



# Treatment of the 'non-citizens' in Latvia as a sign of Euroscepticism?

**IDENTITY AND DIVERSITY**

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# No one should be stateless in today's Europe [1]

250,000 people residing in Latvia are deprived  
of the right to a nationality

<sup>1</sup> THOMAS HAMMARBERG, "THE RIGHTS OF STATELESS PERSONS MUST BE PROTECTED".

## Does anyone care?



- Governmental attempts
- European Parliament resolution on the situation of fundamental rights in the EU
- EU calls for compliance to international documents
- Council of Europe, OSCE
- Movements within Latvia (political parties, Congress of Non-citizens)

## Why is it a problem?

- "Right to have rights"
- "Naturalization" trend is downwards

## Why does the problem persist?

- Is Latvia moving away from the common European values of HR protection?
- Latvian unwillingness to allow the EU interfere in its internal policies

# Signs of Euroscepticism?

Shift in  
values?

Identity-based  
Euroscepticism  
[2]

National-interest-based  
Euroscepticism

Opposing to  
external  
interference

Policy-based  
Euroscepticism

# Dimensions to study Euroscepticism [3]



- State (strategies)
- Civil society (public opinion)
- Party system

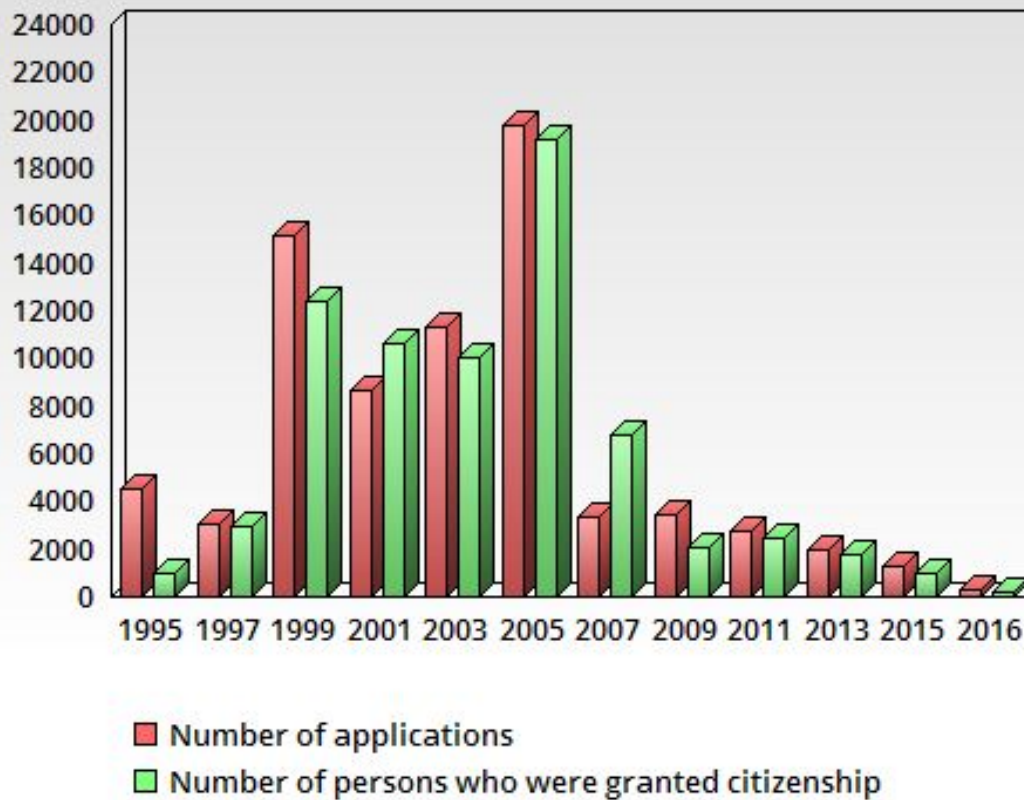
# Methods and Sources



- Qualitative research (works on political identity to assess Latvian "Europeanness", works on Euroscepticism)
- Party programs, journal articles, reports
- Quantitative data (Eurobarometer surveys, governmental statistical data)

# Research findings: State dimension

Naturalization procedure in Latvia, 1995-2016





# Why is the trend downwards?



- Lack of awareness of the process
- Fear of the difficult examination
- Some regard it humiliating
- Rejected applications
- Lack of motivation

# Civil society dimension (or testing identity-based Euroscepticism)



	YES	NO	NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE
IS IT BETTER TO STAY IN THE EU?	56%	28%	16%
DO YOU HAVE TRUST IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT?	45%	34%	21%
DO YOU HAVE TRUST IN THE COMMISSION?	43%	34%	23%

4 Eurobarometer 2015 survey, Direction générale Communication, *L'opinion Publique Dans L'union Européenne*

# Latvian "Europeanness"

Who would feel "more European"?

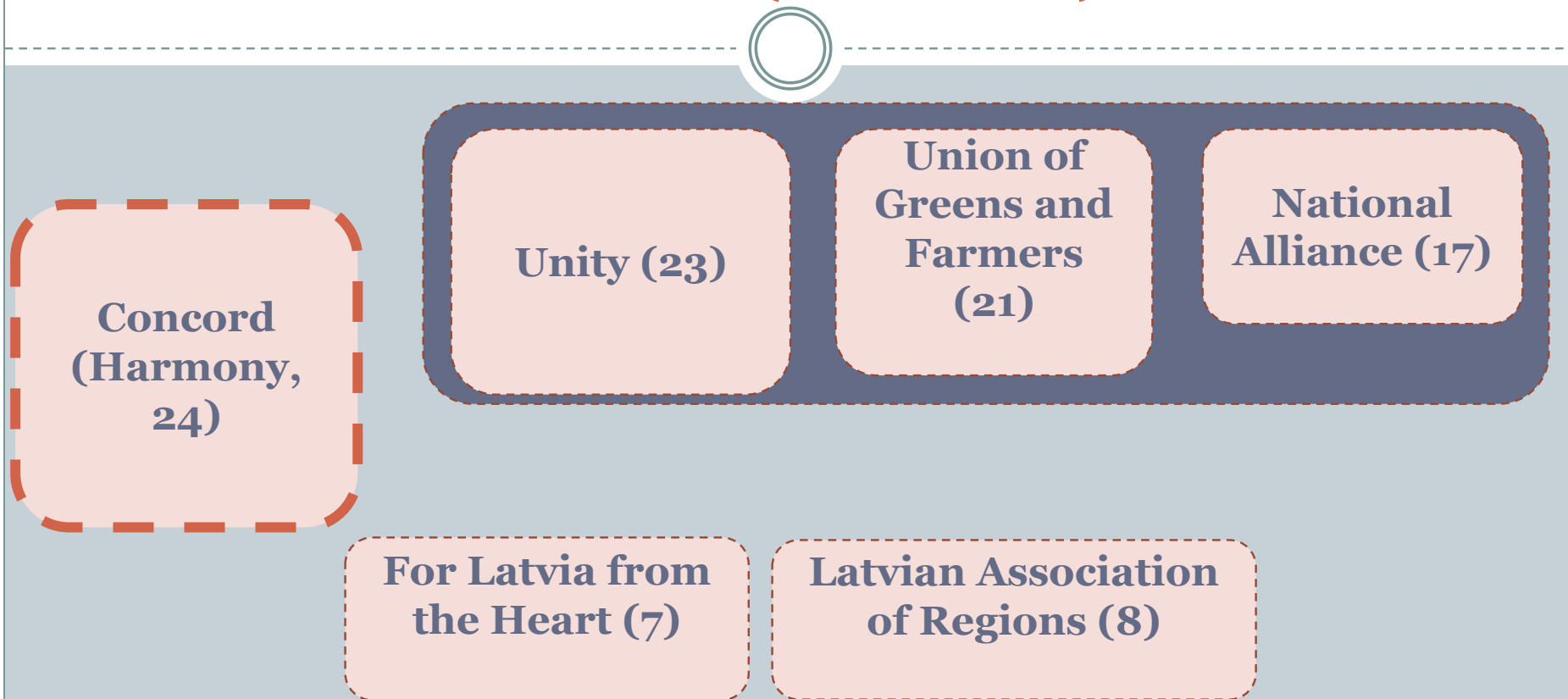
- How long a state has been a member of the EU
- Benefits, economic class, education, age, etc.

European or anti-Russian?

- To stress their "Europeanness" and "otherness" of Russia [5], Latvians confined their policies of citizenship and language.

# Party system dimension

## Saeima (100 seats)



# Findings



- Party's position on integration ↔ history
- Party's position within a system ↔ expression of Euroscepticism
- No radical Euroscepticism expressed, only concerns over preserving national sovereignty

# Findings: Euro-sceptic or not?



- Policies that Latvia chooses and alleged unwillingness to solve the problem
- Latvian reluctance to give Brussels the upper hand to deal with the problem – Euro-sceptic or not?
- Human rights ideals? More internal instruments for monitoring minority rights and policies should be introduced

# Findings: Eurosceptic or not?



- There is no strong Eurosceptic voice in Latvia
- Voicing concerns vs action

## What does the future hold?

- Attempts to cooperate to ensure stability
- Latvian shift away from the human rights values is unlikely, for the state has taken the course on embracing its Europeanness



Thank you for your attention!