



# The geography of EU discontent and the regional development trap

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# **The geography of EU discontent and the regional development trap**

*Andrés Rodríguez-Pose, Lewis Dijkstra and  
Hugo Poelman*

# ABSTRACT

While many regions have flourished in recent decades, many others are stuck — or are at risk of becoming stuck— in a development trap. Such regions experience relative decline in economic growth, employment, and productivity relative to their neighbours and to their own past economic trajectories. Many of these regions have been in a development trap for lengthy periods of time and this condition is increasing political discontent and unrest. Such discontent is often translated into support for anti-system parties at the ballot box. In this paper we study the link between the risk, intensity, and length of regional development traps and the rise of discontent in the European Union (EU) — proxied by the support for Eurosceptic parties in national elections between 2014 and 2022— using an econometric analysis at a regional level. The results highlight the strong connection between being stuck in a development trap and support for Eurosceptic parties. They also suggest that the longer the period of stagnation, the stronger the support for parties that oppose European integration. This relationship is also robust to considering only the most extreme Eurosceptic parties or to including parties that display more moderate levels of Euroscepticism.

**Keywords:** discontent, Euroscepticism, development trap, economic growth, employment, productivity, regions, EU

**JEL Codes:** D72, R11, R58

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2
1. Introduction	5
2. The rise of Euroscepticism	7
3. The drivers of discontent	13
3.1. Cultural and economic explanations	13
3.2. The regional development trap and discontent	13
3.3. Regional development traps in Europe	14
4. The model, data, and method	20
4.1. The model	20
4.2. The data	20
4.3. The method	21
5. The regional development trap and the geography of EU discontent	23
5.1. Descriptive analysis	23
5.2. Cross-section analysis	23
5.3. Changes over time	28
6. Conclusions	31
7. References	32
8. APPENDIX	34

## LIST OF FIGURES

<b>Figure 1:</b> Votes for parties opposed to EU integration in national parliamentary elections in the EU-27, 2000-2022	7
<b>Figure 2:</b> Votes for hard Eurosceptic parties per Member State, 2000-2022	8
<b>Figure 3:</b> Votes for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties by Member State, 2000-2022	9
<b>Figure 4:</b> Votes in national legislative elections by party position on EU integration (2018-2022).	10
<b>Figure 5:</b> Votes for hard Eurosceptic parties and for hard and soft Eurosceptic parties for the most recent parliamentary elections, 2018-2022.	11
<b>Figure 6:</b> EU regions in a development trap (DT1) (2001-2018).	16
<b>Figure 7:</b> Intensity of the development trap (DT2) (2001-2018).	17
<b>Figure 8:</b> Length of the development trap (years spent in a trap) (2001-2018).	19
<b>Figure 9:</b> Correlation between the entrapment risk (DT1) and the hard Eurosceptic vote (2018-2022).	23

## LIST OF TABLES

<b>Table 1:</b> Base table. Link between being in a development trap (2001-2018) and votes for hard Eurosceptic parties.	25
<b>Table 2:</b> Different time measures of the development trap (1) and hard Eurosceptic vote	26
<b>Table 3:</b> Base table. Link between being in a development trap in 2018 and votes for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties	27
<b>Table 4:</b> Different time measures of development trap (1) and soft and hard Eurosceptic vote	28
<b>Table 5:</b> Pooled OLS. Link between being in a development trap and votes for hard Eurosceptic parties	29
<b>Table 6:</b> Pooled OLS. Link between being in a development trap and votes for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties	30
<b>Table A1:</b> Political parties included in the analysis, position on European integration, and year of election.	34
<b>Table A2:</b> Variables used in the analysis, with definitions and sources.	41
<b>Table A3:</b> Different time measures of development trap (2), hard Eurosceptic vote.	42

# 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, popular discontent has been brewing in many parts of the world, including most countries in Europe (Greven, 2016; Zakaria, 2016; Hawkins et al., 2019; Hopkin, 2020). This rising wave of dissatisfaction with a 'system' that many feel no longer benefits them is manifested in different ways: from declining levels of participation in elections to low levels of citizen engagement in civil society. The dissatisfaction can also be seen in: (i) an increasing tendency to support more extreme, often populist options at the ballot box; and (ii) increasing signs of distress and outright revolt by those disaffected from the system (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018; Kitschelt, 2022). In the European Union (EU), this disaffection is reflected in the rise of Euroscepticism (Torreblanca and Leonard, 2013; Dijkstra et al., 2020). Since the 2008 financial crisis, the share of votes in national legislative elections for 'hard' Eurosceptic <sup>(1)</sup> parties has risen from less than 5% to 14% of the electorate. If we include 'soft' Eurosceptic parties, their combined vote share has almost quadrupled from around 7% to 27% in 2022.

What are the reasons for the rise in support for Eurosceptic parties? The rise of Euroscepticism is part of a broader recent increase in popularity of anti-system and/or populist parties (Hopkin, 2020). Explanations of this turn in the electorate can be classified into two camps. On the one hand, there are those who posit that the rise of electoral discontent at both extremes of the political spectrum is the result of the re-emergence of identity issues and culture wars (e.g. Norris and Inglehart, 2019). According to this view, people who feel that changes in their societies are threatening them, and who increasingly consider themselves 'as strangers in their own land' (Hochschild, 2016) form the bulk of those deserting traditional mainstream parties and opting for more extreme political options.

Alongside these cultural explanations, there is a second camp formed by those who posit that the appeal of anti-system and/or populist parties is connected to long-term decline in places which experienced greater prosperity in the past (e.g. Autor et al., 2016; Becker et al., 2017; Fetzer, 2019). According to this view, economic and demographic stagnation have fuelled the perception that the future is less bright in those areas that have lost their past dynamism. But explanations that rely either on cultural, or on economic or demographic decline are not mutually exclusive (Noury and Roland, 2020; Schmid, 2022). These factors are often mutually supportive, as people living in declining places frequently feel trapped in regions they think no longer matter and where they perceive there is (or they have) no future (Rodríguez-Pose, 2018, 2020; Lenzi and Perucca, 2021). Many people living in these regions feel ignored, neglected, and marginalised by a distant and aloof elite (McKay et al., 2021). They are ill at ease with a changing world that threatens their identity and security.

Much of the rise in discontent has therefore been concentrated in places that have seen better times, where economic dynamism has long stagnated, and where the prospects of future economic development have diminished in recent years (McCann, 2020). Some scholars even argue that these areas are falling into a 'development trap' (Iammarino et al. 2020; Diemer et al., 2022). In a development trapped region, economic growth is lower than that of the EU, of the country the region is located in, and/or of the region itself in a previous period. Growth is measured for three indicators: GDP per capita, employment, and productivity. In the EU, the number of regions that have fallen into a development trap of this sort increased after the financial crisis. This trap has affected less developed, more developed, and 'transition' regions <sup>(2)</sup>. The classic example of a region in a development trap is one that initially experienced a rapid growth spurt allowing it to attain middle-income levels (Kharas and Kohli, 2011). However, many regions in Europe have stagnated – and even gone into reverse – at all levels of development. The risk of becoming stuck in a development trap is higher in middle-income regions, but can occur in all regions.

Is falling into a regional development trap a driver of the rise in discontent and Euroscepticism? Previous research has indeed established a link between: (i) long-term economic and industrial decline (Dijkstra et al., 2020; McCann, 2020), low employment rates (Rodríguez-Pose et al., 2021), and demographic decline (Pinilla and Sáez, 2021; Rodríguez-Pose et al., 2021); and (ii) the rise of Eurosceptic and/or populist and anti-system voting. However, there has so far been no attempt to link the broader idea of a regional development trap and the increasing appeal of extreme and Eurosceptic parties at the ballot box. In this paper, we address this gap in existing knowledge by connecting the phenomenon of the regional development trap to the growing rise of Euroscepticism across regions in the EU. We follow definition of the regional development trap of Diemer et al. as the condition of 'regions that face significant structural challenges in retrieving past dynamism or improving prosperity for their residents' (Diemer et al., 2022: 487).

We find that falling into a development trap is a fundamental factor in understanding why Eurosceptic voting has been on the rise across the regions of Europe. The inhabitants of regions that have fallen into a development trap are far more likely to be tempted by both 'hard' and 'soft' Eurosceptic political options and to support them in elections. We also show that factors such as the risk, intensity, and length of time spent in a development trap, significantly increase the share of the Eurosceptic vote.

To reach these conclusions, this paper first discusses the rise of Euroscepticism in Europe in the last two decades, before turning to what have been the drivers, according to scholarly research, of the rise of a geography of discontent against European

<sup>(1)</sup> Eurosceptic parties are defined based on the Chapel Hill Expert Survey. See Section 2.

<sup>(2)</sup> Following the type of regions defined for the 2021-2027 cohesion policy period. Less developed regions have a GDP per head below 75% of the EU average, transition regions between 75% and 100% and more developed regions above 100%.

integration. The third section introduces the concept of the development trap in the EU. The fourth section presents the empirical model, data, and methodology used for this analysis,

followed by a presentation of the econometric results. The paper concludes with some preliminary and necessarily cautious policy implications.

## 2. THE RISE OF EUROSCEPTICISM

Euroscepticism has been on the rise across many parts of Europe, especially in the past decade. Throughout most of the 2000s, support for parties that were opposed or strongly opposed to European integration remained low. Despite these low initial levels of support, some Eurosceptic parties were already attracting attention even 20 years ago, particularly in European parliamentary elections. Eurosceptic parties such as the French National Front, the Austrian Freedom Party, the Danish Progress Party, the German Republicans, or the Greek Communist Party had a presence in the European Parliament from the early 2000s. European elections tend to have lower turnout and fewer votes for mainstream parties compared with national elections. However, when it came to national legislative elections, support for Eurosceptic parties historically remained rather muted.

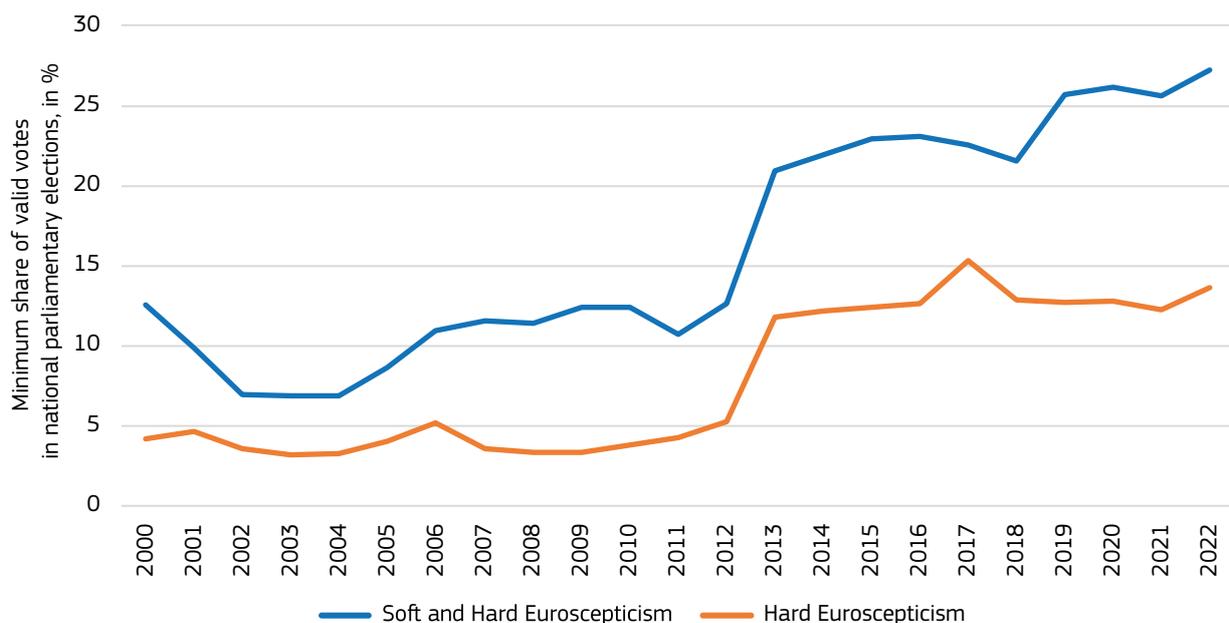
In this paper, we combine Eurosceptic votes into two categories based on the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (Jolly et al. 2022). The first category, ‘hard’ Euroscepticism, covers parties that were assessed to be opposed or strongly opposed to EU integration (a score of less than 2.5 on EU position). The second category, ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ Euroscepticism, is a wider category and includes parties that are somewhat opposed as well as those that are opposed or strongly opposed (i.e. all parties with a score of less than 3.5 on EU position). These two categories can be loosely mapped onto the distinction coined by Taggart and Szczerbiak (2002:7), who define hard Euroscepticism as the

Euroscepticism of parties: (i) that think their countries should withdraw from membership of the EU; or (ii) whose policies towards the EU are tantamount to opposing the whole European project. Taggart and Szczerbiak define soft Euroscepticism as the Euroscepticism of parties that only voice concerns about specific policy areas of European integration.

Although this paper analyses the Eurosceptic vote as a whole, we want to underline that there are significant differences between Eurosceptic parties in: (i) the aspects of EU integration they oppose; (ii) the policies they propose with regard to the EU; and (iii) where they stand on economic and cultural issues. Furthermore, the current position and historical development of Euroscepticism differs between Member States, and is linked to each country’s specific history, its political system, its population size, and its level of economic development.

Support for hard Eurosceptic parties remained below 5% throughout most of the 2000s. Soft and hard Eurosceptic parties received, on average, around 10% of the vote in this period (Figure 1). The financial crisis and the reaction to government austerity measures coincided with a rapid increase in the vote for Eurosceptic parties since the early 2010s. Support for hard Eurosceptic parties in national parliamentary elections has mostly remained slightly below 15% of the total vote since 2012. But the share of the combined soft and hard Eurosceptic vote has continued to rise since the financial crisis, reaching 27% in 2022 (Figure 1). The Brexit vote and its consequences for the UK and Europe as a whole may have reduced the appeal of hard Euroscepticism, but not that of soft Euroscepticism.

**Figure 1:** Votes for parties opposed to EU integration in national parliamentary elections in the EU-27, 2000-2022



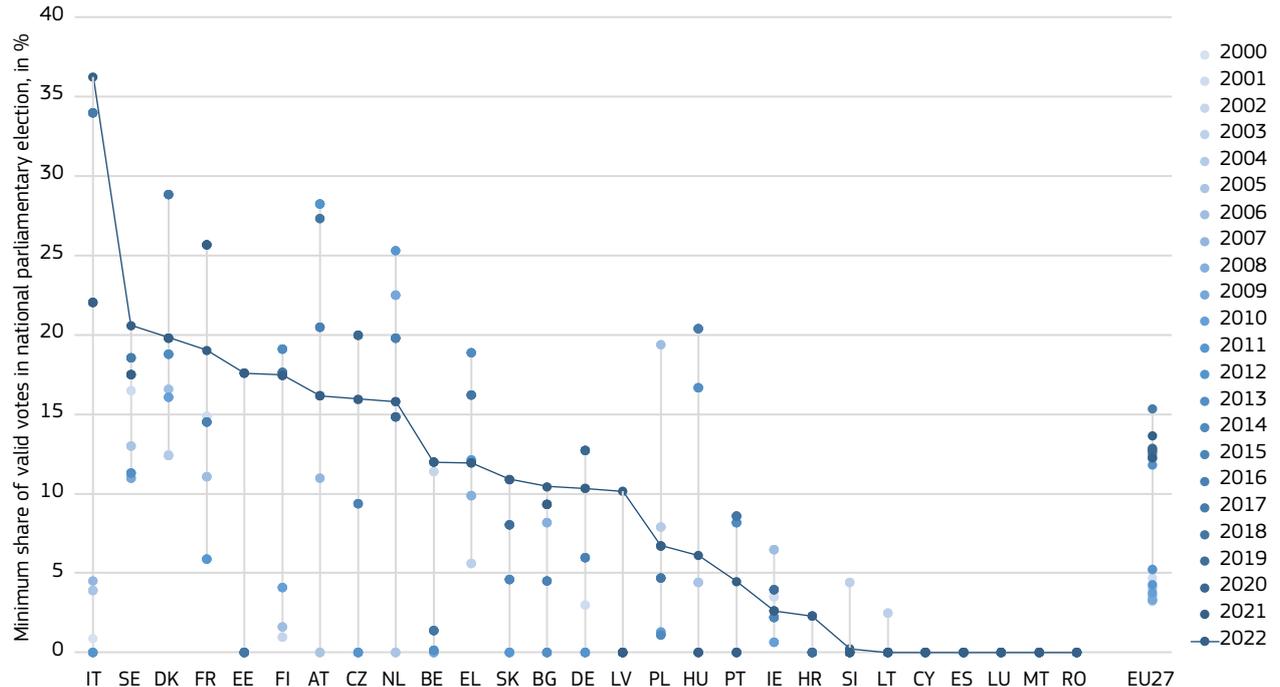
Source: DG REGIO calculations based on the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Seth et al., 2022) and DG REGIO data collection.

Note: Hard Euroscepticism is defined as a score of 2.5 or lower on the EU-position index. Soft and hard Euroscepticism is defined as a score of 3.5 or lower on the EU-position index.

Hard Euroscepticism does not affect all EU countries in the same way. Romania, Malta, Luxembourg, Spain, Cyprus, and Lithuania have virtually no parties that advocate an end to the European project or that propose the withdrawal of their country from the EU. By contrast, support for hard Eurosceptic parties has become prominent in recent national elections in Italy, Sweden, and France (Figure 2). As indicated by the prevalence of darker shades in the upper echelons of Figure 2, hard Euroscepticism has become more prevalent as the 21st

century has progressed. The main exceptions to this are Lithuania, Hungary, Slovenia, and Poland. In the cases of Hungary and Poland, the changes over time reflect changes in the views of the EU held by some of the major parties. This means that although the share of votes for hard Eurosceptic parties is lower than in some of the previous elections, the vote share for soft and hard Euroscepticism combined is now above 50% in both countries (see below).

**Figure 2: Votes for hard Eurosceptic parties per Member State, 2000-2022**



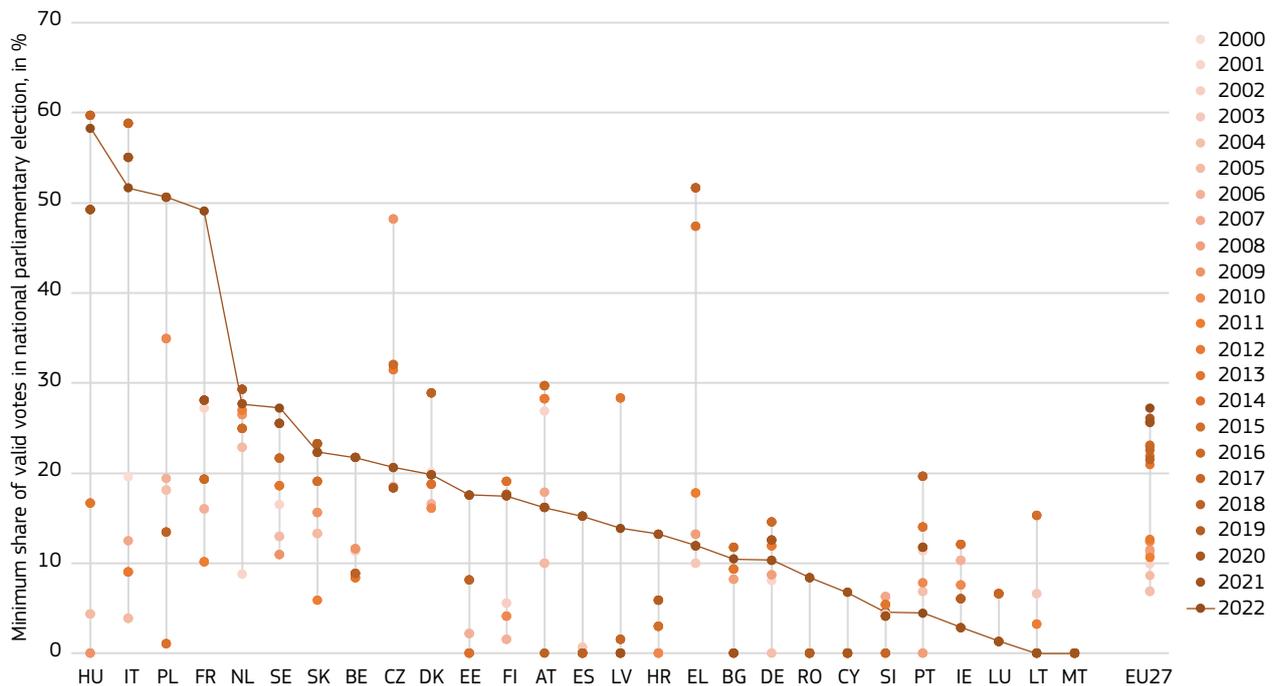
Source: DG REGIO calculations based on the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Seth et al., 2022) and DG REGIO data collection.

This figure shows all parliamentary elections in the years between 2000 and 2022. If multiple years have the same value, only the most recent year is visible.

Note: Hard Euroscepticism is defined as a score of 2.5 or lower on the EU-position index.

The combined votes for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties are much higher and vary considerably by country. In the case of hard Euroscepticism, this share of the vote has grown substantially over the past two decades. The height of the austerity crisis in 2012 resulted in a significant increase in support for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties and, as highlighted earlier, this trend continues. Soft and hard

Euroscepticism are particularly pervasive in countries that, at the time of writing, are governed by Eurosceptic parties or coalitions, such as Hungary, Italy, or Poland. These forms of Euroscepticism are also strong in France and growing in the Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, or Slovakia (Figure 3). Malta is the only country where support for Eurosceptic parties – hard or soft – has so far remained negligible.

**Figure 3:** Votes for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties by Member State, 2000-2022

Source: DG REGIO calculations based on the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Seth et al., 2022) and DG REGIO data collection.

This figure shows all parliamentary elections in the years between 2000 and 2022. If multiple years have the same value, only the most recent year is visible.

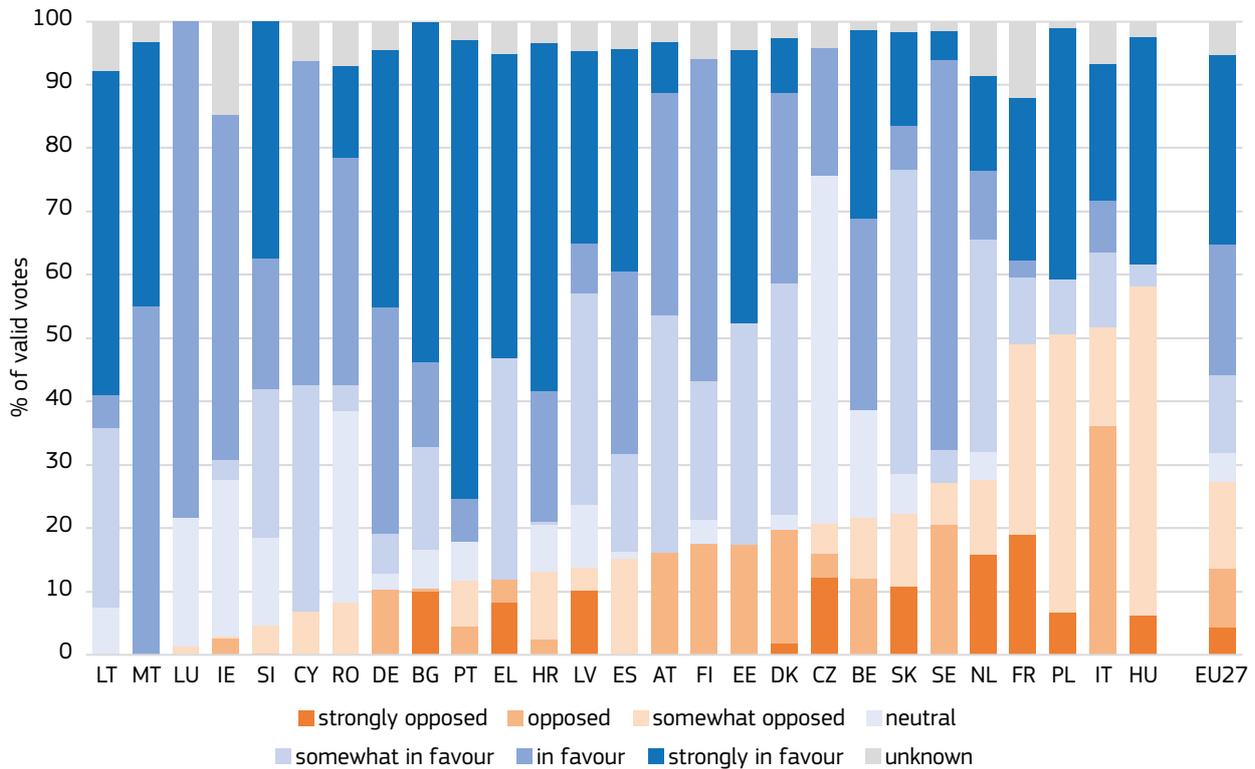
Note: Soft and hard Euroscepticism is defined as a score of 3.5 or lower on the EU-position index.

Overall, the backing for hard and soft Eurosceptic parties in the latest round of national legislative elections (2018-2022) across the EU shows that Euroscepticism is supported by 27% of the total electorate. In four countries – Hungary, Italy, Poland, and France – Eurosceptic parties already represent half of the electorate. Elsewhere in the EU (Figure 4), support for Eurosceptic options drops considerably, but still remains above 25% in the Netherlands and Sweden, and above 20% in Belgium. Lithuania and Malta were the only countries that did

not register votes for Eurosceptic parties in the last round of national parliamentary elections.

The distribution of the vote for hard and soft Eurosceptic parties also varies within countries. Figure 5 shows the distribution of the vote for both hard Eurosceptic parties and for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties combined during the most recent round of elections (2018-2020). In some cases, the variation in support for Eurosceptic parties is minimal within countries. This is especially the case in countries where Euroscepticism is limited.

Figure 4: Votes in national legislative elections by party position on EU integration (2018-2022).



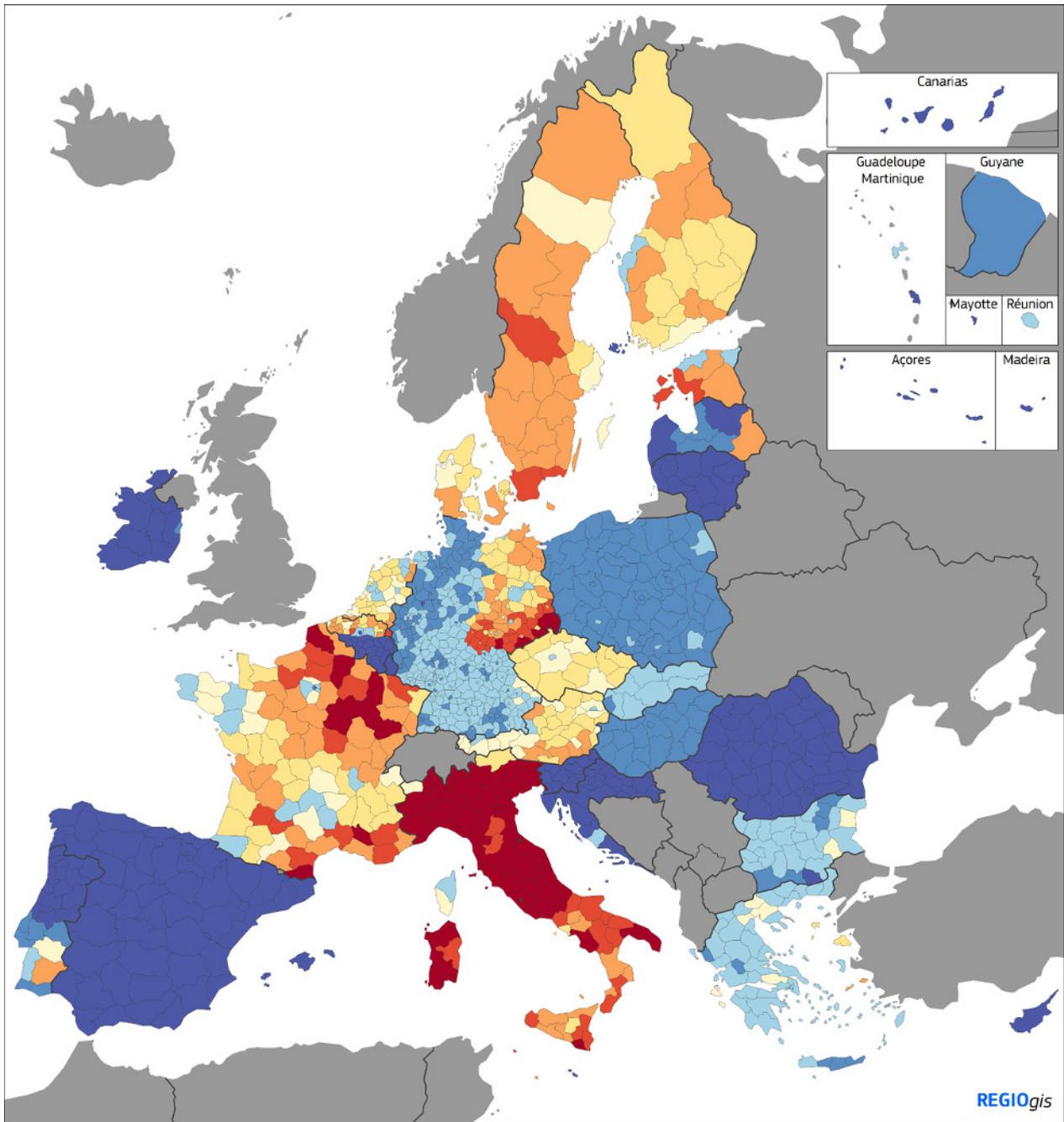
Source: DG REGIO calculations based on the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (Seth et al., 2022) and DG REGIO data collection.  
 Note: Hard Euroscepticism = strongly opposed plus opposed; soft Euroscepticism = somewhat opposed.

In countries with significant support for Eurosceptic parties, regional variations in the levels of support for Euroscepticism is far more common. In France, for example, the support for hard Eurosceptic parties is concentrated in the north-east of the country and along the Mediterranean coast. It is far weaker in the two largest urban areas (Paris and Lyon) as well as in Brittany and in the more rural areas of southern France. Soft and hard Euroscepticism combined is more evenly spread, but again it is weaker in some southern rural departments. The regional contrast in Germany fundamentally concerns hard Euroscepticism, and follows the old border between east and west Germany. Support for soft and hard Euroscepticism is higher in the east of the country, with Berlin and some of its neighbouring regions and some of the other large cities being the main exceptions. In Belgium, the Eurosceptic divide mostly follows the regional and linguistic border between Flanders and Wallonia, with Euroscepticism being far stronger among Dutch-speaking Belgians. In Poland, the large metropolitan areas tend

to vote less for Eurosceptic parties than their surrounding areas. Soft and hard Euroscepticism also reflect the difference between the eastern and western parts of Poland. Euroscepticism is more prevalent in the eastern part of the country, with the exception of the large cities, including Warsaw, Łódź, and Kraków.

However, electoral support for Eurosceptic parties does not match a region's level of development. Using the categories of the EU's cohesion policy for the period 2021-2027 shows that hard Euroscepticism is more popular in transition regions and more developed regions, (where it receives almost twice the vote share) than it is in less developed regions (15% vs 9%). However, if we combine support for both soft and hard Euroscepticism, the opposite pattern emerges. The combined vote shares for such parties are highest in less developed and transition regions, where they receive 34% of the vote compared with 22% in more developed regions.

**Figure 5:** Votes for hard Eurosceptic parties and for hard and soft Eurosceptic parties for the most recent parliamentary elections, 2018-2022.



**Minimum share of votes for hard Eurosceptic parties, 2018-2022**

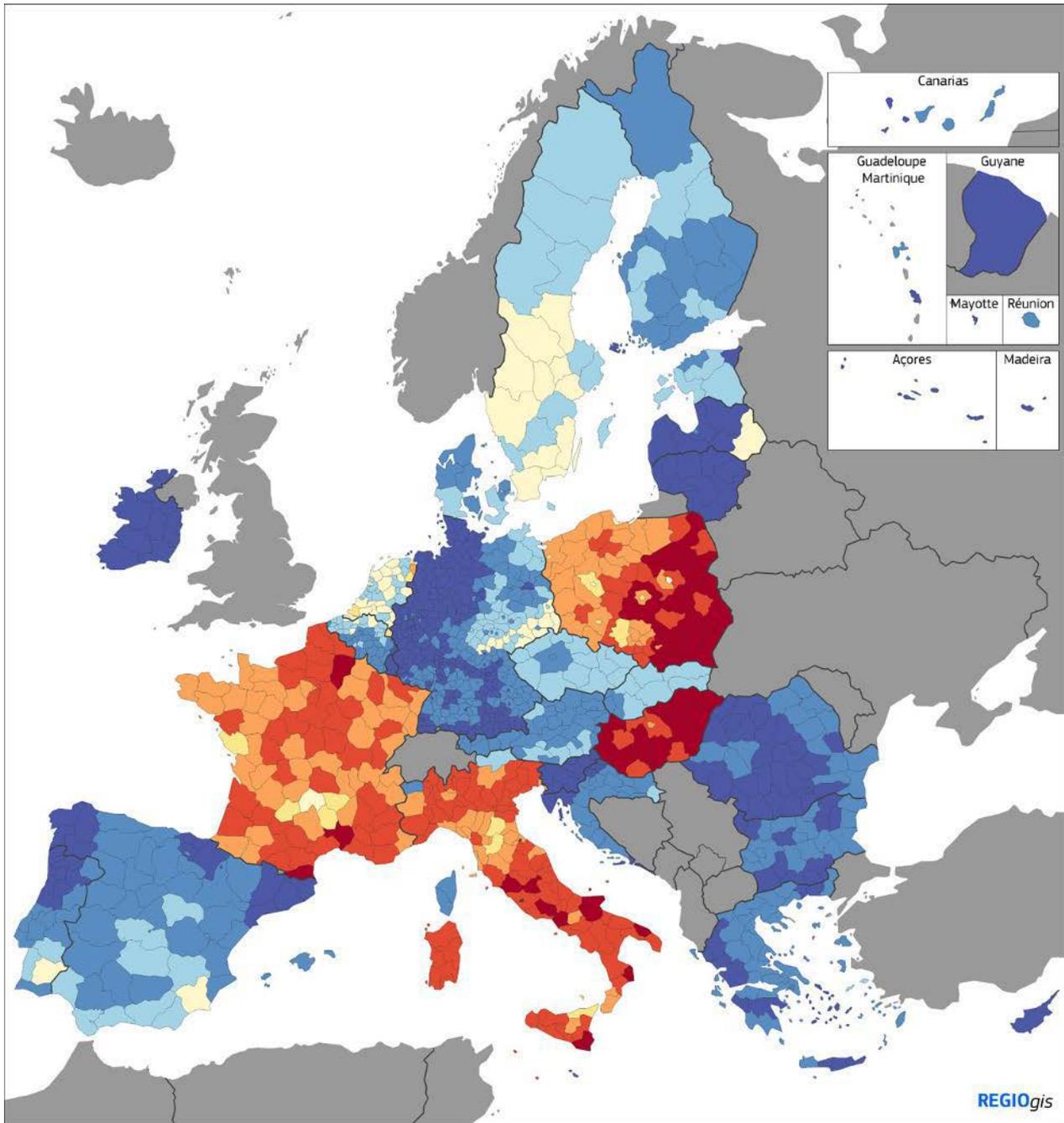
% of valid votes



BG, FR, IT, LV, HU, MT, PT, SI, SE: 2022  
 CZ, DE, CY, NL: 2021  
 IE, HR, LT, RO, SK: 2020  
 BE, DK, EE, EL, ES, AT, PL, FI: 2019  
 LU: 2018

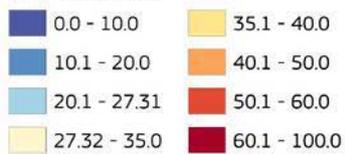
Source: DG REGIO based on EU-NED database, national administrative sources and Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2019





**Minimum share of votes for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties, 2018-2022**

% of valid votes



BG, FR, IT, LV, HU, MT, PT, SI, SE: 2022  
 CZ, DE, CY, NL: 2021  
 IE, HR, LT, RO, SK: 2020  
 BE, DK, EE, EL, ES, AT, PL, FI: 2019  
 LU: 2018

Source: DG REGIO based on EU-NED database, national administrative sources and Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2019



## 3. THE DRIVERS OF DISCONTENT

### 3.1. CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC EXPLANATIONS

What factors are behind this rise in Europe-wide discontent? Why have some countries and regions seen such a significant increase in the Eurosceptic vote, while others have remained relatively unaffected by this trend? As indicated in the introduction, the many explanations for the rise in discontent across the developed world can be classified into two categories.

The first category of explanations emphasises cultural and identity issues (Norris and Inglehart, 2019; Bornschieer et al., 2021). As western societies have become more diverse and inclusive, and as progressive values have become more dominant, certain sections of society have grown ill at ease with these changes. Some people are uncomfortable with values that have changed significantly compared with those that were prevalent when they were young. Others are unable or unwilling to adapt to those changing values. And the rest are simply ill at ease with a society that looks very different from their own recollection of the past. They dislike these transformations that make them feel like 'strangers in their own land' (Hochschild, 2016).

This cultural and identity justification has a demographic and territorial dimension. On the one hand, some demographic groups are deemed far less capable of adapting to changes (Koeppen et al., 2021). For example, some scholars argue that the older we become or the less educated we are, the more difficult it is to adapt to changes in society. From this perspective, regions in Europe with a high share of older people and with a less educated population are more susceptible to the arguments of Eurosceptic parties. Similar arguments about resistance to change have been made about places where population mobility has been limited. Places where most people are locally rooted (i.e. where they live in, or very near to, the place where they were born) have been hotbeds of discontent and resentment (Lee et al., 2018). Urban societies are considered more malleable and adaptable, meaning that discontent is bound to take hold to a far greater extent in rural areas than in urban ones (de Lange et al., 2023). Eurosceptic voting has been shown to be higher in rural areas even after correcting for a range of economic, social, and territorial characteristics (de Dominicis et al., 2022).

In parallel with these cultural and identity arguments, a second category of explanations links the rise in discontent to economic and demographic decline (e.g. Rodríguez-Pose, 2018; McCann and Ortega-Argilés, 2021; Albanese et al., 2022). A growing body of scholarly literature traces the origins of discontent to prolonged periods of relative economic and demographic

stagnation in places which have struggled to adapt to the increasing challenges brought about by globalisation, trade integration (Autor et al., 2016) and, more recently, the green and digital transitions. Places that have lost out in terms of economic growth and industrial production (Dijkstra et al., 2020; Pike, 2022), and that have witnessed considerable employment (Rodríguez-Pose et al., 2022) and demographic decline (Pinilla and Sáez, 2021), have been receptive to feelings of discontent. In Europe, these feelings of discontent have resulted in stronger support for Eurosceptic parties. In regions, discontent has been found to increase the greater the intensity and the longer the duration of the region's relative decline (Dijkstra et al., 2020; Rodríguez-Pose et al., 2022).

Cultural and economic factors interact with one another (Noury and Roland, 2020) and often coincide in terms of geography. Large metropolitan agglomerations have, in general, been the most dynamic areas of the developed world, both from a population growth/change and from an economic perspective. Metro areas are also places with more diverse populations and where more progressive ideas are more likely to be developed and diffused. By contrast, smaller cities, towns, and rural areas often combine a lack of economic dynamism with a lack of diversity (Kenny and Luca, 2021), meaning that both main factors for the rise in discontent and Euroscepticism are present. Overall, the rise in discontent is the result of a series of multi-layered influences involving the adverse effects of: (i) living in 'places that don't matter'; (ii) being a person with many of the characteristics of 'people who do not matter'; and (iii) dealing with contexts where some people matter less than others (Lenzi and Perucca, 2021: 441).

### 3.2. THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAP AND DISCONTENT

Most research focusing on economic and demographic decline has analysed different dimensions of decline individually. The result of this is that the complexity of trajectories of decline has often remained overlooked (Blažek et al., 2020). This research has considered declines in GDP per capita, employment, wages, industrial output, innovation, or population in isolation. It has not taken into account that often this decline is a multifaceted and self-reinforcing process. Places that are suffering long-term stagnation and/or decline across multiple dimensions are far more likely to be places of growing discontent than areas where one dimension of decline prevails over others. In this respect, recent research (Iammarino et al., 2020; Diemer et al., 2022) has introduced a new concept – that of the regional development trap – which captures different economic dimensions of decline. The combination of these dimensions may better explain the rise of discontent and Euroscepticism than each of its constituent elements individually.

The regional development trap has been defined as 'the state of a region unable to retain its economic dynamism in terms of income, productivity, and employment, while also underperforming its national and European peers on these

same dimensions' (Diemer et al., 2022: 489). A region thus falls into a development trap if the prosperity of its inhabitants 'does not improve relative to its past performance and the prevailing economic conditions in national and European markets' (Diemer et al., 2022:490). Diemer et al. (2022) measure the development trap along three dimensions: income, productivity, and employment. They assess the performance of regions in Europe on these three dimensions relative to: (i) the region itself in its own past; (ii) the country where the region is located; and (iii) the average performance of the EU.

The authors propose two alternative measurements of the regional development trap. The most basic index (which they call development-trap index 1, or DT1) captures whether a region's growth according to three indicators (GDP per head, productivity and employment over total population) is: (i) slower than in the EU; (ii) slower than in the country of which the region is a part; and/or (iii) slower than in the same region in the past. This results in nine (3 x 3) growth comparisons. The entrapment risk measures the number of growth comparisons on which a region performs poorly. The second development-trap index (or DT2) considers the intensity of the level of entrapment of a particular region. This latter index allows for greater variation depending on the degree of stagnation of every region but is far more sensitive to outliers. The authors identify DT1 as their preferred index <sup>(3)</sup>.

Places that have fallen into a development trap are far more likely than more dynamic areas to be places of growing discontent. There are several reasons that explain this link between economic stagnation on the one hand and the growing frustration and disaffection spreading through many parts of Europe on the other. First, as in any great Greek or Shakespearean tragedy, discontent is far more likely to grow among those who once had something and lost it than among those who never had anything. In a similar way, territories that have stagnated or even gone into economic reverse can be sites of greater discontent than those that have always lagged behind. Hence, relative economic decline is more important than low absolute levels of development as a driver of disaffection with the system. The development-trap index also takes into account relative performance. Perceptions of development by individuals are always relative. Absolute standards of living and well-being in Europe have increased considerably over the last five decades. However, the expansion in prosperity has not taken place at the same rate everywhere. Whereas many countries in central and eastern Europe have raced ahead in economic terms after the collapse of communism and accession to the EU, large swaths of north-eastern and eastern France, most of Italy, and most of Greece have struggled to keep up with the pace of the rest of Europe. Many of these latter areas have even experienced absolute declines in GDP since 2000 (McKinsey Global Institute, 2023). People in trapped

areas realise that not only are they doing worse in terms of economic, employment, and productivity growth than in the past, they also realise that their neighbours in other regions within their countries (or people in other countries elsewhere in Europe) are performing better. They sense that they are both worse off than they were in the past and worse off than other Europeans. Therefore, they are less likely to support a system and political options that they feel are not delivering for them.

The second dimension to consider in the link between economic stagnation/decline and the rise of discontent is that of the intensity of the trap. People in places where income has suffered the greatest relative decline, where employment prospects are far lower than in neighbouring regions, and where productivity has hardly increased for decades are bound to consider that their life opportunities and chances are considerably worse than those of people living in far more dynamic areas. They are also bound to believe that life has handed them a bad set of cards. The lack of opportunities they have endured simply because of the place where they were born or live is not only preventing them from prospering, it is also thwarting their chances of finding better opportunities elsewhere.

Finally, the longer the length of time spent in the trap, the more difficult it becomes for individuals living in trapped places to escape it, both individually and collectively. Long periods of entrapment lead to deteriorating conditions, opportunities, and basic services. In long-term trapped places, basic facilities such as education, health, infrastructure, transport, or public services <sup>(4)</sup> have deteriorated over time. Those living in long-term-trapped places lack opportunities relative to people living elsewhere and are left with a feeling that they are stuck in 'places that don't matter'.

As a result, people in regions that have lost their edge, where opportunities have worsened, and where the provision of basic goods and services is worse than what it once was are likely to be at the forefront of the rise in discontent that has occurred in many parts of Europe. And the level of discontent is commensurate to the intensity of the slump and to the length of time the region has spent in the development trap. It is not only the fact of being in a development trap that is important, but also the intensity of the trap and the length of time spent in it.

### 3.3. REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAPS IN EUROPE

Which European regions are in a development trap? Figure 1 uses the DT1 index of Diemer et al. (2022) but applies it to NUTS-3 regions instead of NUTS-2 regions, and uses a longer

<sup>(3)</sup> For a detailed explanation of the methodology used in the calculation of each development-trap index, please refer to Diemer et al. (2022).

<sup>(4)</sup> Economic decline is not the only reason why in some regions public services have been scaled back. Reduction of public expenditure due to austerity measures or a reduction in population may also lead to reduced public services.

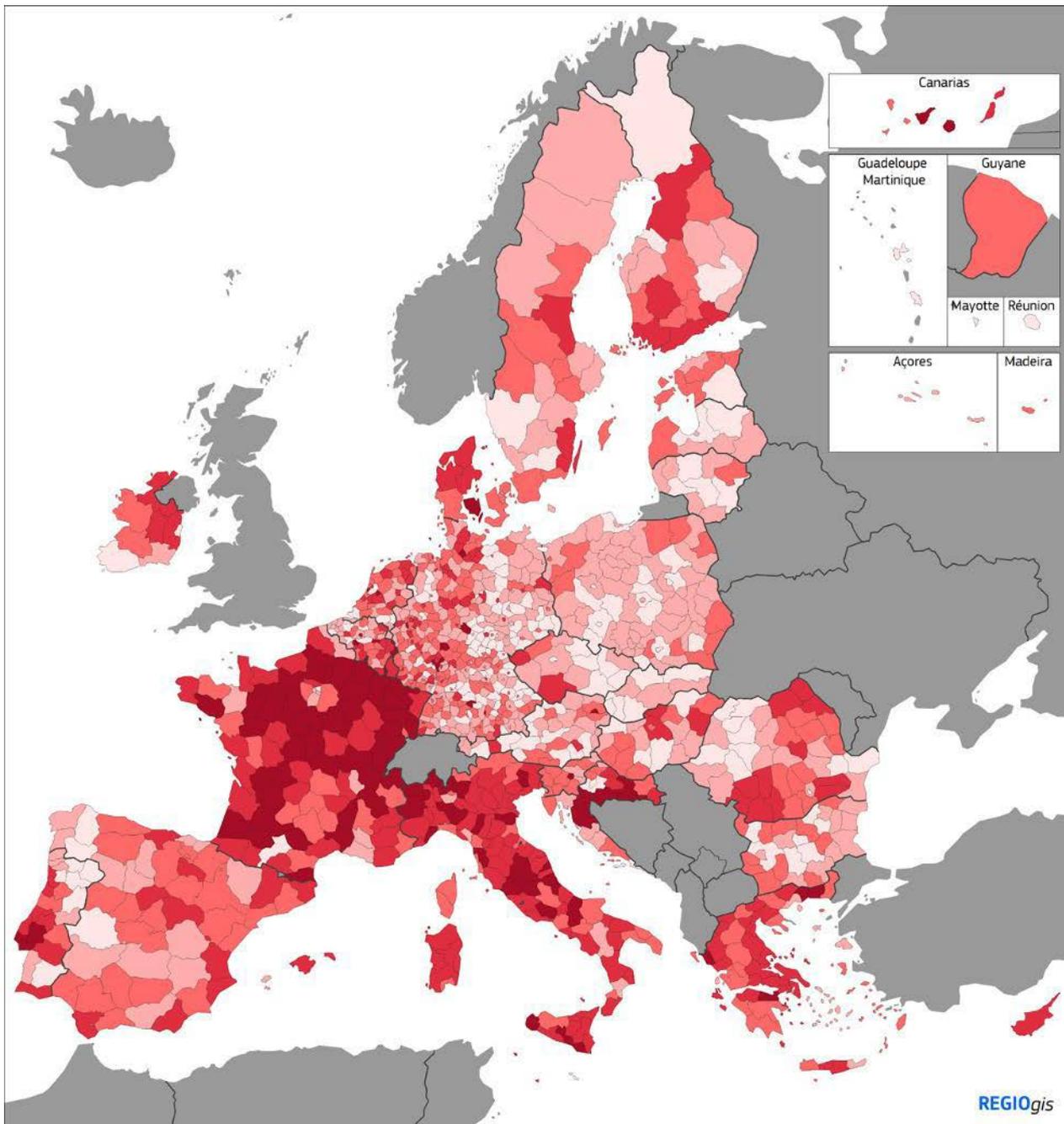
time series to identify the regions that can be considered to have been in a development trap between 2001 and 2018. The map reveals considerable variations both across and within countries. On the one hand, the level of regional entrapment of regions in Czechia, Slovakia, Romania, or the Baltic countries is significantly lower than elsewhere in Europe. However, even within these countries there are significant contrasts between regions. In the case of Romania, for example, the southeastern region of Tulcea or the northwestern regions of Arad, Cluj, Satu Mare, and Maramureş have hardly suffered from economic stagnation. However, the situation is very different in Sud-Vest Oltenia (Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinţi, Olt, and Vâlcea) or parts of the North-East region (such as Botoşani, Iaşi, Suceava) where the level of entrapment is relatively high in the context of central and eastern Europe.

The risk of entrapment is also relatively low across the Nordic countries. By contrast, the highest values for entrapment are found in France and Italy. Departments surrounding the Île-de-France as well as most of those in eastern France (e.g. Ain, Gard, Vosges) are among the regions with the highest development-trap scores in Europe. By contrast, the city of Paris

itself and the regions of Toulouse (Haute-Garonne) and Lyon (Rhône) have managed to escape the development trap. The situation in Italy is somewhat similar, where the province of Perugia is one of the regions with the highest development-trap scores in the EU. Many provinces surrounding the economic powerhouses of Milan and Turin fall in the same category. However, the development trap in Italy is widespread, as most Italian provinces fall in the top 40% of the DT1 index. Only a few provinces managed to avoid falling into a development trap. These include some richer (Milan, Bolzano, Belluno, Sondrio) as well as some poorer (Palermo, Cagliari, Cosenza, Potenza, Avellino, Foggia, Lecce, Taranto) provinces. Lisbon and the Tagus valley also endured considerable periods of entrapment during this period.

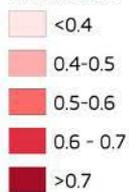
Over this 2001-2018 period, we find very small differences between the regions as classified by EU cohesion policy. All three groups of regions categorised according to the EU's cohesion policy taxonomy score above 0.5 on the DT1 index (on a 0 to 1 scale). The transition regions have the highest score (0.55), followed closely by the more developed regions (0.53) and the less developed regions (0.51).

Figure 6: EU regions in a development trap (DT1) (2001-2018).



### Development trap index 1 at NUTS-3 level, 2001-2018

Likelihood of being in a development trap



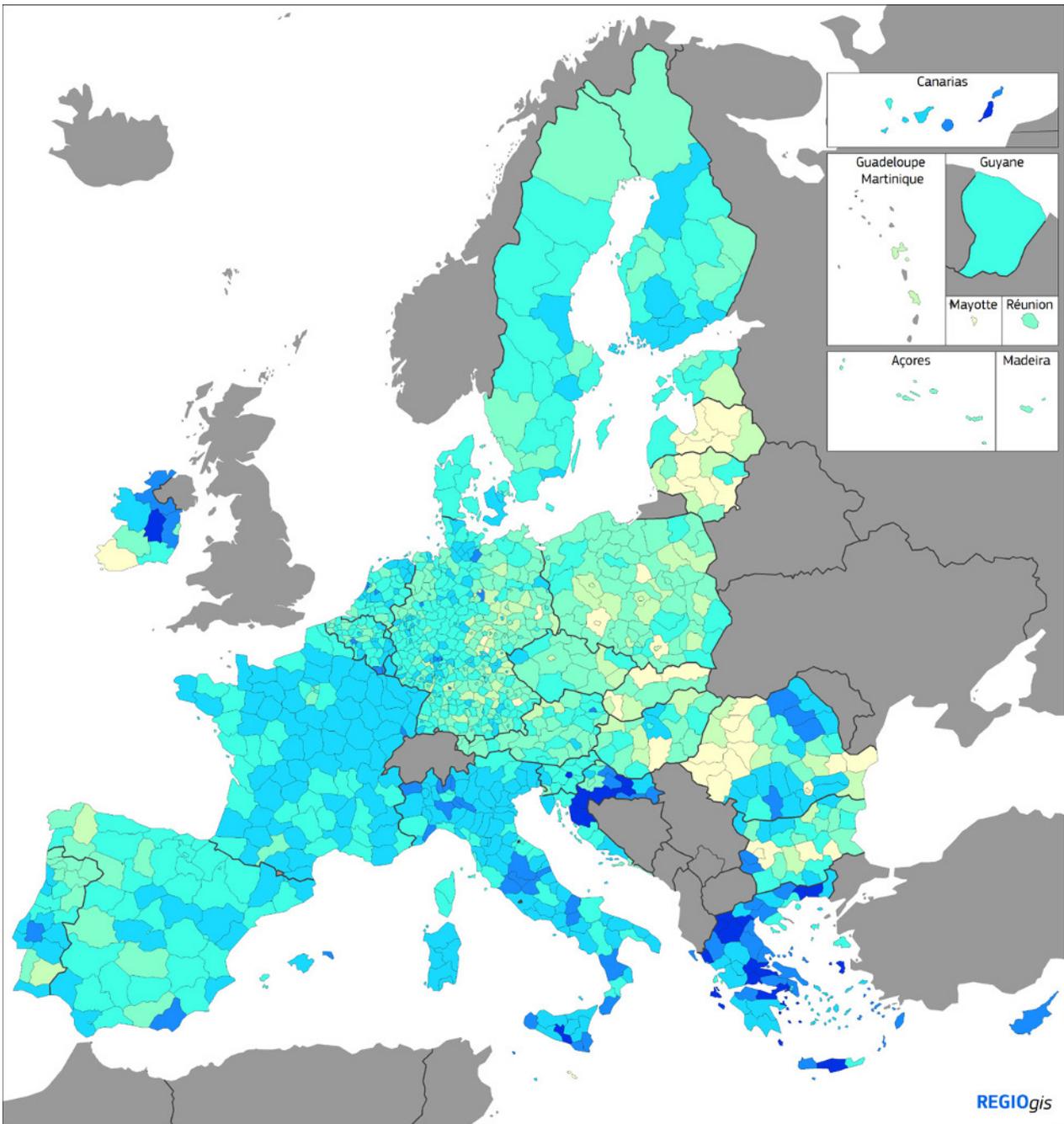
This index measures if a region's growth is lower than that of the EU, of its country or of the same region during the previous five years.

It considers GDP per head, productivity and employment per head growth over a five year period. A region scores 1 for each time its growth is lower. This score between 0 and 9 is then rescaled to 0-1.

Source: DG REGIO calculations based on JRC and Eurostat data

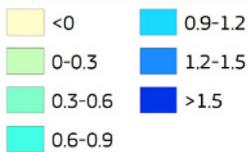
0 500 km

Figure 7: Intensity of the development trap (DT2) (2001-2018).



**Development trap index 2 at NUTS-3 level, 2001-2018**

Depth of the development trap



This index measures the extent to which a region's growth is lower than that of the EU, of its country and of the same region during the previous five years. It considers GDP per head, productivity and employment per head growth. The index is standardized by using the mean and standard deviation of the first period.  
Source: DG REGIO calculations based on JRC and Eurostat data



On the intensity of the trap (DT2) over the same period, the picture that emerges is somewhat different. Figure 7 maps DT2 for the period between 2001 and 2018. This is the index that best captures the intensity of the trap. Here, the general tendencies observed when identifying trapped regions (DT1 in Figure 6) are still in evidence. The intensity of the trap is lower in central and eastern Europe, and especially lower in Latvia, Lithuania, and some parts of Romania and Slovakia. However, the intensity is far higher overall in Italy and France. Having said that, the very deepest development traps (i.e., the most intense) are not found in these latter two countries, but in Croatia and Greece. The regions that endured the deepest development traps are: (i) Lika-Senj, Virovitica-Podravina, Požega-Slavonia, Karlovac, or Sisak-Moslavina in Croatia; and (ii) Kastoria, Thesprotia, Phthiotis, Phocis, Western Attica, or the whole of Western Macedonia in Greece. Even in Ireland, long considered the most economically dynamic country in Europe, some areas were not spared. Whereas Dublin and the South West, West, Mid West, and South East regions of the country have thrived from an economic perspective, the Midlands region has been stuck in a development trap of considerable intensity (Figure 7).

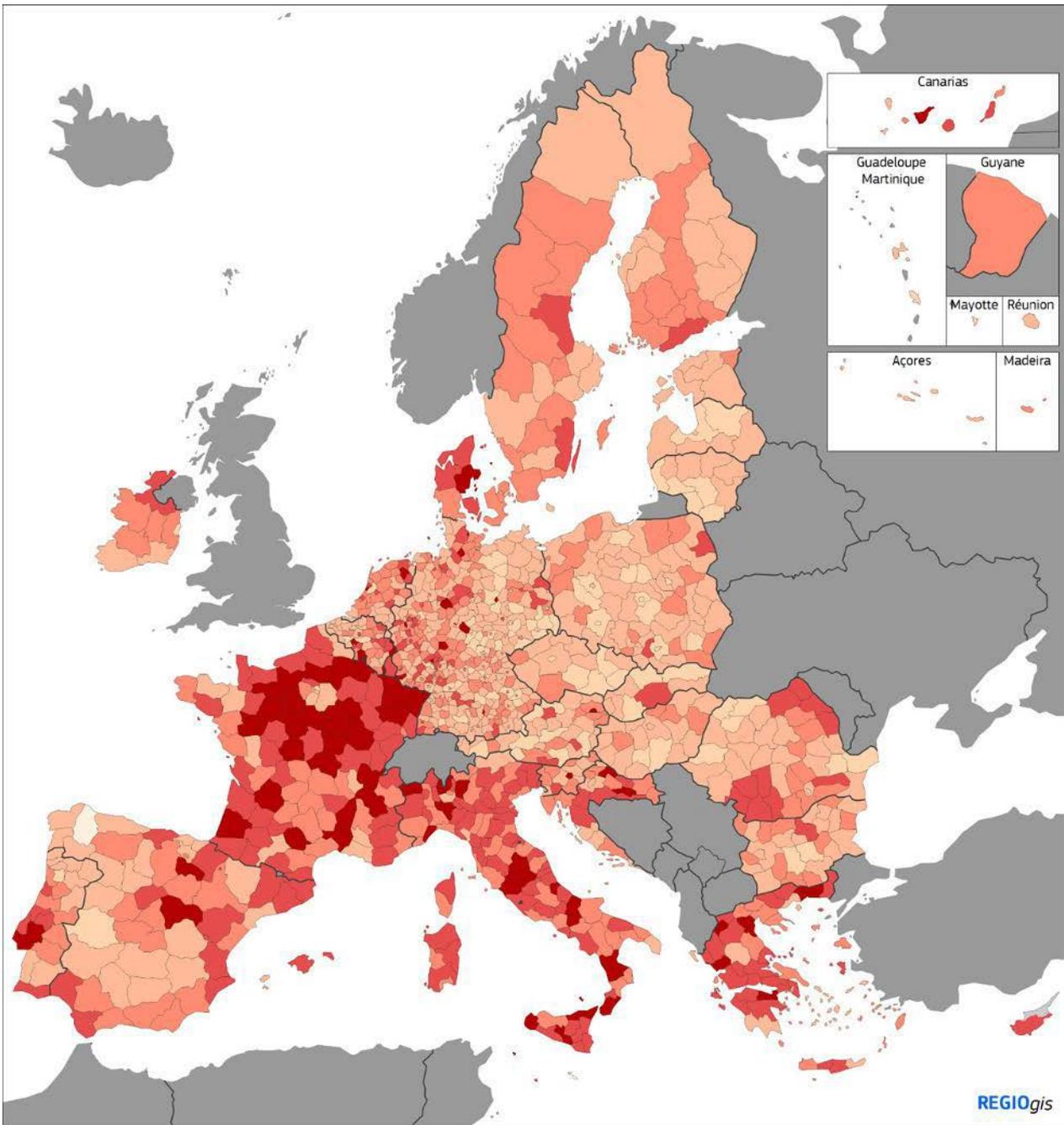
For this indicator, the differences between the regions as classified by cohesion policy is more pronounced. More developed and transition regions have a score of approximately

0.75, while less developed regions score 0.67 (with higher values indicating a more intense trap). This indicates that when a more developed or transition region is caught in a development trap, it tends to be a more intense trap than when a less developed region is trapped.

Finally, the length of time spent in the development trap across regions in Europe is depicted in Figure 8, which measures the number of years in which NUTS3 regions in the EU have been stuck in a development trap. Once again, the geography of the length of time of entrapment is highly varied. Firstly, there are virtually no regions that have managed to evade the trap altogether during this period. The province of Lugo, in north-western Spain, is the only region that never had a score of above 0.5 in DT1 in any year between 2001 and 2018. In contrast, many French departments (mostly surrounding Paris and the Île-de-France), Italian and Spanish provinces, and Greek nomoi have been in a development trap for 16 years or more in an 18-year period (Figure 8).

Transition regions experience 10 years in a trap on average, while more developed regions spend 9.8 years, and less developed regions spend 9.6 years. This highlights both that a period of lower growth is quite common and that such a period of lower growth affects regions at all levels of development.

Figure 8: Length of the development trap (years spent in a trap) (2001-2018).



**Number of years in a development trap during 2001-2018**

- Years
- 0
  - 1 - 4
  - 5 - 9
  - 10 - 12
  - 13 - 15
  - 16 - 18

This map shows the number of years that a region scored 0.5 or more on the Development Trap Index 1.  
 Source: DG REGIO calculations based on JRC and Eurostat data

0 500 km

## 4. THE MODEL, DATA, AND METHOD

### 4.1. THE MODEL

To what extent are the risk, intensity, and length of a regional development trap drivers of discontent in the EU? Can the roots of Euroscepticism be traced to places stuck in a development trap?

Our main period of interest is that of the national legislative elections which took place between May 2018 and October 2022. If multiple elections took place in that period, we used the most recent one. To verify whether these same correlations hold for earlier elections, we also analyse the elections between May 2018 and October 2022 in combination with the elections between September 2013 and April 2018.

To answer the above questions, we examine the link between the rising Euroscepticism and the presence of development traps using the following empirical model:

$$\text{Eurosceptic vote}_{rt} = a + \beta \text{Development trap}_{rt-k} + \gamma \bar{X}_{rt-k} + \delta \text{Share CHES vote}_{rt} + \epsilon_{rt} \quad (1)$$

where  $\text{Eurosceptic vote}_{rt}$  represents the share of votes for hard only or for hard and soft combined – depending on the analysis conducted – Eurosceptic parties in region  $r$  at time  $t$ . Time  $t$  covers two waves of national election cycles across all countries of Europe.

$\text{Development trap}_{rt-k}$  illustrates the risk, intensity, and length of the development trap in any given European region, measured by the DT1 and DT2 indices and the number of years in a development trap, respectively.  $X_{rt-k}$  depicts a vector of cultural and economic factors that, according to scholarly research on anti-system voting and populism, could be at the root of the rise in discontent and, therefore, of the Eurosceptic vote.

The controls include indicators that are related to cultural, economic, geographical, and other explanations. The cultural explanations include: (i) the migration balance in a region (Ford and Jennings, 2020; Di Matteo and Mariotti, 2021); (ii) the share of foreigners born in another EU country or outside the EU; (iii) the share of the older population (Ford and Jennings, 2020); or (iv) the level of education of adults in a given region (Ford and Jennings, 2020). Other controls are of a more economic nature, including the wealth of the region or its employment rate (Di Matteo and Mariotti, 2021). And still other explanations reflect geography or variations in the regional ecosystem, such as the average neighbourhood population density in a region (Rodden, 2019; Rickardsson, 2021) or the regional quality of government (Díaz-Lanchas et al., 2021). We also include electoral turnout, as variations in turnout have been associated in the past with

support for populist and/or anti-system parties (Guiso et al., 2017; Leininger and Meijers, 2021).

The  $\text{Share CHES vote}_{rt}$  takes into account that not all parties running in national legislative elections have been classified according to their degree of Euroscepticism in the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) (the CHES is the source we use to identify parties as hard or soft Eurosceptic, depending on the evaluation of their position relative to European integration by a set of political scientists). The share of votes going to parties not classified in the CHES varies between a maximum of slightly over 15% of the total share of votes cast in Ireland to 0% in Slovenia and less than 2% in Poland, Belgium, and Sweden (Figure 4).

Finally,  $\epsilon_{rt}$  represents the error term, or the share of variation in Eurosceptic vote across Europe that is not adequately explained by the variables included in the analysis. The model is run without country fixed effects, as one of the components of the development-trap index involves comparing the performance in income, employment, and productivity of each region in the analysis relative to the country it belongs to.

### 4.2. THE DATA

We distinguish two types of Eurosceptic votes using the views of the experts involved in the CHES. These experts examine the electoral programmes of the different parties running in national legislative elections against a series of dimensions, including the parties' views on European integration. Eurosceptic parties are classified in the CHES on a scale from 1 to 7: 1 implies very strong Eurosceptic views, while 7 denotes maximum support for European integration. We make a distinction between hard Eurosceptic parties, with scores of less than 2.5 on the CHES 2019 EU-position index, and soft Eurosceptic parties, with a score between 2.5 and 3.5. We use these to create two dependent variables: the first variable covers only the hard Eurosceptic votes and the second variable covers both the hard and the soft Eurosceptic votes.

As mentioned earlier in the paper, hard Eurosceptic parties are those that openly advocate for the withdrawal of their countries from the EU or that have fundamental issues with some of the basic principles and milestones of European integration, such as monetary union or the prevalence of European law over national legislation. Some of the parties included in this hard Eurosceptic group are: the Forum for Democracy or the Freedom Party in the Netherlands; the Rassemblement National or Débout La France in France; the Lega per Salvini, Fratelli d'Italia, or Italexit per l'Italia in Italy; Alternative für Deutschland in Germany; Gibanje Zedinjena Slovenija and Domovinska Liga in Slovenia; the Danish People's party in Denmark; and Vlaams Belang in Belgium.

Soft Eurosceptic parties do not advocate for the exit of their countries from the EU, but they oppose specific aspects of European integration or European policies. Among the parties

that can be considered as soft Eurosceptic using the CHES classification are: the Socialist party in the Netherlands; la France Insoumise, the French Communist Party, or Reconquête! In France; Fidesz in Hungary; the Law and Justice Party in Poland; the Five-Star Movement in Italy; or Vox in Spain.

The list of Eurosceptic parties includes parties at both the extreme right and extreme left of the political spectrum. By contrast, most traditional, mainstream, moderate left-wing and right-wing parties have scores above 6 on the CHES scale. This means that they are strongly pro-European integration. Some of these parties include the Labour Party, Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael in Ireland; La République en Marche, the Socialist Party or the Greens in France; the Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and the CSU in Germany; the Socialist Party and the Popular Party in Spain; the National Liberal Party in Romania; the Socialists and the Christian Democrats in Belgium; or the Socialist Party and Social Democratic Party in Portugal. Table A1 in the Appendix presents the parties considered in the analysis, together with their score on EU integration on the CHES scale and the year of election.

The independent variable of interest covers three different aspects of the development trap: (i) the entrapment risk; (ii) the intensity of the development trap; and (iii) the length of time a region has spent in the development trap. The bullet points below discuss each of these three aspects in more detail.

- ▶ To measure the entrapment risk, we compare a region's growth rates across three indicators (GDP per head, productivity, and employment over total population) against three geographical scales (the EU, the country the region belongs to, and the region's own historical performance). For each comparison, a region scores 1 if it is lower and 0 if it is higher. These scores are added up to a score between 0 and 9, which is subsequently rescaled to a score between 0 and 1. Following the approach proposed by Diemer et al. (2022), we refer to this as development-trap index 1 (DT1). This indicator is measured in 2018 – the year of the start of the last national election cycle considered in the empirical analysis – and over different periods of time (2015–2018; 2010–2018; and 2001–2018).
- ▶ The intensity of the trap is calculated by means of the second development-trap indicator (DT2) of Diemer et al. (2022). This indicator captures the magnitude/intensity of the deviations in income, employment, and productivity growth relative to the region itself, the country, and the EU. We consider DT2 over the same time horizons as DT1.
- ▶ The length of time spent in the trap is identified by including longer periods of time starting in 2001 for DT1 and DT2, but also more explicitly by counting the years a region has been in a trap since 2001 and 2010. A region is trapped if its DT1 score is above 0.5 in a given year.

Finally, we include a series of controls depicting factors that potentially cause discontent. The factors considered include the index of GDP per capita in any given region at the beginning of the period of analysis, as the wealth of regions may affect the extent to which the people living in those regions are happy with the system. Employment in industry – measured as the share of manufacturing in a region – has been connected with growing discontent, especially in cases where such manufacturing employment has declined (Dijkstra et al., 2020; Pike, 2022). Migration is also one of the factors that has been repeatedly highlighted as a trigger of discontent and populism (Rickardsson, 2021). We measure it as the average annual share of net migration per 1 000 residents in a region over the period of analysis. In addition, we include the share of the population aged 15 or above born in another EU Member State or outside the EU. However, the regional coverage for these latter two variables is not complete for all regions. An ageing population has also been identified as being linked with voter discontent (Goodwin and Heath, 2016). We use a proxy for ageing by calculating the percentage of the population aged 65 and over in a region. We also look at the level of education in a region, measured as the share of adults (defined as those between the ages of 25 and 64) with a higher education diploma (i.e. university or post-secondary school). Density is considered by Rodden (2021) to be another one of the main factors explaining differences in populist voting, and is measured as the population-weighted average population density of a grid with cells of 1 square kilometre. This captures the density of the neighbourhood (defined as a square of 1x1 km) in which an average person in that region lives.

We also control for: (i) the share of employment, as regions with more people in jobs are bound to suffer less from discontent; and (ii) quality of government, measured using the regional quality-of-government index proposed by the Quality of Government Institute in Gothenburg for 2017 (or 2013, depending on the regression) (Charron et al., 2019). This indicator has become the most used measure of institutional quality at a regional level for Europe (e.g. Rodríguez-Pose and Ketterer, 2020). Electoral turnout is measured as the total number of valid votes expressed as a percentage of the electorate, while we also include the overall share of votes to political parties included in the CHES. Table A2 in the Appendix contains the variables used in the analysis, their definition, and their sources.

The unit of analysis is the EU region at the finest geographical scales for which data are broadly available: Nomenclature of Statistical Regions Data at level 3, also known as NUTS-3 regions. The maximum total number of regions covered by the data is 1 166.

### 4.3. THE METHOD

Two basic econometric methods are used in the analysis. For research covering just the latest electoral period for which data are available at the time of writing (2018–2022), we use an

ordinary least-squares (OLS) estimation of model (1). The advantages of using OLS are its simplicity and flexibility. OLS is one of the most straightforward and comprehensive econometric methods, and can be used to estimate a wide range of linear regression models, making the coefficients easy to interpret. It is also an efficient model as it tends to have the smallest variance among linear unbiased estimators, yielding more precise estimates of the parameters.

When considering the two latest national election cycles that we have identified (2013-2018 and 2018-2022), we use pooled OLS. Pooled OLS has the same advantages as OLS, while simultaneously making it possible to exploit the combinations of the cross-sectional and time-series dimensions of the data. Pooled OLS also accounts for unobserved heterogeneity, thus reducing bias in the estimates.

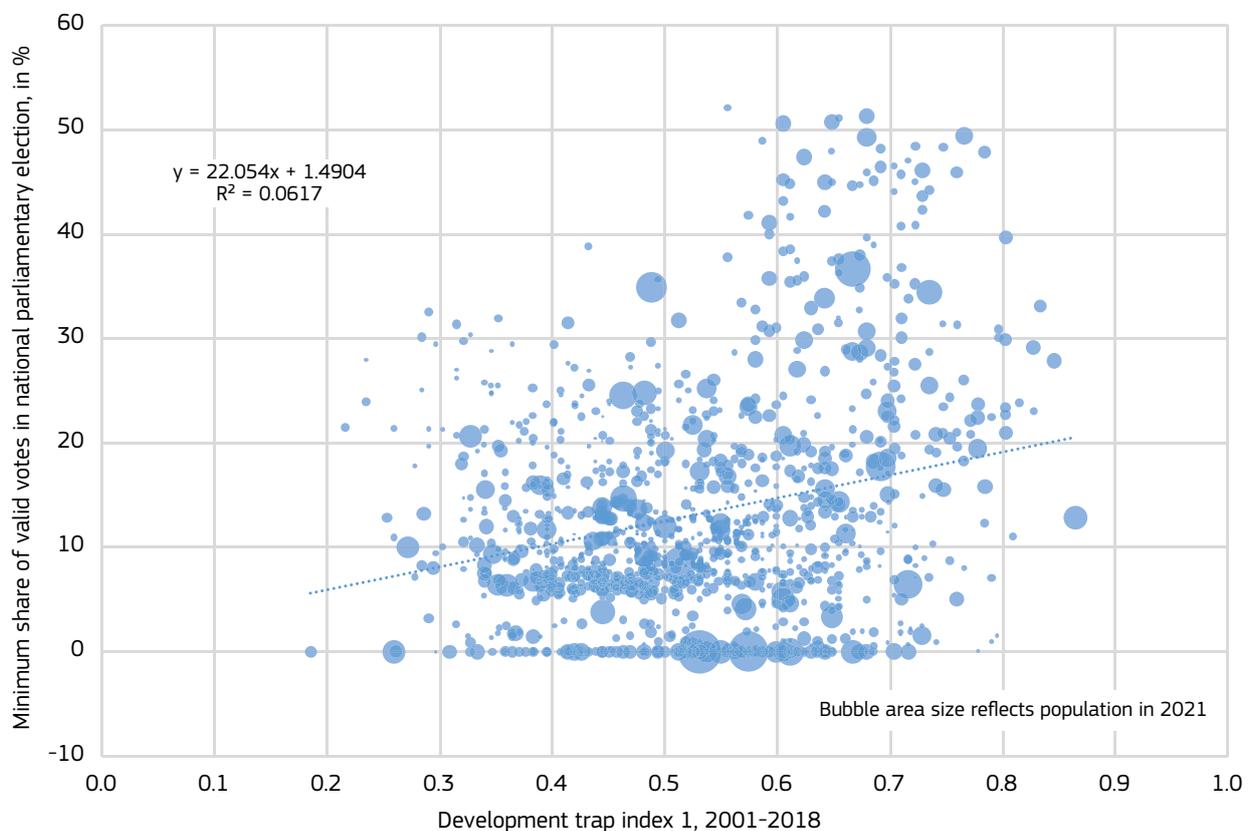
## 5. THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAP AND THE GEOGRAPHY OF EU DISCONTENT

### 5.1. DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The question we now address is whether the risk, intensity, and length of time of a trap are linked to higher vote shares for Eurosceptic parties. If we chart just the simple correlation

between the entrapment risk on the horizontal axis, and the share of votes for hard Eurosceptic parties (Figure 9) on the vertical axis, we uncover a positive correlation between both variables. However, the relationship is not significant and there are many outliers. On the one hand, there are many regions with high entrapment risk that register no (or virtually no) Eurosceptic vote. And on the other hand, a higher share of votes for Eurosceptic parties is cast in many regions with a very low entrapment risk. On the whole however, voters in regions with a higher entrapment risk in the EU show marginally greater support for Eurosceptic political options. Does this relationship hold when inserted into an econometric analysis including many controls that affect the disaffection of voters with the current system?

Figure 9: Correlation between the entrapment risk (DT1) and the hard Eurosceptic vote (2018–2022).



### 5.2. CROSS-SECTION ANALYSIS

Table 1 presents the results of estimating model (1) using the development-trap index (both DT1, to capture the entrapment risk, and DT2, to measure the intensity of the trap) for the period between 2001 and 2018.

Firstly, these results show that the coefficients for the control variables are all – with the only exception of voter turnout – in line with expectations and with what has been reported in the scholarly literature. The share of votes for strong Eurosceptic parties is significantly higher in wealthier regions of the EU, in

regions with more employment in industry, in regions where there is a greater share of older people, and in regions with lower shares of adults with higher education.

The impact of industrial employment, age, and education are expected and covered extensively in the literature. The correlation between higher GDP per head and more Eurosceptic votes is perhaps more surprising. Two different mechanisms may explain this result. Firstly, people living a region with high GDP per head may be more concerned by relatively low economic growth as it would reduce their standard of living compared with other regions. Secondly, it may be easier to

persuade people living in more developed regions that they do not benefit from being part of the EU as many of the benefits they receive (such as greater prosperity, stability, and security) are less tangible.

Voters in EU regions also seem to react more negatively to foreigners coming from countries outside the EU than to those born in another EU country. In places where there are more migrants from outside the EU, the share of the vote going to hard Eurosceptic parties is higher, whereas those regions with a greater share of migrants from other EU countries register less hard Eurosceptic support. As expected, the hard Eurosceptic vote is, on average, stronger in: (i) the less densely populated suburbs, medium-sized cities, towns, rural areas (de Dominicis et al., 2022); (ii) regions with a lower share of the population with higher education (Jennings and Stoker, 2019; de Lange et al., 2023); and (iii) regions with lower employment rates. Regions with a high quality of government also register lower

support for hard Eurosceptic parties (Table 1). The only control that goes against expectations is that of electoral turnout, which yields a positive and significant coefficient, pointing towards greater support for hard Eurosceptic parties in those regions where voter turnout was higher in national legislative elections.

When we turn to our two main variables of interest – the entrapment risk (Table 1, Regressions 1-3) and the intensity of the trap (Table 1, Regressions 4-6) – the coefficients are always positive and highly significant. Voters in EU regions at risk of entrapment (DT1) between 2001 and 2018 were far more likely to cast their votes for hard Eurosceptic options in the next national legislative elections than those in regions with lower entrapment risk. The deeper the intensity of the development trap (DT2) relative to other regions in the EU, the greater the vote for hard Eurosceptic parties.

**Table 1:** Base table. Link between being in a development trap (2001–2018) and votes for hard Eurosceptic parties.

Dependent variable: Share of votes for hard Eurosceptic parties (2018–2022)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	DT1	DT1	DT1	DT2	DT2	DT2
	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
Development trap index (1) (Average 2001–2018)	22.94*** (2.843)	21.91*** (2.973)	20.18*** (3.059)			
Development trap index (2) (Average 2001–2018)				5.484*** (0.811)	3.917*** (0.952)	3.822*** (1.211)
GDP pc index (EU-27) (2018)		0.0393*** (0.00998)	0.0503*** (0.0119)		0.0381*** (0.00996)	0.0488*** (0.0117)
Employment in industry (%) (2018)		0.110*** (0.0374)	0.136*** (0.0450)		0.0907** (0.0389)	0.116** (0.0462)
Migration (‰) (2000–2018)		0.0467 (0.0627)	0.0465 (0.0717)		0.124* (0.0654)	0.0978 (0.0753)
Foreigners (+15 %) born in another EU country (2018)			-0.917*** (0.152)			-0.957*** (0.164)
Foreigners (+15 %) born outside the EU (2018)			0.261** (0.102)			0.313*** (0.105)
Older people (%) (2018)		1.174*** (0.103)	1.019*** (0.111)		1.173*** (0.105)	1.023*** (0.113)
Density 2011 (ln)		-2.057*** (0.519)	-2.349*** (0.563)		-1.895*** (0.519)	-2.210*** (0.567)
Higher education, 25–64 (%) (2018)		-0.0318 (0.0382)	-0.174*** (0.0419)		-0.0553 (0.0389)	-0.204*** (0.0429)
Employment (%) (2018)		-0.134** (0.0600)	-0.0601 (0.0680)		-0.178*** (0.0615)	-0.0931 (0.0698)
Quality of government (2017)		-2.247*** (0.625)	-1.922*** (0.689)		-1.792*** (0.648)	-1.496** (0.709)
Electoral turnout (%)	0.122*** (0.0209)	0.158*** (0.0337)	0.127*** (0.0399)	0.110*** (0.0212)	0.132*** (0.0342)	0.101** (0.0406)
Share of votes covered in CHES (%)	-0.103*** (0.0358)	-0.0286 (0.0363)	-0.0515 (0.0507)	-0.124*** (0.0390)	-0.0632 (0.0392)	-0.0960* (0.0532)
Observations	1 166	1 130	995	1 166	1 130	995
R-squared	0.087	0.280	0.297	0.059	0.249	0.270
Adjusted R-squared	0.0844	0.273	0.288	0.0562	0.242	0.261
DF	1 162	1 118	981	1 162	1 118	981

Robust standard errors in parentheses \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

When we consider the length of time a region has been in a development trap, we expected from a theoretical perspective to find considerable differences between regions that have been trapped for lengthy periods of time and those with a limited period of entrapment. This is what Table 2 tests. In this table, we analyse the connection between the length of time a region has spent in a development trap and the support for parties opposed and strongly opposed to European integration at the ballot box. Regressions 1 and 2 in Table 2 represent the risk of entrapment – measured by DT1 – in 2018, while Regressions 3 and 4 cover the average level risk of entrapment for the period 2015–2018. Regressions 5 and 6 cover the average risk of entrapment between 2010 and 2018; and

Regressions 7 and 8 cover entrapment over the longer span between 2001 and 2018. Regressions 9 through 12 opt for an alternative measurement of the length of entrapment, counting the number of years a region has been in a trap since 2010 (Regressions 9 and 10) or 2001 (Regressions 11 and 12). The model is run both without controls (regressions with odd numbers) and with controls (regressions with even numbers). The controls are not reported in the table for the sake of brevity but go in line with the coefficients discussed for Table 1 above.

The results show that the inhabitants of a region that is trapped, even if only briefly, are far more likely to support hard Eurosceptic options than people living in places that have not

suffered – or that have suffered less – from stagnation in wealth, employment, and productivity. As the coefficients for all the regressions including averages are perfectly compatible, the results of Table 1 show that, as expected, the longer the period we consider, the greater the impact on support for hard Eurosceptic parties. How much more likely are voters in long-term trapped places to cast a vote for hard Eurosceptic candidates? According to the coefficients, if we consider the period 2010–2018, the impact is five times greater than if we only consider 2018. If we consider the two decades starting in 2001, the ratio increases to more than 7 times. Thus, while being in a trap matters, the length of time a region spends in the trap contributes to an almost exponential increase in the discontent that is later reflected at the ballot box.

The same results are in evidence when the years of entrapment are regressed on hard Eurosceptic votes as when we consider

the average level of entrapment over a period of time. The inhabitants of regions that have spent more time in a development trap support hard Eurosceptic options to a significantly greater extent than those living in more economically dynamic regions. This is the case for both the period 2010–2018 and 2001–2018.

If we include the intensity of the trap in the mix (DT2) (Table A3 in Appendix), the results reproduce those of Table 2: the longer the period we consider, the greater the impact of intensity on Eurosceptic voting. When we consider a longer period, the impact of intensity on the vote shares goes up, but by less than when using the entrapment risk (DT1). As compared to 2018, the impact of the period 2001–2018 is twice as high on Eurosceptic voting, while in the case of DT1 it increases by a factor of seven.

**Table 2:** Different time measures of the development trap (1) and hard Eurosceptic vote

Dependent variable: Share of votes for hard Eurosceptic parties (2018–2022)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
	DT1, 2018		DT1, 2015–2018		DT1, 2010–2018		DT1, 2001–2018		DT1, Years in trap since 2010		DT1, Years in trap since 2001	
Development trap (1)	4.213*** (1.124)	2.869*** (1.102)	5.722*** (1.372)	5.333*** (1.368)	15.46*** (2.029)	16.00*** (2.038)	22.94*** (2.843)	21.91*** (2.973)	0.646*** (0.123)	0.592*** (0.123)	0.582*** (0.0876)	0.482*** (0.0932)
Controls	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
Observations	1 166	1 130	1 166	1 130	1 166	1 130	1 166	1 130	1 166	1 130	1 166	1 130
R-squared	0.030	0.240	0.033	0.245	0.071	0.277	0.087	0.280	0.044	0.251	0.063	0.258
Adjusted R-squared	0.0278	0.232	0.0305	0.238	0.0684	0.270	0.0844	0.273	0.0411	0.243	0.0608	0.250
DF	1 162	1 118	1 162	1 118	1 162	1 118	1 162	1 118	1 162	1 118	1 162	1 118

Robust standard errors in parentheses \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

When support for both soft and hard Eurosceptic parties is analysed alongside support for only hard Eurosceptic parties, the coefficients for the average DT1 between 2001 and 2018 remain strongly connected with Eurosceptic vote in national elections and highly significant (Table 3, Regressions 1–3). By contrast, the intensity of the trap yields insignificant coefficients when we introduce controls (Table 3, Regressions 5–6).

The coefficients for the control variables, despite generally going in the same direction as in Table 1, also experience some changes. When all the controls are included, they remain significant in the case of (i) industrial employment; (ii) the share of citizens born in another EU country; (iii) population density; (iv) employment levels; and (iv) the quality of government of the region (Table 3, Regressions 3 and 6). This means that the voter who supports soft Eurosceptic parties has fewer distinct characteristics compared with the average voter who supports

hard Eurosceptic candidates. But the role of the development trap remains strong and significant. Electoral turnout, by contrast, switches signs and becomes negative and mostly significant, along with *a priori* expectations.

The length of time the region has spent in the trap also matters when considering support for both soft and hard Eurosceptic parties. The coefficient is insignificant for regions that were trapped in 2018 or that were trapped between 2015 and 2018. Over longer periods, the impact of the entrapment risk on Eurosceptic voting becomes significant and stronger (Table 4, Regressions 5 through 8). The impact of the entrapment risk on Eurosceptic voting doubles for those regions that have had the same level of entrapment for two decades relative to those having had that level in just the post-2010 period. When considering the years a region has been in a trap, we find a strongly significant impact both for the period 2010–2018 and 2001–2018 (Table 4, Regressions 9 through 12).

**Table 3:** Base table. Link between being in a development trap in 2018 and votes for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties

Dependent variable: Share of votes for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties (2018-2022)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	DT1	DT1	DT1	DT2	DT2	DT2
	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS	OLS
Development-trap index (1) (2001-2018)	32.75*** (4.291)	32.41*** (4.797)	30.67*** (4.687)			
Development-trap index (2) (2001-2018)				3.580** (1.541)	-0.502 (1.907)	-0.0690 (2.130)
GDP pc index (EU-27) (2018)		-0.0139 (0.0124)	0.0380*** (0.0147)		-0.0200 (0.0125)	0.0303** (0.0149)
Employment in industry (%) (2018)		0.286*** (0.0678)	0.192*** (0.0681)		0.185*** (0.0707)	0.120* (0.0708)
Migration (‰) (2000-2018)		-0.0234 (0.140)	0.229* (0.138)		0.205 (0.148)	0.409*** (0.146)
Foreigners (+15 %) born in another EU country (2018)			-1.528*** (0.231)			-1.614*** (0.259)
Foreigners (+15 %) born outside the EU (2018)			-0.0206 (0.168)			0.149 (0.172)
Older people (%) (2018)		-0.0129 (0.180)	0.272 (0.181)		0.0603 (0.182)	0.313* (0.184)
Density 2011 (ln)		-2.535*** (0.867)	-1.796** (0.826)		-2.290*** (0.880)	-1.553* (0.852)
Higher education, 25-64 (%) (2018)		0.268*** (0.0749)	-0.00312 (0.0743)		0.215*** (0.0754)	-0.0683 (0.0759)
Employment (%) (2018)		-0.521*** (0.111)	-0.415*** (0.125)		-0.694*** (0.111)	-0.553*** (0.127)
Quality of government (2017)		-3.577*** (1.151)	-0.373 (1.231)		-2.613** (1.202)	0.318 (1.293)
Electoral turnout (%)	-0.261*** (0.0406)	-0.0174 (0.0639)	-0.170** (0.0661)	-0.285*** (0.0416)	-0.0452 (0.0669)	-0.215*** (0.0687)
Share of votes covered in CHES (%)	0.172*** (0.0461)	0.176*** (0.0564)	-0.150* (0.0864)	0.142*** (0.0503)	0.102* (0.0572)	-0.229** (0.0918)
Observations	1 166	1 130	995	1 166	1 130	995
R-squared	0.091	0.186	0.326	0.051	0.153	0.293
Adjusted R-squared	0.0888	0.178	0.318	0.0483	0.145	0.284
DF	1 162	1 118	981	1 162	1 118	981

Robust standard errors in parentheses: \*\*\* p&lt;0.01, \*\* p&lt;0.05, \* p&lt;0.1

**Table 4:** Different time measures of development trap (1) and soft and hard Eurosceptic vote

Dependent variable: Share of votes for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties (2018-2022)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
	DT1, 2018		DT1, 2015-2018		DT1, 2010-2018		DT1, 2001-2018		DT1, Years in trap since 2010		DT1, Years in trap since 2001	
Development trap (1)	-2.223 (2.028)	0.197 (1.947)	2.471 (2.546)	3.594 (2.496)	19.15*** (3.331)	15.38*** (3.647)	32.75*** (4.291)	32.41*** (4.797)	0.781*** (0.209)	0.414* (0.226)	0.744*** (0.140)	0.603*** (0.158)
Controls	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
Observations	1 166	1 130	1 166	1 130	1 166	1 130	1 166	1 130	1 166	1 130	1 166	1 130
R-squared	0.046	0.153	0.046	0.154	0.071	0.166	0.091	0.186	0.056	0.155	0.069	0.164
Adjusted R-squared	0.0436	0.144	0.0435	0.146	0.0689	0.157	0.0888	0.178	0.0539	0.147	0.0663	0.156
DF	1 162	1 118	1 162	1 118	1 162	1 118	1 162	1 118	1 162	1 118	1 162	1 118

Robust standard errors in parentheses: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1

### 5.3. CHANGES OVER TIME

What happens to the connection between being in a development trap and the share of the Eurosceptic vote when, instead of considering just a single electoral cycle, we cover the two electoral cycles in which Euroscepticism has been on the rise? This is the exercise we conduct in Tables 5 and 6, where the link between being in a development trap – using the average development trap index between 2001, on the one hand, and 2013 or 2018 depending on the electoral cycle considered – and the electoral support for hard (Table 5) and both hard and soft (Table 6) Eurosceptic parties is evaluated over the 2013-2018 and 2018-2022 electoral cycles. The structure of the tables reproduces those of Table 1 (hard Euroscepticism) and Table 3 (hard and soft Euroscepticism).

Estimating model (1) over two national electoral periods yields results that are similar to those already reported for the last electoral cycle. Both the entrapment risk and the intensity of the trap explain the vote for hard Eurosceptic parties across Europe since 2013 (Table 5). The support for hard Eurosceptic parties has been considerably greater in EU regions with a lower level of economic dynamism and with a higher risk of stagnation. The coefficients for the controls reported in Table 5 also reproduce those of Table 1, with a few exceptions. These include the share of employment in industry and the quality of government, which become mostly not significant. Employment

rates become significant with the full set of controls, while electoral turnout becomes negative and significant in the same regressions (Table 5, regressions 3 and 6).

When considering soft as well as hard Euroscepticism over two electoral cycles, both the risk and the intensity of the development trap matter – and they matter a lot – for Eurosceptic votes (Table 6). The results highlight that the link between economic stagnation and the rise of Euroscepticism is not confined to one electoral cycle. Voters in places that have been in a development trap – especially if it was a deep and long trap – are unlikely to support European integration in the future unless the lack of economic dynamism in the places where they live is addressed.

The strength of the development trap variables over two electoral cycles contrast with the weakening of the coefficients for most controls. Those that remain significant go in line with the previous literature. Support for hard and soft Eurosceptic parties is stronger in: (i) relatively less dense places; (ii) regions with worse endowments in higher education; (iii) regions with lower employment levels; and (iv) regions with lower quality of government (the only control variable which is not weakened in Table 6). Once all these factors are taken into account, support for hard and soft Eurosceptic parties is stronger in richer areas (Table 6).

**Table 5:** Pooled OLS. Link between being in a development trap and votes for hard Eurosceptic parties

Dependent variable: Share of votes for hard Eurosceptic parties (2013-2022)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	DT1	DT1	DT1	DT2	DT2	DT2
	Pooled OLS	Pooled OLS	Pooled OLS	Pooled OLS	Pooled OLS	Pooled OLS
Development-trap index (1)	17.13*** (1.765)	20.06*** (1.864)	23.95*** (2.164)			
Development-trap index (2)				3.483*** (0.494)	4.773*** (0.566)	5.618*** (0.853)
GDP pc index (EU-27)		0.0151*** (0.00494)	0.0460*** (0.00900)		0.0147*** (0.00477)	0.0445*** (0.00885)
Employment in industry (%)		0.0287 (0.0264)	0.0124 (0.0379)		0.0237 (0.0267)	0.00530 (0.0389)
Migration (‰) since 2000		-0.0971** (0.0444)	-0.0412 (0.0535)		-0.0426 (0.0465)	0.0129 (0.0574)
Foreigners (+15 %) born in another EU country			-0.842*** (0.107)			-0.881*** (0.116)
Foreigners (+15 %) born outside the EU			0.0983 (0.0782)			0.142* (0.0799)
Older people (%)		0.0783*** (0.0218)	0.0738** (0.0317)		0.0750*** (0.0220)	0.0609* (0.0322)
Density 2011 (ln)		-1.020*** (0.281)	-1.733*** (0.369)		-0.996*** (0.283)	-1.653*** (0.378)
Higher education, 25-64 (%)		-0.169*** (0.0290)	-0.369*** (0.0345)		-0.190*** (0.0294)	-0.414*** (0.0352)
Employment (%)		0.00397 (0.0421)	0.241*** (0.0533)		0.0153 (0.0442)	0.250*** (0.0561)
Quality of government		0.742* (0.412)	-0.120 (0.498)		0.839* (0.432)	0.214 (0.518)
Electoral turnout (%)	0.0975*** (0.0152)	0.0603** (0.0235)	-0.0567** (0.0266)	0.0878*** (0.0154)	0.0373 (0.0242)	-0.0847*** (0.0272)
Share of votes covered in CHES (%)	-0.0312 (0.0247)	-0.0192 (0.0268)	0.0161 (0.0350)	-0.0412 (0.0261)	-0.0359 (0.0290)	-0.0216 (0.0373)
Observations	2 332	2 260	1 583	2 332	2 260	1 583
R-squared	0.061	0.097	0.201	0.034	0.074	0.165
Adjusted R-squared	0.0594	0.0931	0.194	0.0326	0.0692	0.158
DF	2 328	2 248	1 569	2 328	2 248	1 569

Robust standard errors in parentheses: \*\*\* p&lt;0.01, \*\* p&lt;0.05, \* p&lt;0.1

**Table 6:** Pooled OLS. Link between being in a development trap and votes for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties

Dependent variable: Share of votes for soft and hard Eurosceptic parties (2013-2022)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	DT1	DT1	DT1	DT2	DT2	DT2
	Pooled OLS					
Development-trap index (1)	35.22*** (2.735)	31.63*** (2.868)	37.91*** (3.383)			
Development-trap index (2)				8.364*** (0.941)	6.338*** (1.054)	7.848*** (1.533)
GDP pc index (EU-27)		0.00464 (0.00769)	0.0700*** (0.0130)		0.00311 (0.00737)	0.0665*** (0.0127)
Employment in industry (%)		0.125*** (0.0461)	-0.0605 (0.0573)		0.104** (0.0465)	-0.0783 (0.0589)
Migration (‰) since 2000		-0.224*** (0.0859)	-0.0970 (0.0949)		-0.119 (0.0874)	0.00617 (0.0996)
Foreigners (+15 %) born in another EU country			-1.433*** (0.172)			-1.503*** (0.190)
Foreigners (+15 %) born outside the EU			-0.0620 (0.139)			0.0253 (0.141)
Older people (%)		0.262*** (0.0341)	0.0216 (0.0493)		0.257*** (0.0347)	-0.000126 (0.0507)
Density 2011 (ln)		-0.713 (0.475)	-1.859*** (0.588)		-0.667 (0.480)	-1.729*** (0.605)
Higher education, 25-64 (%)		-0.0347 (0.0538)	-0.403*** (0.0601)		-0.0734 (0.0543)	-0.480*** (0.0615)
Employment (%)		-0.518*** (0.0762)	-0.0404 (0.0948)		-0.522*** (0.0795)	-0.0434 (0.102)
Quality of government		-2.884*** (0.702)	-4.038*** (0.842)		-2.658*** (0.728)	-3.481*** (0.891)
Electoral turnout (%)	-0.132*** (0.0259)	0.145*** (0.0375)	0.0293 (0.0417)	-0.151*** (0.0259)	0.112*** (0.0388)	-0.0157 (0.0431)
Share of votes covered in CHES (%)	0.147*** (0.0330)	0.149*** (0.0376)	-0.0124 (0.0632)	0.125*** (0.0356)	0.120*** (0.0385)	-0.0734 (0.0672)
Observations	2 332	2 260	1 583	2 332	2 260	1 583
R-squared	0.081	0.185	0.316	0.055	0.159	0.277
Adjusted R-squared	0.0803	0.181	0.310	0.0543	0.155	0.271
DF	2 328	2 248	1 569	2 328	2 248	1 569

Robust standard errors in parentheses: \*\*\* p&lt;0.01, \*\* p&lt;0.05, \* p&lt;0.1

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

Eurosceptic voting has risen substantially since the 2000s. Hard Eurosceptic parties increased their vote share from 5% to 14% in this period. Since the Brexit referendum, this vote share has not grown significantly. However, softer versions of Euroscepticism have continued to grow, reaching 27% in the latest national parliamentary elections in the EU.

This paper explores the factors linked to Eurosceptic voting. It confirms the impact of a range of social, economic, and demographic factors on the rise of Euroscepticism. In almost all of the regressions presented, Eurosceptic voting is reduced by: (i) higher employment rates; (ii) higher shares of the population with tertiary education; (iii) higher quality of government; (iv) higher shares of residents born in another EU Member State; and (v) higher population densities. In contrast, greater GDP per head, a greater share of older people, and a greater share of residents born outside the EU all increase the votes for Eurosceptic parties in most regressions.

This paper adds a new dimension to understand Eurosceptic voting: the regional development trap. Regions in a development trap experience lower growth in income, productivity, and employment compared to: (i) their own historical performance; (ii) the country in which they are in; and/or (iii) the EU. This paper shows that the more intense and the deeper the development trap, the greater the vote share of Eurosceptic parties. This is the case for both soft and hard Euroscepticism and for the elections since 2013 and since 2018. The paper also demonstrates the cumulative impact of being in a development trap. The longer a region is trapped, the greater the impact on Eurosceptic voting. This highlights the need for a strong, place-based policy that can help regions to escape from their development traps. Previous research has shown that cohesion policy investments tend to reduce Eurosceptic voting (Rodríguez-Pose & Dijkstra 2021).

This analysis calls for more research on three key issues. Firstly, a better understanding is needed of the causes of the regional development traps and how they can be overcome. Regions at all levels of development can be confronted with this issue. Improving the quality of government, increasing innovation, and boosting education and training are all likely to help a region escape from a development trap <sup>(5)</sup>, but the right mix of policies and investments will depend on the regional context. The best policy response is likely to differ between more and less developed regions, between cities and rural areas, and between more accessible and more remote places.

Secondly, engaging more with residents of smaller cities, towns, and rural areas can make it possible to understand why these residents feel that the place they live in does not matter. Ensuring that local residents have a say in cohesion policy programmes through strong local involvement as promoted by the partnership principle may reduce the residents' feeling that their voice doesn't count. Multilevel governance may also ensure that local priorities are heard in regional-development strategies.

Thirdly, closing local public and private service may also generate feelings of discontent and being left behind. More research is needed to identify (i) where access to services is deteriorating, (ii) which groups are the most affected and (iii) how policies can ensure sufficient access to essential services.

Responding to these broad concerns will also require that policies pay more attention to their territorial impacts. Policies obviously should have a positive impact at the aggregate level, but they should also promote a balanced spatial distribution of both costs and benefits. When places that are already struggling or have limited resources suffer significant costs or benefit significantly less than other places, this is likely to fuel disengagement and discontent. This in turn can undermine overall development and the overall cohesiveness of our societies.

<sup>(5)</sup> As shown in the 8th Cohesion Report.

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## 8. APPENDIX

**Table A1:** Political parties included in the analysis, position on European integration, and year of election.

Country	Year of election	Party name	Position on EU integration	Source
SK	2020	Vlast	1.0	Other
LV	2022	Politiskā partija Stabilitātei!	1.0	Other
LV	2022	SUVERĒNĀ VARA	1.0	Other
BG	2022	НАРОДНА ПАРТИЯ ИСТИНАТА И САМО ИСТИНАТА	1.0	Other
BG	2022	ВЪЗРАЖДАНЕ	1.0	Other
BG	2022	БТР – БЪЛГАРИЯ НА ТРУДА И РАЗУМА	1.0	Other
NL	2021	Forum voor Democratie	1.1	CHES
EL	2019	Kommounistiko Komma Elladas	1.1	CHES
EL	2019	Laikos Syndesmos / Chrysi Avgi	1.2	CHES
EL	2019	Laikos Syndesmos / Chrysi Avgi	1.2	CHES
NL	2021	PVV (Partij voor de Vrijheid)	1.3	CHES
SK	2020	Ludova strana Nase Slovensko (LSNS)	1.3	CHES
PL	2019	KOMITET WYBORCZY KONFEDERACJA WOLNOŚĆ I NIE- PODLEGŁOŚĆ - ZPOW-601-5/19	1.4	CHES
FR	2022	Rassemblement National	1.4	CHES
DK	2019	Stram Kurs	1.4	Other
CZ	2021	Svoboda a př. demokracie (SPD)	1.5	CHES
HU	2022	MI HAZÁNK MOZGALOM	1.5	Other
CZ	2021	Trikolora Svobodní Soukromníci	1.5	Other
FI	2019	Perussuomalaiset	1.6	CHES
IT	2022	LEGA PER SALVINI PREMIER	1.7	CHES
DK	2019	Nye Borgerlige	1.8	CHES
HR	2020	ZIVI ZID-PH-SIP-HSSCK5-ZSZ-NLSP-HSS SR	1.8	CHES
HR	2020	ZIVI ZID-PH-SIP-NLSP-AM	1.8	CHES
DE	2021	AfD	1.9	CHES
IT	2022	FRATELLI D'ITALIA CON GIORGIA MELONI	1.9	CHES
SI	2022	ZOS - ZAVEZNIŠTVO OSVOBODIMO SLOVENIJO (GIBANJE ZED- INJENA SLOVENIJA - ZSI IN STRANKA SLOVENSKEGA NARODA - SSN)	2.0	Other
SI	2022	Gibanje Zedinjena Slovenija - ZSi	2.0	Other
SI	2022	DOMOVINSKA LIGA - DOM	2.0	Other
BG	2022	БЪЛГАРСКИ НАЦИОНАЛЕН СЪЮЗ – НД	2.0	Other
IT	2022	ITALEXIT PER L'ITALIA	2.0	Other
IE	2020	Solidarity - People Before Profit	2.0	CHES
DK	2019	Dansk Folkeparti	2.0	CHES
EE	2019	Eesti Konservatiivne Rahvaerakond (EKRE)	2.1	CHES
EL	2019	Elliniki Lisi	2.1	CHES
BG	2022	АТАКА	2.2	CHES
SE	2022	SD	2.2	CHES
BE	2019	Vlaams Belang	2.3	CHES
AT	2019	Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs	2.3	CHES
CZ	2021	Komunistická str.Čech a Moravy (KSCM)	2.4	CHES
PT	2022	PCP-PEV - CDU - Coligação Democrática Unitária	2.4	CHES
DK	2019	Enhedslisten / De Rod-Gronne	2.4	CHES
RO	2020	ALIANȚA PENTRU UNIUREA ROMÂNILOR	2.6	Other

Country	Year of election	Party name	Position on EU integration	Source
HR	2020	DPMS-LED COALITION	2.6	CHES
NL	2021	Partij voor de Dieren	2.6	CHES
SI	2022	SLOVENSKA NACIONALNA STRANKA - SNS	2.7	CHES
BE	2019	PTB	2.7	CHES
BE	2019	PVDA	2.7	CHES
BE	2019	PTB*PVDA	2.7	CHES
NL	2021	SP (Socialistische Partij)	2.8	CHES
FR	2022	Nouvelle union populaire écologique et sociale	2.9	CHES
NL	2021	Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP)	2.9	CHES
PL	2019	KOMITET WYBORCZY PRAWO I SPRAWIEDLIWOŚĆ - ZPOW-601-9/19	3.0	CHES
LU	2018	Déi Konservativ	3.0	Other
LU	2018	KPL d'KOMMUNISTEN	3.0	Other
SI	2022	Državljansko gibanje Resni.ca	3.0	Other
LV	2022	Politiskā partija KATRAM UN KATRAI	3.0	Other
CZ	2021	PŘÍSAHA Roberta Šlachty	3.0	Other
FR	2022	Reconquête !	3.0	Other
BE	2019	Parti Populaire	3.0	Other
SK	2020	Slovenska narodna strana (SNS)	3.1	CHES
HU	2022	FIDESZ - MAGYAR POLGÁRI SZÖVETSÉG-KERESZTÉNYDEMOKRATA NÉPPÁRT	3.1	CHES
SK	2020	Sme Rodina - Boris Kollar	3.1	CHES
SE	2022	V	3.2	CHES
IE	2020	Renua Ireland	3.2	CHES
ES	2019	VOX	3.3	CHES
PT	2022	CH - CHEGA	3.4	Other
IT	2022	MOVIMENTO 5 STELLE	3.5	CHES
CY	2021	ΕΘΝΙΚΟ ΛΑΪΚΟ ΜΕΤΩΠΟ (Ε.ΛΑ.Μ.)	3.5	CHES
IE	2020	Independents 4 Change	3.7	CHES
IE	2020	Sinn Féin	3.7	CHES
PT	2022	B.E. - Bloco de Esquerda	3.8	CHES
CZ	2021	SPOLU – ODS, KDU-ČSL, TOP 09	3.8	CHES
LT	2020	Lietuvos Centro Partija LITHUANIAN CENTRE PARTY	3.8	CHES
HR	2020	Most nezavisnih lista	3.8	CHES
BG	2022	ПП ВМРО – БЪЛГАРСКО НАЦИОНАЛНО ДВИЖЕНИЕ	3.8	CHES
NL	2021	50PLUS	3.9	CHES
FI	2019	Kristillisdemokraatit	3.9	CHES
BG	2022	НФСБ	3.9	CHES
SI	2022	ZA LJUDSTVO SLOVENIJE - ZLS	4.0	Other
SI	2022	POVEŽIMO SLOVENIJO (KONKRETNO, ZELENİ, SLS, NLS, NS)	4.0	Other
SI	2022	NESTRANKARSKA LJUDSKA LISTA GIBANJA ZDRAVA DRUŽBA	4.0	Other
SI	2022	NAŠA PRIHODNOST IN DOBRA DRŽAVA	4.0	Other
SI	2022	NAŠA DEŽELA stranka dr. ALEKSANDRE PIVEC	4.0	Other
SI	2022	Lista Borisa Popoviča - Digitalizirajmo Slovenijo	4.0	Other
LV	2022	LATVIJA PIRMAJĀ VIETĀ	4.0	Other
BG	2022	РУСОФИЛИ ЗА ВЪЗРАЖДАНЕ НА ОТЕЧЕСТВОТО	4.0	Other
BG	2022	ПП ГЛАС НАРОДЕН	4.0	Other
BG	2022	ДВИЖЕНИЕ НА НЕПАРТИЙНИТЕ КАНДИДАТИ	4.0	Other

Country	Year of election	Party name	Position on EU integration	Source
BG	2022	ПП КОАЛИЦИЯ ЗА ТЕБ БЪЛГАРИЯ	4.0	Other
BG	2022	БНО	4.0	Other
BG	2022	БСДД – Български Съюз за ДИРЕКТНА ДЕМОКРАЦИЯ	4.0	Other
DE	2021	Freie Wähler	4.0	Other
BE	2019	DierAnimal	4.0	Other
BE	2019	Piratenpartij	4.0	Other
LU	2018	déi Lénk	4.0	CHES
LU	2018	Alternativ Demokratesch Reformpartei	4.0	CHES
RO	2020	PARTIDUL SOCIAL DEMOCRAT	4.0	CHES
NL	2021	ChristenUnie	4.0	CHES
DK	2019	[Ny] Liberal Alliance (LA)	4.1	CHES
SK	2020	Sloboda a Solidarita (SAS)	4.1	CHES
SI	2022	LEVICA	4.1	CHES
PT	2022	PAN - PESSOAS - ANIMAIS - NATUREZA	4.2	CHES
BE	2019	N-VA	4.3	CHES
LV	2022	Latvijas Krievu savienība	4.3	CHES
BG	2022	ПП ИМА ТАКЪВ НАРОД	4.4	CHES
CZ	2021	ANO 2011	4.5	CHES
LU	2018	Piratepartei	4.5	CHES
LT	2020	Lietuvos lenku rinkimu akcija LITHUANIAN POLES' ELECTORAL ACTION	4.5	CHES
ES	2019	Euskal Herria Bildu / Reunir Euskal Herria	4.5	CHES
ES	2019	GBAI	4.5	CHES
EL	2019	European Realistic Disobedience Front [MeRa25]	4.6	CHES
NL	2021	DENK	4.7	CHES
DE	2021	Die Linke	4.7	CHES
LV	2022	Nacionālā apvienība Visu Latvijai!-Tēvzemei un Brīvībai/LNNK	4.7	CHES
HR	2020	Milan Bandić 365 - Stranka rada i solidarnosti	4.8	CHES
SK	2020	Občasní Ľudia a Nezávislé Osobnosti (OLANO)	4.8	CHES
LV	2022	Zaļo un Zemnieku savienība	4.8	CHES
FI	2019	Maalaisliitto / Keskusta	4.9	CHES
IT	2022	FORZA ITALIA	4.9	CHES
HU	2022	MAGYAR KÉTFARKÚ KUTYA PÁRT	5.0	Other
BG	2022	ПП ИЗПРАВИ СЕ БЪЛГАРИЯ	5.0	Other
BG	2022	БЪЛГАРСКИ ВЪЗХОД	5.0	Other
BG	2022	МИР	5.0	Other
BG	2022	ПРЯКА ДЕМОКРАЦИЯ	5.0	Other
BG	2022	ПП Национално движение Единство	5.0	Other
CY	2021	ΑΛΛΗΛΕΓΓΥΗ	5.0	CHES
CY	2021	ΚΙΝΗΜΑ ΟΙΚΟΛΟΓΩΝ-ΣΥΝΕΡΓΑΣΙΑ ΠΟΛΙΤΩΝ	5.0	CHES
CY	2021	ΑΚΕΛ (ΑΝΟΡΘΩΤΙΚΟ ΚΟΜΜΑ ΕΡΓΑΖΟΜΕΝΟΥ ΛΑΟΥ)	5.0	CHES
AT	2019	Österreichische Volkspartei	5.0	CHES
IE	2020	Social Democrats	5.0	CHES
EL	2019	Synaspismos Rizospastikis Aristeras (SYRIZA)	5.0	CHES
DE	2021	Tierschutzpartei	5.0	CHES
FI	2019	Vasemmistoliitto LEFT	5.1	CHES
DK	2019	Socialdemokraterne	5.1	CHES
EE	2019	Erakond Isamaa ja Res Publica Liit (IRL)	5.1	CHES

Country	Year of election	Party name	Position on EU integration	Source
NL	2021	VVD	5.1	CHES
LT	2020	Darbo Partija LABOUR PARTY	5.1	CHES
BG	2022	БСП ЗА БЪЛГАРИЯ (BSP)	5.1	CHES
SE	2022	MP	5.1	CHES
SI	2022	SLOVENSKA DEMOKRATSKA STRANKA - SDS	5.1	CHES
ES	2019	JXCAT-JUNTS	5.1	CHES
PL	2019	KOMITET WYBORCZY POLSKIE STRONNICTWO LUDOWE - ZPOW-601-19/19	5.1	CHES
DK	2019	Socialistisk Folkeparti	5.1	CHES
SK	2020	Krestanskodemocraticke hnutie (KDH)	5.2	CHES
SK	2020	Smer - socialna demokracia	5.2	CHES
IT	2022	ALLEANZA VERDI E SINISTRA	5.3	CHES
ES	2019	PODEMOS-IU	5.3	CHES
ES	2019	ECP-GUANYEM EL CANVI	5.3	CHES
ES	2019	PODEMOS-EU	5.3	CHES
LV	2022	APVIENOTAIS SARAĶSTS - Latvijas Zaļā partija, Latvijas Reģionu Apvienība, Liepājas partija	5.3	CHES
NL	2021	CDA	5.3	CHES
DK	2019	Alternativet	5.4	CHES
RO	2020	PARTIDUL PRO ROMÂNIA	5.4	CHES
LT	2020	Lietuvos valstiecių partija LITHUANIAN PEASANT AND GREENS UNION	5.5	CHES
CY	2021	KINHMA ΣΟΣΙΑΛΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΩΝ ΕΔΕΚ	5.5	CHES
EE	2019	Eesti Keskerakond	5.5	CHES
FR	2022	Les Républicains	5.5	CHES
SI	2022	DeSUS - DEMOKRATIČNA STRANKA UPOKOJENCEV SLOVENIJE	5.5	CHES
ES	2019	ERC-SOBIRANISTES	5.5	CHES
LV	2022	Saskaņa sociāldemokrātiskā partija	5.5	CHES
ES	2019	BNG	5.5	CHES
RO	2020	PARTIDUL MIȘCAREA POPULARĂ	5.7	CHES
DE	2021	CSU	5.7	CHES
DK	2019	Konservative Folkeparti	5.7	CHES
LV	2022	Konservatīvie (JKP)	5.7	CHES
CZ	2021	Česká str.sociálně demokrat.	5.7	CHES
SE	2022	S	5.8	CHES
DE	2021	FDP	5.8	CHES
DK	2019	Venstre	5.8	CHES
SE	2022	KD	5.8	CHES
IE	2020	Green Party/ Comhaontas Glas	5.9	CHES
ES	2019	MAS PAIS-EQUO	5.9	CHES
ES	2019	MAS PAIS	5.9	CHES
ES	2019	M PAIS-CHA-EQUO	5.9	CHES
PT	2022	CDS-PP - CDS-Partido Popular	5.9	CHES
IT	2022	SÜDTIROLER VOLKSPARTEI (SVP) - PATT	5.9	CHES
NL	2021	Partij van de Arbeid (P.v.d.A.)	5.9	CHES
FI	2019	Suomen Sosialidemokraattinen Puolue	5.9	CHES
CY	2021	ΕΝΕΡΓΟΙ ΠΟΛΙΤΕΣ-ΚΙΝΗΜΑ ΕΝ.ΚΥΠ. ΚΥΝΗΓΩΝ	6.0	Other
CY	2021	ΑΛΛΑΓΗ ΓΕΝΙΑΣ	6.0	Other
LU	2018	Demokratie	6.0	Other

Country	Year of election	Party name	Position on EU integration	Source
HR	2020	PAMETNO-IP-FOKUS	6.0	Other
HR	2020	GREEN-LEFT	6.0	Other
SK	2020	DV	6.0	Other
LT	2020	LITHUANIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY LITHUANIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LABOUR PARTY	6.0	Other
BG	2022	БЪЛГАРСКА СОЦИАЛДЕМОКРАЦИЯ – ЕВРОЛЕВИЦА	6.0	Other
BG	2022	ПРАВОТО	6.0	Other
BG	2022	КОД /Консервативно Обединение на Десницата/	6.0	Other
BG	2022	Коалиция Справедлива България	6.0	Other
IT	2022	AZIONE - ITALIA VIVA - CALENDIA	6.0	Other
BE	2019	Listes Destexhe	6.0	Other
BE	2019	DéFI	6.0	Other
BE	2019	B.U.B	6.0	Other
CY	2021	ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΚΟ ΚΟΜΜΑ	6.0	CHES
CY	2021	ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΚΟΣ ΣΥΝΑΓΕΡΜΟΣ	6.0	CHES
LU	2018	déi gréng	6.0	CHES
SI	2022	LISTA MARJANA ŠARCA - LMŠ	6.0	CHES
SI	2022	NOVA SLOVENIJA - KRŠČANSKI DEMOKRATI	6.0	CHES
BE	2019	sp.a	6.0	CHES
SE	2022	M	6.1	CHES
SE	2022	C	6.1	CHES
RO	2020	UNIUNEA DEMOCRATĂ MAGHIARĂ DIN ROMÂNIA	6.1	CHES
SK	2020	MKO	6.1	CHES
BE	2019	PS	6.1	CHES
AT	2019	Sozialdemokratische Partei Österreichs	6.1	CHES
CZ	2021	PIRÁTI a STAROSTOVÉ	6.1	CHES
LT	2020	Lietuvos žaliaji partija LITHUANIAN GREEN PARTY	6.1	CHES
MT	2022	Partit Laburista Labour Party	6.1	CHES
IE	2020	The Labour Party	6.1	CHES
IE	2020	Fianna Fáil	6.1	CHES
BG	2022	Движение за права и свободи – ДПС	6.3	CHES
RO	2020	PARTIDUL NAȚIONAL LIBERAL	6.3	CHES
IE	2020	Fine Gael	6.3	CHES
DE	2021	CDU	6.3	CHES
SI	2022	STRANKA ALENKE BRATUŠEK	6.4	CHES
FR	2022	Ecologistes	6.4	CHES
HR	2020	REFORMISTI-HSS BRACE RADIC-UMIROVLJENICI	6.4	CHES
HR	2020	ZELJKO LACKOVIC INDEPENDENT LIST-REFORMISTI-HSS BRACE RADIC-NSH-HDS	6.4	CHES
ES	2019	CCA-PNC-NC	6.4	CHES
ES	2019	EAJ-PNV	6.4	CHES
BE	2019	CDH	6.4	CHES
HR	2020	RESTART-REFORMISTI	6.4	CHES
FI	2019	Ruotsalainen Kansanpuolue / Svenska Folkepartiet i Finland	6.4	CHES
FI	2019	Kansallinen Kokoomus	6.4	CHES
NL	2021	GROENLINKS	6.5	CHES
SI	2022	SOCIALNI DEMOKRATI - SD	6.5	CHES
ES	2019	PP	6.5	CHES

Country	Year of election	Party name	Position on EU integration	Source
HR	2020	Hrvatska demokratska zajednica	6.5	CHES
CY	2021	ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΚΗ ΠΑΡΑΤΑΞΗ	6.5	Other
PT	2022	IL - Iniciativa Liberal	6.5	Other
LU	2018	LSAP - D'SOZIALISTEN	6.5	CHES
LU	2018	DP	6.5	CHES
LU	2018	CSV - Chrëschtlech Sozial Vollekspartei	6.5	CHES
FI	2019	Vihrea Liitto GREENS	6.5	CHES
AT	2019	Die Grünen - Die grüne Alternative	6.5	CHES
DE	2021	Piraten	6.5	CHES
BE	2019	MR	6.5	CHES
DE	2021	SPD	6.5	CHES
SK	2020	ZA LUDI	6.5	CHES
BG	2022	ГЕРБ-ЦДС	6.6	CHES
HR	2020	HNS	6.6	CHES
HR	2020	HNS-HSS BRACE RADIC	6.6	CHES
MT	2022	Partit Nazzjonalista Nationalist Party	6.6	CHES
PL	2019	KOMITET WYBORCZY SOJUSZ LEWICY DEMOKRATYCZNEJ - ZPOW-601-1/19	6.6	CHES
EE	2019	Sotsiaaldemokraatlik Erakond - Moodukad	6.6	CHES
EE	2019	Eesti Reformierakond	6.6	CHES
BE	2019	CD&V	6.6	CHES
BE	2019	Groen	6.6	CHES
BE	2019	ECOLO	6.6	CHES
HR	2020	Kukuriku koalicija	6.6	CHES
LT	2020	Lietuvos Respublikos Liberalu sąjūdis LIBERALS MOVEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA	6.6	CHES
LV	2022	Attīstībai/Par!	6.6	CHES
HR	2020	Hrvatska demokratska zajednica	6.7	CHES
HR	2020	Hrvatska demokratska zajednica - Hrvatska demokratska stranka	6.7	CHES
SK	2020	MOST-HID	6.7	CHES
PL	2019	KOALICYJNY KOMITET WYBORCZY KOALICJA OBYWATELSKA PO.N IPL ZIELONI - ZPOW-601-6/19	6.7	CHES
AT	2019	NEOS - Das Neue Österreich	6.7	CHES
LT	2020	Lietuvos socialdemokratu partija LITHUANIAN SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY	6.7	CHES
ES	2019	CS	6.7	CHES
RO	2020	ALIANȚA USR PLUS	6.8	CHES
EE	2019	Erakond Eesti 200	6.8	CHES
PT	2022	PPD/PSD - Partido Social Democrata	6.8	CHES
PT	2022	PPD/PSD.CDS-PP - MADEIRA PRIMEIRO	6.8	CHES
PT	2022	PPD/PSD.CDS-PP.PPM - AD / Aliança Democrática	6.8	CHES
PT	2022	PS - Partido Socialista	6.8	CHES
IT	2022	+EUROPA	6.8	CHES
DE	2021	Grüne	6.8	CHES
IT	2022	PARTITO DEMOCRATICO - ITALIA DEMOCRATICA E PROGRESSISTA	6.8	CHES
LV	2022	PROGRESĪVIE	6.8	Other
LV	2022	Jaunā VIENOTĪBA	6.8	CHES
ES	2019	PSOE	6.8	CHES

Country	Year of election	Party name	Position on EU integration	Source
LT	2020	Tevynes Sajunga / Tevynes sajunga - Lietuvos krikcionys demokratai HOMELAND UNION	6.8	CHES
BG	2022	ДЕМОКРАТИЧНА БЪЛГАРИЯ – ОБЕДИНЕНИЕ (ДА България, ДСБ, Зелено движение)	6.8	CHES
FR	2022	Ensemble ! (Majorité présidentielle)	6.8	CHES
BE	2019	Open Vld	6.8	CHES
SK	2020	Spolu - občianska demokracia	6.9	CHES
SE	2022	L	6.9	CHES
EL	2019	Nea Dimokratia	6.9	CHES
EL	2019	Kinima Allagis	6.9	CHES
NL	2021	D66	6.9	CHES
HU	2022	DEMOKRATIKUS KOALÍCIÓ-JOBBIK MAGYARORSZÁGÉRT MOZGALOM-MOMENTUM MOZGALOM-MAGYAR SZOCIALISTA PÁRT-LMP - MAGYARORSZÁG ZÖLD PÁRTJA-PÁRBESZÉD MAGYARORSZÁGÉRT PÁRT	6.9	CHES
DK	2019	Det Radikale Venstre	6.9	CHES
SI	2022	VESNA - zelena stranka	7.0	Other
SI	2022	PIRATSKA STRANKA SLOVENIJE	7.0	Other
SI	2022	GIBANJE SVOBODA	7.0	Other
LT	2020	FREEDOM PARTY	7.0	Other
BG	2022	Продължаваме Промяната	7.0	Other
BE	2019	Volt	7.0	Other

Note: The coding for 219 political parties are based on the Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES see Jolly et al. 2022). To avoid that in some Member States a significant share of the votes is not coded, 69 parties have been coded following the same methodology by other country experts. Because most of these additional parties are quite small, they represent only 4.5% of the total vote at the EU level, while the parties coded by CHES cover 90% of the vote. The remaining 5% were not coded.

**Table A2:** Variables used in the analysis, with definitions and sources.

Variable name	Definition	Source
<i>Dependent variable</i>		
Vote share for parties opposed to European integration	Votes for parties that, depending on the regression considered, are strongly opposed, opposed, or moderately opposed to European integration (score $\leq 2.5$ on the EU position scale of the Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2019 for hard Eurosceptic parties and $\leq 3.5$ for soft Eurosceptic ones) as % of valid votes.	Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES) and other country experts.
<i>Independent variable of interest</i>		
Development trap index 1 (DT1)	Regional development trap indicator identifying whether a region is in a development trap at a given point in time, standardised between 0 and 1.	Own elaboration using Diemer et al.'s (2022) DT1 formula.
Development trap index 2 (DT2)	Regional development trap indicator considering the magnitude of the accelerations of income, employment and productivity, constructed using unstandardised values.	Own elaboration using Diemer et al.'s (2022) DT2 formula.
<i>Control variables</i>		
GDP pc index	GDP per capita (PPS) expressed as index compared to the EU-27 average.	Eurostat
Employment in industry	Share of employment in industry.	Eurostat.
Migration	Annual net migration plus statistical adjustment per 1000 persons	Eurostat.
Foreigners born in another EU country	Share of the population aged 15 and older born in another Member State.	Eurostat.
Foreigners born outside the EU	Share of the population aged 15 and older born outside the EU.	Eurostat.
Elderly	Share of the population who is 65 and over.	Eurostat
Density	Weighted population density at 1 km <sup>2</sup> resolution.	Own calculations based on Eurostat GEO-STAT-2011 grid.
Higher education	Share of adults (aged 25-64) with a higher education degree.	Eurostat.
Employment	Employment rate (ages 20-64).	Eurostat.
Quality of government	Quality of government index.	Gothenburg Quality of Government Institute.
Voter turnout	Total number of valid votes in a national legislative election as a percentage of the total electorate.	Official national sources of election results.
Share of votes covered in CHES	Votes for parties covered by the Chapel Hill Expert Survey 2019, as a percentage of valid votes.	Chapel Hill Expert Survey (CHES).

**Table A3:** Different time measures of development trap (2), hard Eurosceptic vote.

<b>Dependent variable:</b> Share of votes for parties strongly opposed and opposed to European integration (2018-2022)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)
	DT2, 2018		DT2, 2015-2018		DT2, 2010-2018		DT2, 2001-2018	
Development trap (2)	1.983*** (0.361)	2.140*** (0.372)	2.188*** (0.411)	2.022*** (0.397)	2.476*** (0.554)	1.779*** (0.572)	5.484*** (0.811)	3.917*** (0.952)
Controls	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES
Observations	1 166	1 130	1 166	1 130	1 166	1 130	1 166	1 130
R-squared	0.041	0.255	0.037	0.248	0.034	0.241	0.059	0.249
Adjusted R-squared	0.0383	0.248	0.0348	0.241	0.0318	0.234	0.0562	0.242
DF	1 162	1 118	1 162	1 118	1 162	1 118	1 162	1 118

Robust standard errors in parentheses: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0

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