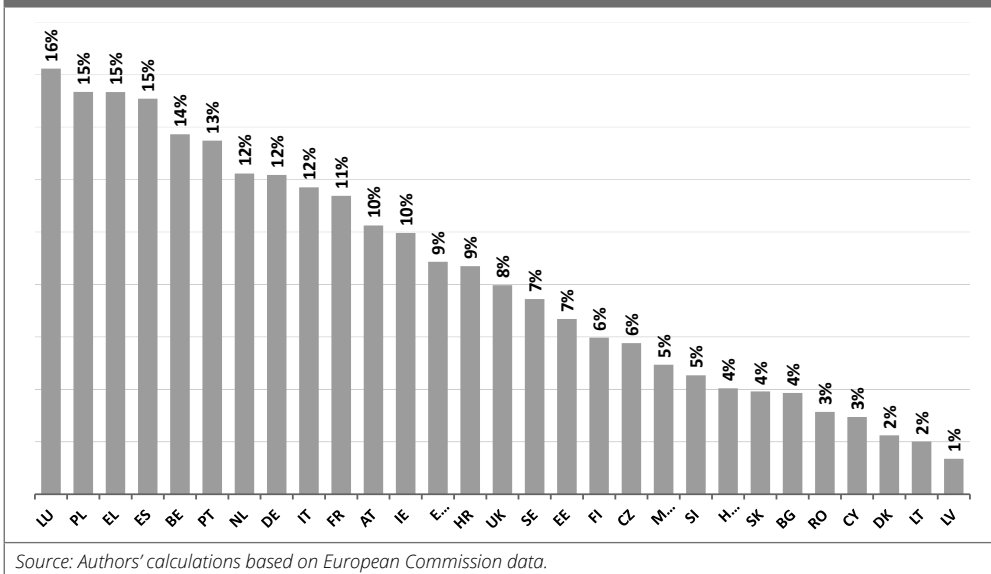


Source: Authors' calculations based on European Commission data.

In terms of the proportion of cases reaching the stage of issuing a reasoned opinion, the southern European states were at the forefront: the Portuguese (27%), Italian (27%) and Greek (26%) governments adapted their internal legislative order to the EU rules the most after the European Commission gave them detailed reasons as to how the member state was in breach of Community law. The disputes were resolved at stage two of the proceedings least often for Malta (14%), but Denmark (16%) and two member states that joined in 2007 (Romania and Bulgaria) and Hungary also had similarly low ratios (17%). This proportion was 18% in Slovakia, 21% in the Czech Republic and 25% in Poland.

Infringement proceedings reached the European Court of Justice in the highest proportion for Luxembourg (16%), but the other two Benelux states were also at the forefront, alongside the Portuguese, Greek and Spanish trio (Figure 7). It is also striking that Poland had the second highest rate of cases referred to the Court, while all other member states that joined after 2004 required a lower-than-average rate of Court intervention. This is presumably explained by the fact that, after their accession, most of the newly acceded countries wanted to meet the expectations of the community and avoid any conflict, and accepted the Commission's position in controversial cases rather than trying to enforce their position in court.

**Figure 7: Proportion of infringement proceedings referred to the European Court of Justice in EU member states (2004–2018)**



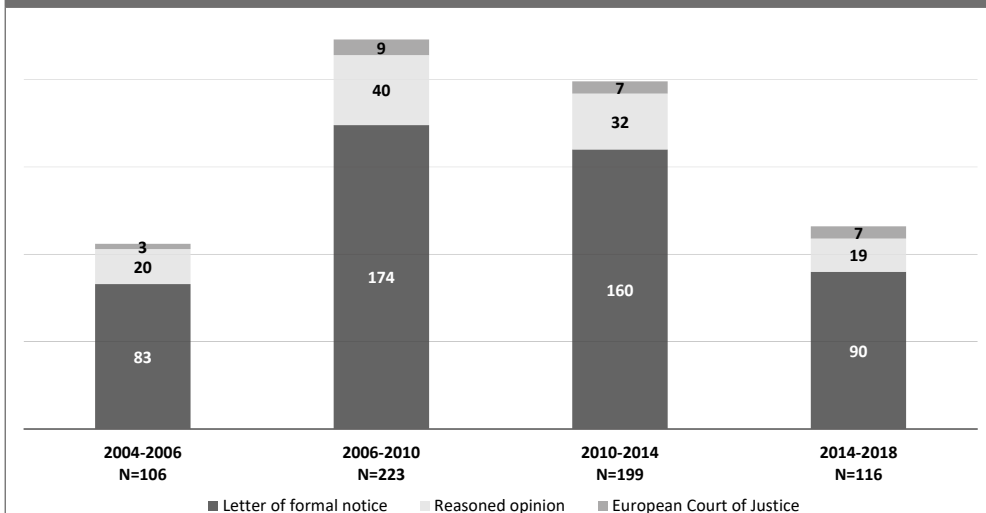
Comparing the Visegrad countries, we can conclude that fewer proceedings than the EU-28 average were launched only against Slovakia (510). The various Hungarian (644), Polish (691), and Czech (746) governments were subjected to infringement proceedings by the European Commission more frequently than the average. We can observe almost the same record for the governments of Hungary and Slovakia, as the different levels of closure of proceedings were distributed between the two countries in almost exactly the same proportion. For Hungary, 79%, and Slovakia 78% of the cases reached the stage of the letter of formal notice; in the former 17%, and in the latter 18%, of the cases were resolved with a reasoned opinion, and in both countries 4% of the proceedings required the intervention of the Court. For the Czech Republic, the proportion of cases for which the procedure was closed immediately after the formal notice was slightly lower (74%), while the proportion of reasoned opinions and court cases was slightly higher (21% and 6%, respectively) than in Hungary and Slovakia. Poland's record, on the other hand, is noteworthy, as a Commission letter of formal notice was sufficient to resolve only 60% of proceedings; in a quarter

of cases, a reasoned opinion was required from the Commission to motivate adaptation to EU expectations; and in a further 15% of the cases, the European Court of Justice had to rule on the dispute. Incidentally, this highlights the problematic behaviour of Poland in the proceedings, not only among the Visegrad countries, but also within the EU as a whole.

If we focus on the behaviour of the Hungarian governments between 2004 and 2018, perhaps the most unexpected result is that the European Commission launched more infringement proceedings against the fundamentally pro-EU left-wing governments in six years than the rhetorically strongly EU-critical second and third Orbán-governments over two complete cycles (Figure 8). While in total 329 proceedings were launched against various Socialist governments between 2004 and 2010, between 2010 and 2018 the European Commission initiated 315 proceedings. Most proceedings were launched against Hungary between 2006 and 2010 (223 times), while in the period from accession in 2004 to the 2006 parliamentary elections, which corresponded almost exactly to half a cycle in terms of the number of days, 106 procedures were initiated, which means that the proportions of the frequency of proceedings initiated during the two periods was almost identical. In contrast, during the second Orbán government there were slightly fewer proceedings (199), while between 2014 and 2018, only 116 letters of formal notice were received in Budapest from Brussels. On an annual basis, however, the year 2011 stands out, when 80 proceedings were initiated against Hungary: this was presumably related to the accelerated legislation practice that followed the first two-thirds victory of the Fidesz–KDNP coalition, which is also supported by the fact that the second highest number of proceedings were initiated in 2010.

There is only a minimal difference in the behaviour of the different governments: we can observe only a few percentage point differences in the proportion of procedures that

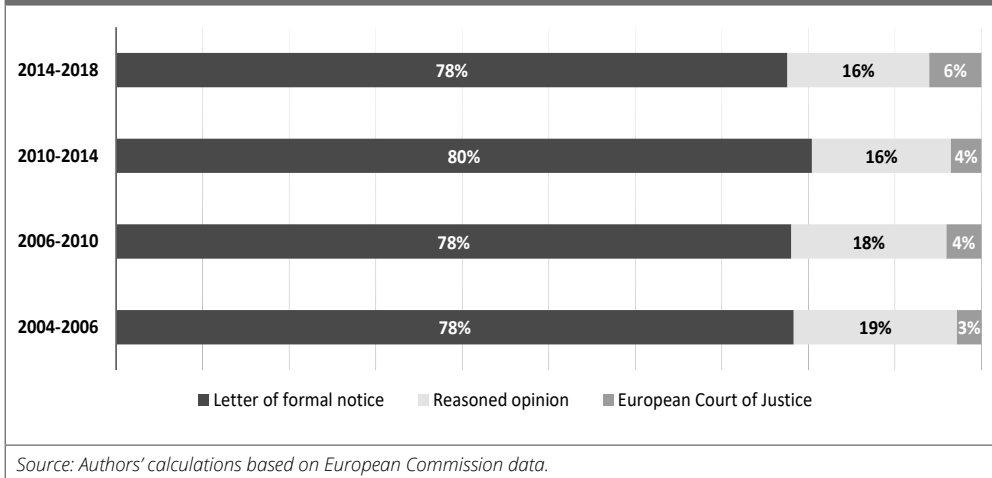
**Figure 8: Number of infringement proceedings reaching different stages in Hungary (2004–2018)**



Source: Authors' calculations based on European Commission data.

reached different levels (Figure 9). For both the left and right-wing governments, the letter of formal notice was enough to close the infringement proceedings in practically equal proportions, 78% and 80%, respectively. The highest proportion of proceedings closed following a letter of formal notice was recorded during the second Orbán government (between 2010 and 2014), while the proportion of cases that reached the stage of a reasoned opinion was the highest earlier, between 2004 and 2006. The proceedings were referred to the European Court of Justice most frequently in the last cycle, between 2014 and 2018 (6%), but due to the low number of cases, it is numerically the same as the number of cases in 2010–2014 and even less than the number of proceedings reaching the court in 2006–2010. All this indicates that, in general, the behaviour of the Hungarian governments in infringement proceedings was not significantly affected by either their worldview or their European policy.

**Figure 9: The proportion of infringement proceedings reaching different stages in Hungary (2004–2018)**



## 5. Conclusions

In our study, we attempted to provide empirical answers to the question of the impact of EU membership on Hungarian public policy. Our results show that a minority of the laws passed in the Hungarian parliament were created due to the influence of the European public policy environment, but at the same time the impact of the EU may be deemed significant, as the proportion of Europeanized laws is high in comparison with other EU member states. In the period between 2004 and 2018, we detected some European origin in 38% of Hungarian laws, and we do not see any significant differences between the governments that differed in their views on European integration at the level of political communication, either. Comparing the periods of 2004–2010 and 2010–2018, we

can state that the change in the attitude of the government towards the European Union is hardly reflected in the parliamentary legislation at all. The proportion of laws of European origin was 39% under the left-wing governments before 2010, and 37% under the Orbán governments after 2010, but since many more laws were passed by Parliament after 2010, in terms of absolute numbers, more laws of European origin were passed under Orbán governments than under the Gyurcsány and Bajnai governments. It seems, therefore, that Eurosceptic rhetoric and actual action may be separated, similarly to what was previously seen in the case of Fidesz MEPs in the European Parliament, the vast majority of whom voted loyally in the European People's Party while they were members of the biggest political group of the European Parliament (Bíró-Nagy, 2018). This is also supported by our data examining government legislative proactivity during this nearly 15-year period. In addition to the predominance of the phenomenon of passive Europeanization in the domestic legal system, the active Europeanization process was also a constant factor influencing Hungarian legislation (one-fifth of all laws of European origin can be thus classified). Hungary is transposing not only as much legislation as required, and not just in areas where it is mandatory – this statement is true for the whole period of 2004–2018, even if there was a decline from 2015 onwards (although only to the level that prevailed in the 2006–2010 cycle).

As regards country-specific recommendations to member states in the framework of the European Semester, the Hungarian implementation of EU public policy recommendations matched the Visegrad average. However, the Visegrad countries were generally in the bottom half of the EU ranking: until the 2018 elections, Hungary and Slovakia were tied in 25th and 26th places, and the Czech Republic and Poland were also tied in 17th and 18th places in terms of meeting the European Commission's annual recommendations. While the Hungarian willingness to implement was stable in this period, the Czechs and Poles took opposite paths: the Czech Republic improved and Poland deteriorated in terms of implementation of EU recommendations at the national level. However, the Visegrad countries incorporated far more EU recommendations into national policy over the long run than on an annual basis. The best example of this is the Orbán government, which, according to the European Commission's multi-annual performance review, made at least 'some progress' on 64% of the recommendations. This figure is below the EU average (71%) and puts the country in 20th place in the EU as a whole, but it is the second best figure among the Visegrad countries (behind the Czech Republic). In the long run, more and more EU recommendations are gradually integrated into member states' public policies, and this is true for the Visegrad countries, although in the past few years the V4 generally ignored EU recommendations more than the EU average.

In addition to following the advice from Brussels less than average, the Visegrad countries were somewhat more likely than the EU average to conflict with the European Commission in infringement proceedings. Although fewer proceedings were initiated against Slovakia than the EU average between 2004 and 2018, the other three Visegrad countries ranked in the top half of member states. Hungary received the 11th highest number of proceedings in the EU, placing the country in a middle ranking over a 15-year perspective. Not only in the Visegrad countries, but also in the EU as a whole, Poland stands out for its problematic behaviour in the proceedings: although the European Commission

initiated only the 9th highest number of proceedings against Polish governments, only 60% of them were closed after the letter of formal notice. In the case of Hungary, this ratio was 79%, which means it showed the most cooperative attitude among the Visegrad countries. In the case of Poland, infringement proceedings reached the court stage in the second-largest proportion (15%) within the EU (for Hungary, only 4% of the proceedings reached this stage).

With regard to the infringements of EU law by the various Hungarian governments, it can be stated that, on the one hand, more infringement proceedings were initiated against the various left-wing and liberal governments committed to European integration between 2004 and 2010 than after 2010. And looking at the behaviour during the proceedings, we find almost exactly the same values expressed when examining the socialist-liberal governments as when examining the Orbán governments. In the two consecutive parliamentary terms after 2010, the right-wing government's fight against Brussels took place mostly in the arena of public communication, with no substantive change in the number of infringements referred to the Court (with the exception of a few outstanding cases, such as the quota case). The proportion of proceedings before the Court was highest between 2014 and 2018, in the period of the third Orbán government (6%), but according to the figures most infringement proceedings reached the final stage between 2006 and 2010. The main difference is in the subject matter of the proceedings: while under the left-wing governments the cases were dominated by economic issues, under the right-wing governments they were dominated by issues of justice and fundamental rights.

All in all, it can be concluded that the Europeanization of Hungarian legislation did not break after 2010, nor do we see any increase in the number of infringement proceedings or deterioration in the willingness of the government to cooperate during the proceedings. In the field of infringement proceedings in general, the attitude of the both left and right-wing Hungarian governments was much more constructive than that of the Polish governments (except for a few symbolic cases). The Visegrad countries implemented EU public policy recommendations less than the EU average and were more often in conflict with the European Commission, but it is clear that cooperation at the public policy level was often much smoother than that of the current political relationship between the V4 and the EU. Looking at the decade and a half of Hungarian politics after EU accession, it is also clear that, regardless of the attitudes of the different governments to the EU, adaptation to the EU context was also in evidence in areas that were not mandatory.

## Endnotes

1. The 21 keywords were the following: European Union, EU, European Community, EC, European Economic Community, EEC, Common Market, Single Market, European Market, European Coal and Steel Community, ECSC, European Atomic Energy Community, EAEC, Euratom, European Monetary Union, EMU, European Monetary System, EMS, Directive, Community law, European law.
2. Similarly to the methods used by other international research teams, we applied double blind coding and, in the case of a mismatch, a third analyst decided on the usage of the final code. For the period 2004–2018, we processed a total of 2,511 laws with the double-blind coding method. During coding the match rate was 96%, while a third researcher's decision was required in 4% of the cases.

## References:

- Alcidi, C., & Gros, D. (2017). How to strengthen the European Semester? *CEPS Research Report No. 2017/15*. CEPS Brussels.
- Ágh, A. (2015). De-Europeanization and De-Democratization Trends in Ece: From the Potemkin Democracy to the Elected Autocracy in Hungary. *Journal of Comparative Politics*, 8(2), 4–26.
- Antal, A. (2019). *The Rise of Hungarian Populism: State Autocracy and the Orbán Regime*. Bingley: Emerald Group Publishing.
- Arató, K., Koller, B., & Pelle, A. (2021). *The Political Economy of the Eurozone in Central and Eastern Europe: Why In, Why Out?* London: Routledge.
- Bachtler, J., Mendez, C., & Oraže, H. (2014). From Conditionality to Europeanization in Central and Eastern Europe: Administrative Performance and Capacity in Cohesion Policy. *European Planning Studies*, 22(4), 735–757.
- Bakker, R., Hooghe, L., Jolly, S., Marks, G., Polk, J., Rovny, J., Steenbergen, M., & Vachudova, M. (2021). *Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) Europe 1999–2019 trend file, Version 1.2*. Retrieved from <http://chesdata.eu>
- Ban, C., Scheiring, G., & Vasile, M. (2021). The Political Economy of National-Neoliberalism. *European Politics and Society*, 0(0), 1–19.
- Batory, A. (2014). Uploading as Political Strategy: The European Parliament and the Hungarian Media Law Debate. *East European Politics*, 30(2), 230–245.
- Bíró-Nagy, A. (2018). *Integration into Europe. Central European MEPs in the European Parliament*. Budapest: Gondolat-MTA TK PTI.
- Bíró-Nagy, A. (2021). Orbán's Political Jackpot: Migration and the Hungarian Electorate. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 48(2), 405–424.
- Boda, Z., & Sebök, M. (ed., 2018). *The Hungarian public policy agenda - Theoretical foundations, empirical results*. Budapest: MTA TK PTI.
- Bohle, D., & Greskovits, B. (2012). *Capitalist Diversity on Europe's Periphery*. Cornell University Press.
- Bozóki, A., & Hegedűs, D. (2018). An Externally Constrained Hybrid Regime: Hungary in the European Union. *Democratization*, 25(7), 1173–1189.
- Börzel, T. A., Dimitrova, A., & Schimmelfennig, F. (2017). European Union Enlargement and Integration Capacity: Concepts, Findings, and Policy Implications. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 24(2), 157–176.
- Börzel, T. A., & Schimmelfennig, F. (2017). Coming together or drifting apart? The EU's political integration capacity in Eastern Europe. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 24(2), 278–296.
- Börzel, T. & Sedelmeier, U. (2017). Larger and more law abiding? The impact of enlargement on compliance in the European Union. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 24(2), 197–215.
- Brouard, S., Costa, O., & König, T. (eds.). (2012). *The Europeanization of Domestic Legislatures. The Empirical Implications of the Delors' Myth in Nine Countries*. New York: Springer.
- Buzogány, A. (2017). Illiberal Democracy in Hungary: Authoritarian Diffusion or Domestic Causation? *Democratization*, 24(7), 1307–1325.
- Buzogány, A., & Varga, M. (2018). The Ideational Foundations of the Illiberal Backlash in Central and Eastern Europe: The Case of Hungary. *Review of International Political Economy*, 25(6), 811–28.
- Cirautas, A. M., & Schimmelfennig, F. (2010). Europeanisation Before and After Accession: Conditionality, Legacies and Compliance. *Europe-Asia Studies*, 62(3), 421–441.
- Costello, T. (2017). *Six Years On: Assessing the Impact of Country Specific Recommendations*. Dublin: Institute of International and European Affairs.
- Epstein, R., & Sedelmeier, U. (2008). Beyond Conditionality: International Institutions in Postcommunist Europe after Enlargement. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 15(6), 795–805.
- Epstein, R., & Jacoby, W. (2014). Eastern Enlargement Ten Years On: Transcending the East–West Divide? *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52(1), 1–16.

- Fabry, A. (2019). Neoliberalism, Crisis and Authoritarian–Ethnicist Reaction: The Ascendancy of the Orbán Regime. *Competition & Change*, 23(2), 165–191.
- Hajnal, G. (2021). Illiberal Challenges to Mainstream Public Management Research: Hungary as an Exemplary Case. *Public Management Review*, 23(3), 317–325.
- European Commission. (2020a). *European Semester: why and how?* Retrieved from
- European Commission. (2020b). *Infringement procedure*. Retrieved from
- Ladrech, R. (1994). Europeanization of Domestic Politics and Institutions: The Case of France. *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 32, 69–88.
- Kovács, K., & Scheppele, K.L. (2018). The Fragility of an Independent Judiciary: Lessons from Hungary and Poland—and the European Union. *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 51(3), 189–200.
- Krekó, P., & Enyedi, Z. (2018). Explaining Eastern Europe: Orbán's Laboratory of Illiberalism. *Journal of Democracy*, 29(3), 39–51.
- Lindstrom, N. (2021). Aiding the State: Administrative Capacity and Creative Compliance with European State Aid Rules in New Member States. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 28(11), 1789–1806.
- Magyar, B., & Vásárhelyi, J. (2017). *Twenty-Five Sides of a Post-Communist Mafia State*. Budapest: Central European University Press.
- Medve-Bálint, G. (2018). EU Cohesion Policy and the Eastern Member States: A Case of Transnational Policy Convergence. In D. Stone, Á. Batory & A. Cartwright (Eds.), *Policy Experiments, Failures and Innovations: Beyond Accession in Central and Eastern Europe* (pp. 109–30). Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.
- Piroska, D., Gorelkina, Y., & Johnson, J. (2021). Macroprudential Policy on an Uneven Playing Field: Supranational Regulation and Domestic Politics in the EU's Dependent Market Economies. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 59(3), 497–517.
- Radaelli, C. (2003). The Europeanization of Public Policy. In: K. Featherstone & C. Radaelli (Eds.), *The Politics of Europeanization* (pp. 27–56). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Sallai, D., & Schnyder, G. (2020). What Is “Authoritarian” About Authoritarian Capitalism? The Dual Erosion of the Private–Public Divide in State-Dominated Business Systems. *Business & Society*, 60(6), 1312–1348.
- Scheiring, G. (2021). Dependent Development and Authoritarian State Capitalism: Democratic Backsliding and the Rise of the Accumulative State in Hungary. *Geoforum*, 124, 267–278.
- Schlipphak, B., & Treib, O. (2017). Playing the Blame Game on Brussels: The Domestic Political Effects of EU Interventions against Democratic Backsliding. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 24(3), 352–365.
- Sedelmeier, U. (2008). After Conditionality: Post-Accession Compliance with EU Law in East Central Europe. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 15(6), 806–825.
- Toshkov, D. (2012). Compliance with EU Law in Central and Eastern Europe. *L'Europe en formation. Revue d'études sur la construction européenne et le fédéralisme*, 2(364), 91–109.
- Tosun, J. (2014). Absorption of Regional Funds: A Comparative Analysis. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies*, 52(2), 371–387.
- Verdun, A., & Zeitlin, J. (2018). Introduction: the European Semester as a new architecture of EU socioeconomic governance in theory and practice. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 25(2), 137–148.
- Vukov, V. (2020). More Catholic than the Pope? Europeanisation, Industrial Policy and Transnationalised Capitalism in Eastern Europe. *Journal of European Public Policy*, 27(10), 1546–1564.