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Euroscepticism or European Integration? Latent Euro-Enthusiasm in a Discourse Analysis of the Journal *Opoka w Kraju* Using the Method of Walery Pisarek

Abstract: The issue of European integration constitutes one of the key thematic areas of *Opoka w Kraju*. The purpose of this article is to analyse the ideological and programmatic bases of national movements' positions on European integration, as expressed in Professor Maciej Giertych's journal, *Opoka w Kraju*. At first glance, the journal may appear to a lay reader as unambiguously eurosceptical in its discourse. This impression stems from Maciej Giertych's involvement and that of national circles in political initiatives aimed at halting the process of European integration. However, this eurosceptical current also carries European accents, such as its disapproval of Brexit. From this perspective, it is essential to reveal not only the overt euroscepticism of *Opoka w Kraju* but also to bring to light the journal's latent euro-enthusiasm. The explanation of this research problem will be carried out using Walery Pisarek's method of analysing banner words and expressions.

Keywords: European Union, euroscepticism, latent euro-enthusiasm, *Opoka w Kraju*, Walery Pisarek's method

Introduction

The journal *Opoka w Kraju* is primarily addressed to readers with right-wing and eurosceptical views. It falls within the field of political science and public administration. The theme of euroscepticism



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and European integration constitutes one of the fundamental areas of the journal's political commentary. It should be emphasised that, in public perception, *Opoka w Kraju* is viewed as a strictly eurosceptical periodical (Lacković, 2021, pp. 184–185).

At this point, however, it is necessary to delineate the substantive scope of the issues addressed by *Opoka w Kraju*. Maciej Giertych stresses that “the EU is not a federal state. It is a Europe of Nations” (Giertych, 2020, p. 3). This statement requires updating in light of contemporary debates on European integration. Within European studies, it is widely accepted that we no longer deal with the “Europe of Nations” model, which is primarily associated with the institutional framework of the European Economic Community (EEC). Today, the European Union is best described as a hybrid polity, combining elements of Charles de Gaulle's “Europe of Nations” and Konrad Adenauer's federalist vision of a “United States of Europe”. Successive European treaties – most recently the Treaty of Lisbon – have moved the EU closer to a federal model, though it has not yet become a federation due to the discontinuities in this process. In this sense, the rhetoric employed by Maciej Giertych should be understood as articulating a constitutional ideal desired by him and by national eurosceptical circles, but one that no longer exists in practice.

The present study is based on press material analysis. In the 20th and early 21st centuries, sociology witnessed a marked expansion of research into the theoretical frameworks of discourse, including political discourse. This distinct “trend” towards discourse analysis has largely stemmed from the rapid development of popular culture, political marketing, and public relations (Czyżewski, 2013, p. 4).

1. Euroscepticism and latent euro-enthusiasm: theoretical and methodological assumptions

A considerable number of articles have been published addressing various thematic issues raised in *Opoka w Kraju*. However, most of them adopt a descriptive or historical character, focusing primarily on press studies of specific political or scholarly themes. Against this background, the research question posed here is as follows: Do the eurosceptical concepts represented in *Opoka w Kraju* also embody latent euro-enthusiastic views?

The answer to this question will be derived from research results based on Walery Pisarek's method, namely the empirical analysis of attitudes

expressed through the use of selected banner words: positive miranda and negative condemna (Pisarek 1992a, 1992b, 1999, 2001, 2007, 2016).

Press articles selected for empirical analysis (published between 2002 and 2020) had to meet two cumulative criteria: 1. They had to substantively address latent euro-enthusiasm perspectives within the eurosceptical rhetoric of *Opoka w Kraju*. 2. They had to include at least one banner word.

The methodological propositions of Walery Pisarek, who successfully developed the method, are of crucial importance here. Within the scholarly community, he is recognised primarily as a press studies scholar, and it is within this field that his method gained recognition and numerous followers.

Pisarek's methodological assumptions were grounded in neopositivist empiricism. His scholarly work comprehensively integrated achievements in philology, linguistics, sociology, and media studies. Experts emphasise that Pisarek developed an entirely new method by applying the principle of transgression (Kołodziej, 2019, p. 153). "The author linked the method to political linguistics – a relatively new field in Poland but well established in Germany" (Diekmann, 1975; Klein, 2014; Niehr, 2014; Niehr, 2013, pp. 73–88; Niehr, 2007, 496–502; Niehr, 2002, pp. 85–104; Pisarek, 2007b, pp. 348–355; Wolter, 2000).

As Joanna Sondel-Cedarmas observes (2015, pp. 396–398), euroscepticism remains relatively weakly defined in political science, as research on it is still in its early stages. It is worth noting that until the late 1990s, the term "euroscepticism" had not been scientifically conceptualised at all. In this sense, we are not dealing with a single definition, but with multiple understandings of markedly different substantive scope. The concept entered more widespread use following the French and Danish referenda on the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 (Milner, 2000, pp. 1–13).

Several typologies of euroscepticism have been proposed. Two, however, stand out most clearly: hard euroscepticism (often equated with anti-Europeanism) and soft euroscepticism, otherwise described as euro-realism (Szczzerbiak, Taggart, 2003, p. 6). A similar distinction is drawn by Krzysztof Zuba (2006, p. 7), who identifies these two positions as central to the Polish political discourse. The first current is characterised as out-right opposition to the very idea of European integration and to Poland's participation in the European Union. The second concerns a series of objections regarding specific competences of the EU. Carlos Flores Juberías describes this as a qualitative stance towards certain EU policies deemed

inconsistent with the national interest, while not questioning either the Union's existence or one's state's membership in the Union's structures. Accordingly, Juberías uses the concept of euroscepticism in the sense of "soft euroscepticism", while reserving the term "anti-Europeanism" for opposition to the very principle of European integration (Juberías, 2007, pp. 27–505).

The Danish political scientist Søren Riishøj proposed a threefold classification of oppositional stances towards the current process of European integration: The most radical stance, represented by national, sovereignist, far-right, or conservative groups, accuses the EU of constructing a European superstate that would abolish the sovereignty of member states and erode national identities. Riishøj terms this position *euroscpticismo tradicional-conservador* or national euroscepticism. He places in this camp the British Conservatives, Poland's Law and Justice party, the French Mouvement pour la France and the National Front, Belgium's Flemish Bloc, and Austria's Freedom Party (FPÖ) (Riishøj, 2004, pp. 36–37). In Italy, representatives include the Northern League, the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement (active from 1946 to 1995), and today's Fratelli d'Italia.

Parties focusing on combating corruption and bureaucracy within the EU, as well as its alienation and distance from citizens. This current is labelled liberal-conservative or ultra-liberal euroscepticism. According to Riishøj, such groups, though ideologically diverse, demand participatory democracy in the name of "true Europeanism", seeking to address the EU's democratic deficit. Most of these formations are minority movements with short political lifespans, often revolving around national political outsiders. Their opposition tends to concern one or several aspects of integration, resulting in partial or conditional opposition to the EU. Their critique often emphasises the defence of the national interest as a supreme value, incompatible with the EU's developmental trajectory. This type is found chiefly in consolidated democracies. Examples include Hans Peter Martin's List in Austria, the June List in Sweden, and the Dutch Europa Transparente (Riishøj, 2004, pp. 36–38). In Italy, comparable cases are Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement and Silvio Berlusconi's new Forza Italia.

Left-wing populist euroscepticism stresses the antisocial character of the current EU integration process. From a socio-communist perspective infused with populism, the EU is seen as a bastion of multinational capitalism. This stance characterises most communist parties of both "old"

and “new” Europe, including Germany’s Die Linke, Italy’s Communist Refoundation Party, the Communist Party of Greece (KKE), the French Communist Party (PCF), Spain’s United Left (IU), the Czech Communist Party, as well as certain ecological parties in Belgium and Sweden. In the most recent European Parliament elections, Italy’s Tsipras List – also known as “Another Europe with Tsipras” – belonged to this group (Sondel-Cedarmas, 2015, p. 398).

The categories in the title – Euroscepticism and European integration – are not mutually exclusive (the latter is also very broad). This is evidenced by the rhetoric of the journal *Opoka w Kraju*, which represents what is commonly referred to as soft euroscepticism.

From a methodological perspective, the analysis sought to identify this dualism within the journal’s discourse: euroscepticism on the one hand, and – so to speak – a pragmatic, context-dependent (geopolitical, economic, etc.) form of euro-enthusiasm on the other. This Euro-enthusiasm, however, was not expressed explicitly; hence, it is described here as latent.

Accordingly, latent euro-enthusiasm as a scientific concept does not exist in the academic literature; at most, it appears as a rhetorical figure in journalistic discourse. For the purposes of the present study, the following original definition of latent euro-enthusiasm is adopted: a hidden, implicit, often unconscious, or indirectly expressed positive attitude toward European integration or the European Union that is not articulated explicitly (e.g., for political, strategic, or identity-related reasons).

The classification of banner words does not rely on explicit pro-European declarations, but rather on implicit evaluative structures embedded in the discourse. In line with the methodological framework inspired by Walery Pisarek, the analysis focuses on the functional meaning of expressions within their broader argumentative context.

More precisely, an expression is classified as latent euro-enthusiasm when it meets at least one of the following criteria: it attributes positive geopolitical, economic, or strategic value to the European Union, even indirectly; it frames EU membership as beneficial or necessary, despite critical rhetoric; it expresses regret over processes that weaken the EU (e.g., Brexit); or it presupposes the desirability of remaining within EU structures.

In the case of the expression “United Kingdom / Brexit”, its classification as latent euro-enthusiasm is based on the following analytical reasoning: the statement “A pity... For Poland this is not good” constitutes a negative evaluation of disintegration (Brexit), which in turn implies

a positive counterfactual evaluation of EU membership, particularly in geopolitical terms (balance of power, alliance structures). Consequently, the EU is implicitly framed as valuable and strategically beneficial, even if it is not explicitly endorsed.

Thus, the classification does not attribute explicit Euro-enthusiasm to the author, but rather identifies discursive effects that implicitly reproduce pro-integration logic. Such an approach reduces the risk of overinterpretation by grounding interpretation in clearly defined analytical criteria.

The key categories have been further refined through more explicit operationalisation. Euroscepticism is operationalised as the presence of condemnanda (negatively evaluated key terms referring to the EU, integration, or its institutions). Latent euro-enthusiasm is operationalised as the presence of miranda or ambivalent expressions that imply the utility, necessity, or value of the EU, or express concern about its weakening.

Furthermore, the study adopts a contextual coding rule, according to which classification depends not only on lexical form but also on: co-text (sentence-level meaning), broader argumentative structure, and pragmatic function within the discourse.

The quantitative results of the analysis are as follows: the total number of identified keyword occurrences is 32, of which condemnanda (euroscepticism) account for 21 occurrences (approximately 65.6%), while miranda / ambivalent expressions (including latent euro-enthusiasm) account for 11 occurrences (approximately 34.4%).

Within the category of latent euro-enthusiasm (miranda and ambivalent expressions with implicit pro-EU implications), the most relevant phrases include: “Europe of Nations” – 3 occurrences; “League of Polish Families” – 3 occurrences; “Sovereignty” – 3 occurrences; and, in an ambivalent/relational sense, “United Kingdom / Brexit” – 2 occurrences.

The unit of analysis was a single occurrence of a banner word or phrase within the textual corpus. Repeated occurrences within the same article were counted separately. However, occurrences in titles, subtitles, and main body text were treated equally. Words were classified as miranda or condemnanda based on their evaluative function within the sentence and broader discourse context. To enhance methodological rigour, the coding procedure followed predefined rules concerning the identification, classification, and counting of banner words. Although the analysis involves an element of qualitative interpretation, the use of clearly specified categories (miranda/condemnanda) and a closed textual corpus increases the study’s transparency and reproducibility. Therefore, the research design

meets the basic criteria of analytical replicability within qualitative discourse analysis.

These results indicate that euroscepticism clearly dominates at the level of explicit rhetoric; however, approximately one-third of the discourse contains elements that implicitly reproduce pro-integration logic, thereby supporting the thesis of discursive dualism. Latent euro-enthusiasm is not a declared ideological position but rather an analytical category that describes implicit meanings emerging from discourse, identified through systematic criteria and supported by both qualitative interpretation and the quantitative distribution of categories.

2. Euroscepticism in *Opoka w Kraju*

A current strongly opposed by the eurosceptical *Opoka w Kraju* was Konrad Adenauer's federalist concept. The journal resisted this vision of Europe not so much for substantive reasons as for historical, political, and constitutional ones.

“The Chancellor was influenced by federalist visions and advocated that Western European states renounce their sovereignty in favour of a single European federal state – the United States of Europe. This structure was to be characterised by political universalism, enabling the overcoming of historical conflicts and antagonisms of state, national, and economic character. In Adenauer's view, the creation of the United States of Europe depended on the reconstruction of a European community of nations, each of which would contribute its indispensable share to European civilisation” (Białas-Zielińska, 2011, p. 39).

In contrast, *Opoka w Kraju* ultimately endorsed General Charles de Gaulle's project of a “Europe of Nations”. At its core, this vision proposed economic ties while preserving the political independence of the member states. Its distinctive feature was the emphasis on respect for national sovereignty and the development of intergovernmental rather than supranational cooperation. Developed and promoted by de Gaulle, this vision stood in opposition to federalist concepts of European unity. De Gaulle opposed a European federation and deeper political integration of the then European Communities (Góralski, 2007, pp. 22–23). Today, this idea is supported by eurosceptical politicians such as Václav Klaus, Philippe de Villiers, and Nigel Farage. In Poland, the concept of the EU as a “Europe of Nations” is endorsed by the Law and Justice party.

3. *Opoka w Kraju* before and after Poland's accession to the EU

In its rhetoric, *Opoka w Kraju* repeatedly emphasized that Poland's integration with the EU would bring irreparable economic losses: the imposition of excessive standards, economic exploitation, rising unemployment, the treatment of Poland as a reservoir of cheap labour, subordination to Germany's economic dictate, and, in cultural terms, the erosion of Christian morality (Zięba, 2015, pp. 84–85). The EU was portrayed as the realisation of a German plan for European domination (Górewicz, 2000, p. 1). Within its eurosceptical discourse, Polish eurosceptical voices in the pre-accession period provoked nervous reactions from EU officials, though without disrupting the accession process: “The visibility of our opposition so irritated them that even the EU Commissioner for Enlargement, Mr. G. Verheugen, a German, deemed it appropriate to call Poles ‘criminals’ for expecting too much from the EU. This is only a foretaste of how EU officials will treat us. When the President of the European Parliament, Patric Cox (an Irishman and member of the Bilderberg Club), visited the Sejm, he was challenged mainly by LPR deputies. His answers were so vague that there were voices saying that, in this way, we would all become eurosceptics. Let it be so” (Giertych, 2002a, p. 6).

Budget negotiations added further fuel for national criticism: “Meanwhile, the European Union crudely revealed the poverty of its offer. We were told our accession would be delayed by four months to save us €800 million. What was left unsaid was that, had we not joined at all, we would have saved at least €2.4 billion annually” (Giertych, 2002b, p. 5).

Despite these efforts, eurosceptics failed to persuade Polish society, which in the 2003 referendum on EU accession voted “yes”: “We lost the referendum. By the will of the people, expressed decisively with the required turnout, we shall become a member of the European Union. We allowed ourselves to be persuaded to renounce our sovereignty. We were subjected to aggressive, one-sided propaganda – real brainwashing – and we succumbed” (Giertych 2003, p. 1–3).

At the same time, the formation of a eurosceptical group in the European Parliament began, though it held little political significance: “Immediately after the elections, intensive talks began in Brussels about creating a new political group. I conducted these talks on behalf of the LPR (...). The group is called Independence and Democracy (ID) and consists of 37 deputies” (Giertych, 2004, pp. 8–9).

The final turning point of LPR's euroscepticism was the electoral failure of the *Libertas* project in the 2009 European elections: "The idea of *Libertas* did not work out. (...) The organiser, Declan Ganley, tried to repeat his success in Ireland, where he had managed to create a coalition of people opposed to Ireland's membership in the EU, opposed to the EU's evolution into a federal state, and opposed to any EU constitution" (Giertych, 2009, pp. 1–2).

4. An example of latent euro-enthusiasm in *Opoka w Kraju*

The phenomenon of latent euro-enthusiasm in *Opoka w Kraju* manifests itself in three areas of European integration. First, it is the political consent to the further process of European integration, expressed by the political background of *Opoka w Kraju*, namely the League of Polish Families (LPR).

According to the underlying rationale of such a stance, the aim was to derail the integration process by consenting to the initiation of accession talks with an increasing number of candidates, which, in their view, would destabilise the European Union internally. One of the main political goals of the League of Polish Families was to pursue a liberal policy regarding the admission of new member states. The primary objective was to avoid imposing stringent accession conditions and instead admit new states in line with incoming applications. This policy, as intended, was aimed at weakening and ultimately undermining the European Union from within (Płoski, 2016, p. 124).

Roman Giertych framed the issue as follows: "What is extremely important in the new reality is the effort to ensure society's survival amidst a thicket of idiotic regulations and commands, which, if slavishly obeyed, will work to our detriment" (Słodkowska, 2005, p. 144). Another political goal of the LPR was to engineer state institutions in such a way as to weaken the pressure of Brussels bureaucracy and to sabotage the implementation of EU regulations. What becomes apparent here is the intention to institutionalise resistance to incoming EU legal norms. At the same time, the notion of civic disobedience was clearly articulated – though within constitutional limits – through the possibility of blocking subsequent reforms by means of referenda on key structural issues of European integration (Płoski, 2016, pp. 124–125).

The promotion of such a vision of Polish politics is illustrated by the statement: “Our aim is to organise the nation, because within the European Union into which we have been thrust, only an organised society has a chance to pursue its goals and interests” (Śłodkowska, 2005, p. 145). Such a political position could not, in fact, harm European integration, since it effectively provided the EU with the consent of national circles for its further enlargement. Moreover, the Union was safeguarded against internal destabilisation by the pre-accession process, during which candidate states underwent legal harmonisation. For these reasons, the position of *Opoka w Kraju*, which in the media sphere represented the League of Polish Families, must be regarded as ultimately favourable to the EU and its enlargement process.

The second issue in European integration was Turkey’s accession to the European Union. Here, LPR MEPs engaged within the Independence and Democracy group in an effort to prevent Turkey’s entry into the EU – arguing that it represented a different civilisation. In this respect, *Opoka w Kraju* acted contrary to the official position of the LPR, which endorsed the admission of ever new candidates to the Union. A clear stance on this issue was articulated by Maciej Giertych: “As Feliks Koneczny rightly observed – there are no syntheses between civilisations. In a confrontation, the inferior one prevails, especially when representatives of the superior fail to protect their own. The plan to bring Turkey into the European Union is a Trojan horse. Europe, wake up!” (Giertych, 2013, p. 9).

It should be emphasised that this “joint crusade” of eurosceptical circles in the European Parliament contributed to halting the process of EU–Turkey integration. This was undoubtedly influenced by the fact that certain Western European governments adopted the rhetoric of potential harms associated with Turkey’s accession (i.e., that it belonged to a different civilisation, with only 2% of its territory in Europe and the remainder in Asia Minor, as well as the prospect of mass labour migration). Significantly, eurosceptic movements displayed remarkable foresight in anticipating subsequent political developments in Turkey, as the authoritarian rule of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan soon followed. As a result of these eurosceptic efforts, Turkey “became a perpetual candidate for EU membership” (Lasoń, 2011, p. 190). In this respect, eurosceptic actions may be interpreted as an expression of concern for the durability of the European project.

The third area of latent euro-enthusiasm concerns *Opoka w Kraju* attitude toward Brexit. The periodical expressed regret at the United King-

dom's withdrawal, perceiving the process as detrimental to Poland's international standing. It was clear that Poland would not assume the place formerly held by the United Kingdom within European structures, as illustrated by Maciej Giertych's words: "The United Kingdom has left the European Union. A pity. The withdrawal process lasted long and it seemed there might be a second referendum, but this did not happen. After the last parliamentary elections the Conservatives won a sufficient majority to leave the Union on agreed terms. For Poland, this is not good" (Giertych, 2020, p. 3).

This stance articulated by *Opoka w Kraju* unequivocally identifies Poland's disadvantageous geopolitical situation after Brexit. At the same time, however, voices advocating "Polexit" and a hardline stance against European integration began to emerge – posing a threat to the European project. What is clearly discernible among national circles is a desire for Poland to remain within the European Union. Maciej Giertych thus abandoned his previously promoted vision of the nation-state, recognising that it no longer corresponds to the current geopolitical realities (Giertych, 2005, p. 13).

5. Summary: empirical conclusions

As a result of the empirical analysis of texts published in *Opoka w Kraju*, within the framework of Walery Pisarek's approach, both positive and negative banner words emerge, thereby answering the main research question. However, it should be assumed that the assignment of words or phrases to a specific group was not determined by objective criteria but by the interests of national movements in Poland, as represented by *Opoka w Kraju*.

In Maciej Giertych's rhetoric, euro-sceptic phrases play a dominant role. These are negatively evaluated banner words (*condemnanda*), emotionally charged and presented as threats to Poland and to Europe.

The most frequent phrase is "European Union (EU)" (8 occurrences). In Giertych's texts, the EU appears as an institution imposing restrictions on Poland, forcing the abandonment of sovereignty and leading to the erosion of traditional values. The quote: "We gave up our sovereignty... brainwashing" (2003) shows that integration was not, in his view, the result of rational choice but rather the effect of mass manipulation. The EU is presented as an oppressive system, not as a sphere of cooperation.

Table 1. Banner words by frequency, classification, and context of use in eurosceptic and latent euro-enthusiastic rhetoric based on *Opoka w Kraju*

Banner word / phrase	Occurrences	Miranda / Condemnandum	Quote (shortened)
European Union (EU)	8	Condemnandum	“We gave up our sovereignty... brainwashing” (2003).
Europe of Nations	3	Miranda	“The EU is not a federal state. It is a Europe of Nations” (2020).
United States of Europe	2	Condemnandum	“States should renounce sovereignty... one European federal state” (2005/2020).
Germany	4	Condemnandum	“The EU is the realization of the German plan for domination” (2002a).
Turkey	2	Condemnandum	“Turkey will be a Trojan horse. Europe, wake up!” (2013).
United Kingdom / Brexit	2	Miranda / Condemnandum	“The UK left the EU. A pity... For Poland this is not good” (2020).
League of Polish Families (LPR)	3	Miranda	“Only an organized society can achieve its goals in the EU” (2005).
Sovereignty	3	Miranda	“We gave up our sovereignty” (2003).
Christianity / Christian morality	2	Miranda	“Integration would cause erosion of Christian morality” (2002b).
Brussels bureaucracy	2	Condemnandum	“Goal was to weaken Brussels bureaucracy” (2002a).
Polexit (implication)	1	Condemnandum	“Now we are in the Union and I do not propose leaving it” (2017).

Source: Own study based on research results.

Another key condemnandum is “United States of Europe” (2 occurrences). This phrase symbolises the federal model of integration, which Giertych strongly opposes. In the quote: “States should renounce sovereignty... a federal state” (2005/2020), one can see the fear of centralisation and the liquidation of nation-states. The federal project represents, in his view, the end of the traditional European order in which Poland could maintain its independence.

A particularly emotionally charged category is “Germany” (4 occurrences). In Giertych’s rhetoric, Germany is portrayed as the driving force behind integration but at the same time as a hegemon striving for political and economic domination. The quote: “The EU is the realisation of the German plan for domination” (2002a) makes it clear that the whole

integration process was perceived as a disguised form of German imperialism. The banner word “Germany” thus resonates with historical resentments and fears of subjugation.

Another condemnandum is “Turkey” (2 occurrences). The phrase “Turkey will be a Trojan horse. Europe, wake up!” (2013) transforms Turkey into a metaphor of civilizational threat from outside the European cultural circle. Turkey’s accession would, in Giertych’s view, weaken Europe and expose it to destabilisation. The emotional appeal “Europe, wake up!” adds dramatic emphasis.

The phrase “Brussels / bureaucracy” (2 occurrences) also belongs to this group. Giertych wrote: “The goal was to weaken the pressure of Brussels bureaucracy” (2002a). Here, Brussels becomes the symbol of centralism and foreign control, contrasted with national democracy. Criticism of bureaucracy emphasises the gap between EU elites and ordinary citizens.

An interesting case is “Polexit (implication)” (1 occurrence). Although classified as a condemnandum, it has an ambivalent character. The quote: “Now we are in the Union and I do not propose leaving it” (2017) shows that Giertych distanced himself from the idea of leaving the EU. Still, the very notion of Polexit carries negative connotations, serving as a warning against the consequences of hard euroscepticism. It remains within the field of opposition to integration but reveals a shift towards a more conciliatory stance.

Overall, Giertych’s eurosceptic rhetoric is coherent and rests on several pillars: criticism of the EU as an institution that undermines sovereignty, rejection of federalism, fear of German domination, opposition to Turkey’s accession, and criticism of the Brussels bureaucracy. Yet in the background emerges an awareness that total rupture with the EU – Polexit – is not a realistic alternative.

Alongside negative condemnanda, Giertych’s discourse also contains latent euro-enthusiastic phrases. These are positive or ambivalent words (*miranda*) which, often unintentionally, suggest some acceptance of European integration or acknowledgment of its benefits.

The most important is “Europe of Nations” (3 occurrences). The quote: “The EU is not a federal state. It is a Europe of Nations” (2020) shows that Giertych associates the EU with a model of intergovernmental cooperation among nation-states. Even if he rejects federalism, he accepts a certain form of integration – a Europe united but maintaining national sovereignty. This paradox encapsulates latent euro-enthusiasm: a rejection of federalism, but not of Europe itself.

Another significant phrase is “League of Polish Families (LPR)” (3 occurrences). In the quote: “Our goal is to organize the nation, because within the European Union only an organized society has a chance...” (2005), ambivalence becomes visible. While LPR officially opposed integration, it also took Poland’s continued presence in the EU for granted. The party viewed the EU as a space where Poland had to operate effectively to defend national interests. This is an implicit acknowledgement of the advantages of participation in EU structures.

A third latent euro-enthusiastic phrase is “United Kingdom / Brexit” (2 occurrences). The statement: “The United Kingdom has left the EU. A pity... For Poland this is not good” (2020) expresses regret over Brexit. Giertych recognises the negative geopolitical consequences for Poland – the weakening of Poland’s position after the UK’s departure. Thus, he acknowledges the value of EU membership as a guarantee of balance and security, an unintended endorsement of the European project.

The phrase “Sovereignty” (3 occurrences) also carries latent euro-enthusiastic undertones. While often used as an anti-EU argument, in the 2017 quote: “Now we are in the Union and I do not propose leaving it”, Giertych combines the defence of sovereignty with the acceptance of EU membership. Sovereignty here means not isolation but protection of national distinctiveness within EU structures. This reflects soft euroscepticism that effectively turns into latent euro-enthusiasm.

Finally, “Turkey (Trojan horse)” (2 occurrences) illustrates a paradox. Although Turkey is described negatively, the opposition to its accession can be read as an attempt to safeguard the integrity of the European project. The appeal “Europe, wake up!” is not just criticism but also a call to protect the EU from destabilisation. Eurosceptic rhetoric thus inadvertently becomes an argument for maintaining a strong and stable Union.

Christianity and Christian morality in Giertych’s rhetoric function as a *mirandum*, that is, a positive and supreme value. The author argues that European integration brings the risk of eroding Christian moral principles, which he presents as a serious warning for Poland. Yet this criticism also carries a latent euro-enthusiastic dimension, since it assumes that the European Union can be a community of values – provided it remains rooted in the Christian tradition. In this way, Christianity becomes a common point, a potential foundation for integration, rather than merely a tool of opposition. By defending Christian morality, Giertych does not entirely reject the European project but calls for it to be grounded in Europe’s

civilisational roots. Thus, Christianity plays a dual role in his rhetoric: on the one hand, it warns against threats, and on the other, it points to a direction in which integration could be acceptable and sustainable.

The analysis of Giertych's banner words reveals a clear dualism in his rhetoric. On the one hand, there are euro-sceptic phrases – European Union, United States of Europe, Germany, Turkey, Brussels, Polexit – all carrying negative connotations and aimed at undermining integration. On the other hand, latent euro-enthusiastic phrases appear – Europe of Nations, LPR, United Kingdom/Brexit, Sovereignty, and partly Turkey – which show that despite the rejectionist rhetoric, Giertych accepted Poland's functioning within the EU and recognised the need to defend national interests within the Union.

This ambivalence indicates that Giertych's euro-scepticism was not absolute opposition to Europe but rather criticism of certain forms of integration. His discourse combines elements of rejection with unintentional support for the European project.

Table 2. Characteristics of selected banner words related to euro-sceptic and latent euro-enthusiastic rhetoric according to Pisarek's five-dimensional model (*Opoka w Kraju*)

Banner words/ phrases	Valence	Emotion- ality	Ideologi- cal sali- ence	Specificity	Number of occur- rences
European Union (EU)	–	High	High	High	8
Europe of Nations	+	Moderate	High	High	3
United States of Europe	–	Moderate	High	High	2
Germany	–	High	High	Moderate	4
Turkey	–	High	Moderate	High	2
United Kingdom / Brexit	+/-	Moderate	High	Moderate	2
League of Polish Families (LPR)	+	Moderate	Moderate	High	3
Sovereignty	+	High	High	Moderate	3
Christianity / Christian morality	+	High	High	Moderate	2
Brussels / bureaucracy	–	High	Moderate	High	2
Polexit (implication)	–	Moderate	Moderate	High	1

Source: Own study based on research results.

In Maciej Giertych's writings in *Opoka w Kraju*, eurosceptic phrases play a dominant role. Within Walery Pisarek's model, they can be classified as *condemnanda* – negatively charged concepts expressing opposition to European integration, its institutions, values, and political or social consequences. Their high frequency, emotional intensity, and strong ideological grounding make them a central component of Giertych's rhetoric.

The most frequent banner word is "European Union", which appears eight times and always in a negative sense. The EU is depicted as an institution depriving member states of sovereignty, imposing regulations, and subjecting societies to a kind of "propaganda treatment". Giertych uses highly emotional language, suggesting that Poland allowed itself to be manipulated and voluntarily surrendered its fundamental rights to an external decision-making centre. The emotionality of this phrase is very high, and its ideological significance is central to the entire discourse. For Giertych, the "European Union" becomes synonymous with threat and the loss of national identity.

Another important expression is "United States of Europe", which appears twice. Although somewhat less emotionally charged, it carries significant ideological weight. The phrase symbolises the federal project, identified with the vision of a supranational Europe. Giertych unequivocally rejects this idea, seeing it as an assault on the independence of nation-states. In his rhetoric, the notion of a "United States of Europe" operates as a cautionary rhetorical construct, aimed at mobilising the audience against further centralisation.

The word "Germany" also plays a key role, appearing four times. Its specificity is moderate, but its emotionality is very high. In Giertych's texts, Germany represents both the driving force of integration and a looming threat to the rest of the continent. Germany is portrayed as seeking domination, and the EU itself is presented as a tool for this plan. This framing draws upon deep-rooted Polish historical resentments and legitimises a sceptical stance toward European processes. Its ideological significance is high, as it forms one of the pillars of his euroscepticism.

Equally important is the phrase "Turkey", which appears twice and is consistently framed in negative terms. Its emotionality and specificity are both high, as it refers to the concrete issue of EU enlargement. Giertych sees Turkey's accession as a civilizational threat, famously describing it as a "Trojan horse". Turkey symbolises an alien element that could weaken and destabilise the European community. This phrase thus serves a warning function, mobilising opposition to further expansion.

“Brussels / bureaucracy” also belongs to the category of *condemnan-da*, appearing twice. Here, the emotional charge is high, while the ideological significance is moderate. Brussels is cast as the symbol of centralism and distant authority, disconnected from the interests of nations. Criticism of bureaucracy is a recurring theme in eurosceptic discourse, allowing a rhetorical contrast between “the people” as a democratic subject and “the elites” as a distant, oppressive force.

A special case is “*Polexit (implication)*”, which appears only once. While formally classified as a *condemnandum*, its tone is more ambivalent. Its emotionality and ideological weight are moderate. Giertych does not advocate for Poland’s withdrawal from the EU, yet the very mention of *Polexit* signals awareness of such a scenario. This reflects a tension in his rhetoric: on the one hand, harsh criticism of the EU, and on the other, an avoidance of radicalism that would entail a total withdrawal.

In sum, eurosceptic phrases in Giertych’s rhetoric form a coherent system of concepts united by the conviction that the European Union and its institutions pose a threat. They articulate fears of lost sovereignty, opposition to federalism, concern about German domination, and resistance to enlargement. Their high emotionality makes them rhetorically effective, while their ideological significance reinforces a clear opposition to integration.

Alongside clearly eurosceptic expressions, Giertych’s rhetoric also contains phrases that may be described as latent euro-enthusiastic. These are positively or ambivalently evaluated concepts indicating partial acceptance of European integration or at least acknowledgement that participation in the EU is unavoidable and, in some respects, beneficial. In this sense, they represent a form of soft euroscepticism that, in practice, becomes a hidden endorsement of the European project.

One of the most important is “*Europe of Nations*”, which appears three times. Its evaluation is positive, emotionality moderate, and ideological significance high. By rejecting federalism while affirming Europe as a community of cooperating but independent nations, Giertych implicitly accepts integration – just in a specific intergovernmental form. For him, this phrase represents the foundation of a positive alternative to the “*United States of Europe*”.

Another significant phrase is “*League of Polish Families (LPR)*”, also appearing three times. Here, the positive evaluation is combined with moderate emotionality and moderate ideological weight. The LPR becomes a symbol of organised action within the EU. Although the party

officially opposed integration, its strategy assumed Poland's continued participation, emphasising the need to operate effectively within the Union. In this way, membership was not contested but seen as a prerequisite for pursuing national goals.

"United Kingdom / Brexit" is another phrase with latent euro-enthusiastic undertones, appearing twice and marked as ambivalent. Its ideological weight is high, while emotionality remains moderate. Giertych interprets Brexit as a loss for Poland: the UK's departure undermines balance within Europe and weakens Poland's position. This reflects recognition that having strong allies inside the EU benefits Poland, and that the Union itself is geopolitically valuable.

The concept of "Sovereignty", occurring three times, is equally significant. While often invoked as an argument against integration, for Giertych it does not mean isolation but rather the ability to defend national interests within the EU. Its high emotionality is combined with an acceptance of membership, reframing sovereignty as a matter of active participation rather than withdrawal.

Another notable example is "Christianity / Christian morality", which appears twice with high emotionality and ideological importance. Giertych fears the erosion of Christianity due to integration, yet simultaneously sees the EU as the arena where this struggle must be waged. The Union is not framed as an institution to abandon but as a battleground for defending values. Thus, the phrase indirectly affirms Poland's presence in European structures.

Taken together, these latent euro-enthusiastic phrases demonstrate that Giertych's rhetoric, despite its strong critical tone, was not radically anti-European. Instead, it presupposed Poland's continued membership and emphasised the need to fight for sovereignty, values, and interests within the EU. The paradox here is that the stronger the criticism of federalism or German dominance, the clearer the implicit acknowledgement that Poland's place is inside the Union.

The analysis of both eurosceptic and latent euro-enthusiastic phrases reveals the dualism of Giertych's rhetoric. On the one hand, he constructs a highly negative image of the EU, federalism, Germany, Turkey, Brussels bureaucracy, and even the notion of Polexit. On the other hand, he also emphasises the necessity of remaining within the Union, highlighting benefits related to sovereignty, Christian values, and geopolitical balance.

This ambivalence shows that Giertych's euroscepticism was not an absolute rejection of Europe but rather a critique of specific forms of in-

tegration. His discourse blends elements of opposition with hidden endorsement – precisely what can be termed latent euro-enthusiasm.

Conclusion

Within the eurosceptic outlook of Polish national circles, one can identify the phenomenon of so-called “soft euroscepticism”. In essence, this represents an acceptance of the continued process of European integration. In this respect, the political stance of the League of Polish Families (LPR) is instructive. After Poland’s accession to the European Union in 2004, the party acknowledged this, recognising that opponents of EU membership constituted only a small minority, whereas the vast majority of Poles supported accession to European structures and further integration, including acceptance of the European Union’s federalist constitutional vision. Public opinion research within the EU indicated that in 2011, two-thirds of respondents believed that the EU, rather than national governments, should determine foreign policy, while more than half maintained that the EU should also decide on matters of defence (Peters, 2011, pp. 1–24).

Following its defeats in the 2007 Polish parliamentary elections and the 2009 European Parliament elections, the League of Polish Families – until then the only eurosceptic formation represented in the Polish parliament and the European Parliament’s Independence and Democracy group – ultimately became a non-parliamentary eurosceptic party. Its electorate in both arenas was absorbed by Law and Justice (PiS), thereby acquiring a nationally oriented eurosceptic faction. Meanwhile, former LPR supporters unwilling to embrace a hard eurosceptic course shifted toward supporting European integration, further accelerating their departure from LPR (Paczeński, 2015, pp. 185–186). In contrast to the conciliatory euroscepticism of national movements and *Opoka w Kraju*, Law and Justice’s euroscepticism has taken an uncompromising form. National milieus, as a result, express concerns that this trajectory may ultimately lead to Poland’s withdrawal from EU structures. Furthermore, the United Kingdom’s exit from the EU is widely regarded as geopolitically disadvantageous, significantly weakening Poland’s position in Europe.

This perspective finds expression in the commentary of *Opoka w Kraju*: “I was an opponent of Poland’s entry into the European Union. Before the referendum, I campaigned against membership. I travelled across Po-

land giving lectures on this issue. After accession, I ran for the European Parliament under the banner of opposition to the EU. As an MEP, I joined the eurosceptic group alongside the UK Independence Party, which later brought about Brexit. My position was that we should belong to the Schengen Area and the European Economic Area, like Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein, but not be subject to the political dictates of the Union. Now we are in the EU, and I do not propose leaving it. What has changed? Above all, I see that most Poles are satisfied with EU membership and do not wish to leave. Second, the project of a unitary state 'European Union' with its own constitution collapsed with the negative referenda in France and the Netherlands. Third, the idea of a 'Europe of the Regions' has clearly receded (an attempt to construct an entity akin to the FRG, with a central authority and Länder – Brussels with Catalonia, Scotland, Bavaria, Silesia, Mazovia, etc. – but without national capitals). Moreover, it has turned out that EU financial aid has significantly improved living standards in Poland. The country is visibly developing and catching up with the West. It has also become clear that we can resist the Union's dictates, and we are not alone in safeguarding our national distinctiveness. Finally, the international situation requires avoiding isolation. Thanks to EU membership, we feel greater security. I view very negatively the policies of the PiS government, which embroils us in conflicts with all our neighbours. What is needed is Western European solidarity" (Giertych, 2017, p. 7).

The example of national movements represented by *Opoka w Kraju* illustrates that it is indeed possible to combine two seemingly contradictory political processes within the Polish social context: the simultaneous acceptance of euroscepticism and European integration. Alongside this, Maciej Giertych's public commentary reveals a concealed form of latent euro-enthusiasm. Nevertheless, it must be emphasised that integration is not endorsed unconditionally. Rather, national circles maintain that the institutional model of a "Europe of Nations", envisioned by Charles de Gaulle, should be pursued. In practice, this national variant of euroscepticism is less destructive to the European Union than the hard euroscepticism promoted by Law and Justice supporters. Among national sympathisers and political commentators in Poland, however, there is a recurring emphasis on the danger that such a trajectory could lead to Polexit. Yet, as Anna Pacześniak observes (2015, p. 197), "neither Euroscepticism nor pro-European attitudes provide a sufficient basis for building lasting ties between political parties and their electorates, as some political actors have already discovered".

Leszek Zaborowski (2021) stresses that the downfall of the League of Polish Families was precipitated by its euroscepticism. This view should serve as a cautionary reminder for national circles and *Opoka w Kraju*, since their inconsistent and internally contradictory positions on European integration led to the erosion of their eurosceptic electorate. In 2007, this electorate shifted en masse to Law and Justice, becoming the core of that party's eurosceptic faction after the LPR's electoral defeats. To date, political commentators and eurosceptic members of Law and Justice have not signalled any intent to break away from the party. Nor have significant internal moves been observed within PiS's eurosceptic circles. The political reality in Poland thus demonstrates that the euroscepticism articulated by Law and Justice has proven more politically attractive than the variant represented by national circles and *Opoka w Kraju*.

In conclusion, the discourse of *Opoka w Kraju* in Giertych's interpretation combines two dimensions. Euroscepticism forms the dominant axis of the narrative, expressed in the criticism of federalism, German hegemony, and Brussels centralism. Yet, at the same time, elements appear that recognise European integration as a reality with which one must reckon and within which national interests must be defended. One can therefore speak of a paradox: the stronger the criticism of integration, the clearer the awareness that Poland should not leave the Union but act within it. This combination indicates that these texts do not represent a pure form of euroscepticism, but rather a specific blend of rejection and acceptance – what may be defined as latent euro-enthusiasm.

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**Eurosceptycyzm czy integracja europejska? Ukryty euroentuzjazm
w analizie dyskursu czasopisma *Opoka w Kraju*
w świetle metody Walerego Pisarka**

Streszczenie: Problematyka integracji europejskiej jest jednym z kluczowych działów publicystyki *Opoki w Kraju*. Celem niniejszego artykułu jest określenie podstaw ideowo-programowych ruchów narodowych w kwestii integracji europejskiej, których stanowiska prezentuje w czasopiśmie *Opoka w Kraju* profesor Maciej Giertych. Dla laika pierwsza myśl dotycząca tego czasopisma budzi skojarzenie z jednoznacznym eurosceptycznym jego dyskursem. Wynika to z zaangażowania się Macieja Giertycha i środowisk narodowych w przedsięwzięcia polityczne zmierzające do zastopowania procesu integracji europejskiej. Jednak ten eurosceptyczny nurt ma również swoje akcenty europejskie np. niepodogodzenie się z brexitem. W tym aspekcie istotne będzie wydobyć z publicystyki *Opoki w Kraju* nie tylko jej jawnego eurosceptycyzmu, ale również ukazanie kryptoeuroentuzjazmu tego czasopisma. Wyjaśnienie tego problemu badawczego zostanie przeprowadzone z wykorzystaniem metody badania słów i wyrażeń sztandarowych Walerego Pisarka.

Słowa kluczowe: Unia Europejska, eurosceptycyzm, kryptoeuroentuzjazm, *Opoka w Kraju*, metoda Walerego Pisarka

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