I Told You Before: Czech Euroscepticism Before and After the Economic Crisis

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Motto: “Tragic mistake was nevertheless already emergence of monetary union which almost everyone knows today” (Klaus 2012a: 2)

Introduction

The European Union (EU) has been changing since the start of the economic crisis in 2008. Many previously uncontested issues have been challenged, and the general atmosphere in the EU political system has become more critical. As a result of these developments, attitudes and opinions usually labelled Euroscepticism have become more and more accepted as a part of the political mainstream. To illustrate this, one can point to the statement made by former German Finance Minister Oscar Lafontaine in May 2013 claiming that it is time to abolish the euro (the EU’s common currency), as it binds EU members states in their struggle with the economic crisis (Die Welt 2013). Just days before Lafontaine issued this controversial statement, former British Finance Minister Nigel Lawson called for the UK to withdraw from the EU in an article published in the Times (The Times 2013).

The question remains, however, as to whether these critical remarks and demands are so new and whether they are necessarily a manifestation of Euroscepticism. Do they indicate that even the EU political mainstream (Lafontaine is one of the politicians who implemented the first phase of the euro) has become more Eurosceptical? Euroscepticism is seldom seen as a consistent and coherent ideology and is rather an umbrella term encompassing almost every form of EU criticism. If there is any agreement concerning the conceptualization of Euroscepticism, then it is to define it as a reaction, which may be a reaction towards the EU’s general development, its current trajectory or a particular step taken or policy made by the EU. A general Eurosceptical stance may thus be expected as time-indebted and incoherent approach as it should adjust itself towards ongoing development in the EU.

This paper will challenge this prevailing point of view by analysing political discourse of one prominent Eurosceptic – Václav Klaus, former Czech president. It will analyse Klaus’ discourse on the euro during the period between 2003 and 2012 in order to reveal whether Klaus only reacted to the political situation at the time, or whether his stance also contained some different elements and components that do not correspond with Euroscepticism. Klaus has been considered a Eurosceptic both by scholars and politicians since the late 1990s, and he represents an ideal subject for such analysis as his long-term lasting role in both Czech and European politics enables the detection of changes and stable factors in the euro debate. Moreover, as later mentioned in the section
commenting the state of art, Klaus is a clear and strong opinion leader whose influence on Czech political debate is obvious.

Last but not least, our previous research on Václav Klaus and his the euro-discourse in period between 1999-2002 (Kaniok and Hloušek 2013) led to some interesting conclusions not only about the content of Klaus the euro opinion, but also concerning implications that such conclusions could have for the conceptualization of Euroscepticism¹.

The analysis proceeds as follows: First, the state of research as well as the methodology and data used are briefly explained. The focus then shifts to the context of the period 2003–2012, taking into account both European (EU) and Czech perspectives. The next section offers an analysis of select speeches, interviews or articles by Klaus in terms of their message, structure and language used. Finally, conclusions are presented together with the direction of future research.

**State of research, methodology and data**

There is little systematic, European-oriented research on Václav Klaus, a politician who has been active in Czech politics since the so-called Velvet Revolution. Existing literature especially comments on Klaus as an actor in Czech domestic politics, with the most complex picture provided by Klaus’ political biography by Kopeček (Kopeček 2012). Saxonberg (Saxonberg 1999) analyses Klaus’ political career in the 1990s and explains his political longevity through the concept of a charismatic leader. Another stream of work analyses Klaus in terms of dichotomy with his predecessor in the presidential office, Václav Havel (Potůček 1999, Myant 2005). This approach is also applied in the context of the European agenda (and its role in Czech politics); for example, Drulák and Beneš compare the different metaphors of Europe emphasized by both former presidents during the periods 1990–1996 and 2003–2005 (Drulák, Beneš 2008). Nevertheless, Klaus is predominantly analysed as an actor and agenda setter with regard to both the Czech Republic’s overall stance towards the process of European integration and concrete events such as the Constitutional Treaty (Rakušanová 2007).

In contrast to the sparse research on Klaus specifically, the former Czech president appears in almost every study on Czech Euroscepticism, as he is seen as a *spiritus agens* of Czech resistance to EU membership and European integration. This is usually done in the context of party-based research; Klaus himself is not a key object or topic for these studies (Hanley 2004a; Hanley 2004b; Havlík 2009; Rulikova 2010; Nedelcheva 2009; Hanley 2010). However, his influence is perceived as very strong and persistent, as the Civic Democratic Party (ODS) did not lose its Eurosceptic label even after Klaus’ leadership, after which he was replaced first by Mirek Topolánek and then by Petr Nečas. Surprisingly, there is no study systematically analysing whether Klaus is a Eurosceptic politician and, if

¹ First of all, we have found interesting and from the Eurosceptical point of view surprising coherency in Klaus attitudes towards the euro. Klaus critique was rather rooted in economic theory and expertise arguments than in simple populist rhetoric. Thirdly, even though Klaus never shifted from soft to hard Euroscepticism during the euro launching period (1999-2002), his voice was, at least in the Czech debate, louder and generally more critical. From the theoretical point of view, the results obtained seem to challenge the concept of soft Euroscepticism. Taggart and Szczepanik conceptualize it as opposition to the EU’s current or future planned trajectory based on the further extension of competencies planned by the EU (Taggart and Szczepanik 2008: 248). A core part of this trajectory is, according to them EMU, where Taggart and Szczepanik dispute the compatibility of support for the EU and opposition towards EMU (Taggart and Szczepanik 2008: 250). However, after 10 years of EMU, it is obvious that its components and mechanisms are contested both by Eurosceptics and the so-called European mainstream. It is thus questionable whether a category (in this case soft Euroscepticism) which aims to capture an actor’s position can rest on attitudes towards a trajectory operationalized in terms of changing and developing policy or policies. In the current EU, policies and trajectories change almost every month, which problematizes efforts to take them into account as a starting point for any typology. Such a “quicksand” point of departure is even more problematic when normative typologies or categories (which Euroscepticism undoubtedly is) are the target.
so, the nature and content of his Euroscepticism and whether there has been any development in his attitude towards European integration.

Eurocepticism is certainly not among the most popular topics for theoretical political science research. The phenomenon of Euroscepticism is vague and its definitions wide. A number of theoretical studies were published in the early 2000s and focused mainly on party-based Eurocepticism (Taggart, 1998; Kopecký and Mudde, 2002; Conti, 2003; Taggart and Szczeroibiak, 2008; Conti and Verzichelli, 2004; Flood, 2002). The conceptualization by Aleks Szczeroibiak and Paul Taggart can be perceived as a winner of this intensive conceptual battle. Their conceptualization distinguishes between soft and hard versions of Eurocepticism. Hard Eurocepticism is considered to be “principled opposition to the project of European integration as embodied in the EU, in other words, based on the ceding or transfer of powers to [a] supranational institution such as the EU” (Szczeroibiak - Taggart 2003: 12). Soft Eurocepticism is then an attitude where “there is not a principled objection to the European integration project of transferring powers to a supranational body such as the EU, but there is opposition to the EU’s current or future planned trajectory based on the further extension of competencies that the EU is planning to make” (Szczeroibiak - Taggart 2003: 12).

This study adopts the Szczeroibiak and Taggart conceptualization as a point of departure for understanding Eurocepticism and Klaus’ approach, but takes into account that it is not uncontested (Crespy, Verschueren 2009, Kaniok 2012). In general, both categories of Eurocepticism are based on opposition either to the EU as a whole or to its key policies and activities in their current form.

This analysis of Václav Klaus is conducted through the lens of critical discourse analysis. As repeatedly stated by many authors, discourse analysis is a highly contested methodology because there are many ways to define the core term “discourse”. Howarth claims that there are five major approaches or ways to define and analyse discourse: positivistic, realistic, Marxist, critical discursive and post-structuralist (Howarth 2000: 2-5). This analysis is similar to the fourth approach because it focuses on the linguistic features of texts, processes relating to the production and consumption of the text (discursive practice), and the wider social practice to which the communicative events belong, i.e. social practice (Jørgensen, Phillips 2002: 68). Among these three levels of analysis, this paper deals mostly with the level of discursive practice. Generally, and recognising that language matters in every debate dealing with the process of European integration, the authors believe that a discursive approach can offer a more in-depth perspective than simple description of a politician’s or political party’s statement and matching it with a previously developed category or typology. Words and sentences are rarely important solely in their individual meaning, rather, their significance is built upon the context in which they exist or the way in which they are presented (e. g. textual structure, metaphors, etc.). Moreover, political stances and positions are seldom static as they interact within a given context and develop.

In terms of publication activity, Václav Klaus is among the most productive politicians in modern Czech politics. As a result, it was necessary to reduce the number of sources studied, as the analysed period lasted for ten years (2003–2012). Moreover, many of Klaus’ public appearances focused rather on domestic politics and touched on EU issues only very briefly. When determining the sources to analyse, only Klaus’ appearances dealing primarily with EU or EU economic affairs were included in the analysis. Each year is represented by two texts chosen on the basis of their diversity both in terms of genre (articles, speeches and interviews) and audience (general public, foreign audience, opinion leaders) in order to get as diverse a picture of Klaus’ discourse as possible. A total of twenty textual units were analysed.
### Table 1: Overview of analyzed documents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Quotation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Euro a jeho budoucnost: Pohled z budoucí členské země</td>
<td>Conference speech CATO Institute, Washington D.C.,</td>
<td>2003a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro and its Future: A View from the Expectant Member Country</td>
<td>Interview for Neue Zürcher Zeitung, Switzerland</td>
<td>2003b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evropa nepotřebuje zrychlenou integraci</td>
<td>Conference speech, European forum, Berlin, Germany</td>
<td>2004a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe Does Not Need Accelerated Integration</td>
<td>Interview, Handelsblatt and Hospodářské noviny, Germany and the Czech Republic</td>
<td>2004b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrace či unifikace Evropy</td>
<td>Speech for the Austrian central bank</td>
<td>2005a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Může společná evropská měna přežít?</td>
<td>Article, MF Dnes, Czech Republic</td>
<td>2005b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can the Common Currency Survive?</td>
<td>Article, Lidové noviny, Czech Republic</td>
<td>2006a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Concepts of Europe</td>
<td>Article in Newsletter of the CEP think-tank, Czech Republic</td>
<td>2006b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klausova kritéria pro přijetí (či nepřijetí) společné evropské měny</td>
<td>Article in Newsletter of the CEP think-tank, Czech Republic</td>
<td>2006b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Klaus’s Criteria for Adoption (or Refusal) of Common European Currency</td>
<td>Speech, Euro Business Breakfast, Prague, Czech Republic</td>
<td>2007b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vraťme se k mezivládní Evropě</td>
<td>Speech, Bertelsmann Foundation, Berlin, Germany</td>
<td>2008a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Let Us Return to Intergovernmental Europe</td>
<td>Speech, Euro Business Breakfast, Prague, Czech Republic</td>
<td>2008a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kritizuji deficit svobody v EU</td>
<td>Interview for Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Germany</td>
<td>2007a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Am Criticizing the Deficit of Liberty in the EU</td>
<td>Speech, Bertelsmann Foundation, Berlin, Germany</td>
<td>2008a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Záznam vystoupení prezidenta republiky na Euro Business Breakfast</td>
<td>Speech, Euro Business Breakfast, Prague, Czech Republic</td>
<td>2007b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record of Speech of the President of the Czech Republic at the Euro Business Breakfast</td>
<td>Speech, Euro Business Breakfast, Prague, Czech Republic</td>
<td>2007b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budoucnost Evropy: Beethoven nebo Schönberg, Óda na radost nebo dodekafonie?</td>
<td>Speech, Bertelsmann Foundation, Berlin, Germany</td>
<td>2008a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future of Europe: Beethoven or Schönberg, Ode to Joy or Dodecaphony?</td>
<td>Article, Hospodářské noviny, Czech Republic</td>
<td>2008b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 let Eura: Kdo má důvod oslavovat?</td>
<td>Article, Hospodářské noviny, Czech Republic</td>
<td>2008b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 Years of Euro: Who Has the Reason to Celebrate?</td>
<td>Speech, the European Parliament</td>
<td>2009a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projev prezidenta republiky v Evropském parlamentu</td>
<td>Speech, the European Parliament</td>
<td>2009a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech of the President of the Czech Republic in the European Parliament</td>
<td>Speech, the European Parliament</td>
<td>2009a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zneužití krize pro další centralizaci Evropské unie</td>
<td>Article, Hospodářské noviny, Czech Republic</td>
<td>2009b</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misuse of the Crisis for Further Centralization of the EU</td>
<td>Speech, Scientific Council of the Faculty of Economics, University of Economics,</td>
<td>2010a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Euro budoucnost má, ale ne příliš růžovou</td>
<td>Speech, Scientific Council of the Faculty of Economics, University of Economics,</td>
<td>2010a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe Has the Future, However Not Very Rosy One</td>
<td>Speech, Scientific Council of the Faculty of Economics, University of Economics,</td>
<td>2010a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changing domestic and European context of Klaus’s discourse

Václav Klaus became the second Czech president in March 2003. This step was a remarkable return to political prominence since period of 1998-2002 when Klaus occupied the position of Chairman of the House of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic which always was far from leading executive power. Of course, arrangement of so-called Opposition Agreement left Klaus and is Civic Democratic Party space to negotiate with ruling Social Democrats about some governmental policies. Looking back, however, we must admit that it was Miloš Zeman who can be depicted as the political winner of those days (see Roberts 2003 for details on the Opposition Agreement).

Klaus embarked on more independent political travel as well when he left the Civic Democratic Party chairing because of his engagement in presidential elections. He remained honorary chairman of the Party but Civic Democrats under the new leader Mirek Topolánek changed both strategy and rhetoric and the position of Klaus and the party became slightly divergent. For the purpose of our paper, it is important to stress that such a divergence occurred especially in the sphere of “European” policy. Topánek had changed his former Euro-skeptic views when he took over prime ministerial function and responsibilities to his EU counterparts and, as a logical reaction, Klaus has become more critical to the Party and especially Topolánek’s (no matter how moderate – see Drulák et al. 2008 for broader political context) pro-European position.\(^2\) His strong and from now on from partisan concerns fully independent political voice was thus even sounder. Practically, he continued

\(^2\) Klaus even gave up the honorary chairman function in December 2008 “[i]n order not to be an obstacle in a way of ongoing transformation of the ODS from the right-wing and civic party to the party of lobbyist interests...” (Klaus 2008c). Europe played officially no role in this decision but long term tensions between Klaus and pro-European politicians among the ODS elite surely helped him to leave “his” party.
to use the channel of the Center for Economics and Politics (CEP) which became the prominent
platform for Czech intellectual Euro-skeptic debate.³

Klaus never hesitated to dispute the European Union political mainstream but his activities in this
field were shaped not least by changing salience of the topic for the Czech and international public.
Simplifying a bit, we can see certain depreciation of Klaus’s attention in the mid-2000s. The Czech
Republic entered the EU in May 2004 (which Klaus lukewarmly accepted), project of European
Constitutional Treaty was broken in 2005, so the EU did not seem to be the most prominent concern
of the Czech president.⁴ More can be read in the following table:

**Table 2: Number of EU-related items among Klaus’ public appearances during 2003–2012**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Share of EU-related items (%)</th>
<th>“Articles and Essays”</th>
<th>“Economic texts”</th>
<th>“Speeches and addresses”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20,0</td>
<td>4/23</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>5/26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>18,5</td>
<td>7/22</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>5/41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>23,3</td>
<td>8/20</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>5/38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>14,5</td>
<td>2/29</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>7/39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>8,3</td>
<td>2/23</td>
<td>0/3</td>
<td>3/34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>13,2</td>
<td>3/22</td>
<td>2/8</td>
<td>4/38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>13,6</td>
<td>4/25</td>
<td>1/11</td>
<td>6/45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>18,0</td>
<td>2/16</td>
<td>5/8</td>
<td>4/37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>12,9</td>
<td>1/33</td>
<td>8/21</td>
<td>2/31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>17,9</td>
<td>3/28</td>
<td>4/10</td>
<td>5/29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: [www.klaus.cz](http://www.klaus.cz)

Note: Division among individual categories follows the original division of the web site content. Fractions show
the number of EU-related items divided by the total number of entries in the respective category.

Looking at the figures, one can see that the peak of Klaus’s occupation with the EU topics was
reached in the period around entering the EU and debates on so-called European Constitution. After
that, Klaus attention relaxed a bit but never diminished entirely. Second phase of raising interest in
the EU issues started at the end of the last decade together with economic crisis and political efforts
to fight the crisis via deepening of EU regulation capacity in fiscal and monetary matters. Form the
point of view of our aim to analyze Klaus’s discourse on the monetary integration and especially
single European currency, we have to recognize rising share of economic papers devoted to the EU-
related issues in the period after 2008, as shown in the following graph.

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³ Much less favorably looked Klaus at direct political activities of Petr Mach, former prominent person of CEP,
who founded Party of Free Citizens (SSO) in February 2009 and who made anti-EU views one of the crucial
parts of new party’s manifesto and image. Rumors concerning Klaus direct engagement in SSO campaign in the
EP 2009 elections did not turn to reality and SSO remains minor negligible political actor ([Havlík 2009; Havlík
2011](http://www.klaus.cz)).

⁴ Other topics seemed to be Klaus’s favorites in this period, especially the debate concerning the global
warming together with issues related purely to Czech politics, such as debates on economic transformation in the
1990s when Klaus affirmed his then policies.
Graph 1: Share of EU-related items among Klaus’ public appearances in general and among economic papers, 2003-2012

Source: www.klaus.cz

In the 2003-2013 “presidential” period, Klaus increasingly published books or volumes of papers devoted to European politics, economics, and integration in Czech for domestic audience. He also tried to hit more various audience initiating and / or authorizing publishing of his thoughts in foreign languages abroad.

New energy that Klaus pumped to enter the debate with full vehemence was thus connected to economic crisis that started in 2008 and with political debates on the Lisbon Treaty covering roughly the same time span. We will leave Klaus position towards the Lisbon Treaty and his effort to stop the process of its ratification in the Czech Republic un-discussed in this paper because we pay attention to economic reasoning of Klaus and especially to his critique of common European currency project. We shall however to stress the salience the Lisbon Treaty had for Klaus Euro-skeptic activities, seen by him as an important step in deepening of the EU direction (Kopeček 2012: 224-228).

Last but not least, we must to take into consideration changing context of European monetary integration. Very soon after the common currency introduction to common circulation of notes and coins, first violations of the Stability and Growth Pact occurred including Germany and France as early as 2003. The rules were relaxed by the 2005 reform but the entire euro-zone together with other EU member countries were shaken by global bank, credit, and mortgage crisis and even more by the 2010 debt crisis in some euro-zone countries. As a counter-reaction, Euro Plus Pact was

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5 A book *Europe of Václav Klaus* (Klaus 2004c) is a collection of previously published essays as well as the book *President of the Republic on the Lisbon Treaty* (Klaus 2009c). In 2005, Klaus wrote a preface for the pamphlet of Irish author Anthony Coughlan (*Řekněte své ano či ne...* 2005) which was published by the think-tank CEP founded by Václav Klaus and very close to his political views. The last original book devoted to EU-related issues in broader perspective of European history, politics, and economics called *Us, Europe, and the World* (Klaus 2013) sums-up Klaus thinking on Europe that developed in the previous two decades.

6 Already in 2006, four of Klaus’s essays on integration together with other text written by Klaus’s Euro-skeptic intimae were published in English in Prague by the CEP as the short book called *What is Europeism?* (The book can be downloaded at [http://www.cepin.cz/docs/dokumenty/europeism.pdf](http://www.cepin.cz/docs/dokumenty/europeism.pdf)). Similar collection was published in Poland in 2008 and in 2012 in Bulgaria. Other collections of articles of Klaus on Europe and her integration were published in Serbia (2010), Germany (2010) and France (2012). The most influential book, however, is *European integration without illusion* (Czech original – Klaus 2011c), which was till august 2013 translated to Spanish, German, English (published by the Hudson Institute in Washington, D.C.), Italian, Bulgarian, and Danish.
developed in 2011 and all parts of so-called Six-Pack are heading in direction foreseen to some extent by Klaus already in the second half of the 1990s. (See Lannoo 2011)

Content analysis of Klaus’s speeches and articles

We can briefly characterize content of analyzed Klaus papers and speeches on the EU in 2003-2012 period as a combination of persistence of arguments and sensibility to the new developments of European integration. Especially in the case of economic integration, monetary union and related issues, Klaus insisted on his argument raised in previous years and commented the ongoing development often commemorating the reader that such a development can be foreseen since the very beginning and he belonged to the few wise men that knew well before.

Klaus relatively often connected economic argumentation and economic topic with more general issues such as the Treaty establishing the Constitution for Europe (see Klaus 2003b; 2004a; 2005a; 2005b), or The Treaty of Lisbon (Klaus 2007b; 2009b). In later years, Klaus has returned more to general preconditions of the European integration, relations between integration and democracy or liberalism, and especially the critique of diminishing concern for freedom in the EU.7

Klaus general position in European integration debate has remained unchanged. He has persistently stood for evolutionary integration seen as a negative integration in sense of removal of obstacles and barriers of free move of people, ideas, goods, services etc. EU in its contemporary shape lacks democratic responsibility which is incurable because any viable democracy is maintainable on national level only anyway.8 As in the previous period, Klaus has maintained the position that the Czech Republic has no alternative to the EU membership9 but the EU itself has many alternatives how to evolve while the current state of affairs and changes made after the Czech Republic has entered the EU are heading the worst possible way (see especially Klaus 2005b). Klaus explicitly stated that his vision of the EU is based on strong position of nation states. Nation was however always conceptualized in political, non-ethnic-exclusivist way: for Klaus, nation encompasses all the inhabitants of the state (2011a).

First analysed unit is a Klaus speech at the CATO Institute (Washington, USA) entitled “Euro and its Future: A View from the Expectant Member Country” (Klaus 2003a). Speech concentrates on evaluation of impact of the euro on similar states and evaluation of the euro on transition states. Speech is firmly rooted in economic theory, Klaus uses rational and technical language often cites another authors – obvious ambitious is to present the speech as an expert and academic piece of work. Concerning content, based upon economic theory argumentation, Klaus concludes that in both cases the euro brings more disadvantages than benefits. He occasionally refers to his previous argumentation (“A lot of us already knew in these times that creation of regional common currency is not neither necessary nor sufficient condition for healthy economic growth”). Klaus several times emphasises that the euro is a political project, primarily serving to further harmonization of the EU and not respecting economic laws.

In comparison to Klaus previous work, there is present strong prediction element. Klaus assumes problems in the Eurozone and expects that such problems will be explained as consequences of insufficient level of harmonization. He also predicts that the euro will survive and does not expect its

7 “The goal of all contemporary striving [of the EU] is some mythic overall-reaching Good and in its framework, the demand for real freedom is almost absent” (Klaus 2008a: 1).
8 See for example Klaus 2007a; 2009a for understanding his dealing with a democratic deficit concept.
9 With argument that the Czech Rep. traditionally belongs to the West: “Shall the February 1948 not come, the Czech Communists’ coup d'état and the later invasion of Soviet troops, we would belong of course to founding members of the EU and the NATO” (Klaus 2004b: 1).
collapse. However, preservation of the euro will be costly in terms of fiscal transfers and tension within the Eurozone.

Second analysed document is a transcript of Klaus interview for Neue Zürcher Zeitung entitled “Europe Does Not Need Accelerated Integration” (Klaus 2003b). Klaus comments the euro only slightly, questions devoted to the EU are broadly orientated and most of them deal rather with the Czech politics. When commenting the EU, Klaus speaks about “Brussels integration fever that is a...form of escapism” and labels Brussels as “cumbersome bureaucratic system...that takes and re-distributes money”. Klaus still tries to present himself as a moderate critic of the EU – when he answers question asking whether EU needs a constitution at all, he says: “Definitely not. European constitution is just a method, method that various politicians want to use for acceleration of the integration process. And I am against such acceleration”. Klaus thus opposes not the integration process, but its speed-up.

A first analysed document representing year 2004 is a Klaus speech at the European forum in Berlin (Germany, 2004a) bearing a title “Integration or Unification of Europe”. The speech is not primarily focused on the euro, but it evaluates the whole process of the European integration. Klaus claims that he opposes artificial acceleration of the European integration while he is in favour of evolutionary – thus natural and logical – process of integration of the Europe. Klaus defines the former as “unification, homogenization, harmonization and standardization of the European continent...and its bureaucratic institutionalization” and the latter as “cooperation and friendship among European states as perfect as we can imagine”. However, according Klaus, states should not be replaced by EU structures – the key problem is democratic accountability. Klaus explicitly says that for some decisions is nation state either too big (and decision should be taken at the regional or local level) or too small (and decision should be taken at the international level, either in form of organization or treaty) – but there is simply no space for system like the EU is.

This speech can be read as Klaus first manifestation of inclination towards hard Euroscepticism. Klaus explicitly rejects basic principle of the European integration and requests fundamental transformation of integration into purely intergovernmental cooperation without any supranational institutions. Speech avoids using of metaphors.

The second analysed unit of 2004 is interview published in Handelsblatt/Hospodářské noviny (Klaus 2004b). Klaus critically evaluates the whole process of the European integration – in accordance with his previous statements. There is one particular question on the euro – Klaus claims that he does not oppose the euro, but its hasty introduction (Klaus states that economies of accessing countries need real convergence, not just nominal one) and refers to the case of German reunification and subsequent introduction of DM in the former East Germany (Klaus repeats his argument on necessary fiscal transfers frequently used in 1999-2002 period). In the rest of the interview, there is one interesting metaphor – Klaus likens EU to the “European house that is without bars but with doors that can be locked before its flats” saying the he “does not like the metaphor of the European house”.

Already in 2005 Klaus asks himself in speech for the Austrian central bank (Klaus 2005a) whether the euro can survive. Klaus puts the euro into overall European debate taking into account e.g. European constitution or EU enlargement. He claims that European socio-economic model faces a severe crisis caused by combination of low economic growth, increase of unemployment or aging of population. There is no group of separate problems; the problem is the system itself (basically in its idea promising prosperity without connection to real economic performance).

The speech repeats already stated (1999-2002) arguments. First of them is the role of exchange rate, Klaus claims that it must be connected to the economic conditions in given country. Exchange rate should be flexible in order to enable react on changes in economic conditions – the euro disables such movements as it has one exchange rate for 12 different economies with different structural conditions. The second argument stating that there is a strong connection between monetary and
The first analysed text of 2005 is Klaus essay on European constitution (Klaus 2005b) “Two Concepts of Europe” published in Czech mainstream daily newspapers MF Dnes. Essay comments main differences between supporters and critiques of the European constitution – while the former believe that society can be constructed on the rational basis, the latter follow natural law of spontaneous development. The text did not touch the Euro; it rather illustrates Klaus overall opinion on the European integration in its then form (which is critical).

First analysed text of 2006 entitled “Klaus’s Criteria for Adoption (or Refusal) of Common European Currency” was published in the newspaper Lidove noviny (Klaus 2006a) and explicitly deals with the Euro. In short essay, Klaus briefly comments so called Maastricht criteria and sums up that these conditions cannot be the decisive factors making up Czech decision concerning the Euro adoption. On the contrary, Czech Republic has to build up its own parameters (Klaus arbitrary calls them “Criteria of Česká Lípa”) based upon the Euro possible benefits calculation. In short review of existing history of the Euro, Klaus claims that the Euro did not bring expected success (concerning economic stability and growth) and is still a risky project. Klaus again repeatedly refers to his previous work and favours intergovernmental cooperation in Europe.

Second analysed unit of 2006 is a transcript of Klaus speech for an economic conference in Italy (Klaus 2006b). Klaus states that European economic growth is very slow and argues that such development is caused by defects in European economic system. The Euro, Klaus continues, is a part of this broken mechanism, not a treatment of it. The Euro, according Klaus, strengthened rigidity of European economy, brought new inappropriate parameters and caused serious problems for several Eurozone member states. Costs caused by the existence of the Euro are evidently higher than its benefits.

Klaus concludes that Europe’s future has only two ways – first of them is continuation of this unsuccessful integration project and the second option is return to “old intergovernmental Europe”, where states will be the basic and most important players. Klaus claims that European institutions and policies are useful only if they solve continental externalities. The article is very simple, it again uses dichotomy as a linguistic tool (two ways for Europe).

Year of 2007 starts with a transcript of interview for FAZ (Klaus 2007a). Most of the questions that Klaus got target on the issue of European constitution – Klaus repeat already stated arguments rejecting such treaty, rejecting discussions about particular parts (and instead of it supporting discussion on fundamental topics as democratic accountability in politics). Some of the answers are again based upon implicit or explicit dichotomy (interests of EU politicians against interests of the people).

Second analysed document is a transcript of speech “Record of Speech of the President of the Czech Republic at the Euro Business Breakfast” (Klaus 2007b). The speech consists of 4 separate parts (the Euro, Nuclear energy, Czech economy, European Reform Treaty). Part devoted to the euro is the first and longest one – Klaus repeats already stated arguments – the Euro is one of reasons causing
current economic decline in the Eurozone member states, adoption of the Euro must be evaluated according Czech own criteria, economic criteria following economic theory must be followed etc. Klaus says that it would be enormously unwise step to adopt the Euro now.

First document representing year of 2008 contains a transcript of Klaus speech for Bertelsmann Foundation in Berlin (Klaus 2008a). Speech does not primarily focus neither on the process of European integration, nor it deals with the Euro. It rather presents Klaus overall opinion on character of modern politics. Text is based upon one strong analogy borrowed from music (Beethoven versus Schönberg) and Klaus belief that Europe has to return to its history and its experienced structures and processes.

On the contrary, the second unit aims only at the euro as it evaluates 10 years of its existence (Klaus 2008b). First of all, Klaus admits several successes of the ECB (rational monetary policy, the Euro as respected international currency, low level of inflation). On the other side, from the citizens’ and Eurozone member states point of view, the picture of these 10 years is much more complicated. Klaus argues that the Eurozone was – 10 years ago – primarily political not economical project and necessary economic conditions was believed to occur additionally. Such development has not been happening so far as the differences between Eurozone member states have increased. Klaus expects severe crisis in coming period and claims that Eurozone mechanism are not able to react on international development. He also expects that ECB will be under heavy pressure and that common currency could be an easy target when politicians would try to divert discontent of citizens with economic development.

Year of 2009 was in the case of the Czech Republic specific as country held in its first half EU Council Presidency. This opportunity offered Václav Klaus floor in the European Parliament where he held his speech in February (Klaus 2009). Klaus repeated its statement that EU membership has no alternative for the Czech Republic but in the same time argued that current shape of the EU was not the only possible form of the European integration. Klaus criticized the EU for possessing too many competencies, for the content of the Lisbon Treaty and for its decision-making system that differs from classic parliamentary democracy. Moreover, Klaus attacked several times its own audience as he claimed (e. g.) that EP should not be strengthened and that there was no real political alternative within the EP.

Second analysed document of the year 2009 was written in completely different language and tune – Klaus came back to his favourite words and terms as “Europeists”, “regulators” and his implicit suspicion that the EU wants to regulate and centralize. Article itself (Klaus 2009b, written for Hospodářské noviny) deals with creation of new regulatory bodies ESRB and ESFS that were supposed to regulate financial markets within the EU. Klaus repeats his previously stated argument that EU will abuse the crisis in order to gain more political power and competencies. Klaus sees establishment of these new bodies as important step towards hidden centralization of economic policies of EU member states.

First analysed document of the year 2010 was Klaus speech at the Prague High School of Economics bearing a title “Europe Has the Future, However Not Very Rosy One” (Klaus 2010a). Klaus reviews his previously stated argumentation consisting of treating the euro rather as a political idea than economic project – that thesis underlined whole speech. He accuses supporters and proponents of the euro of deliberate ignoring of economic arguments as they believed that political benefits of the euro launch are much bigger than potential economic losses. Klaus also repeats another thesis stating that it is impossible to establish and subsequently run monetary union without having established both fiscal and political union. He claims that current institutional changes represent radical move from monetary towards fully fledged fiscal and political union. Klaus finishes his speech with two strong conclusions. Firstly, such union can exist only as centralized and undemocratic entity. Secondly, the euro will survive but the price will consist of large fiscal transfers and redistribution; and long lasting stagnation of European economy.
Three weeks before parliamentary election was Klaus interviewed by mainstream Czech weekly magazine Týden (Klaus 2010b). Several questions were directly focused on issues of the euro and Eurozone. Klaus sums up his approach emphasizing that he has been the prophet warning against the euro and its set up for more than 15 years. Klaus gradually repeats almost all arguments that he has developed in these 15 years – the euro as a political project, analogy with re-unification of Germany, ignorance of economic arguments. Klaus also repeats that economy crisis will lead to further integration (He used his favorite word “unification steps”).

Comparing to the previous units (that were dominantly published in various monologic genres), Klaus is much more expressive. Instead of expertise terms, he prefers simple analogies (personalization of states – especially Greece) and metaphors (“stowaway”, “live beyond one’s means”, “tightening the belts”).

In March 2011 Klaus spoke at the conference South Tyrolean Economic Forum entitling his speech with the title “Europe Has the Future, However Not Very Rosy One” (Klaus 2011a). Speech dealt with Klaus overall approach towards the European integration focusing on its economic benefits and costs. Klaus claims that the European integration should have stopped in the EC phase – any further deepening did not bring profit as it moved from initial liberalization to centralization and unification. He argues that there are just two ways or options for further development. First scenario means “less Europe”, the second heads towards further unification (move from Monetary Union towards Fiscal Union).

Second analyzed unit representing the last but one year of Klaus presidency is an interview for mainstream Czech daily newspaper Lidové noviny (Klaus 2011b). All questions are devoted to the issue of the EU and particularly to the Eurozone and its crisis. Klaus repeats already know and repeated arguments (the Eurozone is not an optimal monetary zone, the integration will continue and its costs will be extremely high), but also adds new insights and remarks. He is aware that his approach towards the EU (and the Eurozone) has marginalized him from real political debate as he says “If I would feel a political opportunity to do something with my suggestions...I would immediately write a pack of measurements. But I do not feel it as my mission and I do not think that anybody is interested in that”. Such statement obviously indicates high degree of resignation, at least at the level of real political activity. Klaus then explicitly says – answering question whether he thinks that concerning the EU history is agreeing with him – that he is not happy that Europe faces serious problems (“I would be happy if I were wrong”).

As the most recent contribution we analyze (Klaus 2012b) shows, Klaus doesn’t isolate economic from the politics of integration. Contemporary economic crisis is depicted as a product of both European integration and European social and welfare model. Europe is at the crossroads and substantial systemic changes are needed. Systemic solution is, according to Klaus, “return of politics” which is possible only in nation- or state-wide democratic system. There is no European demos therefore there cannot be any European politics. Without such a change (return to decision making based on intergovernmental mode and unanimity, and return of power to the hands of the member states), Europe will face long-term economic stagnation.

If we should briefly sum up content of analyzed units, first general comment deals with its consistency and coherency. Klaus articles and speeches address limited number of topics, his approaches and stances are stable and if there is a change, it is only cosmetic and does not violate overall picture. Generally, content of analyzed Klaus papers and speeches on the EU in 2003-2012 period can be characterized as a combination of persistence of arguments and sensibility to the new

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10 It is possible that Klaus was influenced here by the book written by Petr Fiala (2010) that criticizes diminishing of politics and transformation of political thinking to administrative or “expert” decision making of technocratic nature.
developments of European integration. Especially in the case of economic integration, monetary union and related issues, Klaus insisted on his argument raised in previous years and commented the ongoing development often commemorating the reader that such a development can be foreseen since the very beginning and he belonged to the few wise men that knew well before.

Klaus relatively often connected economic argumentation and economic topic with more general issues such as the Treaty establishing the Constitution for Europe (see Klaus 2003b; 2004a; 2005a; 2005b), or The Treaty of Lisbon (Klaus 2007b; 2009b). In later years, Klaus has returned more to general preconditions of the European integration, relations between integration and democracy or liberalism, and especially the critique of diminishing concern for freedom in the EU.\(^{11}\)

Klaus general position in European integration debate has remained unchanged. He has persistently stood for evolutionary integration seen as a negative integration in sense of removal of obstacles and barriers of free move of people, ideas, goods, services etc. EU in its contemporary shape lacks democratic responsibility which is incurable because any viable democracy is maintainable on national level only anyway.\(^{12}\) As in the previous period, Klaus has maintained the position that the Czech Republic has no alternative to the EU membership\(^ {13}\) but the EU itself has many alternatives how to evolve while the current state of affairs and changes made after the Czech Republic has entered the EU are heading the worst possible way (see especially Klaus 2005b). Klaus explicitly stated that his vision of the EU is based on strong position of nation states. Nation was however always conceptualized in political, non-ethnic-exclusivist way: for Klaus, nation encompasses all the inhabitants of the state (2011a).

**Analysis of the discursive praxis**

Following part of the paper goes from the analysis of content to the analysis of the discourse, Klaus’s discursive practices and rhetorical tools and figures. From general point of view, Klaus is in using his favorite discourse(s) very coherent and consistent. He constantly prefers particular set of rhetoric techniques and features as well as ways in which he presents his argument. This - producing side concerning – consistency goes in hand with Klaus coherency in content that we found in previous section.

As one of the most favorite Klaus’s rhetorical features can be identified position of expert\(^ {14}\) to foster his political argumentation. Especially in papers or speeches devoted primarily to politicians (European or Czech) and academic environment, Klaus employs a lot economic terms, concepts, uses quotations of like-minded economic experts (although the basic circle is limited to the best known liberal economists like Bastiat, von Hayek, Mises, or Erhard)\(^ {15}\). Adopting the position of an expert, Klaus can successfully support his view that the common currency has been a purely political project without sufficient background in economic reasoning and without convincing cost-benefit analysis.\(^ {16}\) On the contrary, Brussels’s bureaucrats are depicted as narrow minded people who “(…) blindly insist

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\(^{11}\) “The goal of all contemporary striving [of the EU] is some mythic overall-reaching Good and in its framework, the demand for real freedom is almost absent” (Klaus 2008a: 1).

\(^{12}\) See for example Klaus 2007a; 2009a for understanding his dealing with a democratic deficit concept.

\(^{13}\) With argument that the Czech Rep. traditionally belongs to the West: “Shall the February 1948 not come, the Czech Communists’ coup d’état and the later invasion of Soviet troops, we would belong of course to founding members of the EU and the NATO” (Klaus 2004b: 1).

\(^{14}\) “My former life profession – academic economist, central banker, and politician – allow me to say following to the topic [of Euro] (…)” (Klaus 2010a: 1)

\(^{15}\) See for example Klaus 2003a; 2005a; 2006a; 2008b; 2010a.

\(^{16}\) And he confirms his view by selecting couple of citation of top European leaders (Prodi, Schröder, Gonzales) to demonstrate pure political nature of Euro project and to show underestimation of economic argumentation by European-elites (Klaus 2003a).
on “fight with the climate change” as the most important global agenda” (Klaus 2008b: 3). In another excerpt, Klaus (2010a) attacked proponents of the euro that they believe in possibility of steering of economic development with deep and broad economic planning. Generally, he treats the pro-European politicians as less rational enthusiasts who started processes of deeper integration without seeing consequences.17

As far as the costs and benefits are concerned, Klaus operates with such a kind of euro’s assessment in rather specific way. He never denies that the common currency has some advantages but he always compares them with disadvantages he sees and shows how marginal the benefits are and how high the costs are rising, especially from the point of a common European citizen.

Klaus preference of expertise discourse does not limit itself only to the emphasis of economic argumentation. Klaus quite often uses examples from history (European as well as Czechoslovakian or Czech) and addresses the euro and economic integration in broader context. Such approach is not only a case of speeches or articles where Klaus analyses the European integration in general (e.g. Klaus 2009), but also is used in Klaus treatment of the euro.

Another Klaus’s argumentation tool already familiar to us is broad usage of dichotomies to demonstrate that there are two options – one good and the other bad – without much space for reconciliation. As far as the euro and its implementation in new member countries – a deep concern of Klaus especially in the first half of the previous decade – are concerned, Klaus differentiates between “the real economic convergence” and “nominal convergence” ascribed to the World of Maastricht Criteria. The first one is connected with keeping the national currency; the other Klaus connects with introduction of euro. Another popular dichotomy to be found in more entries we examined is a dichotomy of “particular interests” versus “reasonable, rational organization” (for example Klaus 2003b). Klaus differentiates between “evolutionary process of integration” and “unification, homogenization, harmonization, and standardization” of Europe as well (Klaus 2004a: 1) and stresses the fact that the EU is not the same as Europe18 which is a deep concern of his19 (see for example Klaus 2004b). In the same vein, he differentiates between “bad” human rights versus “good” civil rights (Klaus 2005b). Majoritarian decision making excludes seeking of compromise at all according to Klaus (2007a) and there is unbridgeable gap between the political systems of the EU on the one hand and historically confirmed parliamentary democracy on the other hand (Klaus 2009a).

As a subset of using dichotomies can be seen “We versus them” practice widely applied by Klaus. His division between the perspective of Europeanized elite and common people living in particular countries of the EU is another powerful tool to show his reservations and objections towards the euro. Klaus knows how to address the masses; he is less sophisticated, argues more straightforwardly, and uses more clear examples. We can exemplify his way of argumentation by slightly populist statement “Only European politicians and bureaucrats who travel permanently through Europe will reach superior advantages [of euro]” (Klaus 2003a: 3; see also Klaus 2007b). Emphasis on diverging particular interest of some European elites (supporting common currency and further economic and political integration generally) and general interest of masses to sustain primary role and supreme power of a national state is throughout backbone of most of Klaus entries devoted to European integration and its economic and political impact. “We versus them” creates strong persuasive power especially in papers and speeches directed to the Czech public and

17 In an interview for the Czech non-tabloid daily Lidové noviny, Klaus obtained question whether he thinks that the EU rids people of liberty of liberty, his answer was: “I do not think that someone wants to get rid somebody of freedom, I think that someone only cares about his position, his hegemony, his interests. Getting rid of different kinds of freedom is only a consequence then” (Klaus 2011b: 2).
18 “Allegiance to Europe does not need any decision, one does not enter her. We belong to Europe but we are the members of the EU” (Klaus 2011a: 2).
19 “I say all this because of my feeling of responsibility for democratic and prosperous future of Europe” (Klaus 2009a: 4)
corresponds in a slight populist way to a popular vogue of critique directed to “the Brussels” and parts of Czech economic and political elite connected to European Union policies and financial sources. Here Klaus leaves the firm ground of economic expertise and embarks on the road more common among Euro-skeptic politicians.  

Very strong role in Klaus argumentation line is played by labeling his opponents with (often pretty nasty) ideological labels and doing this, to interpret ideas of the adversaries in his own way. The notion of post-democracy belongs to the most frequently used: “Efforts to suppress national state lead us to post-democratic brave new world, to absence of democratic accountability, to leaving of existing and “tested” democratic mechanisms and guarantees, to replacement of politics with technical and bureaucratic thinking” (Klaus 2004a: 2). Four years later Klaus added: “I see [in Europe today] only formal liberty and democracy which are uncontrollably changing into system that more and more regulates a human being, into a post-democracy” (Klaus 2008a: 2). And used again analogy between today’s EU and Huxley’s Brave New World, Zamjatin’s novel We, Orwell’s 1984, or even Campanela’s The City of the Sun. Monetary, fiscal, and political unions play a decisive role in this process because they “(...) can function but without democracy” (Klaus 2010a: 2). And he offers a cure as well saying that “[...] the only solution [of contemporary crisis] is return of politics. From a post-democracy that thinks that decision about the society is mere administration, I claim return of politics” (Klaus 2011b: 3). Another term Klaus coined is “Europeists” for the enthusiastic supporters of supranational integration, a term that shall have embarrassing connotations as well (see for example Klaus 2006b; 2009b) or “Eurosimpletons” (Klaus 2011b). Whenever the same method is applied by other politicians to Klaus himself, he has always been very radically against such a (mis)interpretation: “It is (...) almost scandalous and in any case undignified to label one [of the concepts of Europe] as Euro-essimism, Euro-skepticism, and nationalism or as an incomprehensible reactionary backwardness” (Klaus 2005b: 1). He prefers to call his position “Euro-realism” (Klaus 2011a). 

In most of analyzed texts, Klaus avoids using of expressive language and metaphors. This tool does not seem to belong among his favorite one – as one rare example can be found Klaus speech for Bertelsmann Foundation in Berlin (Klaus 2008a) Klaus metaphorically contrasts Beethoven’s Ode to Joy and Schönberg’s dodecaphony. Ode to Joy seems to be too abstract and far from reality, dodecaphony, according to Klaus, corresponds better with the real world full of cacophonous difference of interests and ideas. According to Klaus, Ode to Joy represents false feeling of romantic dreaming about the future, not the complex reality. Another, obviously negative, metaphor is used by Klaus as well: “European currency unification is moreover a Trojan Horse of general harmonization of economic rules, policies and legislation of the EU” (Klaus 2003a: 4). Generally, if there is a metaphor used, it is a negative one and addressed to the EU or European integration.

20 “We versus them” approach sometimes spills over even to economic argumentation, as Klaus demonstrated talking about appropriateness of the Maastricht Criteria for the Czech Republic. Maastricht Criteria according to Klaus are not the Czech but theirs criteria (Klaus 2006a: 1). In the entire entry, euro-zone is seen as something complete external (and perhaps even alien) to the Czech Republic. Economic argumentation is moreover mingled with highly politicized language if we compare the firs and the second (more or less economic) Klaus’s criterion with the third one, when he shifts from economic to purely political arguments and he uses assessing adjectives with a-priory negative connotations.

21 Another telling example is Klaus’s attempt to explain his position on the Greek crisis: “There is no single reason to make fun of the Greeks. (...) I am criticizing those who forced the Greeks to enter the euro-zone (...) Some media quote me that crisis in Greece was caused by the euro and that this is my critique of existence of the common currency. But I am not saying anything like this. Crisis was caused by the fact that Greece opted for euro – and this is completely different message” (Klaus 2010b: 4).

22 “Unification is something different that integration. Exactly in this respect is the Ode to Joy nothing more than an inanimate symbol of the plan for artificial brotherhood for me” (Klaus 2008a: 3).
However, Klaus in general does sometimes not hesitate to use suggestive stylistic and expressive language means to foster his argumentation, especially when he talks to or writes for Czech masses. Some of pictures he uses to depict non-democratic and anti-national nature of contemporary European integration are suggestive: “Integration fever of the Brussels is a typical surrogate [of deep structural reforms that are needed according to Klaus], some kind of escapism” (Klaus 2003b). In another entry, Klaus is warning again “artificial speeding-up of unification of [European] continent” (Klaus 2004a). Sometimes his vision is almost apocalyptic: “Great British historian Arnold Toynbee wrote that suicide of a civilization occurs when the people cease to react to the challenges they face in an innovative way. We are exactly in this situation” (Klaus 2012b 3).

A suggestive analogy between the new member countries and former GDR emerged in Klaus’s mind when one comes to the question how fast the euro should be adopted: Premature introduction of euro in the new member countries would harm their economies similarly to premature introduction of DM in former GDR (Klaus 2005a). He employed sometimes an analogy between the EU and the USSR. Klaus (2006b) analogized the EU and Brezhnev’s USSR comparing the Communist notion of “scientific-technological revolution” with the EU emphasis on knowledge or information economy. In 2011 (in an interview for broad Czech public) he used an analogy between European economic integration and communism again because of centralization of economic policies steering in both regimes.23 Klaus (2012b) also recalls his experience with communism to claim that he can understand the problems of the EU in more sensitive way.

Klaus uses irony very sparingly; still we can find some interesting points, especially in more recent entries, as was the ironical assessment concerning the loss of autonomy: “I can refer about myself in a hyperbole only as about honorary president of the Czech Republic already now” (Klaus 2011b: 3). Or in depicting of emptiness of European political debate when he writes that people like Delors, Prodi, or Barroso cancelled the most important political question about how much market or regulation (Klaus 2012b).

Klaus was very consistent also in terms of discourses he tried to prefer or/and suppress. Concerning the former, Klaus constantly advocate liberal economic discourse as well as conservative political discourse. Preference of liberal discourse was obvious especially in units which were directly devoted to the euro, the Eurozone and overall European economic integration. Conservative background was strongly present in units where Klaus analyzed the EU as a whole. Similarly, as in the period of 1999-2002, Klaus both explicitly and implicitly challenged predominant European the euro (and the EU) discourses.

Instead of conclusion: which form of Eurosceptisim?

Overall strategy of Klaus towards the euro was always trying to de-legitimize the project as well as his proponents be it in the way of rational economic argumentation or more emotional (and sometimes slightly populist) political arguments. We must to bear in mind however that Klaus interest in euro and its critique was not isolated from his general views of the European Union and European integration project. And we have to recognize as well that views of Klaus on integration are deeply embedded in his complex political ground based on mixture of cultural conservatism and economic liberalism. His remarkably consistent and coherent critique of the common currency must be thus analyzed in the light of concepts of soft and hard Euroscepticism as defined by Paul Taggart and Aleks Szczepskiak which will be dealt with in the concluding part of the paper.

23 In another excerpt, Klaus wrote that “[e]ven though the level of state intervention to economy is completely different from early stage of aggressive communism in the contemporary EU, it is not so different from its final more “softer” phases” (Klaus 2012b: 1).
Following Taggart and Szczerbiak definition of soft Euroscepticism, Klaus as a president definitely constructed Eurosceptical the euro discourse. Klaus constantly criticized the euro, its set up as well as its performance and his discursive strategy in regard to the common currency can be undoubtedly assessed as de-legitimizing one. He also predicts very critical and pessimistic future of the common currency. The question that immediately occurs – especially in the euro crisis context – what does this conclusion tell us? Can the Euroscptic be right in evaluating such crucial EU policy and what does this “possible rightness” mean for conceptualization of Euroscepticism? Klaus already in the first years of new millennium stated that he expected serious crisis and problems in the Eurozone and quite exactly foresaw e. g. massive transfers between parts of the Eurozone (Kaniok, Hloušek 2013). Pessimistic prognosis seems to happen as well as the critique towards the Eurozone seems to become a mainstream in the European politics in these days. Such situation does not necessarily mean that soft Euroscepticism prevails in contemporary EU politics but it might suggest that one step or one policy of the EU might have been wrong or might have followed way leading to the dead end.

This development leads to a broader theoretical question whether each critique towards the EU must be labeled as a manifestation of Euroscepticism and, subsequently, to which degree is relevant to base a typology or category on such quicksand as content of concrete policy (in this case the EMU) is. Analysis of Klaus the euro discourse indicates that as policies are still (and in many cases dramatically) changing, it hardly makes a sense. Critique towards a content of concrete policy thus may understand a kind of feedback that each political system needs. It is thus questionable whether the whole concept of soft Euroscepticism does not rather capture a critical but still pro-European stance (producing such critical feedback) than a hard version of Euroscepticism. Or shall we employ a new mezzo category between uncritical pro-integration position and soft Euroscepticism that will not correspond with the category Nicolò Conti (2003) once labeled as neutral position because it covers critique striving for strengthening and improving of the EU?

Such questions are however not so important in the case of Klaus who can hardly be labeled as pro-integration politician in any way. Despite of the fact that it is very difficult to isolate Klaus the euro discourse from his general European or EU discourse, it is obvious that a stance towards concrete EU policy (even if this policy plays such key role for the EU) hardly produces picture offering general approach towards the EU. Marking Klaus – in the euro case – as a soft Eurosceptic politician does not mean that he is a soft Eurosceptic concerning his overall EU approach. Just on the contrary, if we take into account Klaus views on the EU as a whole, he started during his presidency to incline towards hard Euroscepticism – Klaus e. g. claimed that the European integration should stop as embodied into the European Community (Klaus 2011a) or that European integration should take part only in form of purely intergovernmental cooperation between European states (Klaus 2008a). However, this issue was not a topic of our paper.

At the end of the first decade of the New Millennium, Klaus started to point out explicitly that he foresaw the problems of Euro-zone already a decade of two ago. Thus we can conclude the discourse analysis with a king of “I told you so” statement to address the title of our presentation: “Many of us knew from the very beginning that there is no monetary union without a fiscal union and there is no fiscal union without a political union. Europoliticians thought that it is possible, which was of course a fatal mistake, or they knew that it is impossible but the considered monetary union the shortest way how to implement fiscal and political union. Therefore they behave in such a hypocritical way today. They want fiscal and political union but they are afraid to state it and the pretend that it is not like this” (Klaus 2010a: 2).

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